

The Analysis of Internet and Social Media Behaviors of the Students in the Higher School of Vocational and Technical Sciences

Mehmet Balci, Sakir Tasdemir, Mustafa Altin, Ozlem Bozok

Abstract—Our globalizing world has become almost a small village and everyone can access any information at any time. Everyone lets each other know who does whatever in which place. We can learn which social events occur in which place in the world. From the perspective of education, the course notes that a lecturer use in lessons in a university in any state of America can be examined by a student studying in a city of Africa or the Far East. This dizzying communication we have mentioned happened thanks to fast developments in computer and internet technologies. While these developments occur in the world, Turkey that has a very large young population and whose electronic infrastructure rapidly improves has also been affected by these developments. Nowadays, mobile devices have become common and thus, it causes to increase data traffic in social networks. This study was carried out on students in the different age groups in Selçuk University Vocational School of Technical Sciences, the Department of Computer Technology. Students' opinions about the use of internet and social media were obtained. The features such as using the Internet and social media skills, purposes, operating frequency, accessing facilities and tools, social life and effects on vocational education and so forth were explored. The positive effects and negative effects of both internet and social media use on the students in this department and findings are evaluated from different perspectives and results are obtained. In addition, relations and differences were found out statistically.

Keywords—Computer technologies, internet use, social network, higher vocational school.

I. INTRODUCTION

TECHNOLOGICAL developments in the world have followed each other since the beginning of 21st century. The greatest and fastest developments of our century called as information age are experienced in especially communication field. Nowadays, the developments of the substructure of communication have resulted from the developments in the fields of electronic and computer. For these developments, it can be said that the children of them are called as Internet. Though the Internet initially came into our lives as mostly websites, we have almost stated this equation: Internet = Communication and Social networks [1]. Social networks are defined as web-based services enabling the opportunity of creating a user's profile, seeing what other users state and sharing, and being accessed by everyone or restricted with a

group of users [2], [3].

In literature, there exist many researches analyzing the young's usage of social networks and Web 2.0 tools from the perspective of education. In one of these studies, it is stated that university students generally use online ways to communicate with their friends and for the purposes of education and research, and their awareness of social networks and Internet, the way they use them and their level of satisfaction are emphasized [4].

As stated in [5] many lecturers use social networks in distance education. At the end of the study, they concluded that social networks are appropriate in distance education for communicating and cooperating with the students.

In literature, it is seen that researches have also been made in order to determine the relationship between university students' usage of social networks and their academic success [3]. As an example of these researches, in the study applied to 1127 students [7], it is concluded that there are no negative or positive effects of the students' usage of social networks on their success in lessons. By giving the findings about the reasons of students' usage of social networks at the end of the study, it is stated that students use social networks for social and entertainment reasons most, and for vocational reasons least. It is stated that Facebook is the tool used most and LinkedIn is the tool used least [7], [3].

Because social networks are flexible and user-friendly, they can be used more easily than other teaching management systems. The fact that many educators and researchers create a community by following much easier steps and making shares among themselves enables conveniences in terms of communication and feedback. As well as mentioned features, social networks have advantages for also educational organizations in terms of some features such as enriching combined teaching experiments, supporting teaching and evaluation process [8], [9].

Technologies for social networks where individuals gather for cooperation, learning and information structures are rapidly developing. The importance of social Networks in the context of education and school efficiency has increased beyond spreading to a minority of people with computer and communication of social networks. In an environment that can be reached from everywhere all the time, having high connectivity and directing desires, it is needed to widen the education extent and social networks where individuals can actively participate by not being passive consumers or can produce the content together. Thus, as a social process, this

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supports the personal life goals and needs [10], [8].

In the USA in 2010, 82.900 educators (601 teachers, 381 headmasters and 262 librarians) participated in the study named as "Social Networks; Pratics, Policies and Realities in Education". The data about social networks which participants mostly used or they are member of were obtained. In the data related to purposes of social networks usage in education among educators, it is indicated that teachers and school librarians mostly use social networks in order to share information and sources, and educators and headmasters use them mostly in order to create a vocational learning community. Among the results of this study, it is concluded that more comprehensive researches need to be done so that social networks are used more effectively in the educational field [11].

In this study, the skills of using Internet and social networks of the students in the Computer Technologies Department in Selcuk University Higher School of Vocational and Technical Sciences were researched. For this aim, students' inclinations were determined and results were comparatively presented.

II. CONCEPTS OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Vocational and technical education concepts are defined in different ways. Once these concepts were defined as "education for production and works requiring development of handicrafts" [12], this definition has changed as "The form education that aims to improve necessary information, skills, and attitudes for individuals to carry out the activities that he/she has chosen" [13].

The definition of VET in our country is "the whole of management, supervision and training activities with the co-ordination of planning researching, developing of every kind of vocational and technical services related to industry, agriculture and service sectors within the unity of National Education System" [14].

Vocational and technical education varying according to changes in economic, social and cultural areas include three main elements: "individual, professional and educational process". In this case, we can define the vocational education as a developing process of individual's skills in physical, mental, emotional, social, economic and personal ways by gaining him/her necessary knowledge, skills and practical application skills that the individual needs in their professional life [15].

The objective of vocational and technical education, in general, is to train individuals to employ them in industry, trade and service sectors as qualified labour and to give the necessary basic training for the transition to higher education institutions [16].

The Internet mentioned above has been one of the indispensable education tools in both high schools and higher schools of vocational and technical education.

A. Higher Schools of Vocational and Computer Technologies Department

Higher schools are the schools in the higher education of education system in Turkey. Students who want to receive

education in these schools can be the students graduating from vocational high schools or from common high schools. Whereas graduates of related departments of vocational high schools are taken to these schools according to their diploma grades, graduates of different departments of other schools are taken to the departments they want with an exam. Whereas graduates of Information Technologies continue their vocational and technical education in these higher schools, graduates of general high schools may begin their vocational and technical education in these schools and continue their education with upper levels.

B. Internet and Social Media

The dizzying developments in communication substructure and computer technologies all over the world have almost made the life impossible without Internet. We have begun to live with Internet in education, work or shopping, in short, in almost all the fields of life. One of the most common purposes of Internet usage recent years is to communicate and share through social networks [6]. Social network websites are wide communication environments having millions of users nowadays. The member-based communities allowing users to send profile information such as user names and photographs, send general or online messages, and to communicate with others using materials such as voice, photographs, videos can be defined as social networks websites [17], [6]. Social network websites, video sharing sites, wikis, blogs and folksonomies used in this way indicate the development of web culture [18], [19], [3]. The young who are general users of social networks and Web 2.0 tools consist of the most important component of this culture [4], [20], [3].

III. PRACTICE

A. Methods

An online survey [21], questionnaire consisting of multiple choice questions was applied to students in the Computer Technologies Department of Selcuk University Higher School of Vocational and Technical Sciences in order to determine their usage inclinations of Internet and social media. In some of these questions, students have the right of selecting one choice while in some; they have the right of selecting more than one choice. The questionnaire was published on the Internet after arranging the necessary control mechanisms and was applied to the students in laboratory at the same time. All of the questions were completely answered by students and the answers were reported in the electronic environment.

B. Findings

82.68% of the students participated in the questionnaire are male and 17.3% of them are female. 40.98% of the students are first grade students and 59.01% of them are second grade students. According to the findings, 94.69% of the students state that they came to this school after graduating from a vocational technical high school. This indicates that almost all the students received education in computer technologies before and they have been probably Internet users for a long time.

In another question for students, they were asked to select their range of age and the answers are shown in Fig. 1.

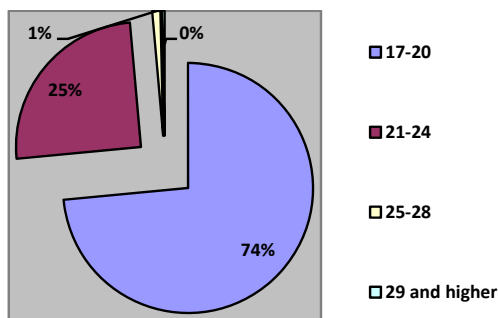


Fig. 1 The age range of the survey respondents

For the question of how many years you have been using computer, 8% of them answered as between 0 and 2 years, 31% of them answered as between 3 and 5 years, and 61% of them answered as 6 years and more. This supports the idea that almost all of the students came from vocational high schools and they have been computer users for a long time. As a continuation of this question, 17% of the students answered as between 0 and 2 years, 44% of them answered as between 3 and 5 years, and 37% of them answered as 6 years and more for the question of “How many years have you been using Internet?”. 18% of the students answered as between 0 and 2 years, 54% of them answered as between 3 and 5 years, 25% of them answered as 6 years and more for the question of “How many years have you been a user of social networks?” whereas 3% of them state that they do not use any social networks.

From the answers above, it is seen that almost all students are firstly users of computer, secondly users of Internet and then users of social networks. The answers these students gave to the usage skills of social networks are seen in Table I.

The questions that students can make a choice more than one were also asked to the students for the aim of determining Internet and social network usage behaviors better. These questions and the answers the students gave are seen in Table II.

It is seen from Table II that students use social networks for communication purposes most.

It is seen that students use the Internet connection at their homes most for the social networks. In a rate close to this, they utilize from the Internet from Wi-Fi spots in various environments such as shopping malls, restaurants and so forth (see Table III).

The values on Table IV can be shown as a result of fast developments of smart phone technology.

We can see the graphic of answers that students gave to the question of "In which social network, do you have an account?" in Fig. 2.

TABLE I
USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SKILLS RATES

Options	Rates (%)
Insufficient	7,42
Partially Sufficient	28,26
Sufficient	49,11
Completely Sufficient	15,19

TABLE II
FOR WHAT PURPOSE YOU ARE USING SOCIAL NETWORKS?

Options	Rates (%)
Communication	22,12
Media (Photos, Music, Video) sharing	16,03
Student affairs (education, research, etc.)	15,35
Innovations, products and agenda to follow	13,89
Making new friends	7,54
Playing games	9,94
Leisure Activities	10,8
Others	4,28

TABLE III
WHERE DO YOU ACCESS MUCH TO SOCIAL NETWORKS

Options	Rates (%)
Home	27,84
Workplace	7,58
School	14,43
Friends' Houses	6,7
Internet Cafes	7,72
Wifi Areas	24,48
Other	11,22

TABLE IV
YOU ENTER WHAT KIND OF DEVICES TO SOCIAL NETWORKING?

Options	Rates (%)
Desktop PC	23,14
Laptop	29,75
Mobile Phone	37,85
Tablet PC	8,26
Other	0,99

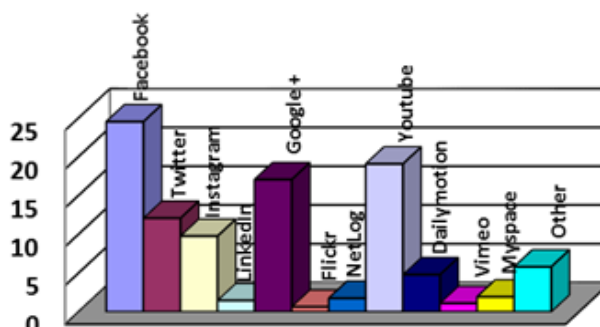


Fig. 2 Which social networks do you use?

The answers given to the question of whether being user of a social network contributes to their education or not can be seen in Fig. 3.

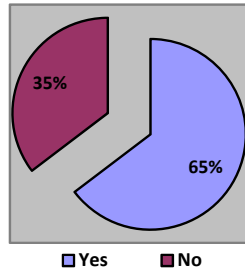


Fig. 3 Students' opinions on the contribution to the course of social networking

By looking at the graphic above, it is seen that two thirds of students answered as "Yes". It can be concluded that social networks can be used as an effective tool in education field depending upon these results.

The answers students gave to the question of "Do you believe that every information in social media are sufficiently true?" are given in Fig. 4.

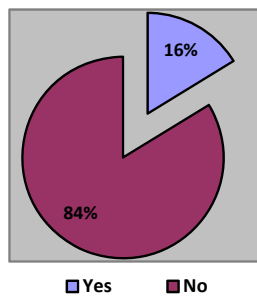


Fig. 4 Students' opinions on the reliability of information in social networks

Although a majority of the participants of the questionnaire (84%) answered negatively about the reliability of information in social media, many information that are groundless or whose trueness are not proved have an effect on individuals even on societies.

The answers given to the question of "Is it appropriate according to you to share or upload each kind of personal information (photographs, videos, etc.) on Internet and especially in social media?" are seen in Fig. 5.

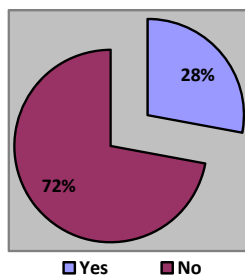


Fig. 5 Students' opinions on the suitability of sharing personal information

It is a well-known fact that many people especially the young of social media users carelessly share each kind of personal information. The result is meaningful when it is considered that the participants who answered the question above are young people.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, an online questionnaire [21] consisting of multiple-choice questions was applied to the students in the Computer Technologies Department in Selcuk University Higher School of Vocational and Technical Sciences in order to determine their inclinations of usage of Internet and social media.

Vocational higher schools are fundamental schools in our country in terms of meeting the needs of intermediate staff. Students in vocational higher schools like others face ever-developing world in many respects such as information and communication technologies.

It is seen that the young in different age groups use social media much more common. This result is very crucial and meaningful for our country whose population consists of mostly young people. It is seen that our students have been using the Internet and social media much more common for 3 or 5 years and this parallels with this kind of technological developments in our country. What is more, the fast technological developments in mobile devices direct young people's preferences for Internet and social media usage to these devices.

At the end of the study, it is concluded that social networks are appropriate for communication and cooperation with students in especially education. It is concluded that there is a positive effect of using social media upon the success of students in lessons. By giving the findings about the reasons of students' usage of social networks at the end of the study, it is seen that students use them for entertainment, social and communication purposes most.

In addition to this, it can be concluded that students do not trust the information in social media much and each kind of personal information should not be shared in a social environment.

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