




# Social Media Use of Higher Education Students in the Earthquake Disaster

## Deprem Felaketinde Yükseköğretim Öğrencilerinin Sosyal Medya Kullanımı

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### Özet

Teknolojiye erişimin giderek arttığı Türkiye’de, yükseköğretim öğrencileri arasında sosyal medya kullanımının da buna bağlı olarak arttığı görülmektedir. İletişim kurmak, güncel haberlere hızlı erişim sağlamak, zaman ve mekândan bağımsız sosyal etkileşimde bulunmak sosyal medyanın tercih edilme nedenleri arasında yer alıyor. Türkiye’de son dönemde gündeme gelen afet durumlarında da sosyal medyanın tercih edildiği görülmektedir. Afet durumlarında sosyal medya kullanımının araştırıldığı bu çalışmada amaçlı örneklem kullanılmış ve yükseköğretim grubuyla yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme sonrasında elde edilen veriler betimsel analiz yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Yaşları 18-24 arasında değişen 5’i kadın 5’i erkek 10 üniversite öğrencisi ile görüşmeler çevrimiçi olarak gerçekleştirilmiş, katılımcılar ile yapılan görüşmeler kaydedilmiş ve daha sonra kayıtlar analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada afet durumlarında sosyal medyanın tercih edilme nedenleri olumlu ve olumsuz yönleriyle ele alınarak incelenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda, afet durumlarında sosyal medyanın geleneksel medyaya göre daha etkin bir şekilde tercih edildiği ve afetzedelerin hayatını kolaylaştırdığı görülmüştür.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Türkiye, Kahramanmaraş Depremleri, Sosyal Medya, Yükseköğretim Öğrencileri.

### Abstract

In Türkiye, where access to technology has been increasing, the use of social media has increased accordingly among higher education students. Communicating, having quick access to current news, and having social interaction independent of time and place are among the reasons why social media is preferred. Social media is also preferred in disaster situations that have recently become the most urgent concerns on agenda in Türkiye. Investigating the use of social media in disaster situations, this study used purposive sampling and obtained data from semi-structured interviews conducted with a group of university students. The data were analyzed using a descriptive analysis method. Interviews with 10 university students, five female and five male, aged between 18-24, were conducted online, which were recorded and then analyzed. The study investigated the reasons for the preference for using social media in a disaster situation, with its positive and negative aspects. Based on the findings, it was concluded that social media is preferred more frequently than traditional media in disaster situations since it is perceived to help make disaster victims’ lives easier.

**Keywords:** Türkiye, Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes, Social Media, Higher Education Students.

Because Web 2.0 technologies emphasized the communication and interaction dimension of the Internet, it has become a social interaction environment (Dursun & Çuhadar, 2015). With the development and growth of the possibilities offered by Web 2.0, new technologies have taken their place in social life in every period, the concept of “new media” has started to be spoken, and they have been characterized by developments that will make people’s lives easier (Öztürk, 2015). Internet access rates have increased with developing technologies. According to the 2022 Household Information Technology

Usage Survey of the Turkish Statistical Institute, 94,1% of households have internet access and 85% of individuals use the Internet (TUIK, 2022). With the development of social interaction environment and communication skills, social networks, which are considered as new media, have become internet applications where users experience intense interaction and thus their usage rates are increasing day by day (Dursun & Çuhadar, 2015). Social networks, also referred to as social media, are -considered social networking sites that help users interact online and where personal posts and comments can be made (Güzel, 2020).

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In the process of moving from traditional media to new media, there is a transition from mass communication tools to applications that can provide individual communication and interaction. The ability of users to freely exchange personal information, opinions and messages on social media, independent of time and space, can be seen as one of the main elements of this transition.

Users prefer social media in their daily internet use for their communication and interaction needs. According to the “Türkiye Social Media Usage Statistics” report, which reports that social media users in Türkiye are 70.8% of the total population, there are 62.55 million social media users in Türkiye in January 2023 (Digital in Türkiye, 2023). The main reason for this situation is that social media is among the preferred new media tools with some advantages it provides. Some of the advantages of social media are that it is fast and up-to-date, users can publish their own content instantly, it provides simultaneous access and sharing, it is reliable, it is interactive, and it provides access to content and people of interest (Öztürk & Talas, 2015). On the other hand, social media has some limitations as well as advantages. These include the rapid spread of negative, false, erroneous news or situations, the production of different content by thousands of people on a subject whose accuracy has not been confirmed, constant exposure to social media activities in any environment where there are tools such as computers and smartphones, and wasting time due to being in interaction with social media for a very long time (Öztürk & Talas, 2015). According to the household IT usage survey conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute, the rate of access to the internet from home was 88.3% in 2019, 92% in 2021 and 94.1% in 2022 (TUIK, 2022). In today’s world of increased access to technology and technological tools, these advantages and limitations in the use of social media are becoming a part of our daily lives. These situations have some consequences: we can access every content and information we want to access, we can be instantly informed about every situation, we waste a lot of time, we can be exposed to bad situations and events, we may access false information that is not certain, and our personal data can be used by anyone.

An analysis of the purposes of social media use revealed that social media is mostly used for “communication and following the agenda” (Çömlekçi & Başol, 2019). When this result is taken into account, it can be said that the use of social media has become a priority to interact and communicate, especially in the event of unexpected situations because in unexpected and mostly reactive situations such as epidemics, earthquakes, floods, storms, droughts, and fires, interaction is also realized through personal posts on social media in addition to communication through mass media.

As in the disasters in the world, the recent disasters in Türkiye give the impression that personal interaction is strengthened through social media. For example, people who were forced to stay at home during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 had

to be informed about pandemic developments and had to form their personal interactions by both following social media posts and participating in these posts. Social media applications such as “Hayat Eve Sığar” (Life Fits Home), developed by the Ministry of Health to inform and guide the public about the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) and to reduce the risks related to the pandemic and prevent its spread, were developed to strengthen interaction and information flow (GooglePlay,2023). On the other hand, during the flood disaster in Rize in 2021, instant information was followed up through social media. Finally, information and developments about the Kahramanmaraş-based earthquakes that occurred in 2023 were accessed through social media as well as traditional media tools. Similar to the benefits provided by social media, it was aimed to increase access to disaster victims through applications such as 112 emergency, help button, whistle, I am safe, earthquake network, and real whistle.

### Social Media Use in Disasters

Disaster is defined as “natural, technological or human-induced events that cause physical, economic and social losses for the whole or certain segments of the society, stopping or interrupting normal life and human activities” (Legal Gazette, 2009). Social media is an environment where individuals can create and share their own content, independent of time and space, use the opportunities offered by the internet, communicate with other individuals and transfer their information, feelings and thoughts (Hasanoğlu, 2019). Social media has an important place in the daily lives of individuals. It offers a flexible, fluid, accelerated and creative environment for higher education students to maintain their daily activities, organize and meet their needs (Selwyn, 2012). In disasters such as floods, earthquakes, epidemics and fires where life is adversely affected, communicating and giving or receiving information may be interrupted due to damage to the communication infrastructure. However, in these cases, it becomes important that communication can be fast and that the flow of information can continue uninterrupted. Unlike traditional media, social media platforms allow for sharing and reproducing information, co-creation of information, synchronous and asynchronous communication, and accessibility across multiple devices (Knox, 2022). In this context, social media differs from traditional media for reasons such as offering two-way communication and providing an interactive environment. The positive effects of social media are seen as providing fast communication in disasters and emergencies, creating an environment of solidarity and cooperation, and the possibility of two-way communication (Usta & Yükseler, 2021). Traditional media communication may be disrupted due to interruptions that may occur during disasters and emergencies, but social media is accessible via mobile devices and enables uninterrupted communication. Being accessible in disasters and emergencies and being able to communicate simultaneously may be the reason why social media is preferred over traditional media (Zincir & Yazıcı, 2013).



Social media, which forms a bridge between disaster victims and others in disasters and emergencies, has become an important platform that enables information flow, organization of aid activities, reaching large masses, and understanding emotions and thoughts (Lu & Yuan 2021). Social media is used to disseminate disaster warnings, distribute situation information, raise awareness about disasters, follow news, request and provide assistance, and give support. In addition, it allows organizations responsible for emergency management to reach a wide audience, establish direct two-way communication and transmit emergency-related information (Hu et al., 2022). Individuals use social media to reach their relatives and get information for reasons such as quick responses to changing conditions and real-time information sharing (Lovari & Bowen, 2019). While traditional media regularly publishes news, social media is used to obtain first-hand news, convey aid requests, and announce aid efforts. Providing access to large masses and the possibility of access from mobile devices can be counted among the biggest reasons for this (Selvi, 2023). In addition, the signals obtained through mobile devices, location information accessible through social media, and the rapid updating of this data accelerate access to disaster victims, emergency response capability and rescue efforts (Xing, et al., 2021).

In addition to its features related to information sharing and interaction in personal life, social media is an important part of life for students in higher education in situations such as communicating, collaborating, and learning (Tess, 2013). With its multilevel functions, it has become an important space for individuals, organizations and other media to connect with each other and create collective meaning, especially in situations of uncertainty in the social context (Jung & Moro, 2014). In addition, social media can be updated faster than traditional media in disasters and emergencies, and it has faster information flow. Moreover, it is accessible from mobile devices regardless of time and place. It also provides access to signal and location data. Furthermore, social media enables two-way communication. Also, it can be used to organize aid activities and announce aid organizations.

### Literature Review

When the studies on the use of social media in disasters are examined, it can be seen that generally technological features, communication and interaction aspects, and ethical dimensions come to the fore. Social media posts were analyzed in a study on the earthquake that occurred in Japan in 2011. It was emphasized that during the earthquake in Japan, access to traditional media tools stopped due to a power outage in the city of Tsukuba, voice communication was difficult, but with the help of mobile devices and social media, it was possible to communicate with other people over the internet, provide information and share information (Kaigo, 2012). In the Van earthquake that took place in Türkiye in the same year, it was reported that emergency information was shared through social media and support was provided for rescue

activities by communicating with the relevant units (Zincir & Yazıcı, 2013). In 2020, in a study conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic process, which affected the whole world, it was found that individuals saw social media as a need in crisis situations and preferred to use social media along with traditional mass media to follow information and be informed about the information on the agenda (Çerçi, Canöz & Canöz, 2020). On the other hand, in a study examining Covid-19 press release on social media, it was stated that misinformation, disinformation and infodemic are frequently encountered, and that this situation negatively affects public health. Therefore it was suggested that legal measures should be taken together with the implementation of social media ethics principles (Gisondi, et al., 2022). In a different aspect, an ethical evaluation of the posts made on traditional and social media during the Izmir earthquake, which occurred in 2020 was made in another study. It was stated in this study that there is a need for legal and ethical regulations for the effective use of social media before, during and after disaster situations (Usta & Yükseler, 2021). Within the scope of these studies, it is important to examine the purposes of using social media such as communication, news and information flow in the recent Kahramanmaraş-based earthquakes, to evaluate the violations of rights that disaster victims have been exposed to, to examine the accurate and positive posts made, to identify the content that is objectionable to share, and to determine what kinds of measures should be taken for similar situations that may be encountered in the future. The researchers felt the necessity of carrying the research due to the disaster's immense effect, as well as the robust literature on technology utilization regarding social media this time. In order to see the impact of social media in extraordinary situations, higher education students were selected as the sample, taking into account the fact that young people are intertwined with technology and use social networks effectively. In this direction the aim of the study is to determine the use of social media by the disaster victims among higher education students who were affected by the Kahramanmaraş-based earthquakes on February 6, 2023. In line with this purpose, the following questions were sought to be answered.

1. What are the purposes of disaster victims to use social media?
2. What have been the positive or negative aspects of social media use for disaster victims?

### Method

The data were obtained through semi-structured interview technique in the study, investigating the use of social media by disaster victims during the Kahramanmaraş-based earthquakes is a qualitative research and modeled as phenomenology. This model tries to reach a conclusion with the data obtained from a limited number of samples. Interview technique is used as the main data collection tool (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The data were analyzed using the qualitative method of descriptive analysis.

## Study Group

The study group, which was selected by purposive sampling method, consisted of university students and included 5 male and 5 female participants. Seven of the participants were 20 years old or younger, and three were over 20 years old. There are 11 cities in the region defined as a disaster zone. Among the participants, 4 of them stated that they were in Kahramanmaraş, 1 of them was in Şanlıurfa, 2 of them were in Adana and 3 of them were in Hatay (Table 1). Participants are students of Afyon Kocatepe University and study in different programs.

**Table 1.**  
Study Group.

Category	Codes	Participants
Participants' gender	Female	P2, P3, P5, P7, P9
	Male	P1, P4, P6, P8, P10
Age of participants	20 years and under	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P9
	Over 20 years old	P7, P8, P10
City of residence/ living during the disaster	Kahramanmaraş	P2, P3, P8, P10
	Şanlıurfa	P9
	Adana	P4, P5
	Hatay	P1, P6, P7

## Collection of Data

The data of the study were obtained through telephone and online interviews with the study group. Semi-structured interview questions were prepared in line with the purpose and sub-questions of the study. The research questions were prepared as 5 basic interview questions and related follow-up questions. In line with the purpose of the research, care was taken to select questions that prioritize the use of social media by disaster victims during and after the disaster. The questions were organized as semi-structured forms expressed in an open-ended manner. The final form of the forms was created by consulting expert opinions. Due to the sensitivity of the participants' environment and situation, the type of interview was left to the individual preference of the participants. The interviews were organized as phone calls, WhatsApp calls, Zoom video calls, and Zoom audio calls by taking into account the participants' environment, internet access and choices. Data collection covers a period of three months after the disaster.

## Analysis of Data

The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants. After they were transferred to computer media, they were analyzed by creating themes, categories, and codes. The content analysis was completed by supporting the analyzed data with quotations.

## Validity and Reliability of the Research

Within the scope of the research, the participants were informed before the interview. The interview questions were prepared in accordance with the research purpose. The interviews were conducted on a completely voluntary and confidential basis. During the interview, if necessary, the answers given by the participants were repeated and confirmed. Interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and kept for verifiability. Throughout the interview, as stated by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2021), interview questions were organized according to the flow, daily language was preferred when asking questions, and feedback was given when necessary. Throughout the study, self-assigned codes were used for the participants. The data obtained from the interviews were divided into themes and codes under the relevant themes. Thus, the findings related to the research questions were reached quickly and accelerated the reaching of the results (Miles & Huberman, 2019). The research report covers the whole process and is supported by direct quotations from participant interviews.

## Findings and Discussion

### Communication and Telecommunication

Participants who stated that they made phone calls to communicate during and after the disaster stated that they also communicated via WhatsApp after they gained internet access (Table 2). In addition, a participant who stated that he could not communicate due to problems arising from the infrastructure (such as the lack of a network) and a participant who stated that he did not need to communicate because he was with his relatives expressed their views on the situation as follows:

*"We were all side by side because there was no demolition." [P9]*

Participants whose houses were not damaged in the earthquake preferred face-to-face meetings in order to see their relatives and know that they were okay.

*"I couldn't reach anyone even though it wasn't very far. I mean, there were zero phone calls." [P8]*

Another participant stated that the network was affected due to infrastructure problems in his region, so he could not use the phone and had communication problems. Communication on social media is negatively affected due to possible power outages, but access to social media can continue for a while with the continuation of internet access from mobile devices (Çanakçı, Öztürk & Şaşmazlar, 2022).

Social media is an effective communication tool, especially in emergencies, as it is an area where information can be shared quickly and there is a high level of access in the social sphere (Oran & Akan, 2021). It is seen that it has also been the first preferred way of communication for disaster victims.



**Table 2.** Findings related to the category “Communication method”.

Codes	Participants
Telephone	P6, P7, P1, P10, P4, P2, P3
WhatsApp	P5, P2, P3
Face to face interview	P9
No contact	P8

After the infrastructure problems were overcome in a period of 2 days, it was stated that the network and internet access were more effective, and Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp are seen as the prominent social media environments. 1 of the participants stated that s/he does not use social media, 1 of them said that s/he uses Telegram and 1 of them said that s/he uses Bip (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Findings related to the category of “Preferred communication tools”.

Codes	Participants
Telephone	P3
WhatsApp	P5, P1, P10, P8, P2, P9
Twitter	P7, P1, P10, P4
Instagram	P5, P6, P7, P1, P10, P4, P8, P2, P9
Telegram	P10
Bip	P8

### Positive and Negative Aspects of Social Media

It is understood from the participant interviews that social media is used to follow news and access up-to-date information. It is also preferred as a communication method, and even aid campaigns are organized and followed up by using social media (Table 4). It can be said that social media has positive effects such as rapid dissemination of information, raising awareness, increasing solidarity and solidarity during and after disasters (Usta & Yükseler, 2021). In this context, some participant opinions are given below:

*“I preferred to use social media in terms of timeliness. Since there were a lot of earthquakes here, we wondered where it was happening, or where it happened all of a sudden, you know it happened to us all of a sudden, so we wondered where it happened*

*and how strong it was. Also, I was following the news sources on Instagram. I was constantly updating them. The network went out and then it came back and we started to get news later. This brought us convenience and Instagram was already saving us.” [P6]*

With the resolution of the infrastructure problems in the communication channels, it is observed that the participants continue to communicate via their mobile phones and at the same time maintain their connections via internet access and social media.

*“We had an Instagram group, a WhatsApp group, and a Telegram group, where the message is simple. There were groups there about the earthquake, people were asking for help from each other, indicating their location from the rubble. I was in those groups, for example, I tried to help as much as I could. I shared posts as much as I could on Instagram, on Twitter too.” [P10]*

In addition to communicating via social media, asking for help, sharing requests for help and reaching large masses and most importantly, reporting location are seen as prominent uses during the disaster.

*“The group had already been formed here by people in need of help. I am a member of the youth center at the same time, and we tried to provide our acquaintances with whatever they needed to wherever they wanted it Also on Twitter, we arranged whatever our acquaintances needed. For example, if they needed a house, we arranged a house. If they needed supplies, we arranged supplies.” [P7]*

Structuring and monitoring aid campaigns through social media is valuable in reaching more disaster victims in need of all kinds of assistance. Social media’s support in the post-disaster recovery phase is emerging as a useful communication infrastructure to help uncover challenges (Ogie, et al., 2022).

*“Communication was up to a certain point, and then we used it to direct the aid coming from outside. You know, there were many villages in our immediate vicinity where the incoming aid did not reach, where there were problems with the network and roads. We used social media to direct the aids there.” [P1]*

It is evident that social media helps people and groups to organize themselves so that aid reaches its destination on time. Social media contributes to the recovery process by supporting the information needs of people trying to recover after a disaster, raising awareness, and providing the information that disaster victims need (Ogie, et al., 2022).

*“I followed social media when the internet started to work because I joined groups and things like that, I also shared posts on social media. Because I was helping, you know, by following ... I could never put the phone down.” [P2]*

**Table 4.**

Findings related to the category of "conveniences provided by social media".

Codes	Participants
Contact	P5, P6, P7, P1, P4,
Following news	P5, P6, P7, P10, P9
Current information	P6, P9
Helping others	P7, P1, P2

Although social media has facilitated news gathering and solidarity, it can also create difficult situations for disaster victims. Unconfirmed posts on social media and sharing of false information and news can create psychologically negative situations for disaster victims. Verifying the reliability of information emerges as a problem in social media. False information can be transmitted very quickly without verifying the true source of information (Kaigo, 2012). The rapid dissemination of unconfirmed information can cause fear, worry and anxiety (Table 5). Participant views on this situation are given below:

*"There was fake news. We were panicking at that moment, but when it turned out to be fake news, we were relieved."* [P9]

*"The earthquake happened on February 6th. On the morning of February 7th, actually everyone wrote the same things. The second earthquake is coming, this time it will be in Adana, it will be higher, it will be 7.8 magnitude, it will be more severe, so a lot of fake news circulated a lot. Then we couldn't go home on February 6, February 7 and February 8."* [P5]

It is seen that sharing fake news on social media increases the anxiety of disaster victims and creates fear in them.

*"There are 12 tunnels between Elbistan and Maraş, when we looked up the internet, they posted news that 3 or 4 tunnels had collapsed, but we went to Maraş on the morning of that day. There was nothing. It was strange to me why they were misinforming us."* [P8]

*"On the first day of the earthquake, everyone was already in a panic. There is a dam here and there was some news on social media that the dam had exploded. Suddenly everyone in our whole neighborhood started crying. They started to go to the mountains, that is, social media had this bad side, the news spread to everyone, but it was fake news. Everyone started to go to the mountains for no reason and the neighborhood was left empty."* [P6]

It is observed that the posts made on social media reach large masses without verifying their accuracy and that they cause disaster victims to panic even more with the effect of the situation they are in. Likewise, it is said that different sharing

of aid also has negative effects. The openness of social media to all information creates a favorable environment for the spread of misinformation, especially during disasters, and makes it difficult to distinguish between important and accurate information due to information overload (Murthy & Gross, 2017).

*"Someone from the group writes. Let me give you an example; they say a truck is coming, they say there are supplies in it, or you are waiting for food, they say it will arrive, you go there but the truck doesn't arrive. Or they say that a construction machine has been arranged, you go to the address of some debris, you wait, but the construction machine doesn't show up. I mean, when you are already in a bad psychology, such situations affect you worse."* [P10]

According to the opinions expressed by the participants, it is clear that the hopes of the disaster victims who are in a difficult situation are also broken when the expected news does not come true. For this reason, the posts made on social media have to be verified by official sources in order to help disaster victims protect themselves from fake news and their effects (Yang, Chu & Li, 2023).

**Table 5.**

Findings related to the category "Negative aspects of social media".

Codes	Participants
Misinformation	P7, P10, P8, P2
Fake news	P5, P6, P1, P10, P2, P9
Creating fear / anxiety / worry	P6, P4, P8, P9

According to the findings of the study, the time of social media use before and after the disaster differed among the participants. It was observed that participants who worked in the debris zone for aid spent less time on social media due to time constraints, while participants who followed aid campaigns spent more time on social media. It is observed that a participant who stated that he had been using social media for approximately the same period of time before and after the disaster had a different purpose because he used the social media to follow news on the disaster. It is seen that participants who cannot follow news and obtain information through traditional media in the disaster area prefer social media for these needs. In the researches conducted, it is seen that the regular internet usage rate of individuals is 82.7%. In support of the research findings, it can be said that the time spent on social media is quite high according to TUIK reports (TUIK, 2022). In this context, some participant opinions are given below:

*"Before the disaster, I was picking up the phone for a normal period of time for a call and the like. After the disaster, I can say that I became more concerned with social media because you are*



*constantly waiting for news from there to learn whether someone from there will say something, and give some news, whether there is something missing, or what is happening. Because it happened at dawn here, we didn't know anything, and we thought it was just this place. Then we learned how widespread the earthquake was. Therefore, I can say that I needed it more." [P7]*

It is observed that the time spent by the participants on social media has increased in order to contribute to relief activities, and it is also observed that the purposes of use differ depending on the disaster situation experienced by the participants

*"The difference was not in terms of increasing or decreasing. But before, I was laughing and sharing good memories, now it's just for news, let's send a crane here, or there will be food distribution here." [P2]*

Within the scope of the opinions expressed by the participants, it was seen that the restrictions on social media also had negative effects. They stated that they had difficulties in terms of following the news, sharing information and helping each other. It is seen that users who are active in internet use and social media communication in challenging situations such as disasters do not feel alone, feel relieved by seeing that there are other individuals who have experienced the same situation and benefit emotionally (Neubbaum, et al. 2014). Therefore, keeping the lines of communication as open as possible will have positive effects.

*"We were going to send something to someone, but we couldn't. We couldn't send a message, or we couldn't share anything. We had only social media, but we couldn't do that either." [P6]*

*"Well, I was constantly following what was happening on Twitter, you know, from a news page, how many deaths there were and who was missing. Since we were constantly re-tweeting, I was following it from there because it was constantly on time zone. That was the only place I was already on social media but it suddenly stopped, . Instagram didn't work properly, so we couldn't access it, and we didn't know what was happening. We had a hard time when there was a block on Twitter." [P7]*

The restriction of social media, which disaster survivors use most frequently, at this difficult time caused them to feel lonely and helpless. Restriction of communication channels at a time when they need support the most is another factor that puts them in a difficult situation.

## Conclusion

The findings obtained as a result of the interviews show that social media is used in cases such as communicating in disaster situations, following news, sharing posts for aid and need situations, organizing aid activities, sharing information about the aid materials and places that needed them, and directing the incoming aid to the right places. In

addition, it was stated by the participants that they utilize social media to report the location of disaster victims. Thus, the necessary information sharing for emergency situations can be followed on social media. Interviews were conducted within the first three months after the disaster, considering that social media use may change as time progresses. Due to the difficult process they went through, it took time to reach the disaster survivors within the scope of the study and to conduct the interviews. In this context, the number of disaster survivors interviewed was limited. Conducting face-to-face interviews in the disaster area will increase the number of participants interviewed for the study. At the same time, it will also bring the opportunity to conduct interviews not only with university students but also with other disaster victims.

In line with the opinions of the participants, it was observed that social media has positive contributions especially during and after disasters as it provides fast and wide audience access to issues such as following up-to-date information and solidarity. In addition to the positive aspects, sharing of unconfirmed information has caused disaster victims to fall into difficult situations. It was stated that fear, anxiety and worry increased due to fake news and information. In addition, the restriction of social media, which they prefer to use as a communication channel during the disaster, emerges as another negative impact.

As a result, it is stated that social media is preferred for providing opportunities such as location detection for emergency response in disaster situations, fast and simultaneous communication, and assistance through large masses, but it has negative effects due to unconfirmed information sharing.

Depending on the results of the research; training activities on social media literacy can be carried out in order to eliminate the negative effects of social media use, and studies can be organized to investigate the access to technology, technology use, social media usage status and knowledge levels of people who have experienced disasters other than university students about mobile applications that they can apply in extraordinary situations.

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