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## THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** This study examines the problematics of how much lower do secondary school students use social networks and how these networks affect their education, respectively their success in school. In this research participated  $n = 150$ , students from the age of -12-15, in the city of Prishtina, and  $n = 3$  teachers-classmasters. The model used in the study is the qualitative method. The results from the students' questionnaire with a qualitative nature showed that 92% of these students are users of social networks. The results of this research also highlighted the need to understand that social networks have become an integral part of teenagers' lives, creating both a habit and a psychological dependence on their use. From psychological point of view, the use of these technologies to a large extent is having a negative impact by producing negative effects, both in learning, food and in terms of physical socialization of these students.

**Keywords:** social networks, performance, negative etc.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Integrating information and communication technology into teaching and learning means using computers and software productively, using the Internet, and using computer networks for teaching and learning purposes. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, based on the global trends of life and education today, as well as the European competencies for education (one of which is the use and development of information and communication technology skills), as its priority for teaching/learning has set the integration of ICT in this process. (A. M, p,6.2014). In the book CALL Environments (Egbert & Hanson-Smith, 1999) several methods are described on how to develop learning through different technological tools for different groups of participants (students). One of the methods was the method of interactive learning through ICT. According to him, this method is realized student with student, student with group and group with group. (A. M, p,6.2014)

Students can also interact with different people, such as classmates, the teacher, students from other classes, students from different communities, and people from all over the world. Since students are placed in groups, they are required to be active in class, this requires cooperation, but to achieve this interaction and to make learning as easy as possible, the teacher is required to ensure that the interaction is effective. (Joy Egbert and Elizabeth Hanson-Smith., CALL Environments: Research, Practice, and Critical Issues, p 55.

Equipping schools with computers greatly affects their proper use. Teachers during the lessons with their instructions and concrete tips have the opportunity to guide students in the correct use of computers. But not all schools have such an opportunity. A significant number of schools have only one or two computers, which are mainly used by the school principal. However, despite this, teachers can find different ways to integrate technology as a work tool for educational needs, either by using their personal devices such as laptops, iPad, or by using the equipment of their colleagues and in some cases even when the students themselves bring their laptops to school. (A. M, p,8.2014)

Spending students' time misusing the computer for communication and various games can be turned into its effective use if teachers integrate ICT in the learning process, instructing students to research their learning needs tailored in their subject curriculum. (Bosch, T. E. (2009). Adolescents use the potential of these technologies to facilitate connections within the social context in order to accomplish their development tasks. They use electronic games and online information as a resource for interacting and chatting with peers (Orleans & Laney 2000). In a research done in our country for the online safety of children aged 13-18 years done by World Vision Albania and Kosovo and Child Protection and Participation Learning Hub (December 2013 - January 2014) it was found that the three most important devices that Albanian children use to participate in media or play online are mobile phones (65%), personal computers (PCs) (59%), and laptops (43%). According to Vincent (2015) children are the early adopters of Smart technologies, social networks, of services that are provide by mobile devices (phones). The computer is present in almost every home today, so the opportunity for children to use it starts at an early age. For years, the impact of the computer on children and young people has been viewed with a very critical eye by

educators and especially by parents. The criticism concerned the time children spent in front of the computer screen and specifically the contents of the programs they watched. (Borja, Rr. (2005, December 14).

But the massive use of computer and the ease that this tool offers in coping with a variety of daily activities to people have convinced even the most critical voices that the computer should not only be used by children, but start using it from an early age. However, there are some computer related problems that should be. First of all, it should not be forgotten that despite its importance, the computer remains a communication tool that follows certain principles. (M, B, G, J, T, Ab, 2011). One of the most positive values of the internet is the direct interactive opportunity offered to each user to express his opinion on certain topics, i.e. the opportunity to be a communicator. Boyd, D. (2004). But still, the use of the Internet brings with it some risks, among which e.g. failure of the user to react to the information received, insufficient verification of the data as well as the technological addiction. <https://dokumen.tips/documents/edukimi-mediatic-libri-i-mesuesit.html>.

The use of Internet and technology is also a need to facilitate the performance of many tasks in the process of learning saving our time, but its misuse and long-term use is leading to poor results. (L. A-T, 2004 p.21). The sad and lonely world is revealed in cyberspace". "Isolation increases with the use of the Internet "These are some titles found on media as many researchers have concluded that "isolation, loneliness and depression are caused by the internet overuse and that it can be detrimental to the psychological state of some people and that the increasing internet use leads to reduced human relationships and decreased levels of happiness." (Charles G. Morris, Albert A. M), 2008, p. 32.

Road traffic and construction density have increased, making children's physical and mental activity almost dead. The development of technology has made children grow up in a virtual environment taking as an educational basis all the uncontrolled information that technology offers. Borja, Rr. (2005, December 14.)

But what has become a phenomenon and concern for parents and specialists are video games or as they are called computer games. There are several attitudes to this issue. Some researchers think that video games increase children's intelligence and improve their grades. While others say that they have a series of negative consequences, such as a bad posture, communication problems in their environment, social isolation, etc. Information and communication technologies are different sets of technological tools and resources used to communicate, create, distribute, store and manage information. (Burton, 2002). This kind of technology has become a defining feature of our time, making our lives different from what it once was (Dearly & Feather, 2001; Robins & Webster, 1999). In his study Di Nicola points out that technology is changing the way individuals socialize, study, work, spend their free time (Di Nicola, 2004). The means of communication through the internet have become an important part of our lives (Subramanian, Reich, Watcher & Espinoza, 2008). (MSH. Elda TARTARI, 2015).

In an another study conducted in Albania by HBSC (Health Behavior in School Age-Children) with the support of UNFPA, UNICEF and IPH during 2013-2014 with children of school age of 11, 13 and 15 years was identified that the main form of communication was electronically via Facebook. More specifically, 40.6% of students reported communicating with friends via instant messaging (on Facebook); 32% reported communicating via SMS; 25.3% via e-mail and 30% through other means of electronic communication, where higher communication figures were reported by boys compared to girls, (Q, et al. 2014). A survey organized by the Office of the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection (CPDP) with students aged 10–16 in relation to the use of social networks, provides data on the number and degree of the social network Facebook used by this age group. According to this survey, 88% of respondents are registered on Facebook and 36% of them visit their profile on daily basis. (Z, 2011). Source of information taken from (MH. Elda TARTARI 2015).

## 2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The general problem of search is: to see how much time do primary school students in Pristina (age group 13-14-15) spend on social networks and how much does it impact on their school performance or their learning success.

**The research sub-problems are followed by the following questions:**

1. How much time a day do these students this age spend on social networks?
2. What do they mainly use social networks for?
3. How do parents react when their children use these tools (computers, iPads, phones)?
4. What sites do they follow on social networks?

## 3. METHODS

To fully finalize this study, the research method is practised, which is a way and a better opportunity to directly influence on the research results. Qualitative data and their following analysis provide a general understanding of the research problem, chosen to recognize and present during this study.

- a) **Aim of the study:** The purpose of this study is: The use of social networks and their psychological impact on lower secondary school students.
- b) **Study group:** In this research participated n = 150 students from the age of -13-14-15, of the city of Prishtina, also participated n = 3 teacher-caretakers. This research used the qualitative method model.
- c) **Data collection:** The organization of this study was done through questionnaires divided into two parts: The first part consists of questionnaires for students, where questions are dedicated to their age and level, aiming to have better results of the questionnaire and the second part consists of questionnaires for teachers, where questions were dedicated to the role and responsibility of teachers working in schools with these students selected in the research.

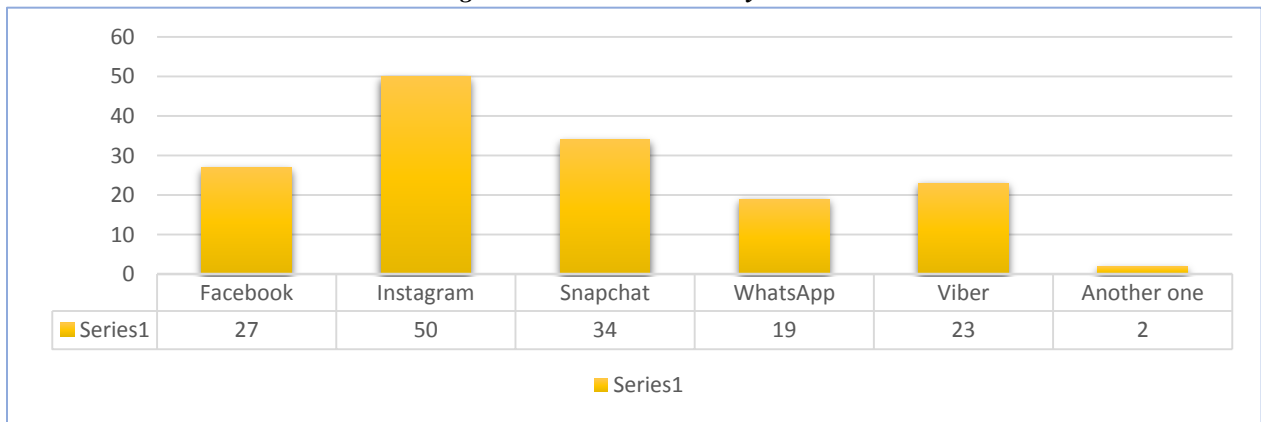
The questionnaires consist of 7 questions including information about the students' age, including demographic information, e.g., gender, parents' educational level, age and monthly family income level.

**d) Data analysis:**

For the analysis of the data, first of all the topic of the study was fully analyzed, formulating questionnaires in accordance with the field of study, also practicing the application of the qualitative method in research. Once the data collection was completed, they were analyzed using the IBM SPSS version 16.0 statistical package. The data of this study were interpreted according to the analysis of the descriptive method. By means of descriptive analysis there were expressed the characteristics of the entire population through the calculation of age, gender, place of residence, inclusion of students in the social network Facebook, etc. Data were entered into the SPSS program and the instrument package was coded to facilitate data casting and analysis proces.

**a) Research question 1: Which social networks do you use most?**

*Fig.1. Social networks mostly used*

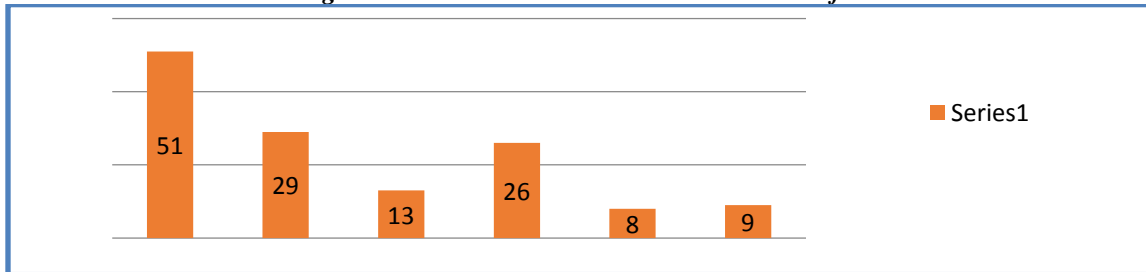


The results of this graph are reflected with the data from the first question. The first question states that 27 students use Facebook, 50 of them Instagram, 34 students use Snapchat, 19 of them Whats App, 23 Viber and 2 of them have open accounts on other networks which are not mentioned in the *questionnaire*. The total answers given in this question are 150.

**b) Research question 2:**

**What do you use social networks mostly for?**

*Fig. 2. Shows what do students use social media for*

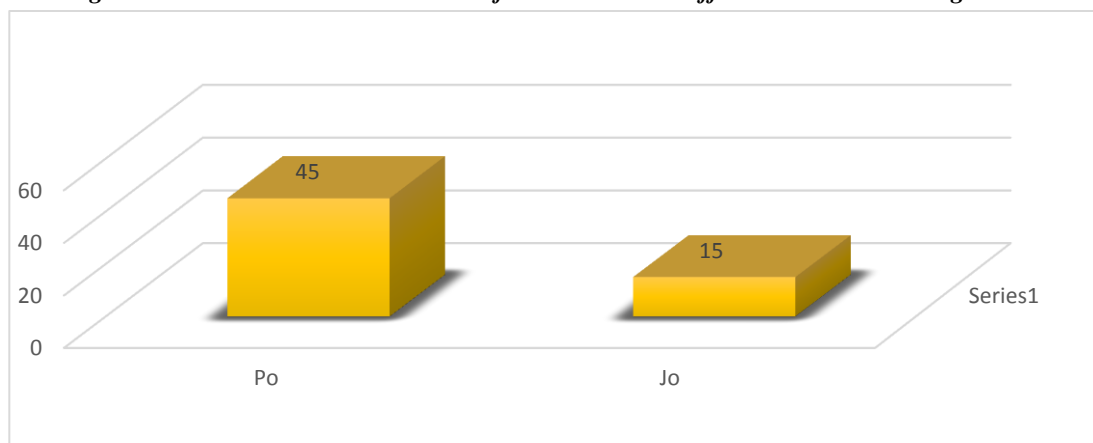


This question in which students could circle one or more options gave the following answers: 51 students answered that they use social networks to chat with their friends, 29 students to post photos / videos, 13 students to download

games, 26 students to get new information, 8 of them to search for an author, book or information needed for school and 9 of them to meet new friends. So, in the 3rd graph can be seen that most students use social networks to chat with their friends, some of them prefer to post photos / videos, while some students think that social networks offer them the opportunity to receive new information from various fields, but the news they receive is mostly related to the posting of their friends. The fact that students spend time on social media, and only a few use them to search for an author or book needed either for school or to expand their knowledge in the future is really worrying .

c). Research question 3: Do you think social media affects your learning time?

*Fig. 3. Shows how much does the use of social networks affects students' learning time.*



In the question four students gave the following answers: 45 students answered YES, which means 75% of students admit that social networks affect their learning time, and 15 students answered NO, which means 25% of students respond that social networks do not affect their learning time. If we make a correlation with the data obtained in the 2nd graph (answers to the second question) we see that the exceeded time on social networks affects their learning time, therefore the answers to this question are the most accurate indicator that gives us the information that they themselves admit that the use of networks affects their time in school which is reflected in their study success. The headmaster of the ninth-grade pointed out that: maybe it's exactly the time spent online, especially on social networks why students often do not do their homework justifying simply "I forgot".

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This paper contains a total of three chapters, in the first chapter the literature is reviewed, more specifically there is some information given about social media, social networks, the main description of the function of social network sites, and what are social networks used for, the second chapter describes research methodology and in the third chapter are presented the statistical data which have emerged from the responses of students involved in the questionnaires. The research progress went well because accurate data were extracted on the topic researched.

Referring to the modern era, students today belong to the generation living in a digital world. They are surrounded by the latest technology and the internet. 67.7% of students aged 13-15 years included in the study use Facebook and the other students who do not use this social network claimed to use the social network Instagram and communication applications such as Viber and Whats App. Based on the research progress and outcome, it is worrying that students use social networks mainly for things not related to school or their future career. So, it would be better if in our schools, among other courses be included the course of media education as a compulsory course, so that students get informed about the benefits of media and Internet use, the use of social networks, etc., and always use them for their own benefit, for useful things that will help them on schooling and building their personality.

The majority of students in this study have their personally Facebook account, and in other social networks. This shows that students are inclined to know and use the technology and services offered by the Internet, because according to them they see it as an opportunity. As an easier communication and a direct access to the information related to their age. The paper also analyzes the situation of how much parents and teachers are informed about the use of social networks by their students and their children at home and in schools. Given the legal rules and procedures, whenever we talk about children in such cases, the study data argued that there is an extremely large

percentage of children who without the knowledge of parents or legal guardians, open their accounts on social networks, in our case with a total percentage of 45% of children aged 10 years.

While when we move on to the next age of children, in our case the age of 13 there is a percentage with a total of 52% of children who use social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp. And the age of 12 is included with 68.6% in the social network Facebook.

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