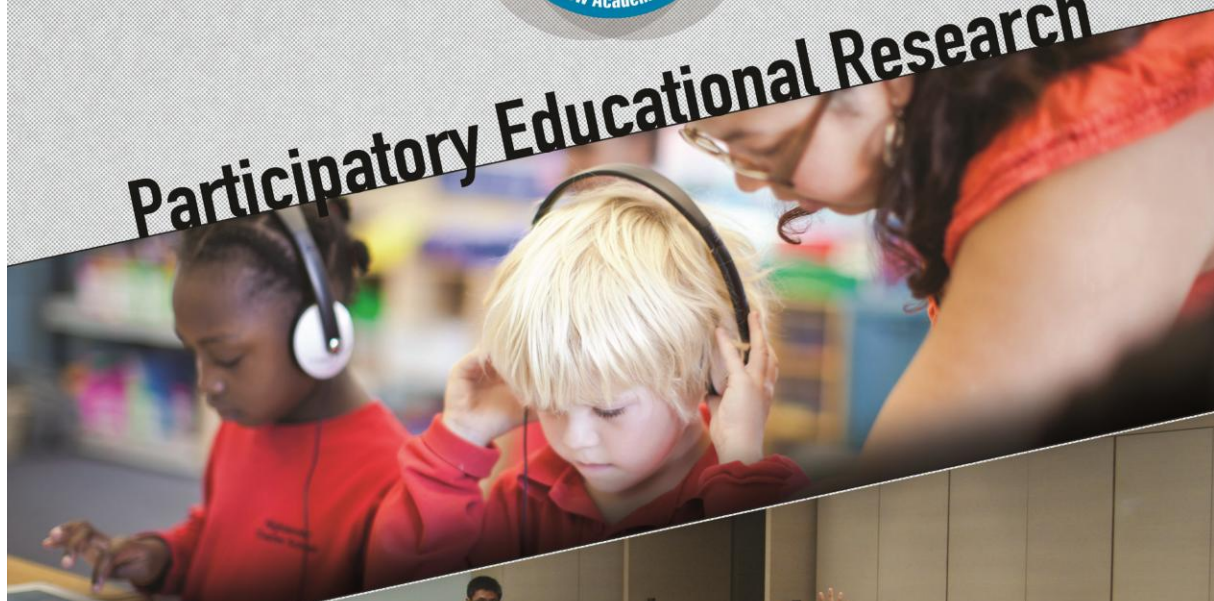
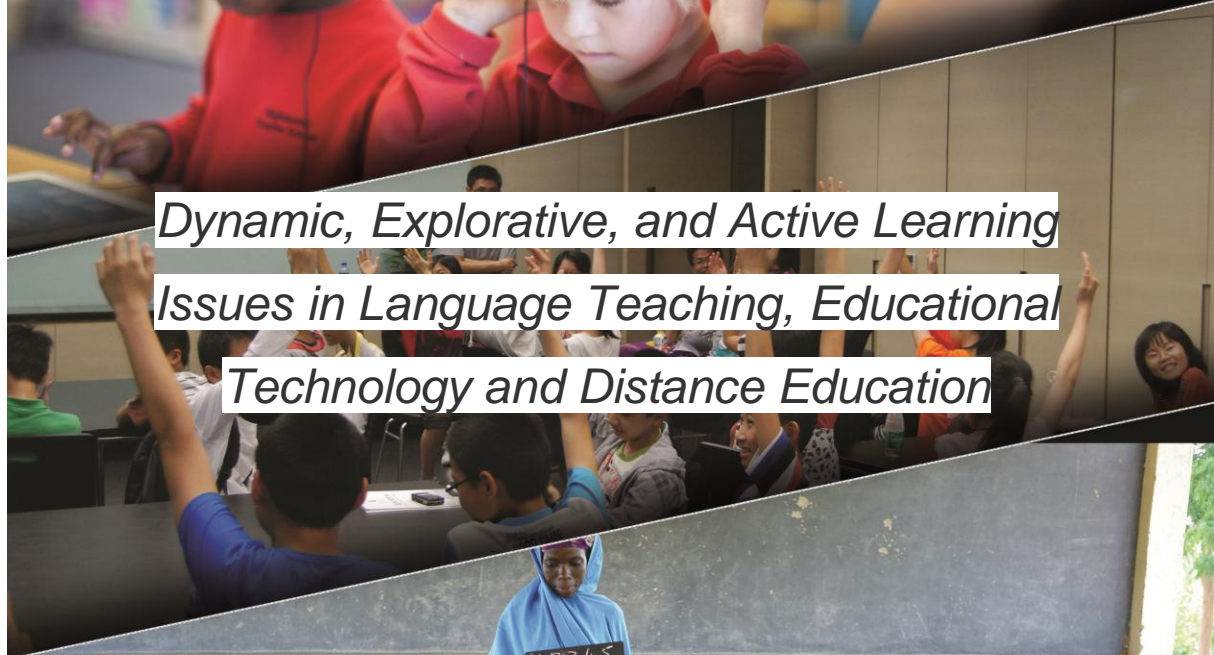


# Participatory Educational Research



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Issues in Language Teaching, Educational  
Technology and Distance Education*



*Full text papers from IDEAL 2016*

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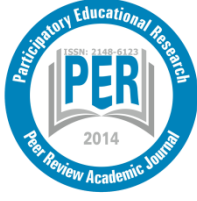
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## Vocational School Students' Purposes of Facebook Usage

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### Abstract

The study investigated vocational school students' purposes of Facebook usage and examined how some demographic profile, including gender frequency of Facebook usage and network size on Facebook have played a role in their purposes of Facebook usage. For the purpose, the researcher used a questionnaire that was completed by a sample of students at the Erzurum Vocational School, Ataturk University. The first section of the questionnaire consists of students' demographic profile. The second section of the questionnaire included "Purposes of Facebook Usage Scale" developed Mazman (2009). This scale consists of 11 items with 3 factors as "social relations" (7 items), "work related" (2 items) and "daily activities" (2 items). Results indicated that social relations are the main reason why vocational school students use Facebook. It is used for communication, sharing news and pictures and meeting new people rather than worked related purposes. It is also found that statistically significant differences in purposes of Facebook usage based on gender. According to the results, females performed better on work related factor and males performed better on social relations and daily activities factors.

**Key words:** social network sites, facebook, purposes of facebook usage, vocational school

### Introduction

In recent years, social network sites (SNSs) have significantly increased among a large number of people. SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat have exponential growth in membership. Increased effect of SNSs has brought important changes in the distribution of knowledge as well as in "moving the frameworks of cultural standards" (Manasijevic, Zivkovic, Arsic, & Milosevic; 2016).

According to the literature, Facebook, a communication phenomenon, is the most popular SNSs among students (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhard, & Madden, 2015; Sánchez, Cortijo, & Javed; 2013, Manasijevic et al., 2016). Researchers have reported Facebook as a motivation tool (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007), virtual learning environment (Won, Evans, Carey, & Schnittka, 2015), the "social glue" that helps students transition into college

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life (Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009), and a medium to enhance students' career development self-efficacy (CDSE) (Argyris, & Xu, 2016).

Recently, several empirical studies (Ainin, Naqshbandi, Moghavvemi, & Jaafar, 2015; Manasijevec et al., 2016; Oncel&Tekin, 2016; Sendurur, Sendurur, & Yılmaz, 2015; Sharma, Joshi, & Sharma, 2015) investigated purposes of the Facebook usage in college or higher education. However, limited research has been conducted on vocational school students' purposes of Facebook usage. Therefore, the current study has focused on vocational school students' purposes of Facebook usage and examined how some demographic profile have played a role in their purposes of Facebook usage.

## **Literature review**

The purpose of Facebook usage in college and higher education are well documented (Akyıldız&Argan, 2012; Ainin et al., 2015; Manasijevec et al., 2016; Oncel&Tekin, 2016; Sánchez, Cortijo, & Javed, 2014; Sendurur, Sendurur, & Yılmaz, 2015). Mazman and Usluel (2010), bridging the gap in this field, designed a structural model of purposes of Facebook usage based on three factors: social relations, work related activities and daily activities. According to authors, social relations include “making new friends, maintaining the existing ones and communicating with them”. This factor is the most important dimension of Facebook. Work related activities include professional purposes such as “accessing information, supporting their work in progress by using online and offline functions, sharing projects, materials, resources, homework or ideas.” Daily activities include “wasting time, keeping updated about what's happening around one's social circles, having fun, playing games or joining groups.”

The research shows that social relations is perceived as the most significant factor in all purposes of Facebook usage (Manasijevec et al., 2016; Sánchez et al., 2014). Akyıldız and Argan (2012), for example, mentioned that students use Facebook particularly to have fun, to keep in touch with friends and to share content on Facebook. The authors also concluded that students use Facebook for not only social purposes but also educational purposes. In this sense, many studies noted that facebook is a useful tool in academic connections, discussions and networking (Asterhan& Rosenberg, 2015; McCarthy, 2012; Yuh et al. 2010).

Several studies revealed that Facebook is used for daily entertainment as well (Akyıldız&Argan, 2012; Sánchez et al., 2014; Sharma, Joshi, & Sharma, 2016). Sharma et al. (2016), for example, reported that students are more concerned with various applications of Facebook such as play games, share funny videos, praise people's achievements and etc.

While it appears that a large number of studies investigated the purposes of Facebook usage in higher education, there has been little research on vocational school students' purposes of Facebook usage. Therefore the study has focused on vocational school students' purposes of Facebook usage and examined the structural model of the purposes of Facebook usage proposed by Mazman and Usluel (2010).

## Methodology

### Study group

This study comprises of 450 vocational school students enrolled in 20 technical program areas of Erzurum Vocational College, Ataturk University in 2015-2016 academic year. The distribution of gender, age, frequency of Facebook usage and network size on Facebook are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic details.

Characteristics	Frequency	%	
Gender	Male	280	62
	Female	170	38
Age	18-20	230	51
	21-23	130	29
	24-30	50	11
	30+	40	9
Facebook visits in a day	0-2 times	98	22
	3-5 times	196	43
	6-10 times	88	20
	More than 10 times	68	15
Network size on Facebook	Less than 50	55	12
	50-100 friends	123	27
	100-200 friends	187	41
	More than 200 friends	85	18

Table 1 shows 450 respondents consisted of 280 males (62%) and 170 females (38 %) and a majority of students are 18–23 years old (51 %). Most participants visit Facebook 3-5 times per day and a majority of participants (59 %) have a large network size.

### Instrument

A survey was designed to collect data from vocational school students to determine their purposes of Facebook usage. The first section of the survey consists of students' demographic characteristics. The second section of the survey included "Purposes of Facebook Usage Scale" (PFUS) developed Mazman (2009). This scale consists of 11 items with 3 factors as "social relations" (7 items), "work related" (2 items) and "daily activities" (2 items). The scale items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "not true" to 5 "very true". The reported alpha reliability of the overall PFUS is .79

### Data analysis

The data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test and analysis of variance. The descriptive statistics were used to see students' demographic profile. Independent t-test was used in comparing the difference between males



and females on all three factors. An analysis of variance was used to find out students' PFUS scores compared with their number of Facebook friends and numbers of hours using Facebook daily.

## Results

According to the findings, most of the participants use Facebook for social purposes. Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for the three factors of PFUS. The highest mean score was yielded by the social relations factor (M=3.90). The lowest mean score was yielded by the work related factor (M= 3.41).

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics for three factors.

Factors	M	SD
Social relations	3.90	.75
Work related	3.41	.85
Daily activities	3.59	.79

Table 3 shows the mean scores of vocational school students for items on social relations, work related and daily activities factors. According to the results, most of the participants use Facebook for social purposes. It is primarily used for communication (4.34), sharing news and pictures (3.83), joining groups (3.72), and meeting new people (3.85).

Academic purposes of Facebook usage were rather low. None of the items had a mean score higher than 3.5 in the work related factor. The lowest mean score of the scale is also item 7. Participants don't often use Facebook to communicate with their classmates about homework and school projects.

Regarding the daily activities factor, it can be determined that students used Facebook for getting updated information from friends (3.47) and finding out what is new and innovative (3.73).

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics of the three factors

	No	Item	M	SD
Social Relations	1	I use Facebook to locate friends I havent been in touch with for a while.	4.01	.95
	2	I use Facebook to find new friendships.	3.85	1.01
	3	I use Facebook to communicate with my friends.	4.34	1.13
	4	I use Facebook to share information and resources with my friends.	3.83	1.01
	5	I use Facebook to join groups to communicate about common interests.	3.72	1.14
	6	I use Facebook to maintain contact with my school (classroom, college, department) about joining the group.	3.67	1.03
	8	I use Facebook to be updated on the events of my previous school and former classmates	3.75	1.12
	Work related	7	I use/would use Facebook to communicate with my classmates about homework and group projects	3.32
9		I use/would use Facebook as a resource to increase my performance in my courses	3.45	1.12
Daily activities	10	I use Facebook to get up to date information and news about my contacts	3.47	1.10
	11	I use Facebook to find out what is new and innovative	3.73	1.00

Difference of vocational school students' mean scores based on gender was analyzed with t-test. According to t-test results, vocational school students' scores differ significantly based on gender in favor of female students in work related factor ( $t = 2.625$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, males performed better on social relations ( $t = -2.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and daily activities factors ( $t = -1.654$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The 95% confidence intervals for the difference in mean between groups was small for social relations factor. The Bonferroni adjustment procedure was used to avoid inflation of Type I error due to multiple testing. The level of significance was confirmed on this factor.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean scores of students with different number of Facebook friends. Results indicated that there were no significant differences on three factors: social relations,  $F = 3.82$ ,  $p = .23$ ; work related,  $F = 2.55$ ,  $p = .30$  and daily activities,  $F = 3.67$ ,  $p = .12$ .

Similarly, no significant differences were observed in a one-way ANOVA conducted to compare the mean scores ( $F = 2.06$ ,  $p = .24$ ) of students who spent different numbers of hours using Facebook daily.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

The study examined purposes of the Facebook usage among vocational school students.

Based on the findings, it is determined that most of the participants use Facebook for social purposes. The social relations factor received the highest mean score of the three subscales. This result is supported by previous outcomes (Manasijevic et al., 2016; Mazman&Usluel, 2010; Pempek et al., 2009; Sanchez et al., 2014). The findings are not surprising because social relations are the most significant factor of Facebook usage (Mazman&Usluel, 2010). Participants mostly used Facebook for communication, sharing news and pictures and meeting new people rather than educational or daily purposes in this study.

Work related factor received the lowest mean score. A majority of the students generally do not prefer to use Facebook to support their academic studies. This findings are consistent with the outcomes of the work done by Manasijevic et al. (2016). Their study suggested that students don't used Facebook for educational purposes and used as a "social networking tool".

On the other hand, Sendurur et al. (2015) showed that SNS is used as both for fun and for teaching/learning activities. According to the authors, "there is a mutual strengthening between socialization and educational facilities, which are powered by SNS. While socialization empowers educational activities, in a simultaneous manner educational activities empower socialization through SNS usage."

The findings revealed that a significant factor in Facebook use is the effect of gender. Statistically significant differences in purposes of Facebook usage based on gender were found. Females performed better on work related factor, and males performed better on social relations and daily activities factors. This results is consistent with the findings of Çelik

(2012). Çelik (2012) noted that male users used Facebook for social purposes more compared to female users. On the other hand, this result is inconsistent with the findings of Oncel and Tekin (2016). Oncel and Tekin (2016) found that no significant difference between Facebook usage for 'social relations' and 'daily activities', and gender. The authors concluded that significant difference between Facebook usage for 'work related' and gender. According to their findings, male students use Facebook for 'work related' more compared to female students. From the findings of the previous research and the current study, it can be seen that the results on gender differences in Facebook use were unclear. Thus further research could provide answers as to why male students used Facebook for social and daily activities and didn't use it for academic purposes.

The results also showed that there is no significant differences between vocational school students' purposes of the Facebook usage and different number of Facebook friends.

In the current study important limitations are found. Students in the study come from only one educational institution. Therefore, results may not generalize well to other institutions. A self-report assessment method was used. Therefore the responses can be subjective.

Although this study will contribute to the current knowledge base, further studies are necessary to investigate the use of Facebook for educational and learning purposes. A similar study to this one can be carried out to investigate the vocational school students use SNS and researchers should investigate further to better understand the factors that may affect the use of SNS among them.

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