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The current issue is the third of the eighth volume of the *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications (AJMMC), published by the Mass Media & Communication Unit of ATINER.*

Gregory T. Papanikos
President
ATINER

Athens Institute for Education and Research
A World Association of Academics and Researchers

20th Annual International Conference on Communication and Mass Media, 9-12 May 2022, Athens, Greece

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- Submission of Paper: **11 April 2022**

Academic Members Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. John Pavlik**, Head, Mass Media and Communication Research Unit, ATINER & Professor, Rutgers University, USA.

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- Exploration of the Aegean Islands
- Delphi Visit
- Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

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Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications
Volume 8, Issue 3, July 2022 – Pages 145-160

No News is Not Good News: The Implications of News Fatigue and News Avoidance in a Pandemic World

By Neill Fitzpatrick[*]

In an era dominated by a constant flow of grim news, news fatigue is becoming more recognized as a serious concern, even a health risk. Around-the-clock reports on the pandemic can seem unavoidable, along with ongoing coverage of political upheaval, climate change, and other major global issues. For some, the weight of the world's news becomes too much. A 2019 pre-pandemic survey of 12,000 American adults by the Pew Research Center found 66% admitting they were "worn out" by the sheer amount of news available to them. News fatigue can translate into a desire to consume less news in an effort to preserve and protect one's mental health. A Pew Research Center survey in April 2020 determined 71% of adult Americans say they need to "take breaks from COVID-19 news" while 43% said the news "leaves them feeling worse emotionally". The World Health Organization addressed the concerns about the impact of the news onslaught in the "Mental Health Tips" section of its website. The WHO offers this advice to the public: "Try to reduce how much you watch, read or listen to news that makes you feel anxious or distressed". Growing numbers are heeding this advice and reducing their news consumption. Some are opting for no news whatsoever as a means of coping. In May 2020, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University examined the "infodemically vulnerable" in Britain, those who chose to reduce consumption of COVID-19 related news. More than one-fifth of those surveyed said: "they often or always actively try to avoid the news," with the majority citing the impact on their mood. While mental health concerns appear to be the primary reason behind the increase in avoidance, growing distrust in mainstream media is also cited. While not a new phenomenon, the skepticism surrounding journalism was exacerbated during the pandemic as anti-vaccination advocates and conspiracy theorists questioned the validity and accuracy of the COVID-19 facts shared by news organizations, even governments. In this analysis of research, interviews, news articles, and social media content, I will advance recommendations for journalism researchers seeking to understand these issues. I will also propose strategies for journalists and news organizations seeking to navigate the issues and find solutions to help their embattled profession survive and recover.

Keywords: journalism, news avoidance, news fatigue, misinformation, trust

Introduction

For most of 2020 and 2021, the world has been in the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic. The health crisis has generated a barrage of news and information about the virus, its victims, and its overall impact. The Economist called it the most dominant news story since the Second World War (The Economist, 2020). It is not

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difficult to feel overwhelmed by the amount of news related to the pandemic alongside the many other significant global stories, including political upheaval, race-related protests, and climate change. Still, it is the news of the coronavirus that has dominated news coverage for more than a year. In May 2021, a Google search for the term "COVID-19 news" yielded more than 25.2 billion results. The majority of these stories share common factors such as negative headlines (Aslam, 2020) and grim statistics about COVID-19's death toll, as well as its impact on families, businesses, and health care workers (Sacerdote et al., 2020). For the millions locked down in their homes and working from home offices, the news is the constant connection to the outside world. Whether from social media or more traditional sources, the headlines are all but unavoidable and an incessant reminder of the health crisis. As the coronavirus spread around the world, it was not long before the amount of pandemic information available on various media became staggering and, for some, overwhelming. By April 2020, the World Health Organization was using the term "infodemic" to describe the torrent of COVID-19 news and information emanating from traditional sources, social media, even friends and family members. The WHO also introduced the term "infodemiology", defining it as "the study of that information and how to manage it" while providing a list of tips to help consumers "identify misinformation or disinformation" (World Health Organization, 2020b). It is important to point out that this deluge of news was a growing concern prior to the pandemic. During the presidency of Donald Trump from 2016 to 2020, the daily news cycle – those stories deemed most important and significant by journalists – was described as "insane" and "action-packed" (Kight, 2017). The mainstream media's coverage of President Trump's announcements and antics, as well as other significant issues, created a seemingly endless news cycle readily available to news consumers anytime on-demand, thanks to 24-hour television news channels and social media platforms. News fatigue seemed an inevitable side effect of this information saturation. In both 2018 and 2019, the Pew Research Center surveyed 12,000 American adults on the topic of news-induced fatigue. Each study found about two-thirds of the respondents admitting they were "worn out" by the sheer amount of news available to them (Gottfried, 2020). By April 2020, as the pandemic intensified, so did the fatigue factor. A 2020 Pew Research Center survey of 10,000 American adults found 71% saying they felt the need to "take breaks from COVID-19 news", while 43% said the news "leaves them feeling worse emotionally" (Mitchell et al., 2020). This research will examine one of the repercussions of news fatigue: news avoidance, when consumers temporarily or completely stop reading, watching, or listening to the news. For some, it may be an exercise in moderation as they limit how much news they consume. For others, it is a conscious decision to shun all forms of news altogether. This trend raises questions about the impact of such shunning on news consumers and on the journalism industry and what, if anything, can be done to slow or reverse it?

Research Problem

This is a descriptive study of the effects of constant news coverage and news consumption of information stemming from significant events or issues over an extended period. Specifically, the constant flow of pandemic-related news is triggering news fatigue among some consumers and prompting them to limit or avoid news consumption, temporarily or completely.

Research Questions

Through the analysis of existing data and new perspectives gleaned from interviews, I will endeavor to provide answers to the following questions:

> What is the impact of news avoidance on consumers and on journalism as an industry?
>
> Is news avoidance a short-term, pandemic-related phenomenon, or is it a trend attributed to issues such as distrust of news media or a decline in the overall quality of journalism?
>
> What can news organizations do to convince the public of the importance of staying informed by professional journalists during a life-threatening global event?
>
> How can journalists and news organizations best demonstrate they are relevant, reliable, and necessary sources of information, thereby regaining the trust of the public?

Methodology

This qualitative research is an analysis of news stories, opinion articles, and social media content primarily between January 2020 and June 2021. The news stories and opinion articles focused on the issues of the increased volume of news in recent years as well as on news consumption and the growing evidence of anxiety, stress, and "fatigue" caused by the constant barrage of news available to consumers. The stories and opinion articles were found on the websites of mainstream media outlets in North America and Europe as well as in studies and surveys conducted by journalism-related organizations. For example, the Pew Research Center, an American organization that studies journalism and other topics, found in an April 2020 survey that "the continuous news churn has had an impact. A majority of Americans say they need to take breaks from it, many say it makes them feel worse emotionally and half say they find it difficult to sift through what is true and what is not" (Mitchell et al., 2020). This material was supplemented with theories and research from academic research papers and journals discussing news consumption and related topics such as human behavior, trust in journalism, and the relevance of inclusion and diversity in the news industry. One example is the study *Sentiments and emotions evoked by news* *headlines of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak* which examined more than 141,000 news headlines pertaining to COVID-19 and the pandemic and found “Fear, trust, anticipation, sadness, and anger were the main emotions evoked by the news headlines” (Aslam, 2020). To determine the growing prevalence and increased public awareness of terms such as “news fatigue” and “COVID-19 news”, Google searches with these words were conducted. The research also utilized unobtrusive observation, based on 30 years of experience as a journalist, to examine the growth of news fatigue and news avoidance before and during the global pandemic. In addition, interviews on these topics were conducted with journalists across Canada chosen for their experience, and for their insight into the news industry and the challenges facing the profession. The questions were as follows:

> How do you respond to someone who says they have no need for news/journalism?
>
> Some say traditional, professional journalism has become irrelevant. How do you respond to this?
>
> In your opinion, what can journalists and news organizations do, or change, to restore confidence and trust in journalism and win back news avoiders?

The questions were sent to 31 journalists in January and February 2021. Responses were received from 14 journalists. While some of the interviewees have decades of experience, others are early in their journalism careers and have a different perspective on the challenges and potential solutions. This is relevant because the news industry has changed dramatically in the past two decades, especially, with the advent of the Internet and social media. The responses indicated that the younger journalists, those new to the profession, have different perspectives and opinions on the future of news than their more senior colleagues. As an example, one of the younger journalists responded with apparent frustration when asked what journalists and news organizations can do to restore trust and win back the news avoiders (question 3): “Stop with the bullshit. Stop with the trying to 'keep TV going' -- get in on technology instead of responding to it. Diversify positions of power” (BB, 2021). Given the subject matter and the critical, honest analysis requested, all names have been removed. Table 1 displays the initials used to identify the interviewees.

Table 1. Initials Used to Identify the Interviewees

Identifier	Title	Experience	Gender
RA	Web journalist	10 years	Female
GC	Senior editor/news host	25 years	Male
SG	News anchor/producer	35 years	Male
BR	Senior producer/host	25 years	Male
MA	Video journalist	5 years	Female
BJ	Former journalist	30 years	Male
GR	News anchor/producer	20 years	Female
LJ	News manager	20 years	Male
OS	News manager	15 years	Male
MJ	Supervising producer	30 years	Female
ST	Retired news manager	40 years	Male
BB	Journalist	15 years	Female
MR	Journalist	20 years	Female
RG	Chief news anchor	25 years	Male

The grounded theory approach was utilized to analyze the content of the stories, articles, and interviews and to identify recurring themes and categories. Developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, the purpose of the grounded theory qualitative methodology approach is to "construct theory grounded in data" (Corbin and Strauss 2015). However, this study's qualitative research is descriptive in nature. It is not intended to advance any new theory. Instead, the goal is to provide analysis and fresh insight into the recently intensified challenges of news fatigue and news avoidance as they relate to the present and the future of journalism. According to Corbin and Strauss, there is value to this descriptive approach as the analysis can add to existing knowledge and it "enables persons to take action and alter, contain, and change situations" (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). In the case of this research, the goals are to identify potential solutions to increased news fatigue and avoidance, encourage news organizations and journalists to evaluate and contain the current situation, and develop new methods of restoring public trust in journalism by better engaging news consumers with more relevant content.

Significance of the Study

While there has been substantial research into news consumption and its implications, there has been limited study of news avoidance. One reason is that news-induced fatigue and subsequent avoidance have only emerged as significant issues in recent years, from 2016 to 2021. This growth coincided with major, ongoing global stories such as the polarizing Brexit debate in Europe and the tumultuous American presidency of Donald Trump. Trump's rampant use of Twitter flooded inboxes, newspapers, and television screens due to the mainstream media's unbridled enthusiasm to report almost everything he said or posted. The president's highly politicized and often outrageous comments, combined with the non-stop, around-the-clock media coverage, spawned a news cycle that both titillated and alienated news consumers. The headlines and constant news alerts also caused stress for some, with one psychologist describing the condition as "headline stress disorder" and comparing the news onslaught to "missile explosions in a siege without end" (Stosny, 2017). While Trump raised eyebrows and Brexit boiled over, the extensive media coverage raised concerns about public trust – in both politicians and the news media (Newman, 2018). It was enough for some news consumers to tune out. By 2019, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's annual Digital News Report found 32% of those surveyed worldwide said they "actively avoid" the news, with avoidance highest in Croatia (56%), Turkey (55%), and Greece (54%) (Newman, 2020). As Trump and Brexit waned, the pandemic infected and monopolized the news cycle. Following a surge of interest in the first few months of 2020, consumers turned away, citing mental health concerns due to the largely negative COVID-19 headlines leaving them "feeling worse emotionally" (Mitchell et al., 2020). As more people choose to avoid the news, occasionally or completely, it is worthwhile to analyze the extent and impact of this avoidance.

Literature Review

Aware or Worn Out?

Humans have a thirst for knowledge. Whether around the corner or around the world, we feel a need to know what's going on and how it may affect our life. Indeed, some believe it is our "duty to keep informed" as responsible citizens (McCombs and Poindexter, 1983). This is not a new phenomenon, but what is new is the sheer amount of news available and accessible to people. The abundance of information at our fingertips has increased exponentially in the past 20 years due to advances in technology and the arrival of the internet and social media. It has never been easier for us to access information. As the enormity of the global pandemic became clear in 2020, millions were seeking the latest details from social media and from traditional sources such as radio and television news. In the early weeks of the pandemic, audience ratings, the measure of how many people watch newscasts, soared to unprecedented and unexpected levels for most news organizations (Johnson, 2020). As one journalist interviewed for this study stated: "Certainly, raw numbers are lower than they were in 2011/12 but we've seen a stunning revival in ratings over the past year as people clamour for the latest COVID news" (GC, 2021). This "clamour" was welcomed by journalists. They had witnessed a slow but steady decline in viewers, listeners, and readers between 2010 and 2020 as growing numbers of consumers, especially the younger demographic, chose to gather news from social media platforms rather than traditional sources (Wakefield, 2016). The pandemic, and the desire to stay up to date on the latest developments, changed this. According to another veteran television journalist: "The best news and perhaps the most surprising: our ratings data shows more people are watching our newscasts than ever before" (SG, 2021). Again, it's important to emphasize this consumer thirst for details occurred early in the pandemic when the story was changing daily, even by the hour. The 24-hour television news channels also saw audience increases, especially during live broadcasts of announcements by politicians and health officials. “I actually think the pandemic has been the best thing ever for local news and we have seen an unprecedented resurgence of viewers. It has literally put our 24 hours channel on the map” (MJ, 2021). However, this audience surge soon became another victim of the pandemic, as consumers turned away, admitting they felt overwhelmed by the constant flow of information. In May 2020, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University examined the “infodemically vulnerable” in Britain, people who chose to lessen the consumption of COVID-19 related news. More than one-fifth of those surveyed said “they often or always actively try to avoid the news” with the majority citing the impact on their moods (Kleis Nielsen et al., 2020). One year later, a similar sentiment was detected in Canada. In May 2021, more than two-thirds (69%) of 1002 Canadians surveyed admitted being “burned out when it comes to consuming news about the pandemic” (Bricker, 2021) and more than half (53%) agreed that news organizations should “focus less on COVID-19 and more on other important stories” (Bricker, 2021). At the same time, however, the perception of the news media’s effectiveness is quite favorable, with 59% of those surveyed agreeing the coverage helped contain the spread of COVID-19 in Canada. Research has confirmed the mental health impact of news consumption. One study found heightened anxiety, even sadness, in people who watched negative news-related material, such as bulletins, after only minutes (Johnston & Davey, 1997). The material shown to the study participants in 2011 was edited to emphasize negative information. A decade later, the real-life negative impact of the pandemic has also been documented. On its website, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States highlights the “major effect on our lives” of COVID-19. The CDC’s advice on coping with coronavirus-related stress is to limit news consumption to “just a couple of times a day” and to disconnect “from phone, tv, and computer screens for a while” (CDC, 2021). The World Health Organization also addresses the stress factor in the “Mental Health Tips” section of its website, encouraging people to “reduce how much you watch, read or listen to news that makes you feel anxious or distressed.” (World Health Organization, 2020a).

Aversion and Avoidance

In discussing news fatigue and avoidance, it is worthwhile to include another term: aversion.

The word’s origin is the Latin *avertere,* which means to ‘turn away from’. Indeed, one definition of aversion is: “a feeling of repugnance toward something with a desire to avoid or turn from it” (Merriam-Webster, 2021). One could argue that, for some, news avoidance begins with an aversion to the news. This “feeling of repugnance” may stem from the fatigue generated by the massive amounts of news available to us. The repugnance may also begin with a growing distrust of news organizations and journalists or, perhaps, a lack of confidence in the accuracy of the news stories (Kalogeropoulos, 2017). In all cases, the result can be a conscious decision to "turn away" from the news, partially or completely. Partial news avoidance may be fatigue-oriented, with the avoider displaying an aversion only to certain topics or triggers, such as COVID-19, climate change, or Donald Trump's latest announcements. An active, consistent news avoider "will not accept being confronted with any news" (Weitz, 2021). One implication of aversion and avoidance can be a less-informed populace, with citizens who are "are not sufficiently equipped to take decisions in elections or referendums" (Kalogeropoulos, 2017). During a global pandemic, the question could be: are news avoiders sufficiently equipped to make informed decisions about their health? Some believe they are or, at least, they believe they are no less informed than their news-consuming counterparts. In the avoider's view, mainstream, traditional news coverage is largely superficial, providing only a "…distant, water-cooler-level awareness of thousands of stories, at least for the few weeks each is popular" (Cain, 2017). Some avoiders proudly proclaim their disdain for modern journalism, stating, (Dobelli, 2019) and declaring it "a ridiculous system" (Dobelli, 2019). These vocal avoiders also encourage others to adopt their perspectives of recognizing that news is "toxic" and to take part in "a news diet" (Dobelli, 2019) as a way of relieving the stress and anxiety caused by media coverage. This speaks to another issue and another reason some cite for avoidance: the overall quality of mainstream journalism and its ability to properly and effectively inform.

Quantity and Quality

It is difficult to argue that consumers are not informed by news organizations and journalists. Every hour of every day, we can access information from newspaper websites, television and radio stations, and social media platforms. Still, what is the overall relevance of this information for news consumers? How much of it do they actually take the time to read, watch, or listen to because they feel it affects them? As one veteran journalist, now a political communications expert, explained: "Most people who tell me they "don't read the news anymore" are folks who no longer feel the stories presented are relevant to their lives" (BJ, 2021). The issue of relevance, when it comes to news stories, has been the subject of research. One study in 2019 asked consumers to rank a variety of news stories based on what they would read or engage in versus what they would avoid. It found the most relevant stories are those that: "affect their personal lives, as they impinge on members of their family, the place where they work, their leisure activities, and their local community" (Schroder, 2019). To put it simply: "People care most about things that affect them" (Dean, 2014). At times, this relevance can be based on location. A news consumer tends to be "more interested in his local weather forecast than the national outlook. He is more interested in knowing why a police officer is taking a report on his block than somewhere else in the city" (Dean, 2014). However, Dean points out the relevance, the connection, can also be linked to a consumer's emotions or specific interests. "The reader may identify with a range of life experiences, from the emotional shock of losing a job or worrying about a sick child" (Dean, 2014). With this relevance defined, a primary, important question for news organizations and journalists is: how can they ensure relevance? A journalist interviewed for this study believes the answer is audience research: "Quite simply the media/journalists need to take some time to understand audience/reader behavior" (ST, 2021). The next step is to act on that research and become more relevant. One American news organization took the time and spent the money to learn what consumers want. The E.W. Scripps company owns 60 television stations across the United States. It sent representatives into 100 homes in various cities to ask about news preferences and relevance. The consumers told them their news needs were not being met and that the non-stop, breakneck speed of the news cycle left them looking for other options: "People craved a deeper look, one that captured their community in full, not just in shards. They wanted longer stories with more context" (Ripley, 2021). Scripps analyzed the research and produced a new television newscast format in some test markets with longer, more in-depth stories "that were seven or eight minutes long—an eternity in the business—audiences watched them to the end, as long as they were well told" (Ripley, 2021). The positive reaction to the deeper storytelling format is mirrored for news organizations that are placing a greater emphasis on an approach called "solutions journalism". The Solutions Journalism Network was founded in 2013 to "change the culture of news" and to foster "rigorous reporting on responses to social problems" (Solutions Journalism Network, 2013). It does this by training journalists to think differently about the stories they cover: "We help reporters, producers, and editors bring the same attention and rigor to stories about responses to problems as they do to the problems themselves" (Solutions Journalism Network, 2013). The goal of the training is to help win back the trust of news consumers who feel disconnected from journalism due to perceived shallow, negative news coverage by providing "a more accurate account of the state of play than does a dystopian ticker tape of corruption and failure" (Solutions Journalism Network, 2013). One study conducted for the organization gave participants different versions of news articles. Some articles focused on a problem, while others focused on the problem and potential solutions. The researchers found that "solutions-based journalism holds promise in at least three areas: heightening audiences' perceived knowledge and sense of efficacy, strengthening the connection between audiences and news organizations, and catalyzing potential engagement on an issue" (Curry and Hammonds, 2014). Of the three areas, strengthening the connection between audiences and news organizations may be the most critical to the future of journalism. In the words of OS, a senior journalist interviewed for this study, the strategy will require a new approach by news organizations and the willingness to change: "to build trust and confidence with news avoiders, we must constantly be challenging how we do things. Current attitudes towards the media don't have to mean the end of journalism – it is merely an opportunity to fast-track essential modernization within the industry to truly re-engage with the public we serve" (OS, 2021).

Restoring Trust

All journalists interviewed for this research are aware of the avoidance trend and the growing numbers of so-called "never-newsers". Some, more than others, realize they and their news organizations must do more to regain or keep the public's trust. Greater transparency is a vital component of this. Educating news consumers on how journalists perform their roles and why certain stories and issues are covered over others may be more important than ever before.

"I do think we need to do a better job of educating the public about how we operate, being transparent about the standards and practices and not just the broad strokes but by openly explaining in our journalism why we made specific decisions" (BR, 2021). Recent research conducted on the subject of "trust in news" indicates the public's lack of understanding of journalism is a significant factor: "It suggests that news organisations would benefit from providing clearer cues and signals about who they are, their histories, what they stand for, and how they do their work" (Toff et al., 2021). This theme of transparency and education is shared by another journalist, who believes quality content and coverage will attract and retain consumers: "Be transparent about story selection and process. Let the public know why you're covering a story a certain way. If your content resonates, the audience will show up" (BB, 2021). For some, trust through transparency means less "telling" by journalists and more "showing" by providing the reader with not only the story and the interviews but with the information and facts that have been uncovered by the reporter, such as charts and data. This open sharing of information "respects the reader's intellect" (Stead, 2021) and empowers consumers to "reach their own conclusions" (Stead, 2021) about the story or issue.

Inclusion and Accuracy

Journalist MA is a recent university graduate. With less than five years of experience, she is relatively new to the profession. Still, she believes she understands why many news consumers have lost trust in journalism in recent years. MA sees it as a reflection of how the industry has evolved into a non-stop, 24/7 entity that endeavors to mirror and compete with the omnipresent social media platforms as news sources. "Fast food journalism, while often well-meaning, has harmed many marginalized communities because it often lacks compassion and sensitivity" (MA, 2021). Understanding the "marginalized communities" is now seen as a priority for growing numbers of news organizations hoping to remain relevant and rebuild sagging audience numbers. In many countries, mainstream news outlets are under increasing pressure to operate with more employees that accurately reflect the diversity of the community, including people in senior and management positions. A 2019 survey of more than 1800 newspapers in the United States found "people of color comprised 21.9 percent of salaried employees," up slightly from 21.8 percent in 2018 (Clark, 2019). The survey also found people of color made up only 18.8 percent of newsroom managers. In the United Kingdom, a 2021 survey indicates a lopsided lack of diversity in newsrooms, with BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic) journalists comprising just 8 percent overall (Spilsbury, 2021). In addition to staffing, newsrooms are also being encouraged, even ordered, to seek out and produce more stories that are relevant to diverse audiences. Younger journalists, especially, see this as a priority: "We need more BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) journalists in positions of power and covering stories that mean something to people and communities that have been underreported" (RA, 2021). The younger generation of journalists, both white and ethnic, are, at times, frustrated with the slow pace of change to the structure and philosophies of traditional newsrooms: "The institutions that we all trusted for so long have been revealed to not be as objective as they once claimed. In fact, at least in North America, it has been shown time and time again, the objectivity is through a white-centric lens" (BB, 2021). They are adamant a more inclusive, diverse journalism industry can both retain consumers and win back avoiders: "Rethinking our ethics and understandings of bias and objectivity play a big part in building trust" (MA, 2021). Some organizations are taking action. The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) first created an internal Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group in 2014. In 2019, a "refresh" of the group was announced with the chair stating: "I want to support the BBC's ambition to be the most creative broadcaster in the world. To do this, it needs to truly reflect the diversity of all its audiences, both on screen and behind the camera" (Ilube, 2019). The announcement of the "refresh" also revealed that BAME staff in leadership roles at the BBC was at 11.4 percent in 2019, up slightly from 10.4 percent the previous year. In September 2020, the broadcaster unveiled an updated diversity and inclusion plan that calls for new "50:20:12 workforce targets". Specifically, the goals are "50 percent women; at least 20 percent black; Asian or minority ethnic; and at least 12 percent disabled employees" by 2025 (BBC, 2021). In the Canadian province of Manitoba, the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) is taking a different approach to inclusion and connecting with its audience. CBC Manitoba launched its first community advisory board in May 2021, advertising for members of the public who meet specific criteria: "The board will be chosen to reflect the ethnocultural, socio-economic, geographic and political diversity of the province". Once selected, the 15 board members will "help add context and perspective" to the newsroom's coverage and provide "advice about specific reporting projects". However, the community members "will not oversee editorial decisions" (MacKenzie, 2021). Conversely, the British online news company Tortoise, founded in 2019, invites people to become members of the newsroom and makes some radical commitments on its website: "We'll show you our inner workings. We'll let you know when we've fallen short" (tortoisemedia.com, 2021). One of its founders, James Harding, is a former head of news at the BBC. In his "What we are for" essay on the Tortoise website, he outlines how the company is different: "We want ours to be a newsroom that gives everyone a seat at the table; one that has the potential to be smarter than any other newsroom, because it harnesses the vast intelligence network that sits outside it" (Harding, 2019). If memberships are an indication, Tortoise's unique approach is effective. Since its launch in 2019, the company claims 100,000 people have joined, paying up to 100 British pounds a year for a seat at the Tortoise table (Tortoise, 2020).

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic is unquestionably a global crisis, but it has also provided an opportunity for news organizations and journalists to illustrate their relevance and regain a level of trust with news consumers. In the first months of the pandemic, news audience levels increased significantly as an anxious public sought any and all details of the pandemic, the lockdowns, the death toll, and the safety campaigns. However, as the pandemic continued, audience levels began to dip as consumers found themselves overwhelmed and confused by the amount and variety of COVID-19 information coming from many sources. Of the many questions surrounding news avoidance, one of the most concerning is the effect of fewer people consuming news, at least in traditional formats such as newspapers, television, and radio. The reduction of news audiences is unquestionably a financial concern for news organizations that rely on revenue from advertising to continue operating. Less revenue generally means cuts to resources, as in fewer journalists seeking the facts and telling stories. There is a greater impact: fewer people staying connected and informed of issues and events within their communities and around the world. Journalists interviewed for this study share this avoidance concern. Indeed, GR calls the pandemic "a perfect example" of why professional journalists are needed:

> "This was the time for news organizations to present the issues/concerns and to ask questions of medical professionals and government officials on how the virus works, the impact on the healthcare system and the economy, and what plans should have been in place for this public health emergency" (GR, 2021).

Still, there is a very real possibility that news fatigue and avoidance are more than short-term, pandemic-related issues and that growing numbers of consumers are disappointed and disillusioned with news organizations and their products. RG believes this is a crucial time for journalists to illustrate their skills and prove their worth to information-hungry consumers.

> "We are swimming in junk. Irrelevant, funny, alarming, distracting, compelling, false junk. Who is going to sift through it? If there's no need for traditional journalism, we would leave this critical path out of the pandemic to individual storytellers and partisans. It would confuse, distort and misinform millions of people" (RG, 2021).

Journalists have long defended themselves and their profession, and, clearly, they continue to do so. However, they must spend less time defending and do more to educate news consumers about the profession and its processes. The lack of knowledge about why reporters and news agencies do what they do invariably leads to misconceptions, stereotypes, and a lack of trust. In its annual Trust Barometer, which measures trust in institutions around the world, the Edelman communications firm found trust in media, both traditional and social, at all-time lows in 2021. A factor in the plummeting trust level appears to be a strong perception of bias among journalists. Of the 33,000 people surveyed by Edelman, 59% agreed with this statement: "Journalists and reporters are purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations" (Edelman Communications, 2021). Nearly two-thirds, 61%, agreed with the statement, "The media is not doing well at being objective and non-partisan" (Edelman, 2021). An essential first step in restoring trust and confidence involves listening more to the concerns of news consumers, in general, and news avoiders, specifically, and acting on those concerns.

> "We need to be extra sensitive to the climate. People are very suspicious right now. We have to be better than we have ever been before. That includes making sure we are fair, accurate and we must guard against personal bias creeping into our journalism" (LJ, 2021).

Based on my experience as a journalist, I believe that many news organizations have fallen short in investing the time and money to design and conduct relevant audience research to confirm what consumers want in news coverage, as opposed to assuming to know what they want based solely on experience and what has worked in the past.

> "Often it's quite obvious what the audience is really interested in, but some journalists think they know better" (ST, 2021).

Along with research, more transparency in news coverage is an essential element in rebuilding trust and winning back avoiders. Increased levels of transparency can be attained by providing detailed explanations and background on how story elements are gathered, from the interviews to the data and documents cited in the story. For example, publishing or posting entire interviews or transcripts would enable consumers to determine if the interviewee's quotes were taken out of context or influenced by editing. Such transparency would help consumers better appreciate the role of the journalist by helping them understand the news process and the work involved in finding and telling stories, from the initial concept to the final published version.

> "We also need to "pull back the curtain" more often. Show people where a story came from, why and how we covered it" (MR, 2021).

This transparent approach would serve to clarify and alleviate long-standing public misconceptions of bias among reporters and news organizations. It would also help engage disenchanted news consumers and entice them to watch, read, and listen once again.

> "Consumers are on high alert for balance and objectivity. If they see you are making a consistent effort to be fair, they will consume your product" (LJ, 2021).

Greater transparency and improved understanding could also help attract a new and younger audience, something sorely needed for traditional media organizations, especially, as their existing audiences age and die off. In 2017, a survey of American adults found the median age of cable news consumers was 60 for CNN and 65 for FOX News (Katz, 2018). A 2020 survey by Statista indicated that only 15 percent of American adults aged 18-29 watch cable news daily or regularly. Perhaps not surprisingly, 42 percent of the 18-29 demographic admitted they never watch cable news (Statista, 2020). The public's overall interest in news has declined in many countries, according to research conducted by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Its 2021 Report on News shows the number of people who say they are "very or extremely interested" in the news has dropped by an average of five percentage points since 2016. While there has been little or no change in some countries (Germany, Netherlands), the drop is dramatic in others, including a "17 percentage point drop in Spain and the UK, 12 points in Italy and Australia, and eight in France, and Japan." (Newman, 2021). Journalists and news leaders must ensure the coverage and story selection are relevant and reflective of today's society and issues. Improved trust and increased relevance can also be attained when news organizations address the lack of diversity and alternative perspectives in newsrooms and strive for improved understanding of ethnic and marginalized communities. The world has changed dramatically in the past 20 years but, apart from technology, little has changed in how newsrooms and journalists inform the public. New perspectives are required from a new generation of informed, diverse journalists who are willing to listen to and learn from news consumers and news avoiders. It seems clear the "old ways" are simply no longer viable and, frankly, no longer accepted by a more discerning, demanding public.

> "We need to challenge our own unconscious bias and that of our colleagues to ensure journalism truly reflects the priorities of our *entire* audience" (OS, 2021).

Still, just as there are news avoiders among consumers, there are those within journalism who refuse to alter their traditional, tested methods of storytelling. This reluctance, or resistance, is at their peril. Without a revised focus and attitude, journalism will continue to falter, and, in many cases, news organizations will continue to fail in the eyes of consumers, and in the eyes of some journalists. MA is the youngest journalist interviewed for this research. She only recently graduated from journalism school and has the least practical experience by far. Still, she is the future of a struggling, embattled profession and understands it must adapt to the changing perspectives and demands of society.

> "Resisting change and failing to innovate only results in layoffs. If submitting to an ever-changing media landscape keeps journalism afloat but makes "traditional" reporting irrelevant, so be it" (MA, 2021).

It is clear both the consumers of news and those who produce it are frustrated with the current environment, but it is the journalists and news organizations that have the most to lose if nothing changes. The pandemic is an opportunity for journalists to display their relevance. The question is: can they regain the trust of the public and win back the news avoiders?

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Town & Gown - University and Community Leaders' Perceptions on Mutually Beneficial Relationships: An Urban American University Case Study

By Joe Harasta[*]

This study examines the relationship between an urban university and its community through the perspectives of university and community leaders. Employing a phenomenological approach, the researcher used in-depth interviews for both groups of leaders to solicit their opinions about the relationship, the influences affecting the relationship, and what steps could be made to improve the relationship. Findings indicate a desire from both sides to improve relations between the institution and neighboring communities. However, a disconnect exists between what university leaders believe they are doing to improve the relationship and what community leaders actually interpret the university doing. Community leaders indicate mismanaged communication, conflicting messages, and isolationism as the university's primary offenses affecting the relationship. University leaders state that the community's stubbornness, lack of appreciation for university-initiated community improvements, and ignorance toward the University's mission negatively affects the relationship from the community's side. The article includes the techniques used to alleviate this disconnect.

Keywords: town-gown, community relations, service learning, community engagement, public relations

Introduction

The primary goal of the public relations department of any organization is to develop, facilitate, and foster goodwill between the organization and its stakeholders. Among the most important of these stakeholders are the community members neighboring the organization. Creating a positive relationship between an organization and these stakeholders, often generalized as the public, is crucial to the sustained success of organizations, including colleges and universities. However, the phenomenon of "studentification", or the changes in community makeup caused by the influx of young students into college towns each semester, often causes conflicts between students and non-college residents resulting in strained relationships between university officials and local residents (Smith, 2002). Broken Windows Theory helps explain this phenomenon, when a transient demographic population, like students, leads to the decay of the college-town community, especially for non-academic residents (Kelling and Wilson, 1982).

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Accordingly, the individuals responsible for developing, facilitating, and fostering such goodwill must make crucial decisions concerning the implementation of programs aimed at improving community relations. In higher education, those individuals responsible for making such decisions are often public affairs or university relations directors. That job, however, is often not an easy one. Shaeffer (2017, p. 1) notes, "When the interaction of campus and community – often as not described in terms of town and gown relationships – is ignored, all too often a steep price is paid". Accordingly, without information on community perspectives, institutions may be blindly enacting and implementing policies and programs aimed at improving their image within the community that offer no benefit, or worse, create more problems.

While profit-based organizations can adapt to meet the demands of their publics by introducing new product lines or investing financially in the community heavily, university relations personnel often face a more difficult task of directing the institution to meet the demands of its community. Unexpected and/or difficult to manage issues such as campus crime, expansion, and tax-exempt status have forced university relations directors to maintain consistently positive relations with community members in an unpredictable environment. Despite these problems, many colleges and universities across the country have developed positive relationships with their surrounding communities. Nonetheless, many institutions of higher education still experience poor community relations and the damaging effects of poor public image.

"The story of the birth and survival of an inner-city college transcends its classes and campus" (Parment, 2011, p. 1). Poor relations between a college or university and the private citizens, businesses, community groups, and local government in which it resides with can decrease the institution's reputation and its ability to establish itself as a preeminent institution of learning. Moreover, poor community relations can drain resources that could go toward improving the institution's academic programs, resources for faculty and students, and future initiatives. Accordingly, colleges and universities must establish and maintain positive relationships with their non-academic neighbors to not only maintain a positive image, but also meet organizational goals. These community/institution relationships, also known as town-gown relations, are integral to an institution's overall success. In their study of town-gown relations, Murphy and Tacky (2002, p. 21) found:

> It's increasingly clear that poor community relations are risky. Problems with neighbors or local officials have diverted too much time and money from the school's core mission. At best, such problems can delay or frustrate plans, sap morale, and create long-term mutual bitterness. At worst, they can pit community against school and actually imperil the ability of the school to operate. Poor or mismanaged community relations can...effectively cancel an institution's license to do business.

Accordingly, the goal of any organization is to foster positive, effective community relations. Burke (1999, p. 13) notes, "Attitudes, expectations, and behavior in communities…have to be managed. If they are not, companies will see their license to operate continue to erode and their competitive strategies become unworkable". In the business of higher education, the University's license to operate entails successfully educating students and building prestige to entice students to attend its institution over the multitude of available colleges and universities in which it competes. Colleges and universities depend on student enrolment to operate, and without them, these institutions lose a major funding source that affects its operations. Furthermore, in the absence of a strong relationship with its community, an institution cannot expect to build prestige and recruit students. Therefore, institutions must seek feedback from the community if they are to manage this relationship effectively.

The "*Odd Couple*" Relationship

Mismanagement often stems from a lack of useful feedback from the community—a necessity in reducing complacency and initiating change in the institution's relationship with its neighbors. Issues affecting community relations were noted by the Center for Educational Leadership as early as 1978 found that real estate development, congestion, and construction were among the most notable sources of strife between colleges and communities.

Community members often find themselves at odds with their academic neighbors regarding taxes, crime, and congestion. Expansion plans that do not add to the community's tax base, increased vandalism and noise complaints, and large student populations that cause traffic and pedestrian gridlock often leave residents resentful of their academic neighbors. In opposition, college and university populations often feel antagonized by what they interpret at ignorant or burdensome locals who do not appreciate the institution. Sandman and Baker-Clark found (1997) that universities and communities must understand each other's needs as well as share the same goals if they are to coexist together. Accordingly, gathering and analyzing useful information from both community and institutional perspectives may enable university relations directors to gauge both groups' misconceptions and misinterpretations. In doing so, they may also help reduce hostility between the two sides and lay the groundwork for a mutually beneficial relationship. However, it is often not until a crisis or emergency occurs that a college or university revaluates its relationship with its community. By then, it is often too late.

While waiting for a crisis may establish a sense of urgency within the organization, it may also cause more harm than good. Kotter (1996, p. 45) notes, "Visible crises can be enormously helpful in catching people's attention and pushing up urgency levels. But in an increasingly fast-moving world, waiting for a fire to break out is a dubious strategy." In higher education, such "visible crises" often take center stage when issues regarding town-gown relations arise.

At the Heart of the Problem

Oftentimes, disputes over alcohol-related crime, noise complaints, and economic discrepancies facilitate many town-gown problems. The University of Florida's Town-Gown Taskforce (2002, para. 7) identified "...noise, parking, infrastructure upgrades, home ownership, neighborhood appearance, code enforcement, garbage and litter, landlord issues, nuisance parties, property values, special event attendance, and consistency of rule application and accountability" as the most common causes of friction between colleges and their communities. All of which negatively affect public image. Woldorff and Weiss (2018) found that residents of college towns take two strategies to cope with problematic student behavior – defensive and normalizing. Defensive involves actions like calling police, and normalizing entails avoiding conflict or simply rationalizing that life in a college town is going to be disruptive.

With frictions between the University and community come negative public image that can lead to reduced student enrollment, fewer alumni/grant donations, and diminished college ratings. Bruning et al. (2006, p. 126) state, "Oftentimes, universities became analogous to self-sufficient 'cities' where students could eat, sleep, be entertained, and have nearly all their needs met without ever leaving the borders of campus".

Cutlip et al. (2000, p. 542) add that colleges need positive relationships with their community stakeholders because:

1. Financial support is insufficient and precarious as other public institutions' roles in society are expanded.
2. Competition for qualified students is spirited and costly.
3. Constraints and regulations that make university administration difficult and costly are imposed by agencies of the federal government.
4. Academic freedom and tenure are challenged by both internal and external stakeholders.

Gumprecht (2003, p. 57) adds:

> Universities are often viewed with conflicting emotions in college towns: welcome by the economic benefits and quality of life they bring, but resented because they are without regard for the interests of permanent residents.

There are, however, means to supplant the tensions between colleges and their communities with respect and collaboration. Nonetheless, despite the positives colleges and universities bring to their communities; town-gown initiatives are often fraught with disagreements and misunderstandings. David Scott, chancellor at the University of Massachusetts (UMass), notes that:

> UMass and neighboring communities tend to arrive at town-gown relations much the same way motorists arrive at a four-way stop sign, trying to work out the right-of-way without collision, obscene gestures, or rage. But with each successful stop and go... the campus and its neighbors develop a warmer relationship. (Steinkamp, 1998, para. 1)

In facilitating such amicable relationships, several universities and colleges have organized commissions and coalitions that seat the institution's administration with local residents and community leaders in hopes of building lasting partnerships between the two factions.

For instance, Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, has developed UniverCity Partnerships, which, "...will promote economic development initiatives among businesses, neighborhoods, and academic institutions" (Valenzia, 2004, para. 1). A similar program at the University of Pennsylvania specifically seeks to build mutually beneficial relationships that aid distressed West Philadelphia neighborhoods while providing faculty and students funds for program development and assistantships. Generally, colleges and universities provide a multitude of opportunities, both economic and cultural, to their communities, and they need to both utilize and publicize these benefits (Massey et al. 2014).

Because the studied organization's leadership required the institution's identity be kept confidential, the researcher is required to refer to it as The University throughout this article. At The University, the institution partners with its community through a program that offers its neighborhoods' schools, churches, and non-profits health, legal, and community revitalization programs

Addressing the importance of these university-community partnerships in her report to the Office of Partnerships in 2002, University of Pennsylvania President Judith Rodin, states (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2002, p. 2):

> Real progress takes a different mindset, asking not what we have to do to the community, or even for the community, but rather what we do with the community. I am convinced that sustained community partnerships will help define successful universities in the 21st century, and such partnerships will fail in the absence of a continuous dialogue

As a result, many institutions are implementing programs in hopes of spearheading their own town-gown improvement initiatives. Such partnerships and committees are also effective because they facilitate buy-in from both the community and the institution to develop programs that promote positive relations as well as provide "...a powerful coalition that can act as a team" (Kotter, 1996, p. 56). Such sustained teamwork can also promote the most important aspect of positive town-gown relations—trust. Kotter (1996, pp. 65–66) adds:

> The combination of trust and a common shared goal...make for a powerful team. The resulting guiding coalition will have the capacity to make needed changes despite all the forces of inertia...without a powerful guiding coalition, change stalls and carnage grows.

Therefore, it is crucial that colleges and universities extend themselves beyond the campus limits to their non-academic neighbors by seeking their perspectives and sharing the institution's vision with the community. Ernest Boyer, former president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, said institutions of higher learning, "... must become a more vigorous partner in search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, and must affirm its historical commitment" (Boyer, 1996, p. 16).

Nonetheless, without a clear understanding of the issues that can negatively affect town-gown relations, even the most trusting coalition between institutions and communities may fail. This understanding comes from careful study and research of the relationship between the institution and the community by The University. Murphy and Tacky (2002, p. 21) found, "...schools have to understand that the benefits of good community relations are not the result of luck or the right chemistry between the [institution] head and the mayor...rather, these benefits come from strategic planning and activity." Moreover, Haberman and Dolphin (1988, p. 82) state:

> The heart of public relations is acceptable performance. But to help achieve it, practitioners must know what current performance is. They must also know if it is acceptable, and if it is unacceptable, they must know why and to whom it is unacceptable.

Accordingly, to identify acceptable performance that focuses on positive town-gown relations, public relations practitioners must proactively initiate research methods to understand the current state of town-gown relations. Thus, through research, public relations practitioners can know if this performance level is being achieved, and if it is not, what steps are necessary to achieve it. Hendrix (1998, p. 171) adds, "The public relations practitioner should assess problems the organization may have had with community groups and make searching analyses of community relations opportunities". Lastly, Gail Raiman, vice president for the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities' public affairs, states the public relations practitioners, "...must go to these opinion leaders instead of waiting for them to come to us" (Cutlip et al. 2000, p. 543). Therefore, it is imperative that practitioners understand the influences affecting public perception prior to devising plans aimed at reinforcing positive relations and improving negative relations.

Scope of the Study

This study seeks to describe the issues concerning town-gown relations at The University as reported by university and community leaders, including overall perceptions of their relationships, sources of problems between the institution and its community, as well as ways to minimize these problems.

In finding ways to build these mutually beneficial relationships between the institution and the community, university public relations directors must acquire community members' perspectives and opinions regarding institutional image. Haberman and Dolphin (1988, p. 83) note, "...the practitioner needs facts. Failure to get the necessary facts can undermine an attempt to achieve good public relations. Ignorance of important facts can make further action futile or even harmful".

Thus, acquiring community members' opinions of the institution may help university relations directors counter anger and distain felt by the community and, in doing so, instill a shared goal or vision between the institution and the community—specifically, the institution's vision for itself and its community. Kotter (1996) states that such a shared vision helps clarify the need for change as well as its benefits. "A good vision acknowledges that sacrifices will be necessary but makes clear that these sacrifices will yield particular benefits that are far superior than those available today—or tomorrow—without attempting to change. Accordingly, communicating the vision is paramount" (Kotter, 1996, p. 70).

Background on the Organization

The University was established in the second half of the Nineteenth Century in a large East-Coast city in the United States. Currently, approximately 6,000 students enroll in the school's nearly 70 undergraduate and graduate programs. The campus comprises over 50 buildings including dormitories, apartment complexes, and town homes on over 100 acres within its urban neighborhoods. Nearly 2,000 university students donate approximately 100,000 hours of service to the community each year. In 2017-2018, the University:

- Donated nearly $2 million to promote businesses development near its campus.
- Provided over $1 million for security to its community, including a liaison to the neighborhood town watch.
- Gave approximately $10 million to its host city for hometown student scholarships.
- Employed faculty and staff, of whom, nearly half reside in the city with over one-third living in neighborhoods near the campus.

Table 1. Total Population of The University's Four Primary Neighborhoods 1960-2010

	1960	**1970**	**1980**	**1990**	**2000**	**2010**
Neighborhood A	67,152	65,377	56,306	52,441	50,696	46,195
Neighborhood B	31,781	32,392	32,854	30,223	25,958	22,412
Neighborhood C	36,838	35,797	32,967	34,839	37,229	42,133
Neighborhood D	22,122	23,144	22,776	20,691	18,866	17,862

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2010*).
*2020 Census data were not available at the time of this article's writing.

Table 1 illustrates the changes in overall population of the neighborhoods The University borders. The most noticeable trend from these forty years includes the decline in residency in all neighborhoods from 1960 to 2000 except for Neighborhood C, with Neighborhood A losing the most residents during this time. Also noticeable is the market decline in population within Neighborhood A and Neighborhood C between 1970 and 1980.

Table 2. Median Home Sales Price of The University's Neighborhoods: 1975-2015 (Constant 1999 US$)

	1975	**1985**	**1995**	**2005**	**2015**
Neighborhood A	$25,000	$26,000	$39,000	$42,000	$41,000
Neighborhood B	$34,000	$29,000	$35,000	$37,000	$26,000
Neighborhood C	$45,000	$39,000	$39,000	$45,000	$45,000
Neighborhood D	$39,000	$35,000	$39,000	$51,000	$46,000

Table 2 shows that both Neighborhood B and Neighborhood D experienced the greatest decline in house values from 1985 to 2015 while Neighborhoods A and C remained constant since 2005. As with Table 2, Neighborhood C remained most consistent of all the neighborhoods over the forty-year period.

Table 3. Most Frequently Cited Neighborhood Complaints in 2018 (Reported by Current and Former Residents in Percentages)

Complaint	**Neighborhood A**	**Neighborhood B**	**Neighborhood C**	**Neighborhood D**
Not safe	42	49	46	49
Too much noise	N/A	38	38	38
Trash and litter	N/A	37	37	36
Not enough parking	30	33	33	38

Current and former residents of The University's neighborhoods unanimously cited unsafe conditions as their biggest complaint. Whereas information on noise and litter was unavailable for Neighborhood A, the numbers of these complaints were all quite similar for Neighborhoods B, C, and D, thus illustrating that crime is a major concern of The University's residents (Table 3).

The preceding data evidence declining populations coupled with low median home values and concerns over safety and sanitation, which indicate the four neighborhoods near The University may be experiencing urban blight. The Urban Institute (2019), an organization that seeks to eliminate urban blight defines it as:

> …the downward spiraling malady afflicting many of our city and inner suburban neighborhoods. Marked by trash strewn lots, graffiti-covered buildings, barricaded storefronts, abandoned buildings, overflowing dumpsters, treeless corridors, and a proliferation of ugly signage, including billboards, broken sidewalks and poor lighting--urban blight chokes the life out of a neighborhood as surely as a blighted or diseased plant can spread and destroy an entire crop. Urban Blight drives out active residents and tax-paying businesses because most people want to live and work in a pleasing visual environment if they can. Those who stay often feel powerless to change the forces that have made their world ugly.

Need for the Study

While The University provided over $1.5 million to the city from annual payments to through taxable wages and city provided services, as well as over $13. million in expenditures with city businesses each year, the institution continues to receive some criticism for its expansion plans, community-perceived isolationism, and student behavioral issues.

The University's master expansion plan has placed additional strain on its relationship with neighboring communities. The plan calls for student housing, additional academic buildings, parking garages, athletic facilities, as well as additional commercial property.

Much of the criticism has come from The University's expansion into surrounding neighborhoods, its effects on the community, the redirection of traffic as well a rape case, which resulted in the resignation of the women's and men's basketball coaches following allegations of previous cover-ups of sexual misconduct among student-athletes. The University reiterated its commitment to the safety of students and neighbors during the crisis and its emphasis on openness to its community. However, some in the community feel The University often does close itself off from it, thereby adversely affecting university-community relations.

The "bully mentality" that some of residents seem to feel The University embodies, its tax-exempt status, its development of sections of the neighborhood, as well as the common problems that plague many colleges' town-gown relations, is at the center of this study—specifically, about community and university leaderships' perceptions. Therefore, this study examined leaders' opinions on the issues affecting town-gown relations between the community and The University as well as seek to find means to build an amicable relationship between the two that, as the literature suggests, benefit both the institution and the community.

Positive relationships are mutually beneficial for both the college and the community. For these relationships to exist however, the institution must become the catalyst to changing the oftentimes-strained relations between town and gown (Singer, 2001). Thompson, Story, and Butler (2003, p. 386) add that the University must be the, "Initiator of the process, moderator or facilitator of deliberation, and broker of scholarly knowledge." Therefore, through research, institutions of higher education can understand and learn from their communities and develop positive relationships with their neighbors in the face of campus crime, tax breaks, isolationist attitudes, and campus expansion (Spagnolia, 1998).

Despite the importance of understanding the town-gown phenomenon more fully, which would aid both universities and communities in establishing stronger relationships, relatively few studies have been conducted on the issue, and even fewer have been conducted that focus on community and university leaderships' views on their relationships with each other. As leaders, these individuals shape the relationship directly, and therefore, their views provide information that adds to the body of knowledge on the subject of town-gown relations. Lastly, case study methods lead to greater understanding of the phenomenon of town-gown relationships, both academically for in practice (O'Mara, 2012).

Research Questions

This study seeks to describe university and community leaders' perceptions of these relationships. Specifically, how do The University leaders and community leaders currently view the relationship between The University and the community? What do The University leaders and community leaders believe are the primary issues affecting the relationship between The University and the community? What do The University leaders and community leaders believe can be done to improve the relationship between The University and the community? How do The University leaders and community leaders foresee the relationship between The University and the community in the future?

Methodology & Research Design

Public relations' effectiveness is contingent on effective research. Without useful, meaningful information, even the best public relations plan is useless. Brody and Stone (1989, pp. 1–2) state that public relations research:

> ...requires identifying and understanding the function of diverse environmental influences within the context of specific public relations problems...As research in public relations must necessarily involve greater breadth and depth...practitioners must develop and maintain substantial bodies of knowledge concerning the environments with which they deal.

Moreover, Hendrix (1998, p. 171) adds, "...community relations research consists of carefully identifying audiences to be targeted for communication and learning as much about each audience as possible".

Therefore, a phenomenological study was utilized to help understand the influences that affect the University's town-gown relations. Stake (1985, p. 277) define the study as:

> ...the study of a single case or bounded system, it observes naturalistically and interprets higher order interrelations within the observed data. Results are generalizable in that the information given allows readers to decide whether the case is similar to theirs. Case study can and should be rigorous.

Dukes and Oiler (as cited in Creswell, 1994, p. 56) state that phenomenological studies include, "The examination of human experiences through detailed descriptions of the people being studied. The procedure involves studying a small number of subjects…to develop patterns/relationships of meaning."

Data from this qualitative research design enables a clear understanding of both The University and community's perspectives of town-gown relations. It is important to note that studying embedded units is crucial in this phenomenological study—that is, university and community leaders' perspectives. de Vaus (2004, p. 221) writes:

> A well-designed study will avoid examining just some of the constituent elements. It will build up a picture of the case by taking into account information gained from many levels...Since many cases will consist of different elements, different methods of data collection may be required for the different elements.

Participants

Participant selections for interviews and focus groups are critical for the study's effectiveness. Purposeful sampling was used to determine the interviewees. Interviewees include the director of communications, provost, dean of students, director of safety and security, vice president of community and government relations, and university president. This selection was made because the preceding individuals are trusted with making decisions that affect nearly all university operations, most notably those that affect or react to issues concerning The University relationship with its community. Accordingly, these individuals are the most knowledgeable about issues addressed. Interview questions center on issues pertaining to the relationship between The University and the community.

In addition, civic and business leaders were interviewed to gauge community leadership perceptions. These individuals include block captains, civic leaders, business leaders, and neighborhood council representatives. Information from these individuals provided insights regarding the relationship between The University and the community from a community leadership perspective. As community leaders, these individuals influence and affect community-oriented perceptions of the University, and therefore, their input provides valuable information as well as an additional view of The University-community relationship.

Qualitative Procedures

To obtain a thorough depth of understanding into the town-gown relationship at The University, the researcher interviewed a variety of university officials and community.

Questions focusing on community and The University leaders' opinions of town-gown relations, who has more power in the relationship, the responsibilities between the two entities, influences affecting the relationship, perceptions of communication between the two, steps to improve the relationship, as well as their views on the future of the relationship. The same questions for community leaders were utilized.

The use of both structured and unstructured interview questions provided greater insights into the mindset of The University officials, community leaders, and focus group participants than would be possible using either open or closed-ended questions exclusively. University officials including the president, provost, campus police chief, and dean of students were engaged in in-depth interviews. A series of five focus groups were held with community members. Additional in-depth interviews were conducted with local business owners, clergy, and civic leaders.

Qualitative Data Analyses

Interview responses and focus group data were coded and analyzed. Coding, segmenting, and enumeration techniques enabled the researcher to identify themes, compare responses, as well as draw conclusions based on the interviewee's answers regarding The University and community's feeling regarding the town-gown relationship.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the preceding qualitative research techniques, the researcher used reflexivity because, as a former employee of The University in the study, there might be the possibility of researcher bias. Mruck and Breur (2003, p. 1) define reflexivity as "…examining the research process (and) using empirical examples to show in which way (sub-) cultural, social, professional, biographical, and personal characteristics of what is perceived, interpreted, and published".

Results

Most of The University leaders noted the complexity of the relationship considering the conflicting demographics between the student body and the citizens of the neighboring communities. Moreover, there exists a clear difference between how The University sees its relationship with the community and how community leaders interpret it. Community leaders often spoke of isolationism, university-centered agendas, and lack of contact when characterizing the relationship between non-academic neighbors and The University.

In contrast, The University leaders regularly spoke of partnership and shared vision when describing their relationship with the community. At the heart of these conflicting statements seems to be a lack of agreement concerning which entity possesses the most authority between the two. Most of The University leaders pointed to shared power, even though several university leaders noted the physical size dominance and purchasing power the institution has over the community. Community leaders expressed the opinion that The University exercises its power of purchasing when expanding, thereby putting the community in a position of inferiority when it comes to making important decisions concerning neighborhood redevelopment. Other community leaders described the relationship as isolationist on the part of The University. Those individuals stated The University introverts itself to the confines of the campus too much and does not provide enough services to aid the non-academic community such as business-assistance programs and student-community programs.

Nonetheless, The University leaders stated that their primary responsibility to the community was increased partnership and greater respect. Community leaders stated that The University must also work more mutually with the community, but also follow-through on initiatives that represent The University, such as service-learning projects. The University leaders contended that the community has a responsibility to The University including being more open to working with The University and more appreciative of the benefits The University brings to the community, such as increased security and retail development. Community leaders admitted that the community needs to "learn to live" with its academic neighbor and accept the negatives as well as the benefits of residing near The University.

Despite The University leaders stating that their communication was responsive, many mentioned that improved communication would benefit the relationship between the University and the community. Community leaders agreed. In addition to communication, both community and The University leaders indicated that improving students' behavioral issues, especially those stemming from off-campus residences, would benefit the relationship. The University leaders also pointed to neighborhood revitalization to improve relations; however, community leaders added that too much restructuring of the neighborhood would adversely affect the relationship. The University leaders also expressed the hope that community leaders would take a more enlightened view of The University initiatives and have a greater acceptance of university-led projects. Community leaders expressed the desire to have The University provide more services to the community.

Data seems to indicate that The University leaders do not appreciate what they seem to perceive as an inability to "see the big picture" regarding university projects aimed at improving the neighborhood. Community leaders at times appeared to be rather unyielding in their stances on university projects and unwilling to accept changes to the neighborhood that benefit institution as well as the community. As with any relationship, give and take is needed form both sides; however, it seems that community leaders, at times, are overly protective of the status quo and unwilling to accept changes The University needs to fulfil its mission.

Both community and The University leaders most often pointed to the age differential between students and residents as the single greatest issue affecting the relationship between The University and the community. In addition, both sides added that the influx of students living in the community away from campus magnified the problems with student-resident relations. The University leaders spoke of traditional-aged college students and the "normal" activity associated with young adults of that age leading to many problematic interactions with non-academic neighbors. Loud parties, late-night noise, and alcohol were among the most-mentioned issues associated with student behavior. Similarly, community leaders stated the lifestyle of the community's high population of senior citizens did not often mesh well with the lifestyle of their college-aged neighbors. As an ancillary effect of off-campus residences, both The University and community leaders often noted parking and congestion problems as another key issue affecting the relationship.

It appears that The University leaders' admitted lack of regulated communication negatively affects the institution's ability to reinforce its commitment university to the community. The University leaders often noted the many services the institution avails to the community; however, community leaders often noted they wanted services from The University. It appears as though university leaders believe the institution is providing a wealth of services to the community.

Again, because most community leaders stated that they either desired additional services or were not aware existing services, The University does not seem to be communicating its offerings strongly enough. This study coincides with previous studies (Thompson et al., 2003; Nyden et al., 1998; Stoecker, 1999) that concluded communication and ongoing partnership must be a goal of any institution of higher education that seeks to strengthen relations with its community. Bruning et al. (2006) found similar sentiments where community members felt disengaged from the campus and its opportunities.

The University leaders stated that the relationship between the University and the community would evolve and improve in the future. Likewise, some community leaders expressed an optimistic future while some felt it would remain the same. Both university and community leaders stated that the future would depend on the actions of the other.

Conclusions & Steps Taken

This study illustrates the need for clearer communication and greater mutuality. Accordingly, The University leadership expanded its community services while making an effort to advertise them more to community leaders. For example, an advisory board was created composed of community leaders who meet at regular intervals and during key times (crises, new development, etc.) that provide The University with up-to-date information concerning community sentiments toward The University as well as suggestions to improve the relationship on an ongoing basis. Also, be The University is situated in a large city, it should easier for it to build stronger relationships with its non-academic neighbors than its rural or suburban counterparts (Mosier, 2015).

Town hall-style meetings, also at regular intervals, now provide The University leaders with greater insights into the community's mindset. Such meetings are open to community members to voice his or her opinion first-hand. Through such meetings, The University leadership also impart information that allows less-than-desirable initiatives such as street closures to be more easily accepted by the community.

Community members now voice their opinions and feel as though their suggestions and concerns are an important component to the initiative's planning. A secondary benefit other than reinforcing communication is making the community aware, and perhaps more appreciative of The University contributions, which The University leaders seek. Such communication comes at regular intervals rather than only when a problem or new construction occurs. Doing so also reduces what community leaders characterized as isolationism on the part of The University. Standardized communication reduces the perceived isolationist attitude that community leaders characterized the University.

Continuing an ongoing, open dialogue familiarizes the community to the everyday operations of The University, and it also helps ease tensions when problems do arise. Community members no longer look at The University communications as being the bearer of bad news. This coincides with Boyer

(1996) and Beck et al.'s (2000) assertion that universities are becoming more isolated as their relationships become more complex. To further improve relations, The University addresses issues of student behavior, especially off-campus.

Based on predominate sentiments from both community and The University leaders that student, off-campus residences present a major problem, The University develops greater restrictions and improved policing of student housing. In agreement with Murphy and Tacky's findings (2002), the interaction between college students and non-academic neighbors appears to be negatively affecting the relationship between The University and its neighbors, and thus, adversely affect The University's ability to further its mission. The University considers addressing the rising population of off-campus students with restrictions on the numbers of students permitted in neighboring communities.

Specifically, The University introduces policies that keep freshman and sophomore resident students on campus through rules that simply state that all freshman and sophomore students must use on-campus housing if they wish to attend The University. To further ease tensions, a combination of increased communication and student involvement in the community further alleviates pressures arising from off-campus residences.

Currently, The University offers many student-community programs; however, changes to the current programs enhances their benefits. One such enhancement is to increase the amount of time students must participate in their community programs.

For instance, requiring students to be involved over the four-year period of their undergraduate education shows the community The University's prolonged commitment to it while teaching students valuable life skills that reinforce the importance of their contribution to the community. As an example, an 18-year-old freshman sees how his or her tutoring at a local elementary school affects the life of a student who grows from elementary to high school as well as how the 18-year-old has grown as an individual the same four years. Such lessons cannot be taught in the classroom, and these programs provide the community, the college student, and The University with a valuable resource.

One such program is the inclusion of "community service" to a particular neighborhood. These community-student programs include planting gardens, renovations, etc. that enhance the community and help preserve it from the trash and vandalism that many community leaders stated was plaguing the neighborhoods—often coming from college students according to community leaders. College students are less likely to drop trash in a garden they helped plant or allow their friends to, so such programs create a domino effect of community "protection" on the part of college students. Another component of the college student-community connection comes from the integration of the real-world community into the lessons taught in the classroom. Collaboration between institutions and their communities must be part of any college or university's master plan (Dalton et al., 2018).

The inclusion of the community into the college classroom provides benefits to the students, professors, and community members (Dardig, 2004). For instance, business school classes include having students provide local businesses the help they need based on lessons learned concerning the operations required to run a business successfully. Rather than simply reading a textbook on marketing, students integrate marketing techniques for a local business to (a) increase the business's profits and (b) show students how to market in the real world, thus benefiting both the student and the neighborhood and reinforcing the bond between The University and community. This type of highly engaged interaction between students and community members is key to developing positive town-gown relations (Gavazzi and Fox, 2015). Furthermore, involving students in the process of hands-on learning, while also helping the community at the same time, increases both engagement and positivity between The University and its neighbors (Filinson and Raimondo, 2019).

The University considers publicizing its services to the community more effectively, possibly through greater media exposure, which some community leaders expressed would benefit communication as well. Additionally, the community's demographic is predominately aging and elderly individuals who digest communication through printed materials. Accordingly, The University provides communication via mailers, postcards, etc. that publicize The University's offering to the community using large print to ease readability as opposed to social media and online communication. Drawing positive publicity and improving public image by advertising these initiatives provides an added benefit to the reputation of The University and further strengthens bonds between the community and its academic neighbor.

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A Development, Validity and Reliability of Safe Social Networking Scale

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Social networks has become in the spotlight for millions of people since they create a dynamic and rich interaction environment between users, and allow free access and usage of fake identity information. Distance education and working from home around the world due to COVID-19 pandemic has affected the increase in the rate and duration of social media usage in the last year. Unfortunately, this increase has offered criminals, who have the potential to pose risks and dangers on social media, more opportunities. Therefore, it has become even more important to use social media as a safe environment. The objective of this study was to develop a Safe Social Networking Scale for determining the security levels in social network usage. The validity and reliability studies of the scale were conducted with 585 social media users. As a result of the validity study, 28 items under five factors were obtained. These factors were being "Time Tunnel/Wall Sharing", "Safety of Social Network Profile Information and Sharing", "Social Network Friends List and its Safety", "Safety of Social Network Information Input", "Safe Login to Social Network Account". The items obtained were capable of discriminating the individuals in terms of the features to be measured by the scale. There has not been any scale that directly determines the level of safe use of social media in the literature. The developed scale is expected to fill this scale gap in the literature.

Keywords: safety, social networks, scale development, reliability, validity

Introduction

Social networks are one of the applications introduced into the lives of people following the development of web 2.0 technologies. In addition to read shares, the social networks allow users many opportunities, such as to comment on what they read, to produce contents in different formats and to share these, to like, to play a game. The opportunities provided by the social networks make them attractive for users. In addition to this attractiveness, the number of social network users is increasing day by day due to the fact that the social networks are free, it is not necessary to become a member with real identity information, it is possible to access the social networks anywhere and anytime by a device with an internet connection. The studies conducted corroborate this idea. While 53% of the world's population were active social media users in October 2020 (Kemp, 2020), this figure increased by 13.2% compared to the same month of the previous year and

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increased to 53.6% in January 2021 (Kemp, 2021a). The number of active social media users between January 2020 - January 2021 increased by 11.1% in Turkey. As of January 2021, 70.8% of Turkey's population is active social media users (Kemp, 2021b). These figures are significantly high for both Turkey and the world. Significantly high values also draw attention in the duration of social media usage. Worldwide users spend average 2 hours and 25 min per day on social media (Kemp, 2021a), while this time is 2 hours and 57 min for Turkey (Kemp, 2021b). The number of social media accounts owned by all active social media users in the world is average 8.4 (Kemp, 2021a), while this figure is 9.4 in Turkey (Kemp, 2021b). The effect of COVID-19 pandemic period on the increase in social media usage rate, duration and number of accounts cannot be ignored. The rate increases can be considered normal considering that people around the world fulfil their job responsibilities at home, education activities are carried out remotely, communication and social activities are transferred to digital platforms such as social media for a long time during the pandemic.

These numbers show that we live with a more crowded community in social networks than our physical environment. In the real life, we try to take measures against the threats likely to be caused by people living around us. Although it seems that the social networks refer to only virtual participation, the people we share these virtual environments are actually people, and they may always pose threats. It is even possible that we may encounter dangers with higher risk and harmful effect than the dangers we may face in real life. We should take the measures, as taken in order to prevent the risks and dangers that may be caused by people in real life, in social network environments where we interact with a large group of people. For these measures, it is not only necessary to be aware of taking security measures, but also to be competent in practice.

The main reason of working with university students in this study is the fact that the rate of active social media users between 18-24 years is 25.2% in the world (Kemp, 2021a), while this rate in the same age range is 20.3% for Turkey (Kemp, 2021b). This age range corresponds to the students at the university level for Turkey and constitutes a significant portion of the population. Young participating in the study voluntarily are prospective teachers. The participation of teachers this study as a role model for their students and as a guide for their close circle makes the scale intended to be developed more meaningful.

In order to be protected from dangers and risks as much as possible and not to harm others, we should use the social networks consciously. The consciousness in the social networks may be provided by taking security measures and acting in accordance with the rules of social networks. For this reason, it has been an important issue to determine the adequacy of security behaviours of individuals in the social networks. In the literature, there are scales for identifying computer security, mobile device security, and internet security behaviours, but there is no tool measuring only the security behaviours of the social networks. The necessity of the scale is provided once more since it will be first in the literature and will fulfil a significant gap.

Literature Review

Social Networks Based Cyber Threats

The social networks are unequalled crime scenes for cybercriminals. Because it is not likely to meet billions of people from every age, gender, language, race, status and education in any other environment. For this reason, many and various crimes are committed in the social networks.

For example, the social network fraud is highly widespread. According to news published in Dailyword, there are 270 million fake accounts on Facebook (Dailyworld, 2017). This number is gradually increasing. The number of Facebook accounts determined to be fake between January and October 2019 is 5.4 million (Fung and Garcia, 2019). Menczer (2018) found out that 9% to 15% of Twitter accounts are fake. According to LinkedIn Community Report (2020), 98.4% of fake accounts were blocked between January-June 2020. 33.7 million fake accounts were detected by LinkedIn security systems and deleted during registration process. The number of fake Facebook accounts deleted only in December 2020 was 1957, while the number of fake Instagram accounts deleted was 707 (Facebook, 2021). Fake accounts are opened for many purposes such as trapping other users into phishing, spreading malware, spam or viruses and cyberbullying.

Phishing scams are mostly seen on the social media networks. Users are directed to fake web sites with the links containing attractive messages and offers in line with their interests (Sırt, 2017). Phishing scams are mostly lived on Facebook and Twitter (Eren, 2018). As Morris (2019) stated, cyber attackers now prefer social networks instead of e-mail for phishing attacks. Thus, it is much easier to reach more people and personal information through social networks. In phishing scams, the purpose is not only to get personal information, but also to access information about the institution where the person is working (Newberry, 2020) or studying. For this reason, it is extremely important to know the privacy and security settings in social networks as well as to confirm the content before clicking on phishing posts.

Social networks are the primary preference area of cyber attackers for spreading malware or spam and virus attacks. It is not difficult for a cyber attacker to reach and deceive people through a fake or stolen account (Morris, 2019). Because a malicious software link sent to a person can reach hundreds, even thousands of people in an instance like a snowball. This may affect not only users, but also the institutions and even the educational institutions where the users work. The last example of this happened in Nottinghamshire. 15 schools in the region had to shut down their IT systems supporting distance education for a while because of cyber-attacks on social networks (Priyanka, 2021).

Cyberbullying is another critic risk arising from the social networks, especially for children and youths. 40% of all cyberbullying cases are seen on the social networks (Cyberbully411, 2018). Tuncer and Dikmen (2016) focussed on cyberbullying in social networks. Sixty-two students studying at Fırat University, Organized Industry Vocational High School participated in the study. The results showed that participants who used social network web sites more heavily were more likely to be both cyber victims and also cyber bullies, compared to those who usedsocial networks less frequently. Gonzales (2017) conducted a study where students themselves suggested how protection could be put in place while using social networks. In this study, data from Pew Research Center in 2014 were included. Gonzales showed that 60% of students had been harassed on social networks. In addition, one out of every 11 students was secretly monitored on social networks. Most students did not know what their online rights were. When faced with unwanted situations in online platforms, they were afraid to tell their teachers or parents. According to the report of a survey conducted in the UK in 2017, 42% of young social network users stated that they were victims of cyberbullying on Instagram and 37% on Facebook (Ditch The Label, 2017). The cyber bullying is mostly seen on Facebook (Cook, 2018). In a survey conducted with 1974 United Statian in the age group 18 and over in January 2020, 77% of the participants experienced cyber bullying on Facebook (Johnson, 2021). Undoubtedly, the use of internet and social networks by millions of students not only for educational purposes but also for socializing and having fun during the pandemic period has led to an increase in cyberbullying incidents. According to L1ght (one of the organizations publishing cyberbullying data), cyberbullying incidents increased by 70% in September-October (Micklea, 2020). Although the numbers and rankings change, it is clear that social networks are platforms where cyberbullying incidents are frequent. As a result of these data, it is revealed once again that social networks should be used by taking security measures.

The stealing of social networking or personal information through mobile applications has also become an important problem after the increasing popularity of smartphones. Some mobile applications require users to sign up with their social network personal information. Thus, the application owners can easily access private and social network information of individuals. Moreover, the social network accounts can be seized because of the security vulnerabilities of the applications registered with social network username and password no matter how strong the password of the social network account is (Newberry, 2020). Changing the current password at regular intervals can be offered to users as a solution in this regard and in order to protect against other social network-based cyber threats. Many banks in Turkey impose obligation to change password at regular intervals for internet banking customers. This application of banks can also be performed by social networking companies.

Some online games threaten security in the social networks. In addition to financial losses, these games lead to depression, physical injury and suicides. Some of these games are as follows: Blue Whale (Adeane, 2019), Mariam (Khalaf, 2017), Avataria (CNNTÜRK, 2016), Momo (Ryan, 2019), Doki Doki Literature Club (Hawken, 2018), 48 Hours Challenge (Johnson, 2019) and Eraser Challenge (Şalt, 2018).

Following the declaration of the pandemic on 11 March 2020, countries compulsorily took decisions on distance education, remote and flexible working. The popularity of the social networks, known as indispensable platforms of communication, news and shares, has increased more by being an important part of educational systems in this period. The World Bank revealed in a study that teachers in many countries have preferred the social media for communication and information share with their students (The World Bank, 2020). However, some dangers and risks arising from social networks have been raised during COVID-19 quarantine days. Many infodemic examples, such as spreading fabricated news and rumours related to COVID-19, creating negative psychological atmosphere in the society, selling counterfeit drugs and vaccines, fake donation campaigns were seen and are still seen frequently on the social networks (Bitdefender 2020; Chakravorti, 2020; Gold and O'Sullivan, 2020; Hao and Basu, 2020; Koyuncu, 2020; Rakipoğlu, 2020; Rodríguez et al., 2020; Scott, 2020; TÜBA, 2020). The number of fake news deleted from LinkedIn social network platform between January and June 2020 is 22,846 (LinkedIn Community Report, 2020). According to the news of BBC (2021), YouTube announced that 30,000 videos published about the COVID-19 vaccine and determined to be false have been deleted from the platform.

Based on this information, it can be said that social networks provide users with advantages, but also bring some threats and risks. It is clear that adopting safe social networking behaviours is important for everyone in order to minimize the material and moral losses caused by these threats and risks personally, institutionally and nationally.

Studies on Security in Social Networks and Measuring Instruments Used

The increasing use of social networks for several purposes, especially by children and youngsters, has also caused an increase in the volume of national and international research investigating the safety of social networks. Although there are various scales to measure awareness of information security and to assess cybersecurity behaviour available in the literature, these scales do not focus on social network security behaviour.

Kjørvik (2010) developed the Information Security Awareness Questionnarie within the framework of his master’s thesis. General computer security, e-mail usage, internet usage, backup, password usage, physical device security dimensions are included in questionnaire.

Kim (2013) also developed a scale to identify high school students’ behaviour and perceptions of information security too. The scale consists of 21 questions: password usage, backup, antivirus usage, e-mail security, file security in devices, e-mail accounts and files.

Çakır et al. (2015) used the Safety Awareness Questionnaire in Social Networks, developed for their study to determine the awareness of pre-service teachers on social network safety. This study showed that the participants were highly aware of the risks related to login passwords and the confidentiality of answers to safety questions. However, it was also found that participants seldom read the terms of use and privacy policy.

Erol et al. (2015) also developed the Personal Cyber Security Scale. When the scale is analyzed, it is seen that the items related to password usage, e-shopping, e-banking, e-mail security, using web browser, and common computer use are predominant. There are only 3 items related to security in social networks in the 25 item scale.

Dreibelbis (2016), in his research conducted with private sector employees, aimed to specify the cyber security behaviours of employees. For this purpose, he developed a Cyber Security Scale consisting of 23 items. There is no item that measures security behaviours in social networks in this scale.

In their Cyber Security Awareness Scale for high school students, Muhirwe and White (2016) included several questions in subjects such as software security, email security, password usage, backup, antivirus usage, sharing of devices and files.

The Risky Cyber Security Behaviour Scale used by the Hadlington (2017) its research consists of 20 items and only 2 items are intended to measure the types of safe behaviour in social networks.

Yan et al. (2018), in the study where university students examined the correct decision-making behaviours in the face of cyber threats, used the scenario-based Cybersecurity Judgment Scale.

Scenarios include general cyber threats. Giwah (2019) developed a scale, intending to determine the information security attitudes of mobile device users. The scale items consist of topics such as physical security of mobile devices, use of passwords and antivirus devices on devices, security in internet and e-mail transactions.

The absence of scales which only determine social network security behaviour was the starting point of this study. One of the objectives of The Safe Social Networking Scale development study was to remedy this deficiency together with determining the sub-dimensions of safe social network usage behaviour. We considered this scale would measure how much regard individuals have for security while using social networks, and what they do for security. In addition, we hoped that it would contribute to evaluation of the current status and identify faulty behaviour, thus enabling its elimination.

Materials and Methods

Research Objective

This study was a scale development study for determining and evaluating the security behaviour of the users while social networking.

Participants

The study group included students studying at different departments of the Education Faculty in a state university. The study invited a total of 598 students to participate. The students were chosen randomly according to a sampling method. Of these, 585 students participated in the survey and submitted a valid form and so were included in the evaluation process. The demographic characteristics of these 585 students are presented in Table 1. 47.86% of the participants are women and

52.13% of the participants are men. The students participating in the study are studying in various departments of the Faculty of Education (German, Information Technologies, English, Music, Painting, Preschool, Turkish Teaching). Their ages are between 17 and 23 years.

Table 1. Social Networking Usage Times

Social network usage time (year)	**N**	**%**	**Time spent in a day on social networks (hour)**	**N**	**%**
1-3	38	6.5	less than 1 hour	48	8.2
4-6	210	35.8	1-3	285	48.6
7-9	216	36.9	4-6	199	34.0
10 and over	121	20.6	7 and over	53	9.0
Total	585	100.0	Total	585	99.8

When Table 1 is examined; 36.9% of the students participating in the study stated that they have been using social networks for 7-9 years, 35.8% of them for 4-6 years, and 20.6% of them for 10 years and over. Considering the average time spent in a day in social networks; 48.6% of the students stated that they have been using social networks for 1-3 hours and 34% of them have been using social networks for 4-6 hours.

Table 2. Social Network Accounts they joined

Social network	**N**	**%**
Facebook	156	26.6
Twitter	357	60.9
Youtube	72	12.3
Total	585	100

When the social networks joined by the students are examined, it is seen that 60.9% of the students have joined in Twitter, 26.6% of them in Facebook and 12.3% of them in YouTube (Table 2).

Data Collection Tools

This scale has been developed in order to develop a Safe Social Networking use. In the first section of the study, the literature was reviewed. Scales which attempted to measure indicators of safe social network use were investigated. Each identified indicator relating to safe social network use was taken into consideration, and a pool of 67 items was created.

A draft of three categories was established: spelling, punctuation and expression errors, which were later analysed by five linguists.

The resulting, experimental 67-item questionnaire was evaluated by five experts (three from the Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technologies and two from the Department of Informatics) for content validity. Each item was evaluated for: measurability of the level of safe social network usage; for the relationship with relevant sub-dimensions; and understand ability of the language used. A 5-point Likert scale was used (1: strongly disagree; 2: disagree; 3: neutral; 4: agree; 5: strongly agree).

Data Collection and Analysis

A Likert statement consisting of five stages was used to fully analyse and understand the responses given by the teachers who took part in the study. A statistical analysis was made according to the participants' responses that went from "strongly agree" (5 points) to "strongly disagree" (1 point). During the six month long data collection process, 598 students filled in electronic or printed versions of the developed questionnaire. After analysis of the submitted questionnaires, 585 out of 598 (97.8%) were determined to be suitable for statistical analysis. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire was conducted on these forms.

The literature recommends conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using different samples (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012; Ilhan and Çetin, 2014).

Therefore, the collected data are divided into two subgroups. In this context 300 of the forms were evaluated by EFA and remaining 285 by CFA.

When determining sufficient sample size, relative criteria such as the number of items or factors should be taken into consideration. It has been reported that the sample size should be 5-10 times greater than the number of items in the scale (Kline, 1994; Tavşancıl, 2005). In this study, the sample size was approximately 8 times more than the number of items.

All statistical analysis was performed with SPSS 20.0 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA) and LISREL 8.7 software packages.

Results

It is important to check whether the data are suitable for factor analysis before performing exploratory factor analysis. For this purpose, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity were performed.

According to the literature, the test should be finalized if the KMO value calculated for the sample size is smaller than 0.50. A value greater than 0.90 means "perfect", and the test can be maintained (Çokluk et al., 2010; Tavşancıl, 2005). In our study, KMO coefficient was 0.79. In the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, a value greater than 0.001 was considered to be significant [χ^2=3078,454; df=378; p=0.001]. This finding will depend on the multivariate normal distribution and may be interpreted as obtaining another assumption of the factor analysis.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The data collected for the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were obtained from 300 students studying at different departments of the Education Faculty in a state university. First, the unrotated principal components analysis was performed to determine the factor structure. The evaluation of the factors with an eigenvalue >1 was preferred for determining the number of factors and the run chart and variance rates of the factors were considered in relation to the factor eigenvalues (Zwick and Velicer, 1986). According to the literature, only factors with an eigenvalue equal to or greater than 1 could be considered as stable (Büyüköztürk, 2002; Çokluk et al., 2010). We determined that the eigenvalue was greater than 1, and the scale developed in the light of this information had a 5-factor structure. The total explained variance of 5 factors was 50.45%.

The determined factors were called "Time Tunnel/Wall Sharing", "Safety of Social Network Profile Information and Sharing", "Social Network Friends List and its Safety", "Safety of Social Network Information Input" and "Safe Entry to Social Network Account." The scale was named "The Safe Social Networking Scale" (SSNS) and the SSNS framework, showing the scale items and their respective main value divisions (factors) is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Factor Structure and Factor Loads of the Safe Social Networking Scale (SSNS)

Main values	Sample indicator
1st factor: Time tunnel/wall sharing	1. In my time tunnel/wall, I do not share contents which can harm to other people (e.g., accusations, threats, mockery, unfounded news, lies, and gossips).
	2. In my time tunnel/wall, I do not share contents related to violence.
	3. In my time tunnel/wall, I do not share illegal statements.
	4. In my time tunnel/wall, there can be no sexually explicit contents.
	5. In my time tunnel/wall, I do not share private information of other people.
	6. In my time tunnel/wall, there can be no contents including insulting expressions.
	7. In my time tunnel/wall, I restrict access of people whom I do not want to see the statements I share.
	8. In my time tunnel/wall, I do not allow hateful messages.
	9. In my time tunnel/wall, anyone cannot share contents.
	10. In my time tunnel/wall, I do not share information I do not get from primary sources.
2nd factor: Safety of social network profile information and sharing	11. My cover photo in social networks is accessible to anybody.
	12. Anybody can share my cover photo in social networks.
	13. Anybody can see my profile photo in social networks.
	14. Anybody can share my cover photo in social networks.
	15. The private information about my birth date, birth place, address, ID number, phone number, e-mail address, bank account number, political opinion, religious belief and relationship status that I share in my social network profile is accessible to anybody.
	16. Anybody can access to my social network profile from search engines.
3rd factor: Social network friends list and its safety	17. I do not add persons whom I do not know in my social network friends list.
	18. I do not accept friendship requests from persons whom I do not know.

	19. If I realize that social network account of one of my friends is hacked, I inform the Help Desk.
	20. I report malicious contents in social networks to the Help Desk.
4th factor: Safety of social network information input	21. I run the applications with my social network login information.
	22. I log in to different applications and websites with my social network information.
	23. I do cybershopping with my social network information.
5th factor: Safe entry to social network account	24. In order to login my social network account, I get the backup codes in case of not receiving two-step authentication message.
	25. I use two-step authentication (via phone code messaging) to login my social network accounts.
	26. While logging in my social network accounts, I prefer using https which is a secure transfer protocol (hypertext transfer protocol secure) instead of http.
	27. I adjust my social network account setup in a way warning me if a new device is used to be logged in.
	28. I change my social network password periodically.

Information about the factor loads of the scale and the variance rates are presented in Table 4. The rotated factor loadings ranged between 0.54 and 0.81.

Table 4. Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factors and item numbers	**Total variance explained**	**Cronbach's α**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Item total correlation**	**Common factor variance**	**Rotated factor load**
1st factor	18.70	0.71					
Item 1			4.61	0.95	0.70	0.74	0.81
Item 2			4.56	0.96	0.70	0.69	0.77
Item 3			4.52	0.95	0.71	0.58	0.77
Item 4			4.67	0.95	0.71	0.58	0.74
Item 5			4.28	1.15	0.72	0.53	0.73
Item 6			4.44	0.90	0.71	0.53	0.70
Item 7			4.50	0.94	0.72	0.51	0.69
Item 8			4.42	0.91	0.71	0.53	0.64
Item 9			4.36	0.91	0.70	0.41	0.58
Item 10			4.11	0.97	0.71	0.40	0.54
2nd factor	9.42	0.74					
Item 11			2.80	1.55	0.75	0.54	0.75
Item 12			1.62	1.03	0.73	0.54	0.73
Item 13			2.90	1.52	0.74	0.53	0.74
Item 14			1.83	1.24	0.72	0.50	0.72
Item 15			1.80	1.12	0.73	0.43	0.73
Item 16			2.75	1.39	0.75	0.42	0.75
3rd factor	8.34	0.70					
Item 17			4.14	1.15	0.72	0.68	0.72
Item 18			4.07	1.14	0.70	0.68	0.70
Item 19			3.98	1.16	0.71	0.44	0.71
Item 20			4.06	1.08	0.70	0.40	0.70
4th factor	6.70	0.73					
Item 21			3.18	1.32	0.73	0.69	0.73
Item 22			3.14	1.19	0.73	0.42	0.73
Item 23			2.67	1.36	0.74	0.48	0.74

5th factor	7.29	0.72						
Item 24			2.47	1.32	0.73	0.56	0.73
Item 25			3.10	1.41	0.73	0.47	0.73
Item 26			3.01	1.32	0.73	0.47	0.73
Item 27			4.11	1.14	0.71	0.41	0.71
Item 28			2.00	1.03	0.73	0.51	0.73
Total	50.45	0.72					

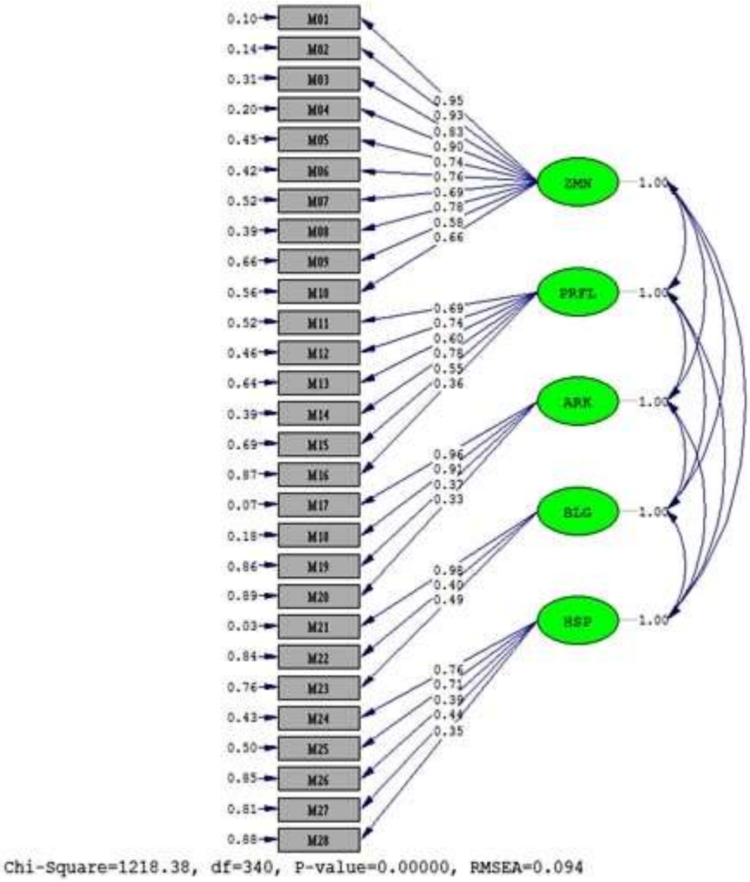
According to the results shown in Table 4, the first sub-dimension of time tunnel/wall sharing including 10 items explained 18.70% of the total variance. The factor loads of the items found in the sub-dimension of Time Tunnel/Wall Sharing ranged between 0.81 and 0.54. The second sub-dimension of Safety of Social Network Profile Information and Sharing included six items, and explained 9.42% of the total variance. The factor loads of the items in this sub-dimension varied between 0.73 and 0.42. There were four items in the third factor of the scale (Social Network Friends List and its Safety). This sub-factor explained 8.34% of the total variance and the factor loads ranged between 0.82 and 0.48. The fourth sub-dimension was named Safety of Social Network Information Input. There were three items in this sub-dimension and the factor loads ranged between 0.80 and 0.67. It explained 6.70% of the total variance. The fifth factor was called Safe Entry to Social Network Account and included five items. Its factor loads varied between 0.74 and 0.47, and it explained 7.29% of the total variance. The 5-factor structure of the SSNS could be evaluated as five separate scales, as well as yielding a total score for safe social networking.

In order to determine the reliability of SSNS, the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was calculated, and α value of the whole scale was determined to be 0.729. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient varied between 0.70 and 0.75 on the basis of item scores. It is generally accepted that a reliability level >0.70 indicates a statistically significant result for each factor (Tavşancıl, 2005; Turgut & Baykul, 1992).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

A total of 285 separate forms filled in by the students studying at different departments of the Education Faculty in a state university were used for the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). CFA was administered in order to find out whether the factor structure of SSNS could be confirmed or not. In order to demonstrate the sufficiency of the tested model in CFA, Chi-square Goodness of fit test, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjustment Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) values were evaluated. It has been reported that a value of 0.90 indicates an acceptable fit and 0.95 indicates a perfect fit for the criteria, which should be taken into consideration for fit indices (Marsh et al., 2006; Şimşek, 2007). In terms of NNFI, 0.95 was considered to be acceptable, and 0.97 a perfect fit while for AGFI, 0.85 was considered to be acceptable and 0.90 was considered to be perfect fit (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Wang and Wang, 2012). For RMSEA, 0.08 was acceptable and 0.05 was a perfect fit (Schumacker and Lomax, 2010). For SRMR, 0.05 was considered to beperfect and 0.10 an acceptable fit (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Waltz et al., 2010). In our study, the fit indices of the model obtained from CFA analysis were evaluated, and the minimum Chi-square value (χ^2=1218,38; SD=340; p<0.01) was significant. The evaluation of fit indices revealed the following results: RMSEA=0.94; GFI=0.89; AGFI=0.87; CFI=0.94; NFI=0.87; NNFI=0.89 and SRMR=0.07. The acceptable fit criteria related to the evaluated fit indices indicated that the 5-factor model assessed by CFA had a good fit and confirmed the scale. The factor loads related to the 5-dimension model resulting from the one-level CFA are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Factor Loads Related to the 5-Dimension Model from Level One CFA



As seen in Figure 1, the factor loads varied between 0.58 and 0.95 for the sub-dimension of Time Tunnel/Wall Sharing (ZMN), between 0.36 and 0.78 for the sub-dimension of Safety of Social Network Profile Information and Sharing (PRFL), between 0.33 and 0.96 for the sub-dimension of Social Network Friends List and its Safety (ARK), between 1.17 and 0.38 for the sub-dimension of Safety of Social Network Information Input (BLG), and between 0.35 and 0.76 for the sub-dimension of Safe Entry to Social Network Account (HSP). The fit values of the suggested model and the standard fit criteria are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The Fit Values of Suggested Model and the Standard Fit Criteria

Fit values	**Good fit values**	**Acceptable fit values**	**i-value scale fit values**
χ2/df	⩽3	⩽5	3.583
RMSEA	⩽0.05	0.05-0.08	0.088
SRMR	00.05	0.05-0.10	0.071
GFI	⩾0.95	0.90-0.95	0.89
AGFI	⩾0.90	0.85-0.90	0.87
CFI	⩾0.95	0.90-0.95	0.94
NFI	⩾0.95	0.90-0.95	0.87
NNFI	⩾0.95	0.90-0.95	0.89

T values obtained from one-level CFA are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. T Values Obtained from One-Level Cfa for Ssns

Item No	**t**	**Item No**	**t**	**Item No**	**t**	**Item No**	**t**
1	21.32**	8	15.67**	15	9.33**	22	5.71**
2	20.46**	9	10.66**	16	5.75**	23	6.66**
3	17.10**	10	12.44**	17	20.07**	24	11.42**
4	19.40**	11	12.40**	18	18.39**	25	10.67**
5	14.53**	12	13.15**	19	6.24**	26	5.86**
6	15.09**	13	10.33**	20	5.48**	27	6.63**
7	13.20**	14	14.18**	21	9.95**	28	5.21**

** p<0.01.

According to the results in Table 5, t values related to the items in SSNS varied between 5.21 and 21.32. It has been reported that t values greater than 1.96 indicate a significance level of 0.05, and t values greater than 2.58 indicate a significance level of 0.01 (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993; Kline, 2011). Thus, all t values obtained from one-level CFA had a significance level of at least 0.01. According to the results of one-level CFA, the sample size of the study was sufficient for factor analysis, and we concluded that there was no item which should be excluded from the model.

The Evaluation of SSNS Scores

Since there were ten items in the sub-dimension of time tunnel/wall sharing, the minimum and maximum scores were 10 and 50. The dimension of safety of social network profile information and sharing contained six items, and the minimum and maximum scores were 6 and 30. The minimum and maximum scores of the dimension of social network friends list and its safety were 4 and 20 since there were only four items in this dimension. There were three items in the sub-dimension of safety of social network information input, and thus the minimum and maximum scores were 3 and 15. The sub-dimension of safe entry to social network account had five items, and the minimum and maximum scores were therefore 5 and 25. As the whole scale had totally 28 items, the minimum and maximum possible scores were 28 and 140. As SSNS provided sufficient fit indices in one-level CFA, it could be concluded that the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions could be separately processed and the total score could be used fora measure of safe social networking. An increase in the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of SSNS and from the whole scale indicated a high security level in the social networking.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to develop a simple, short, and psychometrically sound scale capable of measuring security behaviours in social networks. Considering that students have been using social networks for a longer period of time day by day, this scale may enable them to use social networks in a conscious and safe manner and to guide their environment in this regard. The present study aimed to develop and validate a safe social networking questionnaire in order to understand of social networking usage of university students in an Turkey context. This paper has presented the carefully methodological procedure carried out to develop and quantitatively validate a method measuring Turkey university students' safe social networking usage. A Safe Social Networking Scale not only has adequate statistical support but also has enough theoretical support. The factors extracted through exploratory factor analysis and validated through confirmatory factor analysis also have similar references in empirical studies. The scale included 28 items, and had a 5-factor structure. The defined factors were "time tunnel/wall sharing", "safety of social network profile information and sharing", "social network friends list and its safety", "safety of social network information input" and "safe entry to social network account". There are researches and studies that may be associated with these factors and that emphasize the importance of these factors in the literature:

Factor 1. Time tunnel/wall sharing: One of the most important reasons of the increasing interest in social networks is that users may share all kinds of content with their followers on their own time tunnel/wall without time and place. However, it is highly important to authorize those who will see the posts made on social networks and who will post on our own time tunnel/wall for the safety of personal information. After joining in a social network, it should be learned how to make privacy and safety settings in this regard (Aksakallı, 2021; Digital Nusiance, 2020; Tutorful, 2020).

Factor 2. Safety of social network profile information and sharing: Personal information shared on social networks is a powerful weapon for cyber attackers. Even information on hobbies and interests that many people find insignificant is enough for many cyber attackers to take action. Most cyber attackers can bring together personal information shared by the person on different social networking platforms and create a well-equipped database about the person (Chester, 2020). Academic studies hereof also draw attention to the importance of personal information sharing in social networks. Sharma and Gupta (2018) investigated the effects of situational factors such as control of information in social networks, protecting personal information and indifference of users towards privacy. Senthil Kumar et al. (2016) emphasized safety measures related to the privacy of personal information, along with the possible risks of social networks. Yıldırım and Varol (2013) conducted a study at Fırat University and Bitlis Eren University with the participation of students, lecturers and instructors. They used a questionnaire to find out the safety level of the social networks and the awareness of the users concerning safety measures related to social networks. The results showed that most of the participants believed that the personal information was being abused by social network sites. More than half of the users had been subjected to spam or harmful applications. It was reported that 20% of accounts were fake, and that photographs, supposedly of the account owner, were usually used without the permission of the true owners. Personal information sharing errors in social networks are a factor threatening the cyber safety of institutions (Morris, 2019). For this reason, students who are a part of educational institutions should not share personal information on social networks in a publicly accessible way.

Factor 3. Social network friends list and its safety: Some of the cyber-crimes seen in social networks are performed by a fraud method called social engineering. In social engineering, the attacker first gains the victim’s trust and then begins to gather information about the victim. To do this, the attacker asks questions or shares a link containing software infiltrating the victim's device. Therefore, it is important to make necessary investigation before adding new friends in social networks (Chester, 2020; Yavanoğlu et al., 2012). It is also an important sign that one(s) of the friends list constantly posts negative-content and repetitive messages. Some of the accounts sharing such things are fake accounts and should be deleted from the friends list (Digital Nusiance, 2020).

Factor 4. Safety of social network information input: Millions of people around the world use the internet for different purposes. Some sites on the Internet are logged in with user name and password information. However, sometimes this information may be forgotten for various reasons. In case of such situations, some of the sites provide access to the site with social network username and password information in order to hold users harmless. In case of forgotten username or password, the sites should not be logged in with social network login information. The entered information is saved in databases and may be used maliciously. Therefore social network login information should only be used for this purpose.

Factor 5. Safe entry to social network account: Digital Nusiance (2020), Morris (2019) and Sobers (2018); emphasize that it is highly important to determine a strong password, change the password regularly and log in social networks with two-step verification method for social network safety. Tosun (2015) investigated the social network habits of vocational high school students and found that the majority of students changing the security options regularly but only implemented updates when they considered it necessary and believed that their social network passwords had a high strength.

Finally, the evidence of this measurement suggests that this questionnaire has robust psychometric properties to measure a safe social networking usage among university students. This study will give researcher much needed tools and a fresh perspective in their research on the concept of the safe social networking usage.

When the strength of the study is considered, the Safe Social Networking Scale can be used to measure for wider age groups, including students and social network users.

Conclusion

1. A carefully, educated and conscious use of social networks is important for the privacy and safety of users. In this context, a Safe Social Networking Scale was developed. This scale developed, is the only scale developed regarding the use of secure, conscious social networks. The development of this scale may contribute to future studies with different groups and to compare the results with this study.

Both in Turkey at the level of university students in the world, there is a high prevalence of the use of social media. Young people use social networks for various purposes. It is seen that social networks, which are open to the use of everyone, bring along negatives as well as the positive sides. Probably, the most important one is cyber danger among these threats, because the cyber dangers incurred by conscious and improperly used social networks, can reach the extent that threatens individual, institutional and even national security. Incidents such as theft, fraud, cyberbullying, carried out by using social engineering methods and constitute a crime, may cause material losses, damage to reputation and even loss of life. The increase in this kind of criminal acts has forced countries to take deterrent measures. In Turkey, crimes committed through social networks have been identified in the Turkish Penal Code 243, 244, 245 and the penalties corresponding to these crimes were explained (Turkish Penal Code, 2004). Considering that young people use social networks intensively for various purposes, it is not difficult to predict the negativities that young people who lack security awareness in social networks will experience or cause. However, there is a need for more theoretically informed, reliable, and valid instruments that are able to measure developments in this area. The fact that there is no other scale measuring security behaviours only in social networks in the current situation and literature indicates the importance and necessity of the developed Safe Social Networking Scale. It can be stated that this scale is sufficient to determine the security behaviours of young people in social networks, as a result of the validity and reliability analyzes performed on the scale items.

2. As a result of the analysis and calculations performed on the substances, it can be expressed that the validity and reliability scores of the scale are high and the validity of the scale and structure is ensured. Put it differently, the scale is a valid and reliable scale that can be used to assess the status of security behaviours exhibited by university students in social networks.

In similar studies with young people, it is thought that it can be benefitted from Safe Social Networking Scale as a valid and reliable data collection tool. The sample studied in the development of the scale, consists of a state university Faculty of Education students. The scale can be applied to students studying in different units of the same university. This scale can also be applied in universities with different geographical and cultural characteristics and comparisons can be made.

This study was conducted to assess the behaviours of college students on social media, related to the use of safe and informed. Besides, it helps to bridge the gap in the current literature with its new findings. However, having different samples for future research will contribute to the validity and reliability of the scale.

In addition to comparisons, it may also pave the way for students to have knowledge and skills on these subjects by revealing the wrong behaviours and habits seen in the social dimension of social network use with this scale.

Limitations

Even though it used highly reliable and valid scale development procedures, there are still some limitations. The first limitation is that both the techniques of the scale refinement, of exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis are quite sample-size specific. To have better results a bigger and different sample size is advisable.

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Appendix

Below are statements regarding the behaviors demonstrated by users in a safe social networking. Please read each statement attentively and mark one option (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree) that best defines you. Please, respond to all the questions without skipping any		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Agree Strongly
1	In my time tunnel/wall, I do not share contents which can harm to other people (e.g., accusations, threats, mockery, unfounded news, lies, and gossips).					
2	In my time tunnel/wall, I do not share contents related to violence.					
3	In my time tunnel/wall, I do not share illegal statements.					
4	In my time tunnel/wall, there can be no sexually explicit contents.					
5	In my time tunnel/wall, I do not share private information of other people.					
6	In my time tunnel/wall, there can be no contents including insulting expressions.					
7	In my time tunnel/wall, I restrict access of people whom I do not want to see the statements I share.					
8	In my time tunnel/wall, I do not allow hateful messages.					
9	In my time tunnel/wall, anyone cannot share contents.					
10	In my time tunnel/wall, I do not share information I do not get from primary sources.					
11	My cover photo in social networks is accessible to anybody.					
12	Anybody can share my cover photo in social networks.					
13	Anybody can see my profile photo in social networks.					
14	Anybody can share my cover photo in social networks.					
15	The private information about my birth date, birth place, address, ID number, phone number, e-mail address, bank account number, political opinion, religious belief and relationship status that I share in my social network profile is accessible to anybody.					
16	Anybody can access to my social network profile from search engines.					
17	I do not add persons whom I do not know in my social network friends list.					
18	I do not accept friendship requests from persons whom I do not know.					
19	If I realize that social network account of one of my friends is hacked, I inform the Help Desk.					
20	I report malicious contents in social networks to the Help Desk.					
21	I run the applications with my social network login information.					
22	I log in to different applications and websites with my social network information.					
23	I do cybershopping with my social network information.					
24	In order to login my social network account, I get the backup codes in case of not receiving two-step authentication message.					
25	I use two-step authentication (via phone code messaging) to login my social network accounts.					
26	While logging in my social network accounts, I prefer using https which is a secure transfer protocol (hypertext transfer protocol secure) instead of http.					
27	I adjust my social network account setup in a way warning me if a new device is used to be logged in.					
28	I change my social network password periodically.					

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A Study of Former Japanese Prime Minister Abe's Speaking Style in 2020: Listener-Oriented or Speaker-Oriented?

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Generally speaking, politicians sometimes communicate in a manner that may be considered untrue or even inappropriate in various political situations. One reason for this is the simple but crucial fact that politicians often talk in a manner that is excessively focused on themselves rather than on their listeners. Political officials, it seems, really enjoy talking about what they plan to do and accomplish during their tenure, but less so about what the general public really wants to hear. Speaking more about themselves and less about their constituents, demonstrates that many politicians are clearly speaker-oriented and not listener-oriented. Japan's former Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, is an example of a politician who often uses a speaker-oriented approach. Through the lens of speaker versus listener orientation, this paper examines Abe's speaking style in various contexts, including Abe's comments during several political scandals, as well as Abe's speeches to constituents and global audiences. By studying Abe's communication style, we find that politicians may maximize their effectiveness when they orient their speech to listeners, instead of focusing on themselves. The primary data for this study comes from the National Diet Session documentation files provided by the Japanese government, as well as major newspaper articles.

Keywords: Japan, listener-oriented, solidarity, speaker-oriented, speech orientation

Introduction

Japanese political rhetorical study in the postwar period has not been examined extensively except a few cases in sociolinguistics (Maynard, 1994; Ikeda, 2009; Azuma, 2010). In the present paper, we address the question of how rhetorical usage influences Japan's political landscape. In particular, we take an approach that there are two ideas in speech orientation (e.g., Makino, 1983; Azuma, 2014): One is to orient our speech toward ourselves, as if talking only to ourselves. In such a case, when we talk, although we are aware that other people are listening, we might consider it simply as audible internal dialogue with ourselves. We call this the speaker-oriented approach. The other approach takes into account the listeners or addressees. In such a case, our speech is oriented to others and not just the speaker. We call this the listener-oriented approach[1].

This speaker- versus listener-orientation is critical to understanding how politicians behave, particularly in the speech behavior of Japan's prime minister,

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[1]For further discussion, please see Makino (2018).

Shinzo Abe, who is the focus of this study. Generally speaking, a commonly recognized perception is that politicians often talk about themselves (i.e., speaker-oriented) without referring to the general public's wants and needs. Prime minister Abe is not an exception to this rule. His style is most often speaker-oriented rather than listener-oriented. If Abe would consider more frequently what his addressees or the general public want to hear, then his speech would become listener-oriented.

Because Abe very often pursues what he, himself, wants to accomplish, and not what the general public wants to know or achieve, his constituents are familiar and frustrated with his speaker-oriented approach. Therefore, the listener orientation is missing from Abe's speech. One of the important aspects of a listener-oriented approach is the fundamental issue of *kyooyuu gengo* or shared language. Put differently, shared language is a willingness to share one's own feelings with others and sense a mutual closeness with them. In the political arena, politicians can accomplish this by finding common ground with the general public, and by sharing a similar approach to organize and achieve the same goal, value or idea[2]. Instead of dividing into separate groups and disengaging with one another, finding common ground enhances the likelihood for achieving a shared goal.

Method

In the present study, I will examine Abe's speaking style as observed in relevant newspaper articles (e.g., Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri, Sankei, Jiji Shinpo and Japan Times newspapers), government documents (e.g., Japanese National Diet session), a joint session of Congress in the United States, as well as other relevant materials. I adopt a rhetorical approach in studying the speaking style of Abe, examining how he expressed his ideas, policies and strategies in order to persuade and convince his audiences (e.g., politicians and the general public). Specifically, I will focus on whether Abe used a speaker-oriented style or a listener-oriented style in his speeches. For example, did Abe try to connect with his audience by expressing feelings which his audience also shared? Or, alternatively, did Abe focus on his own personal inclinations (not shared by the audience) in his speaking style? What did he think about his own speeches? What did "speaking" mean to him?

The sections below contain an analysis of Abe's self-oriented speech style. First, a short description of Abe's background is provided, followed by a general overview of his political scandals. Then, we will examine, in greater detail, two aspects of the cherry blossom festival scandal: the cherry blossom viewing party and the bribery accusations in the National Diet. Finally, we will look at an example of Abe's listener-oriented approach and, before summarizing conclusions, review the recent example of the COVID-19 press conference by Abe in Japan.

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[2]Among many experts, Jacques Attali, the French economic theorist argues for the altruism (*rita shugi*) by stating that "the real legitimacy of democratic power tomorrow is empathy." Please see https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/Interview/Technology-to-reign-supreme-after-the-coronavirus-Jacques-Attali. [Accessed 20 April 2020]

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

Who is Shinzo Abe? Abe is a Japanese politician and the current prime minister of Japan, since 2010. He previously served as the Chief Cabinet Secretary (*Kanboo Chookan*) from 2005 to 2006, and as prime minister from 2006 to 2007, making him the longest-serving prime minister since the office was created in 1885. If Abe continues in his post until his term expires on September 30, 2021, he will have served for a total of more than 3,500 days, about 9 ½ years.

Abe was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1993. Later appointed Chief Cabinet Secretary, he was extremely popular with the electorate, including opposition lawmakers. Confirmed the prime minister in 2006, at the age of 52, he was Japan's youngest post-war prime minister, and the first to have been born after World War II. However, in September 2007, he suddenly resigned, citing health reasons.

Yet, in September 2012, Abe staged an unexpected political comeback and has been prime minister since that time. A conservative, whom political commentators have widely described as a right-wing nationalist, he advocates revising Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution to allow Japan to maintain their own military force. He, and other conservatives, see the constitution, which forbids Japan from using force to settle international disputes, as an outdated constraint on Japan's ability to defend itself against a nuclear-armed North Korea and a more assertive China. Despite several cronyism scandals and failing to enact structural reforms, such as increasing the number of women in senior public and private roles, many analysts agree that Abe has benefited from a weak and divided opposition and a desire for stability among voters.

Over the course of the decade, Abe's tenure has made Japan an island of political stability even as other advanced industrial democracies have suffered from weak, unpopular, and short-lived governments. Abe's strong endorsement of governmental economic policies, which pursue monetary easing, fiscal stimulus, and financial reforms – sometimes called "Abenomics" has contributed to such stability[3].

Political Scandals

Recently, amid voter concerns about an economic slowdown, Abe showed little appetite for celebration as he fielded questions over a fresh political scandal in the Diet. Abe has denied any wrongdoing as he faces accusations that his office broke campaign laws by partially paying for supporters that he personally invited to a reception at the government-funded cherry blossom festival in Tokyo. However, a poll by the Asahi Shinbun, which has a readership of over 10 million, showed 68% of respondents were unconvinced by his explanations (Asahi Shinbun, June 24, 2019). Some commentators have even argued that this event is a significant

[3]Abe and his government unveiled a comprehensive package known as Abenomics to revive the Japanese economy from two decades of deflation, all while maintaining fiscal discipline.

blow to his political career, and the chances of him achieving the goals of his party, including constitutional reform, is very low.

Over the course of Abe's time in office, it is easy to identify numerous political scandals, perhaps, sadly, even too many to count[4]. However, in past months, backlash from an angry and confused public as well as opposition parties, has finally forced Abe to take responsibility of a more prominent role. Nevertheless, his clumsy efforts have only succeeded in deepening the biggest political crisis of his more than seven consecutive years in office.

One example of Abe's political scandals took place during the year 2019, when a pair of cabinet ministers resigned. Due to general election discrepancies in the Hiroshima district, Katsutoshi Kawai (minister of law) stepped down. In addition, Isshuu Sugawara (minister of trade, economy and industry) resigned because of allegations that he received bribes from his supporters. Abe insisted that these politicians provide an explanation to the public, but neither have done so. Furthermore, a member of Abe's political party, Mr. Tsukasa Akimoto, the vice minister of transportation, has been linked to bribes from a Chinese gambling company. Again, though requested, no public explanation has ever been made to the public. Despite these serious allegations against members of his cabinet, Abe made only brief appearances at strategy meetings, and spent his evenings wining and dining with friends and cabinet ministers.

Asahi Shinbun, wrote a recent editorial about the current state of the Japanese National Diet (February 13, 2020). The title reflects the newspaper's critical viewpoint "kooryoo taru kokkai, Abe shushoo no sekinin wa omoi" (Devastating Diet meetings, Abe has been solely responsible for the dissatisfactory gatherings). The essay claims the following:

> (1) *Abe shsuhoo no itakedaka nai hanron ya yaji, shidoro modoro no kakuryoo tooben. Kensetsuteki na giron o tsuujite yoriyoi ketsuron o michibikidasu, sonna "genron no fu" no aru beki sugata kara hodo tooi kookei ga tsuzuite iru koto ni azen to suru.*
> (Prime minister Abe's arrogant and aggressive approach, irregular comments, and the unspinning of lawmakers' opinions is extremely disappointing. Our National Diet and these unpleasant debates are far removed from the reasonable question and answer sessions we have come to expect.)

One lawmaker, Kiyomi Tsujimoto, of the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, was quoted during a Diet session as stating the following to prime minister Abe (Asahi Shinbun, February 17, 2020):

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[4]Some people argue that there have been some *sontaku* or conjecture/surmise among government officials and relevant individuals. For example, in the so-called Kagoike-scandal, this *sontaku* was used with respect to the altered documents related to the discontinued sale of state-owned land to a school operator, Kagoike, with ties to Abe's wife, raising the possibility of a cover-up. See also the book authored by Abe's wife (Abe, 2015) which discusses about the speaker herself. In addition, the President Online has carried an article about Abe. (https://president.jp/articles/-/34761?page=2) (April 20, 2020).

(2) *Soori sankoo ni mooshi agemasu. Tai wa atama kara kusaru to iu kotoba o gozonji desu ka? Koko made kitara genin wa tai no atama. Atama o kaeru shika nain jya nai desu ka? Sorosoro soori jishin no makuhiki da to omoimasu.*
(May I mention a reference to you, our Prime Minister. Do you know of the saying, "The sea bream rots from the head?" If we have come to this point, we can say that the cause is the head. The only option is to change the sea bream's head to avoid everything going bad, don't you think? I believe it is about time for your political term to come to an end.)

Abe was very upset by Tsujimoto's negative comment comparing him to the head of a sea bream, and commented, to himself under his breath, "imi no nai shitsumon da yo" (what you are saying is meaningless). This statement, although spoken to himself, was clearly heard by the entire Diet attending the session (incidentally, Abe's muttering to himself was deleted from the official government record). This impulsive personal reaction, not meant to be heard by all, suddenly created a firestorm among opposition lawmakers. Viewed as Abe's belittling of an opposition lawmaker during the Diet session, the utterance was denounced as uncivil and inappropriate for a prime minister.

This incident has only reinforced Abe's image as having hostility towards opposition parties and exhibiting a blatant disregard for the legislature. Although Abe made an official apology, saying "I apologize for my irregular remarks; I will discipline myself as prime minister and refrain from making such remarks," his demeanor seemed unrepentant, and he still appeared and acted defiant. Since then, he has continued to succumb to the temptation to heckle opposition legislators, provoking on-going criticism from various quarters. Gerald Curtis, a professor emeritus of political science at Columbia University assured that whoever will succeed Abe "will face a skeptical, distrusting public." (New York Times, March 10, 2020)[5].

Cherry Blossom Viewing Party

Let us examine the details of the cherry blossom viewing scandal. Cherry blossom viewing is considered one of the most important and national spring events in Japan and attracts a large number of people to Tokyo, the nation's capital. A source of national pride, the blossoms represent the fragility and fleeting beauty of life. A common social practice is to hold a cherry blossom viewing party during the short season. One such party was held at the highly respected ANA InterContinental Tokyo hotel. Considered one of the leading hotels in the Akasaka area, downtown Tokyo, it has received both the World Travel Award and World Luxury Hotel Award; prestigious awards that recognize excellence in the travel, tourism and hospitality industries.

For the present paper, the most controversial question is whether Abe's office spent national budget funds to invite and entertain his supporters at the cherry blossom festival events. According to Abe and his office staff, the hotels, including

[5]For his analysis of Japanese politicians, see Curtis (2009).

the ANA Intercontinental Hotel, did not issue any quotes or detailed invoice statements, yet the price, set by the hotels, was 5,000 yen per person. Typically, the cost for such an event would be at least 15,000 yen, far exceeding the 5,000 yen price. In other words, it appears that each Abe supporter received a benefit in the form of a discount of 10,000 yen (approximately USD $95 per person), which could be viewed as a "bribe" or favor paid to such supporters to attend party events.

To put it in more straightforward terms, it does not make economic sense for the hotel, which could normally charge 15,000 yen per person during such time of high demand, to only charge 5,000 yen per person. By doing so, the hotel would lose up to a total of 3,000,000 yen or more, depending on the number of attendees. It is only plausible to infer that the hotel's loss would somehow be compensated by the hosting party, the Abe-led political government. Such an occurrence, if paid by Abe's office using the national budget funds, would be a clear misuse of public funds and a potential violation of Japan bribery laws, even if the attendees participated without knowledge of the benefit or compensation. In sum, each attendee may have unwittingly received a benefit of at least 10,000 yen by Abe's office and the national government.

Abe has argued that the party fee (5,000 yen) was collected from each participant at the entrance of the venue by his office staff, that then provided a receipt issued by the hotel. Abe maintains that after all money was collected by his staff, it was then turned over to the hotel. He argues that because of this, no income or outlays were processed through his office. It is not clear how the hotel came up with 5,000 yen fee, given that the total number of attendees at the party was unknown. The inference is clear that someone had to pay the difference to the hotel, and Abe's office and the Japanese government are the prime suspects.

In short, Abe claims there is nothing wrong in organizing and conducting the cherry blossom viewing parties for attendees. According to some newspapers, this type of cherry-blossom event has been held annually for the past seven years, starting in 2013.

However, as additional evidence, one lawmaker, Kiyomi Tsujimoto, claimed that she received a detailed e-mail response from the ANA Intercontinental hotel on the morning of 17 February 2020. The following are the details of the communication between the hotel and Tsujimoto. This information is drawn from the Japanese National Diet session files, as well as national news outlets such as the Asahi, Mainichi, and Sankei newspapers.

(3) *2013 nen ikoo no 7 nen kan ni ki hoteru de hirakareta party and reception events ni tsuite oukagai shimasu. Jyooki ni tsuite ki hoteru ga mitumorisho ya seikyuusho o shusaisha gawa ni hakkoo shinai keesu ga atta de shoo ka?* (Tsujimoto)
(Let me ask about the parties and events which were held at your hotel during the past 7 years, beginning in 2013. During such period, have you ever had a case when you have not issued an estimate or receipt to the hosting agency?)

(4) *Gozaimasen. Shusaisha ni taishite mitsumorisho ya seikyuu shoomeisho o hakkoo itashimasu.* (Hotel)
(No. We always issue an estimate or receipt to the hosting agency.)

This statement clearly shows that the hotel has decisively stated they always issue either a receipt or a cost estimate to an agency in connection with party events. Starkly refuting Abe's explanation, this statement is significant. Given this clear statement, Tsujimoto once again asked a slightly different question to the hotel. Observe the following query and answer.

(5) *Jyooki ni tsuite kojin dantai o towazu, ki hoteru no tanntoosha ga kingaku nado o tegaki shi, atena wa kuuran no mama ryooshuusho o hakkoo shita keesu wa atta de shoo ka?* (Tsujimoto)
(With respect to the above mentioned period, regardless of whether it was an individual or a political group, have any of your hotel members ever written a memo of receipt in which the addressee space was left blank?)

(6) *Gozaimasen. Hei-hoteru ga hakkoo suru ryooshuusho ni oite, atena o kuuran no mama hakkoo suru koto wa gozaimasen.* (Hotel)
(We never do that. We never issue a receipt with the addressee space left blank.)

The hotel's response further clarifies, in precise terms, that the hotel never issues a receipt without specifying an addressee. Again, this is a clear contradiction of Abe's explanation. This is quite shocking and different from what we would tend to expect from the prime minister of Japan. Ultimately, these actions raise a clear discrepancy which, if valid, may point to a potential violation of Japan law.

Later, Abe insisted that the answers to Tusjimoto, as listed in (3) through (6) above, were about "general rules" (*ippan teki*) and not about any "specific case" (*tokubetsu*), such as this particular incident. Hence, Abe concluded that there has been no inconsistency between his previous statements and the hotel's response to Tsujimoto. Can we accept Abe's remarks at face value? Many viewers including the opposition parties have fundamental doubts and have asked him to contact the hotel again, in writing, and make their response public. However, Abe has simply rejected their request.

How is it possible for Abe to take no active efforts to clarify the allegations against him? One possible answer to this question is analyzing and understanding the way the prime minister speaks. In particular, all of his actions, comments and statements referenced above from the cherry blossom festival scandal, lend support to the conclusion that Abe uses a self-oriented approach.

Accusation of *Baishuu* ("Bribe")

We next examine Abe's comments and statements in response to bribery accusations made during the national Diet sessions as further evidence of his self-oriented approach. Takahiro Kuroiwa, a lawmaker belonging to the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, spoke to Abe during one of the Diet sessions. Kuroiwa became very upset by the fact that Abe's personal secretary (*hishokan*) was speaking to Abe while Kuroiwa took the stand to ask questions about the cherry blossom party. Kuroiwa felt ignored by Abe and took great offense. Observe the sequence of Kuroiwa's comments and Abe's reply. The data is taken from the National Diet session stenograph.

(7) *Shinrai ni urazuke rareta baishuu desu yo. Datte, Abe soori, toozen, kore rieki kyooyo desu yo.* (Kuroiwa)
(It is a bribe based on the trust between you and the hotel. Prime minister Abe, this is a clear case of what I call a "bribery.")

Kuroiwa clearly alleged that the prime minister had "bribed" the participants by providing them a monetary benefit. Suddenly, at this point in the conversation, Kuroiwa noticed Abe's secretary quietly but visibly making verbal comments to the prime minister. This fact agitated Kuroiwa, and he abruptly and quite openly condemned Abe, using an extremely loud voice, which could be heard by the entire Diet. Observe Kuroiwa's statements below.

(8) *Soko urusai. Soko shiro, urusai, kankei naidesho, soko, soko kankei nai kara, nande Abe sanshika kotaerarenaikara, nande, okashii deshoo, soko kankei nai, soko.*
(Over there, you are noisy, you, in white, you are indeed noisy. You have nothing to do with this. Over there, you have nothing to do with this. Abe is the only person who can answer, why do you speak? Are you crazy? Over there, you have nothing to do with this.)

Abe's secretary speaking to the prime minister during Kuroiwa's questioning without having received permission to speak in the Diet session, was a glaring breach of Diet protocol. Abe's reply is noteworthy in light of speaker-oriented speech. Observe what Abe said to Kuroiwa (and the general public, who were listening to the live Diet session on television).

(9) *Maa, hishoka wa samazama na kikai ni desu ne. Watashi ni adobaisu suru koto wa arimasu yo. Soreni taishite donaru to iu no wa desu ne. Ijyoo na taioo desu yo. Sore wa yappari okashii desu yo. Sore kurai atarimae jyaa nai desu ka.*
(Well, a secretary takes an occasion and tries to give some advice to me. And you get angry and yell at me like you have just done in front of me. It is unbelievably rude. What you have done is absolutely unthinkable. What I am telling you is a simple fact.)

In response to Kuroiwa's abrupt comment, Abe scolds Kuroiwa by suggesting that his secretary had done nothing wrong. Then Abe continued his strong response. Observe his next sentence.

(10) *Mattaku sonn na koto wa nai wake deshite, mattaku baishuu to iu* ***kyooretsu*** *na kotoba o tsukau. Mattaku bakagete arienai kotoba deshite.* (emphasis added)
(It is not like that at all. Good grief, you use the utterly crazy word, "bribery." It is a completely rude and unthinkable word (i.e., bribery).)

Abe expressed his anger and complete dissatisfaction with Kuroiwa. The fact that Kuroiwa had chosen to use such a strong word – bribery – in his questioning of Abe was countered with Abe likewise using a severe term – *kyooretsu* (utterly crazy) – to describe Kuroiwa.

In essence, Abe's response supports his speaker orientation approach. Abe replied to Kuroiwa by expressing what mattered to Abe, and not taking into account the feelings of the listener. Abe spoke of his own anger and feelings of condemnation without empathizing how Kuroiwa and the general public might feel about what he had done. Interestingly, he has never offered an apology for his secretary's behavior during the Diet session. No explanation or justification has ever been made public, except his comment that the word *bribe* is *kyooretsu* (utterly crazy) and unthinkable for him.

Abe's Listener Orientation

So far, we have examined examples of Abe's speech style which support the speaker-oriented approach. However, are there examples of Abe's speech which reinforce a listener-oriented method? While Abe's style seems to be speaker-oriented the majority of the time, accompanied by his strong determination not to resign as prime minister (Asahi Shinbun, April 2, 2020), we have seen some occasions when Abe temporarily becomes a listener-oriented speaker.[6] One clear example of this was when he traveled abroad to the U.S. in 2015 to give a speech at a joint session of Congress in Washington D.C. We will examine his speech style on this occasion from the media accounts reported in the Japan Times newspaper (Japan Times, April 30, 2015).

On 29 April 2015, Abe made an historic, first ever address by a Japanese prime minister to a joint session of the U.S. Congress. In his speech, Abe focused on the long-term relationship between Japan and the U.S., going back to when the two countries were enemies during World War II. During his speech, Abe recognized several dignitaries in the audience and made the following statements:

> (11) Ladies and gentlemen, in the gallery today is Lt. Gen. Lawrence Snowden. Seventy years ago in February, he landed on Iōtō, or the island of Iwo Jima, as a captain in command of a company. In recent years, General Snowden has often participated in the memorial services held jointly by Japan and the U.S. on Iōtō. He said, and I quote, "We didn't and don't go to Iwo Jima to celebrate victory, but for the solemn purpose to pay tribute to and honor those who lost their lives on both sides."

In a dignified manner, Abe introduced Snowden who had been the U.S. commander during the Iwo Jima military campaign. Abe honored Snowden as a capable commander to lead the U.S. at such time of war. At the session, a Japanese individual was sitting next to Snowden. Observe Abe's next comments.

> (12) Next to General. Snowden sits Diet member Yoshitaka Shindo, who is a former member of my Cabinet. His grandfather, General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, whose valor we remember even today, was the commander of the Japanese garrison during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

[6]Taniguchi (2018) discusses Abe's communication style as his speechwriter.

Essentially, the visual juxtaposition of Snowden, the U.S. commander at the island, and the grandson of Mr. Kuribayashi, the Japanese commander during the same campaign, is compelling. (Incidentally, Mr. Kuribayashi died at Iwo Jima at the end of the war.)[7] Abe continues his speech as follows:

> (13) What should we call this, if not a miracle of history? Enemies that had fought each other so fiercely have become friends bonded in spirit.

To Abe and all the members of the U.S. congress, this was a significant and profound moment of his speech. Two past enemies, now unified in peace, sitting side by side in the gallery of a joint session of the U.S. congress, had historical implications.

It is important, nevertheless, in our analysis of Abe's speech, to make the distinction that Abe was speaking to U.S. politicians, not Japanese politicians. In other words, this example of Abe as a listener-oriented speaker occurred in a different context -- Abe was acting as an American politician and not as a Japanese politician. A Japanese politician would never invite members of the public to a session of the Diet and introduce them to the legislators, as Abe did at the U.S. Congress. Abe, in fact, espoused American customs and behaviors for this historical speech. Abe's adoption of the listener-oriented style also helps explain why the audience so enthusiastically accepted the speech. He oriented his remarks to the listeners and their needs. If he had not done so, and did not personalize his remarks by introducing the visitors, it is easy to conclude that his speech would not have received the same level of acceptance by the U.S. audience.

Having evaluated this rare instance of Abe's listener-oriented approach, let us examine briefly, other Japanese prime ministers who exhibited listener-oriented traits. For example, Kakuei Tanaka (1918-1993) was a very popular prime minister. Often called a "bulldozer with a computer," he was a smart, talented, and powerful "country builder" at a time when the country needed such a politician. Active in building highways, bullet trains, dams, and other infrastructure, he paid close attention to what local people really needed in their hometowns. A clear example of a popular listener-oriented speaker, he fully understood and shared the values of his constituents. More recently, Junichiro Koizumi (1942-), was considered a "strange politician" (*henjin*) and a "one phrase" (*wan fureezu)* leader known for his concise speech. However, he was extremely enthusiastic about political reform and restructuring the economy (called *yuusei mineika* -- post office reforms) when the country really needed a diversified approach to economy building. One unique aspect of his policies was his ability to produce his own political agenda, which was shared by the general public (*kyooyuu gengo* -- shared language). Because he made an effort to fully understand the ideas and values of his constituents and acted to carry them out, Koizumi can be viewed as adopting a listener-oriented approach. From these two examples, we can posit that sharing and understanding the views and values of the general public will strengthen a politician's ability to communicate with, and gain the support and approval of the people, helping to further his or her political agenda.

[7] The film "Letters from Iwo Jima" directed by Clint Eastwood deals with this subject matter.

Abe's Press Conference on COVID-19

Let us now turn to studying another example of Abe's speech, as reflected in a recent press conference concerning the COVID-19 crisis in Japan. In the U.S. and many other countries, it is common for a political leader to use prepared written materials, and even a prompter, when speaking at a press conference or other formal events. For example, the current U.S. president often uses a teleprompter placed in front of him when conducting a press conference. These media devices help a political leader to ensure his or her speech is accurate, concise and consistent with the administration's agenda. Nevertheless, when the speaker delivers the message apart from prepared written remarks, bringing emotion, enthusiasm and conviction to the fore, the speaker's communication style is enhanced and seems to be better accepted by the audience,. In essence, adopting a listener-oriented approach is a key to its political success.[8]

Under the circumstances of a national emergency, this aspect of emotive and enthusiastic communication becomes critical. Using a speaker versus listener-oriented analysis, let us examine how Abe behaved at a recent press conference during the COVID-19 crisis in Japan. Did his speech convince the audience or move them emotionally? Given that a listener-oriented style pays attention to the listener's needs, and often enables an emotional interpersonal experience between the speaker and the listener, was Abe successful in achieving such results with his audience?

On 7 April 2020, Abe gave his first press conference to explain a "declaration of a state of emergency" in Japan, relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon close examination of the video of this speech, we notice that Abe was careful to maintain eye contact with the media and the audience, more so than usual. It also appears that he used long pauses more frequently than normal. Nonetheless, it is clear that his speech as a whole was not convincing enough to move people emotionally. He continued to adopt a speaker orientation by using extremely polite expressions when addressing the audience, instead of more aggressive and authoritative forms. Although we might expect such behavior in Japanese culture at such a very formal conference as this occasion, the need to urgently and effectively communicate with the audience under these circumstances becomes more important than abiding by cultural norms. After all, the subject of the conference is the declaration of a state of emergency for the country in a national crisis. Abe's speech fails to meet this expectation. Observe some of his expressions below, which support his speaker-oriented approach (see also Okamoto, 2020).

(14) *Seikatsu no iji ni hitsuyoo na baai o nozoki,midari ni gaisyutu shinai yoo yoosei subeki to kangaemasu.*

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[8]47 News (including the Kyodo Press) reports that Abe's government always blames others (the Japanese people) instead of blaming the government itself. Please see https://headline s.yahoo.co.jp/hl?a=20200502-00000001-yonnana-soci&p=1 (Retrieved on May 2, 2020). Asahi Shinbun also reports that the Japanese government abides the concept of *Jishu Yoosei* (voluntary request) demanding a request to only go out outside for essential things without any sanctions attached to the request. Please see https://digital.asahi.com/articles/A SN4Z7F2B N4ZUTFK00K.html?ref=m or_mail_topix1. [Accessed 3 May 2020]

(I think that we should ask you not to go out except when you need to do so by necessity.)

(15) *Gaishutsu jishoku o onegai shimasu.*
(We ask you to avoid going out.)

(16) *Mittsu no mitsu o sakeru koodoo o tettei shite itadaku yoo aratamete onegai itashimasu.*
(We humbly ask you to take action to avoid the three "high-density" areas (i.e., closed spaces, crowded places, a close-contact setting.)

In each sentence, we see the clear example of the Japanese linguistic style of politeness. Simply put, his statements were too polite in this context of urgent necessity (Azuma, 2019). Instead, Abe should have used expressions that were more decisive, full of confidence and unwavering determination. Examples might include:

(17) *Gaisyutu shinai yoo yoosei shimasu.*
(We ask you not to go out.)

(18) *Gaishutsu o jishuku shite kudasai.*
(Please do not go out.)

(19) *Mittsu no mitsu o sakeru koodoo o tette kudasai.*
(Please actively avoid the three "high-density" areas.)

In each sentence, the final particle is simplified, and the linguistic form is more direct, like a strict order. For example, in (17), *yoosei shimasu* (we ask you) is very straightforward and directly asks the listeners to follow the command. In its original expression in (14), it is unnecessary to say *seikatsu no iji ni hitsuyoo na baai o nozoki,midari ni* (not to go out except when you need to do so by necessity), given that the statement needs to be a strong "order" expressed by the leader of the country in crisis. Abe may feel that the expression in (14) is a Japanese way to communicate his intended meaning, however, it is also a manifestation of his speaker-oriented approach, and it will never reach the listeners so that it convinces and moves them emotionally. In an emergency situation, it is an absolute necessity for a political leader to connect with listeners in an interpersonal way by using the most reasonable and shortest expression, as reflected in (17). Likewise, in (18) and (19), the simplest expression is used to convey the order. In each case, we recognize that the listener-oriented approach is an extremely important tool for convincing and emotionally connecting with an audience[9].

Another example from Abe's speech is when he briefly discusses a "lock down." A "lock down" is a political directive to completely close the city in a bid to stop the spread of COVID-19. For example, in the UK, police officers are able to fine or even arrest those ignoring a stay-at-home order or "lock down," Abe

[9]Decker (2008) gives various examples from business environments.

insists that Japan will never take “lock down” measures. Observe his comment during the conference.

> (20) *Konkai no kinkyuu jitai sengen wa kaigai de mirareru yoo na toshi fuusa lock down o okonau mono de wa mattaku arimasen. So no koto wa meikaku ni mooshi agemasu.*
> (This declaration of a state of emergency has nothing to do with any so-called city disclosure or lock down as seen in other countries. I firmly state this fact.)

In this example, Abe clearly states that the “state of emergency” does not equate to closing the city or a “lock down.” Citizens can still move freely as they usually do, although they are not encouraged to do so. The idea of “lock down” has never been discussed or implemented under Japanese governmental policies. The Japanese Constitution prohibits unwanted government intervention in the ordinary life of Japanese citizens, protecting freedom of speech and movement within the country. This overriding principle stems from historical government abuses during World War II, when the government forced citizens to fight in the war with little to no compensation. Therefore, dissimilar to the efforts used in many other European and North American countries, the Japanese government has not forced their citizens to endure “lock down” procedures.

Given Abe’s statement, we must ask whether the listeners will indeed follow Abe’s instructions. In particular, he does not mention any penalty or fine for not following the stay-at-home policy. Abe’s only instruction was asking people to stay-at-home. No additional consequences for violating the instruction were mentioned. From our analytical perspective, we may say that this is an example of a speaker-oriented approach because Abe is not responding to the needs or questions of the people at all.

Under emergency circumstances we see that a speaker needs to be listener-oriented, instead of speaker-oriented. Abe paid no attention to this important linguistic mechanism and as a result, most of the media and the general public were quite disappointed or at least not emotionally convinced. One communication specialist, Okamoto (2020) argues that Abe’s speech was “without any blood” and his style was “sluggish and bureaucratic” (Okamoto, 2020). This similar analysis has also been expressed by other media such as the Asahi, Yomiuri and Sankei newspapers.

On 16 April 2020, Abe conducted another press conference concerning the COVID-19 crisis. At this event, he announced the payment of 100,000 yen (about USD $900) to every single Japanese citizen to assist them in surviving the crisis. While a welcome gesture, this announcement constituted a remarkable shift from his previous decision to provide 300,000 (about $2,700) to each household with reduced income. It is noteworthy that this political shift, which benefits government finances by about three times the original plan, was decided due to pressure from his allied political party, Komeito (Clean Government Party). This party insisted on the 100,000 yen proposal for every Japanese citizen (see also newspapers including Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Jiji Shinpo). It is significant that the shift was not initiated by any pressure from the general public, but by Abe’s allied political party, Komeito. Abe seems to have paid more attention to his own party interests as well as those of allied parties and as a result, lost the opportunity to listen and connect with the Japanese public. He was again adopting a speaker-oriented approach and not a listener-oriented method. Asahi newspaper published an article titled "Hitori jyuuman en, dotanba no shuusei, shusoo no mentsu maru tsubure" (100,000 yen per person, last minute change, prime minister ends in utter failure) (Asahi Shinbun, April 16).

Now it is the time that Abe needs to realize that various economic monetary vouchers such as "Go to Travel" (*Ryokoo ken*), "Go to Eat" (*Shokuji ken*) are not the only kind of emergency plan that the Japanese people have been waiting for.

Additionally, Abe made the following statement claimed at the board meeting of his party (April 13, 2020).

> (21) *Kyuugyoo ni taishite hoshoo o okonatte iru kuni wa sekai ni rei ga naku, waga kuni no shien wa seikai de mottomo teatsui.*
> (There is no other country which offers better compensation to workers other than Japan. The compensation of our country is the best. Emphasis added)

We know that Japan has not offered the best worker compensation, as compared with other countries in the world[10]. Abe is simply using his own language and version of the facts to try to convince everyone[11]. This is further evidence that he is a speaker-oriented politician (unlike other foreign politicians such as German chancellor Angela Merkel, whose speech to the public was well-accepted. In reference to Merkel's speech, Reuters (2020) printed an article titled "Merkel tells Germans: Fighting virus demands war-time solidarity" (Reuters, March 18). According to the article, Merkel, who addressed the nation for the first time in nearly 15 years in office (other than her annual New Year's address), said in her televised speech, that "since German reunification, actually, since World War Two, there has never been a challenge for our country in which acting in solidarity is so crucial" (emphasis added). As we see, the term solidarity has been the key concept for Merkel, which is very different from Abe's speaker-oriented style.[12] Abe has never used the word "solidarity" in the same sense used by Merkel here - clear and unambiguous. In the same line, New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern pleaded the people of her country to "act like you have COVID-19." Right next to her was a huge billboard vividly stating "Unite against

[10]Veteran lawmaker Ichiro Ozawa of the National Democratic Party made a comment on this issue in the Daily newspaper in 2020. Please see https://www.daily.co.jp/gossip/2020/04/15/0013273938.shtml. [Accessed 20 April 2020]

[11]Abe had said Japan would ramp up its PCR (polymerase chain reaction) testing capacity to 20,000 per day (April 6, 2020). However, among many health experts including well-known professor Shinji Shimada, president of the Yamanashi University, claims that the limited PCR testing system is "the shame for the country of Japan" and remains a *santan taru jyookyoo* (terribly miserable situation). Please see https://digital.asahi.com/articles/ASN555QVWN54UTIL02Q.html. [Accessed 30 April 2020]. Professor Kenji Shibuya of Kings College London who is the former senior advisor to the Director General of WHO (World Health Organization) advocates the nationwide PCR test system in Japan. Please see https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/kings-welcomes-new-director-to-establish-institute-for-population-health. [Accessed 8 April 2019]

[12]See Azuma (forthcoming) for the discussion of Japanese-Americans newspaper during World War Two.

COVID-19," as she personally spoke to the audience, saying "you are not alone, you will hear us, see us daily as we guide New Zealand in this period." Again, the concept of unity or solidarity was the key message from her speech (The Guardian, 2020)[13]. Furthermore, the Atlantic newspaper also pointed out that her success "isn't all Ardern's doing; it's also the product of an impressive collective effort by public-health institutions, opposition politicians, and New Zealanders as a whole, who have largely abided by social-distancing restrictions (The Atlantic, 2020). In all, we can say that Ardern was very successful in maintaining the sense of solidarity and "togetherness" among the people of her country.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we have studied the language style used by politicians to attract support for their political agendas. Our focus was to examine how they behaved in doing so. Through our analysis, we have found two approaches; one is an orientation to the speaker (i.e., speaker-oriented style), and the other is an orientation to the listener/addressee (i.e., listener-oriented style). By studying the speeches of prime minister Abe Shinzo, we have realized that politicians can maximize their effectiveness when orienting their speech to *listeners*, instead of to the *speaker*. In doing so, listeners feel a sense of common purpose and a shared feeling of ownership. This knowledge sharing is a key concept in establishing group-orientation in politics. By enhancing a sense of solidarity, shared knowledge increases the ability for political dialogue to go beyond the mere structures of power.

In addition, we can also conclude that spoken language is more effective when it shares emotion/solidarity with its audience, instead of a detached delivery of facts or abstract propositions. This can be characterized as a sense of *rapport-talk* rather than a simple *report-talk* (Tannen, 1993)[14]. Human beings enjoy the sharing of information between and among themselves. Instead of monopolizing information for ourselves (i.e., speakers), we should prefer to share it with others (i.e., listeners) so that we can maximize the potential output.

Politicians, like any other profession, are interested in "sharing" and expanding their own knowledge with others. A listener-oriented approach that emphasizes an emotional connection or shared common ground with the constituents (more than just rote information, facts and propositions), will increase the likelihood of accomplishing political goals and objectives. In other words, focusing on *rapport-talk* and emphasizing *emotion* is an effective way for politicians to maximize their spoken language and have an impact on democratic institutions in Japan, as well

[13]"The Call to Unite" is a global livestream event to encourage the concept of solidarity among the people in the world so that they can fight against the COVID-19 in 2020. The event has been participated by more than 200 people including well-known politicians and entertainers.
[14]Tannen (1993) argues that "rapport-talk" is a communication style that promotes social affiliation and emotional connection and "report-talk" is a style focused on exchanging information with little emotional import.

as other nations[15]. Tannen (2007) has highlighted several methods to enhance mutual understanding and involvement in speech, including repetition, dialogue, details, and storytelling, all of which pertain to personal emotions. Remarkably, none of these are actively used in Abe's speeches. Politicians, including Abe, seldom use any of these techniques to connect with their constituents, most often simply speaking "at" them and not "to" them. They frequently fail to communicate ideas in a shared emotive manner and consequently fail to move the audience toward a common joint connection[16].

In sum, we argue that focusing more on listeners and paying attention to the emotional connection of speech (rather than a detached, fact-based, delivery of information), and conducting rapport-talk rather than report-talk with a sense of "solidarity," are effective ways to attract and gain support from the general public and the media. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that understanding and support is facilitated, even enabled, by a shared, emotional, interpersonal experience, or in one word, "rapport," which is exhibited in a listener-oriented speech style.

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[15]For discussions about rhetorical styles among U.S. presidents, please see Ott and Dickinson (2019) and Lim (2008) among others.

[16]Duranti (1986) emphasizes the active role of the listener in interpreting and shaping a speaker's discourse.

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