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## Opinions of Teacher Candidates about Intended Use of Social Networks and Social Media

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## Opinions of Teacher Candidates about Intended Use of Social Networks and Social Media

Alpaslan DURMUŞ

Hakkı BAĞCI

### Abstract

In this modern age witnessing a rapid change in information & communication technologies, internet and internet applications have now gained a nascent dimension with the introduction of web 2.0 concept by Tim O'Reilly in 2004-dated conference organized by MediaLive International. Amongst these applications, social web has emerged as one of the most eye-catching changes. Social network software and applications have gained increasing dominance in our daily lives. The purpose of current study is then to explore prospective teachers' views on the use objectives of social networking sites and overall social media. The research has been conducted on 159 prospective teachers studying at Sakarya University, Faculty of Education. As data collection tool, "Social Networking Site Use Objective Scale" developed by Karal and Kokoç (2009) and "Views on Social Media Form" prepared by Dikme (2013) have been utilized. Research findings manifest that prospective teachers' use of social network sites for "Social Interaction and Communication" and "Know and be known" is in average level; use for educational purposes is in upper level. It has also been detected that gender, department, internet-use experiences and internet-use durations create no significant differentiation on the use objectives of social networking sites. Furthermore this research has also pointed out that prospective teachers hold the belief that social media leaves an effect on society and people in addition to overall life.

### Keywords

Teacher candidates, Social networks, Social media.

## INTRODUCTION

In present age eyeing a blinding advancement in information & communication technologies the century we live in has been defined as information & communication age and developed communities living through this age are termed as information societies. In the new identity of modern age as the age of information & communication, it goes without saying that the prominent role belongs to internet technology. Internet

adventure first triggered in the 1960s with ARPANET embraced a new dimension with the introduction of web 2.0 concept by Tim O'Reilly in 2004-dated conference organized by MediaLive International (O'Reilly, 2005; Özmen, Aküzüm, Sünkür and Baysal, 2011). Upon the integration of social networks, which are an application of Web 2.0 technologies, into our everyday lives in 2004 Internet is now occupying a wider place in daily life. Thus using social networks, which are one of the most striking applications of social media, has now turned into a regular habit of daily life, which inevitably increased the popularity of social networking sites (ComScore,2013). Social networks and social media applications indeed take up wider place in our lives each new day. A variety of studies are supportive of this deduction as put forth by February 2009 data, registered & active users of Facebook, a social networking application, is above 175 million and according to March 2013 data only in Turkey, the total number of active Facebook users is over 32 million (Wikipedia, 2013).

In the twenty first century Internet has reshaped social, economic, cultural life and learning-teaching processes, information-communication technologies. Particularly speaking, social networking sites reshaping communication styles have become indispensable components of daily life. Social networking sites used widely or social media in a more general definition grabs attention with a variety of uses in training processes as well. Creating an interactive and participative context via Web is a reflection of web 2.0 technologies on our daily life and this has indisputably rendered an effect on learning & teaching processes. Particularly speaking studies concerning use of Web 2.0 applications for educational objectives gained impetus following 2006 (Karaman, Yıldırım and Kaban, 2008). Studies related to the use of Web 2.0 demonstrated that new applications have been beneficial in creating a further effective learning process; gaining group working skills; refining high-level thinking skills; information literacy experience and problem-solving skills (Karaman, Yıldırım and Kaban, 2008). It has also been designated that covering a period between 2008-2011, registered users of popular social networking site Facebook has multiplied its number of users 4 times in Turkey. A majority of social network applications are free of charge, which undoubtedly enabled the use of social networks as an educational tool in learning-teaching processes (Kalafat and Göktaş, 2011).

In relevant literature, the contributions of Web 2.0 applications to educational processes have been listed as below (Karaman, Yıldırım & Kaban, 2008; Atıcı & Yıldırım, 2010):

- Enhancing effective learning
- Gaining upper-level thinking skills
- Gaining Information literacy skills
- Gaining constructive problem solving skills
- Suiting the student (grabbing attraction)

- Personal development
- Taking responsibility

Despite the fact that social network sites having many aspects have many negative effects on people, they have positive effects on them as well (Kabilan, Ahmad & Abidin, 2010). For example there are many different applications that exist on social network sites. It is point out that Facebook has more than 7000 applications. Many applications existing on social network sites for different purposes cause users spent much of their time surfing on this sites. (Kobak & Biçer, 2008).

As it is focus in the items ordered above social network sites and social media applications are used for educational and instructional purposes. In relevant researches, the significance of these applications and the potential contributions they might introduce have been realized. These programs enable the students to benefit from social learning opportunities and cooperative learning chances with other students (Selwyn, 2007). Research results on the functionality of social networks in educational settings prove that effective use of social networks among teacher, administrator and school members shall provide contributions to learning processes. It has also been reported that social network interaction in schools which are affected by surrounding environment and equally affects and shapes their surrounding shall lead school members and society in turn to a more active participation (Özmen, Aküzüm, Sünkür and Baysal, 2011). Within this context, as regards integration of social network and social media applications to learning processes, it matters greatly to determine the views of prospective teachers who shall all be forced to more widely utilize web 2.0 technologies in their professional careers in ensuing years, and to detect their opinions on the use objectives of social networking sites and overall social media.

### **Purpose of Research**

The purpose of current study is to explore prospective teachers' views on the use objectives of social networking sites and overall social media. Within this scope, below-listed questions have been sought for answers.

1. What are prospective teachers' use objectives of social networking sites?
2. Do prospective teachers' use objectives of social networking sites vary with respect to gender?
3. Do prospective teachers' use objectives of social networking sites vary with respect to departments?
4. Do prospective teachers' use objectives of social networking sites vary with respect to internet use experiences?
5. Do prospective teachers' use objectives of social networking sites vary with respect to the duration of daily internet use?

## 6. What are the views of prospective teachers on social networking sites?

### METHOD

This is a quantitative-structured descriptive study aiming to determine prospective teachers' views on the use objectives of social networking sites and overall social media. To collect research data, survey model has been implemented (Karasar, 2005).

#### Study Group

Convenient sample method is used for this study. Although the reability of this metod is low it is used in order to prevent loss of labour and decrease the cost (Büyüköztürk et al, 2008). The sample group of this studies chosen from the students studying at faculty of education in Sakarya University. Study group consists of 159 prospective teachers studying at Sakarya University, Faculty of Education, Departments of Computer Education and Instructional Technologies (CEIT) and Turkish Language Teaching as well as Division of Primary School Teaching. Table 1 presents a distribution of study group with respect to department and gender.

**Table 1. Demographic Data on Study Group**

Department/Sub department	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female		f	%
	f	%	f	%		
1 Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technologies	32	41.6	45	58.4	77	48.4
2 Turkish Language Teaching	10	26.3	28	73.7	38	23.9
3 Primary School Teaching	4	9.1	40	90.9	44	27.7
Total	46	28.9	113	71.1	159	100.0

#### Data Collection Tool

As data collection tool, "Social Networking Site Use Objective Scale" developed by Karal and Kokoç (2009) has been employed. To determine students' views on Social Media, "Views on Social Media Form" prepared by Dikme (2013) has been utilized.

"Social Networking Site Use Objective Scale" developed by Karal and Kokoç (2009) consists of 14 items which can be grouped under "Using for Social Interaction and Communication", "Using for knowing and being known" and "Using for Educational Purposes" factors. There are 7 items under "Using for Social Interaction and Communication" factor; 3 items under "Using for Social Interaction and Communication" factor and 4 items under "Using for Educational Purposes" factor. Scale items are graded as: I totally disagree (1), I disagree (2), I partially agree (3), I agree (4) I totally agree (5).

Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of Social Networking Site Use Objective Scale has been provided as 0.830 while in current research, Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient has been detected as 0.792.

### Data Analysis

To analyze the data, raw scores have been computed by adding the responses to five-Likert type scale. Since the number of items in each factor is dissimilar, these raw scores have been standardized by dividing to item number in relevant factor and multiplying with 20. Hence in each factor the lowest score has been computed as 20; the highest score as 100. In the conversion of raw scores to a standard score, below formula can be used:

$$x_{standard\ score} = \frac{x_{raw\ score}}{item\ number\ in\ scale} \times 20$$

Score ranges that can explain the groups of prospective teachers according to the scores they receive from subscales have been identified. According to computed score ranges, the scores prospective teachers receive from each factor have been grouped such; low score if between 20-46, average score if between 47-74, high score if 75 and above. These ranges can be demonstrated as in Table 2.

**Table 2. Scale Score Ranges**

20-46	Low Score Group	} 100- 20=80/3=26.66≅ 27
47-74	Average Score Group	
75-100	High Score Group	

In order to evaluate and explain the data collected via “Views on Social Media Form” prepared by Dikme (2013) evaluation ranges and criteria given in Table 3 have been set.

**Table 3. Views on Social Media Form Evaluation Ranges**

Evaluation Range	Evaluation Criteria	} 5-1=4/3≅1.33
1.00-2.33	I disagree	
2.34-3.67	I am undecided	
3.68-5.00	I agree	

In data analysis the arithmetic means, percentage and frequency which are among descriptive statistics have been utilized. In order to detect if prospective teachers' views

vary with respect to their gender and department, independent sampling t test and variance analysis have been employed. In the conducted analyses, significance level of data has been taken as .05.

## FINDINGS AND EXPLANATION

### Findings on Prospective Teachers' Use Objectives of Social Networking Sites

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics on Prospective Teachers' Use Objectives of Social Networking Sites**

Factors	N	$\bar{x}$	s	Min	Max	Levels					
						Low		Average		High	
						f	%	f	%	f	%
1 Social Interaction and Communication.		67.82	14.43	20.00	100.00	11	6.9	109	68.6	39	24.5
2 Knowing and being Known	159	54.88	18.83	20.00	86.67	60	37.7	76	47.8	23	14.5
3 Education		74.78	12.71	20.00	100.00	3	1.9	92	57.9	64	40.3
Total		67.04	11.48	20.00	94.29	4	2.5	123	77.4	32	20.1

As manifested in Table 4, the mean scores prospective teachers receive from Use Objectives of Social Networking Sites is  $\bar{X}=67.04$ ; the mean scores prospective teachers receive from "Using for Social Interaction and Communication" is  $\bar{X}=67.82$ ; the mean scores prospective teachers receive from "Using for knowing and being known" is  $\bar{X}=54.88$  and the mean scores prospective teachers receive from "Using for Educational Purposes" is  $\bar{X}=74.78$ 'dir. As Social Networking Sites Use Objectives are examined it surfaces that 20.1% of prospective teachers use social networks in high level for Social Interaction and Communication, Knowing and being known and Education; 77.4% of prospective teachers use social networks in average level and 2.5% of prospective teachers use social networks in low level. In the light of obtained findings, as using for Social Interaction and Communication level is examined it surfaces that 6.9% of prospective teachers have low level of use, 68.6% have average level and 24.5% have high level of use so it can be argued that prospective teachers use of social networking sites is in average level for Social Interaction and Communication. As the use level for Knowing and being known purposes is examined, it surfaces that 37.7% of prospective teachers use for this purpose in low level, 47.8% in average level and 14.5% in high level which points out that prospective teachers use of social networking sites for Knowing and being

known purposes is in average level. As using for educational purposes is examined it appears that 1.9% of prospective teachers use in low level, 57.9% in average level and 40.3% in high level which indicates that prospective teachers' use of social networks for educational purposes is in average level. In the light of obtained findings it can be claimed that prospective teachers' use objectives of social networking sites is in average level while compared to other purposes, use of social sites for educational purposes is higher ( $\bar{X}=74.78$ ).

### With respect to gender, the Change of Prospective Teachers' Social Networking Site Use Objectives

Data manifesting if prospective teachers' social networking sites use objectives vary with respect to gender have been demonstrated in Table 5.

**Table 5. With respect to gender, Analysis of Prospective Teachers' Social Networking Sites Use Objectives**

Factors	Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	s	t	sd	p
1 Social Interaction and Communication.	Male	46	66.27	11.64	-.860	157	.391
	Female	113	68.45	15.42			
2 Knowing and Being known	Male	46	57.97	15.95	1.322	157	.188
	Female	113	53.63	19.81			
3 Education	Male	46	75.43	12.77	.414	157	.680
	Female	113	74.51	12.73			
Total	Male	46	67.11	9.72	.054	157	.957
	Female	113	67.00	12.17			

Table 5 manifests that as the use objectives of social networking sites are examined it surfaces that gender is not a differentiating factor for use objectives of social networking sites ( $t_{(2-157)} = .957$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). It can thus be argued that gender is not a differentiating factor on using for Social Interaction and Communication, Knowing and Being known and Educational Purposes.

As subfactors of use objectives of social networking sites are investigated it appears that gender is not a significant differentiator in subfactors of use objectives of social networking sites either. However compared to male prospective teachers, female prospective teachers more frequently utilize social networks for interaction & communication purposes ( $t_{(2-157)} = -.860$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). Male prospective teachers on the other hand more frequently utilize social networks for the purpose of knowing & being known in contrast to female prospective teachers ( $t_{(2-157)} = 1.322$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). Likewise male



prospective teachers more frequently utilize social networks for educational purposes when compared to female prospective teachers ( $t_{(2-157)} = 1.322$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ).

### With respect to department the Change of Prospective Teachers' Social Networking Sites Use Objectives

With respect to departments, mean scores of social networking sites use objectives of prospective teachers are as given in Table 6.

**Table 6. Descriptive Statistics on the Change of Prospective Teachers' Social Networking Site Use Objectives with respect to Department**

Department	N	$\bar{x}$	s
1. CEIT	77.00	68.13	11.38
2. Turkish Language Teaching	44.00	66.07	12.11
3. Primary School Teaching	38.00	65.94	11.03
Total	159.00	67.04	11.48

Table 6 manifests that the highest mean score for the use of social networking sites for social interaction & communication, knowing & being known and educational purposes is in CEIT ( $\bar{X}=68.13$ ) department while the lowest score is in Teaching English ( $\bar{X}=65.94$ ) department. Variance analysis results demonstrating if the differentiations in mean scores of prospective teachers vary significantly with respect to department are as given in Table 7.

**Table 7. With respect to Department, Variance Analysis Results on Social Networking Sites Use Objectives**

Source of Variance	Sum of squares	sd	Squares Mean	F	p	Significant dif.
Intergroup	178.107	2	89.053	.673	.512	None
Intragroup	20656.780	156	132.415			
Total	20834.886	158				

Variance analysis results manifest that the mean scores of social networking sites use objectives of prospective teachers with respect to their department is not significant ( $F_{(2-156)} = .673$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ).

### With respect to Internet Use Experiences, the Change of Prospective Teachers' Social Networking Sites Use Objectives

With respect to internet use experiences, mean scores of social networking sites use objectives of prospective teachers are as illustrated in Table 7.

**Table 8. Descriptive Statistics on Social Networking Sites Use Objectives with respect to Internet Use Experiences**

	Internet Experience	N	$\bar{x}$	S
1	5-6 Years	45.00	67.05	14.82
	7-8 Years	54.00	66.96	10.03
3	9-10 Years	33.00	67.75	9.01
4	10 Years and above	27.00	66.30	11.12
	Total	159.00	67.04	11.48

Table 8 manifests that in terms of using social networking sites for the purposes of social interaction & communication, knowing & being known and educational purposes, the group with the highest mean score has 9-10 years of internet experience ( $\bar{X}=67.75$ ), the lowest group has 10 Years and higher internet experience ( $\bar{X}=66.30$ ). Variance analysis results demonstrating if the differentiations in mean scores of prospective teachers vary significantly with respect to internet experience are as given in Table 9.

**Table 9. With respect to Internet Use Experiences, Variance Analysis Results on Social Networking Sites Use Objectives**

Source of variance	Sum of squares	sd	Mean of squares	F	P	Significant Differentiation
Intergroup	31.883	3	10.628	.079	.971	None
Intragroup	20803.004	155	134.213			
Total	20834.886	158				

Variance analysis results manifest that the mean scores of social network sites use objectives of prospective teachers with respect to their internet use experiences is not significant ( $F_{(3-155)} = .971$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). This finding evidences that internet use experience is not a significant differentiator on the use objectives of social networking sites.

### With Respect to Daily Internet Use Duration, the Change of Prospective Teachers' Social Networking Sites Use Objectives

With respect to daily internet use durations, mean scores of prospective teachers' social networking sites use objectives are as given in Table 10.

**Table 10. With respect to daily Internet Use, Descriptive Statistics on Social Networking Sites Use Objectives**

Internet Experience	N	$\bar{x}$	S
Below 1 hour	27.00	66.46	13.34
1-2 hours	50.00	66.20	10.25
3-4 hours	46.00	68.39	11.52
5-6 hours	20.00	69.29	11.67
7 hours and above	16.00	63.93	11.87
Total	159.00	67.04	11.48

As seen in Table 10, in terms of using social networking sites for the purposes of social interaction & communication, knowing & being known and educational purposes, the group with the highest mean score has 5-6 hours of daily internet experience ( $\bar{X}=69,29$ ), the lowest group has 1-2 hours of daily internet experience ( $\bar{X}=66.20$ ).

**Table 11. With respect to Daily Internet Use Durations, Variance Analysis Results on the Use Objectives of Social Networking Sites**

Source of Variance	Sum of squares	sd	Mean of squares	F	P	Significant Dif.
Intergroup	383.502	4	95.876	.722	.578	None
Intragroup	20451.384	154	132.801			
Total	20834.886	158				

Variance analysis results manifest that the mean scores of social networking sites use objectives of prospective teachers with respect to their daily internet use durations does not vary significantly ( $F_{(3-155)} = .971$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ).

### What are the Views of Prospective Teachers on Social Media?

Table 12 details the views of prospective teachers on social media. In the table the mean scores of prospective teachers on each item have been demonstrated.

Prospective teachers on a large scale hold positive attitudes towards social media. Prospective teachers stated that only for social media can create a social agenda ( $\bar{x}=4.26$ ) item they totally agreed with. They reported to have agreed with the items: Social media enables acquiring new information ( $\bar{x}=4.19$ ), social media is an environment in which communication can be established fats ( $\bar{x}=4.18$ ), social media affects social movements ( $\bar{x}=4.14$ ), social media enables sharing of information ( $\bar{x}=4.00$ ), social media is an effective communication environment ( $\bar{x}=4.00$ ), social media promotes intercultural communication ( $\bar{x}=3.99$ ), social media is not a safe environment ( $\bar{x}=3.84$ ), social media affects institutional dignity ( $\bar{x}=3.81$ ), social media removes the barriers in communication ( $\bar{x}=3.79$ ), social media affects personal dignity ( $\bar{x}=3.68$ ), social media

alienates people from real life ( $\bar{x}= 3.68$ ). They reported to have partially agreed with the item Only in social media I can express myself more freely than I can in real life ( $\bar{x}= 2.86$ ).

**Table 12. Views of Prospective Teachers on Social Networking Sites**

S.N	Items	X	SS	View
1	Social media is an environment in which communication can be established fast.	4.18	.96	I agree
2	Social media removes the barriers in communication.	3.79	1.07	I agree
3	Only in social media I can express myself more freely than I can in real life.	2.86	1.28	I am undecided
4	Social media alienates people from real life.	3.67	.99	I am undecided
5	Social media is not a safe environment.	3.84	.99	I agree
6	Social media enables sharing of information.	4.00	.99	I agree
7	Social media affects social movements.	4.14	.93	I agree
8	Social media is an effective communication environment.	4.00	.94	I agree
9	Social media affects personal reputation.	3.68	1.06	I agree
10	Social media can create a social agenda.	4.26	.84	I agree
11	Social media affects institutional dignity.	3.81	1.01	I agree
12	Social media enables acquiring new information.	4.19	.80	I agree
13	Social media promotes intercultural communication.	3.99	.94	I agree

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Research findings evidence that the participant of research use objectives of social networking sites for the purposes of social interaction & communication and knowing & being known are in average level; using social networking sites for educational purposes is in high level. It has also been determined that gender, department, internet use experiences and internet use durations are not differentiating factors on the use objectives of social networking sites. Research findings have also pointed out that prospective teachers hold the belief that social media leaves certain effects on society and individuals in addition to overall life. Prospective teachers' mean score concerning their use objectives of Social Networking Sites is  $\bar{X}=67.04$ , mean scores of using for "Social Interaction & Communication" are  $\bar{X}=67.82$ , mean scores of using for "Knowing & Being known" are  $\bar{X}=54.88$  and mean scores of using for "Educational purposes" are  $\bar{X}=74.78$ .

The research findings obtained by Kalafat and Göktaş (2011) support the data given above. 88% of participant students reported that Facebook is good for their own learning process. Another finding of Kalafat and Göktaş (2011) research is that once Facebook is

integrated with learning-teaching process, an increase shall be witnessed in student-context, student-student and prospective teacher-student interaction. In that way it will be possible to provide contribution to major learning experiences such as directing question; providing explanation; criticizing; providing example; discussion and problem-solving. In their study, the fact that students that are active in learning processes assist their peers indicates that Facebook supports cooperative learning.

In a study conducted by Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman and Witty (2010) it has been reported that 82.4% of participant college student use social websites for communication, 18.1% of students for their professional development and departmental studies. The difference between the findings obtained in present research and previous research might be due to the reason that the sampling consisted of prospective teachers and covered quite a limited scope. In a study conducted by Grosseck, Bran and Tiru (2011) on college students, 57.3% of participants have reported that Facebook provided a more natural learning environment and 54.2% stated that they would desire to have a Facebook account for the purpose of sharing educational activities with others or their friends. In the study by Grosseck, Bran and Tiru (2011) it has been underlined that the main reason behind having a Facebook account is educational motives. As use objectives of Social Networking sites are examined it surfaces that 20.1% of prospective teachers use social networks in high, 77.4% use in average and 2.5% use in low level of using for Social Interaction & Communication, Knowing & Being known and Educational purposes. In the light of obtained findings, as Social Interaction & Communication directed use levels are probed into, it is detected that 6.9% of prospective teachers use in low level, 68.6% in average level and 24.5% in high level and these data manifest that prospective teachers' use of social networks for Social Interaction & Communication purposes is in average level. With respect to Knowing & Being known level it appears that 37.7% of prospective teachers use in low level, 47.8% in average level and 14.5% in high level. With respect to Educational purposes level, 1.9% of prospective teachers use in low level, 57.9% in average level and % 40.3 in high level.

In a study conducted by Tınmaz & Çağıltay (2012) on 289 participants to investigate the use of social networking web sites for educational purposes, they have underpinned that by means of extensive opportunities for interaction, Facebook bears huge potential to be utilized for educational purposes. Tınmaz and Çağıltay (2012) have reported that Facebook is mostly utilized for establishing social interaction and communicating & sharing information with others. The participants however claimed that they were not so decided about the benefits of using Facebook for educational purposes. The researchers attributed this finding to participants' lack of experience on the use of Facebook for educational purposes. Findings obtained in present research are parallel to the findings obtained in Tınmaz & Çağıltay (2012) study. The parallelism between two studies

demonstrate that prospective teachers already use Facebook for educational purposes but still to encourage even further use of Facebook for educational purposes it would be beneficial to gain awareness to prospective teachers.

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