CHANGES IN STUDENT'S COMMUNICATION INFLUENCED BY SOCIAL MEDIA – 2nd Part

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Abstract: The present paper represents the second part of the research that investigates the way the student's communication process is changed by using online social networks. Among the objectives investigated in this paper are: the investigation of the motives that influence the students to access the social media platforms when they are in town with their friends; how often they use the social media platforms to communicate messages. The research is a quantitative one based on a questionnaire given to the students from Sibiu and Alba Counties of Romania.

Keywords: communication, changes, social media.

JEL codes: M31

Introduction

Nowadays the social media exercise a great influence over the youngster's way of life. Therefore, their behavior, gestures, attention and language are often influenced by those platforms (eg. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and others).

The present paper represents the second part of the research, the first part was presented in the paper entitled: "Researching the influence of online social networks on the students' communication – 1st part" published in De Gruyter Journals in 2017.

Literature review

A definition of social media ca be considered the following: "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61 quoted by Whiting A., Williams D., 2013, p.363).

"The term Social Media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue" (Trisha Dowerah Baruah, 2012).

The authors, Whiting A., Williams D., (2013), identify ten uses and gratifications for using social media: social interaction, information seeking, pass time, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility, expression of opinions, convenience utility, information sharing, and surveillance and watching of others.

"In terms of specific library and information services functions, social media provide useful additional platforms. For example: Information discovery and access is facilitated using social book-marking and blogging. Reference services extend beyond the physical enquiry desk when instant messaging and chat are offered as additional channels through which to access specialist staff. Teaching and related activities can benefit greatly through the inclusion of YouTube videos and podcasts in classes and training sessions. News and current awareness services have a greater immediacy and reach when relayed by library Twitter accounts and blogs." (Hall H., 2011).

A description of the youngsters who use social media is given by Bolton R. N. et al., (2013), "A "broad brush" description of Gen Y starts with the observation that many members grew up with the computer; they have mastered its use for many aspects of their lives, particularly communication.

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These digital natives, who are either students or relatively recent entrants to the workforce, are often described as technologically savvy and the most visually sophisticated of any generation" (Bolton R. N. et al., 2013).

"Social media usage is being increasingly embraced by Generation Y "Boomerang Kids" (Beresford Research, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The world has changed dramatically since the dawn of the Internet, moving from one where a destination could create a web page and use it in the same fashion as one might an online brochure; to one where users generate their own content" (Bamini KPD Balakrishnan, Mohd Irwan Dahnil, Wong Jiunn Yi, 2014).

"Social media has seen increased flexibility and visibility in marketing content and a change in the way individuals and organisations interact" (Dolan R, Conduit J., Fahy J., Goodman S., 2017).

The authors Floreddu P. B., Cabiddu F. identify "three different conceptualizations of corporate communication: primary communication (the various communication effects of product and service performance, firm policies and employee behavior); secondary communication (the formal communications of the organization, which make use of traditional communication channels that include advertising, public relations and sponsorship); and tertiary communication (word of mouth, media interpretation and competitor communication) (Balmer and Gray, 1999 quoted by Floreddu P. B., Cabiddu F. 2016)".

Research methodology

The main goal of our research paper, which is a part of a larger study, (Fuciu M., Lazea R., Dumitrescu L., 2017), is to identify the way the online social networks influence the communication process of the students from Sibiu and Alba Counties of Romania. In order to meet the goal, we have developed a quantitative, direct, selective marketing research based on a questionnaire distributed to the students of the Faculty of Economics from the two Universities of Alba and Sibiu Counties. The sampling method was based on logical reasoning and was based on the availability of the students. The sample size was consisted from 137 students of both counties. The questionnaire and the used research objectives were developed by the authors based on their experience in the field and on previous studies. The questionnaire had 17 questions (dichotomous and multi-hotomous) of which, 6 were closed questions, 11 were based on 5 or 7 step Likert scale. We also identified a clear profile of the respondents based on their age, gender, residence and income (Fuciu M., Lazea R., Dumitrescu L., 2017).

The specific research objectives discussed in this second part of the study were the following:

- the investigation of the motives that influence the students to access the social media platforms when they are in town with their friends (O1)

- how often they use the social media platforms to communicate messages (O2)

- how much the students rely on the social networks to express their feelings and to obtain feedback (O3)

- how often they connect to the social media platforms when they are in town with their friends (O4)

- what are the main criteria used when the students choose their friends on the social networks (O5)

Obtained results

The research analysis was conducted using the IBM SPSS software. Regarding the first objective of the paper (O1), we asked the students to give their opinion regarding the motives that they have when they make a post on the social media networks when they are in town with their friends. The obtained results were: 8,8% from the total number respondents say that they make a post to avoid a conversation; 10,9% affirm that they post for others (their friends) to see; 6,6% to get as much likes as he can; none of the questioned students post messages to inform their parents.

The next question asked the students to affirm if they use their favorite network to communicate certain messages to their friends/colleagues/ family, messages that they do not want to say face to face. This represents the second objective of our research (O2).

Fig. no. 1 Communication with friends
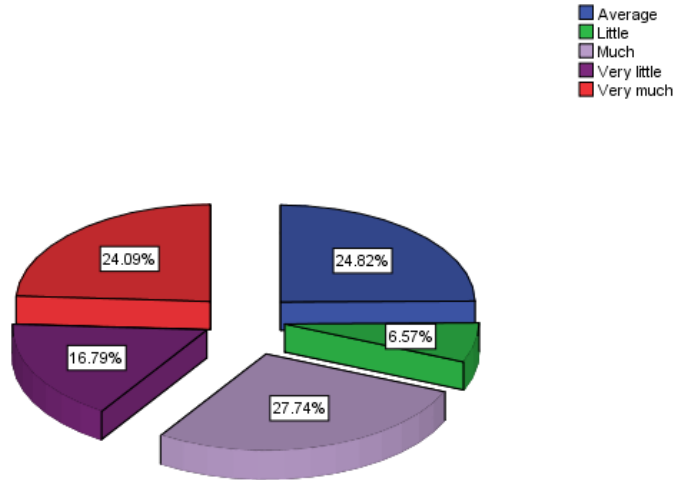
From the obtained results we can observe that the largest percent (27.74%) is given by the respondents who communicate much using the social media network to send messages to their friends. 24.82% communicate moderately with their friends with the help of social media platforms and 24.09% are using the social media platform a lot to communicate their messages.

**Fig. no. 2 Communication with acquittances**
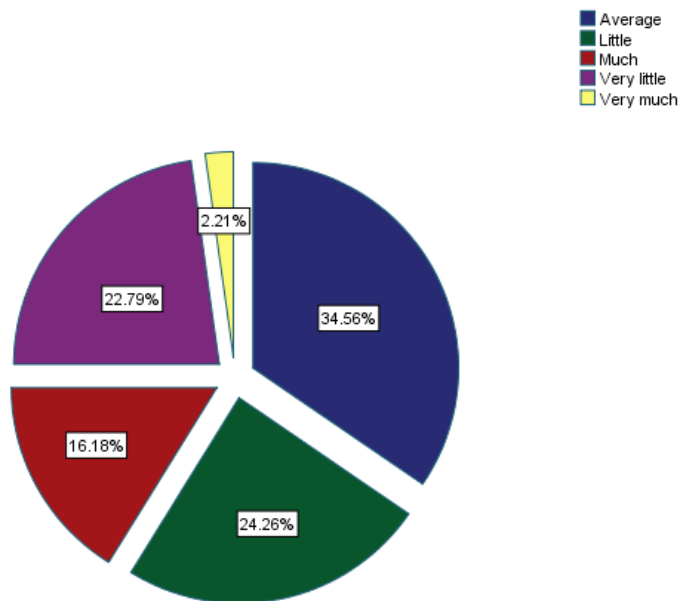
The results show that 34.56% from the total number of respondents affirm that they spend an average amount of time to communicate messages with their acquittances; 24.26% spend little time to communicate with their acquittances and 22.79% very little time to communicate. In the present paper the acquittances were considered the people known by our respondents know and are not considered to be friends.

Fig. no. 3 Communication with colleagues
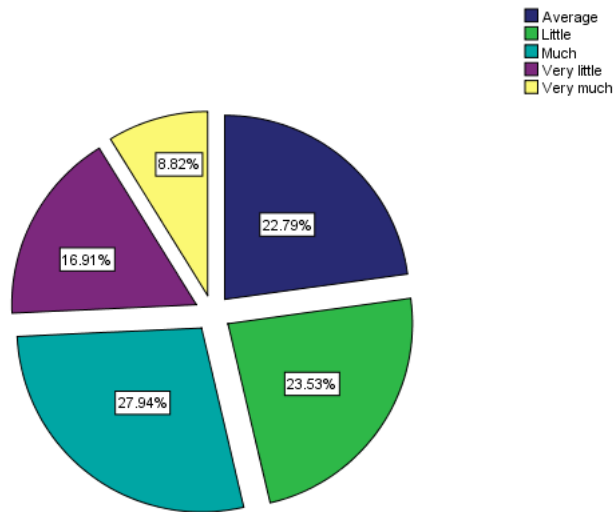
Regarding the communication with colleagues the results were the following: 27.94% from the total number of respondents communicate much with their colleagues using social media platforms; 23,53% spend little time communicating with their colleagues through the help of social media and 22,79% spend an average amount of time communicating with their colleagues using social media.

Fig. no. 4 Communication with family
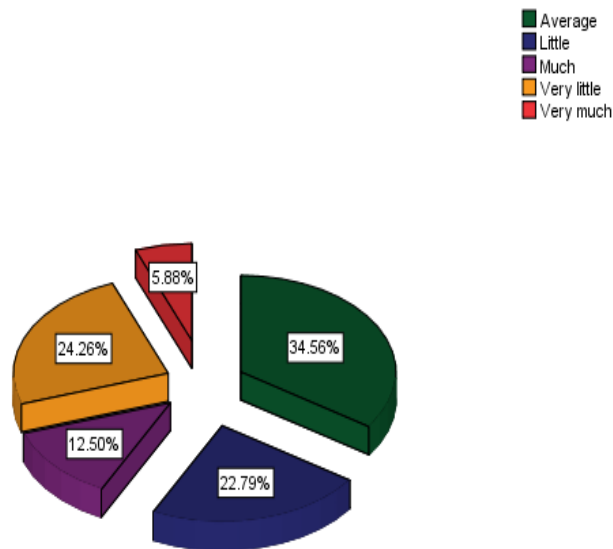
Regarding the preferences of communicating the messages to the family by using social media platforms we can observe that 47,05% from the total number of respondents do not allocate much time to communicate with their family by using social media platforms and 18,38 spend a large amount of time communicating on-line with their families. The 34.56% is represented from those who spent an average amount of time communicating by the help of social media platforms.

The next question asked the students to give their opinion on the following affirmations:

- I prefer to communicate with the help of social network platforms rather to communicate face to face: 70.81% from the total responses expressed their disagreement regarding this affirmation

- I prefer to communicate by social media rather than using a phone: 42.34% couldn't express their opinion regarding this affirmation while 32.12% expressed their disagreement regarding this affirmation

- I prefer to communicate with the help of social media platforms rather than to communicate through messages/apps like WhattsUp/Viber: 41.15% neither agree or disagree with this affirmation and 28.47% expressed their disagreement regarding this affirmation.

- I express my feelings more easily through the help of social media platforms (O3): from the total number of responses 62.78% expressed their disagreement regarding this affirmation while only 18.25% expressed their agreement

- I obtain immediate reactions if a make a post on the social media platform and therefore I feel more appreciated (O3): 67,16% didn't agreed with this affirmation; 9.49% agreed with this affirmation and 23.36% couldn't express their opinion

- For every like I get I become more confident: 61,31% totally disagree; 17.52% couldn't express their opinion; 10.95% disagreed and 10.22% agreed with this affirmation

The next question asked the respondents if they connect to the social media platform when in town with friends/family/colleagues/ to avoid a conversation (O4).

Fig. no. 5 Connection with social media platform when in town
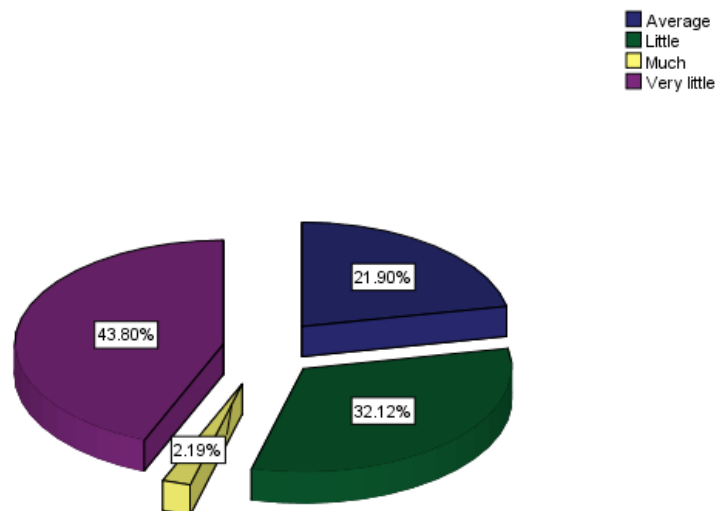
The results show that 43.80% don't often connect; 32,12% connect for a little while; 21.90% connect more often on the social media platforms and only 2.19% from the total number of respondents frequently connect.

In order to see the respondent's opinion towards the communication process they were asked the following affirmations:

- I think that face to face communication is obsolete: 98,54% expressed their disagreement

- It is cooler to communicate by using social media platforms: 81.76% expressed their disagreement

- I can communicate more easily on the social media platform because I can express my feelings by using images: 33.58% totally disagreed; 27.01% disagreed; 29,93% couldn't express their opinion and 9.49% agreed with this affirmation

The main means of connection preferred by the respondents is by using a smartphone (89,78%) and the main method used in connection is the wireless connection (61.31%).

The next objective (O5) of the paper investigated the criteria's used when the students select their friends on the social media platforms. In order to find the answer to this objective we asked the students opinion on the following affirmations:

- I know the person: 79,57% consider this an important aspect when making a friend on the social media platform
- The existence of commune hobbies and interests: 38.69% consider this as having an average impact when choosing a friend while 29.20% consider this aspect as being important
- We play the same games: 57.66% affirm that this is not an important aspect when choosing a friend
- The number of mutual friends: 31,39% consider this as being an important fact; 28.47% don't care about this aspect and 18.98% consider this as having somehow an impact when making a new friend on social media platform
- The presence of nice pictures: the 27.74% is present on two types of answers for this affirmation as having an average importance and as being unimportant; 16.06% consider as being little important and 14.60% consider this aspect as being important when making new friends
- I want to be part of a group: 40.88% consider this aspect as being important while 31.39% do not consider this aspect as being important
- I like what it posts: 79,56% consider this criterion as being important when making a friend on the social media platform
- I'm a fan: 34.31% from the total number of respondents affirm that this is not an important fact when making a new friend; 26.28% consider this aspect as having some influence and 21.17% consider this aspect as being important

The socio-demographic data shows that of our respondents, 93.43%, have an age between 18-25 years; 81,75% are female; 70.80% live in the city and 53.28% have an income higher than 25001

Conclusions

From the present research we can observe that regarding the motives that the youngsters have when they access the social media platforms are: to make themselves noticed by their friends, to avoid having a conversation and to get as many likes as they can. When it comes to communicating with their friend's social media is preferred by many our respondents. On the opposite side the youngsters do not prefer to express their feelings using social media platforms. When the youngsters are in town with their friends or family they rarely connect to the social media. And the most important criteria's when a person becomes accepted as a friend on a social media platform are: knowing the person and preferences for what it posts.

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