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## Vocational School Students' Attitudes Towards Internet

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### Abstract

Internet is shown among the main ways of learning in many recent research findings. Many masses like personnel and students prefer meeting their need for obtaining knowledge with internet above all. This positive impact of internet on learning can be better increased with the determination and direction of various psychological perceptions of the learners'. One of these psychological traits is attitude towards internet. In this study, 265 undergraduate students', from various departments of Tunceli Vocational School of Tunceli University, attitudes towards internet were investigated. The Attitude Towards Internet Scale was used as the data collection instrument. The opinions gathered with the application of the scale were compared in terms of gender, grade, experience of computer education, age and field of study variables. Some of the findings are as following: the attitude towards internet does not differentiate meaningfully in terms of gender and grade variables; whereas there is a meaningful difference of opinions in terms of the field of study variable.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Internet has been widespread in other fields as well as in education. Learners consider internet as the main and initial source of information (Tuncer, Yılmaz and Tan, 2011; Tuncer and Kaysı, 2011). With the spread of internet technology, the tendency of getting information via books or library has become gradually less. About half of the students begin using computers during their undergraduate years, and nearly two-thirds of them make use of internet for educational purposes (Usta, Bozdoğan and Yıldırım, 2007). Thus, it can be claimed that the

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internet technologies will have an ever-increasing importance as either the source of learning or a part of the learning activity itself in the future. Yet, it should not be thought that internet is beneficial under every circumstance and situation, and can be resorted to regardless of any regulation concerning it. As it is in other kinds of learning activities, the learners' psychological perceptions concerning internet should be known, and thus actions should be taken accordingly. And one of these psychological perceptions is attitude towards internet.

The attitude towards internet is defined as the feelings, thoughts and experiences regarding internet activities (Erkan, 2004; Esgi and Bardakci, 2007). As regards its educational use, the learners' feelings, thoughts and perceptions towards the object are quite significant. And sometimes these psychological properties create an effect as a generalization. For example, Mitra and Steffensmeir (2000) state that easy internet access encourages positive attitudes towards computers. When the fact that internet has already begun to be used in learning environments so frequently is taken into consideration, it is possible that students' negative attitudes towards this technology may be generalized for schools, and thus there could be increases in loss of learning.

This study aims to investigate the vocational school students' attitudes towards internet. As the vocational schools conduct educational activities for any given profession, it is thought that the students receiving education in this departments will be so closer with internet very soon and in their future lives as well. Within this study, it was questioned whether the vocational school students' attitudes towards internet change in terms of gender, grade, experience of computer education, age and fields of study variables.

## **2. METHOD**

The design of this study can said to be a survey model. As Karasar (2009:76) puts it, it is aimed to describe past or present situations in the survey model. The survey model is resorted to in the case of larger samples differently from other research designs (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008:177).

The Attitude Towards Internet Scale, developed by Nickell and Pinto (1986) and adapted by Tuncer (2012), was used as the data collection instrument. As a result of the adaptation of this 19-items and one-factor scale, it was observed that the scale consists of 15 items and four dimensions. The factors of the scale were labeled as "Internet Anxiety", "Future of Internet", "Internet Facilities" and "Drawbacks of Internet". This four-factors structure accounts for 51.860 % of the total variance. The cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is .81.

The sample of the study consists of 265 students receiving education at various departments of the Tunceli Vocational School of Tunceli University. 200 of these students are females (75.5 %), and 65 of them are males (24.5 %). 160 of the students are in the first year (60.5 %), while 105 of them (39.5 %) are in the second year of their study. The students are from 7 different programs. The ages of the students range from 16 to 28, and the age mean is 22.13.

## **3. FINDINGS**

The attitudes towards internet were compared in terms of gender, grade, and experience of computer education, age and field of study variables. The results of the independent groups t-test which compares the vocational school students' attitudes towards internet in terms of gender variable are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Comparison of Attitudes towards Internet in terms of Gender

Dimension	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	SS	Levene's test			T test	
					F	p	df	t	p
Internet Anxiety	Female	200	2,58	,98	,852	,357	263	-1,705	,089
	Male	65	2,82	1,02					
Future of Internet	Female	200	3,44	,98	,017	,897	263	1,915	,057
	Male	65	3,17	1,00					
Internet Facilities	Female	200	3,66	,82	5,275	,022	263	-	U=6013,00 p=,303
	Male	65	3,59	,70					
Drawbacks of Internet	Female	200	3,47	,95	5,667	,018	263	-	U=6295,00 p=,612
	Male	65	3,44	,80					
The Whole Scale	Female	200	3,29	,61	3,450	,064	263	,213	,832
	Male	65	3,27	,50					

As can be seen in Table 1 above, the vocational school students' attitudes towards internet do not present any meaningful differences in the sub-dimensions of the scale and in the whole scale itself in terms of gender.

Another variable investigated within the study is the grade variable. The results of the independent groups t-test which compares the vocational school students' attitudes towards internet in terms of grade variable are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Comparison of Attitudes towards Internet in terms of Grade Variable

Dimension	Grade	n	$\bar{X}$	SS	Levene's test			T test	
					F	p	df	t	p
Internet Anxiety	1st Year	160	2,61	,95	2,105	,148	263	-,746	,457
	2nd Year	105	2,70	1,07					
Future of Internet	1st Year	160	3,42	,97	,127	,722	263	,949	,343
	2nd Year	105	3,30	1,03					
Internet Facilities	1st Year	160	3,64	,72	8,979	,003	263	-	U=8114,500 p=,639
	2nd Year	105	3,65	,89					
Drawbacks of Internet	1st Year	160	3,47	,90	,514	,474	263	,173	,863
	2nd Year	105	3,45	,93					
The Whole Scale	1st Year	160	3,29	,54	2,821	,094	263	-,022	,982
	2nd Year	105	3,29	,63					

As a result of the analyses, no meaningful difference was found in terms of the grade variable.

There were also comparisons of the internet attitudes of those students who had somehow received computer education before and those who had never received any computer education before. It was tried to identify whether experience of computer education is an effective variable on attitudes towards internet. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Comparison of Attitudes towards Internet in terms of Experience of Computer Education Variable

Dimension	Experience of Computer Education	n	$\bar{X}$	SS	Levene's test			T test	
					F	p	df	t	p
Internet Anxiety	Experienced	101	2,48	1,02	,478	,490	263	-2,061	,040
	Unexperienced	164	2,74	,97					
Future of Internet	Experienced	101	3,30	1,03	,810	,369	263	-,932	,352
	Unexperienced	164	3,42	,97					
Internet Facilities	Experienced	101	3,79	,71	4,210	,041	263	-	U=7052,500 p=,042
	Unexperienced	164	3,55	,82					
Drawbacks of Internet	Experienced	101	3,56	,79	5,920	,016	263	-	U=7774,500 p=,398
	Unexperienced	164	3,41	,97					
The Whole Scale	Experienced	101	3,30	,54	3,492	,063	263	,231	,818
	Unexperienced	164	3,28	,61					

According to the analysis results in Table 4, in the “internet anxiety” dimension of the attitude towards internet scale, a meaningful difference was found in favour of those who had not received computer education before ( $t(263)=2,061, p<.05$ ). As the distribution was not homogenous, a Mann Whitney U test was conducted, and a meaningful difference was observed in the “internet facilities” dimension of the scale in favour of those who had received computer education before ( $U=7052,500, p<.05$ ).

Another problem that was scrutinized in this research was whether the internet attitudes change according to age. The Kruskal Wallis H test analyses conducted in order to explain this problem are in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Kruskal Wallis H test comparing Attitudes towards Internet in terms of Age Variable

Dimension	Chi-Square	df	p	Difference
Internet Anxiety	3,238	3	,356	-
Future of Internet	5,292	3	,152	-
Internet Facilities	1,127	3	,771	-
Drawbacks of Internet	2,406	3	,492	-
The Whole Scale	2,093	3	,553	-

Age: (16-19, 59 people), (20-23, 154 people), (24-27, 39 people), (28 and over, 13 people)

As can be understood from the data in Table above, no meaningful difference was identified in terms of the age variable. The last problem that was scrutinized in this research was whether the internet attitudes change according to the field of study. The Kruskal Wallis H test analyses for this are given in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Kruskal Wallis H test comparing Attitudes towards Internet in terms of field of study

Dimension	Chi-Square	df	p	Difference
Internet Anxiety	9,840	6	,132	-
Future of Internet	10,934	6	,090	-
Internet Facilities	12,848	6	,046	7-1,7-2,7-3,7-4,7-5
Drawbacks of Internet	6,568	6	,363	-
The Whole Scale	8,145	6	,228	-

Field of Studies: (1.Child Development, 120 people), (2.Electricity and Energy, 22 people), (3.Accounting and Tax Practices, 26 people), (4.Fashion and Design, 51 people), (5.Hair Care and Beauty Services, 11 people), (6.Construction Technology, 8 people), (7.Computer Technologies, 27 people)

Upon comparisons in terms of field of study variable, some meaningful differences were found in the “internet facilities” dimension of the attitude towards internet scale between the department of Computer Technologies

( $\bar{X}=4,04$ ) and the departments of Child Development ( $\bar{X}=3,65$ ), Electricity and Energy ( $\bar{X}=3,48$ ), Accounting and Tax Practices ( $\bar{X}=3,58$ ), Fashion and Design ( $\bar{X}=3,53$ ) and Hair Care and Beauty Services ( $\bar{X}=3,45$ ) ( $X^2=12,848, p<.05$ ).

#### 4. DISCUSSION

As a result of the study, it was identified that attitudes towards internet do not present any meaningful differences in terms of gender, grade and age variables, but present meaningful differences in terms of experience of computer education and field of study variables. The meaningful difference in terms of experience of computer education is in the “internet anxiety” and “internet facilities” dimensions of the attitude towards internet scale. And the meaningful difference found in the “internet facilities” dimension in terms of field of study is between the department of Computer Technologies and the departments of Child Development, Electricity and Energy, Accounting and Tax Practices, Fashion and Design and Hair Care and Beauty Services.

The find that the attitudes towards internet do not present any difference in terms of gender is compatible with the findings of the researches done by Tuncer and Berkant (2010), Usta, Bozdoğan and Yıldırım (2007), Birişçi, Metin and Demiryürek (2011), Çavuş and Gökdaş (2006), Gezer and Sevim (2006), Tavşancıl and Keser (2002), Tekinarslan (2008), Yıldırım and Bahar (2008) and Zhang (2007). However, Erdoğan (2008) concludes that there is a meaningful difference in terms of gender in the “social interaction” dimension of the attitude towards internet in his study, and Yıldırım and Bahar (2008) find the same result in the “communication” and “Anxiety” dimensions of their internet attitudes scale. Bahar, Uludağ and Kaplan (2009) and Kol (2010) also conclude that the attitudes towards internet change in terms of gender.

The find that the attitudes towards internet do not present any difference in terms of grade variable seems to be compatible with those of Bozkurt, Demirer and Şahin’s (2010). Moreover, the find that there is a meaningful difference in terms of fields of study is the same as those of Yanık(2010), Tavşancıl and Keser(2002) and Yıldırım and Bahar (2008).

The fact that internet is utilized so much in daily life makes it more significant to know the users’ attitudes towards it. The positive attitudes towards internet contribute to the increase in the success of learning activities. It is especially essential to create and improve a positive attitude towards internet in younger age groups for educational objectives. Families should be informed about the negative aspects of internet environment for young children, and there should be taken some precautions in order for children to perceive the internet as a safe environment. In addition, it should be made sure that teachers and members of other professions develop a positive attitude in this regard with the help of the activities organized by their institutions.

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