

# Studying the Relationship between Social Networking with the First Grade Intermediate Students' Educational Achievement in Male Gifted Program Schools, Zanjan, Region 1

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**ABSTRACT:** This study has investigated the relationship between social networking and the educational achievement of male intermediate school students of Zanjan in 2014-15. The applied study is descriptive-correlational in its data collection method. The participants of the case study were 199 people, that is, all the male first grade intermediate students' of gifted program school in Zanjan (Region 1) during 2014-15. According to Morgan's table, the sample size was determined to be 108 people. Stratified random sampling method was used for distribution. Researcher-made questionnaire was used as data collection tool. To measure the students' academic improvement in their education, their previous year's grade-point average (GPA) was used. Analyzing the data based on descriptive and inferential statistics such as Pearson and ETA square showed a weak significant inverse relationship between students' educational achievement and social networks membership; an increase in social networking slightly decreases their GPAs.

**Keywords:** social networks, educational achievement, gifted students, Zanjan

## INTRODUCTION

The current millennium has witnessed the emergence of the Internet as a mass communication medium. Among the many services that the Internet offers its users, social networks have been welcomed more warmly. Social networks are a set of sites that allow the users to share their favorites, ideas, and activities with others, inviting others to view their ideas and activities. A social network is a set of web-based services that makes it possible for the users to create public and personal descriptions of themselves, communicate with other members of the network, share their information, and choose new connections from the available public descriptions [1].

Since the birth of social networks, thousands of such websites have been created all over the world [1].

Social networks have become one of the most important and well-known ways of communication all over the world [2].

These websites have the potential to bring about fundamental changes in the social life of each individual both on interpersonal and social levels of relationships [3].

The most important effect of such websites has commonly been considered to be their potentiality for maintaining and improving existing relationships (Hampton and Wellman [4]). However, one cannot ignore the role of these websites in establishing new interpersonal relationships [5]. On the other hand, although membership in these networks facilitates communication with friends [2], it interferes with the learning process of the students by decreasing their studying time [6].

## DISCUSSION

Students' improvement in their educational achievement is one of the important factors in pedagogical evaluation, and the educational system does its best to materialize this goal. In other words, society and the educational system are concerned about the development of students and their future position in the society, and

expect that children and students progress in different aspects of life, including, cognitive, emotional, personality, skills and abilities. To achieve progress in students' education, one needs to pay attention to the factors which influence it [7].

Virtual social networks have become one of the concerns of pedagogics and parents recently because of the students surfing the net and playing online games. Social networks do not just have negative effects, rather they can be used properly in enhancing the learning process [8]. Communicating with others, learning social rules, entertainment, and sharing experience are among the most common reasons for using social networks [9].

Javadinia (2012) in "The Effect of Social Networks on the Learning of Students in Birjand University of Medical Sciences" has found out that students with a lower GPA and performance use social networks more than those with a higher GPA and better performance.

Mehmood and Taswir (2013) in "The Effects of Social Networking on the Academic Performance of Students in College of Applied Sciences, Nizwa, Oman" have found out that these social tools were useful for sharing and communicating the students' information.

Helou and Ab-Rahim (2014) in "The Effect of Social Networking on the Academic Performance of Malaysian Students" have stated that most of the respondents agree that social networking has a positive effect on their academic performance.

Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013) in "The Effect of Social Networks on University Students' Performance" have shown the remarkable positive effect of social networks on learning because of the interaction among the students and their instructors.

Accordingly, the present study intends to investigate the relationship between social networking and learning performance.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study is applied in its objective, and descriptive-correlational in its data collection method. The case study includes all first grade intermediate students of male gifted program school in Zanjan, region 1, 199 people, during 2014-15. Based on Morgan's table, 108 were selected as the sample, which due to defects, 103 people were finally studied. Stratified random sampling method was used for distribution.

### Research tools

Researcher-constructed questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire has two parts. Part One includes information about grade of education, age, and GPA of last year. Part Two of the questionnaire has five questions regarding membership in social networks, type of social network, hours spent social networking every day, duration of membership, and the reason for social networking. For analyzing the data, in addition to descriptive statistics, inferential statistics such as Pearson and ETA were used.

### Findings

#### First Question

Hours spent daily, type, reason, and membership history in social networking.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample according to grade

Grade	Frequency	Percent
Seventh	29	28/2
Eighth	74	71/8
Total	103	100

Table 2. Duration of membership in social networks

Membership	Frequency	Percent
I am a member	22	21/4
I am NOT a member	81	78/6
Total	103	100

Table 2 shows that 21/4 of the sample are members of at least one social network.

Table 3. Hours spent social networking

Hours spent for social networking every day	Frequency	Percent
Never	17	16/5
Less than 2 hours	46	44/7
2-3 hours	15	14/6
3-4 hours	13	12/6
4-5 hours	3	2/9
5-6 hours	2	1/9
More than 6 hours	7	6/8
Total	103	100

Table 3 shows that social networking for less than 2 hours a day with the frequency of 46 and 44/7% is the highest amount, and between 5-6 hours is the lowest with the frequency of 2.

Table 4. Reasons for social networking

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Sharing information and images	41	39/8
Contacting current friends	61	59/2
Using others' experience	22	21/4
Checking the news	36	52/4
Entertainment	54	35
Education and learning error correction	22	21/4
Contacting old friends	37	34/9
Finding new friends	27	26/2

The above table suggests that the most important reason for social networking is for contacting current friends, with the frequency of 61 people, 59/2%.

Table 5. Duration of membership in social networks

Duration of membership	Frequency	Percent
I am NOT a member	16	15/5
1-6 month	29	28/2
6-12 month	26	25/2
1-1/5 year	20	19/4
More than 1/5 year	12	11/7
Total	103	100

Table 5 shows that 29 people of the case study have been a member of social networks for 1-6 months.

Table 6. Membership in different social networks

Membership in	Frequency	Percent
Viber	44	42/7
Whats App	26	25/2
Telegram	69	67
Line	31	30/1
Instagram	40	38/8
Facebook	21	20/4
Clash of Clans (game)	58	56/3

According to the above table, *Telegram* with the frequency of 69 and *Clash of Clans* with the frequency of 58 have the highest number of membership among the social networks. *WhatsApp* has the lowest number of members (26).

Second Question: Is there a relationship between social networking and students' performance?

Table 7. The correlation between membership in social networks and students' performance

Variables	Pearson coefficient	ETA square
Membership in social networks	-0/155	0/155
Performance		

Because the independent variable of membership in social networks is nominal, and the variable of learning performance is interval, ETA square was used, however, to determine the kind of relationship (direct or inverse) the Pearson coefficient was used. ETA square (0/1550) shows that the relationship is inverse with low strength, that is, the learning performance of non-member students is better than member students. Moreover, based on the obtained determination coefficient (15%), it can be stated that 15 % of the variance or distribution of the dependent variable of students' performance is determined by the independent variable of membership in social networks.

Third Question: Is there a relationship between the amount of hours spent social networking and students' performance?

Table 8. Pearson correlation coefficient between hours spent social networking and students' performance

Variables	Number	Correlation coefficient	Level of significance
Hours spent social networking Performance	103	-0/008	0/93

Because the hours for social networking as an independent variable is hierarchical, and the learning performance of the student as a dependent variable is interval, Pearson coefficient was used. Given the fact that the level of significance is more than 0/05 (0/93), there is no significant correlation between the two variables.

Question Four: Is there a relationship between the type of social networks and students' performance?

Table 9. Correlations between membership in social networks and students' performance

Variables (type of network)	ETA square	Pearson coefficient
Viber	0/144	0/124
WhatsApp	0/136	0/136
Telegram	0/10	-0/10
Line	0/011	0/011
Instagram	0/084	-0/084
Facebook	0/028	0/028
Clash of Clans	0/000	0/001

Given the obtained ETA square, membership in *Telegram* and *Instagram*, and the inverse slightly strong relationship with the learning performance, students who have not used *Telegram* or *Instagram* have had a better performance in comparison to those who have used these networks. Moreover, according to the obtained determination coefficient, it can be stated that 10% of the variance or distribution of the dependent variable of students' performance is determined by the independent variable of membership in *Telegram*, and 8 % of variance or distribution of the dependent variable of performance is explained by the independent variable of membership in *Instagram*.

Question Five: Is there a relationship between duration of membership in social networks and the students' performance?

Table 1.

Variables	Number	Correlation coefficient	Level of significance
Duration of membership in social networks Performance	103	-0/11	0/23

Because the duration of membership in social networks as an independent variable is hierarchical, and the educational performance as a dependent variable is interval, Pearson coefficient was used. Given the obtained level of significance (0/23) which is more than 0/05 it can be stated that there is no significant relationship between the two variables.

## CONCLUSION

A survey of social networks shows that millions of users have become members. These members use social networks for different reasons, including, communication, academic purposes, and completing class activities. The present study investigated the relationship between social networking and the educational performance of students, and found out that student use *Telegram* more than other networks, and their primary

reason is contacting friends. It was also found out that students who spend less hours social networking have a better educational performance in comparison who use more social networking. These findings are consistent with Javadinia (2012), but inconsistent with Helou and Ab-Rahim (2014) and Al-Rahmi and Othman (2013). According to the findings in the present study, it can be stated that social networks do clearly affect people's lives, especially teenagers who have had a growing interest in them. Therefore, it is recommended that social networks and sites which are appropriate for people's age and in accordance with educational purposes be designed, students be taught how to correctly use them, and the dangers of using social networks be explained to the students.

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