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Ali Sabanci, Mehmet Ufuk Urhan

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Ali Sabanci

Associate Prof. Dr. Department of Educational Sciences: Educational Administration, Supervision, Planning and Economy, Faculty of Education, Akdeniz University, Dumlupinar Bulvari 07058 Kampus-Antalya, Turkey
Email: alisabanci@akdeniz.edu.tr/ ali_sabanci@yahoo.com

Mehmet Ufuk Urhan

Teacher in MONE and Master of Science Student in Institution of Educational Sciences, Akdeniz University, Campus, Antalya, Turkey
Email: memoufuk@hotmail.com

Abstract

Instead of opposing in-school and out-of-school learning, the advent of new learning technologies describes a pluralistic world in which out-of-school learning can complement in-school education. The purpose of this paper was to explore the profiles of primary and secondary school teachers' use of social networks and to draw some outcomes depending on their views about the role of social networks in education. This research was based on phenomenological approach. The participants were determined by maximum variation sampling which is a type of purposeful sampling. The data were gathered by qualitative interviewing using standardized open-ended interviews. The data were analysed by content analysis technique using NVivo 10. The findings show that the primary and most common social media tool among respondents was social network websites. The findings indicated that teachers use social networks for educational issues such as for occupational problems, daily events of their schools, exam materials and branches thought directly and indirectly more than providing professional development. The results imply that teachers' limited competency and awareness about how and why set a barrier in front of bridging a further step. Consequently, in the current use of social networks, teachers believed that they benefitted from social network sites by means of professional issues. In order to benefit social networks by means of educating students, teachers' awareness and ICT competency should be developed.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Network, Formal Learning, Informal Learning

Introduction

In the last few decades human relations has changed dramatically based on the latest rapidly evolving technological developments. In this regard, traditional ways started to leave their throne to more complicated yet uncertain ways of thinking. In this sense it is possible to define the educational perspectives in two periods: pre-digital and digital. Digital describes electronic technology that generates, stores and processes data (http://whatis.techtarget.com/). The digital age has both changed the nature of resources and information and transformed basic social and economic enterprises. Especially Internet can be seen an important catalyser for this metamorphosis from static to interactive. The term pre-digital has been defined as belonging to or characteristic of the period preceding the widespread adoption of digital technologies (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013). Hill and Hannifin (2001) contend that educational perspective in the pre-digital age reflected an industrial model of production. Accordingly, it was managed in controlled environments, with information divided into specific topics. Students demonstrated what they learnt from textbooks or teachers by passing tests and meeting performance criteria. When learners were preparing reports or writing papers varied resources were used. The resource were typically highly directed, focused and limited in scope. Ideas were largely fixed and represented in a static fashion.

Media literacy / Social Networks

The digital platform apparently requires media literacy. Media literacy has been defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms such as print journalism, cinematic productions, radio and television programming, and even computer-mediated information and exchange, including real-time interactive exploration through the global internet (Brown, 1998; Hobbs, 1998). As one and the most effective tools of media literacy, social networking tools enable learners to create informal associations or communities of practice, in which to develop their own subject-based mastery. Moreover, they are able to define who they share those experiences with and to connect their informal educational lives to their formal, institutional work (Hall, 2009).

Social media is called "social" because it enables communication (King, 2012). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0. It has been asserted that the interactivity of web 2.0 or social software provides two-way communication collaboration, co-operation and the development of a learning community (Minocha, 2009; Tiryakioglu and Erzurum, 2011). O'Reilly (2007) and Knight and Smith (2006) consider that what makes the internet a more powerful platform for social networking is the ability to build social networking tools upon it. It is also possible to imagine a further step symbolized by Web 3.0 technologies which will possibly change people's perception and interaction on the internet with the introduction of features and tools that go way beyond those provided by the social media (Chisega-Negrilaweb, 2012).

Social Media and Education

Abdelraheem (2013) claims that educational practitioners and theorists have begun to eagerly explore how social media can be harnessed to describe and implement new paradigms for communication, learning and education. As Halverson and Smith (2009-10) state, instead of

opposing in-school and out-of-school learning, the advent of new learning technologies describes a pluralistic world in which out-of-school learning can complement in-school education. Chen and Bryer (2012) assert that uses of social media as learning tools could possibly connect informal learning to the formal learning environment. It also provides engaging channels to facilitate student-student, student-instructor and student-content interactions in multimedia formats. Brooks (2009) asserts that it is time to accept, embrace and promote social media to make a difference for our students learning.

Murray (2008) advocates that as with any new technologies, many schools and teachers are working in this innovative space in order to engage and motivate students, to improve their literacy and ICT skills, but also to prepare them as citizens in a global world. Coombs, Leite and Grierson (2010) contend that integrating social networking platforms encourages us to create student-centred classrooms. These platforms could act as an essential part in everyday teaching and learning. Some central components of this type of classroom have been the development of a community of learners where students take an active role in their learning, empowered to make decisions about the tools that support their personal approaches to learning and able to participate in collaborative work and develop further control over their learning experiences (Chisega-Negrilaweb, 2012; Crockett, 2005; Hall, 2009; Minocha, 2009; Salavuo, 2008).

Despite their highly positive potential, threats of these digital mediums should also be considered. Many schools look for options to control technologies by blocking sites. (Murray, 2008). As the internet continues to evolve, educators must understand both the opportunities and threats of this present (Murray, 2008). For instance, Waddington (2011) points out teenagers' lack of awareness surrounding the consequences of social networking. Goldfarb et al (2011) claim that few education systems have considered adopting educational networking initiatives. Concerns regarding privacy, legality and safety prevent educators from embracing a potentially valuable tool. Selwyn (2009) points out that growing numbers of educators celebrate the potential of social networking, others fear that such applications compromise and disrupt young people's engagement with 'traditional' education provision.

Abreu (2010) writes that researchers are advocating for educators to become involved in the social sites with the idea of having an open relationship with students on these platforms. The only way to empower the student is to also feel empowered as educator. Brown (1998) points out to the need of training teachers about social media tools. The energy and creativity emerging outside schools should be harnessed and linked to the academic enterprise within schools. In this regard the purpose of this paper was to explore the profiles of primary and secondary school teachers' use of social media and to draw some outcomes depending on their views about the role of social media in education.

Method
The purpose of this paper was to explore the profiles of primary and secondary school teachers' use of social networks and to draw some outcomes depending on their views about the role of social networks in education. This research was based on phenomenological approach which is a qualitative research design. The data were gathered by qualitative interviewing. The participants were determined by maximum variation sampling which is a type of purposeful sampling. As a result the work group consisted of fourteen primary and secondary school

teachers participated voluntarily. NVivo 10 was used during data analysis. The data were gathered using standardized open-ended interviews in spring semester of 2013. The participants were interviewed face to face. During the interviews, teacher respondents were addressed 41 specific questions in order to understand profiles of primary and secondary school teachers' use of social networks and to draw some outcomes depending on their views about the role of social networks in education. The questions were designed to focus on teachers' profiles of their use of social nets and its educational outcomes. The interviews included items asking about their profiles of using social networks, their skills of using tools of social networks, their usage backgrounds, the duration of their usage, their usage of social nets by means of professional and personal developments, the type of their relations with their students. Content analysis technique was conducted in two ways: first the interviews were read through in order to get a feel for what is being said, identifying key themes and issues in each text; secondly, NVivo 10, computer software package was used for further analysis (Kus, 2007; Mason, 2002; Patton, 1990; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Yildirim & Simsek, 2006). In order to improve the validity and reliability the following were considered internal consistency, confirmation of the data, consistency of the data with estimations and generalizations, limitations of the study, sample availability, giving details about individual sources of the data, setting conceptual framework and assumptions, clearing data collecting techniques and analysis methods, introducing the data directly, including more researchers to the processes and finally testing and comparing the findings with other related researches (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Yildirim & Simsek, 2006).

Finding and Results
Demographic characteristics of the participants were as follows: of the participants 11 were female and 3 were male. The ages of the teachers ranged from twenty-four to forty-seven. The groups included three English teachers, two primary school teachers, two Turkish language teachers, three kindergarten teachers, a math teacher, a social sciences teacher, a special education teacher and a psychological consultant. 3 teachers had 1-5 years, 4 teachers had 6-10 years, 3 had 11-15 years, 3 teachers had 16-20 years and only one teacher had more than 20 years of experience in teaching. 12 teachers had undergraduate degrees, while 2 of them had graduate degrees. 10 participants were married, 2 participants were single and 2 participants were divorced.

In this part first of all the most frequent-used communication devices, the most preferred connection types, teachers' average time of daily internet use, preferred social networks and the time spent on were given as general information. Secondly, the data were presented under subheadings in regard to the motives led the respondents to use social networks, purposes of the use of the nets by respondents, the effects of social networks perceived by them, the content shared through, the effects of social networks on occupational development, the way the participants use social networks in relation to educating their students and finally the effects of social networks on students' success were sought.

Profiles of Primary and Secondary School Teachers' Use of Social Networks
The most frequent-used communication devices by teachers were as follows; Cell phones (n14), Desktop computer (n13), Laptop computer (n13), Land line (n8) and Tablet (n1). Of the

participants, 3 stated that they had high level of competency while 9 had moderate level and 2 had low level of competency in the use of computer.

All of the participants reported that they had internet connection at home. Of the participants 7 stated that they accessed internet via mobile devices. The most preferred connection types were as follows; ADSL (n10), 3G modem (n3), fiber optic (n2) and cable modem (n1). In terms of the use of mobile device competency, of the participants 7 considered that they had high level, 3 reported to have moderate level and 4 had low level of competency.

According to the participants' statements their average time of daily internet use was 72 minutes. Of the participants 5 teachers reported to be highly competent, 6 reported to have moderate level of competency and 3 said to have low level in the use of internet. All participants had a "Facebook" profile while only 6 of them also had a "Youtube" profile. 6 participants stated that they spent "most" of their online time on social networks while 5 spent "half" and 3 spent "some" of their online time. Membership time on average is 3,9 years for Facebook and 2,3 years for Youtube. Of the 14 Facebook users, 10 users stated that they accessed their Facebook profiles on a daily basis and they had an average of 36 minutes of daily access. The participants reported that they accessed "Youtube" three times week on average and each access lasted an average of 18 minutes.

The Purposes of Using Social Networks

The respondents emphasized that the main purpose was to share information both written and visual (n8). In this sense some participants stated that: *Social networks are similar to Sms in mobile phones. They are really helpful in sharing information fast (T10). The photos and comments on profile pages can be shared (T11).*

The second purpose for using social networks was to get informed and keep in touch with people and follow events (n6). Some participants' views were as follows: *When I look at my relatives and friends' profile page, I see what they have been doing and when I know they are ok, it makes me happy and peaceful. This is a tangible and practical benefit, I think. (T4) Profile pages provide plenty of photo and status update. So, we talk about these things, what people do, where they are, what they think, etc. (T12).*

A significant purpose for social network use was the chance to know about the insights and ideas of people (n2). A respondent said "*I think I know people better when I see and inspect their profiles. When I read their comments, I can catch a clue about their insights. This can be a practical value (T13)."*

The Effects of Social Networks on Teachers' Ideas, Attitudes and Behaviours

The first group of respondents advocated that social network sites had no conscious affect on their ideas, attitudes and behaviours (n8). A respondent said *"I do not use social network sites intensively. Therefore, they do not have any effect on me or I feel so." (T1)* and a second respondent stated *"These web sites are just for entertainment. So, I do not expect any impact or feedback." (T14).* Some respondents also noted that social network sites improve the ability to comment effectively, to manage human relations and to keep up-to-date (T3). For example T2 said "*When I read the comments and check the discussions, I see how different comments can be written or how different points of views can be. So, they show examples of creative and authentic*

ideas, sometimes. The third group advocated that social network sites develop the motive to express ideas better and the will to communicate. In this regard T7 said that: *"I don't think I have been through any change in my ideas or behaviour. However, these social sites provide a platform where everybody can be equal and everybody can go on the floor. This can have a great value in providing people with an opportunity to talk and in decreasing prejudices.*

The Educational Content Shared Through Social Network (Directly-Indirectly)

The findings indicated that educational issues were also among major topics which were shared through social networks. This kind of sharing included occupational issues (T6); problems related to the work place (n2); occupational activities such as meetings (T2) and innovative ideas related to their profession. For example, a social sciences teacher stated that her primary activities on the net were based on facts or anecdotes about social sciences. Another teacher said that she shared anecdotes and quotes about Turkish literature and language. Here is some quotations reflecting this finding: "*Sometimes we talk and negotiate exams, occupational issues and work related stuff. I like posting famous anecdotes and quotes. This might be because I am a Turkish language teacher (T6). When I can't find a solution or a nice option, I post messages if someone is available (T2). I post and chat about stuff related to my occupation. Usually it is like brain-storming and I find it useful (T10).*" On the other hand, teachers reported that social networks were used as a tool to share educational issues indirectly as well. In this regard, most widely shared information ranged from photo sharing (n11); anecdotes or quotes, comic strips and jokes (n6); daily topics and news (n5); to gossips (n2). Here are some exemplary quotations: "*Usually, I post photos, jokes and anecdotes (T3). Since I am interested in photography, I am keen on sharing photos taken by me or by someone famous (T4).*

However, some respondents thought that there ought to be a limitation to transfer the communicated issues on the social networks to professional settings. In this regard a respondent said *"My posts on social network sites are private to those mediums. I do not agree on talking about those posts in real life" (T1).*

The Effects of Social Network on Occupational Development of the Teachers

According to the findings it seems that the least effect of social network was on occupational development (n7). Teachers' responds recalls that they hold negative attitudes against using ICT in occupational developmental issues generally (n7). Some representative quotations were as follows: "*I use some web sites but I don't think social network sites have any training value (T3). I do not use any kind of online tool neither for Professional development nor individual training (T11).* On the other hand almost all respondents reported that they used computers in various stages in teaching such as preparing exams, developing materials, designing slides and preparing worksheets, etc. (n10). For example T1 said "*I prepare my worksheets and classroom activities on my computer. Moreover, video materials are always being used in terms of enriching course materials.*" T6 said "*I make use of my computer in preparing worksheets and exam.* "As it might be expected, attitudes and technical issues seem to be the cause of not to be so willing to use ICT tools in professional processes. Especially older respondents insist on using traditional approaches (n3). Some representative quotations were as follows: *I support and prefer traditional approach in teaching. That is why I am not interested in ICT in teaching (T9). I find the traditional techniques easier to apply (T12).*

Only a minority of respondents claimed that social networks could have a potential for occupational development. They stated that *"There is no social network I know in terms of professional value but the post and chat features in social network sites are already useful enough." (T7). "I have many colleagues in my friend list and there I find it possible to make use of them in online medium by means of posts and chat." (T10).* In this sense, although social networks were not seen as a major source of occupational development, respondents mentioned that they used some network sites to provide professional information (n3). A teacher stated that *the website "Memurlar.net" is a good source of occupational reference and sharing (T2). I use visual materials and animations to enrich my course. www.morpakampus.com" is my best source for providing instructional material. Also, I like web sites focussing on language teaching (T4). I use ready-made testing materials applying various web sites (T12).*

The Way Teachers Use Social Networks in Relation to Educating Their Students

In relation to the findings it can be asserted that what teachers see or share on social networks can be a source of inspiration to teachers during the instruction. It seems also that teachers were aware that all of the experiences in social nets enrich their activities in the class (n2). Here are some quotations: *During free-time classroom activities, we talk and brainstorm about daily events, we talk about our posts on social sites and the posts we find interesting are sometimes mentioned as examples. Also I sometimes ask questions if they are aware of the news and topics on social network sites (T2). Students sometimes give example and talk about the posts and shares on social sites if they are related to the course content. (T6)*

Respondents reported that they were able to make use of social network for providing visual material source for classroom activities. Two main uses can be reported: Using videos on Youtube and copying down any suitable material to personal computers (n3). Some teachers state that: *I download and make use of videos on Youtube (T1). Youtube videos are very useful if they can be linked to the course content or I copy down related or educational materials to my computer (T1). I check my colleagues' posts regularly and sometimes they post videos and photos suitable for training purposes. So, I download and archive them (T7).*

Despite not being effectively-used, respondents reported that they added their students to their friends list and they responded to students' questions only on a request. However, most respondents emphasized that they did not have any special intention to search or add their students to friends list because respondents believed that online medium was not appropriate for teacher-student interaction (n6). Two primary reasons were proposed for this attitude: 1) having no intention to use and 2) not knowing how to use effectively. Some representative quotations were as follows: *I only check my students' posts. I have them on my contact list but there is no direct connection between us (T14). I do not chat with my students. I do think chatting with students are appropriate on internet, this is my principle (T9). My students are in my Friends' list. They can keep in touch with me if they need to (T10). Although I do not chat with them, I accept my students' requests. It is sometimes nice and interesting to keep in touch with them while out of school. (T13)*

Few respondents reported positive attitude to set an equal contact with their students. One said *"I can chat with them and it is sometimes possible to help them overcome their own problems via this digital platform." (T7)* and the other one remarked that *"I keep in touch with*

my graduated students. It is nice to know where they are and sometimes I can help them, too. Social network sites can be useful in this way" (T6).

Most Respondents reported that there was an undeniable lack of qualified and well-prepared materials to make the communication mutually effective (n9). Here are some quotations: *They use social network sites excessively and go to the extremes. Most of their posts are unnecessary and worthless. They do not include any creative attitude. Moreover, they post their private photos without any concern. This type of use is inefficient and not inconvenient (T14). Looking at the current situation, neither teachers nor students are aware of how to make use of social network sites purposefully (T4).*

The data showed that respondents reflected low awareness and efficiency about how to use social network sites in consciously for educational purposes (n6). Some representative interviews were as follows: *I seldom post educational materials (T10). If my students ask me a question when I am online, I respond them, but student should feel this need. (T7, T12). I do not have any idea about how to achieve success using social networks (T2).*

Few respondents who want to make use of social network sites stated that they were not able to access social network due to restrictions and security filters as they reported that *"Ministry of Education prevents access to social network sites" (T2).* Therefore, they stated that they had to use their private mobile connections such as 3G modems.

In spite of all negatives, it is clearly emphasized that social networks were effective communication tools by which the access to information can be provided fast, easily and freely (n5). A respondent said *"Especially they have great value in keeping in touch with students" (T14)* and some respondents supported this quotation by stating that up-to-date, controlled, guided and topic-based social network sites can be more useful and meaningful for students (n5). Here are some quotes: *Theme-based facebook pages can be designed and students and their posts can be guided (T1). Pages focussing on specific themes or topics can be created but they should be kept up-to-date to attract students' attention (T2).*

Respondents stated that social network can be made a part of educational curriculum (n10) and it can be a useful in a multi-functional way (n3). ICT awareness and competence is often emphasized in order to turn social network applications into educative tools but under control (n5). Some quotations reflecting these ideas were as follows: *Social network sites can cause some kind of digital addiction. Therefore, there must always be a criterion or some attention while using (T13). If used rationally, they are always useful in some ways. However, advantages can turn out to be disadvantages if user does not pay enough attention (T9). If we know how to use them, they are highly applicable to teaching since they have a high value in terms of education (T1).*

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the profiles of primary and secondary school teachers' use of social networks and to draw some outcomes depending on their views about the role of social networks in education.

Facebook and Youtube were mostly referred social networks among participants. Teachers participated in this study had an average of 36 minutes of daily access to Facebook. The participants reported that they accessed "Youtube" three times week on average and each access

lasted an average of 18 minutes. Abdelraheem (2013); Stollak (2011); Ellison (2007) also reported that "Facebook" was the most used site followed by "Youtube"; reading blogs and "Twitter".

As stated by the teachers the accounts of social networks were preferred to be shared with only close friends. This finding is consistent with findings of Kaya (2011) stating that teacher candidates preferred to share their profiles with only close friends and avoided contacting foreigners. It is also significant to find that most of the teachers update their information which can be seen as a signifier of an active use.

The respondents emphasized that their prior purpose was to share information whether written or visual. In related studies it was determined that teacher candidates used social network to follow daily events (Kaya, 2011; Horzum, 2010). Their second purpose for using social networks was found as to follow people and events. In MMS Education research results (2012) similarly it was found that the value in social networks was strongly felt in connecting family and friends. The third and fourth purposes of teachers in referring social networks were to be able to get information about people all around and inspiring from the shares.

According to the results some teachers perceived that using social networks had no conscious affect on their ideas, attitudes and behaviours. It is reasonable in that social networks have not been designed, defined or used on a planned basis yet. As David, Ian and Christine (2003) pointed out "in an online environment, the social norms, values and mechanisms for communication and interaction are less well known because of the newness of the media". On the other hand, some respondents believed that network sites helped to improve their abilities to comment effectively, to manage human relations and to keep up-to-date indirectly and a the third group reported more conscious effect through which they said they gained an ability to express their ideas better and they were encouraged to communicate more.

The findings indicated that social network drew the respondents to share information directly related to education in such as occupational issues, problems related to the work place, and innovative ideas related to their profession. These findings are similar to the findings of the MMS Education (2012) research in that educators reported that Web 2.0 tools were used more for professional collaboration than for instructional purposes in the classroom. On the other hand, teachers reported that sharing photos, anecdotes or quotes, comic strips, jokes, daily topics and news indirectly affected their educational perspectives.

According to the findings occupational development was not considered as a major consequence of using social network sources. Because it seems that teachers hold negative attitudes about using ICT in occupational developmental issues generally Although, computers were used affectively in instruction for preparing exams, developing materials, designing slides and preparing worksheets. MMS Education research (2012) results also produced similar results in that educators told that they did not focus on educational-occupational issues.

It is significant to note that although slightly, there is evidence that social networks hold a potential for occupational development. The first evidence for this premise was teachers' statements about referring to some network sites in order to provide professional information. The second evidence was teachers' awareness about whatever they see or share on social networks comes out to be a source of inspiration in all of the process of instruction.

According to the results social network sites also help teachers to provide visual material source for classroom activities. Minocha (2009) also stated that social software tools allow users

to gather resources, share the resources with others and facilitate active participation of each user. A significant finding of this study was that teachers did not like to be active social media partners with their students because of two main reasons. The first reason was about having no intention but the second reason which is more significant was the feeling of "not to know how to do that". The lack of qualified and well-prepared materials to make the communication mutually effective, low awareness of the gains of the tool and restrictions and security filters put by the management in the school are likely to be the other reasons of poor relationship on the web. MMS Education research (2012) results also reported the same restriction as schools and districts often block access to sites, and many educators are frustrated by this. In addition, Gonzales and Vodicka (2010) reported that when sites are blocked, the ability to improve productivity and intertwine technology use is significantly reduced. This is a critical question the answer of which is likely to shed a light on using this tool more effectively. Some teachers' conscious efforts in using social network as a valuable tool to develop desired behaviours in their students are encouraging. In this regard respondents stated that social network can be made a part of educational curriculum. Shen and Eder (2009); Waddington (2011) advocated that to maximize the potential of the virtual world platform as a learning environment, educators should recognize its perceived value to students.

Consequently, educators should be aware of the fact that technological tools have the potential and the power to determine the philosophy of education in 21st century and social networks are among the most valuable tools of grasping future education perspective. There is a primary need for educators to lead this process with a holistic and long term planned policy.

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