



Educational Social Media Platforms And Edmodo Sample Application

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study, analysis of educational social media platform to more effectively use the power of social media in the education environment and demonstrate the sample application referring to EDMODO with a high utilization rate by teachers and students due to studies on the use of educational social media platforms was not effective enough in Turkey. For this purpose, examined in depth teacher candidates' views on the use of the EDMODO and the views on the availability of educational purposes social media platforms in education. Working group of the research is composed 61 Computer and Instructional Technologies Education department teacher candidates who was studying 2014-2015 fall semester and prefer interpersonal communication course in elective course. The study was applied to mixed methods research based on the combined use of qualitative and quantitative research methods and grounded method.

Introduction

In recent years, different transformations have occurred with information and communication technologies. These transformations, which are and continue to be experienced, are social transformations involving social life and environment, social communication and social relations, and they also affect technology and use of technology

(Çoklar, 2010). Every day, we feel the effects of the internet and social media, which are important turning points in the world history, on economy, politics and socio-cultural life. This process of change and the resulting rapid developments in the world have had an effect in the field of education as well as in all other areas of life and brought about changes in the structure, process and scope of education along with the roles of people in this context (Mazman, 2009).

Many of the general-purpose social networking websites develop over time and offer several features and applications to the users; they are also platforms as well as social networks. Education and educators have not been indifferent to this attention, which is paid by users to general-purpose social networks, and the communication opportunities provided. In this context, many educational social network platforms have arisen, and the number of their users has increased substantially. EDMODO, Beyazpano, Edcanvas, Edublogs, SchoolTube, Edshelf, Glogster and Teachem are some of the educational social networks.

When the relationship between social network and education is reviewed in the studies conducted abroad, the usability of general-purpose social networks in education and the usability of educational social networks in education appear as two main headings. Due to the nature of general-purpose social networks, it is seen that they are not fully educational environments; social media tools are benefited from for educational purposes and most of the activities are performed within the framework of the social network 'Facebook'. The research conducted on educational social networks has been intensified after 2014, and most of these studies have focused on the social platform 'EDMODO'. In our country, the majority of the studies related to the use of social media as educational tools address the use of general-purpose social networks for educational purposes. Besides, there are almost no extensive studies concentrating on educational social networks. Many reasons such as language option, teachers' perspective on technology and the fear of going beyond the classic way result in the non-use of educational social networks and insufficiency of the studies in this field.

Purpose of the Study

As the studies on the use of educational social media platforms in Turkey are not adequate, this study aims to examine the educational social media platforms in order to use the power of social media in educational environments in a more effective way and to set forth a model implementation by reviewing the EDMODO platform, which is highly used by teachers and students. With this model implementation, the changes in the attitudes of the students towards the use of educational social media platforms will be investigated by integrating the EDMODO social platform into a blended education system. The research questions formed in this context are as follows:

- 1- What are the prospective teachers' opinions about the use of the EDMODO platform?
- 2- What are the prospective teachers' opinions about the usability of educational social media platforms in education?

3- Does the EDMODO platform provide a suitable environment for learning?

Method

Research Design

It was considered necessary to diversify the data and support them with complementary data for answering the research questions developed in this study. As a result of this necessity, the Mixed Method research, which is based on the joint use of qualitative and quantitative research methods, and the Embedded Pattern Method, were adopted in the study.

Mixed method researches are addressed as a separate category for the classification of the research methods and it is a rising research paradigm (Fırat, Yurdakul and Ersoy 2014). As a method, the mixed method concentrates on the collection, analysis and use of both qualitative and quantitative data in a single research. The mixed method research is mainly based on the fact that the joint use of both qualitative and quantitative methods enables the research problem to be understood better than what each method would result in separately (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007).

One of the most common mixed method researches used in educational researches is the embedded mixed method. In the researches of the embedded mixed method, the data are collected simultaneously, however, a form of data plays a supporting role. Embedded mixed method is suitable when the researcher has different questions requiring different kinds of data to increase the qualitative or quantitative pattern applications in line with the primary purpose of the research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). The dominant research method in this design (experimental design) is used to answer the main research question, and the embedded method is used to answer the secondary research question based on the main research question (Plano Clark, Creswell, O'Neil Green and Shope, 2008).

In this study, quantitative research methods were used extensively, and qualitative research methods were employed to support and confirm the research data.

Participants

The study group of the research consists of 61 prospective teachers, 24 daytime and 37 evening education students studying at the Department of Computer and Teaching Technologies and receiving the course 'Communication between Individuals' in Ahmet Keleşoğlu Faculty of Education of Necmettin Erbakan University in Konya in the 2014-2015 academic year.

Data Collection Tools

As a mixed design was formed in the research, the research had both qualitative and quantitative dimensions, thus, the data were obtained with qualitative and quantitative tools.

EDMODO Adoption Questionnaire

The first section aims at identifying the prospective teachers' use of global social media, the second section consists of 5-point Likert type closed-ended questions to specify the prospective teachers' opinions about the EDMODO social platform during the 12-week implementation, and the third section is comprised of a single open-ended question. The

data collections tools were examined by browsing the theoretical information obtained by literature review regarding the closed-ended questions in the assessment tool, field studies and theses, the items of the data collection tool were formed as a draft by the researcher. The "Facebook Adoption Questionnaire" developed by Sacide Güzin Mazman (2009) was adapted to the EDMODO platform in parallel with the research questions and included in the item pool with her consent.

For the content validity of the data collection tool, attention was paid to the exemplification of the opportunities and elements provided to users by EDMODO and the items' assessment of the desired situation in the best way. It was attempted to develop the validity of the assessment tool by obtaining the opinions of 3 experts in the field of educational technologies on whether each statement in the assessment tool assessed the relevant aspect in terms of both content and technique. Moreover, to test the comprehensibility of the questions, the opinion of a Turkish field expert was obtained. Additionally, the draft questionnaire was read by 2 prospective teachers at the study group level, areas difficult to understand were identified and corrections were made. It was made ready for implementation after re-corrections in line with the opinions, suggestions and criticisms of the experts and students.

Interview

In this study, the opinions of the instructor about the EDMODO implementation were acquired with semi-structured interview forms. The interview was based on questions in line with the questionnaire to be applied to students, and the focus was set on educational social media platforms. Furthermore, questions were also prepared to get the evaluation of the instructor on the EDMODO evaluation and to learn the views on the effects of the implementation on students and the course. The interviews were held with semi-structured interview forms consisting of six questions at 8th and 12th weeks of the EDMODO implementation.

EDMODO Records and Statistics

In the research, the memberships of the participants on the EDMODO social media platform and the usage statistics were recorded for 12 weeks. These statistics contain information such as users' sharing of materials, sending assignments, likes and comments.

Data Analysis

In the research, frequency and percentage analyses were conducted for the data collected via the personal information form, and the data collected through the questionnaire and interview were analyzed qualitatively. The data obtained through the 'EDMODO Adoption Questionnaire', which forms the basis of the research and was used to provide quantitative data, were analyzed via SPSS 20 software and the data were subjected to descriptive analysis. The data obtained with the descriptive analysis approach are summarized and interpreted in accordance with the previously determined themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this sense, findings, percentage and frequency scores were interpreted.

The answers of the prospective teachers, who constitute the qualitative and supportive section of the research, to the open-ended questions were examined with the content analysis approach. Content analysis is usually defined as a systematic analysis of the written and oral materials (Balci, 1997). Content analysis can be considered as any technique for the objective and systematic identification of the materials received from several sources (Nachmias and Nachmias, 2000). The content analysis is built on the classification of what is said and how often it is said (Simon and Burstein, 1985). Through the content analysis, it was aimed to

reveal the common points in the content of a material (Mayring, 2000). The steps of the content analysis are as follows (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011):

In this study, the collected qualitative data were examined first. The data were coded and divided into themes. Codes and themes were organized. The findings were interpreted together with the quantitative data.

Results

The distribution of answers according to Social Network Usage Scale for educational purposes is as follows.

Table 1. Distribution of Answers to Educational Social Network Use Scale

Item	N	Min.	Max.	Avg.	sd
I easily signed up on EDMODO.	61	2	5	4,5902	0,7328
I use EDMODO easily.	61	3	5	4,4918	0,6433
I believe that EDMODO contributes to achieving the educational objectives.	61	1	5	4,0656	1,0381
I believe EDMODO makes positive contribution to my success in lessons.	61	1	5	3,6721	1,0670
I believe that EDMODO makes the lessons more enjoyable and the materials easily accessible.	61	1	5	3,9180	1,0757
I don't think there will be a security problem as EDMODO only serves educational purposes.	61	1	5	3,9508	1,1077
I find EDMODO successful at sharing sources and materials.	61	1	5	4,3115	0,9151
I follow the course-related announcements on EDMODO.	61	2	5	4,3607	0,8104
I follow the course-related homework and tasks on EDMODO.	61	2	5	4,4262	0,7987
I visit our EDMODO course group at least once a week.	61	2	5	3,6393	1,1019
I sign in EDMODO on my smartphone (mobile).	61	1	5	3,1475	1,6380
I consider educational social media platforms as new learning environments for education	61	1	5	4,1803	1,0164
I think educational social media platforms will eliminate temporal and spatial dependence.	61	1	5	4,1475	1,0217
I think foreign language is not a problem in using educational social media platforms	61	1	5	3,7541	1,1258

The results obtained from the data are as follows:

Findings and Interpretation on the First Sub-Problem

In the first sub-problem of the research, an answer was sought for "What are the prospective teachers' opinions about the use of the EDMODO platform?".

70.5% of the sample group selected the option "I strongly agree" and 21.3% selected "I agree" for the statement "I easily signed up on EDMODO". Accordingly, 91.8% of the study group stated they agreed the statement "I easily signed up on EDMODO", however, 3.3% did not agree with this expression and 4.9% stated that they had no idea about this matter. According to the frequency analysis and percentage distributions, it is revealed that the majority of the participants did not have any problems about signing up on the EDMODO platform.

57.4% of the sample group selected "I strongly agree" and 34.4% selected "I agree" for "I use EDMODO easily". Accordingly, 91.8% of the study group agreed with the statement "I use EDMODO easily", however, 8.2% had neutral views on the use of EDMODO. According to the frequency analysis and percentage distributions, it is revealed that the majority of the participants did not have any problems about signing up on the EDMODO platform. The statement 'When I become a teacher in the future, I will/will not use educational social media platforms in lessons, because... was directed to the sample group at

the end of the implementation, and the answers given were examined and divided into themes. 3 students expressed their opinions about the ease of use, and 1 student referred to the difficulty of use.

50.8% of the sample group selected “I strongly agree” and 34.4% selected “I agree” for the statement “I find EDMODO successful at sharing sources and materials”. Accordingly, 85.2% of the study group agreed with “I find EDMODO successful at sharing sources and materials” while 11.5% expressed neutral opinions on it. 3.3 percent of the study group expressed their opinions by selecting “I strongly disagree”. According to the frequency analysis and percentage distributions, most of the participants think that the EDMODO platform provides a successful environment for sharing course materials and sources.

According to the answers given by the sample group to the open-ended question and divided into the themes, 12 people expressed positive opinions with the theme “sharing information” in terms of educational contributions.

54.1% of the sample group selected “I strongly agree” and 31.1% selected “I agree” for the statement “I follow the course-related announcements on EDMODO”. Accordingly, 85.2% of the study group followed the course-related announcements within the scope of the course 'Communication between Individuals' on the EDMODO platform. While 11.5% of the study group expressed neutral opinions, 3.3% stated that they disagreed with this statement.

57.4% of the sample group selected “I strongly agree” and 27.9% selected “I agree” for the statement “I follow the course-related homework and tasks on EDMODO”. Accordingly, 85.2% of the study group followed the course-related announcements within the scope of the course 'Communication between Individuals' on the EDMODO platform. While 11.5% of the study group expressed neutral opinions, 3.3% stated that they disagreed with this statement.

27.9% of the sample group selected “I strongly agree” and 27.9% selected “I agree” for the statement “I visit our EDMODO course group at least once a week”. Accordingly, 55.8% of the study group visited the EDMODO course group at least once a week during the implementation. While 21.3% of the study group stated neutral opinions on this statement, 23.0% did not agree with it.

32.8% of the sample group selected “I strongly agree” and 16.4% selected “I agree” for the statement “I sign in EDMODO on my smartphone (mobile)”. Whereas 29.5% of the study group selected “I strongly disagree”, 11.5% selected “I disagree” for this statement; 9.8% expressed neutral opinions. According to the frequency analysis and percentage distributions, at least half of the participants have positive attitudes towards the mobile use. According to the answers given by the sample group to the open-ended question and divided into the themes, 3 people expressed positive opinions with the theme “mobile” in terms of educational contributions.

It can be interpreted that all the students who took the course had positive approaches to the EDMODO platform as per their voluntary participation in this implementation, which was performed within the scope of the course, and the data of use.

Findings and Interpretation on the Second Sub-Problem

In the second sub-problem of the research, an answer was sought for “What are the prospective teachers' opinions about the usability of the EDMODO platform in education?”.

42.6% of the sample group selected “I strongly agree” and 32.8% selected “I agree” for the statement “I believe that EDMODO contributes to achieving the educational objectives”. Accordingly, 75.42% of the study group agree that the EDMODO platform makes contribution to the achievement of educational objectives. While 16.4% of the study group

stated neutral opinions for this statement, 3.3% selected "I disagree" and 4.9% selected "I strongly disagree". According to the answers given by the sample group to the open-ended question and divided into the themes, 7 people expressed positive opinions with the theme "compliance with the objective" in terms of educational contributions.

34.4% of the sample group selected "I strongly agree" and 36.1% selected "I agree" for the statement "I believe that EDMODO makes the lessons more enjoyable and the materials easily accessible". Accordingly, 70.5% of the study group agreed that the EDMODO platform provides makes the lessons more enjoyable and enables course materials to be accessed more easily. Whereas 4.9% of the study group stated neutral opinions for this statement, 4.9% selected "I disagree" and 4.9% selected "I strongly disagree". According to the answers given by the sample group to the open-ended question and divided into themes, 17 people expressed positive opinions with the theme 'access to information' and 6 people expressed positive opinions with the theme 'fun' in terms of educational contributions.

37.7% of the sample group selected "I strongly agree" and 34.4% selected "I agree" for the statement "I don't think there will be a security problem as EDMODO only serves educational purposes". Accordingly, 72.1% of the study group agree that the EDMODO platform does not have any security problems structurally. While 16.4% of the study group stated neutral opinions for this statement, 6.6% selected "I disagree" and 4.9% selected "I strongly disagree". According to the answers given by the sample group to the open-ended question and divided into the themes, 6 people expressed opinions with the theme "security" in terms of educational contributions.

42.6% of the sample group selected "I strongly agree" and 39.3% selected "I agree" for the statement "I think educational social media platforms will eliminate temporal and spatial dependence". Accordingly, 81.9% of the study group agree that educational social media platforms will eliminate temporal and spatial dependence. While 11.5% of the study group stated neutral opinions for this statement, 1.6% selected "I disagree" and 4.9% selected "I strongly disagree". According to the answers given by the sample group to the open-ended question and divided into the themes, 16 people expressed positive opinions with the theme "time-space" in terms of educational contributions.

19.5% of the sample group selected "I strongly agree" and 31.1% selected "I agree" for the statement "I think foreign language is not a problem in using educational social media platforms". Accordingly, 50.6% of the study group agree that foreign language is not a problem in using educational social media platforms. Whereas 26.2% of the study group stated neutral opinions for this statement, 8.2% selected "I disagree" and 4.9% selected "I strongly disagree". According to the answers given by the sample group to the open-ended question and divided into the themes, 1 person expressed his/her opinion with the theme "language problem" in terms of educational contributions.

21.3% of the sample group selected "I strongly agree" and 42.6% selected "I agree" for the statement "I believe EDMODO makes positive contribution to my success in lessons". Accordingly, 63.9% of the study group agree that EDMODO contributes positively to success in lessons. Whereas 19.7% of the study group expressed neutral opinions about this statement, 13.1% selected "I disagree" and 3.3% selected "I strongly disagree". According to the answers given by the sample group to the open-ended question and divided into the themes, 11 people expressed opinions with the theme "attention-motivation" in terms of educational contributions.

Findings and Interpretation on the Third Sub-Problem

In the third sub-problem of the research, an answer was sought for “Does the EDMODO platform provide a suitable environment for learning?”.

49.2% of the sample group selected “I strongly agree” and 27.9% selected “I agree” for the statement “I consider educational social media platforms as new learning environments for education”. Accordingly, 77.1% of the study group consider the educational social media platforms as new learning environments for education. While 16.4% of the study group expressed neutral opinions for this statement, 3.3% selected “I disagree” and 3.3% selected “I strongly disagree”. For “Have you ever used an educational social media platform before?”, 50.8% of the sample group said “Yes” and 49.2% said “No”.

For “Are you thinking, as a prospective teacher, about using educational social media platforms in your lessons in the future?”, 91.8% of the sample group said “Yes” and 8.1% said “No”. 2 out of 31 prospective teachers who have used an educational social media platform before state that they will not use educational social media platforms in their lessons when they become teachers. Of 30 prospective teachers who did not use any educational social media platforms before, 27 people reported that they could use educational social media platforms in the future after the implementation with the EDMODO platform used within the scope of the course 'Communication between Individuals'.

In the answers given by the sample group to the open-ended question and divided into themes, almost all the positive opinions related to educational social media platforms and EDMODO were stated in the 1st and 2nd sub-problems together with their themes. 12 people expressed positive opinions with the theme “Requirement of the era”, which were not stated in the 1st and 2nd sub-problems, regarding students' adoption of positive attitudes towards these platforms.

The drawbacks mentioned by the sample group constitutes the themes “difficulty in following (2 people), wasting time (3 people), problem with access (7 people), anti-sociality (3 people) and attention problem (1 person)”.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this research, a model implementation was carried out for EDMODO, which is an educational social media platform. The contributions of the EDMODO platform to education and the opinions of prospective teachers about the use of EDMODO were examined, and the following conclusions were reached.

Within the scope of the implementation, the students who were taking the course 'Communication between Individuals' were requested to voluntarily participate in the implementation, and all the students who were taking the course participated in the implementation with a positive approach. The majority of the study group stated that they considered educational social media platforms as new learning environments and that these platforms would eliminate the temporal and spatial dependence for education.

Due to the fact that the students studying at the Department of Computer and Teaching Technologies, who formed the study group, had sufficient computer knowledge and all of them were using at least one social media platform, no problems occurred regarding the membership process and use of EDMODO. In conclusion, it is possible to say that EDMODO is easily used and adopted by students. This situation is similar to the relevant literature (Kongchan, 2012; Sirakaya, 2014; Kazez and Bahçeci 2016). While there is no problem with the use of the EDMODO platform with its interface partially translated into

Turkish, half of the study group believe that foreign language is a problem for the use of educational social media platforms. This situation is in parallel with the studies of Sarıkaya (2014), Kazez and Bahçeci (2016). Half of the study group did not consider foreign language as a problem or expressed neutral opinions about foreign language. In the studies conducted in foreign literature (Kongchan, 2012; Greco and Gates, 2012 and Elizabeth, 2012), they concluded that there was no problem in their own language.

The majority of the study group expressed positive opinions about the EDMODO platform and stated that they would use EDMODO when they became teachers in the future. These results are supported by Kongchan (2012), Türkmen (2012) and Sarıkaya (2014), who reached similar conclusions about EDMODO.

It is observed that EDMODO is a new application and there are a very low number of studies on this subject in the literature. According to these studies, it is possible to say that EDMODO can be used successfully in educational environments (Çankaya et al. 2014; Durak et al. 2015, Kongchan, 2008; Sanders, 2012). In addition, most of the study group stated that there were no security problems because EDMODO served only educational purposes, thus, it was concluded that the EDMODO platform provided a suitable environment for learning.

The majority of the study group expressed that they found EDMODO successful in sharing sources and materials, and that they followed the course-related announcements, homework and tasks related to the course on EDMODO. Kılıçkaya (2012) and Sarıkaya (2014) support the idea of the students that EDMODO enables a healthy communication outside the classroom.

As in the studies of Al-Said (2015) and Kazez and Bahçeci (2016) on the use of EDMODO in mobile devices, students think that the use of the system in mobile devices is useful and the item averages have been found between 'not sure and no idea'. It is assumed that the reason for uncertainty is that they do not use EDMODO on too many mobile devices or that the mobile application is completely in English.

Drawbacks encountered during the review of similar studies such as difficulty in following, wasting time and anti-sociality were also expressed by some students in this study.

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