Social Network Use Preferences of Pre-Service ICT Teachers

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Extensive use of technology related to rapid advancements have changed the daily habits and behaviors of people (King et al., 2013). For instance, people have started to check their smartphones as the first thing to do in the morning and last thing to do at night before going to sleep. So, we have several new, technology related phobias such as nomophobia (King et al., 2013; Yildirim & Correia, 2015), cyberphobia (Lucas, 2015), and many more. The main point here is not how many times people check their smartphones or smart devices, why do they check their devices. According to Yildirim and Correia (2015), people afraid of losing communication and connection with other people at most.

According to O'Keeffe, Clarke-Pearson, and Council on Communications and Media (2011) using social networking sites has become the most common activity of teens' and adolescents' daily life. They take pictures to share on "Instagram", twit about their moods and ideas on "Twitter", check-in a place to announce where they are on "Swarm", chats with many groups on "WhatsApp", or share videos, single photos or albums, tag their friends on "Facebook".   According to PEW Research Center's (2017) social media update 2016, 79% of online adults, which is 68% of all Americans, use Facebook, whereas 32% of online adults, which is 28% of all adults, use Instagram. Moreover, according to Facebook (2017), there were 1.79 billion monthly active users and 1.18 billion daily active users as of September 2016. While 1.66 billion monthly active users logged in via mobile devices, 1.09 billion monthly active users logged in via mobile devices. When the social media usage statistics were compared it is seen that Facebook is the most commonly used social networking site among all social networking sites.

The extensive use of social networking sites has already gain the attention of educators that many different studies have conducted to examine educational use of social networking sites, especially educational use of Facebook (Arteaga Sánchez, Cortijo, & Javed, 2014; Demirbilek, 2015; Henderson, Finger, & Selwyn, 2016; Manca & Ranieri, 2016; O'Keeffe et al., 2011; Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010).

Although there are many studies conducted to investigate how educators and students use social media, or would like to use it with or without educational purposes, this study aims to investigate how pre-service ICT Teachers use social media, and what do they expect from professors about social media use. In Turkey, Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technology (CEIT) is responsible for educating ICT teachers. The department has B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees. People with B.S. degree in CEIT could be ICT teachers in private and public schools. These ICT teachers have several roles in schools besides teaching such as being a role model to both other teachers and students about the correct and effective use of technology, maintaining computer labs, solving network, hardware and software problems, and so more. Furthermore, ICT teachers are responsible for preparing web sites, and managing social media accounts of the institution.

Since ICT teachers have a key role for technology integration and effective technology use in schools, they needed to be correctly educated. Moreover, the proper use of social media is required to be taught. At this point, understanding how pre-service ICT teachers use social media and what do they expect from professors might help to establish a road map to social media education.

This study investigate how pre-service ICT teachers use social media, and what do they expect from professors in terms of using social media in education. For this purpose, a descriptive questionnaire consisted of 44 questions, nine questions to understand social network use, and 35 questions to understand their expectations from professors and institutions, was prepared and utilized. At first, the questionnaire was sent to five experts with Ph.D. in order to ensure there was no problem. The final form of the printed questionnaire was distributed to pre-service ICT teachers in a public university located in central Anatolia region, and 88 responses were collected.

According to preliminary analysis, there were 44 (51.2%) women and 42 (48.8%) men, and their ages ranged between 18 to 24. The main device used to connect to the Internet is smartphones (n=60). The most common social network was Facebook (n=83), and least common was LinkedIn (n=22). The other social networks used by students were Twitter (n=45), Instagram (n=72), Google Plus (n=48), Swarm (n=42). They use social networks to communicate with friends (n=83), to find old friends (n=51), to find new friends (n=28), to learn what other people do (n=43), to share (n=60), to follow celebrities (n=44), to follow institutions (n=42), to follow news (n=74), to buy something (n=36). When they are asked to clarify which information they share on social networks, it is seen that they share their names (n=77), phone numbers (n=12), addresses (n=12), e-mail (n=30), marital status (n=21), photo and video (n=60), hometown (n=69), political view (n=20).

When pre-service teachers asked to whom do they send friend request, it was seen that they send friend request to relatives (n=65), friends (n=72), classmates (n=69), schoolmates (n=62), dorm mates (n=57), friends' friends (n=20), professors (n=47), and everybody they know (n=26). Furthermore, they accept friendship request of their relatives (n=68), friends (n=78), classmates (n=78), schoolmates (n=72), dorm mates (n=65), friends' friends (n=41), professors (n=55), and all requests (n=13).

These are just the initial findings. More detailed findings on what do they expect from professors and institutions will be presented and discussed.

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