INTERNET USAGE PURPOSES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: THE CASE STUDY OF ERZURUM PROVINCE, TURKEY[i]

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Abstract:

The objective of this study is to carry out a research on the internet usage purposes of primary school students. In line with this objective, the internet usage frequency and purposes of students, including the intervention of their parents were studied. In this study, a descriptive research model was used, as it was aimed at making an assessment in line with the views of students. Within this scope, a questionnaire with open ended questions was used. 143 students participated in the students, from 3rd and 4th grade, studying at two state schools in the center of Erzurum Province, who were randomly selected. The answers given by students for 5 questions were categorized based on similarity and differences, as well as calculating the percentage rates and frequency values. The findings obtained from the study suggest that the students use internet with certain intervals, and that they mostly use internet via mobile phones. It was also detected that the parents intervene in the internet usage of their children by imposing a time limit. It was detected that the students mostly use internet for "accessing information" and "making research", but still with a high frequency of usage for playing games and watching cartoons. These results show that the educational institutions and the parents bear tremendous responsibility in order to ensure that the children use internet effectively and that they are protected against the dangers they may face during the time they spend surfing on the internet. The educational institutions should bring the students with computer skills, as well as training them on the reasons and manners of using internet, the problems they may face, internet usage rules, the manners on how to make use of the information obtained from internet.

Keywords: primary school students, internet usage, educational technology

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1. Introduction

Internet has become an essential technology, which is used by young and old like in order to access information, access social media, watch & listen music and video, online shopping, carry out banking transactions and play games (Oskay Yurttaş, 2013). Considering the increase in the use of computers and smart phones, establishing high-speed internet infrastructure, as well as generalizing the usage areas of internet gathers more momentum, as each day passes. Today, the internet usage age is down to pre-school period (Aksüt et al., 2008).

This massive increase in the internet usage directly affects the children. Examining the internet usage of children, it can be seen that they frequently use social media networks, along with accessing information and playing games, despite the age limitation (Çelen, Çelik and Seferoğlu, 2011). The risks that children may face with regards to internet usage can be summarized as; computer viruses, allowing spyware access, breaking down computers, being addicted to playing games, locking himself/herself in the house, being abused by ill-minded people (Canbek and Saoğuroğlu, 2007).

The views and attitudes of parents are of great importance with regards to protecting their children against the negative effects of internet usage. It is stated that the parents of primary school students are not well-informed on safety, that the internet has a positive impact on the academic success, and that it is one of the necessities of modern age (Odabaşı, Kabakçı and Çoklar, 2007). According to the EU Kids Online Project report, it is stated that the children and their parents mention to have a great knowledge on internet, which they, in fact, don't, and that their mothers are of opinion that they are on a level for helping their children (Haddon and Livingstone, 2012). In order for the children to be protected against the dangers of internet, the parents and teachers are to have awareness with regards to the usage time and purposes of communication media (Arnas, 2005). It is also of importance for the parents to provide guidance for their children in order to ensure that they access the appropriate and correct information (Ersoy and Ersoy, 2008).

EU Kids Online Project Report sets forth certain indicators that the internet usage is on a low level and risk in our country. It was detected that 36% of the children uses internet for more than 1 hour, while 52% of them connects internet from their homes. In another study, it was found out that the students uses internet mostly for homework and projects (Tuncer, 2000). Examining the respective literature, it can be seen that there are certain studies carried out with regards to the place of computer and internet in the lives of secondary school students (Altuğ, Gencer and Ersöz, 2011; Gökçearslan and Seferoğlu, 2005; Zhou et al., 2012). Having limited studies carried out on the purposes of internet usage by primary school students has become the starting point of this study. On the other hand, having also limited questionnaire studies that set forth the direct views of students with regards to internet usage is one of the main reasons of this study, as well. Within the framework of this general perspective, it is thought for the internet usage habits and purposes of primary school students to be detected is of great

importance for the parents to encourage their children without fear in this limitless network.

In this study, it was aimed at researching the internet usage purposes of primary school students with the technological developments and improvement of opportunities in the recent time. The following questions were tried to be answered in line with this objective:

1. What are the internet access ways of students?
2. What is the internet usage frequency of students?
3. How can the intervention of parents on the internet usage of their children be described?
4. What are the top played games and top watched cartoons by students on internet?

2. Method

The survey model was used in this research. Within the framework of this research model, the internet usage conditions and purposes of primary school students, between the age group from 8 to 11, were analyzed.

The general survey models are the survey designators on the whole universe, or a group from the universe, an example or a sample in order to make a general judgement on the universe, within a universe comprising of many elements. Survey model researches provide the opportunity to study on large groups (Karasar, 2005).

2.1 Data Collection Tools

In order to identify the internet access ways and usage purposes of students, a questionnaire was used. This questionnaire was applied in two state schools, which were within the scope of "Fatih Project" and where internet was used. On the first part of the questionnaire, comprising of two parts, there are questions about the students participating in the research. On the second part, there are six questions with regards to the objective of the research. The literature was utilized for forming the questionnaire, thus being shaped in line with the views by academicians and teachers, who were acknowledged experts in the survey field. Before the implementation process, some students, who were not within the study group, were given the questionnaires, and they were asked to tell if there are any unclear question.

2.2 Study Group

143 students from two state school participated in the study. The students were selected on a random basis. The distribution of students by age and gender can be found on Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Students by Age And Gender

Age	8		9		10		11	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	38	26,6	53	37,1	48	33,6	4	2,8
Gender	Female				Male			
	n		%		n		%	
	75		52,4		68		47,6	

As can be seen on Table 1, the distribution of 143 students by age, who participated in the study, has the age between 8 to 11. 52.4% of the study group comprise of female students, while 47.6% is male.

Table 2: Distribution of Students by Their Parents' Jobs

Mother's profession	f	%	Father's profession	f	%
Civil servant	5	3,5	Civil servant	**29**	**20,3**
Doctor	2	1,4	Doctor	3	2,1
Housewife	**124**	**86,7**	Engineer	1	0,7
Artisan	1	0,7	Artisan	18	12,6
Other	11	7,7	Farmer	13	9,1
			Other	79	55,3

It can be seen that the 86.7% of mothers of students, participating in the study, are housewives, while 7.7% of them are have other professions. Having a higher ratio of housewives, compared to other professions, shows the general social structure of the parents, and the working life participation of women. 20.3% of the fathers are civil servants, and 55.3% of them are working in other fields.

3. Findings and Discussion

The obtained findings have been discussed and interpreted according to the problem sentences of the research.

3.1 Findings on the Internet Access Ways of Students

The internet access ways and connection manners for the students can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of Student by Connection Type

Where do you connect internet from?	f	%
From mobile phone	**75**	**52,4**
From tablet computer	35	24,5
From desktop/laptop computer	33	23,1

Examining Table 3, it can be seen that mobile phones of the children's parents are the main connection tools that are used to connect internet. The number of students with their own mobile phones is low. Considering the development in the phone technology

of today's world, the phones being used as computers explain the main reason for the rise of this ratio. Other students, participating in the research, mentioned that they use the "desktop/laptop computers" and "tablet computers" in their houses to connect internet.

Table 4: Distribution of Students by Their Connection Ways

	Yes		No	
	f	%	f	%
Those connecting from their homes.	62	43,4	81	56,6
Those connecting from school.	116	81,1	27	18,9

43.4% of the students stated that they connect internet from their homes, while 56.6% stated that they do not have internet connection at home. These ratios Show that the students connect to internet more from school. These findings comply with the Household Information Technologies Usage Research results by Turkish Statistics Institute (2012), as well as being similar to the study data, carried out by Oskay Yurttaş (2013) on secondary school students (5th-6th-7th-8th grades).

3.2 Findings with regards to the internet usage frequency of students
The internet usage frequency of students can be found on Table 5.

Table 5: Internet Usage Frequency of Students

Internet usage frequency	f	%
Once in a day	14	9,7
Once in two to three days	**53**	**37,1**
Once in a week	49	34,3
Once in a month	27	18,9

The internet usage frequency details of students, participating in the study, are as follows: 9.7% as "once in a day"; 37.1% as "once in two to three days"; 34.3% as "once in a week"; 18.9% as "once in a month". According to these results, the average internet usage frequency of students were found to be once in two to three days, while usage on daily basis is of lower ratio. This is thought to be due to the socio-economic positions of the students.

The intervention by parents of students with regards to internet usage is as follows:

Table 6: Intervention by Parents on Internet Usage

	f	%
Do not intervene.	27	18,9
Impose time limit.	**83**	**58**
Do not allow during week days.	33	23,1

Examining Table 6, it can be seen that the parents impose limitations on the internet usage of their children. It was found out that this is mostly under the control of their

mothers. However, it was also found out that the parents do not properly control the internet activities of their children, despite imposing a time limit on the internet usage. The struggles by the parents for not letting their children unchecked do not meet the need for strengthening them against internet. Children that continuously record information that they see and hear should be supported on media literacy (Akşit and Dönmez, 2011).

3.3 Findings on the Internet Usage Purposes of Students

The findings on general internet usage purposes of students can be seen on Table 7.

Table 7: Internet Usage Purposes of Students

Reasons	No		Sometimes		Yes	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
I use internet for doing homework.	35	24,5	90	62,9	18	12,6
I use internet for playing games.	50	34,9	65	45,5	28	19,6
I use internet for accessing information.	28	19,6	51	35,7	**64**	**44,8**
I use internet for communication.	50	34,9	48	35,6	**45**	**31,5**
I use internet for accessing news.	70	49	46	32,2	27	18,9
I use internet for research.	20	14	66	46,2	**57**	**39,9**
I use internet for fun.	45	31,5	72	50,3	26	18,9
I use internet for projects.	86	60,1	38	26,6	19	13,3

Examining Table 7, it can be seen that the students use internet for mostly "accessing information", "research" and "communication. It can also be seen that the students use internet more for accessing information and research, while using it less for projects and doing homework. The results of the studies that were carried out on older age group students were similar (Çalık and Çınar, 2009; Oskay Yurttaş, 2013). It is seen that playing games and fun activities, which they are known to love doing so, is lower than the other reasons. 19.6% of the students use internet for playing games, while 18.9% uses it for fun. The reason for the ratio of these reasons to be low is thought to be due to the students meet their needs for fun and entertainment from real world, streets, parks and play grounds actively, instead of virtual environments.

The top-played games and top-watched cartoons by students, who use internet more for playing games and watching cartoons can be seen on Table 8.

Table 8: Top Games and Cartoons Played & Watched On Internet

Games	f	%	Cartoons	f	%
War game	10	9,5	Pink Panther	12	14,5
Mind game	19	18,1	Ice Age	6	7,2
Race game (Cars)	11	10,5	Rafadan Tayfa	6	7,2
Barbie	10	9,5	Esrarengiz Kasaba	5	6
Minecraft	9	8,6	Spider Man	5	6
Football game	5	4,8	Koca Ayı	4	4,8
Fashion game	5	4,8	Barbie	3	3,6
Kitchen game	4	3,8	Tom and Jerry	3	3,6
Fire and water	4	3,8	Rüzgar Gülü	3	3,6

Royal	3	2,9	Niloya	5	6
Subway surf	3	2,9	Kara Kedi	2	2,4
Angela	2	1,9	Rapunzel	2	2,4
Zula	2	1,9	Madagascar	2	2,4
Racing	2	1,9	İstanbul Muhafızları	2	2,4
Clash of clans	1	1	Winxs	1	1,2
Templerun	1	1	Denizci	1	1,2
Strawberry girl	1	1	Ben 10	1	1,2
Heart collector	1	1	Muana	1	1,2
Save the princess	1	1	Dinazor Makineleri	1	1,2
Key collector	1	1	Sonik	1	1,2
Robot	1	1	Pepe	1	1,2
Sad monkey	1	1	Akıllı Tavşan	1	1,2
Bowling	1	1	Lion King	1	1,2
Super Mario	1	1	İbi	1	1,2
Pou	1	1	Jotron	1	1,2
Mobile Legends	1	1	Flinstones	1	1,2
Com Crus	1	1	Demir Çocuk	1	1,2
Deat Target	1	1	Steel Fist	1	1,2
Horse Farm	1	1	Selena	1	1,2
Batman	1	1	Optimors	1	1,2
			Transformers	1	1,2
			Çember	1	1,2
			Kukuli	1	1,2
			Biz ikimiz	1	1,2
			My Little	1	1,2
			Bulmaca Kulesi	1	1,2
			Harika Kanatlar	1	1,2

The games that are played the most by students are as follows, respectively: 18.1% "mind games", 10.5% "race games (cars)", 9.5% "Barbie" and "war games". The games played by boys and girls differ from each other. It can be seen that the male students play the war and race games more, while female students prefer mind games and Barbie games.

The cartoons that are watched the most are as follows, respectively: "Pink Panther", "Ice Age", and "Rafadan Tayfa", "Esrarengiz Kasaba" and "Spider Man". It was found out that the cartoons that are watched the most have close rates compared to each other. The cartoons that are watched by boys and girls differ, similarly to the played games. While "Pink Panther" and "Ice Age" are the cartoons that are watched the most by female students, "Pink Panther" and "Spider Man" are the ones that are watched the most by male students.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

With the opportunities to access information within a short period of time and fulfill many things over, internet has become one of the most essential needs of 21st century. Used by both younger and older generations, this technology may have negative

impacts on children. Therefore, it is a must for the parents to raise awareness on the risks of internet technology. The objective of this study is to set forth the purposes and frequency levels of internet usage by primary school students, thus providing guidance on their parents. According to the results of this study, it can be seen that:

- The students use internet with certain intervals,
- They prefer using internet via smart phones,
- The number of students connecting internet from their homes is low, while the number of those connecting from school is higher,
- Parents intervene their children by imposing time limit on the internet usage, but do not deliberately handle this matter in terms of the accessible contents,
- The jobs of parents have an effect on the internet usage of their children, the opportunities of these jobs, including their educational background have negative or positive impacts on the internet usage of children,
- Considering the games and cartoons that are played & watched the most by the students, the ratios are close among each other, and there is no game or cartoon that comes to forefront,
- Students use internet more for "accessing information" and "research".

These results show that the educational institutions and the parents bear tremendous responsibility in order to ensure that the children use internet effectively and that they are protected against the dangers they may face during the time they spend surfing on the internet. Educational institutions should provide computer literacy for their students, while training them on the reasons and manners of using internet, the problems they may face, internet usage rules, the manners on how to make use of the information obtained from internet. Parents, on the other hand, should track up their children in terms of their connection ways and manners, as well as encouraging them on safe and effective use of internet.

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