

INTERNET USE AMONG RETIRED TEACHERS

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Abstract

Internet access tools and devices are developing with the prevalence of the Internet, which is considered revolutionary in information and communications technology. Beside the widespread use of the Internet among young people, statistics show that the number of older people that use the Internet is also on the rise. The purpose of the study is to identify the Internet use habits of the retired teachers who are registered members of Retired Teachers Association. The sample of the study is composed of the teachers who are members of Eskişehir Retired Teachers Association. A two-part questionnaire was implemented. The first part includes six questions of demographics and the second includes 16 questions related to Internet use habits. The data was analyzed on SPSS 23 software. The results show the Internet use habits of retired teachers who are members of the association.

Keywords: Information society, Information and communications technology, retired teachers, Internet.

INTRODUCTION

The widespread use of information technologies has led the societies to become "information societies" today. New technologies have affected both finance and social and educational system. Therefore, societies have to follow technological developments (Akkoyunlu, 1995:206).

Today, information and communications technologies are in almost every area of society and they are getting more important every day. These technologies have also become a part of life and this makes people's daily lives and work easier. For some people, adapting to present or developing technologies and learning how to use them affectively can be a result of an easy process. However, for some, this process may take more time. This difference is thought to stem from the fact that individuals generally carry the characteristics of the era that they were born in (Çukurbaşı and İşman, 2014: 29).

In recent years, the fast development of technology has created generation gaps as big as canyons. These gaps have ramifications on people's daily lives. For example, the people that were born right into this constantly changing and developing technology era have different life views than older generations. As a result, in certain areas like education, new needs and requirements arise due to new technologies. In line with the effects of the developing technology and its place in our lives, there have emerged two different groups in the society: the ones who were born into the developing technology and the ones who were born before and trying to keep up (Bilgiç, Duman and Seferoğlu, 2011:2).

The people who were born in the analog world and grew up using analog technologies are defined as "digital immigrants" and the people who were born later and growing up using mass communication technologies like mobile phones, computers, the internet are defined as digital natives by Prensky. The main distinction is that digital natives were born of after the digital revolution in the 1980s and have been raised in the era of digital technologies. The prominent difference of these two groups is

that digital natives live their lives without having exposed to any analog technology while digital immigrants have a permanent "analog accent" although they try to adapt to the new environment. The reason to use the word "accent" to exemplify this distinction is to emphasize the difference between the people who learn a foreign language and the native speakers of that language. The former inevitably carry traces of their mother tongue in their speech as an accent unlike the latter. Similarly, Digital technology is a foreign language for digital immigrants. (Altunay, 2015, p. 185)

The Internet offers a perfect platform to the elderly when they want to get information. One of the most important advantages of the Internet for adults and the elderly is that it can serve as a medium for socialization. The characteristics that make the Internet the primary leisure time choice of these people are its creative, interactive, comfortable and economical nature. It can also host other leisure time activities such as reading books, magazines and newspapers. The rates of these activities have started to increase as TV watching rates decreases (Yıldırım Becerikli, 2013:24).

The Internet and social media have a great potential to help the elderly socialize, get better at their hobbies and see the family members, which is a source of happiness for them. They can improve their life quality and thus, have a happier life. Although these media are said to be beneficial, the real determinant of whether they will benefit from them or not is bound to their positive opinion and attitude towards social media and Internet (Tekedere and Arpacı, 2016:381).

Current research shows that senior citizens are the last to acknowledge and adopt a new technology. However, it is observed that they do not avoid buying a product or service of one if it meets a need that has not been met before. For example some elders learn to use a computer and prefer to be in touch with their social circle via "e-mail" or "Internet" (Özkan ve Purutçuoğlu, 2010: 41). The elderly population is increasing rapidly like it is in the world. Research suggests that the population over the age 60 will reach 1.2 billion by 2025, and 2 billion by 2050 (<http://www.yasadikca.com/teknoloji-kullanimi-yasliolarin-refahini-ve-bagimsizliklerini-ortaya-koyuyor-28657#>).

According to households information technology usage survey results, the rate of the elderly people who use the Internet was 5% in 2014 and it rose to 5.6% in 2015. When elderly Internet users compared by gender, it was revealed that men use the Internet more than women and the rate of elder men was 8.8% while the rate of women was 2.8% in 2015 (TUİK, 2016).

METHOD

The purpose of the study is to identify the Internet use habits of the retired teachers of Retired Teachers Association who are considered in the group that is called digital immigrants. The purposive sample of the study is composed of the teachers who are members of Eskişehir Retired Teachers Association. A two-part questionnaire was implemented. The first part includes six questions of demographics and the second includes 16 questions related to Internet use habits. These questions asks which of the information technologies they have, which one they prefer to use the most, where they use them the most, the access conditions to online devices, their user experiences, who they consult when they have a problem about their online devices, how they have learnt to use the Internet and computer, how long they have been using them, how often they use these technologies, which communication channel they use, their personal purpose to use the Internet, who they contact most online, their personal benefits from using the Internet, their opinion on using the Internet, the biggest obstacle that prevent them from using it more and on what areas they would like a training to satisfy their needs about using computers and the Internet. The retired teachers in Eskişehir Retired Teachers Association who use the Internet were included in the sample. The data was analyzed on SPSS 23 software and interpreted with frequency and cross tables.

FINDINGS

118 people participated in the study, 50 of which are male and 68 of which are female retired teachers. The following results were obtained in the two-part study.

Demographic Features of the Participants

57.6% of the participants were female and 42.4% were male. 27,1% is in the age group of 50-60 years and 12,7% is in the age group of 71-80 years. The 61-70 age group was the largest and was represented with the rate of 60.2% in the survey. 85.1% were university graduates while 7% received post-graduate education and 7.9% marked the other option. When the income level of the participants is examined, 59% of them have income of 2000-3000 TL, 27.4% of them have less than 2000 TL, 8.5% of them are between 3000-4000 TL and 5,1% of them have more than 4000 TL income. 71.2% of the respondents had two, 13.6% had one, 5,1% had three, 1,7% had four and more children. 8.5% stated that they do not have children. 37.1% of the participants are class teachers, 12.7% are science, 11% maths, 3.3% social studies and 2.5% are Turkish Language teachers. The rest of the participants are distributed to branches such as music, physical education and foreign language.

The Information Technologies that the Retired Teachers Possess

73.3% of the retired teachers have a smartphone, 55.2% have a desktop computer, 50.4% have a mobile phone, 44.8% have a laptop, and 37.9% have a digital camera . While 29.3% of participants use tablet and flash memory, 38.8% of those stated that they had fixed phone in their home. The finding that about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the retired teachers have smartphones, and more than half of them have desktop computer is an indication that they are not so distant to information technologies. Participants have selected more than one option in this question.

Information Technology Preferences of the Retired Teachers

Retired teachers prefer to use smart mobile phones among other online devices with a rate of 56.6%. The second choice is the laptop with 21,1%. When gender is taken into account, smart mobile phone preferences of women are 69%, while it is 41.2% for men. On the other hand, the percentage of women in laptop preferences is 11.9%, while that of men is 32.4%. Choice of desktop computers is 20.6% for males and 9.5% for females. While women use smartphones more than men, men use laptop and desktop computers more often than women. According to these results, it can be said that retired teachers are not far away from information technologies and use them at high rates. Table 1 shows which online devices participants preferred to use the most.

Table 1: Which of the following online devices you prefer to use the most?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Laptop	16	13,6	21,1	21,1
	PC (Desktop)	11	9,3	14,5	35,5
	Tablet	5	4,2	6,6	42,1
	Smart mobile phone	43	36,4	56,6	98,7
	Other	1	,8	1,3	100,0
	Total	76	64,4	100,0	
Missing	System	42	35,6		
Total		118	100,0		

The Places Where Retired Teachers Prefer to Use Online Devices

73.7% of the participants stated that they use online devices at home. This rate is 75.5% for women and 71.7% for men. Table 2 shows where participants use the devices with internet connection the most.

Table 2: Where Do You Mostly Use online devices such as Desktop Computer, Laptop, Tablet, and Smartphone?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Home	73	61,9	73,7	73,7
	At friends or relatives	1	,8	1,0	74,7
	Anytime anywhere	24	20,3	24,2	99,0
	Other	1	,8	1,0	100,0
	Total	99	83,9	100,0	
Missing	System	19	16,1		
Total		118	100,0		

The Access Conditions to Online Devices

94 % of the participants stated that they own a device connected to the Internet and they access the Internet via their own devices. This rate is 89,1% for women and 100% for men. The rate of the participants who use their children's devices is 3,9% and all of these participants are women. It is important for retired teachers to have access to Internet-connected devices in their own right and this is notable in terms of their freedom of use and the need for Internet use. Table 3 shows the access conditions of participants to online devices.

Table 3: State Your Access Conditions to Online Devices

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I have my own device.	96	81,4	94,1	94,1
	I use my children's devices.	4	3,4	3,9	98,0
	I use my spouse's device	1	,8	1,0	99,0
	Other	1	,8	1,0	100,0
	Total	102	86,4	100,0	
Missing	System	16	13,6		
Total		118	100,0		

Internet Usage Experiences of Retired Teachers

When the experience of retired teachers using the internet was examined, It was found that the rate of those who have no experience in this matter is 11%. These are all females. This group describes themselves as inexperienced with the use of the internet. Participants rated their experience of using the Internet as somewhat 44% and 5.5% very experienced. The percentage of women who have some experience is 42.9% while the proportion of men is 45.7%. The rate of women who regard themselves as very experienced in internet use is 3.2% and the male ratio is 8.7%. 89% of retired teachers have had Internet experience at different levels. Table 4 shows the participants' experience using online devices.

Table 4: State your Internet Usage Experience Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	12	10,2	11,0	11,0
	Limited	16	13,6	14,7	25,7
	I have little experience	48	40,7	44,0	69,7
	I have some experience	27	22,9	24,8	94,5

	I have a lot of experience	6	5,1	5,5	100,0
	Total	109	92,4	100,0	
Missing	System	9	7,6		
Total		118	100,0		

The Person Who They Consult When They Have a Problem About Their Devices

57.7% of the participants consult their children, 14.4% their friends, and 12.4% computer technicians when they face a problem that they can not solve with their devices. While the proportion of women who consulted their children was 63%, the proportion of men was 53.5%. Men are consulting their friends with a rate of 20.9% when they have a problem, while 9.3% of women do the same. It has been seen from the answers to this question that women consult their children more and men consult their friends. Table 5 shows who They consult when they face a problem they could not solve about their online devices.

Table 5: Who Do You Consult When You Have Problems About Your online Devices?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Computer technicians	12	10,2	12,4	12,4
	My children	56	47,5	57,7	70,1
	My grandchildren	7	5,9	7,2	77,3
	My friends	14	11,9	14,4	91,8
	Other	8	6,7	8,2	100,0
	Total	97	82,2	100,0	
Missing	System	21	17,8		
Total		118	100,0		

How the Participants have Learnt to Use Computers and Internet

While 34.8% of the participants stated that they have learnt to use computers and Internet to from their children, this rate is 68.8% for females and 31.3% for males. The rate of self-teaching by means of trial-and-error is 30.4%. This rate is 67.9% for males and 32.1% for females. The rate of those who can not say that they have learned to use a computer is 5,4%. It is seen that retired teachers regard their children and their grandchildren as a tutor. Another important point is that 12% of the people take time and money to learn how to use computer and get a special training. This result shows that retired teachers are perceive learning how to use internet and computers as a necessity. Table 6 shows how participants learnt to use computers and the internet.

Table 6: How Have You Learnt to Use Computers and Internet?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I joined a course in our Retired Teachers Association	4	3,4	4,3	4,3
	I taught myself by trial and error.	28	23,7	30,4	34,8
	I learnt from my children	32	27,1	34,8	69,6
	I learnt from my grand children	2	1,7	2,2	71,7
	I joined a private course	11	9,3	12,0	83,7
	I learnt from my friends	4	3,4	4,3	88,0
	I cannot say I have learnt	5	4,2	5,4	93,5

	Other	6	5,1	6,5	100,0
	Total	92	78,0	100,0	
Missing	System	26	22,0		
Total		118	100,0		

How Long They Have Been Using the Internet

Retired teachers stated that they have been using the Internet for 1-5 years with a rate of 35.8% and for 6-10 years with a rate of 30.5%. The rate of those who have been using the Internet more than 11 years is 26.3%. While the proportion of men who use Internet for more than 11 years is 36.2%, the proportion of women is 16.7%. While the rate of women using the Internet for 1-5 years range is 45.8%, the rate of men is 25.5%. Table 7 shows how long the participants have been using the Internet.

Table 7: How Long Have You Been Using the Internet?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 year	7	5,9	7,4	7,4
	1-5 years	34	28,8	35,8	43,2
	6-10 years	29	24,6	30,5	73,7
	More than 11 years	25	21,2	26,3	100,0
	Total	95	80,5	100,0	
Missing	System	23	19,5		
Total		118	100,0		

Internet Usage Frequency of the Participants

When the frequency of participants' usage of the internet is examined, it was found that 83.3% of the respondents used the internet constantly and spent several hours every day. The rate of women who use the internet constantly every day is 34%, while this rate is 26,1% for men. The percentage of men who use the internet for a few hours every day is 58.7%, while this rate is 48% for women. According to the results, internet is perceived and used as a daily necessity. Table 8 shows the usage frequency of the Internet.

Table 8: How Often Do You Use the Internet?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Constantly everyday	29	24,6	30,2	30,2
	A few hours a day	51	43,2	53,1	83,3
	A few hours a week	12	10,2	12,5	95,8
	A few hours a month	3	2,5	3,1	99,0
	Other	1	,8	1,0	100,0
	Total	96	81,4	100,0	
Missing	System	22	18,6		
Total		118	100,0		

The Communications Channels That the Participants Use the Most

The communication channels most frequently used by retired teachers were Facebook with 92%, Messenger with 49%, e-mail with 44% and Skype with 30%. The most important difference between men and women is seen in the use of Messenger and Skype. For Messenger the rates are 29% for women, 20% for men and For Skype the rate of women is 18%, while it is 12% for men. According

to these results, it can be said that social networking sites are the most frequently used communication channel among retired teachers and visual communication channels are mostly used by female teachers. Participants have selected more than one option in this question.

Participants' Purpose to Use the Internet

The retired teachers use internet to read newspapers, magazines and follow up the news by 78.8%, to follow social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter by 75.5%, for personal communication like sending and receiving e-mails by 48%, travel and tourism with 41.8%, to get information about health with 35.7% and for E-government with a rate of 26.5%. At the lowest rate of 2%, they use it for job search and job application. From the answers given to this question, retired teachers seem to use the internet at high rates for personal or mass news needs. One of the prominent purposes of use is social networking sites where friendship and sense of togetherness are exhibited. Participants have selected more than one option in this question.

The People They Contact the Most Online

Participants communicate online with their children and friends at the rate of 47%. The proportion of women who communicate with their children is 51.4%, while the proportion of men is 41.9%. The proportion of men who communicate with friends on the Internet is 54.8%, while the rate of women is 40%. Women communicate with their children, while men communicate more with their friends. Table 9 shows the the people participants mostly communicate with on the internet.

Table 9: Who do you Communicate online with?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	My children	31	26,3	47,0	47,0
	My friends	31	26,3	47,0	93,9
	People I do not know	2	1,7	3,0	97,0
	Other	2	1,7	3,0	100,0
	Total	66	55,9	100,0	
Missing	System	52	44,1		
Total		118	100,0		

Personal Benefits from Using the Internet

Participants stated that the Internet contributed them as a pass time activity with a rate of 91.5%, 90.8% of them responded that it facilitated access to information, 89.7% said it allowed them to improve their general knowledge, 87.9% said they provided communication with the environment. 43.6% of them said it helped find friends and partners. 1.6% of them marked the "other" option and it included activities like organizing trips. Participants have selected more than one option in this question.

Participants' Opinion on using the Internet

Retired teachers' opinions on internet use are as follows. 79.7% of them stated that it is impossible to be proficient on using computers and the Internet as young people. 77.3% of them said they can adjust the volume of a computer and 74.6 % said they can recognize icons. 72% of them responded that they are not competent on internet concepts and 70.2% said they follow new information technologies but not buy them. 69.6% said that they cannot make use of the Internet enough and 68.9% said making explorations on the Internet makes them happy. 62.9% stated that they determine the passwords for the sites they visit, 60% said computer and Internet has a big part in their lives and 52.7% of the participants responded that they can set up a password to log on and off the computer. 52.5 said that information technology products are distant to them and 43.6% said they cannot produce quick solutions. 40.4% of them revealed that using the information technologies earns them respect and 37.9% said they panic when they face a problem about the Internet or the computer. 28.6% think their time online is a waste of time and 25.5% said they never trust online devices. 23.4% stated that they are afraid of using Information technology products. According to the

results of the answers given to this question, retired teachers accept that they are digital immigrants. Compared to young people, they find themselves less knowledgeable and think that they can not keep up with these technologies and also they are unfamiliar with foreign internet concepts and terms, material or other reasons. They cannot follow these technologies closely due to financial or other reasons. However, retired teachers know that the use of computers and the internet is a necessity in spite of these drawbacks, and they tend to address their basic needs with consulting their children or friends. The majority of them use computers, they think they have basic skills and they have confidence in this issue. Participants have selected more than one choice in this question.

The Most Important Factors That Prevent Participants from Using the Internet More

The most important factor preventing participants from using the internet more often was the fact that they did not need to use the internet more with a rate of 38.7%. 17.3% said lack of knowledge or skills are the biggest factor. 14.7% responded with lack of time and it is followed by security and privacy with a rate of 10.7%. The greatest difference between men and women has emerged in the face of security and privacy concerns. This rate is 75% for women and 25% for men. The inability to find time is seen as the second biggest obstacle with a rate of 63.6% for women, which is 36.4% for men. The lack of time with privacy and security concerns are the biggest obstacles for women while the lack of foreign language and the slowness of the connections used were the first reasons for preventing the use of the internet for men. Table 10 shows the most important factors that prevent participants from using the internet more.

Table 10: What is the Most Important Factor that Prevent you from Using the Internet More?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of time	11	9,3	14,7	14,7
	Lack of foreign language	7	5,9	9,3	24,0
	Lack of knowledge and skills (Complexity of websites)	13	11,0	17,3	41,3
	Security and privacy concerns	8	6,8	10,7	52,0
	Slow internet connection	5	4,2	6,7	58,7
	I do not need to use the Internet more	29	24,6	38,7	97,3
	Other	2	1,7	2,7	100,0
	Total	75	63,6	100,0	
Missing	System	43	36,4		
Total		118	100,0		

The Areas They Would Like Training to Satisfy Their Needs About Using Computers And The Internet

Retired teachers stated that they would like to receive training to use the computer and internet to make up for their incompetence, to use the computer more efficiently, to move the picture from the mobile phone to the desktop, to learn the purpose of the keys, to configure the privacy settings, to open the e-mail, to use internet in more secure way, to learn the programs, to produce information on the social media, to set up a password, to make a video call, to improve their English and on general Internet knowledge. 72% of the participants stated that they did not want to receive any training and they found themselves skillful enough to use a computer and the Internet.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the study are summarized as follows:

- Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the retired teachers have smartphones, and more than half of them have desktop computers. Based on this evidence, it can be said that retired teachers are not distant to information technologies.
- In terms of gender, it is seen that women prefer smart mobile phones and men prefer laptops more.
- 73.7% of respondents stated that they use online devices at home.
- 94.1% of the participants indicated that they have their own device with Internet connection.
- 89% of retired teachers have experience with and use the Internet at different levels.
- Participants are consulting their children, then their friends, and finally computer technicians when they face a problem they cannot solve with their online devices.
- Retired teachers consider children and their grandchildren as a tutor on computers and the Internet. Another important point is that they spend 12% of their time and money learning about computers and have a special training. This suggests that learning to use the Internet and computers is perceived as a necessity.
- Retired teachers have been using the Internet mostly for 1-5 years.
- When the frequency of using the Internet by participants is examined, it was found that 83.3% of them have been using the Internet constantly every day and a few hours a day. According to this result, Internet is now perceived and used as a daily necessity by retired teachers.
- Social sharing sites are the most frequently used communication channels among retired teachers. Female teachers mostly use visual communication channels.
- Retired teachers use the Internet at high rates for personal or mass news needs. One of the prominent purposes of use is social networking sites where friendship and sense of togetherness are displayed.
- Participants use the Internet and specify personal benefits in this order; making leisure time easier, facilitating access to information, enhancing general knowledge, and communicating with the environment.
- Retired teachers find themselves inadequate in computer and Internet compared to young people, they think that they have difficulty in knowing and using the concepts on the Internet, and following and purchasing information technologies. However, retired teachers know that the use of computers and the Internet is a necessity in spite of these negativities. The primary sources of information about using computers and the Internet are the children or friends, who they think are masters. A large majority is confident that they have basic skills in using computers.
- The most important factor preventing participants from using the internet more is lack of knowledge or skills with 17.3%, lack of time with 14.7%, security and privacy with 10.7%. However, "I do not need to use the Internet more" 38.7% is the highest response with rate of 38.7%.
- Retired teachers have stated that they would like to receive training to use the computer more efficiently, to move pictures from the mobile phone to the desktop, to learn the purpose of the keys, to configure privacy settings, to open the e-mail services, to use the internet in a more secure way, to learn programs, to produce information on social networking sites, to set up passwords, to open files on desktop, to make video calls, to study English, and receive general training.

The general conclusion from the study is that retired teachers have minimum basic skills in using computers and the Internet, and they regard the Internet as a part of daily life. However, the feeling of not being able to fully master a learned technology is also true for retired teachers who fall into the so-called digital immigrants group in the literature. This situation brings the need for education in order to make Internet usage better and more efficient. In addition to the help they get from their children and their friends, more professional training opportunities should be provided to retired teachers for hands-on skills in using computers and the Internet.

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