



## A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

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### **Abstract:**

The phenomenology design which is one of the qualitative research methods was employed in this research that aimed to reveal the contribution of educational administrators' usage of social media to educational administration. The research is an explanatory study survey model. The study groups were selected using convenience sampling method. In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview form consisting of three themes along with their subthemes that is developed by the researcher as the data collection tool. It is revealed that the social media has an effect on school administration and it should be used effectively implying that every school administrator should know how to use social media consciously. It can be asserted that some educational administrators can use social media tools effectively and in a manner that can contribute to educational administration. It is concluded that effective social media use should contribute to school administration, but school administrators rather use social media to share information with teachers, and also school administrators should exhibit instructional leadership to teachers and students through effective social media use, but school administrators do not have enough knowledge and experience of instructional leadership. It can be stated that school administrators do not have enough experience in creating a vision and bringing team spirit.

**Keywords:** educational administration, social media, instructional leadership, change management, communication

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## 1. Introduction

Today, technology develops more than ever. There is a need for administrators who can adapt to rapidly changing and developing technology. The need for teachers and school administrators to use social media effectively is growing. Because students use social media more often. Weinberg, (2009) defines social media as a field of application that places the world of the internet rapidly into our life and enables the sharing of information, different perspectives / thoughts and experiences through community oriented websites.

The fact that the majority of social network users are composed of young people and students and that they offer a rich interaction with the user suggests the use of these networks for educational purposes. The fact that social networking sites have importance in the lives of students of all ages has attracted a great deal of interest among some educators (Selwyn & Lyndsay, 2009). Data sharing by means of many social networking applications has become quite easy. Individuals with similar interests can learn from each other and contribute to the ever-evolving web-based information sources (Mazman, 2009). An environment in which both students and teachers can contribute to school management through social media can be created.

The digital marketing agency "We Are Social", which works all over the world in 2016, reports the statistics of internet and social media usage in 2016 with a report. The report based on the data gathered from 30 countries including Turkey covers important data such as the number of social media and internet users on mobile platforms. According to the report the number of people who has internet connection throughout the world is 3,419 billion while 2307 billion people use social media. The report shows that out of overall population of 79,4 million 46,3 million people are connected to Internet and out of 42 million social media users 36 million people use social media through mobile devices.

In this case, it can be said that Turkey is very active in using social media and internet. According to the report of "We are Social", 77 % of internet users in Turkey are online every day and 16% are online at least once a week. 51% of them access Internet by laptop and desktop computers, 46% by mobile phones and 3% by tablets.

There are a total of 42 million social media accounts in Turkey. 51% of them access Internet by laptop and desktop computers, 46% by mobile phones and 3% by tablets. With the widespread use of smartphones, the use of social networks and the internet on mobile is seen to grow. According to the report by We are Social, compared to 2015, the number of active internet users and active social media users has increased 12% ,15% respectively in Turkey.

The report states that people spend on the internet for 4 hours and 14 minutes a day, and 2 hours and 32 minutes on the social media. When the use of social media tools in Turkey is examined,, 32% of them are Facebook, 24% is WhatsApp, 20% is Messenger, 17% is Twitter, and 16% is Instagram, they are followed by Google+, Skype, LinkedIn, Viber, Vine and Pinterest (<http://www.dijitalajanslar.com/internet-ve-sosyal-medya-kullanici-istatistikleri-2016>). As the time spent and statistics show, the widespread use of social media makes it necessary for educators to use social media effectively.

The use of social networks, enriched by the opportunities that have provided users in recent years is growing. The large majority of users of social networks are formed by students, teachers and school administrators which make it necessary to create ideas and to make studies on educational use of social networking sites to keep up with the changing information Technologies (Özmen, Aküzüm, Sünkür, Baysal, 2011). As social networking is so intensely used, the use of these tools in professional development and educational context for educators is becoming increasingly important (Grant, 2008, s.3755-3759). In an environment where social media is used so intensely, it is unthinkable that educational administrators do not use these effective tools in school management.

It is necessary for the administrator to use social media effectively in order to be effective in issues such as promoting efficiency in management and school development. Furthermore, social media can be turned into opportunity in school development which may promote the communication between students and teachers. Administrators in schools have various responsibilities. They are responsible for improving student learning, ensuring safety and security, social and moral development of students, and professional development of teachers (Cho & Jimerson, 2016). Administrators can effectively use social media while fulfilling these responsibilities.

When the literature is scanned, there are many researches on the use of technology in education by teachers, students and school administrators. In their research *"Why Social Media Must Have a Place in Schools?"*, Krutka & Carpenter (2016) assert that while a great number of students use social media, teachers and administrators insist on the necessity of not using social media. The result of the research says that teachers and administrators' using social media can be turned into an opportunity.

In their research *"Managing digital identity on Twitter: The case of school administrators"*, Cho and Jimerson (2016) study on the impact of social media on occupational learning and school management. In their research *"Management of social*

*networks in the educational process*", Mora & Pont & Casado & Iglesias (2015) indicated the importance of social media for education enrichment where students can freely express themselves.

Greenhow & Lewin (2015) recommend social media as a model for formal and informal learning in their research "*Social media and education: The limits of formal and informal learning*". However, no research has been found that examines the contribution of social media use of education administrators on education administrators. It is thought that the research in this direction will contribute to the literature.

School administrators now also benefit from the use of computers and the Internet in the effective implementation of educational and administrative processes in schools. Accordingly, school administrators have computers and internet connections allotted to them in their rooms (Özdem & Demir, 2015). In this research, it is aimed to reveal the contribution of social media use of education administrators on education management.

For this purpose, the following questions will be replied:

1. What are the impacts of the use of social media in school management as school administrators?
2. How effective is your use of social media in your instructional leadership?
3. What are the impacts of using social media in change management at school?

## **2. Material and Methods**

In this section, the pattern of research, study group, data collection tool, collection and analysis of data are included.

### **2.1. Pattern of Research**

Phenomenological study design was chosen in this qualitative research. In phenomenology, the researcher focuses on phenomena that he is aware of but does not have an in-depth and detailed understanding (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). This research method borrows experiences from individuals to describe and interpret the experiences of individuals (Jasper, 1994; Miller, 2003).

In the phenomenological analysis of a qualitative research, it is attempted to elucidate the general definition of the phenomenon from experience of individuals through individual expressions (Patel, 2002; Baker, 1992). At the same time, in the analysis of phenomenology, individual and experienced experiences are examined in detail and the participants explain how they perceive their individual perceptions (Smith & Eatough, 2007). The research has benefited from the experience of

administrators. In this research, phenomenology design was chosen because the views of the school administrators on impacts of social media on school management are expressed through their views.

## **2.2. Study Group**

The research was carried out with education administrators working in government and private schools working in various levels in Ankara. Ten education administrators were selected according to easy reachable case sampling which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. This sampling method brings speed and practicality to the researcher. Because in this method the researcher selects a situation that is close and easy to Access (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

There are a total of ten participants. One of them graduated from two year university, four of them graduated from university, four of them finished PhD without thesis and one of them is doctorate student. Eight of the participants are men, two participants are women. Three of the education administrators work in primary schools, four in secondary schools and three in secondary schools. Eight of the participants work in public schools while two work in private schools. All of the participants are over twenty years of occupational seniority.

While five of the participants were experienced in education management for more than ten years, five had experience in less than ten years. All participants indicated that they mostly use social media tools such as Facebook, twitter and Whatsapp and e-mail. In addition, three participants indicated that they use Instagram and two participants indicate they use Pinterest

## **2.3. Data Collection Tool**

As a means of data collection in the research, in-depth interviews were conducted through a "semi-structured interview form" consisting of three main themes including sub-themes developed by the researcher. In this method, by using unstructured or semi-structured interview techniques the phenomenon investigated is tried to be explained (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000).

## **2.4. Data Collection**

Data were collected by a semi-structured in-depth interview with school administrators conducted by the researcher. Before the interview, an appointment was made with school administrators, they were informed about the duration of the interview and the interview would be recorded if there was no objection. During the interview, open-ended questions were asked in the data collection tool and additional questions were

asked when the questions were felt inadequate. Thus, deep information on the phenomenon has been tried to be reached. The collection of data related to the role of the researcher is limited to the analysis of findings and data. The interviews took place in an intimate setting in the school administrator's room and were recorded.

### 2.5. Analysis of Data

The records of the interviews were resolved by the researcher. The interviews that were transferred to the computer environment were converted into a 20 page manuscript. Coding was made by reading the text several times and the obtained data was analyzed by analyzing the content. Validity and reliability in research are important criteria for researchers who aim to reflect social reality as well as to base reality on research data (Kümbetoğlu, 2005). In this direction, additional questions were asked to the interviewees about the validity of the research and deep information was obtained. Interviews were also deciphered by a scholar for the credibility of the research and in addition, they were transferred as they were given. In this study, Female Education Administrators were coded as FEA1, FEA2..., and Male Education Administrators as MEA1, MEA2....

### 3. Results and Discussion

To determine the contribution of social media tools to education management, the most given responses to the question *"What are the social media tool / tools you have used outside your work life?"* were Facebook and WhatsApp . The research conducted by We Are Social shows that the population of Turkey spent 4 hours and 37 minutes on average on the internet. It can be said that this is also true in the private life of the education administrators.

All participants responded "Yes" to the question *"As a school administrator, do you use social media tools while fulfilling your duties and responsibilities related to your work?"*

The opinions of the education administrators in this regard are as follows;

*FEA1: "Announcements, Sharing Good Practices, Presentation and sharing of educational tools, fast and popular communication (Everyone chooses this Media and it's free)"*

*MEA"3 "I share my studies about the school in face, I sometimes share in the local national education management and school group and sometimes I share in Instagram. I use twitter more officially to inform Çankaya municipality or metropolitan municipality about my requests, I send pictures or use them for complaints and usually get responds."*

MEA6 *"I use social media. Making announcements to the staff sent by the upper authorities, corresponding about education or teacher's duties and responsibilities within the school, giving duties to the staff, for communication on topics, celebrations on special days, I also make use of social media to promote the school's introduction and increase its visibility."*

For what purpose do you use social media in school management? What are the reasons? Participants say that they prefer it because it increases the motivation of staff; it makes work run faster, and is provable in the notification of official writings. Participants' views on this issue are as follows;

MEA1 *"It is used to announce the work done at the school to the parents and to some people in the field of educational sciences."*

FEA2 *"We usually use social media to share, announce (face, Instagram) the work we do, but we also use it for our requests and complaints (Twitter)"*

MEA8 *"In School Administration I use social media in matters such as communication, announcement, visibility, communication, social communication."*

FEA7 *"The notification of official announcements is faster and easier through social media and it can be proved. The sharing of the school's achievements through social media is also important in the sense that a positive judgment is formed. It also increases the visibility of the school in terms of advertising. Besides, the school is a social environment at the same time. Communicating via social media, celebrating birthday successes, etc. has positive influence on the school climate."*

To the question: *"Does your use of social media help you create a common vision for the school?". "How do you achieve it?"* The participants has indicated that by increasing participation in school management it contributes to build a common vision, it has an indirect contribution to create a vision, and the sharing of other schools has an impact on teachers. Participants' views on this issue are as follows;

MEA2 *"I see the contribution to create a vision by providing a quick brainstorming as it provides fast communication between teachers"*

MEA3 *"However, the staff can be affected by the sharing of other schools."*

FEA2 *"In fact, though not exactly designed for this purpose, vision studies can be done in the context of the feedback received. So it is more appropriate to say that it is an indirect contribution"*

MEA5 *"When we use social media, we have a school group that we use together as school management, teachers and school-parent union. In this group, there are common works and shares. Since it is used and decided commonly It helps to create a common vision"*

To the question: *"Do you think using social media helps motivate your teachers?"* Participants responded that the activities shared by teachers, sharing the successful activities of the school, celebrating special occasions become a source of motivation. Participants' views on this issue are as follows;

FEA2 *"When I share an urgent letter about the personal rights of teachers; The teacher can be more motivated by thinking that his rights are being pursued and tried to be protected."*

MEA3 *"Teachers can be influenced by administrators' sharing their activities in the social media. In this case, teachers may think that they have a way of expressing themselves"*

FEA1 *"I observe that sharing the work done on the internet increases the motivation because the working institution 'exists' in this area. On the other hand, it also has the function of reducing the need for longer meetings as social media makes communication faster. For example, WhatsApp groups provide serious opportunities to discuss a meeting agenda and preparation notes in advance, to support the decision-making process with a serious debate, and perhaps to allow for possible lobbying."*

MEA5 *"We have common share, texts in our face group or WhatsApp group we use together with our teachers and since there are celebrations and congratulations on the common area, social media accounts make our work easier when we want to motivate our staff."*

MEA8 *"When different teaching groups share the success of their work from the WhatsApp, all teacher friends see this share and congratulate them. Such sharing brings sweet competition among other groups, because competition is aimed at school success."*

To the questions: *"How do you use social media so that teachers can adapt to changes and innovations in school? Could you give an example about it?"* Participants expressed that social media make it easier for teachers to be knowledgeable, encourages them to use technology, to share developments and activities in education and thereby adapting to change and innovation. Participants' views on this issue are as follows;

FEA1 *"It provides only fast and collective information therefore it is worthwhile."*

MEA1 *"Sites where good examples are shared (Pinterest), exam questions etc., Sharing sites, forms and examples of formal writings are used quite often. Complex workshop, Robotic etc. examples are also used on social media."*

FEA2 *"The changes, developments and innovations that are relevant to our school are shared through social media, ensuring that teachers get knowledge. They are able to research through social media again to improve their knowledge"*

MEA3 *"I can make announcements for teachers through social media at school. We can share a formal announcement in groups we have created. We can share the time of the date of any meeting."*

MEA 5 *"When I came to this school, there was at least one half of the school that did not use WhatsApp, and now there is only one teacher and he is retiring which shows the change has appeared. Our teachers have begun to be more enthusiastic about sharing more of social media and trying to show themselves. Our teachers have begun to become more enthusiastic about sharing more and using social media more and trying to show themselves."*

How and in what ways does your use of social media affect your instructional leadership behavior? Five participants responded to the question, five left unanswered. Respondents expressed that they make instructional leadership by opening up discussion on educational issues, making suggestions, sharing and reading educational articles, and educating teachers through social media as a guide for information access. Participants' views on this issue are as follows;

FEA2 *"Our use of social media makes our teachers think that we follow the developments and changes very closely and that we make continuous research to ensure the development."*

MEA3 *"I do not think it is very influential. The reason for using it is just because people express themselves in this field."*

MEA 4 *"When you consider leadership as an interaction process, to use rich content for the work you want to suggest, supporting the debate you want to open influences the communication and therefore leadership. After all, sometimes a good example, or an article that supports what you want, makes your job easier."*

MEA5 *"In this case, I could be an example, in addition to the face and Instagram used by everyone, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter have been introduced to my teachers by me."*

To the question: *"How does your use of social media help students develop acceptable behaviors for your school?"* six participants responded, four left unanswered. Respondents expressed that using social media correctly has established a common platform for developing positive behavior, and gaining acceptable behaviour. Participants' views on this issue are as follows;

MEA2 *"Thanks to social media, we are aware of the different studies that are applied in our country and even in the world and through which positive results can be obtained and it helps to realize these studies."*

FEA1 *"There is no significant use for students. It is only sharing the activities they did students can express themselves in that environment."*

MEA 4 *"Social media can provide many effective means on the road to agree on acceptable behavior. If you share the cleanliness of the school on your page to explain your expectations better to the students, you will give a clear aesthetic value of cleanliness or you will reveal your expectations in this regard."*

To the question: *"Does your use of social media lead you to create team spirit for teachers? How?"* Seven respondents responded positively while three participants responded negatively. Participants say that social media use improves their habit of acting together for an effective education and teaching, and that the contribution of all employees in the achievements is announced through social media. Participants' views on this issue are as follows;

MEA2 *"We are aware of the competitions organized in our city and even in many places of our country through social media and we take care to participate students in such competition which gives way to establish the team spirit. For example, last week after we got the knowledge of maths Olympiads which we took the second and third place, we created groups of teachers who worked with children."*

MEA3 *"Teachers are only influenced as much as they can if they share their activities. I do not think it's very effective."*

FEA2 *"The team spirit can ultimately be thought of as a conceptualization of a level of harmony in working life. The fact that people have the opportunity to have intensive communication can create the basis for a possible harmonious work. The opposite is also possible, but it is necessary to believe in the benefit of intensive intra-group communication"*

To the question: *"Does your use of social media lead to a team spirit for your students?" How?"* participants expressed that joint successes of the students and their announcement via social media has led to communication of students who cannot meet together outside school and the introduction of schools in social media has given way to develop team spirit among students. Participants' views on this issue are as follows;

MEA2 *"We are aware of the competitions organized in our city and even in many places of our country and we take care to participate our students in such competition by means of*

*social media. In this case, it is the team spirit is encouraged to create. For example, we were informed about the contest held in Gaziantep two weeks ago and participated and got the degree.*

*MEA3" I do not think it is very effective for students."*

*MEA7 "It is easier to catch team spirit together with children because children are more interested in my groups. Both Facebook and school's web page are more followed by them"*

#### **4. Conclusion**

In school management, the duty of the administrator is to live the organization in accordance with its purposes. There are many ways and methods to achieve these goals. One of these methods is social media which is compatible with today's technology. The use of social media has become widespread in Turkey as it has been all over the world in recent years. As a result of their research, Krutka and Carpenter (2016) say that teachers and administrators can turn the use of social media into an advantage. School management carried out only with classical methods has lost its validity. It is also possible to reach the whole world through social media, not just students, teachers and parents. Since social media has influence on school management, it is necessary to use it effectively in school management, so it is necessary for every school administrator to know how to use social media consciously. All of the school principals participating in the research use multiple social media pages both in the business environment and in private life. It is reached the conclusion that a number of administrators can contribute social media tools to education management and can use them effectively.

In the first theme, the conclusion is that school management needs to contribute to school management with effective use of social media and social media is mostly used to share information with teachers by school administrators. In the second main theme, instructional leadership, it is revealed that it is a necessity to teach teachers and students effective use of social media within instructional leadership. Junco (2012)'s research on the use of Facebook's of higher education students and scholars has found that the use of Facebook is important for the academic development of the students and it affects the students and keeps them in school. However, it is also revealed that school administrators do not have enough knowledge and experience in instructional leadership. In the third main theme, by questioning the school administrators' experiences of creating vision, creating team spirit in teachers and students it is tried to find out the level at which the school administrators are able to accomplish that task by using the social media tools.

It can also be indicated that school administrators do not have enough experience in creating vision and team spirit. Meneteşe (2013)'s research revealed that

the administrators who need to have the vision and direct the education do not follow the technology substantially which is similar that of this research's result.

Some suggestions based on the findings from the research are presented. Instructional leadership skills should be measured when choosing education administrators; In-service training should be organized in case of inadequacy of the skills. In-service trainings should be organized in a similar way by measuring the skills of vision and team spirit establishing in change management. Educational administrators should be supervised whether they use social media tools appropriately and effectively in accordance with ethical rules. The ethics of in-service training courses organized for the use of the Internet and social media should be measured, and if necessary, they should be re-set by changing the content.

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