Chapter 30
I Am Online; Therefore, I Am!
Digital Obesity From a Sociological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The digitalization of data has profoundly affected every aspect of our lives: how we communicate and socialize, how we work, learn, and participate in politics and the economy. Digital sociology is concerned with all these new social fields. Digital obesity, which is overconsuming digital information, is a disease of the postmodern individual. Therefore, living in a digital society is a form of communication and membership in a virtual society in the postmodern era. New forms of sociality have been created as a result of this connection. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the literature on digital obesity, to sociologically explain digital obesity, and to shed light on the situation in Turkey. To categorize digital obesity in Turkey, the number of followers on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter will be reviewed and, to demonstrate the interest areas in Turkey, Twitter trending topics, Google, and YouTube trends will be examined for thirty days. This data was obtained from the Boomsocial website, and the Maxqda analysis program will be used to create the images.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital world, people interact with each other regardless of time or place. Social actors in this world have gained visibility and, to some extent, online presence. A new social way of life was created by consuming Big Data and remaining permanently online. The digital world has shaped much of modern life, creating a new social group known as online communities. Online communities enable people with similar education, culture, and taste to connect quickly, but they don't know who lives nearby. Communication technologies have modified the meaning and content of social interaction between people. "An online community is a group of people who interact in a virtual environment, and they have a purpose,

are supported by technology, and are guided by norms and policies" (Preece et al., 2003). Technology companies and social influencers decide what online communities should do, how they should act, and what their policies should be. As a result, this virtual world does not serve as a free zone or provide a pathway out of the real world. Therefore, why do people prefer the virtual world over the real world, and why do they feel a sense of belonging there?

Virtual life creates an online community as an alternative to real life, but society also continues its sociological relations internally. Online societies create representation processes as in real life, depending on how individuals present themselves. An individual is represented by what he ought to look like, what he ought to consume, what he ought to love, and what he ought not to love. It was about winning more followers or likes, which replaces acceptance and appreciation. Creating the most engaging speech, image, or action is important to enhance popularity. Consequently, a reciprocal relationship is created: being more online, and being more beloved. In this virtual field area, making political criticisms, watching a video of a popular make-up product, communicating via e-mail, working online, and catching the instant flow with all the tools of the new media have become a basic way of life. The establishment of a virtual network around them and being online has become a sign of being alive. The digital world which infiltrates in this way at every moment of life is inevitably the field of study of sociology. Because sociology tries to analyze society, it also needs to analyze and challenge the online version of society.

Digital obesity refers to consumption forms and amounts. In addition to the concept of a society of the spectacle, it is necessary to consider the sociological position of the individual who consumes excessively. Today, the spectacle itself is becoming a dependency, a digital dependency. With this quote from Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, Debord reveals the most popular wish of postmodern society (Debord, 2020):

"But for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, representation to reality, appearance to essence, ... the truth is considered profane, and only illusion is sacred. Sacredness is held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be seen as the highest degree of sacredness.''

It is now a new social form of life to always be online and to create the highest degree of illusion. When individuals consume a lot of data and spend every minute online, they are stuck in a cycle of consuming. Online life, which also affects the individual's daily life, affects the relationship between the individual and society, and that change is a study area in sociology. Although there are remarkable studies in the literature under the subtitle of digital sociology, it is insufficient for the issue of digital obesity. Digital obesity is a new type of disease of virtual life, a new type of society, and it needs to be examined.

In this study, the concept of digital obesity, which is examined under digital sociology, is discussed. Using digital sociology as a tool, one can explore, analyze, and explain the impact, development, and use of technologies on social worlds, social institutions, and ideas of self and embodiment (Lupton, 2015). Digital obesity is a concept that requires an understanding of how individuals interact with the online world. The charm of virtual life is only visible from a sociological perspective. There are several reasons for this, including trying to escape from the pains and problems in the real world. A person who has attained enlightenment has a lot of responsibilities. However, in the postmodern era, all humanity learned by living is that an individual is not always a rationalist and does not always need the whole truth. The consequences of wars and grand narratives have forced society to consider modernism and reality's structure. Individuals in postmodernism question whether they still wish to reach reality. By giving the

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