



Research Paper

The efficiency of social media in school management according to teachers' viewpoints

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ABSTRACT

The development of technology is currently used effectively in all areas of life, and of course, the educational field is also affected by this change. Technology has affected all areas of life as well as school management and has enabled school administrators to use social media tools frequently. The purpose of this study was to determine whether school managers use social media means in an efficient manner when managing schools according to the viewpoints of teachers. This study was conducted with a qualitative research design, and the Phenomenology Technique was used. The study group consisted of fifteen teachers who were selected with maximum variety sampling method, which is one of the Purposeful Sampling Methods. It was found that school management use social media means for certain purposes. In terms of influencing school management, it was found that teachers are informed about official works to be done at school in a faster and more efficient manner, coordination is established between employees, several planning activities are performed (exam programs, distribution of classroom schedules, etc.), and fast decision-making is enabled through social media use, which are several contributions of it to school management. It was also found that school managers are not adequate in being leaders for teachers in terms of educational services.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has come to the agenda as the most ideal medium because it is easily updated, open to multiple-use, and enables users to share anything in virtual realm, etc. properties. People can write their daily opinions, discuss these opinions, and write about their new opinions in social media. In addition, people may also share various photographs and videos, look for job, and even find jobs, and experience the real world in the virtual realm without being bored. This situation causes everyone to become interested in this field in time, and draw a conceptual frame for the virtual realm which is renewed with each passing day (Vural and Bat, 2010).

The fast development of technology has influenced educational field. Technology has influenced all fields of our

daily lives; school management has also started to use social media in a frequent manner. With there is widespread use of the Internet in smart phones tablet PCs and computers, the use of social media has also gained widespread. There are almost no information and no individual that cannot be reached with instant messaging. The number of people using social media is increasing each day. When people express themselves in social sharing sites, they can provide detailed information at various chaos levels about their locations, opinions, feelings and activities, and create individual profiles (Balcı and Gölcü, 2013: 274). Social media users may be in constant interaction with other social media users, they may text other users (Hughes et al., 2012: 561; Ellison et al., 2007:

1143) and follow messages that are open to the public and the locations of other people (Balci and Koçak, 2017). Education management is also affected by this situation, and school principals use instant messaging programs in school management processes.

Bursalıoğlu (2002) mentioned that school should be considered as a sub-system of the educational system, and claimed that school management might also be considered as a sub-system of education management. The school management has been defined as a limited area of education management in one aspect. Aydın (2005) claimed that as a specialty field, education management was separated from business and public management in terms of purpose and functions. The thing that makes it differ from other management types is the fact that it is specific for the educational field. The specificity of education is the work of education. Critical educationalist Giroux (1992) defined school management as “managing school with a critical viewpoint, and imagining changing the world rather than managing it”.

Students and teachers may follow simple steps and create a community with educational purposes; share things among themselves, establish communications and receive feedbacks. Social network sites also enable users to support learning processes of students and make teachers focus on teaching and assessment processes by enhancing the educational processes with texts, videos, sounds and similar materials (Pollara and Zhu, 2011).

The activities that may be realized at schools with the use of social media, the announcements coming from senior management levels, and the communication among employees may be realized in a faster and more efficient manner.

Of course, means of social media are effective when they are used for their intended purposes. The social structure of social network media includes certain individuals that facilitate the establishment of networks with different relations and connections, writers and readers, and constitute the bases of social dimension with customizable contents and information sharing. In addition, it has also been claimed that the notion of reaching only the content has been eliminated with social networks, and an unlimited learning medium in which social application experiences are continuously regulated has been provided for people. Establishing cooperation using social networks enables educational practitioners and producers of information (universities) to share information. This sharing provides parties with information both in policy-making processes and in developing applications (Özmen et al., 2011).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether school managers use social media means in an efficient manner when managing schools according to the viewpoints of teachers. In this context, answers for the following questions will be sought in this study:

1. What is the frequency of school managers in using social

media; do teachers follow the messages?

2. Do school managers use social media in school management in an efficient manner?

3. Does using social media by school managers affect teachers in a negative or positive way?

METHODS

Research design

This study was conducted with the qualitative research design, and the Phenomenology desing or method was used. Phenomenology aims to investigate the phenomena that appear before us in many shapes such as events, experiences, perceptions, tendencies, concepts and situations in the world we live in, and focuses on the phenomena which we do not have a detailed and deep understanding (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). Phenomenology is a qualitative research technique that emphasize the experiences of participants in a certain process or event or tries to explain such things (Sart, 2013). A phenomenological study reduces a universal situation to an individual one (Van Manen, 1990) and seeks answers for questions such as “What is the experience of the individual?”, and “How has the individual experienced this?” (Moustakas, 1994; Narrated by Ersoy, 2016).

Study group

The sample consisted of 15 teachers who were selected using Maximum Variety Sampling Method, which is one of the Purposeful Sampling Methods. In such a sampling, the researcher used his/her own judgment in selecting the participants for the study, and included those who were most eligible for the purpose of the study (Balci, 20015). Maximum variety is the creation of similar situations within the sampling group about the problem (Büyüköztürk, 2016). Eight of the participants were male, and seven of them were female teachers. Four of them worked at primary schools, six of them worked at secondary schools, and five of them worked at secondary education schools. Maximum variety was ensured in terms of the variety of schools and gender.

Research instrument and procedure

A “Semi-Structured Interview Form” was used in the study as the data collection tool. The form was prepared by the author of the study and consisted of three main themes that could reveal the purpose of the study (the purposes of education managers in using social media; the effects of social media on school management; problems caused by social media use in education management). The form also included sub-themes of the main themes. The form was Sent to five academicians who worked in the field of

education management, auditing, economy and planning; and after the feedbacks and criticisms were received, the Interview Form was reshaped. Detailed interviews were made with the participants. Detailed interview is an interview method which considers the exact side of the story and desire of the participant with detailed questions and with the effect of the answers that will be received from the participant without sticking to a certain questions list (Şekerler, 2015). The interviews were recorded after the permissions of the participants in a comfortable place that was determined by the participants.

Data analysis

The recordings of the interviews were analyzed by the author of the study and were written as a text consisting of fourteen pages on computer. The recordings of the interviews were sent to two specialists and were converted into text on computer. These three copies were compared and the conflicting fields were corrected. The analyses were made with the Content Analysis Method, and a report was prepared around the main themes of the study. The basic process applied in Content Analysis is collecting similar data around certain concepts and themes, and organize and interpret them in such a way that will be understood by readers (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). The participants were encoded as T1, T2, ... in the analyses.

RESULTS

The data on the demographical structure of the participants, their purpose of using social media, the effect of social media on school management, and the problems stemming from the use of social media in education management are included in this section.

The educational status of all the participants who were interviewed in the study is at the undergraduate level. Seven of the participants were female, and eight were male. Five of the participants worked at primary schools, five at secondary schools, and four at secondary education schools. Six of the participants had a seniority between 1-5 years, and nine of them had seniority of 10 years and above.

As it was understood from the viewpoints of the teachers in the context of the purposes of using social media with school group, all participants mentioned that the purpose was to convey the official announcements to teachers (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13; T14 and T15). It was also determined that social media was used to establish communication and cooperation among group teachers (T2, T3, T4, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12, T13; T14 and T15). Some participants stated that they also established communications also in emergency situations such as the health status of their colleagues (T1, T7, T10, T14; T15). In this context, T2 said: "We use social media in

situations like announcing the changes in academic programs and to share exam programs"; T4 said: "We use social media for social purposes"; and T5 said "We use social media for planning purposes".

The participants were asked the question "For what reasons do school managers use social media?", and the answers were as follows: "To establish communication about teachers' duties, and sometimes the principal assigns us with forced labor " (T1, T8, T13); "To establish communications with parents" (T2, T11); "To convey the situations that must be told to students, parents, school management, and teachers" (T3, T7, T14); "To exchange information in a fast manner" (T4, T9, T10); "Informing about various social activities" (T5, T15); "Informing about announcements in time off hours" (T6).

The participants were asked the question "What are the advantages brought to you by social media use?", and the answers were as follows: "Fast access to announcements and remembering announcements" (T1, T11); "It is more practical and safer" (T2, T13); "Each message is permanent" (T7, T9); "Fast and efficient communication" (T4, T5); "Means of loading unnecessary work" (T10, T14); "Having information before hand about my duties and responsibilities in order to fulfill them" (T6, T15); "Improving solidarity and cooperation with group teachers and other teachers" (T3, T12).

The participants were asked the question "What are the effects of social media use on school management?"; and the answers were as follows: "Announcements were fast and efficient" (T1); "Technology use is of course more practical, economic and safer. It also avoided waste of paper" (T2, T11); "It facilitated contacting more people at the same time" (T3, T15); "The difficulties on conveying special and official information were eliminated" (T6); "It reduced bureaucracy and fastened proceedings" (T4, T15); "Although it is a practical method for announcements, celebrations, and proceedings to do, managers load unnecessary works to teachers through social media" (T5); "It facilitated and fastened the communication and information fields" (T7); "It brought advantage in terms of time" (T7); "Fast communication was ensured through school management, staff and students" (T8, T12); "It helps school managers in ensuring the coordination in communication" (T9); "There is no need for meetings to take urgent decisions" (T10, T13).

The participants were asked the question "Do school managers use social media for school management?"; and the answers were as follows: "Generally yes, because only official announcements are written" (T1,); "In my opinion, they use social media, they have to use it in terms of having things work well" (T2); "It is used for its real purpose as much as possible" (T3, T7); "Although it is used for its real purpose to a certain extent, sometimes it is also used for other purposes" (T4, T12); "It is used to assign unnecessary work to teachers" (T8, T14); "Although not one hundred percent, in my opinion, it is used for its real purpose" (T5,

T13); "Sometimes it can be used for other purposes" (T9, T11); "Sometimes announcements may be made in a disturbing level" (T10, T15).

The participants were asked the question "Does means of social media have an effect on increasing motivation?"; and the answers were as follows: "It only ensures that I do not miss announcements" (T1, T12); "In my opinion, it does not have any motivation in enhancing motivation" (T2, T15); "It has been influential in ensuring that teachers follow the educational agenda and everybody is informed simultaneously, and motivation has a dynamic structure" (T3, T11); "Since it facilitates sharing with school management, teachers, friends and parents, it is motivating" (T4, T14); "If there is a demand on actual duties, it motivates people; however, if there are extra and unnecessary duties, the person moves away from motivation" (T5); "We are informed about the things on our work field. We can be informed together. We can establish communication with the necessary people in a simultaneous manner and sustain it as needed. We can work in a more efficient manner" (T6, T11); "I can say that it disrupts my motivation" (T7, T15); "No. If school management has not established the system, social media increases the management gap" (T8, T13); "I do not think that it is beneficial in ensuring motivation" (T9, T10).

The participants were asked the questions "Can school management act as education leader through social media for you (for teachers)?"; and the answers were as follows: "School managers must be better than me in order to be able to act as educational leader, for this reason, I do not think that the school management acts as leader" (T1); "Although school management must be able to answer the questions of teachers about education, my questions remain unanswered (T2, T7); "School management makes us feel that it is the superior in social media although there are no wet-ink signature rather than the school management acts as an educational leader" (T3, T14); "I do not need it" (T4, T15); "It ensures that our questions are answered and required guidance is provided" (T6, T11); "Does school manager know what educational leadership is?" (T9, T12); "School management can act as a leader in some issues" (T10).

The participants stated that they did not have any problems about the sharing made over the social media account that is used commonly by the school management and teachers (T2, T3, T4; T7, T8, T9 and T10, T13, T15). T1 said "Sometimes things that are irrelevant with school work are shared. This causes that the mobile phone warns about the messages constantly and causes disturbance". T4, said that s/he had an interrogation about one of his/her sharing about art in the social media account that was used commonly.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Several results were concluded in the present study that

was conducted for the purpose of determining the effect of social media use of school managers on school management according to teacher viewpoints. It was concluded that school management use social media means for certain purposes. These purposes are; Conveying the official announcements to teachers, cooperation and communication between group teachers, special days of the teachers working together at school (birthdays, marriage, illness, urgent situations, etc.). Beside announcing the changes in exam dates and classroom schedules to take necessary precautions, social media is used for planning and social purposes. Özmen et al. (2011) conducted a study and reported that social media use was supplementary for socializing in our present day, which is in line with results of the present study. Şişman Eren (2014) conducted a study and reported similar results, which claimed that social media was used for interaction, cooperation and information sharing. Social media strengthen the existing relations and expand social networks (Clarke, 2009; Ellison et al., 2006).

It was also found in the study that using social media account which is created by the school managers has several advantages for teachers, which are; Fast access to the announcements made by school management, the announcements are permanent, it is practical and reliable, being informed beforehand to do the duties and responsibilities, cooperation between group teachers, and solidarity with other teachers.

In terms of influencing the school management, it was found that teachers are informed about official works to be done at school in a faster and more efficient manner, the coordination is established between employees, several planning activities are performed (exam programs, distribution of classroom schedules, etc.), and fast decision-making is enabled through social media use, which are several contributions of it to school management. Previous studies also support this finding. Managers have responsibilities in many duties at schools. School management must improve the learning of students, ensure security, develop students in social and moral terms, and improve teachers in professional terms (Cho and Jimerson, 2016).

However, it was also found that school managers are not adequate in being leaders of teachers in terms of educational services. This result shows that education managers are not well selected in Turkey. Akyol et al. (2017) conducted a study and reported that school managers are inadequate in being educational leaders. This problem may be eliminated by selecting principals in an objective manner and by considering the necessary qualifications.

It was also found in the present study that the sharing made in the social media do not cause problems in general; and sometimes these sharing may cause serious problems. If the principal shares unnecessary things, uses social media account in inappropriate hours, and sometimes

share about teachers' social event, they may be investigated in legal terms. Here, the responsibility rests solely on the shoulders of school managers and teachers. Necessary education must be provided for school managers and teachers in using social media in school management.

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