



Digital Media Addiction and the Transformation of Everyday Practices Among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how young adults in Türkiye experience and interpret digital media addiction within the broader transformation of everyday practices. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), it draws on two focus group discussions conducted with Turkish and international university students aged 20 to 25. Participants reflected on their digital media routines, perceived productivity or distraction, and their interpretations of being “addicted” to digital media. Most participants described feelings of “obligatory attachment” to digital media as an integral part of their daily routines, often beginning the day by checking their phones. These practices are not merely habitual; they are embedded in digital culture and shaped by broader needs such as time management, social visibility, and a sense of cultural belonging. While some participants described themselves as “addicted,” others deliberately avoided the term, identifying instead as digitally attached and viewing constant online presence as a normalized way of life. This diversity of perspectives illustrates how digital connectivity is experienced not only individually, but also through culturally situated meanings and expectations. Participants expressed ambivalence as well: digital media was perceived as both productive and distracting, suggesting that their experiences resist fixed categorization. For many, digital platforms served as essential tools for maintaining social and cultural interaction—especially under economic pressure, time constraints, or limited physical mobility. International students further emphasized their reliance on digital media to stay connected with family and manage part-time work alongside academic responsibilities. These findings point to the value of further interdisciplinary research that attends to how digital media use is shaped by culturally situated norms, mediated routines, and the everyday negotiations of young people navigating increasingly digitized social environments.

Keywords: digital communication; digital culture; digital everyday routines; social transformation; young people