

# Influence of new media on intercultural communication: an example of an Erasmus student

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*The world turns out to be a small village due to globalisation and communication technologies. In this new world, different cultures and communication means have interlaced and started to increasingly affect each other, leading communication and culture to transform into two organic structures that feed each other. The culture in which individuals socialise also determines these individuals' ways of communication. It is necessary to examine the communicational behaviours of the members of given societies to distinguish the differences between these cultures. The skills of different people who live in different cultures in enduring the information load would also be different. Today, it is possible to transfer any information via news media in an instant. This, as a result, increases the significance of new media in intercultural communication. This study is to examine the influence of social media usage in the intercultural adaptation process of Erasmus students who came to Turkey for educational purposes. Within this scope, detailed analyses were made using both qualitative and quantitative research methods.*

**Key words:** intercultural communication, Erasmus students, new media

## 1. Introduction

With globalisation and developments in communication technologies, the world is turning into a small village. In this global village, cultures and communication tools have begun intertwining and interacting by each passing day. Communication and culture are two organic structures that nurture each other. The culture in which individuals socialise also determines how they will communicate. Hall stated that in order to understand intercultural differences, it is necessary to examine the communication behaviours of societies of cultures. Ac-

ording to Hall, people who live within different cultures also have different skills of handling the information load. In our day, information is transferred by news media very swiftly. This increases the significance of news media in intercultural communication. Saying that the medium is the message, McLuhan (1964) focuses on the medium changing people's frames of mind rather than the message. For this reason, both culture and communication are directly affected by the mediums used. The rapidly rising use of social media and its applications in our day turned it from being a communication tool into being a part of

culture and communication. For this reason, it is very important to examine the effects of social media on the process of intercultural communication and cultural adaptation.

With the Erasmus programmes, which are implemented within the context of European Union educational programs, mobility between countries increased quite a lot. In the academic year of 2012–2013, 18,934 people went from Turkey to Europe via the Erasmus programmes ([www.ua.gov.tr](http://www.ua.gov.tr)). For this reason, Erasmus mobility and social media applications may be evaluated as two very important instruments regarding the examination of intercultural communication within Europe. Within this context, in the qualitative part of the research, in-depth interviews were conducted with students of the Erasmus programme in Turkey regarding social media-intercultural communication; and in the quantitative part, using the prepared research questions, an online research form was applied to students who have been in Turkey last year and later have returned to their countries.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Culture**

It is not sufficient to make only one definition of culture. To understand culture, various perspectives must be developed (Bodley, 1994, p.16). Culture is a concept that is used in many different meanings. Underlying this is the usage of the concept by many different disciplines and each discipline having its own definitions depending on their perspectives (Soydaş, 2010, p. 30). According to Cecen, every discipline puts forward different approaches about culture from their own perspectives. The concept of culture has such wide dimensions that it cannot be explained with only

one definition. For this reason, it is very difficult to put forward a definition that could be accepted by everyone. However, it is generally accepted that all the values and products created by people make up the culture altogether. Since the concept of culture is thought to be multi-dimensional, given definitions mostly focus on shared features. Nonetheless, it cannot be said that these definition attempts are successful. The discipline that the definer studies in and his upbringing style determine not only the content of the definition, but also its borders. The question of culture involves existence of people and their interactional territories. Given definitions and explanations make this question's different aspects known. This kind of development makes the topic more complicated instead of making it a whole (Cecen, 1984, p. 9). If we are to examine some definitions of culture, the basic definition of culture, made by Tylor (1871), is the following one: Culture is a complex process comprising information, art, traditions and other suchlike capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society (Güvenç, 1985, p. 15–20). According to Lustig and Koester, culture is a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms, and social practices, which affect the behaviours of a relatively large group of people (Lustig and Koester, 2006, p. 25). According to Güngör, culture arose from solution attempts of people who live in a community together for various problems of life. Some of these solution styles become the property of the community by becoming stable, and culture consists of them. (Güngör, 1989, p. 35).

There are various instruments providing the sustainability of culture. It can be said that today the most efficient of these instruments is mass media (Kocadaş, 2006). Mass

media has gradually become widespread and through this intercultural relationships become condensed.

The effects of mass media are both wide and limited. They are wide because it has a vital role in all the globalised areas. Due to the fact that mass media is an important part of the daily life, these effects are limited since it is not the only source of cultural experience (Tomlinson, 2004, p. 37). According to Hall, communication is culture (Hall, 1990, p. 94). Placing communication at the centre of culture's definition, Habermas examines symbolic activities as well as the relation between these activities and their symbolic environment. According to Habermas, with communication arises the transfer and renewal of cultural information, the emergence of social integration and grouping, personal identities and identifications (Habermas, 1985, p. 11–25). Culture and communication are concepts with deep relations between each other. For this reason, they affect each other. The culture in which the individual socialises also determines how he/she will communicate (Erdoğan, 2005, p. 38–39). Each community has a cultural environment that they produce “authentically” and live in. Aforementioned culture and cultural environment cover all areas of life, such as the economic, social and political area. Through development of mass media and it becoming widespread, culture has become a meta that is produced and marketed. Culture, as well as media products, is exported to countries that are unable to produce mass media instruments by developed countries, those of which are able to produce them (Adıgüzel, 2001, p. 103–104). The effect of media comes not only from its content. Each element which is embedded in the text contributes to the interaction while the content is being

transferred. There are background details in the profundity of the text. Attitudes and habits of heroes and even the objects they use in movies or in media texts affect audience. Behaviour patterns that are embedded in this kind of detail, which are thought to have a lesser effect, actually make a genuine change of modelling. The dimension of cultural change is substantially embedded in these background details since a dominant culture-related structure is formed in these background details, and given information is offered within the integrity of this structure. Messages that are emitted from mass media provide the dominant culture to prevail over other cultures and to manufacture consent or its adaptation (Özdemir, 1998, p. 98). To put it in another way, mass media plays a key role for intercultural sustainable communication and contributes to intercultural adaptation.

## ***2.2 Intercultural communication and Cultural Adaptation***

In order to explain intercultural communication, first of all, communication must be perceived as a multi-dimensional process, rather than only an act. Communication must be defined taking into account the cultural features of individuals involved (Kartarı, 2014). Having used the concept of intercultural communication for the first time, Hall shares important data for the understanding of cultural differences with the Information Systems Theory (Primary Message Systems). The Information Systems Theory (1959) categorises human activities as ten main message systems; being Interaction, Association, Subsistence, Bisexuality, Territoriality, Temporality, Learning and Acquisition, Play, Defence and Exploitation. Hall indicates that in the first two systems of the theory, interaction is at the

centre of the culture universe, also stating that the most complex and at the same time most institutionalised communal life sustained by living beings belongs to humans. Shortly, intercultural communication is the “*communication between people of different cultures and ethnicities*” (Neuliep, 2014). Intercultural communication is a significant goal of intercultural contact and, as such, has been widely examined. It generally takes into consideration an ideal type of contact, requiring openness and empathy, and resulting in a deep understanding of the other (Ganesh & Holmes, 2011, p. 81–86). Intercultural dialogue is a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or world views. Among its aims are the following: to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices; to foster equality; to enhance creative processes (Council of Europe, p. 10).

There are many cultural components that affect intercultural communication. In general, these are values and norms, social scenarios and roles, ethnocentrism, uncertainty and anxiety, conventional thoughts and prejudices (Kartarı, 2014). These factors that affect intercultural communication naturally expose the necessity of questioning the competency of intercultural communication. With the globalisation process in effect, on the one hand, borders are removed, yet on the other, the world disintegrates even more. In this process, on the basis of intercultural dialogue and intercultural communication, the concept of intercultural communication competence becomes even more significant (İlbuğa, 2010, p. 174). According to Wiemann,

communication competence is the ability of an individual participating in interaction to choose the most appropriate communication behaviour among the possible choices within the present conditions in order to reach the objectives of both parties during interaction (Wiemann, 1997, p. 198).

Communication has two functions in the process of acculturation/adaptation, which are interindividual communication and mass communication. Individuals who joined a new community which the individuals know almost nothing about will refer to interindividual communication in order to acquire knowledge about primary needs in daily life, such as – in the first place – the language of that community, behavioural patterns, clothing, arts, activities, shopping places and food. If they can reach the aforementioned needs, these individuals will primarily prefer to communicate with the members of their own country. However, information that needs to be learned urgently via interindividual communication about this foreign community may not be learned due to problems derived from both the newly-arrived person and the individual who will provide that information. In this stage, a communication alternative which is more compatible with a newly-arrived person’s psychological state comes to the fore (Gülner, 2011). When the basis of the concept of acculturation is examined, acculturation could be defined as changes that occur reciprocally in the original cultural patterns of both groups, when individuals, who are from different cultures, come into direct contact (Redfield 1936, p. 149). In the adaptation process of an individual who has recently arrived to a foreign country, the fact that media can be an important instrument in acquiring information about the behaviour which the individual should

learn urgently at the first stage is discussed within the scope of uses and gratification approach. Many researchers who study in the area of acculturation agree that media is an effective instrument in this process (Kim, 1990: 194; Chang, 1972; Gülnar, 2011; Reece and Palmgreen, 2000; Moon, 2003, Sawyer, 2012; Wooley, 2013).

### **2.3 Social Media and Intercultural Communication**

Social media, which represents all of the web-based applications enabling individuals to interact with each other, provides a sharing environment for all kinds of content, which is produced by other media instruments. Anthony Mayfield sorts social media types as blogs, microblogs, social networks, wikies, podcasts, forums and content groups. Social networks enable people to communicate with their friends and share contents by using their own personal websites. Websites like Facebook, Myspace, Wikipedia, Apple iTunes, YouTube and Twitter are examples of social networks (Mayfield, 2013).

At the heart of community life, media plays an important role and has different effects on society. In our day, young people in particular communicate online (93%) and 63% of the youth is online every day, indicating the power of social media within a society. From this aspect, social media quite naturally becomes a channel not only for personal or organisational communication, but also for social communication. In addition, social media expands and increases its activity each passing day. In other words, besides popular applications, such as Facebook and Twitter, social media operates within daily life in various ways (Peltekoğlu, 2012, p.5). By hosting many activities in the course of one's day, social

media takes important roles in social events that occur. Providing freedom and partial deterritorialisation, social media enables individuals to realise themselves and to want to use this environment actively. Newly developed media derivatives have an important place in the dissemination and sharing of information. As it brings people together, social media also brings together communities organised around the same objective. It establishes an environment that connects social movements to each other and accelerates their actuality. This way, a different and broad base was established for intercultural communication (Engin, 2011, p. 37).

With globalisation, very rapid and important relations have developed between intercultural communication and social media (Lazar, 2012, p.291). Until very recently, face-to-face communication had been very important, while it is not as important as right now due to communication processes developed through social media. Social media collectively describes all the channels that make online personal communications possible. From sending a text message to posting on Facebook, there are endless uses for digital media (Wooley, 2013, p. 41). Besides being a practical tool in the spreading of messages, at the same time, social media plays a very important role in creating new forms of multicultural relations (Piechota, 2014, p. 38). Beyond being related concepts, social media and intercultural communication are phenomena that affect and shape each other. For this reason, with the use of social media in intercultural communication, an adjustment and sense of community emerge. Adjustment is an essential factor in intercultural adaptation, and social media influences this process. Sawyer (2012) has examined

the interactions of migrants that arrived in America with social media in the process of adaptation to intercultural communication. According to this study, in the adaptation process to the American culture, migrants had acquired lots of information by using social media before coming to America. In other words, social media plays a significant role in intercultural adaptation. In addition, it has also been an influential factor in the development of sense of community. Intercultural communication creates sense of belonging and integration processes to the new culture; these processes are supported by social media, which plays an important role in their development. Likewise, through social media they are able to easily continue their communication with friends and family they have left behind. Social media provides an outlet where people have the opportunity to communicate with friends and family in order to stay updated, aware and informed of current events.

### 3. Research Model and Hypotheses

The aim of this study is to determine the effects of social media in the development, sustainability and adaptation process of intercultural communication. Thus, the aim of this is to reach the individuals who experience intercultural communication via social media. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were made in order for this study

to reach its aim. How prejudices, cultural differences, cultural activities and problems that are faced in a new culture change via social media was researched in the light of the information acquired in the literature part of the study. The research model was formulated as shown below (see picture).

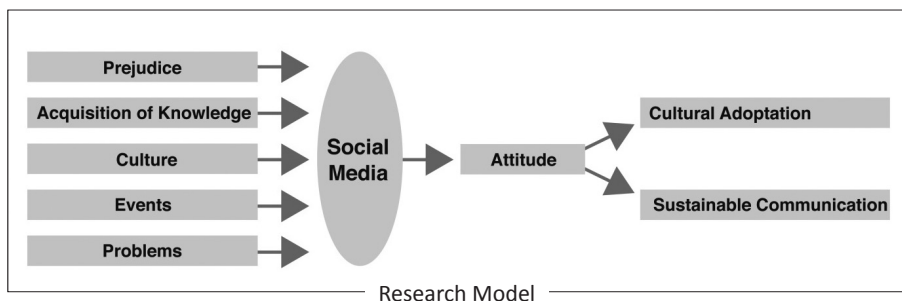
Within this framework, the hypotheses of this study are the following:

- H1: Social media affects the intercultural adaptation process and is an important communication medium within this process.
- H2: After the cultural interaction is ended, intercultural communication continues intensely via social media.
- H3: Different cultures may otherwise each other within social media.
- H4: Various social media instruments are used in intercultural communication processes.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Sample and Instruments

Within the scope of the study, qualitative and quantitative research methods were used together. For the qualitative data, in-depth interviews were conducted with 9 people who were still in Turkey as Erasmus students, while the quantitative data were collected from people who have been Erasmus students in Turkey a year ago, later returning to their countries. Within this



context, a survey consisting of 11 questions was prepared and sent to 82 people from 17 different countries through the virtual environment. The data acquired were analysed descriptively. The reason for choosing such a sample within the framework of the study is that sampled individuals use social media intensely and they are a part of the Erasmus programme, which is the most important practice of intercultural interaction within the European Union.

Help was received from 3 academicians who work in this field and 2 field experts during the preparation process of the questions within the framework of this study. 18 questions that were prepared for quantitative research were firstly applied to 20 people; the received replies were evaluated by experts and the number of the questions was decreased to 11. Validity reliability of the research was discussed within the study by making SSPS analyses.

#### **4.2 Data Acquired Through Qualitative Research:**

The 14 questions prepared within the scope of the research were answered through face-to-face communication. The data acquired within this scope is as follows:

Q1: What kind of advantages does social media provide to you regarding communication with different cultures?

The participants indicated that social media provides various advantages with regard to communication with other cultures. Within this context, some of the answers of the participants are as follows:

*“Social media provides me opportunity to share information and opinions with people who live in different regions of the world. For example, I can keep in touch with friends and connections I’ve made in different countries*

*over the course of my travels, and I have the opportunity to share new experiences, information, and opinions with them.*

*I feel like I have an enhanced awareness of current events and international cultural trends because I have connections with many different cultures on social media. Social media allows us to connect on a personal level from a distance; in the past, the most thorough information we had of international culture and news was through magazines, newspapers, news shows, etc. Now we have first-hand information from our friends and have access to a more intimate understanding of cultural developments.” (A1)*

*“I found Couchsurfing as a great social network to meet new people in the cities that I visit for a short or medium period of time. It is easy to find people that are willing to host you or just to meet up with you for a cup of tea. Facebook is really useful to communicate with your friends either when you do not have a cell phone number in that country or you want to be in contact with your friends that are living in some other continent.” (A7)*

Q2: Did you have prejudices about Turkey before you came to this country? If you did, what helped you to overcome these prejudices?

The participants have different perspectives on this subject. It was seen that in overcoming prejudices, social media sometimes provides great contribution, and sometimes it fails to satisfy. Some of the answers of the participants are as follows:

*“Yes, I had some prejudices. For example I thought, I would not be allowed to speak to all women. It helped to stay a long time in this country and to learn about the Turkish culture by myself.” (A6)*

*“Turkey somehow was a country we were not speaking much about in Italy. Therefore my parents were a bit worried about such an unknown country where I was supposed to study for a year. I think the most important choice I’ve done in order to overcome all of*

*the prejudices has been to decide to learn the Turkish language. This made easier the way to meet the Turkish people in the street, in the shops and everywhere else.” (A3)*

Q3: Did social media help you make friends in Turkey?

The participants gave similar answers in this subject. They have indicated that social media is quite appropriate for making friends within a different culture.

*“Absolutely! Social media is a part of my daily life, and integrating new Turkish friends into my social network makes me feel a little more at home.” (A2)*

*“It has been easy to be in contact with my Erasmus friends met at the University and it has been easy to use Facebook to know which events were happening every day in the city.” (A9)*

Q4: Do you have friends from different countries in your Facebook and other social media accounts? Did social media help you make friends with these people?

It was revealed that all participants have been developing many friendships via social media.

*“Yes I do. Social media didn’t necessarily help me make these friends originally, but social media is absolutely vital in keeping in touch with these friends over time. Without social media, it would be easy to lose contact with these friends – but because I see them on social media, they have a constant presence in my life.” (A7)*

*“Yes, a lot of parties, trips and gatherings were organized via social media. Also it is easy to organize a football game or a pre-drinking with the help of social media.” (A1)*

Q5: Do you share your own cultural features with friends from different cultures through social media?

With regard to sharing cultural features through social media, different answers

were received. It was seen that cultural and personal features come into prominence here.

*“Absolutely. I often share news stories about my own culture, music from my region, etc. Simply by interacting with people on social media, one shares implicit data about one’s culture. I actually believe it’s impossible to befriend people from other cultures on social media and not participate in mutual cultural exchange.” (A9)*

*“Not so much, I sometimes post pictures or songs of my country but generally I like to private message my friends.” (A5)*

Q6: Before you came to Turkey, did you try to get information about the school, Istanbul and the culture here through social media?

Most of the participants indicated that they gathered information through social media before coming to Turkey.

*“Yes, I contacted a girl, who had been doing Erasmus in my university. I also searched for the ESN group of my university and read the questions others had made before coming to Turkey. In order to find an apartment, I contacted a friend from Istanbul via Facebook and she found a room for me by posting a request on Facebook.” (A8)*

Q7: Before you came to Turkey, did you try to get in touch with people here through social media? Did you meet new people by becoming a member of Facebook groups and groups alike? Or did you try to find people, who have been Erasmus students here before you, through social media?

*“Yes! Erasmus has a special Facebook group that allowed us to keep in touch about the grant process. I still use that group every day. I am also a part of a few ex-pat Facebook groups, ranging from groups for teaching opportunities to cooking tips.” (A9)*



Q8: Do you think that social media helped you in the adaptation process to the Turkish culture? If yes, what kind of help did it do?

The participants have indicated that social media is helpful during the cultural adaptation process. However, they stated that, this is not sufficient on its own and that they need many different factors for cultural adaptation.

*"Yes. It would have been exponentially more difficult to adapt without the help of social media. Social media helped in two distinct ways. Firstly, connecting to people living in Turkey via social media helped me compare my experience to the experience of others and allowed me to discern what's normal, and to reach out for help when I needed it. Secondly, social media has allowed me to stay in close contact with my friends and family in England, which has been really important for coping with the stress of cultural adaptation/assimilation."* (A8)

*"I am not sure about this possibility. This maybe because I didn't watch any Turkish television neither was I reading so many newspapers (paper and online ones)."* (A2)

Q9: After you came to Turkey, did you use the social media to participate in or follow cultural, artistic activities?

*"Yes, I followed the music playlist of some pubs (e.g. of the "Incir pub"). Sometimes I went to concerts or food events which were organized on Facebook."* (A1)

*"I have used social media to follow activists and artists, though I don't participate since I am not Turkish and don't find it appropriate to give my opinion on a country that isn't my own."* (A7)

Q10: What kind of differences did you think there were between the social media usage habits of young people in your country and of young people in Turkey?

*"I think they were approximately the same. All of the young people use Facebook to message, share and be in contact with their closest friend. And of course they publicize events mainly on Facebook."* (A1)

*"This is such a great question. I've been thinking about this a lot recently. I find that English are usually much more likely to share personal things on social media. Most Turkish people seem to be more or less reserved about what they post and how often they post. English tend to flood social media with content. Also, English are typically very vocal about their political opinions and have complete freedom to express these opinions, whereas some restrictions in Turkey may discourage citizens from doing so."* (A7)

Q11: After coming here, did you become a member of social media groups (such as in Facebook) in which Turkish people are the majority?

It turned out that the participants cannot use social media in this sense, especially because they do not know the language.

*"Only my department's Facebook page from my university."* (A2)

*"Actually, no, simply because my Turkish isn't very good"* (A8)

Q12: Did you form your own social media groups as Erasmus students? If yes, did you include Turkish citizens in these groups?

Differences were observed regarding allowance of people from other cultures into social media groups established by participants according to their orientations.

*"Yes we had lots of Turkish friends and they are still in contact with us."* (A1)

*"Yes we did, and no, there are no Turkish citizens in this group. It is exclusively for Erasmus."* (A8)

Q13: Did social media create new awareness in you regarding Istanbul or the culture here?

While some participants see social media as a good instrument in creating awareness, others stated that they find it insufficient.

*“Sure, I learn from social media via my Turkish friends every day. The process is a lot like data input – by looking at content in social media provided by Turks, we are in a way collecting and mentally processing data related to Turkey and Turkish culture.” (A5)*

*“Yes, by seeing what is important to Turkish people.” (A1)*

Q14: When you experience a problem in Istanbul, do you look for a solution to it through social media?

Participants stated that when they face a problem in a different culture, in order to find a solution they gather information from social media, however this alone is not sufficient.

*“I am curious to see what people say about that problem but I don’t think that a solution to the problem can mainly arrive from a social media.” (A3)*

*“Yes, we always were able to ask in our group on Facebook because of any kind of problem.” (A4)*

### 3.3 Quantitative Data

This study was conducted on Erasmus students in the University of Marmara between the ages of 18-25. Within the scope of the study, a 5 point likert scale research survey consisting of questions ought to determine demographic characteristics was prepared. The survey was applied to 134 subjects, the 82 valid surveys were analysed within the context of the study. 56 of the subjects were women (63.3%), 26 were men (31.7%).

Table No. 1: **Reliability Statistics**

<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
,895	11

According to data on Table No. 1, the reliability level of the research questions used is valid.

According to data on Table no. 2, the average values of females are a little higher.

According to data on Table No. 3, there is no significant difference between genders on the  $p < 0.05$  level.

The answers to the 11 questions that determine the judgements of participants about the intercultural communication in

Table No. 2: **Average Values of Participants According to Gender**

<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Female	56	41,7500	10,11794	1,35207
Male	26	40,5385	5,80504	1,13846

Table No. 3: **The independent samples test results**

	<i>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</i>		<i>t-test for Equality of Means</i>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
Equal variances assumed	4,115	,046	,568	80
Equal variances not assumed			,685	76,280

Table No. 4: Answers given to the questions within the scope of the study

	<i>I absolutely disagree</i>	<i>I disagree</i>	<i>I am indecisive</i>	<i>I agree</i>	<i>I absolutely agree</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Questions	N	N	N	N	N		
Q 1: Social media facilitates communication with different cultures.	2	4	16	34	26	3,951	0,967
Q 2: Social media helped me to make new friends in Turkey.	8	12	26	20	16	3,292	1,222
Q 3: I enjoy sharing my cultural features through social media.	12	14	14	28	14	3,219	1,324
Q 4: I enjoy being informed about other cultures through social media.	2	8	16	24	32	3,926	1,097
Q 5: I have used social media in the process of joining cultural life in Turkey.	4	10	10	32	26	3,804	1,159
Q 6: During the time I have been in Turkey; I followed cultural, artistic events through social media.	6	10	10	30	26	3,731	1,237
Q 7: I enjoy communicating with people from different countries through social media.	4	8	4	40	26	3,926	1,097
Q 8: After my Erasmus studentship, I enjoy communicating with my friends in Turkey through social media	2	6	10	18	46	4,219	1,077
Q 9: I enjoy joining Facebook and similar social media groups with people from different countries.	8	2	12	32	28	3,853	1,208
Q 10: Before coming to Turkey, I obtained information about the school I was coming to, Istanbul and the culture of this place through social media.	4	14	14	20	30	3,707	1,261
Q 11: People from different cultures also have different usage habits of social media.	4	6	22	26	24	3,731	1,111

social media. According to this, the question “After my Erasmus studentship, I enjoy communicating with my friends in Turkey through social media”, which is one of the most important factors, has the highest average (4.219). Other high-average expressions

are: “Social media facilitates communication with different cultures” (3.951), “I enjoy being informed about other cultures through social media” (3.926).

Components of culture and intercultural communication researches that were con-

ducted in different regions were analysed in the literature review that was conducted within the framework of the study. Data acquired within the framework of the study was compared with cultural components and other research that were mentioned in the literature review part, which contributed to the conclusion part.

#### **4. Conclusion**

With globalisation and advancements in communication technologies, cultures have converged like never before and began to influence each other. Especially with the increase of social media usage, it has become imperative to analyse influences of social media in intercultural communication. In this study, the role of social media in intercultural communication has been researched by both qualitative and quantitative analyses. The results acquired within this context are as follows:

Qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the research shows that social media is quite an efficient instrument in the development of intercultural communication. People are able to communicate very rapidly via social media and discover and adapt to intercultural values much more conveniently. Beyond being a small village for people, the world has turned into a single scope in which space, speed and cultures meet. This verifies H1 of the study. Moreover, this result supports the outcomes of the study of Sawyer & Chen (2012) about the effects of social media in the process of cultural adaptation. Ju, Jia & Cortland (2016), who made research about the cultural adaptation processes of social media within intercultural communication, analysed the use of social media and adaptation processes in the intercultural communication process of Chinese students who went to the

USA. The Cross-cultural Adaptation Model (Kim, 2005) was used in this research. Face-to-face and online interviews were carried out within the framework of this research. The study determined the existence of positive effects of social media in the cultural adaptation. This research and the presented study have the same outcomes, which supports hypothesis-1.

Social media tools that cultivate intercultural communication increase and diversify each passing day. Beyond just using Facebook and suchlike popular social media tools, the youth also communicates through micro blogs and new applications (H4). Thus, the influence of social media on intercultural communication is able to develop organically. As a result of this, it becomes quite efficient in solving problems within a different culture, making friends faster, following activities, being part of cultural values, adapting, belonging and overcoming prejudices. This calls forth the concept, “sustainable intercultural dialogue.” Social media serves as a catalyst for “sustainable intercultural dialogue.”

As a result of the qualitative research made within the context of the study, differences were also determined in intercultural social media usage habits. It was determined that it is related to the culture and social expectations lived in. Especially in societies like Turkey, where political events are talked about often, intended purposes of social media also change in this direction. On the other hand, in societies where political events are not that common conversation pieces, people reflect their social lives more. In the quantitative part of the study, social media was determined to be the most preferred tool for providing continuance of intercultural communication.

Quantitative data of the study shows that the highest average is achieved in

consequence of the replies to the question of “After my Erasmus studentship, I enjoy communicating with my friends in Turkey through social media”. This supports the second hypothesis (H2) of the study. In other words, people maintain their communication flows intensely via social media when they return to their home country after intercultural interaction. This is compatible with the research results of Chen (2012).

Qualitative data shows that in intercultural communication, social media sometimes gains very complex discriminating characteristics. Especially closed and secret groups created within Facebook come to-

gether with foreign cultures within another foreign culture to develop a new communication flow. This result supports the third hypothesis (H3) of the study. For instance, it was observed that some secret Facebook groups created by Erasmus students from certain different countries do not accept members from Turkey. This shows that organic communication chains that have horizontal components were born through social media. Consequently, as usage details of social media tools increase, we will be able to directly observe the influence this has on intercultural communication. The tools we use will not only shape our messages, but cultures as well.

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## NAUJOSIOS ŽINIASKLAIDOS ĮTAKA TARPKULTŪRINEI KOMUNIKACIJAI: „ERASMUS“ STUDENTŲ PAVYZDYS

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S a n t r a u k a

Dėl globalizacijos ir komunikacijos technologijų pasaulis virto mažu kaimu. Šiame naujame pasaulyje skirtingos kultūros ir komunikacijos priemonės susipynė ir ėmė vis labiau viena kitą veikti; komunikacija ir kultūra virto dviem organinėmis viena kitą maitinančiomis struktūromis. Kultūra, kurioje individai socializuojasi, lemia ir jų bendravimo būdus. Tam, kad būtų galima nustatyti kultūrų skirtumus, būtina iširti, kaip bendrauja jos bendruomenių atstovai. Skirtingi, įvairiose šalyse gyvenantys žmonės taip pat

nevienodai priima informacijos srautą. Šiandien bet kurią gautą informaciją akimirksniu galima paskleisti per naująją žiniasklaidą. Tai padidina naujosios žiniasklaidos svarbą tarpkultūrinėje komunikacijoje. Šiame tyrime bus nagrinėjama, kokią įtaką turi socialinė žiniasklaida tarpkultūrinio adaptavimosi procesui, pasitelkiant „Erasmus“ studentų, atvykusių į Turkiją švietimo tikslais, pavyzdį. Šiuo aspektu atlikta išsami analizė naudojant kokybinius ir kiekybinius tyrimo metodus.

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