Individual Seeking Identity in the Digital World

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Abstract: At the beginning of the remarkable developments in the 21st century in the world, it can be expressed as the fact that digital applications have become an indispensable part of human life. It can be said that these practices affect human life in two ways, positively and negatively. Societies or individuals with a strong sense of self and identity, who evaluate these practices in terms of individual and social awareness, can see the reflections of many advantages in their lives thanks to these practices. However, it can be stated that the meeting of identity with the digital era offered by the globalizing world influences the thinking system of the individual while questioning the concept of self through these applications throughout his life. It can be said that with the digital age, the individual's distancing from the social environment he / she lives in has both positively and negatively affected the level of self-questioning. In this study, the quest for self-knowledge and recognition of individual, who is under the influence of the digitalized world, has been evaluated. In this study, in which the scanning model was used, the results of the studies conducted similar to the subject of the study were discussed and evaluated.
Note: This study is supported by the Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit of Inonu University with the Normal Research Project coded SBA-2019-1755. As a result of the study, the study subject was evaluated from different angles and striking results were achieved.

Keywords: Digitalization, world, individual, identity.

Introduction

It can be said that there is a positive trend in both the number of users and the number of communication tools, with the internet becoming the leading actor of the developments in communication and computer technology in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Web 2.0, which was produced in the early 2000s, led to the birth of new media and enabled the internet to reach very large masses. The concept of new media has also brought many changes and practices (Ayan, 2016). It can be said that the search for identity in Turkey, as in the rest of the world, varies in line with different criteria as a product of the change over time. Namely, with the spread of modernization in Turkey and the differentiation of its actors, it is seen that new identity demands and tendencies have begun to become more visible. Searching for a new identity that goes beyond the single-center pattern effectively uses all the tools it can find; it tries to enable its own existence through television, internet, symbols and new slogans (Kolukırık, 2008). It can be said that the increasing search for identity in the context of digitalization also positively affects the individual's desire to question and research.

It is possible to explain the concept of identity, which forms the basis of the study, in different ways in different fields. A definition that can be used in common in physical, cognitive and social fields is "who am I?" in the simplest sense is the set of answers to the question. As Myers stated, seeing our life as happy or unhappy, productive or sterile depends on the answer to this question (Bilgin, 1994; Ayan, 2016). According to Giddens' sociological perspective, identity is related to people's understanding of who they are and what is meaningful to them (Giddens, 2008; Ayan, 2016). According to Richard Jenkins (2008), identity is the response to who is who or what is what. This is the kind of response that encompasses who we and others are, the space you are in, and

the classification of humanity into different dimensions. In addition, identity is to be valuable and different in the eyes of others, to be recognized and approved by the society, by establishing the distinction between me and the "other" (İmançer, 2003; Ayan, 2016). Jan Assmann says that the concept of identity is not independent of culture and emphasizes that while people make culture their nature, they adapt to the culture they perceive as a world of meaning that makes sense of the world with its symbolic dimension and thus makes it livable (Assmann, 2001; Ayan, 2016). In today's world, where the importance of digitalization in human life is increasing, it can be said that the search for identity changes and digitalization increases the construction of a new identity. It can be said that this study aims to examine the individual's search for identity in the digitalized world in the light of scientific studies.

Method

In this study, in which the search for identity of the individual in the digitalized world is evaluated with studies similar to the research topic, literature review model was used. Literature review is one of the first steps to be taken not only in academic studies but also in every innovative field. Gash defined this process as the in-depth and systematic search and identification of as many published works on a particular subject as possible. Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) review of the literature:

- Defining the boundaries of the research problem,
- Capturing new research topics,
- Elimination of previously tried but unworkable methods,
- Determining what future works might be,
- It has been determined that it contributes to obtaining ideas in terms of methods that can be used.

In the study, academic studies on the individual's search for identity in the digitalized world were evaluated.

Findings

In the study, the findings related to the research subject were evaluated under 3 headings. These titles are given in Figure 1.
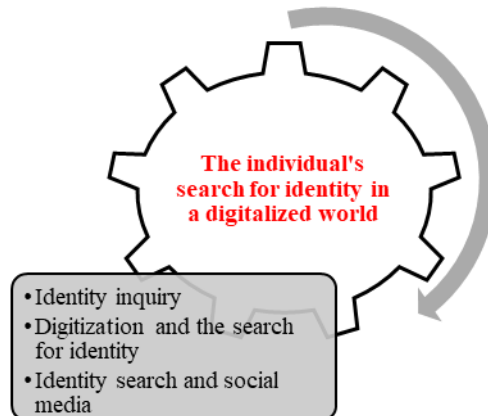

Figure 1. Research findings themes

Overview of Identity Questioning

The concept of identity can be briefly defined as a person or community's conscious perception of their own qualities, position and value. Looking at the studies, it can be said that the individual questions his identities in every environment he enters in his life adventure. It can be said that this questioning is sometimes due to the fact that the individual sees himself far from the sense of belonging and sometimes the reasons for accepting himself to an institution or individuals (Alperen, 2008; Kolukırık, 2008; Özdemir & Yıldırım, 2019; İmamoğlu, 2019). In the studies, the identity questioning factors that come to the fore regarding this research theme are given in Figure 2.
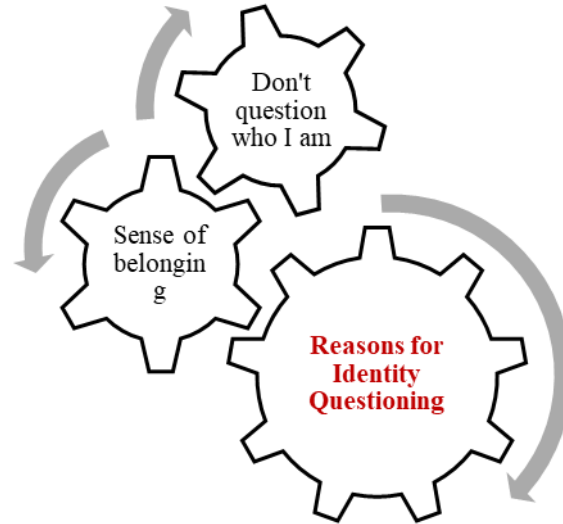
Figure 2. Identity inquiry reasons

Digitization and the Search for Identity

The two themes of the study are digitalization and the search for identity. When we look at the results of the studies examined in line with this theme, it can be said that digitalization has affected and changed all individual and social relationship dimensions of people, together with the search for identity. In the search for identity, it can be said that the digital world and social networks, which have become handheld through mobile phones and mobile applications, have become a part of people's lives at any time of the day and in every place (Şimşek, 2002; Akdağ Satır, 2015; Önür & Kalaman, 2016; Özdemir & Yıldırım, 2019). With digitalization, the individual's search for identity has accelerated, and it can be said that various results have been achieved in studies on acquiring many identities and acquiring identity-appropriate behaviors.

Social Media and Search for Identity

Considering the results of the studies on this theme of the research, it can be said that remarkable results have been achieved. In the studies, it was emphasized that with social media, the individual began to shape his social identity through social media, alongside or supporting his identity in his daily life. In addition, in these studies, the individual tries to create a new self by recreating his own consumption habits, family and friendship relations, marital status, education level, career information, ideological ideas and even the places he went to, through social media, and with every activity he does on social media. It was stated that they wanted to create a self (Bauman, 1999; Kellner, 1993; Bocock, 2005; Özdemir, 2015).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, in which the search for identity of the individual in the digitalized world is evaluated, it can be said that more than 10 academic studies are examined. In the studies examined, results were found that digitalization positively affects the individual's search for identity. However, it has been emphasized in the studies that the individual's search for identity in the digitalized world also has negative effects on the sense of belonging. It can be said that these negativities cause the alienation of the individual until the individual's alienation from his family and cultural values. In some studies, this negativity can be expressed as cultural degeneration, and it can be stated that the individual's admiration and emulation of other cultural identities as a result of digitalization causes him to distance himself from his own culture. Based on the work done;

- In the digitalized world, the individual should be supported in search of different identities in order to improve himself,
- The individual's reasons for seeking identity should be examined and these quests should be reacted accordingly,

- In the digitalizing world, the individual's search for identity should be supported as it enables the individual to gain cultural and social wealth, recommendations can be made.

Scientific Ethics Declaration

The author declares that the scientific ethical and legal responsibility of this article published in EPESS journal belongs to the author.

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To cite this article: