

An Analysis on Unfriending Decision of Facebook Users

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Abstract

This study explores the reasons of unfriending/unfollowing decision Facebook users by applying qualitative and quantitative research methods. For the purposes of the study, an online survey is conducted and snowball sampling was used to reach out active Facebook users. 462 valid survey forms were collected and data is analyzed by using descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. The study indicated that insulting behavior, flirting attempt, content against animal rights, racist and sexist attitude are the main online reasons of friendship dissolution for Facebook users. For the offline reasons, betrayal has the highest agreement level (%86,6) for unfriending decision. Additionally, significant difference is investigated among the demographic groups by conducting ANOVA and t-test. Results revealed that there are significant differences between different gender, education and age groups. This research was conducted in Turkey and finally, findings were compared with the previous researches that were conducted in the USA and Germany.

keywords: social network sites, Facebook, unfriending, Facebook users

Résumé

Une analyse sur la décision de supprimer un/e ami/e des utilisateurs/trices de Facebook

Cette étude explore les raisons qui poussent les utilisateurs/trices de Facebook à supprimer ou à arrêter de suivre d'autres utilisateurs en ligne et ce, en appliquant des méthodes de recherche qualitative et quantitative. Dans cet objectif, un sondage en ligne auquel l'échantillonnage en boule-de-neige a été appliqué pour entrer en contact avec des utilisateurs/trices actifs/ves de Facebook fut mené. 462 formulaires de sondage valables ont été collectés et les données ont été analysées en utilisant l'analyse descriptive et l'analyse inférentielle. La recherche menée a montré que des comportements insultants, une tentative de flirt, un contenu contre les droits des animaux, des comportements racistes et sexistes sont des raisons principales en ligne qui amènent les utilisateurs/trices de Facebook à supprimer ou à arrêter de suivre d'autres utilisateurs. Parmi des raisons "hors ligne", l'infidélité fut au premier rang des raisons de suppression / d'arrêt de suivre un(e) ami(e) (86,6%). En outre, une grande différence fut observée entre les groupes démographiques en utilisant des méthodes ANOVA et T-Test. La recherche a montré qu'il y a une différence importante entre les différents groupes d'âge, de sexe et d'éducation. Les résultats de cette recherche menée en Turquie, furent également comparés aux recherches précédentes faites aux États-Unis et en Allemagne.

mots-clés : les réseaux sociaux, Facebook, supprimer un ami, utilisateurs/trices de Facebook

Öz

Facebook Kullanıcılarının Arkadaşlıktan Çıkarma Kararı Üzerine Bir İnceleme

Bu çalışma Facebook kullanıcılarının arkadaşlıktan çıkarma/takibi bırakma nedenlerini nicel ve nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılarak ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma amacıyla aktif Facebook kullanıcılarına ulaşmak için kartopu örnekleme ile çevrim içi bir anket düzenlenmiştir. 462 geçerli anket formu toplanmış ve veriler betimleyici ve çıkarımsal analizler kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre Facebook kullanıcıları için arkadaşlıktan çıkarma/takibi bırakmadaki çevrim içi ana nedenler, aşağılanma, başkalarının aşağılanması, flört girişimi, hayvan haklarına aykırı içerik, ırkçı ve cinsiyetçi içeriklerdir. Çevrim dışı nedenlerden ise "aldatma" %86.6 ile en yüksek katılım düzeyine sahiptir. Demografik gruplar arasında anlamlı farklar olup olmadığını ortaya çıkarmak için ANOVA ve t-testi uygulanmış, farklı cinsiyet, eğitim ve yaş grupları arasında anlamlı fark olduğu görülmüştür. Bu araştırma Türkiye'de yapılmıştır ve elde edilen bulgular ABD'de ve Almanya'da yapılan daha önceki araştırmaların sonuçlarıyla karşılaştırılmıştır.

anahtar kelimeler: sosyal ağ siteleri, Facebook, arkadaşlıktan çıkarma, Facebook kullanıcıları

Introduction

Social network sites (SNSs) are virtual platforms where %68,3 of all the Internet users in the world spend most of their online time ("Number of social media users", 2016). Most of the SNSs provide users alternative ways to present themselves, to form new relations or to maintain existing relationships (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 23; Walther et al., 2015). Therefore, new kinds of relationship formation have been appeared and dynamics of relationships have altered.

One of the most popular SNSs is Facebook. When it was launched in 2004, the site reached 1 million active users in a year. For December 2016 Facebook owns 1.23 billion daily active users on average and it is the most trafficked SNS in the world ("Company Info-Facebook Newsroom", 2017). As for Turkey, Facebook statistics are also bewildering. In Turkey, 42 million of all Internet users are active Facebook users ("Facebook'un Türkiye'deki kullanıcı sayısı", 2016). Besides, more than 66 percent of all Turkish Facebook users' main purpose to have a Facebook account is to communicate with their friends (cited in Yelpaze and Ceylan, 2015, p. 27).

As the number of SNSs, specifically Facebook, users worldwide continues to grow, SNSs considerable impact on social connections and interpersonal relations have inspired various disciplines and given rise to studies concerning computer-mediated communication. Some of these recent studies (Caughlin and Sharabi, 2013; Coyne et al., 2011; Karl and Peluchette, 2011; Kanter et al., 2012) seem to suggest that these new communication channels have transformed broader understanding of relationships (cited in Bevan et al., 2014, p. 171). For instance, a very recent research implies that computer-mediated communication channels have definitely caused drastic changes on how family members interact with each other. Nonetheless, whether the implications of these changes are positive or negative have been subject to much debate (Carvalho et al., 2015, p. 106). In addition, it is suggested that in romantic relations integrated use of computer-mediated channels and face-to-face communication enhances the partners' understanding of each other. In their studies Ellison et al. addressed to influence of SNSs on social relations and revealed that SNSs help keep close links with people who move from an offline community (cited in Lewis and West, 2009). In the same vein, Anderson et al. (2012, p. 29) in their study focusing on recent Facebook research state that social network communications mainly enable to enhance existing relationships and indirectly contribute to new relations.

One specific relationship type that has been influenced by SNSs is friendship. Today millions of SNSs participants connect or reconnect to their friends and disconnect from them on SNSs. For previous generations, friendships were dependent on social norms. Nevertheless, drastic changes in technology

have converted friendships from convenience based to compatible based (Young, 2013). Furthermore, friendships dissolve as easily as they formed on SNSs. The latest research about unfriending decision conducted by Madden (2012, p. 9) revealed that the number of users unfriended at least one member of their online social network increased to 63% in 2012. The number was 56% in 2009. This phenomenon has brought new questions about the friendship concept involving the triggers of its formation and dissolution and the differences between online and offline friendship if there are any.

On this basis, this study aims to reveal the factors that influence unfriending/unfollowing decision of Facebook users in Turkey. Towards this purpose, the study is going to answer the following questions;

RQ1: What are the reasons of unfriending/unfollowing decision of Facebook users in Turkey?

RQ2: Is there a difference in unfriending/unfollowing decision of Facebook users in Turkey in terms of age, gender and education?

Literature Review

Friendship Formation and Dissolution

Within the psychology, friendship is examined as a developmental, social and personal issue, and it is broadly defined as "voluntary interdependence between two persons over time, which is intended to facilitate social, emotional goals of the participants, and may involve varying types and degrees of companionship, intimacy, affection, and mutual assistance" (Wang, 2007). As highlighted in the definition, friendship is established to meet some social and emotional needs of the individuals. These needs are positively related to expressivity, security and identity attainment. DeVito (2009, p. 248) extends these three major needs to five major motivations of friendship; utility, affirmation, ego support, stimulation and security. The need of *utility* refers to all traits of an individual that are useful to reach personal goals or meet personal needs. In other words, utility function of friendship underlines the pragmatic side of the concept. *Affirmation* and *ego support* are attributed to the fulfillment of the social needs of both parties. These two fundamental needs are vital for confirmation and self-worth (Van De Bunt, 1999, p. 169). Another need of friendship, *stimulation*, is related to how much friends contribute to their social capital and expand their worldview by providing new connections, experiences and resources. Finally, *security* is a very instinctive personal need ensuring not being hurt in a friendship context. People tend to establish friendship with individuals who will not betray them and who will not reveal their weaknesses. Furthermore, it is suggested that homophily has a crucial role in the formation of friendship. Aristotle in his rhetoric asserted that people "love those who are like themselves". Similarly, Plato expressed

in Phaedrus that “similarity begets friendship” (cited in McPherson, 2001, p. 417). After identified in early studies, homophily was examined as one of the core motivations of friendship formation and recent research demonstrated that people have a tendency to become friends with those who share similar race, ethnicity, age, religion, education, occupation and gender (McPherson et al., 2001). Hallinan, on the other hand, describes the structure of friendship formation sequentially; “First, P must desire to have O as a friend (attraction). Second, P must initiate a move to establish a friendship with O. Third, O must recognize P’s overture of friendship. Fourth, O must reciprocate P’s offer of friendship” (cited in Sibona and Walczak, 2011). Likewise, Van De Bunt et al. (1999, p. 167) explain friendship formation as a chain process covering to initiate, to establish, to maintain and to dissolve the relationship. This interpretation of friendship formation implies that dissolution may be a natural phase of friendship process and it is worth enquiring its reasons.

Friendship dissolution is not similar to friendship formation since it does not follow a process. On the contrary, friendships may end abruptly without a concrete reason or it may disappear due to a dispute. Moreover, termination of a friendship does not require other person’s assent (Sibona and Walczak, 2011).

Four-condition disengagement model of Rodin (cited in Rose, 1984) is the widely accepted model for friendship dissolution in literature. He suggested that four conditions are prominent in disengagement. The first one is related to expectancy violation. When one’s friend do or say something causing dislike, this situation may lead to the end of the relation. The second condition is linked to “like” criteria. People may start to expect different things from their friends, likewise friends may change and so mutual interests may disappear. Third, a new or an older friend is able to meet one’s emotional and social needs. Therefore, current friendship will lose its functions. Lastly, pleasure/cost equation is possible to change in friendships. For instance, the level of pleasure may decrease, however, the cause may increase.

Despite these very reasonable conditions for friendship dissolution, some internal and external barriers may hinder disengagement. Bushman and Hold-Lundstad assert that while internal barriers arise from personal reasons; such as, religious beliefs, self-identity or personal sense of commitment, external obstacles appear because of social pressure like family ties, financial ties or physical proximity (colleagues, neighbors) (cited in Sibona and Walczak, 2011).

Existing literature has revealed that both friendship formation and friendship dissolution have gained new and unique formulations as a consequence of SNSs. According to Kane et al. (2014) the main differences of online relationships are being easier to form, and being more visible to others. As a consequence, friendship on SNS, specifically on Facebook, has lack of power, reciprocal trust and long lasting bonds (cited in Brass, 2015). On the other hand, the need to ‘unfriend’

emerged and disconnection on SNSs became as important as connection. The main rationale of this situation is that each connection requires a decision not to connect others (John and Dvir-Gvirsman, 2014, p. 955). In addition, Light and Cassidy (2014) assert that disconnection on SNSs triggers new online activities and improve online experiences by giving way to new connections.

To recap, this brief literature review suggests that further research on unfriending on SNSs is highly important to illustrate and explain new codes and dimensions of interpersonal relationships and social relationships. Particularly, Facebook is considered as the most proper online platform to research on unfriending since it is the most popular SNS both in Turkey and in the world.

Unfriending on Facebook

The term “defriending” was first defined and investigated scholarly by Fono and Raynes-Goldie (2006) in their article “Hyperfriendship and beyond: Friends and Social Norms on LiveJournal”. In the article “defriending” is explained as “the act of removing someone from one’s friend list”. Subsequently, the term “unfriending” has started to be used as a synonym of “defriending” and the *Oxford English Dictionary* labeled “unfriend” the word of the year in 2010. In the dictionary, “unfriending” is defined as the act of removing “(someone) from a list of friends or contacts on a social networking site” (Unfriend, 2009).

Currently, the term “Unfriending (or defriending)” is commonly used for an option available on Facebook to remove someone from friend list purposefully. In other words, “unfriending” refers to the action of clicking “unfriend” button on individual’s Facebook page and terminating a friendship on Facebook community. With this working principle Facebook unfriending has mainly two distinguishable features from offline friendship. First of all, when Facebook unfriending occurs it happens abruptly and rigidly. The other unique feature is that the unfriended one is not informed about being removed from one’s friend list (Sibona and Walczak, 2011, p. 1). Therefore, unlike offline friendship, Facebook friendship is a one-way communication process.

Recent studies investigating Facebook unfriending in terms of its reasons, formation and resemblance to offline friendship indicated several important facts. According to McEwan, Gallagher and Farinelli (2008) the purposeful avoidance is the main reason for friendship dissolution. Namely, people communicate less with their friends who avoid contacting with them (cited in Gashi and Knautz, 2015, p. 585). Another research by Sibona and Walczak (2011) underlined both online and offline reasons of Facebook unfriending. The result of their study uncovered that the most common online reasons of unfriending decision are unimportant topics, inappropriate content and posting frequently. On the other hand, their study demonstrated that some of the Facebook users defriend on Facebook in reaction to their friends’ offline behaviors, which include personality

of the friend, behavior and misdeeds. Moreover, the study revealed that the possibility of unfriending due to offline reasons increases when the friends know each other for longer period.

Gashi and Knautz (2015) also investigated the reasons of unfriending behavior on Facebook. As in the previous study of Sibona and Walczak (2011), they revealed both online and offline reasons of unfriending decision. The results showed that the most common online reasons of unfriending decision are posting frequently, game requests and unimportant content. For the offline reasons of unfriending decision, main reasons are alienation, personality and trust issues.

In their research Light and Cassidy (2014) claim that defriending someone to improve connection with other contacts is also common. They suggest that some of the users "clean out" friends to strengthen their relationship with close friends. On the other hand, Quercia, Bogaghi and Crowcroft (2015, p. 251) assert that unfriending decision is more likely given if the friends are not connected to each other in the same social environment, if they differ in age, and if one of them is introverted or neurotic. Additionally, Pena and Brody (2014, p. 149) revealed social attractiveness of the individuals influence the possibility of being unfriended. The study indicated that friends with high social attractiveness are less likely to be unfriended. They added that sender's insulting behaviors and threatening the personal image of the receiver may be result in unfriending.

As for Turkey, Şener (2009) conducted a comprehensive literature review aiming to reveal the scope of Facebook research in Turkey. Şener mainly focused on the reasons of Facebook use. According to her study, forming, developing and having new friendship relationships are common reasons of Facebook use in Turkey. Although Şener's study provides valuable data for not accepting friendship requests and friendship formation reasons, it lacks the reasons of unfriending or unfollowing on Facebook. Another recent research examining Facebook use in Turkey indicated that great majority of Facebook users in Turkey do not have face to face communication with Facebook friends. Moreover, %71 of Facebook users between the ages 18 and 24 really know who their Facebook friends are. However, the research does not provide information about unfriending or unfollowing issues on Facebook ("Sadece arkadaş olmayabilir", 2014).

It is clear that research evidence is still emerging to clarify the reasons of unfriending/unfollowing decision and how it differs for variety of user profiles in terms of age, gender, education, culture and so on. This study which was conducted in Turkey addresses this lacuna and explores the factors in unfriending/unfollowing decision of Facebook users by comparing previous research conducted in Germany by Gashi and Knautz (2015) and USA by Sibona and Walczak (2011). In the following sections methodology of the study, research findings, results and conclusion are provided in order.

Method

Research Design

This study explores the factors in unfriending decision of Turkish Facebook users by applying qualitative and quantitative research methods. For the purposes of the study after a very inclusive literature review an online survey was developed and conducted to collect the data. In the initial model most of the items were a blend of Sibona and Walczak's (2011) and Gashi and Knautz's (2015) questions. Prior to the final model, an in-depth, semi structured interview study of Facebook users belonging to various demographic groups was conducted to determine the reasons of their unfriending decision and online posting behavior. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Subsequently, seven new questions (animal rights, insulting others, flirting attempt towards me, flirting attempt towards others, negative emotional reflection, working place, swaggering) were added to the survey. In the final model, the survey consisted of 40 items based on social, psychological and sociological aspects of not only unfriending but also unfollowing decisions on Facebook since "unfollowing" decision is accepted as a milder attempt of dissolution in friendship by Facebook users. All the items were asked in 5 point Likert-type questions (from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)). Additionally, demographic questions were included as an opening to the survey.

Sample

Snowball sampling was used to reach out active Facebook users and those have a certain number of friends online. The survey was prepared on Google forms and distributed online mainly via Facebook and other social media platforms. The data was collected between April 10, 2016 and April 20, 2016. Finally, 462 valid survey forms were collected.

Limitations

This study, though extending understanding of Facebook unfriending, also has a limitation involving the study sample. Though almost 462 individuals participated in this study, it was a snowball sample that was small compared to the 42 million active Facebook users in Turkey ("Facebook'un Türkiye'deki kullanıcı sayısı", 2017), and only generalizable to the individuals who live mostly in the western region of Turkey.

Results and Findings

The collected data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 21.0), which included descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis included frequencies of categorical data and the

means, percentages of numerical data. Inferential analysis examined relationships between demographic variables.

Participants

Distribution of socio-demographics of the participants in terms of gender, age, education, income level, frequency of daily Facebook use and average number of years active on Facebook is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-Demographics of the Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	215	46,5
Female	247	53,5
Education		
Literate	3	0,6
Primary School	6	1,3
High School	55	11,9
Under Graduate	266	57,6
Postgraduate	132	28,6
Income		
Low	9	1,9
Low-Mid	41	8,9
Mid	211	45,7
Upper-Mid	185	40
Upper	16	3,5
Frequency of Daily Facebook Use		
None	5	1,1
Rarely	20	4,3
Occasionally	110	23,8
Frequently	214	46,3
Constantly	113	24,5

Average Number of Years Active on Facebook	7,31 (SD=2,288)
Age (Mean)	34,5 (SD=9,716)

As it is shown on Table 1, the average age of the participants is 34,5. Majority of the participants have undergraduate or postgraduate degree. Besides, most of the participants belong to mid or upper mid income level and great majority of the participants are active Facebook users.

Relationships Between Demographic Variables

Gender:

To compare differences in the means of the 40 questionnaire items based on whether a person selected an online or offline reason for unfriending, independent samples T-test results were analyzed (Table 2). Although Sibona's and Walczak's (2011) and Madden's (2012) research results reveal that there is a significant difference between genders for all factors, the results of the current study indicate that the difference between gender groups is significant just for the items politics ($p = ,004$), animal rights ($p = ,009$), flirting attempts towards me ($p = ,032$), posts about job ($p = ,043$) and posts about pets ($p = ,026$) under the factors polarizing posts, inappropriate content and everyday-life/banal topics. According to the results, female participants unfriend or unfollow someone from their network more frequently than male participants for political polarization, animal rights issues and flirting attempt reasons. However, male participants unfriend or unfollow someone from their network more frequently than female participants for posts about job and pets.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-Test (Gender)

		Questions	Male	SD	Female	SD	Sig. (2-tailed)
Online Posting Behavior	Unimportant/Frequent	Sending requests/invites too frequently	3,09	1,561	3,08	1,445	,935
		Sharing unimportant/irrelevant content	3,51	1,390	3,62	1,313	,392
		Posting too frequently	2,60	1,322	2,49	1,352	,381
	Polarizing posts	Sharing different political views than me	3,13	1,470	3,51	1,328	,004
		Sharing opinions against my religion	2,66	1,441	2,57	1,412	,520
	Inappropriate content	Posting views against animal Rights	3,80	1,444	4,12	1,173	,009
		Posting insulting content towards me	4,51	,981	4,57	,880	,461
		Posting insulting content towards others	4,30	,998	4,41	,919	,213
		Flirting Attempt Towards Me	4,12	1,255	4,36	1,098	,032
		Flirting Attempt Towards Others	3,91	1,336	4,00	1,225	,416
		Posting obscene/sexual content	4,19	1,243	4,20	1,188	,913
		Swearing	3,76	1,372	3,74	1,414	,842
		Sexist posts	4,17	1,201	4,34	1,023	,105
		Racist posts	4,38	1,120	4,40	,998	,839
		Negative emotional reflection on posts	3,01	1,394	2,79	1,287	,074
	Every day-life/banal topics	Posting about workout/fitness routine	1,47	,831	1,34	,703	,060
		Posting about purchases	2,29	1,243	2,17	1,187	,278
		Posting about food	2,28	1,306	2,15	1,241	,262
		Posting about working Place	1,88	1,034	1,77	,919	,227
		Posting about job	1,65	,930	1,48	,811	,043
		Posting about celebrities	2,08	1,149	2,05	1,209	,750
		Posting about pets	1,51	,901	1,35	,669	,026
		Posting about sport Scores	1,83	1,188	1,78	,992	,614
		Posting about discounts/offers	2,64	1,446	2,53	1,399	,438
		Posting about children / babies	1,78	1,153	1,71	1,095	,487
		Swaggering over posts	3,10	1,477	3,04	1,380	,645
Posting about his/her spouse		2,05	1,224	2,00	1,153	,670	

Offline Posting Behavior	Behavior-personality	Quarrelling/fighting	3,67	1,318	3,73	1,289	,628
		Dislike	3,95	1,287	4,14	1,118	,092
		Behavior/attitude	4,10	1,050	4,06	1,101	,679
		Being betrayed	4,54	,926	4,51	,954	,664
		Violation of rules	3,39	1,324	3,35	1,307	,754
		Personality	3,81	1,302	3,93	1,170	,326
		Trust issues	3,81	1,262	3,79	1,252	,808
	Changes in the relationship	Learning something new about him/her	3,40	1,275	3,51	1,126	,364
		Incompatible Friends	3,96	1,203	4,04	1,150	,479
		Change In Geographic Distance	1,44	,940	1,33	,793	,192
		Divorce	3,86	1,351	3,85	1,361	,965
		Alienation	3,06	1,439	3,28	1,365	,082
	Ignorance	Getting no response to messages	3,19	1,457	3,14	1,413	,718

Education:

To compare differences in the means of the 40 questionnaire items based on whether a person selected an online or offline reason for unfriending, ANOVA results were analyzed (Table 3). The multiple comparisons results (Tukey HSD test) demonstrate that there is a significant difference between literate individuals and high school graduates ($p=.002$), literate individuals and undergraduates ($p=.012$) as well as literate individuals and post graduates ($p=.012$) for the item "change in geographic distance" under the factor changes in the relationship (offline unfriending reason). However, there were no differences between literate individuals and primary school graduates ($p=.96$).

Table 3. ANOVA between Groups (Education)

		Questions		F	Sig.	
Online Posting Behavior	Unimportant/Frequent	1. Sending requests/invites too frequently	Between Groups	1,431	,223	
		2. Sharing unimportant and/or irrelevant content	Between Groups	,340	,851	
		3. Posting too frequently	Between Groups	1,717	,145	
	Polarizing posts	4. Sharing different political views than me	Between Groups	,082	,988	
		5. Sharing opinions against my religion	Between Groups	,812	,518	
	Inappropriate content	6. Posting views against animal Rights	Between Groups	,170	,954	
		7. Posting insulting content towards me	Between Groups	,275	,894	
		8. Posting insulting content towards others	Between Groups	1,532	,192	
		9. Flirting attempt towards me	Between Groups	,727	,574	
		10. Flirting attempt towards others	Between Groups	,781	,538	
		11. Posting obscene/sexual content	Between Groups	1,226	,299	
		12. Swearing	Between Groups	,454	,770	
		13. Sexist posts	Between Groups	,629	,642	
		14. Racist posts	Between Groups	,213	,931	
		15. Negative emotional reflection on posts	Between Groups	1,981	,096	
		Every day-life/banal topics	16. Posting about workout/fitness routine	Between Groups	,444	,777
			17. Posting about purchases	Between Groups	1,122	,345
			18. Posting about food	Between Groups	1,275	,279
			19. Posting about working place	Between Groups	,882	,474
	20. Posting about job		Between Groups	1,615	,169	
	21. Posting about celebrities		Between Groups	,281	,890	
	22. Posting about pets		Between Groups	1,523	,194	
	23. Posting about sport scores		Between Groups	,494	,740	
	24. Posting about discounts/offers		Between Groups	,343	,849	
	25. Posting about children /babies		Between Groups	1,234	,296	
	26. Swaggering over posts		Between Groups	,473	,755	
	27. Posting about his/her spouse		Between Groups	,407	,804	

Offline Posting Behavior	Behavior-personality	28. Quarrelling/fighting	Between Groups	,737	,567
		29. Dislike	Between Groups	,603	,661
		30. Behavior/Attitude	Between Groups	,637	,637
		31. Betray	Between Groups	,294	,882
		32. Violation of rules	Between Groups	,379	,824
		33. Personality	Between Groups	,338	,853
		34. Trust issues	Between Groups	,152	,962
	Changes in the relationship	35. Learning something new about him/her	Between Groups	,488	,745
		36. Incompatible friends	Between Groups	2,124	,077
		37. Change in geographic distance	Between Groups	4,209	,002
		38. Divorce	Between Groups	,420	,794
		39. Alienation	Between Groups	,185	,946
	Ignorance	40. Getting no response to messages	Between Groups	2,164	,072

Age groups:

To compare differences in the means of the 40 questionnaire items based on whether a person selected an online or offline reason for unfriending, ANOVA results were analyzed (Table 4).

The results demonstrate that there is a significant difference between all age groups for the online reasons items; unimportant and frequent posts, animal rights, swear wording, racist posts, sport scores, child/baby related posts, swaggering and one of the offline reason item; betray.

Table 4. ANOVA between Groups (Age)

		Questions	F	Sig.		
Online Posting Behavior	Unimportant/Frequent	1. Sending requests/invites too frequently	Between Groups	1,453	,216	
		2. Sharing unimportant and/or irrelevant content	Between Groups	4,851	,001	
		3. Posting too frequently	Between Groups	2,602	,035	
	Polarizing posts	4. Sharing different political views than me	Between Groups	2,042	,087	
		5. Sharing opinions against my religion	Between Groups	,230	,922	
	Inappropriate content	6. Posting views against animal rights	Between Groups	4,302	,002	
		7. Posting an insulting me content	Between Groups	,267	,899	
		8. Posting an insulting content others	Between Groups	1,532	,192	
		9. Flirting attempt towards me	Between Groups	,961	,429	
		10. Flirting attempt towards others	Between Groups	2,349	,054	
		11. Posting obscene/sexual content	Between Groups	1,344	,253	
		12. Swearing	Between Groups	13,375	,000	
		13. Sexist posts	Between Groups	,271	,897	
		14. Racist posts	Between Groups	3,031	,017	
		15. Negative emotional reflection on posts	Between Groups	2,313	,057	
		Every day-life/banal topics	16. Posting about workout/fitness routine	Between Groups	,137	,968
			17. Posting about purchases	Between Groups	2,102	,080
			18. Posting about food	Between Groups	1,392	,236
			19. Posting about working place	Between Groups	2,239	,064
	20. Posting about job		Between Groups	,807	,521	
	21. Posting about celebrities		Between Groups	1,238	,294	
	22. Posting about pets		Between Groups	1,132	,341	
	23. Posting about sport scores		Between Groups	2,835	,024	
	24. Posting about discounts/offers		Between Groups	,731	,571	
	25. Posting about children /babies		Between Groups	2,453	,045	
	26. Swaggering over posts		Between Groups	3,021	,018	
	27. Posting about his/her spouse		Between Groups	2,001	,093	

Offline Posting Behavior	Behavior-personality	28. Quarrelling/fighting	Between Groups	,562	,691
		29. Dislike	Between Groups	2,093	,081
		30. Behavior/Attitude	Between Groups	1,491	,204
		31. Betray	Between Groups	2,994	,019
		32. Violation of rules	Between Groups	1,900	,109
	Changes in the relationship	33. Personality	Between Groups	1,176	,321
		34. Trust issues	Between Groups	,931	,446
		35. Learning something new about him/her	Between Groups	,412	,800
		36. Incompatible friends	Between Groups	,965	,426
		37. Change in geographic distance	Between Groups	,621	,648
Ignorance		38. Divorce	Between Groups	1,589	,176
		39. Alienation	Between Groups	1,182	,318
		40. Getting no response to messages	Between Groups	,098	,983

Descriptive Analysis of Online Reasons of Unfriending on Facebook

Unimportant/Frequent Posts

Similar to Gashi's and Knautz's (2015) and Sibona's and Walczak's (2011) research, the results of this study indicate that unimportant posting is one of the main reasons of unfriending/unfollowing decision of Facebook users. (%51,5). However, it is revealed that frequent posting behavior is not a main reason for unfriending/unfollowing decision of Facebook users in Turkey (%24,7). In contrast, Gashi's and Knautz's (2015) and Sibona's and Walczak's (2011) research demonstrate that frequent posting is one of the main reasons of unfriending decision of Facebook users (%50,1, %34).

Polarizing Posts

In contrast to Gashi's and Knautz's (2015) and Sibona's and Walczak's (2011) research, this current study demonstrates that for Facebook users in Turkey opposing political view is an important reason for unfriending decision (%51,5). This finding supported the results of a prior study carried out by Irak and Yazicioğlu (2012). They assert that people on social media in Turkey are committed to their political communities' position where they feel themselves they belong to. In the beginning they prefer to follow their communities' actions as a first reaction when any kind of reaction is not given to different sort of

events in the country. Another kind of trend is people make comments according to countries' national codes. As a result, Facebook users in Turkey do not want to be in touch with people in Facebook who share posts opposed to their political views. This reaction of Facebook users in Turkey is significantly different from other users in other countries (Irak and Yazıcıoğlu, 2012, p. 87).

Further, Gashi's and Knautz's (2015) and Sibona's and Walczak's (2011) research demonstrate that polarizing religion is a minor reason of unfriending decision. Likewise, this study reveals that polarizing religion posting is not an important reason in unfriending decision of Facebook users in that research (%27,9).

Inappropriate content

Insulting me content has the highest mean score of all the items according to the results of this study (%86,6). On the other hand, Gashi's and Knautz's (2015) study reveals that insulting content is a minor reason for unfriending decision of Facebook users. Sibona and Walczak (2011) did not include this item to their questionnaire research.

Insulting others (%83,4), racist (%84,4) and sexist (%80,1) content, and flirting attempt towards me (%77,5) are other main reasons of unfriending/unfollowing decisions for Facebook users in Turkey. In contrast, Sibona's and Walczak's (2011) research indicate that racist (%13) and sexist (%12) content are not common reasons of unfriending decision among the participants. This data underlines a very crucial difference between Facebook users in Turkey and in other countries.

Everyday/Banal Topics

Similar to Gashi's and Knautz's (2015) and Sibona's and Walczak's (2011) research, the results of the current study demonstrate that everyday/banal topics are not very common among unfriending/unfollowing decisions of Facebook users in Turkey. Except the item swagging (Mean: 3,06) all other items under this factor have a mean value under 3.

Descriptive Analysis of Offline Reasons of Unfriending on Facebook

Behavior/Personality

According to the results of the study, all the items under this factor have high level of agreement. Items betray, behavior and dislike are main offline reasons of unfriending decisions of Facebook users in Turkey. While behavior is a main reason of offline unfriending decision of Facebook users both for Gashi's and Knautz's (2015) and Sibona's and Walczak's (2011) research, betray is not considered as a reason of unfriending decision by most of the Facebook users. On the other hand, Sibona's and Walczak's (2011) research confirm that dislike is considered as a main reason of unfriending decision of Facebook users (%67).

Changes in the relationship

According to the results of this study, all the items under this factor except change in geographic distance have high level of agreement (mean value over 3). Facebook users in Turkey mainly unfriend/unfollow because of incompatible friends (%71). Divorce (%64,5) and new information about a friend (%48,7) are other main reasons of unfriending/unfollowing for Facebook users in Turkey. Gashi's and Knautz's (2015) and Sibona's and Walczak's (2011) research results are mostly similar to these findings; yet change in geographic distance has higher level of agreement in these previous studies.

Offline Posting Behavior	Behavior-personality	,807	28. Quarrelling/fighting	3,70	462
			29. Dislike	4,05	462
			30. Behavior/Attitude	4,08	462
			31. Betray	4,52	462
			32. Violation of rules	3,37	462
			33. Personality	3,87	462
			34. Trust issues	3,80	462
	Changes in the relationship	,619	35. Learning something new about him/her	3,46	462
			36. Incompatible friends	4,00	462
			37. Change in geographic distance	1,38	462
			38. Divorce	3,85	462
			39. Alienation	3,18	462
	Ignorance		40. Getting no response to messages	3,16	462

Conclusion

This study, one of only a handful that has empirically examined the reasons of unfriending/unfollowing decision of Facebook users, applied both qualitative and quantitative research methods to understand the reasons of unfriending/unfollowing decision of Facebook users in Turkey.

The results indicate that there are some significant differences on online and offline unfriending/unfollowing decision between Facebook users in Turkey and Facebook users in the USA and Germany. For Facebook users in Turkey in terms of online reasons insulting me and insulting others factors are the main reasons of friendship dissolution. On the other hand, Gashi and Knautz (2015) reveal that great number of German speaking Facebook users do not agree that insulting content is a reason for unfriending decision. As for American speaking Facebook users, Sibona and Walczak (2011) demonstrate that insulting content is not considered as a reason of defriending decision on Facebook. The result may imply two distinctive features of users in Turkey. Facebook users in Turkey may use insulting content more frequently than German and American speaking users, or users in Turkey may consider Facebook content very personal.

Another important result of the current study is that Facebook users in Turkey have very high level of agreement for unfriending/unfollowing decision for "flirting attempts towards me" (%77,5) and "flirting attempts towards others" (%66,6). This result of the study is very distinctive for Facebook users in

Turkey since these items were not included in previous research conducted by Gashi and Knautz (2015) and Sibona and Walczak (2011). According to this result of the study, it may be implied that Facebook users in Turkey log in Facebook as a medium for romantic relationships.

In the same vein, sexist and racist content have very high level of agreement among participants in Turkey. Most of the participants agreed that "sexist" (%80,1) and "racist" (%84,4) content are the main reasons of unfriending/unfollowing decision on Facebook. This finding of the study underlines that users in Turkey are delicate about discrimination in terms of gender and race. On the contrary, previous research indicated that great majority of German speaking and American speaking Facebook users accept sexist and racist content as a minor reason of unfriending decision on Facebook (Sibona and Walczak, 2011; Gashi and Knautz, 2015).

For the offline reasons, betray has the highest agreement level (%86,6) for unfriending/unfollowing decision. The finding of the study reflects that Facebook users in Turkey consider Facebook as a part of their romantic relationship; therefore, after the betrayal, the unfriending/unfollowing decision is given. Likewise, divorce is one of the major reasons of unfriending decision of Facebook users in Turkey (%64,5). In contrast, previous research results conducted in the USA and Germany indicated that betray and divorce are not the main reasons of unfriending decision. It may be assumed that in these cultures users do not consider Facebook as a medium of their romantic relationship.

Questionnaire item incompatible friends reveals another significant difference of Facebook users in Turkey. For the great majority of survey respondents (%71), having similar tastes, beliefs and personalities are vital for being Facebook friends. According to the result of this study, Facebook users in Turkey are less tolerant of difference when compared to American speaking and German speaking Facebook users.

These findings help reveal the reasons of unfriending/unfollowing decision of Facebook users in Turkey and their unique qualities of unfriending/unfollowing decision by comparing to previous research conducted in the USA and Germany. It is certain that Facebook users in Turkey have very distinctive features in terms of unfriending/unfollowing decision on Facebook. However, the difference in the time span among these separate studies should not be underestimated, and the extent to why these differences are originated will need to be examined further in subsequent research. Furthermore, analyzing research results it can be said that Facebook users in Turkey perceive a social network as an extension of real life. They are repeating their real life reactions in the social network context maybe to be in coherence with their own private life and digital life. These findings have to be analyzed deeply in further cultural studies.

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