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THE ILLUSION OF FLAWLESS LIFE ON SOCIAL MEDIA: VLOGS AND REAL LIFE

**SOSYAL MEDYADA KUSURSUZ HAYAT İLLÜZYONU:
VLOGLAR VE GERÇEK HAYAT**

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Abstract: Internet and social media use are an integral part of life today. Many people spend a significant part of their day on social media. However, people often post on social media as if everything is fine and flawless in their lives. The aim of this study, which is designed as a qualitative research, is to examine the flawless life image represented on social media through selected vlogs. With this aim, after the literature review, 10 vlog accounts were selected by random sampling among the most subscribed vlogs on YouTube. These accounts are analyzed according to the fitness, beauty, family, life style and travel categories. In the study, in line with the main idea of the study and research problems, it is seen that vloggers present themselves as happy and very satisfied with their lives and do not mention the problematic and sad aspects of life.

Keywords: Social Media, Vlogs, Flawless Life, Communication, Everyday Life

Öz: İnternet ve sosyal medya kullanımı günümüzde hayatın ayrılmaz bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Birçok insan günün önemli bir bölümünü sosyal medyada geçirmektedir. Öte yandan, insanlar sosyal medyada genellikle hayatlarında her şey yolunda ve kusursuzmuş gibi paylaşım yapmaktadırlar. Nitel araştırma olarak tasarlanan bu çalışmanın amacı, sosyal medyada temsil edilen kusursuz yaşam imajını çalışma için seçilmiş vlog'lar üzerinden incelemektir. Bu amaçla, literatür taramasının ardından Youtube'da en çok abone olunan vloglar arasından 10 vlog hesabı seçilmiştir. Bu hesaplar fitness, güzellik, aile, yaşam tarzı ve seyahat kategorilerine göre analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada, çalışmanın ana fikri ve araştırma problemleri ile uyumlu olacak şekilde, vloggerların kendilerini mutlu ve hayatlarından çok memnun olarak sundukları, hayatın problemlili ve üzücü yönlerinden bahsetmedikleri görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Medya, Vloglar, Kusursuz Hayat, İletişim, Gündelik Hayat

INTRODUCTION

Internet and social media use are an integral part of life today. Many people spend a significant part of their day on social media. Many people have their own social media accounts and there are other accounts they follow. Social media has become an important market, consumption and leisure time area. However, people often post on social media as if everything is fine and flawless in their lives. Since people's real lives are actually not like that, they create a kind of flawless life illusion. This study aims to examine this flawless life representation through selected vlog accounts.

For this purpose, firstly, new media and digital transformation will be reviewed, then basic theoretical approaches will be examined. Third, the study will focus on social media, YouTube and vlogs. Then the illusion of flawless life on social media will be mentioned. Finally, the vlogs selected for the study will be analyzed.

METHOD

The aim of this study, which is designed as a qualitative research, is to examine the flawless life image presented on social media. For this purpose, vlogs on YouTube were examined. For the study, 10 vlog accounts were selected by random sampling among vloggers with the most subscribers. Discourse analysis was made to the selected vlogs. These accounts are analyzed according to the fitness, beauty, family, life style and travel categories. In the study, 2 of the videos uploaded in 2021 by the vloggers were selected and analyzed (Vlogs in the travel category were selected randomly from the past years). When we look at the limitations of the study, this study is limited to the selected videos only. In the light of all these, the research questions of the study are as follows:

- How do vloggers present their lives?
- How do vloggers present themselves?
- What do vloggers suggest to users to have a better life?

1. NEW MEDIA AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Today we live in a world surrounded by digital resources. In this world that develops thanks to the internet, a significant part of our lives passes in the digital environment. To understand the Web 1.0 era, it is necessary to look at the history of the WWW (World Wide Web). In 1989, software engineer Tim Berners-Lee developed the WWW (World Wide Network) system where computers can communicate with each other. In this system, computers share information over HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) (History of the Web, 2021). "Tim also wrote the first web page editor/browser ("WorldWideWeb.app") and the first web server ("httpd"). By the end of 1990, the first web page was served on the open internet, and in 1991, people outside of CERN were invited to join this new web community" (History of the Web, 2021). In this context, Web 1.0 represents the establishment of the technology of the World Wide Web. With the development and spread of the Internet, its use has become more and more common.

The activity on the Web, which was limited to promotion, obtaining information and shopping until 2004; entered a revolution process with the development of Web 2.0 technology, which enables internet users to create and share content without the need for technical knowledge (Kahraman, 2010). "Web 2.0 is a term that was first used in 2004 to describe a new way in which software developers and end-users started to utilize the World Wide Web; that is, as a platform whereby content and

applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 60-61). Web 2.0 was a collection of technologies, business strategies and social trends and it was more dynamic and interactive than its predecessor, Web 1.0 (Murugesan, 2007: 34). In this context, social media emerged with Web 2.0. Now, users were also able to upload and share content on the internet. Web 2.0 has an interactive structure. Websites such as YouTube, Myspace, Facebook, Wikipedia emerged in this period. “However, although most people would probably agree that Wikipedia, YouTube, Facebook, and Second Life are all part of this large group, there is no systematic way in which different Social Media applications can be categorized” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010: 61).

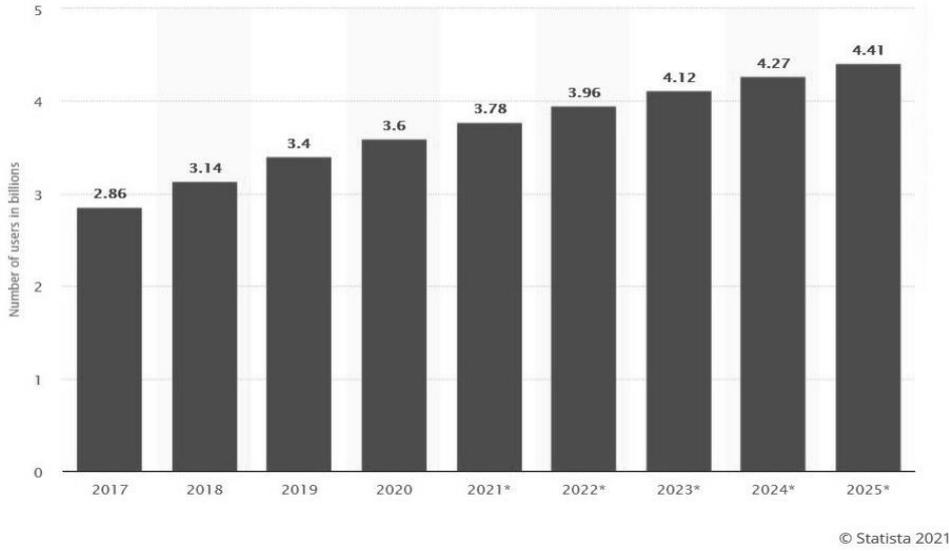
The development of the technology was so rapid that Web 3.0 did not take long to develop. Web 3.0 is a much more advanced version of Web 2.0.

“Probably another buzzword like Web 2.0 for marketing purposes. Web 3.0 is referred to as the Semantic Web, in which the web itself will be used as a database with more intelligent search engines, filtering tags and where the information will be widgetized...Web 3.0 is a techno-social system of co-operation. Networked information technologies are used as medium that allows humans to produce something new together or to form cohesive social relations that are bound by feelings of togetherness and belonging. An example for the first are wikis and for the second social networking platforms” (Igi global, 2021).

Social media applications have evolved rapidly in this interactive, supply-demand-efficient and technologically far more advanced world of web 3.0. This rapid technological development in 30 years is surprising and impressive.

Due to all this technological speed, Web 4.0 did not take long to develop. Web 4.0 is based on wireless communication (mobile devices or computers) that connects people and objects in real time anytime and anywhere in the physical or virtual world such as smart phones and GPS technologies (Benito-Osorio and others, 2013: 277). Web 4.0 is “autonomous, proactive, content-exploring, self-learning, collaborative, and content-generating agents based on fully matured semantic and reasoning technologies as well as artificial intelligence” (Igi Global, 2021).

Figure 1: Number of social network users worldwide from 2017 to 2025 (in billions)



(Statista, 2021)

Web 5.0 is being spoken today. This rapid change is to be expected as technology is developing rapidly, and digital devices are getting smarter. According to this, "Web 5.0, the sensory and emotive Web, is designed to develop computers that interact with human beings. This relationship will become a daily habit for many people" (Benito-Osorio and others, 2013: 277).

Today, a significant part of social interaction takes place in digital environments. The transformation of media and communication culture continues, and we may be in a period that could be called "the end of the digital beginning" (Carlsson, 2019: 7). Many people around the world are now saying that the internet should be free and accessible from anywhere. Social media has become a medium used by many people and institutions today (Carlsson, 2019: 7). More than 3.6 billion people were using social media worldwide in 2020, this number is expected to grow to about 4.41 billion by 2025 (Statista, 2021. Please see figure 1). At this point, it would be proper to examine the main theoretical approaches on the subject.

2. TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

In classical studies, it was stated that the focus should be on the content or the message. But long before the advancement of the Internet and technology, McLuhan (1964) changed that concept by saying "the medium is the message." In fact, medium also has the characteristics of messages and affect people's lives deeply. Accordingly, the message is not a medium, but a medium is a message.

“In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium—that is, of any extension of ourselves—result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology” (McLuhan, 1964: 1).

On the other hand, Castells stated that the internet provides people with new opportunities such as business and self-employment, individual expression, cooperation and assertiveness, and new networks for political activists to spread their messages to the world. In fact, it transforms McLuhan's idea that the medium is the message, into the form that the network is the message (Castells, 2001 in Giddens, 2006: 598).

According to Van Dijk (2020), network society is defined as a type of modern society in which a society consisting of social networks and media networks determines the individual, group and social organization style at all levels. Social networks are as old as human history. Commercial networks, transportation and production networks are in all areas of life. During the 20th century, information and communication became so important that a network society emerged (Van Dijk, 2020: 24-26).

Everything is getting more fluid in this network society. We are moving from solid modernity to a fluid / liquid modernity (Bauman, 2011). While the modernity of the past was heavy, solid, systematic and orderly, today's modernity is spreading like a light, fluid network (Bauman, 2011: 58). This situation has created a network system in every part of the society and an area where people can exchange information. But most things in this world are just an illusion. Nothing that we think is real is real. In this world according to Baudrillard (1994: 2):

“No more mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept. No more imaginary coextensivity; it is genetic miniaturization that is the dimension of simulation. The real is produced from miniaturized cells matrices, and memory bank, models of control - and it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times from these. It no longer needs to be rational, because it no longer measures itself against either an ideal or negative instance. It is anything but operational. In fact, it is no longer really the real, because no imaginary envelops it anymore. It is hyperreal, produced from a radiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace

without atmosphere.”

This unreal world is perfectly suited to create the illusion of flawless life on social media that is the subject of this study. Goffman states in his famous work "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" that people actually perform in front of others (Goffman, 1959). People constantly review their performance to impress the audience and idealize it. They only stop acting on the backstage where the audience is not allowed to enter (Goffman, 1959: 63). Social media is the practical equivalent of Goffman's theory in today's world. Social media, where people can represent themselves and their lives differently, is the stage of our performance in front of the audience.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be defined as "forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)" (Merriam-Webster, 2021). With the development of Web 2.0, the concept of social media has also entered our lives. Social media applications have quickly become a new and very important type of communication by allowing users to share content. Thus, "the term social media refers to technologies, platforms, and services that enable individuals to engage in communication from one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many" (Flew, 2021).

Users can turn social networks into a public or private space at any time. In the network society, the boundaries of the private and public sphere are increasingly blurred. Van Dijk (2020) defines this situation as the structural feature of the network society.

"Key terms used to describe social media's functionality, such as the 'social', 'collaboration' and 'friends', resonate with the communalist jargon of early utopian visions of the Web as a space that inherently enhances social activity. In reality, the meanings of these words have increasingly been informed by automated technologies that direct human sociality" (Van Dijck, 2013:13).

Social media has evolved with the rise of online communication services including Facebook and Myspace, microblogging service Twitter, video sharing website YouTube and blog softwares such as Blogger and WordPress (Flew, 2021).

It would be appropriate to examine the history of YouTube and vlogs, which are the subjects of this study. "YouTube was registered on February

14, 2005, by Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim, three former employees of the American e-commerce company PayPal. They had the idea that ordinary people would enjoy sharing their 'home videos'" (Hosch, 2021). YouTube originated with the slogan "Broadcast Yourself" and Google bought YouTube in 2006. When we conceptualize YouTube and look at it from a sociological point of view, it can be thought that YouTube provides people with a democratized broadcasting opportunity (Özuz, 2018: 33). There are many people who consider being a "youtuber" as a profession, especially among people from the Y and Z generations (Özuz, 2018).

According to Mayfield (2008:5), social media is a group of kinds of online media which shares "participation", "openness", "conversation", "community" and "connectedness". YouTube includes all these concepts. It is one of the most popular video sharing networks today. It appeals to a very wide audience with its new features added in the past years. Today, "over 2 billion logged-in users visit YouTube each month, and every day people watch over a billion hours of video and generate billions of views" (YouTube, 2021).

When it comes to vlogs, the concept comes from the abbreviation of the "video" and "blog" words. Thus, vlogger concept comes from the abbreviation of the "video" and "blogger" (as Vlogger or YouTuber) words. According to Biel and Perez (2010: 211) "Vlogs are video collections that serve both as an audiovisual life documentary, and as a vehicle for communication and interaction on the Internet." Today, many people share their daily lives through vlogs. In addition, many people collaborate with brands, promote through their vlogs and earn money with this method. "Although vlogging is not exclusive of YouTube, the forms of social engagement inherent in vlogging are one of the key features that differentiate YouTube from a simple online video repository and distribution system to a platform for creativity and participation around video," (Biel and Perez, 2010: 211). Conversational vlog is the most common form of user-generated content on YouTube.

Burgess and Green (2009: 54) state that the different part of vlogging is that it gives us the feeling that we are communicating face to face. Vloggers act and speak as if they are talking to the audience. This creates a sense of intimacy in the audience and they feel involved in the process. Thus, "vlogging on YouTube is seen as a distinctively original form of mediated communication" (Tolson, 2010: 279). Actually "YouTube has produced a new generation of celebrities and influencers that have turned posting videos online into lucrative full-time careers" (Leskin and Haasch,

2021). The vloggers with whom viewers give the most positive responses depend on reputation due to various types of strong communication traits (Özuz, 2018).

A generally striking issue in social media is that vloggers and influencers often share the positive and beautiful aspects of life, and they mostly appear happy and at their best in videos. These videos, which reflect a kind of "flawless and happy world illusion", are watched in large numbers. Viewers also want to have lives like this and to look like this. This situation causes the consumption culture to spread even more rapidly.

4. THE FLAWLESS LIFE ILLUSION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

In social media, people compare their lives with those of others, as they can follow each other's lives. Since most people show their lives perfectly on social media, this situation causes unhappiness in followers who have problems in their lives. According to a study, the more time people spend on Facebook, the more depressed they feel (Steers, Wickham and Acitelli, 2014). We can consider these findings valid for all social media. But most people continue to share their lives as if it is perfect.

"Only 18% of men and 19% of women in a 2016 study agreed that their Facebook page displayed "a completely accurate reflection" of who they are... Watching snapshots of our life get "likes" can feel validating. It has been found in a 2016 study that these digital likes are literally addictive and activate our brain the same way eating chocolate or winning money does. However, these favourable yet falsified personas can be incredibly damaging to your mental wellbeing... Many popular social media influencers have revealed that behind their persona, they feel lonely, disillusioned and stressed due to their disconnect from reality. It is important to live in the present and engage actively with your life" (Alegado, 2019)

Actually, there will never be an ideal way to self-present on social network sites (Tüfekçi, 2008). But many young people do not hesitate to share their lives on social media. According to findings of a study on this subject, "Findings show little to no relationship between online privacy concerns and information disclosure on online social network sites. Students manage unwanted audience concerns by adjusting profile visibility and using nicknames but not by restricting the information within the profile" (Tüfekçi, 2008: 20).

This image of flawless life presented on social media can be

explained with the concept of "duck syndrome". "Duck syndrome has mostly been described in college or graduate students and refers to the situation in which the sufferer looks completely calm on a superficial level while in reality, they are frantically trying to keep up with the demands of their life" (Dryden-Edwards, 2021). Nowadays, social media is where this situation is most effective. Many users actually share their lives as if they were flawless on social media, even though they have lots of problems in reality.

According to a study on this subject, social media users stated that even if they knew that real life was not like this, they did not post anything in their social media accounts in which they were sad or unhappy (Gürsoy Atar and Gürsoy Ulusoy, 2020). According to the study, the characters staged on social media appear as an implicit expression of the self. People can create the image they want through social media and they are aware of this. However, although they know that other people are doing the same, other people's posts can affect them either positively and negatively (Gürsoy Atar and Gürsoy Ulusoy, 2020: 948).

This situation has improved with the transformation of social media into a marketing tool. Social media users reflect their lives as if they were flawless in order to increase their viewing rates or when advertising various brands. Even though everyone is aware that this is an illusion, social media covers this reality as well.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In this part of the study, as mentioned above, 10 vlogs were selected among the vlogs with the most followers and examined. These accounts are analyzed according to the fitness, beauty, family, life style and travel categories. In the study, 2 of the videos uploaded in 2021 by the vloggers were selected and examined (Vlogs in the travel category were selected randomly from the past years). The names of these public open vlogs are hidden.

In the fitness category, the 1st vlogger shares a day in her life in the first video. She wakes up early in the morning, does morning sports and has breakfast. The rest of the day goes as planned, works, attends lectures and meetings, and does sports again. She ends her day by preparing a healthy meal. In the 2nd selected chosen, she shares what she eats in a day to strengthen her muscles. She shows the daily meals in detail and exercises during the day to strengthen the muscles and eat healthy.

The 2nd vlogger, who tries different challenges in each video, says

that he will try to lift weights in the first video. He excitedly prepares for it, showing that he makes her breakfast as every day. When he succeeds in lift weighting, he happily celebrates his victory with his family. In the second video, the vlogger introduces the gym he opened. There are many different sports opportunities in the detailed designed gym studio. The vlogger happily shares these gym footages and his happy time with his family again. According to Baudrillard (2017: 148) within the relations of production and consumption, the body experiences a divided mental confusion: the body as capital and the practice of the body as fetish. This is the situation that we see in the presentation of people's bodies in vlogs.

In the beauty category, 1st vlogger introduces the colourpop serum blush product in the first video. She shows the application of the product on the face in detail, while talking cheerfully about life. The second video begins by sharing her excitement of promoting her own product. In the video she introduces nail polishes in a special box and she also shares nail art techniques.

The 2nd vlogger promotes the skincare brand with which she has signed agreement in the first video. In the video she also shares the promotion speeches of the brand's CEOs and she makes her skin care with the brand's products. She happily puts on makeup in the 2nd video. She shows and tells makeup process in detail. Actually, "the beauty industry is not a historically recent phenomenon. Throughout history, women and men have used creams, lotions and preparations to alter their bodies in order to conform to the aesthetic standards of their day and their social position (Black, 2004: 20). In this context, it is not surprising that beauty vlogs have lots of subscribers.

Today, people become a part of mass consumption culture by showing every moment of their lives to public. Actually, they make a presentation of themselves in everyday life (Goffman, 1959) in the videos they share, whether about family or life style. They present their best performances in front of the audience. In the first video selected for the family category, the vlogger shares a family trip. The preparation for the trip, the plane trip, the arrival of their friend to pick them up from the airport, and the activities they do at their destination are shared in detail in the video. In video 2, the vlogger introduces a luxury penthouse they stay together. The vlogger happily walks around the house in the video and promotes the house in detail.

In the 2nd vlog, we first see a birthday party preparation. Parents are cheerfully preparing for the birthday in their kitchen. Preparation in the

kitchen is seen in detail. Children and pets are also seen in the video. Finally, everyone is happily celebrating the birthday. In the 2nd video, the family shares the day they took their kids to school after the lockdown ended. Starting the day with breakfast, we watch them take the kids to school. Then the parents talk about the school, the kids and the life cheerfully by looking at the camera.

In the first vlog selected for the life style category, we see the vlogger walking around the streets with his car. He states that he wants to support them by buying pizza from a pizzeria that is good and not a chain restaurant. In the rest of the video, he evaluates the taste and appearance of the pizza while eating it. In the second video, he gets tattooed for the benefit of a charity. He shares the decision-making phase, going to the tattoo studio and getting tattooed with his subscribers in detail. In the second vlog, we first watch the vlogger's luxury business class flight with his family in all details. He tells the journey in detail in a very cheerful mood. In the second video, he and his friends fill a pool with orbeez and get into it and they seem to have a lot of fun.

"The consumer society also routinely produces a surplus and engages in superfluous production, but it is a society in which 'too much' has become a virtual necessity, a corollary pursuit of economic growth and valorization of increasing consumer choice" (Smart, 2017: 6). That's why we see product promotions, brand collaborations and other advertisements in most of the vlogs. In the first vlog selected for the travel category, we see a couple's travels. In the first video selected from their trips with a van, we see them waking up in the van and getting ready for the day. They then advertise a shampoo. We see the process of buying tickets to their destinations and their trip in the rest of the video. In the second video, we see that they start the day with breakfast and exercise. After sharing their thoughts about where they are with their subscribers, they advertise a deodorant. They then share the places they walk around the city with their subscribers.

In the 2nd vlog, vlogger shares her 10 important tips for traveling with the subscribers. Vlogger gives tips by sharing footage of her travels. The second video is about tips for camping. She gives information about what to do and what not to do while camping. Again, she shares footage of her travels.

In sum, when it is looked to vlogs examined for this study, firstly it is seen that, all vloggers talk by looking at the screen as if talking with the audience face to face. Second, unhappy or painful aspects of life are not

mentioned in the videos. Vloggers all seem to be happy and enjoying life and giving advices to subscribers. Finally, most of the vlogs are promoting products. Goffman (1959) mentions that when a person comes in front of others, the actions can affect the definition that the audience have formed about the situation. Sometimes, a person can express herself/himself by making finely calculated actions just to get the reaction he wants from those around her/him. People are also curious about how the other party sees them and their reactions and want to keep them under control (Goffman, 1959). Goffman's work may explain the flawless life image/representation we watch in vlogs.

CONCLUSION

Internet and social media usage are important parts of our daily lives today. Social media is now an important environment for leisure time, shopping and socializing. Many people post on social media as if their lives were flawless. This study examines this flawless life illusion through selected vlogs. In the study, 10 vlogs were randomly selected among the vlogs with the most followers and examined. With 2 videos selected from each vlog, a total of 20 videos were examined within the scope of the study.

As a result of the study, it is seen that vloggers seem happy and very satisfied with their lives, and they do not talk about the problematic and sad aspects of life. In the selected videos, it has been observed that vloggers cooperate with brands and promote their products. Besides, vloggers give advice and suggestions to their subscribers to have a better life. They give these suggestions based on their own lifestyle and the products they promote. It is seen that there is a flawless life presentation in the videos selected for the study.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT: The aim of this study, which is designed as a qualitative research, is to examine the flawless life image represented on social media through selected vlogs. For the study, 10 vlog accounts were selected by random sampling. These accounts are analyzed according to the fitness, beauty, family, life style and travel categories. In the study, 2 videos uploaded in 2021 by each vlogger were examined by using discourse analysis. When we look at the limitations of the study, this study is limited to the selected videos only. In the light of all these, the research questions of the study are as follows:

- How do vloggers show their lives? -How do vloggers present themselves?
- What do vloggers suggest to users to have a better life?

When it comes to new media and digital transformation, we see that the history of internet starts with the Web 1.0 period. The activity on the Web, entered a revolution process with the development of Web 2.0 technology (Kahraman, 2010). In this context, social media emerged with Web 2.0. Web 3.0

and web 4.0 have been developed in a short time. Finally, Web 5.0 is being spoken today. The theoretical part of the study is based on main approaches of McLuhan, Castells, Van Dijk, Bauman, Baudrillard and Goffman on the subject. McLuhan (1964) states that "the medium is the message." On the other hand, Castells stated that the internet provides people with new opportunities and transforms McLuhan's idea that the medium is the message, into the form that the network is the message (Castells, 2001 in Giddens, 2006: 598). According to Van Dijk (2020), network society is defined as a type of modern society in which a society consisting of social networks and media networks determines the individual, group and social organization style at all levels. In this network society we are moving from solid modernity to a fluid / liquid modernity (Bauman, 2011). But this world "is no longer really the real, because no imaginary envelops it anymore" (Baudrillard, 1994: 2). This unreal world is perfectly suited to create the illusion of flawless life on social media that is the subject of this study. Goffman states that people actually perform in front of others and they only stop acting on the backstage where the audience is not allowed to enter (Goffman, 1959: 63). When it comes to social media, it evolved with the rise of online communication services such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and YouTube. When we conceptualize YouTube, it can be thought that YouTube provides people with a democratized broadcasting opportunity (Özuz, 2018: 33). On the other hand, "Vlogs are video collections that serve both as an audiovisual life documentary, and as a vehicle for communication and interaction on the Internet" (Biel and Perez, 2010: 211). Vloggers act and speak as if they are talking to the audience. This creates a sense of intimacy in the audience and they feel involved in the process. But, a striking issue in social media is that vloggers and influencers often share the positive and beautiful aspects of life. This causes to a flawless life illusion. This image of flawless life presented on social media can be explained with the concept of "duck syndrome". Since most people show their lives perfectly on social media, this situation causes unhappiness in followers who have problems in their lives. According to a study on this subject, social media users stated that even if they knew that real life was not like this, they did not post anything in their social media accounts in which they were sad or unhappy (Gürsoy Atar and Gürsoy Ulusoy, 2020). In conclusion, when it is looked to vlogs examined for this study, first of all, all vloggers talk by looking at the screen as if talking with the audience face to face. Second, unhappy or painful aspects of life are not mentioned in the videos. Vloggers all seem to be happy and enjoying life, and they advise their followers on their own lifestyle and the products they promote. Finally, most of the vlogs are promoting products. Goffman (1959) mentions that when a person comes in front of others, the actions can affect the definition that the audience have formed about the situation. People are also curious about how the other party sees them and their reactions and want to keep them under control (Goffman, 1959). Goffman's work may explain the flawless life image/representation we watch in vlogs.

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET: Nitel araştırma olarak tasarlanan bu çalışmanın amacı,

sosyal medyada temsil edilen kusursuz yaşam imajını seçilmiş vlog'lar aracılığıyla incelemektir. Çalışma için rastgele örnekleme ile 10 vlog hesabı seçilmiştir. Bu hesaplar fitness, güzellik, aile, yaşam tarzı ve seyahat kategorilerine göre analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada seçilen her vlogger tarafından 2021 yılında yüklenen videolar arasından 2 tanesi söylem analizi yapılarak incelenmiştir. Çalışma sadece seçilen videolarla sınırlıdır. Tüm bunların ışığında araştırmamızın soruları şu şekildedir:

-Vlogger'lar hayatlarını nasıl göstermekteydiler? -Vlogger'lar kendilerini nasıl sunmaktadırlar? -Vlogger'lar kullanıcılara daha iyi bir yaşama sahip olmaları için neler tavsiye etmekteydiler?

Yeni medya ve dijital dönüşüm söz konusu olduğunda internet tarihinin Web 1.0 dönemi ile başladığını görmekteyiz. Web üzerindeki etkinlik, Web 2.0 teknolojisinin gelişmesiyle bir devrim sürecine girmiştir (Kahraman, 2010). Bu bağlamda sosyal medya Web 2.0 ile ortaya çıkmıştır. Web 3.0 ve web 4.0 kısa sürede geliştirilmiştir. Bugün ise Web 5.0 konuşulmaktadır. Çalışmamızın teorik kısmı, McLuhan, Castells, Van Dijk, Bauman, Baudrillard ve Goffman'ın konuyla ilgili temel yaklaşımlarına dayanmaktadır. McLuhan (1964), "araç mesajdır" demektedir. Castells ise internetin insanlara yeni fırsatlar sunduğunu ve McLuhan'ın aracın mesaj olduğu fikrini ağına mesaj olduğu formuna dönüştürdüğünü belirtmiştir (Castells, 2001 içinde Giddens, 2006: 598). Van Dijk'e (2020) göre ağ toplumu, sosyal ağlar ve medya ağlarından oluşan bir toplumun her düzeyde bireysel, grup ve sosyal organizasyon tarzını belirlediği modern bir toplum türü olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu ağ toplumunda katı moderniteden akışkan bir moderniteye geçmekteyiz (Bauman, 2011). Ama bu dünya "artık gerçek değildir, çünkü artık onu hayali hiçbir şey kuşatmamaktadır." (Baudrillard, 1994: 2). Bu gerçek dışı dünya, bu çalışmamızın konusu olan sosyal medyada kusursuz yaşam yanılması yaratmak için son derece uygundur. Goffman, insanların aslında başkalarının önünde performans sergilediğini ve yalnızca seyircinin girmesine izin verilmeyen kuliste performans sergilemeyi bıraktıklarını belirtir (Goffman, 1959: 63). Sosyal medya, Facebook, Myspace, Twitter ve YouTube gibi çevrimiçi iletişim hizmetlerinin yükselişi ile gelişmiştir. YouTube'u kavramsallaştırdığımızda, YouTube'un insanlara demokratikleşmiş bir yayın fırsatı sunduğu düşünülebilir (Özuz, 2018: 33). Öte yandan vlogları tanımlarsak, "Vlog'lar hem görsel-işitsel bir yaşam belgeseli hem de İnternette iletişim ve etkileşim için araç olarak hizmet veren video koleksiyonlarıdır," (Biel ve Perez, 2010: 211). Vlogger'lar, izleyici ile konuşuyormuş gibi davranır ve konuşurlar. Bu, izleyicide bir samimiyet duygusu yaratır ve aktarılan sürece dahil olduklarını hissederler. Ancak sosyal medyadaki dikkat çeken bir konu, vloggerların ve influencerların genellikle hayatın olumlu ve güzel yönlerini paylaşmasıdır. Bu, kusursuz bir yaşam yanılmasına neden olmaktadır. Sosyal medyada sunulan bu kusursuz yaşam imajı "ördek sendromu" kavramı ile açıklanabilir. Çoğu insan sosyal medyada hayatlarını mükemmel gösterdiği için bu durum kendi hayatlarında sorunlar olan takipçilerde mutsuzluğa neden olmaktadır. Bu konuda yapılan bir araştırmaya göre sosyal medya kullanıcıları, gerçek hayatın böyle olmadığını bilseler bile sosyal medya hesaplarında

üzüldükleri veya mutsuz oldukları hiçbir şey paylaşmadıklarını belirtmişlerdir (Gürsoy Atar ve Gürsoy Ulusoy, 2020). Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma için incelenen vlog'lara bakıldığında, öncelikle tüm vloggerlar, izleyiciyle yüz yüze konuşuyormuş gibi ekrana bakarak konuşmaktadırlar. İkincisi, hayatın üzücü veya acı veren yönlerinden seçilen videolarda bahsedilmemektedir. Vlogger'ların hepsi mutlu ve hayattan zevk alıyor gibi görünmekte ve takipçilerine kendi yaşam tarzları ve tanıttıkları ürünler üzerinden tavsiyelerde bulunmaktadırlar. Son olarak, vlogların çoğu ürün tanıtımı yapmaktadır. Goffman (1959), bir kişi diğerlerinin önüne çıktığında, eylemlerin izleyicinin durumla ilgili oluşturduğu tanımı etkileyebileceğinden bahsetmektedir. İnsanlar ayrıca karşı tarafın onları nasıl gördüğünü ve tepkilerini merak ederler ve onları kontrol altında tutmak isterler (Goffman, 1959). Goffman'ın çalışması, vlog'larda izlediğimiz kusursuz yaşam imajını/temsilini açıklayabilir.