Web 2.0 or identity 2.0: the roles of Web 2.0 tools on the identity construction of turkish youth[1]
Web 2.0 ou identidade 2.0: o papel das ferramentas Web 2.0 na construção da identidade dos jovens turcos

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Resumo: Esta pesquisa se enquadra na área da Web 2.0 e sua relação com os jovens, procurando analisar o modo como são construídas e reconstruídas as identidades em interações sociais diárias nestes ambientes. O presente trabalho consiste em uma ampla gama de diferentes perspectivas, tais como estudos qualitativos e descritivos do que se passa nos ambientes Web 2.0. Foi empregado um desenho de pesquisa, realizado com 433 participantes a partir de investigação aleatória. O estudo mostra que as ferramentas Web 2.0 facilitam a interação, a troca de informações e a colaboração como recursos possíveis entre os jovens pela ascensão dos *blogs*, *sites* de redes sociais e *wikis*. Isso também afeta a troca de interações sociais entre os atores, de maneira que a construção da identidade desses mesmos atores se torna possível. Os participantes da pesquisa consideraram que estar em ambientes Web 2.0 é um estilo de vida (84,8%), e utilizar ferramentas da Web 2.0 é uma forma para se identificarem entre si (74,2%). Além disso, eles não fizeram distinção entre estar *on-line* ou *off-line* e revelaram não ter outra personalidade *on-line* (67,1%). Este tema está crescendo em tamanho, forma e complexidade, de modo que a necessidade de outros estudos é urgente.

Palavras-chave: Web 2.0, identidade, juventude, interações sociais, redes sociais.

Abstract: The subject area of youth and Web 2.0 tools deal with all research that concerns youth and their use of these media. This research is a special category in the area and examines how identities are constructed and re-constructed in everyday social interactions of Web 2.0 environments. The research consists of a broad range of different perspectives such as qualitative and descriptive studies of what goes on in the Web 2.0 environments. This research employed a survey design and executed among 433 detected participants from random research horizon. The study shows that Web 2.0 tools facilitate interaction, information-sharing and collaboration made possible on young people by the rising of weblogs, social networking sites and wiki's. This also affects the exchange of social interactions among actors and identity construction for these actors becomes possibile. Paticipants in the research think that considering being in the Web 2.0 environments as a lifestyle (84.8%), using a Web 2.0 tools is a tool for identifying themelves (74.2%). Moreover, they do not distinguish between online and offline and do not have another personality online (67.1%). The field is growing in size, shape and complexity and the need for study is urgent.

Keywords: Web 2.0 tools, identity, youth, social interactions, social network sites

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INTRODUCTION

One case is argued widely all around the world: The electronic representation of a real-world entity. The term is usually used to express the online shape of a person that participates in digital interactions on behalf of the person in question. In relation to this, the phenomenon of identity in digital environments is discussed which refers to the specialties of digital technology that is interested in the mediation of people's experience of their own identity and the identity of other people and things. We can imagine that the digital elements would be useful for the process of identity creation especially for the young. As we know that digital environments open the door to new identity experiences.

Identity issue is prominent and it begins with the one crucial question: 'Who am I?' A huge part of being a human being is in fact the ability to ask one's self 'Who am I?' We can answer to this 'basic' question with a name, a profession, a nationality and so on. We can also say that one's identity stems from whom one knows one's associations and connections (TURKLE, 1997: 258). It shows the link between the personal and the social. Primarily, it is difficult to forge a formal definition of identity. The initial and unique characteristics of an entity are what identify it. These characteristics might contain the consistent physical attributes of the person, his preferences, or other people's perceptions of the individual's personality. The talents that a person possesses can also become part of one's identity as mentioned. Here perception is important. This means that in practice the definition of one's identity is determined by how it is perceived by others most certainly. Identity is already regarded as individuals' interpersonal qualities, personality traits, self-definition, personal and moral beliefs and the roles and relationships they take on in various interactions (CALVERT, 2002). Self-concerns are contingently at the center of individuals' efforts for well-being and for making sense of one's life (CASTELLS, 1999: 37-64). Study on self and identity has a primary importance in the study of human nature. On the other hand, perhaps the most crucial contributions to the study of identity was pioneered by Tajfel and Turner and they delineate identity as 'the individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value importance to him/her of the group membership (Abrams and Hogg, 1990: 2). We consider many things at length, but this is a type of process in our minds generally. Identification process is a complex structure, which effects at all sometimes. On the other hand, identity represents an enduring philosophical and everyday concern.

As we said that the question 'Who am I?' is crucial content and often express the idea of identity. But we'll also ask one more question about that instead of answering question: How much of the reply comes from within me and more importantly how much has come from sources outside of me? We can say that so much come from sources outside of me, especially from mass media. Mass media carries weight a grand role in the development of the self in the world of today. We are subject to opinions, people, places, and communities that can induce us to conceal who we really are. Mass media is ok. What about digital media? What about digital or online identity especially by means of Web 2.0 technologies in that case? Here is the key question about our research: What role does a digital medium use in constructing and conversion of this identity, in answering the 'who am I' question? In most sociological literature, digital media in general is already analyzed as tools aimed at interaction of social spaces about building digital identity which is a socio-technical construct. When we think of contemporary situation, interaction can take place through digital media, we can assert that what one can be -and what can be one -is determined in interaction.

The main purpose of this paper is to outline an emerging research area, evolving around young people and contemporary digital arenas like Web 2.0 technologies. The field is growing in sort, title and sophistication. In this manner, we primarily try to questionize the matter of identity construction; then we will examine the relationships between the identity and youth. Hence, we will deal with what factors affect young people's identity development and how do we interpret identity in a Web 2.0 environments like blogs,

social networks, wikis and so on. In concern with these explanations, study is to develop a framework for understanding and analyzing the Web 2.0 technologies as an autonomous social space or structure to construct identity digitally for the young within Turkish society.

WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGIES AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIALIZATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Web 2.0 technologies may be stated by some unique creative principle, make easy contributing, but they take a wide array of modes. Well-known Web 2.0 tools are counted as platforms of Web logs, or blogs, which are websites that are like user based diary or e-journals. Wikis, websites or special platforms are special Web 2.0 tools, which are authored by a community of people. They are used for effective information getting.

Podcasting is a form of audio blog allowed for the uploading and syndication of audio files. Online social networks are also hearth of Web 2.0. Virtual worlds, including online games, are counted as other forms of online social networks. Web 2.0 means a proper of technologies that have crucially lowered the interaction costs of two-way communication over the World Wide Web, which has socialized the production of information and applications across the internet. With these Web 2.0 tools people did not just communicate more, they began communicating in qualitatively different ways than before.

Very huge numbers of new media instruments give a serious opportunity to express themselves, collaborate with others for people and especially for the young people who using these effectively and predominantly. Web 2.0 is really transforming our society in terms of firms' business, politicians' relationships with their voters, teachers' education styles on students, friends' relationships with each other. There are plenty of studies that rely on the impact of Web 2.0 technologies on the socialization effect of them and we have to give some important researches about this subject. Li and Bernoff, 2008; Morato, et. al., 2008: 406-415; Kenderdine and Shaw, 2009: 258-276 can be noticed as studied about this subject. Our research subject which is how individuals and especially

youth shape their own identity is another factor influenced by Web 2.0 instruments.

The relationship among the young people, Web 2.0 technologies and identity are crucial to express a new type of socialization process. Here important question comes to mind: How does the proliferation of Web 2.0 features and social networking platforms have affected young people's sense of self and others? As young people define and redefine their identities through addiction with technology, what are the implications for their experiences as citizens, consumers, family members or special community members?

Before the emergence of identity studies on the relationships between the youth and Web 2.0, issues about identity have examined within academic disciplines (MANDELBAUM, 1996; WEISER, 2001: 723-742; STUTZMAN, 2006: 10-13; MOKROS, 1996, 2003; SHOTTER & GERGEN, 1989; MARKUS VE KITAYAMA, 1991; SINGELIS, 1994). Moreover, some academic studies address the consequences of digital media use for young people's individual and social identities. Buckingham, 2000, 2008; Abbott, 1998: 84–105; Livingstone, 2002; Maczewski, 2002: 111–29; Osgerby, 2004; Boyd, 2007: 119–42; Ito, et al. 2001: 15–21; Watts, Dodds and Newman, 2002: 1302–1305 are few from these subjects.

The contributors explore how young people use digital media to share ideas and creativity and to participate in networks that are small and large, local and global, intimate and anonymous. It can be said that this research subject is also somewhat elusive and its content is changing very rapidly as time goes on. In former studies the researchers have focused on various parts of this area, and some following researches bring ideas together to form a joint research base. DiMiccoand Millen, 2007: 383-386; Bennett, W.L. ed., 2007; Lenhart, et.al, 2007; are mentioned as crucial works.

RESEARCH METHOD

It's clear that participating in a Web 2.0 environments, where any personal information is directly shown to others, is a possibility to experiencing different self and thus to show and build new identities. Therefore, there are more

possibilities for a greater variety of identities to emerge in cyberspace. There has not been a survey research executed with a relatively large sample of Turkish young people about their identity representations on Web 2.0 environments. Such a survey could supply prominent data in order to understand that Web 2.0's social impact on young's identity constructions.

The paper extends debate on the impact of the developing 'digital culture' focusing on young people which is technology-based generation. The aim of the paper is to interrogate the effect of the Web 2.0 technologies on young people and their identity constructions through questionnaire conducted on different young groups. How are identities constructed and re-constructed in everyday social interactions and ritual gatherings? In this frame our research questions are as follows:

Q1: Which means do the users utilize to portray themselves and each other on Web 2.0 environments?

Q2: What kinds of relationships are sought after on the Web 2.0 environments?

Q3: What role do interactions play in the young people's construction of identity?

Q4: What does the site mean to them and how can it be seen as a continuation of their offline lives?

At first glance it would appear that digital environment has brought about greater opportunities to communicate, to share views and represent their identity for the young people which previously could not be widely realized with traditional communication environments. When we look at the procedure and sample in the research, we have focused on the university students between the ages of 18-24 educated in different cities of Turkey.

This research employed a survey design. Some survey items were measured using a 5- point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). The others yes and no items were measured by frequency. The study was conducted in Istanbul, Izmir and Elazýg which are located in the three different-regions in Turkey. Questionnaires were distributed among 433

detected participants from random research horizon. Random selections of young people were asked to complete a survey about their use of Web 2.0 environments, and their feelings about disclosure of identity information. The first part of the survey was completely quantitative; students indicated which, if any, Web 2.0 tools they participated in. In the second part of the survey, young people were asked to respond to a number of statements about identity information statement, stating their level of agreement with the disclosure. The explanations handle how young people feel about their Web 2.0 tools profiles being accessed in general. A total of 414 usable questionnaires were returned, indicating a response rate of 97 percent.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that a large majority of the participants (72.3%) stated that they have been using internet for more than 6 years. The data concerning from where the participants have access to internet are also indicated in the study. According to this, 68.7 percent of the participants have access to internet from home, 11.9 percent from school, 9.4 percent from internet cafes.

Table 1: Usage Time of Internet

Time	N	%
1-6 Months	0	0.0
7-11 Months	0	0.0
1-2 Years	51	12.3
3-5 Years	64	15.4
More than 6 Years	299	72.3
Total	**414**	**100.0**

The information concerning the gender of the participants is provided in the study. 37.6 percent of the participants are female and 62.4 percent are male. The data concerning their own computer and internet accesses of the participants are also indicated in the study. 87.4 percent of the participants have their own computers, and 92.3 percent have personal internet accesses. The periods of connecting to internet in hour at the weekly basis are provided in the study.

According to the findings, 23.2 of the participants connect internet for more than 40 hours, 21.2 percent for 21-40 hours and 20.6 percent for 10-12 hours. The most frequent purposes of using internet by the participants are also indicated in the study. The data concerning how the participants identify themselves as the internet users are provided in the study. The participants use internet most frequently for the purposes of communicating with the other individuals (42.1%), entertainment (19.6%), shopping (16,3%), education and get information (11.0%).

Table 2: Usage Aims of the Participants

Usage	N	%
Education	45	11,0
Shopping	66	16.3
Entertainment	85	19.6
Communcation to Others	173	42.1
Get Information	45	11,0
Total	**414**	**100.0**

It is seen that a large majority of the participants (92.1%) identify themselves as the regular internet users. The results concerning how the participants evaluate the place of internet in their lives are also provided in the study. According to the findings, 94.5 percent of the participants responded at the important and very important levels for the place of internet in their lives. The statuses of using the Web 2.0 environments in which the participants are members are provided in the study. According to this, 51.4 percent of the participants use the social network sites for 214-40 hours, 24.1 percent for longer than 40 hours

and 12.3 percent for 10-12 hours and 12.2 percent for 7-9 hours. When we look at the way of usage of Web 2.0 tools, 32% have created their own online journal or blog. 24% of the participants maintain their own personal webpage. 33% of online participants share their own artistic creations online, such as artwork, photos, stories, or videos. 18% create or work on webpages or blogs for others, including those for groups they belong to, friends, or school assignments.

Researches also have shown that 82.4 percent of all participants use at least one of the Web 2.0 tools. The most popular Web 2.0 tool in terms of social network sites was The Facebook, with 81.2 percent of participants. Twitter, Friendster and MySpace were the other shared social network sites stated by respondents. Table 3 shows the proportion of social network sites users by specific site. Facebook is the well-known Web 2.0 tool among participants, with almost seven in ten using it, all knows it. Twitter is also well-known (100%) by the respondents. MySpace is used by more than half of the sample, although it is popular tool among participant. The other three sites (Friendster, Xanga, and Orkut, in that order of popularity) are significantly less popular Web 2.0 tools which are used less than 5% of the sample. *Table 3* indicated the percentage of respondents who use the site 'often' and 'sometimes.'

We can see that from the study, teens say social networking sites help them manage their friendships. 87% of participants state they use the sites to stay in touch with friends they see constantly, while 79% use the sites to stay in touch with friends they rarely see in person. 68 % of all participants manage the sites to arrange social acitivities with their friends; moreover we see that

Table 3: Familiarity and experience with social network sites among participants (%)

	Manages it	Has known of it	Has never managed it	Tried it but no more
Facebook	81.2	100	12.1	6.1
Twitter	62.5	100	23.5	8.2
MySpace	42.6	86.2	57.4	14.8
Friendster	4.3	38.9	71.5	5.4
Xanga	1.1	6.2	86.2	1.9
Orkut	0.9	7.1	81.3	3.2

46 % use the sites to make new friends. Almost 3 in five (61%) young people who use social networking sites also mean they write blog. Young people in Web 2.0 environments also interact with each other especially with others' blogs. Approximately eight in ten (79%) young people noticed that reading the blogs of others.

On the other hand, just 14% of all participants mean they use the sites for flirting. 54 % of young people utter that they watch videos on video sharing sites such as video.google.com, Metacafe, YouTube. From the comparative analysis we see that men participants are more likely to report watching videos on video sharing sites when compared with women participants. In addition to this, online men participants are twice as likely as girls to post video files (21% vs. 12%). Receiving comments for the videos is another category and we behold that nearly three-quarters (68%) of video posters report that they get comments for these. 44% of participants comment that people sometimes comment on their video postings. 21% says that people comment on their online videos 'most of the time.' Furthermore 26% mean that they never get comments on posted videos.

The opinions concerning what memberships the participants will not leave are provided in the Table 4.

Table 4: What elements memberships the participants will not leave

Social Nets	N	%
Blogs	117	28.3
Facebook	129	31.2
Twitter	48	11.7
Myspace	34	8.3
Video sites	90	20.5
Total	**414**	**100.0**

The answers of the identity-based questions are provided in the Table 5.

According to the Table 5, the following results are obtained based on the opinions of the participants:

- Using a Web 2.0 tools is a tool for identifying myself (74.2%),
- Communicating with the other members is real like in daily life (82.45),
- Communicating with the other members of the social networks is indispensable for me (74.6%),
- Web 2.0 tools are a great tool to stay in touch with friends (81.1%),
- I write my detailed text profile text to show I am real (65.6%),
- You can find my personality totally in Web 2.0 environments (71.7%),
- I have special groups like me in Web 2.0 environments (82.3%),
- There is a freedom of saying in Web 2.0 environments (87.8%),
- I talk about only non-virtual things such as boyfriends or girlfriends, school, parents in the Web 2.0 environments (86.4%),
- I do not distinguish between online and offline and do not have another personality online (67.1%),
- I present my special object in Web 2.0 environments (64.5%),
- Considering being in the Web 2.0 environments as a lifestyle (84.8%),
- Having some political, ethnical and religious subjects objected on the subject of Web 2.0 environments (58.6%).

As it could be seen also in the table, the average attitude point of the participants (n=414) is 55.32. Being 56 of the median and its closeness to the arithmetic average indicate that the participants are close to the normal distribution. When the average attitude point 55.32 is evaluated out of 4, it makes 3.72 points. It could be said that the attitudes of the participants towards to the usage of Web 2.0 environments are positive.

Table 5: The identity-based information concerning the young people in which the participants

Using a Web 2.0 tools is a tool for identifying myself	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	307	74.2	107	25.8	414	100.0

Communicating with the other members is real like in daily life	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	341	82.4	73	17.6	414	100.0

Communicating with the other members of the social networks is indispensable for me	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	308	74.6	106	25.4	414	100.0

Web 2.0 tools are a great tool to stay in touch with friends	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	335	81.1	79	18.9	414	100.0

I write my detailed text profile text to show I am real.	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	288	65.6	126	34.4	414	100.0

You can find my personality totally in Web 2.0 environments	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	296	71.7	118	28.3	414	100.0

I have a special group like me in Web 2.0 environments	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	340	82.3	74	17.7	414	100.0

There is a freedom of saying in Web 2.0 environments	Yes	No	Total			
	n	%	N	%	n	%
	363	87.8	51	12.2	414	100.0

I talk about only non-virtual things such as boyfriends or girlfriends, school, parents in the Web 2.0 environments	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	N	%	n	%
	357	86.4	57	13.6	414	100.0

I do not distinguish between online and offline and do not have another personality online	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	N	%	n	%
	277	67.1	137	32.9	414	100.0

I present my special object in Web 2.0 environments	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	267	64.5	147	35.5	414	100.0

Considering being in the Web 2.0 environments as a lifestyle	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	351	84.8	63	15.2	414	100.0

Having some political, ethnical and religious subjects objected on the subject of Web 2.0 environments	Yes		No		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	242	58.6	172	41.4	414	100.0

Table 6: Participants towards to the usage of Web 2.0 environments

	N	Ranj	Min	Max	$\overline{X}$	Median	S
Scale	414	22	43	68	55.32	58	4.42

In addition to this, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the participants concerning the attitude points are provided in the study. According to this, the articles on which the participants show attitude at high level could be stated as follows.

- Communicating with the other members of the social networks is indispensable for me ($\overline{X}$=4.42),

- Web 2.0 tools are a great tool to stay in touch with friends ($\overline{X}$=4.07),

- I write my detailed text profile text to show I am real ($\overline{X}$=3.74),

- You can find my personality totally in Web 2.0 environments ($\overline{X}$=4.01),

- I have special groups like me in Web 2.0 environments ($\overline{X}$=3.91),

- There is a freedom of saying in Web 2.0 environments ($\overline{X}$=4.55),

- I talk about only non-virtual things such as boyfriends or girlfriends, school, parents in the Web 2.0 environments ($\overline{X}$=3.63),

- I do not distinguish between online and offline and do not have another personality online ($\overline{X}$=3.84),

- Considering being in the Web 2.0 environments as a lifestyle ($\overline{X}$=4.31).

CONCLUSION

In this paper we would argue that Web 2.0 tools have opened an alternative space for young people's identity construction. We can see that from the research young people's construction of identity is relational and interactive in Web 2.0 environments. Their construction of identity depend on not only their description of their own personalty also other's descriptions of them in their own profile pages. It can be seen that they let others describe who they are in these environments. In relation to this, analyis shows that participants write their detailed text profile text to show they are real (65.6%). Research shows that 32% of respondents have created their own online journal or blog. We see that almost 3 in five (61%) young who use social networking sites also mean they write blog. And, in keeping with the conversational nature of Web 2.0 environments, young people are also interacting with others' blogs. 24% of the participants maintain their own personal webpage. 33% of online participants share their own artistic creations online, such as artwork, photos, stories, or videos. 18% create or work on webpages or blogs for others, including those for groups they belong to, friends, or school assignments. Seven in ten (70%) social networking teens report reading the blogs of others, and three in four social networking teens (76%) have posted comments to a friend's blog on a social networking site.

We can understand from this that in a way the users are actually in control of other's construction of them to the degree that they can be almost. Researches also have shown that 82.4 percent of all participants use at least one of the Web 2.0 tools. These are important data to show us the prevalence of the Web 2.0 tools on young people.

As a conclusion, it can be said that the social and contact enabling features of Web 2.0 tools like guest book, the chat section, the debate forum, the clubs etc or the personal and branding related features like profile, the picture gallery, the blog, the notice board, the profiling messages on the front page etc are widely used by young people who are technology-based generation. It's clear that young people use Web 2.0 tools for entertainment like games, videos, jokes, articles or for supporting and getting practical information.

But most importantly, they are used for identifying themselves (74.2%). From the research

we can see that participants think that others can find their personality totally in Web 2.0 environments (71.7%). They are also in special groups or community which alike them in Web 2.0 environments (82.3%). Study shows that young people do and talk about online is very close to their non-virtual lives and friends for which reason the boundary between online and offline is blurred

today. In the research we see that participants do not distinguish between online and offline and do not have another personality online (67.1%).

Thus, the users are permanently creating and co-creating their identity online not only by using the Web 2.0 tools and their functionalities, but also by using their interaction and communication as mediational means.

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