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## POSTGRADUATE STUDIES-SECOND CYCLE

THESIS:

# ENHANCING THE LEARNING PROCESS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES USING SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays generation are surrounded by digital technology more than needed and day by day they are becoming more depended from technology where they differ from previous generations where life has been completely different. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of using social networking on the teaching English language as a second language. It is inevitable that the use of technology in the teaching and learning process has become a global phenomenon. The Internet, as an indispensable tool, is increasingly seen as a tool that enables people to overcome various barriers and have unlimited access to learning and beyond. Online media and modern technology are strongly recommended in order to address a wide range of issues, such as educational impartiality and social exclusion, and can help enable more democratic and accessible educational opportunities.

Online social media can create an optimal learning environment. The Internet as a technological tool to a large extent enables us to access valuable data and information in the learning process, overcoming barriers and geographical boundaries, at affordable cost. A growing number of researchers and teachers believe that information technology has great potential to influence the teaching and learning process.

Nowadays teachers in general that use technologies in their classrooms have are interested to integrate online social media such as: wikis, blogs, YouTube, Facebook and other virtual/online social environments into the learning process. Particularly this may explain why recently Facebook is considering providing online educational courses.

According to various surveys, about 97% of Kosovo students use at least one form of social networking. Among the most used are social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, which are an important tool of their daily life. So social networking sites promote contributions from everyone that may be interested, so anyone can create, edit, comment, and share information.

Contrary to the traditional one-way media systems, such as television, online social networking

sites are two-way communications in which control is decentralized and open to a large number of users. Some educators, however, are willing to accept social networking sites as teaching tools; therefore, the goal of this study is to find ways for positive use of social networks, for educational purposes which could have positive impact towards attaining greater results from the learning process.

It seems reasonable to suggest that social networking sites are promising means, although we, teachers need to perfect teaching methods that have potential to increase the use of information technology and various social networks which can help students have "the sense of learning and cooperation" so they achieve overall better results in the learning process.

This study thesis deals with and tries to answer research questions as follows:

- *Which will support best teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, physical or electronic structures?*
- *What can be the impact of social networks, in teaching?*
- *What are the technologies for student support, and what are the guiding principles for the planning of those electronic technologies and social networks?*

The goal is to help the teachers and students develop strategies for effective and enjoyable learning so that they will be better equipped to cope with the challenges of incorporating innovative technology into teaching and learning process.

**Keywords:** technology, social media, internet, online learning, interviews, questionnaires.

## Апстракт

Денешните генерации се опкружени со дигитална технологија повеќе од потребното и од ден на ден стануваат се позависни од технологијата каде што се разликуваат од претходните генерации каде животот бил сосема поинаков. Целта на оваа студија е да го истражи ефектот од користењето на социјалните мрежи врз наставата по англиски јазик како втор јазик.

Оваа студија има за цел да ја испита важноста на оваа студија која се фокусира на влијанието на социјалните мрежи врз развојот на процесот на учење и како тие влијаат на студентите.

Нема сомнение дека употребата на технологија во процесот на настава и учење стана глобален феномен. Многу често на Интернет се гледа како неутрална алатка која потенцијално им овозможува на поединците да надвлдаат над ограничувањата на традиционалните селективни простори и да добијат неограничен пристап до учење. Многу се сугерира дека користењето медиуми преку Интернет и современата технологија може да помогне во решавање на широк спектар на прашања како што се образовната непристрасност и социјалното исклучување и може да помогне да се отворат демократски и достапни образовни можности.

Новата технологија, особено интернетот, може да понуди возбудливи можности за надминување на географските и трошоците за бариерите во процесот на учење. Се поголем број истражувачи и наставници сметаат дека информатичката технологија има голем потенцијал да влијае на процесот на учење и учење. Социјалните мрежни мрежи можат да создадат оптимална средина за учење.

Наставниците кои користат технологии во своите училници се заинтересирани да ги интегрираат социјалните медиуми на Интернет, како што се: вики, блогови, ЈуТјуб, Фејсбук и други виртуелни / онлајн социјални средини во процесот на учење. Ова делумно може да објасни зошто неодамна Facebook размислува да обезбеди курсеви за едукација преку Интернет.

Според различни истражувања, околу 90% од косовските студенти користат барем една форма на социјално вмрежување. Всушност, социјалните мрежи како Фејсбук се важен

аспект на стилот на живеење на студентите. Веб-страниците за социјално вмрежување промовираат придонеси од сите што можат да бидат заинтересирани, така што секој може да креира, уредува, коментира и споделува информации.

Наспроти традиционалниот еднонасочен медиумски систем, како што е телевизијата, веб-страниците за социјално вмрежување преку Интернет се двонасочни комуникации во кои контролата е децентрализирана и отворена за голем број корисници. Сепак, некои наставници се подготвени да прифатат страници за социјално вмрежување како наставни средства; затоа целта на оваа студија е да се најдат начини за позитивно користење на социјалните мрежи, за едукативни цели што можат да имаат позитивно влијание кон постигнување поголеми резултати од процесот на учење.

Се чини разумно да се сугерира дека веб-страниците за социјално вмрежување ветуваат средства, иако ние, наставниците треба да ги усовршине методите за учење што имаат потенцијал да ја зголемат употребата на информатичката технологија и разни социјални мрежи што можат да им помогнат на учениците да имаат „чувство за учење и соработка“, тие постигнуваат севкупно подобри резултати во процесот на учење.

Оваа студија се обидува да одговори на следниве истражувачки прашања:

- *Што ќе го поддржи најдоброто предавање и учење во 21 век, физички или електронски структури?*
- *Какво може да биде влијанието на социјалните мрежи во наставата?*
- *Кои се технологиите за поддршка на студентите и кои се водечките принципи за планирање на тие електронски технологии и социјални мрежи?*

Целта е да им помогнеме на наставниците и учениците да развиваат стратегии за ефективно и пријатно учење, така што тие ќе бидат подобро опремени да се справат со предизвиците со вклучување на иновативната технологија во процесот на учење и учење.

**Клучни зборови:** технологија, социјални медиуми, интернет, учење преку Интернет, интервјуа, прашалници.

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## **Chapter I**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Technology is an important tool which has revolutionized our world in many aspects especially technology has contributed as a teaching tool in the language classroom. Every day more and more is the interest of different ages, from adults to students for the use of different social sites. Many of them also use them for teaching purposes. Research results indicate that many students spend most of their time surfing on a variety of online social networking sites. Even in Kosovo, they are being used by many lecturers and students as means of communication and cooperation on various project topics, educational and research obligations, despite much debated security concerns. Insufficient research till now has been carried out in Kosova and it is still unknown whether social networking sites should be used or banned in educational institutions.

In today's culture current trends in social networks show that a variety of social networking sites have been systematically introduced into today's culture. A large number of students make use of these networks as part of their everyday lives, such as using Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, LinkedIn, MySpace, and a wide range of other online gaming networks to create and maintain updates and professional and personal relationships.

Based on these facts, this study investigates the possible use of social networking sites for educational purposes and will provide some useful insights for many researchers in general.

Due to the fact that almost 98% of students today spend the majority of their free time on the Internet, mainly visiting social networking sites, it is evident that social networking sites and technologies should be studied in the education system.

So keeping these purposes in mind there is a certain amount of information of semi structured interviews and questionnaires from the teachers and students which will be gathering in the form of needs analysis to understand where the learners spend most of their time, how they use the present date technology and most importantly, how teachers can use the technology as a supplementing tool to face to face classes presently used in our schools in Kosovo. The main

focus is on the impact of those social networking sites and possible effects they may have on students. The initial way in which this research will be organized where first, the technology and computer skills of the student will be examined, the time they spend using modern technologies such as personal computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones etc., the main reasons that use these technologies and finally, if they would be interested in using these technologies for educational purposes. Information on the use of information technology and social networking sites, needs analysis will be reviewed to provide a theoretical framework for the study. A detailed description of the current study research model will follow the literature review, which provided the basis for the selected materials. This paper will present the findings of the study starting with semi-structured interviews and then questionnaire surveys.

The process of the research findings and the answers to the research questions will be presented, followed by reflections on the limitations of the current research and suggestions for further studies at the end of the paper. In an effort to address the above issues, several online and offline strategies will be present and discussed that can be used to build social networks for educational purposes.

### **1.1 Purpose of the study**

Nowadays millions of people all over the world use information technology and social networking sites. Online technology use has become an everyday habit, one can use it when looking up for any information on the vast amount of data available on internet, can be used to stay abreast with the current things happening worldwide, one can buy or sell online, can exchange information, can easily keep in touch with others and even can take online study courses from any location no matter the distance. In general people can come together online to accomplish things that could not do as individuals or can acquire better results on their tasks or projects when they get a second thought from or advice from others too, this advice can come from an expert of a particular expertise that is located on the other corner of the world. Distance can no longer hinder people, and in this case that is students to come together on join forces on real-time work on any project, task or assignment. In line with the present technology booming rate, the use of innovative technology, internet, and social networking sites among the students

in Kosova has become trendy and a lifestyle. Many students have access to internet via their personal computers, laptops, tablets or smartphones. Vast resources on internet are on their fingertips, all what they need is some guidance on how to locate those resources and how to use them. Here is where teachers can play an important role as facilitators for the students for a safe and sound use of internet resources related to the subject matter they study at schools. Ultimately this brings changes to the traditional study environment and methodology. Combining a face-to-face traditional learning with online learning is vital for our educational institutions today. The appropriate learning environment should be a mixture of physical and digital infrastructures that will fully support a smooth learning process. Up to now, Kosova's Ministry of education has invested a lot in renovating and building new schools throughout the country, at the same time government officials say that they are working on modernizing our schools with the new technology, but this process is very slow due to the budgetary restraints. There is a vast choice of modern technology they can choose from, but possibly the biggest challenge is acquiring the adequate educational technology that best supports educators and students. We all are aware of the role of technology in the learning process. Access to IT and modern technology is not yet appropriately integrated into the curriculum. Comparing EU countries with Kosovo schools the computer ration is 1:46 which is very poor where in EU countries computer serves 3 to 7 students (Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011-2016)<sup>1</sup>. Getting the right technology is just the first step, its effective use depends on the users' skills and on the circumstances in which it is used. Many head teachers admit the fact that not all of their schoolteacher's possess the necessary skills in using the recent technology in their teaching even though many of them have attended different IT courses such as ECDL and e-learning. Those teachers should be willing to get and be offered additional training on practical technology use, it's recognized that applying technology create difference between teachers and students when they receive the necessary support to integrate successfully into their daily routines. Many research results indicate that students' learning gains are higher when the use of technology gets adequately integrated with content and high teaching quality.

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<sup>1</sup> Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, evaluation report of Kosovo education strategic plan 2011-2016, page: 100, <http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2016/02/raport-vleresimi-psak-2011-2016-eng-web.pdf>,

## **1.2 Importance and the impact of the study**

Each study overall on the use of technology and internet resources for educational purposes has its own significance due to the fact that they provide a great opportunity for the students and the teachers to enhance their learning and teaching processes. The research of this study has several purposes. In the beginning this research will present the already established student-centered learning strategies presently used in most of schools in Kosova in accordance with the new curriculum which will be a good overview what recent technology and internet have to offer in terms of needs analysis and learning strategies. Then it will give some insight of new ideas to scholars for curriculum development when incorporating technology and electronic social media in the learning process.

## **1.3 Aims and objectives of the thesis**

The research aims of this study is to know the role of using social networking in teaching English as a second language, especially to analyze the process of teaching English in our schools, to know the way how our students implement technology in their English classes, what kind of technology they use and does their schools support them to provide technology equipment in their English classes and also to analyze if the technology can improve the quality of teaching English. Before we can start using today's innovative technology and online resources as supplementing tool to the traditional face-to-face learning process there is a certain amount of information which we have to gather in the form of needs analysis. A needs analysis helps educators understand the difference between where the learners are, in terms of technology competence, and where they need to be to attain better results in their overall learning process. The use of technology in the learning process has become a global phenomenon nowadays. It is strongly suggested that using online technologies can have positive effects on educational impartiality and accessing global educational opportunities. The important aim of this research to identify ways that social networks can be used by educational institutions to convey the knowledge among students and instruct the practical use of that knowledge. Additionally, this study also aims to provide basic information of using online media and examines their positive and any possible negative effects or limitations when using them.

The major objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. To provide some reasons why social media technologies should be used as additional tools in learning and teaching settings.
- ii. Providing insight on how to use social media as supplementing tools in the learning process.
- iii. Identify the main ways of using the social media tools for educational purposes.
- iv. Therefore, the current study seeks to conduct a comprehensive need analysis encompassing all the types of new technology, and internet use in learning and teaching settings.

While studying this topic I will try to discuss different techniques which can help us to teach English language and also to improve their language skills by using social media. We all know today that technology can change our nature of learning and in academic lives is increasing. We are all familiar with technology, it makes us smarter, and we use it every day, we cannot imagine our life without it.

#### **1.4 Research questions and Hypothesis**

This research is very important because it will help teachers and also students to know how important social networking in teaching language process is because learning a language is an ongoing process that continues the whole life.

It is expected that the findings will result in confirming the hypotheses of the thesis. It is expected that the results will show:

#### ***How Can We Use Social Networking to Increase the Quality of Teaching English as a Second Language?***

This is an important question which will include the whole study and also will analyze the role of social networking in increasing the quality of teaching English as a second language. This question will try to find out how students use technology in their English classes,

This research is anchored on the following hypothesis:

- *The use of social networking can be successful and beneficial in education, especially for those students who are teaching English as a Second Language.*
- *Good possibility exists that social networking can offer many opportunities for Albanian students to learn the language by their own using internet.*
- *The use of technology increases interaction in the classroom.*

The hypotheses mentioned above will be verified if they are correct or not, true or false, and of course that the answers of that hypotheses will be results of the research, the whole research will be elaborated based on these hypotheses. This study aimed to find out how students perceive the use of social networking in their studies and also to find out the attitudes towards technology.

## Chapter II

### 2.0 Literature research and review

Countries, especially developed ones, in recent years have conducted a significant number of research studies on the use of social networks and their impact on the learning process. Kosova, as a developing country, has done little or no research on this issue.

What imported most to emphasize is that all these research studies focus primarily on rapid development of the innovative technology and it's online or offline use for educational purposes. Recently, scholars have focused their research on how to which extend these new technology and electronic media can be incorporated in the educational settings. Each research study is just another link in the chain of adopting and incorporating the modern technology and electronic media in education as supplement tools to the traditional learning methodology and environments. However most of the research has been conducted on strategies on planning and using the modern technology and the best learning support environments, rather that needs analysis of incorporating the innovative technology and social media in education and their overall impact towards attaining better learning results in future.

In an attempt to fill this research gap, some of prominent research on this issue have been reviewed, such as:

- Kosovo Pedagogical Institute - Arbnesha Mexhuani “Integration of information communication technology in teaching and learning”, Prishtina 2014. It focuses on the importance of using the information technology on teaching and learning processes involving the use of computers and software productively, use of the Internet and the use of computer-based networks for the purpose of teaching and learning.
- Project “Tomorrow”, the US national education nonprofit organization with its “Speak up” publication on the topic “From chalkboards to tablets” which gives a comprehensive description how the online learning evolved in United States, its present state and obstacles that need to overcome.
- International Journal of Business and Social Science Vol. 4 No. 3; March 2013 “Facebook in the University Classroom: Do Students Perceive that it Enhances Community of Practice

and Sense of Community?” by Doris G. Duncan, PhD Professor of Accounting and Computer Information Systems College of Business and Economics California State University, Casimir C. Barczyk, PhD Professor of Management Department of Marketing, Human Resources, and Management Purdue University, Hammond, USA.

Researchers have found that one of Facebook’s strengths may be its ability to enhance classroom community and help students to get to know one another and share information in a supportive environment.<sup>2</sup> They suggest that future research investigate how specific features of Facebook facilitate community building.

- A report to the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, prepared by Babette Moeller & Tim Reitzes, July 2011 “Integrating technology with student-centered learning” It is a detailed report on the intent to expand education beyond traditional boundaries, student-centered learning focuses on educational practices and principles that provide all students’ equitable access to the knowledge and skills necessary for college and career readiness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, focus on mastery of skills and knowledge, and aligns with current research on how people learn.
- Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016, Evaluation reports an evaluation of the implementation of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016 and of programs of preschool education, pre-university education, vocational education, higher education, adult’s education, teacher’s professional development, information and communication technology. December 2015.

## **2.1 Previous studies and research**

“*From chalkboard to tablets*”, Lately was implemented an innovative school program by US national education nonprofit organization which provide every educator in rural and urban communities within class instructions and the necessary support on the use of technology within schools. The adoption of those digital tools by teachers was still an emerging practice at that

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<sup>2</sup> The "Facebook" Effect: College Students' Perceptions of Online Discussions in the Age of Social Networking Hurt, Nicole E.; Moss, Gregory S.; Bradley, Christen L.; Larson, Lincoln R.; Lovelace, Matthew; Prevost, Luanna B.; Riley, Nancy; Domizi, Denise; Camus, Melinda S. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, v6 n2 Article 10 Jul 2012

time. Their instructors were mostly technology literate students which helped teachers to set up their first email account, do online searches on how to draft their lesson plans and stay abreast with latest developments on their profession. Meantime, these students were asked to work with other students at the schools during their IT classes and during supplemental after school classes. Soon it was realized that these trainers were vastly engaged in a different set of activities with their peers than with their teachers. These trainers were setting up electronic pen pal relationships among their fellow students using instant messaging and social networking sites, helping them to self-develop HTML and programming skills to potentially create their own websites and multi-media presentations. At the end of the course, apart from the difference in the sophistication level of their respective activities, it was noticed a remarkably greedy appetite among the students for using technology more effectively within their learning process. These students knew fundamentally the potential of the emerging technologies of the day, even though that older technology may seem to be quite primitive today, they were able to positively contribute to transform their learning experience. They expressed a powerful sense of urgency to have a greater role in the school and local community discussions about how to more effectively use the vast range of digital tools and resources to meet their learning needs, within schools and out of school activities (p.1.)<sup>3</sup>

As a student explained,

*“The adequate use of technology is the door to our future. Why don’t our teachers understand that?”*

According to Januszewski, Alan & Molenda Michael (2010) study of educational technology and ethical practice of learning facilitation improves performance by creating, using and has an appropriate authority of technological processes and resources (p.2)<sup>4</sup>. Based on the results of studies, recently, students are increasingly using their smartphones as the main point of internet access. Among primary and secondary school students the figures show that 56% of students

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<sup>3</sup> The US National education nonprofit organization, Project Tomorrow: “From chalkboard to tablets: The emergence of the K-12 digital learner” page: 1, [www.tomorrow.org/speakup/pdfs/SU12-Students.pdf](http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/pdfs/SU12-Students.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Januszewski, Alan & Molenda Michael (2010). *Educational Technology: A Definition with Commentary* (p. 2). New York and London: Routledge

in grades 6-8 and 68% of students in grades 9-12 say that they access the internet right from the palm of their hand using a 3G/4G on mobile devices.

This transition away from traditional cable internet access at home can be irritating for a number of elementary and high school children who may have a home computer but no online connection, which can seem discouraging at first. Among those students, 40% of the primary school students and 52% of the high school students say that they do regularly access the internet outside of their schools and that their access points are mobile phones provided by their parents. The percentage is approximately equivalent for students in rural as well as urban communities. Information technology equipment as essential for internet access remains valued and very important in schools, since the number of students who do not have internet access remains around 6%. All this as an opportunity for learning and advancement beyond hard copy books.

As previously said, technology and social media provide a framework for digital learners to connect, collaborate, and produce material in ways that are important to them. Most students are increasingly using a wide range of those social media tools to:

- **Text communication:** 70 % of senior high school students and 60 % of junior high school students communicate with their peers via text messages, an increase of about 40% since 2006.
- **Social network - Facebook:** Majority of high school students, over 60% continues to daily maintain a personal social networking site, the number of students that are actively involved with Facebook is continuously increasing day by day as it is constantly introducing new apps and games for its users.
- **Communication via Twitter:** 4 out of 10 students are currently using Twitter networking site to share 140 characters about their daily life or to follow others on a regular basis.
- **Publishing video content:** The number of junior high school students creating videos and publishing them online has doubled from 10% to 20% from 2006 to 2016.
- **Online games:** figures show that 30 % of students in grades 6-9 take part in massively online multiplayer games, while only 20 % of their older siblings from grade 10 to 12 are actively participate on online multiplayer gaming.

Social networks are becoming very famous for students where they share and interact with their knowledge which can be indicated by online accounts which many students maintain for

websites and social networking sites. Many educators and parents are surprised to learn that just 5% of senior high school kids and 8% of junior high school students claim they currently do not have any online accounts but plan to start one soon, while 15% of students polled have more than three or four distinct online accounts. Online learning definition is continuously getting broader. The experiences of different aged students with online classes, particularly self-study courses, indicate a solid continued growth progression. Some students have taken one self-study online class as a supplement to their traditional face-to-face studies, with a small number of students participating in a teacher-led online session. At this time the figures are still small in terms of online class participation, there is a growing interest in online learning that may possibly create a new supply-demand problem for many teachers and schools in the future. Presently, five out of ten students from grade 6 to 12 that have not taken an online class yet, now say that they would like to do so. In this case we need to answer the following questions:

- *Do our schools have a proper infrastructure to support online learning?*
- *Are our teachers skilled enough to use the up-to-date technology and perform online teaching?*

Schools around the world must be able to benefit from technological developments and then to practice them in their daily life. Blackboards and whiteboards stand for the analog classroom of former days. In the quest to reach students and to enable an effective way of learning teachers nowadays are more successful when adopting smart boards and computer assisted learning platforms. In consequence every new tool seems to be suitable but in fact teachers should carefully look into the details of new tools, methods, approaches and theories in order to find out more about their validity and effectiveness. It is proven that electronic learning platforms can change education and the way of learning. (p.76.)<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, in comparison to other countries, finding adequate professors who are enthusiastic and qualified to offer online lessons is quite difficult in Kosovo. However, a huge number of students and their parents' enthusiasm for online learning does not appear to be waning at this moment. In fact, interest in taking an online class is constantly increasing among

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, David & Baber Eric (2005). *Teaching English with Information Technology* (p.76). London: Modern English Publishing.

students. Most of students in grades 6-9 show their interest in taking online classes in the line of their present studies at schools.

This is what students think on using digital resources and tools for learning?

*“We use our personal laptops, tablets and smart phones to write a short story in cooperation or work on a project with .Working both it's not difficult to create and edit the contents so my friend can make changes at the same time. Hence, we can get our work done quicker and easier when we get support from our peers with their ideas and opinions.”*

A big group of digital resources and tools which students can acquire addressing their own learning goals from personal computers, tablets, mobile phones to social media using technology to contribute to their schoolwork. That can be facilitated by their schoolteacher and as well as they can be self-directed. Regardless of the enthusiasm for technology integration reflected in these student views, there are still some substantial barriers to properly using technology in classrooms, at least in the perspective of students. In numerous interviews I did with students of different age, they remind us that their dissatisfaction with technology use at their school is not about the quality or quantity of IT equipment or resources, but it is about the unsophisticated and poor use of those tools by their teachers, which they believe is hindering their learning potential.

According to the surveys, a large number of students are using internet to stay in touch with their friends, family and relatives and the look up for educational information is second nature to them. Students of AAB College became very popular using tasks, different assignments, and lecturers' notes online as well. As well as with a significant number of other educational institutions in Kosova, this has become a regular school activity. Other student activities involving the use of technology are school activities or teacher facilitated activities that include creating multimedia presentations, using an online textbook, watching a video created by the classmates or their teacher. It is quite interesting how today's digital learners are incorporating online resources and tools from their private lives into their schoolwork activities, and very often they self-direct these activities. There has been a significant shift in the student perspective on using technology for learning, as the digital learners have emerged over the past two decades. In year 2000, we struggled on getting access to the internet and getting hold on the tools that would facilitate that access. Finding ways on how to avoid or ease the obstacles

that limited that access was also an important goal. Nowadays, as access to internet is still not universal for all students, for the majority of the students across the country, their focus is on how to use a wide range of digital resources and tools to facilitate highly personalized gaming, leisure and learning experiences. The evolution from internet access to personalization, presents an interesting model for thinking about the adoption of modern technologies within our school too. Learning technology changed and provided a new vision of education. Its application in almost every classroom requires teachers as well as students to apply technology and effectively to improve their knowledge in practice. Arora, Akansha (2015) said, “It is a worldwide development, which takes place in elementary schools, high schools and universities and all over the world ”<sup>6</sup> We all can see what is presently happening with mobile devices, for example.

- Many schools provide students access to desktops, laptops and tablets.
- The next step should be more focused on how we can more effectively use those devices to transform learning at the individual student level.

As usual, it is obvious that young digital learners have already exceeded us with their skills and their approach to the technology.

According to the findings, social networking sites, such as Facebook, have the potential to improve students' needs by allowing them to share information in a supportive setting. Future studies explore specifically features of social networking sites that make community-building by many researchers. In a study undertaken at the University of Cape Town, the content of 150 randomly selected student Facebook pages was examined (Bosch 2009). In qualitative interviews, a large number of students and instructors were also interviewed. The results indicated that students in cooperative learning classrooms were more motivation to achieve their goals and they had a higher sense of community than those in non-cooperative learning classrooms. Doris G. Duncan, and Casimir C. Barczyk, said “When learners feel a sense of community, it is possible that this emotional connectedness could provide the support needed

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<sup>6</sup> Arora, Akansha (2015). *Using E-Learning Technologies to Improve Educational Quality of Language Teaching*. online: <https://elearningindustry.com/using-e-learning-technologies-improve-educational-quality-language-teaching>

for them not only to successfully complete a class or a program, but also to learn more and achieve better results”. (P. 2.)<sup>7</sup>

This study examines the use of social networking sites and the technology use as a supplementing tool to “face to face” classes presently used in our schools in Kosova. The main focus is on the impact of those social networking and possible effects they may have in students’ sense of classroom community.

It seems rationally to suggest that social networking sites may be promising yet because of the lack of instructional tools with has a great potential towards enhancing teamwork among students that could positively impact students’ sense of connectedness and collaboration, and ultimately their sense of learning. There is an impression that social networking sites and digital media are transforming education and the way many subjects are presently taught in our schools. Social networking sites encourage collaboration among students, everyone who is interested can contribute to the subject matter, anyone can create, edit, comment or share information.

As a result, lecturers become more facilitators of studies, investigations, and collaboration in the finding of answers, solutions, and opportunities rather than authoritative knowledge transmitters. *Teamwork or classroom community* is a “sense that students have of belonging, a sense that they matter to one another and to their respective group, a feeling that they have duties, responsibilities and obligations to each other and to the school in general, and ultimately their group educational needs will be met through their commitment to shared learning goals and expectations. Therefore, this study focuses on the potential of web-based technologies towards building classroom communities among students, enhancing students’ engagement in education, potential approaches that could possibly be used in developing an enhanced learning environment that fosters collaboration and communication among students.

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<sup>7</sup> International Journal of Business and Social Science Vol. 4 No. 3; March 2013“Facebook in the University Classroom: Do Students Perceive that it Enhances Community of Practice and Sense of Community?” by Doris G. Duncan, and Casimir C. Barczyk, (Page. 2.)

## Chapter III

### 3.0 Research Methodology

My research study follows a qualitative methodology, as my main objective is to find and to understand the influence of using social networking in teaching English language process. This method can be applied to better understand a problem of which little is yet known still. While searching the different materials which I have included in the literature review, I pointed out that technology plays an important part which needs to be applied in the classroom. I researched different tools which are used in education and searched for importance of social networking in helping teachers to teach with different methodology and to help students to learn English faster while using them at school and in their homes.

Despite many efforts to incorporate modern technology in the learning process, there are still many restrains in this process, such as schools are not adequately supplied with sufficient number of computers, tablets, overhead projectors, internet access and other supporting technology. Stanley, Graham (2013) said, “Appropriate use of the new technologies allows for a more thorough integration of language, content and culture ever than before and provides students with unprecedented opportunities for autonomous learning” (p. 62.)<sup>8</sup> Learning using technologies has become a global phenomenon, and using these new communication technologies, particularly the internet, may offer exciting possibilities for overcoming geographical access and cost barriers to learning. This study examines the use of internet and social networks in particular as additional tools to enhance the learning process. The study focuses on:

- that technology can make changes in student grades, motivation and attendance.
- that all schools and students can benefit from the use of technology particular those who are teaching languages.
- the impact of internet and social networks on the learning process development and how

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<sup>8</sup> Stanley, Graham. (2013). Language Learning with Technology- Ideas for integrating technology in the language classroom ( page 62) : Cambridge University Press

they affect students.

- that student will acquire English as a Second Language effectively by increase of classroom interaction through technology and social networking without interaction from a qualified language teacher.

### 3.1 The aims of the research

Studying technology has changed a lot the English teaching techniques. Technology gives so many options as making teaching interesting and also making teaching more productive in terms of improvement.<sup>9</sup>

Technique giving lectures by using blackboard or whiteboard must be modified in accordance with the development of the technology. The use of multimedia texts in classroom helps students to get familiar with academic vocabulary and language structure, the benefits of internet give students a huge opportunity to gather information of various materials for analysis and interpretation of both language and context, also internet can increase student motivation to teach, understand and develop their knowledge in the process of learning English language. The fast development of computer assisted technology at the turn of the century helped various kinds of language learning programs to be developed, which assist teachers to teach English language. Many languages learning programs have played a very important part in English teaching activities. These programs allow students to repeat exercises that they can perform in class on their own without the need for intervention of the teacher and therefore make the process of teaching more efficient and effective. These programs are effective in vocabulary, idioms, grammar, pronunciation and spelling.

Doughty, Catherine & Williams Jessica (1998) said, “Digital technologies are perfect to help teachers working with learners, and learners working independently to do the necessary language training that makes their language development possible” (p. 64.)<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>[https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/C607%20Information%20and%20Communication\\_WEB%20ONLY\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/C607%20Information%20and%20Communication_WEB%20ONLY_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Doughty, Catherine & Williams Jessica (1998). *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition* (page 64). New York: Cambridge University Press

### 3.2 Research questions

In this study, I aim to research and to assess the impact of social networking in teaching English language. I will gather information through questionnaires and observations. As Mackey ,Alison and Gass Susan (2016) said, “the survey, in the form of a questionnaire, is one of the most common methods of collecting data on attitudes and opinions from a large number group of participants, as such it has been used to investigate a wide variety of questions in second language research”. (p.3.)<sup>11</sup> This research will have to answer those questions:

1. What can be the impact of social networks, in teaching?
2. Which will support best teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, physical or electronic structures?
3. What are the technologies for student support, and what are the guiding principles for the planning of those electronic technologies and social networks?

### 3.3 Research design and methodology

Changes in educational technology particularly have caused great changes for teachers and their students. Brown, H.D. (2007) said, “Although it is helpful to understand the learner from a psychological perspective, it is equally important to look at the other side of the desk i.e. on the attitudes that teachers have towards such changes in education” (p.28.)<sup>12</sup>

Adoption of new technologies from both teachers and students is important because effective adoption of new technologies involves teachers not only having suitable, personalized, effective examples of internet projects but also having positive attitudes towards new teaching methods using technology and social networking.

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<sup>11</sup> Mackey, Alison & Gass, Susan (2016). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design* (page 3). New York: Routledge

<sup>12</sup> Brown, H.D. (2007). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. (page 128) Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Teacher attitudes can be based on their own teaching beliefs, experience, general educational background, and other training, in involvement or non-involvement in implementation of technology in teaching English and other languages. Even though teachers may have positive attitudes towards computer use this does not mean that teachers will be able to use computers effectively in their English classes. Training appears to be key factor in a teacher's attitude, which sometimes appears to provide negative or positive attitudes towards implementation of technological innovations. Having a computer at home or in their institutions is viewed as a positive factor in teacher attitudes.

Many teachers still did not feel well prepared to use computers and the internet in their teaching even though their schools have computers. Information and extensive training for teachers are key factors in building positive attitudes for using technologies in teaching English. Training is very important especially in those cases where teachers do not have strong computer skills or capabilities in internet use. Teachers must have interest in use of education technology in their classes. Only trained teachers will gain motivation to use computers and online resources.

### **3.3.1 Participants of the study**

The participants in this study are students, teachers and the school principal from "Nazim Kokollari" lower and secondary and high school in Prizren, from "Leke Dukagjini" lower and high school in Prizren,, "Gjon Buzuku" high school in Prizren and "AAB" College in Prishtina. The age of the contestant is from 10 to 50, which they are members of different academic levels. In this study took part over 70 contestants, both males and females.

### **3.3.2 The study instruments**

Instruments used for data collection, analysis and the comparison of results of this study are interviews and questionnaires. Interviews are used with teachers of different subjects from different schools. Student's interviews are used in order to find out more information related to learner's strategies, students' attitudes, and feelings of being independent learners, and the way they cooperate with their fellow students using online media.

Two interviews and one questionnaire composed by the researcher are used in the research. The questionnaire is drafted in two formats, hard copy and online, it includes 12 questions in total and is used to identify students and teacher's interest in using modern technology and internet, reasons and frequency of their use, what are their expectations if technology and internet are incorporated in the learning process. One of the interviews is intended for teachers and school managerial staff, it includes 10 questions about school's infrastructure to support the use of modern technology, teachers' skills and readiness to use modern technology to enhance the overall teaching and learning process in general and perform online instruction as supplement to the classes they teach at their schools. The second interview is intended for the students on how to work on their assignments and how they can cooperate with each other online using social networking sites. The instructions were given to the participants in order to understand the purpose of the questionnaire. In this case questionnaires of this study are structured with multiple-choice questions. The form is machine-readable and given in Google form format to enable the dissemination of the forms and data entry in an organized fashion. The questionnaires are drafted originally in English language but due to the low level of comprehension of the English language among some of the students and teachers, the questions are translated into Albanian language too.

The purpose of the teacher's interview will be clearly explained to the participants. Teacher's interview information is obtained through inquiry and is also based on personal opinions and suggestions. Thus, teachers will be interviewed one-to-one so that we find out their attitude and approach towards using innovative technology, internet and online social media to enhance their teaching process. Tables, charts, and figures will be included in the research along with questionnaire information, and interviews obtained from students and teachers.

All these materials are analyzed and compared with literature that serve to answer the research questions inside the thesis, will help to derive a conclusion.

### 3.3.3. Procedure

The data gathering procedure commenced from identifying and collecting data during the teaching process in the lower and high school “Nazim Kokollari” in Prizren. The respective school was opened in 2005 and named after the Albanian patriot Nazim Kokollari . After several renovations of the old building, in year 2008 the school is one of the modern schools in our neighborhood. It is a 3-floor building with 10 classrooms, an IT room, a library, one room for teachers, the principal’s office, the secretary’s office, a football and basketball pitch.

The school enrolls annually over 400 students, and they come mostly from Prizren and villages. The approximate gender division is 45% males and 55% female among students. There are 29 teachers that along with managing and maintaining staff make a total of 37 employees. Initially, a meeting took place with the principal of “Nazim Kokollari” school, and the idea of this research was presented. The principal gave his consent and full support to conduct the research that will involve some teachers and students of this school. Suggestions, findings, conclusions and recommendations derived from this research, respectively the teaching methods and strategies on improving the quality of learning will be implemented in the respective school, certainly by the permission of the school staff. The students’ questionnaire and teachers’ interview will commence completion accordingly to the work plan timeline. The participants of this study will be over 70 students selected randomly, four teachers and a school principal. The age of the participants ranges from 10 to 15. The participants are both males and females.

There were two forms of questionnaire design used in the research, hardcopy and electronic through Google forms. Online method of collecting data is considered to be safer, timesaving, ensures students’ anonymity, and environment friendly. At the same time the database will automatically calculate data after the students answer the questionnaires and it will generate the overall results in numbers and charts. The expense of research is reduced by using online surveys. The responses are processed automatically, and the findings are accessible at any time. The margin of error in online surveys is significantly reduced because participants enter their responses directly into the system. Students are more likely to respond with honest answers when surveys are designed and sent in an anonymous manner. The research started 6 months with the students of 9<sup>th</sup> grade of “Nazim Kokollari” school. Before the research started it was explained the reason why the research was taking place and the researcher asked for their

help. They were ready to help me and the research has started with an interview. A paper with some questions was given to them, and they were asked to answer those questions. The questions were mainly about the use of innovative technology in education and their experience in using it, their thoughts about incorporating the modern technology in education. The researcher used an old transparency projector with plastic sheets, since that was the only overhead projectors in the school.

During the first two or three classes, an increased interest and attention among the students was noticed in the topics discussed. That resulted in a better discipline and better working environment in general. Later the researcher asked the students if they would be interested to present their homework assignments and tasks using the overhead projector, only to find out that the students were much interested in doing so. Students were assigned to work in their tasks in small groups, comprised of two, up to 4 persons. The researcher, in this case the English language teacher, provided the students with sufficient study material and resources as well as instructions. The researcher created separate groups on Facebook for grade 9 students, in that way the students could perform better collaborative work and at the same time they were monitored, supervised and advised on real time by the teacher, no matter the distance among the students themselves and the teacher. This type of work was fully supported by the school principal, who was pleased that students eagerly embraced this type of work and showed a greater interest in the learning process, in this case English language. Students of grade 9 have 3 English classes per week, students would notify the teacher that they have prepared their assignment and they are ready to present it in front of their classmates. This process continued for about 6 weeks; the researcher was very pleased with the enthusiasm shown by the students in using these methods.

### **3.3.4 Students' interview**

After the first presentations performed by the researcher, instructions were provided to the students on how to work on their assignments and how they can cooperate with each other online using social networking sites. Then an interview with grade 9 students followed their presentations to get their opinion on this matter.

1. What are your skills in using computer technology?
2. What do you think about incorporating technology in the learning process?
3. Do you get proper instructions in your classroom to fulfill your tasks and assignments?
4. Do you find it easier to cooperate with each other using online social media?
5. Do you have the impression that your teachers are ready to move on from chalkboards to laptops and tablets?

*Table: 3.1 Students' interview questions*

As it can be seen there are 5 questions about the use of computer technology and online social media. The students were asked to provide short and clear answers. Their answers will show us their individual thoughts about the use of technology and online social media in the learning process.

### **3.3.5 Teachers' interview**

This interview was drafted for teachers and school managerial staff, they had to answer 10 questions showing their opinion and thoughts about the use of technology, internet and online social media in the teaching-learning process.

1. Do you think your school meets the criteria and requirements need in 21 <sup>st</sup> century teaching process?
2. Is your school properly equipped with IT infrastructure?
3. Do you think your schoolteachers are ready and skilled to use the information technology and modern teaching tools?
4. It is well known that today, over 90% of students have access to internet and spend most of their time on social networks through personal computers, laptops, tablets and smart phones. Do you think that it may be possible for students to use online social networks as a group collaboration tool (from their homes) at the same time being monitored and mentored by teachers as facilitators in various tasks and projects?

5. If the students are working as a group in a project or task assigned by their teacher and they are performing their work online using internet. Do you think it may increase their level of responsibility and accountability about the duties and responsibilities they may have to their group?
6. Do you think social networks can be used as teaching tools to support direct, traditional "face to face" teaching presently used in Kosova?
7. Do you think it is important that teachers provide learning and collaboration opportunities for students where they spend most of their time - social networks and the Internet (posting educational material)?
8. Do you think students and teachers at your school are willing to move on from chalkboards to laptops, tablets, digital projectors and other technology tools in general?
9. It is known that in rural areas the majority of students do not have access to the informal education (training courses). Do you think that cooperation in relations "student-teacher", "student-student" and "student- wider community" using internet can eventually improve their knowledge?
10. Additional Comment (if any) about the IT use, the internet and social networks as supporting tool towards increasing the teaching quality process:

*Table 3.2: Teachers' interview questions*

## Chapter IV

### 4.0 Analysis and interpretation of the questionnaires' results

The participants in this study were mostly ninth graders from a junior high school. Having determined the population, an appropriate approach was utilized, which is a very important step in conducting a research. A proper approach is one that fits the population which is selected. Therefore, the representativeness of a population sample determines the validity of the generalization of the result.

The quantitative data derived from the questionnaires were analyzed using Google forms. In order to answer the three research questions, the descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages were used. The qualitative data were derived from teacher's interviews and school principal of junior high school "Nazim Kokollari". Below are the charts from students' questionnaire and their responses and teacher's interviews analyzed and interpreted.

#### 4.1 Students' interview results

The interview was about the use of computer technology and online social media. All the students answered all the questions and gave their opinions (their thoughts) about it.

**Q1:** What are your skills in using computer technology?

- Most of the students proved to be computer literate, and they spend a lot of their free time in front of a computer.

**Q2:** What do you think about incorporating technology in the learning process?

- According to most of the students, that would be more attractive to them, and they would be able to actively take part in that process.

**Q3:** Do you get proper instructions in your classroom to fulfill your tasks and assignments?

- Most of the students stated that they do get proper instructions in their classrooms by their teachers, but they also stated that it would be easier if teachers would continue to follow up their progress on their tasks and assignments.

**Q4:** Do you find it easier to cooperate with each other using online social media?

- Their answer was “yes”, according to them they are already using online social media to cooperate with each-other on various issues and tasks. Their only problem was that they don’t have internet access at school and they can only cooperate with each other when they are at home.

**Q5:** Do you have the impression that your teachers are ready to move on from chalkboards to laptops and tablets?

- Students’ impression on this question is that some of their teachers probably have good computer and technology skills, but a large number of them don’t. When they were asked “*How do they know that?*” Their answer was simple, we know that because very often teachers request help from the students on many occasions when they face problems or difficulties using new computer technology.

## **4.2 Teachers’ interview results**

**Q1:** Do you think your school meets the criteria and requirements need in 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching process?

- Most of the teachers and the school principal think their school does not meet the criteria and requirements needed in 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching.

**Q2:** Is your school properly equipped with IT infrastructure?

- According to the school principal and the teachers which were interviewed, in their school there exists a poor IT infrastructure, their school doesn’t have any computer lab, the computers they have are old and hardly functional. There are only two projectors, one is a

very old one, transparent projector with plastic sheets, and the other one is a video projector, but it doesn't have any HDMI port and it cannot be connected with most of latest laptops that teachers may have.

**Q3:** Do you think your schoolteachers are ready and skilled to use the information technology and modern teaching tools?

- All the interviewed participants stated that most of their schoolteachers do not possess the adequate skills to use innovative technology and teaching tools.

**Q4:** It is well known that today, over 90% of students have access to internet and spend most of their time on social networks through personal computers, laptops, tablets and smart phones. Do you think that it may possible for students to use online social networks as a group collaboration tool (from their homes) at the same time being monitored and mentored by teachers as facilitators in various tasks and projects?

- Most of the interviewed participants stated that they are aware that many of their students have access to various social networks and it would be the right thing if students use social media to cooperate with each-other on educational issues but given the fact of poor school infrastructure and inadequate preparation of teachers, it would be difficult for the teachers to monitor and mentor them. But at the same time, some of the teachers said they are already doing this from their homes.

**Q5:** If the students are working as a group in a project or task assigned by their teacher and they are performing their work online using internet. Do you think it may increase their level of responsibility and accountability about the duties and responsibilities they may have to their group?

- The answer to this question was quite interesting since teachers thought it would have positively affected the students working on the project, but the school principal thought the opposite. According to the school principal, online collaboration among the students outside

the school may have a negative effect on the traditional teaching and learning process, since it may weaken schools' official functions and credibility.

**Q6:** Do you think social networks can be used as teaching tools to support direct, traditional "face to face" teaching presently used in Kosova?

- Majority of the teachers agree that social networks can be used as support tools, but with an reliable teacher supervision, even think that it facilitates the teaching process whenever such conditions exist. Similar answer was given by the school principal too.

**Q7:** Do you think it is important that teachers provide learning and collaboration opportunities for students where they spend most of their time - social networks and the Internet (posting educational material)?

- According to the teachers interviewed that would increase students' interest in learning, because students would have access to educational instructional materials at any time and any location they might be.

**Q8:** Do you think students and teachers at your school are willing to move on from chalkboards to laptops, tablets, digital projectors and other technology tools in general?

- Most of the interviewed teachers think that the level of technology use among students is higher than among the teachers. But such a transition would be difficulty due to lack of adequate infrastructure.

**Q9:** It is known that in rural areas the majority of students do not have access to the informal education (training courses). Do you think that cooperation in relations "student-teacher", "student-student" and "student- wider community" using internet can eventually improve their knowledge?

- The interview participants think that such cooperation would have positive and soothing effects for the students that do not have access to this non-formal education and can eventually fill any gaps in their knowledge.

**Q10:** Additional Comment (if any) about the IT use, the internet and social networks as supporting tool towards increasing the teaching quality process:

- Participants additional comments were: This century is associated to the IT technology, the sooner schools reach satisfactory level being equipped and using IT technology it will be easier and better for the student and the teachers too. At this point in time, using online social networks often are misunderstood and misused, because students spend a huge amount of time on social networks and other sites without any positive and proper use that students would benefit from, hence, there must be some sort of control over children on how much time they spend on social networks and at the same time to advise them how they can positively use these online social media.

### **4.3 Students' questionnaire results**

Nowadays using E-mail is becoming very effective writing skills so in this way E-mails gives you the chance of using language of your choice which can help exposing your writing skills.

*Goodwyn, Andrew (2000) said, "Text-Chatting: Is another important technical method for developing writing abilities in English language. This is a great method for writers to communicate their thoughts and ideas with one another in a more expedient way" (p. 92.)*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Goodwyn, Andrew (2000). English in the Digital Age: Information Communications Technology (ICT) and the Teaching of English (p. 92). London: CASSELL

### Use of internet

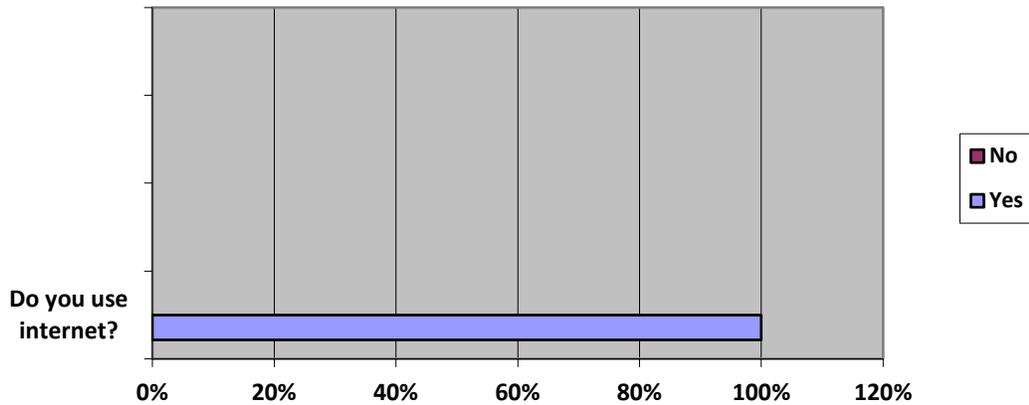


Table 4.1 – The use of internet

All respondents, that is 100% of them answered that they regularly use internet on daily bases, either to check their mail, be informed with the current things happening that effect their lives, looking up for something using online search engines, and to stay in touch with their family, relatives and friends.

### Frequency of internet use

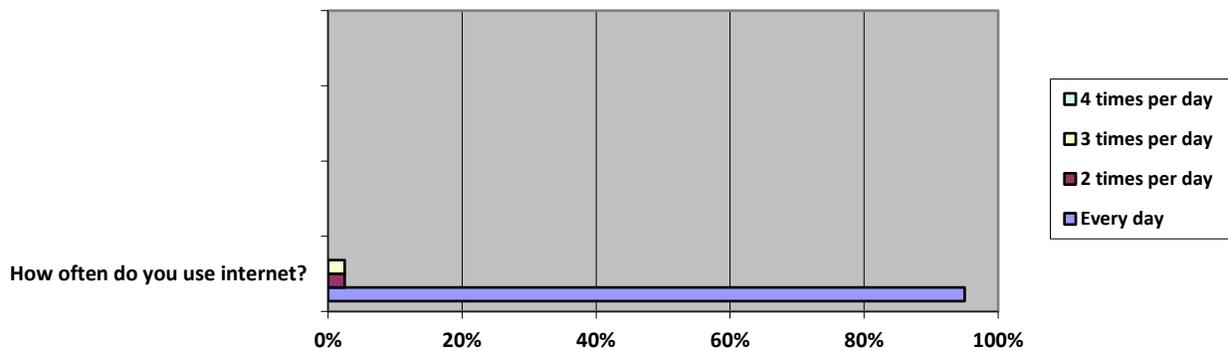


Table 4.2 – Frequency of internet use

An overwhelming majority of the respondents that is 95% indicated that they access internet on daily bases, and they stay online most of the time. Only a small number of respondents, 5% of them indicated that they don't use internet during the whole day. 2.5% of respondents stated

they use internet 2 times per day and 2.5% stated that they use internet 3 times per day. According to most of the respondents, using internet on daily bases has become their life style.

### Time length of internet use

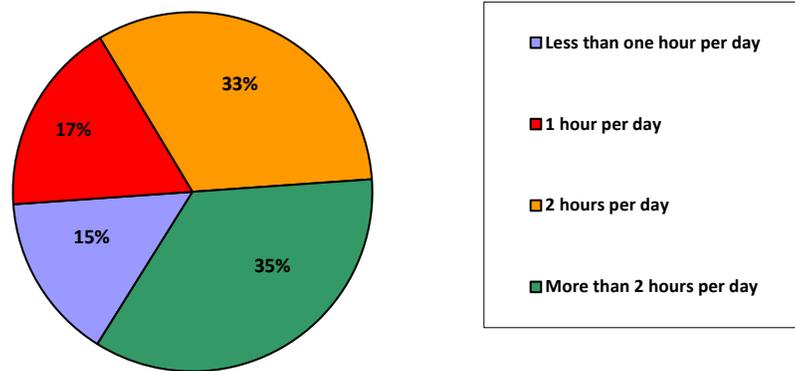


Table 4.3 – Time length of internet use

Regarding the time length, the majority of respondents (34%) claimed that they use internet more than 2 hours per day, 33% at least two hours per day, 18% one hour per day and 15% less than one hour per day. This indicates that nearly 70% of the respondents spend a considerable amount of time surfing on internet, mostly on social networks and online media.

### Social networks used

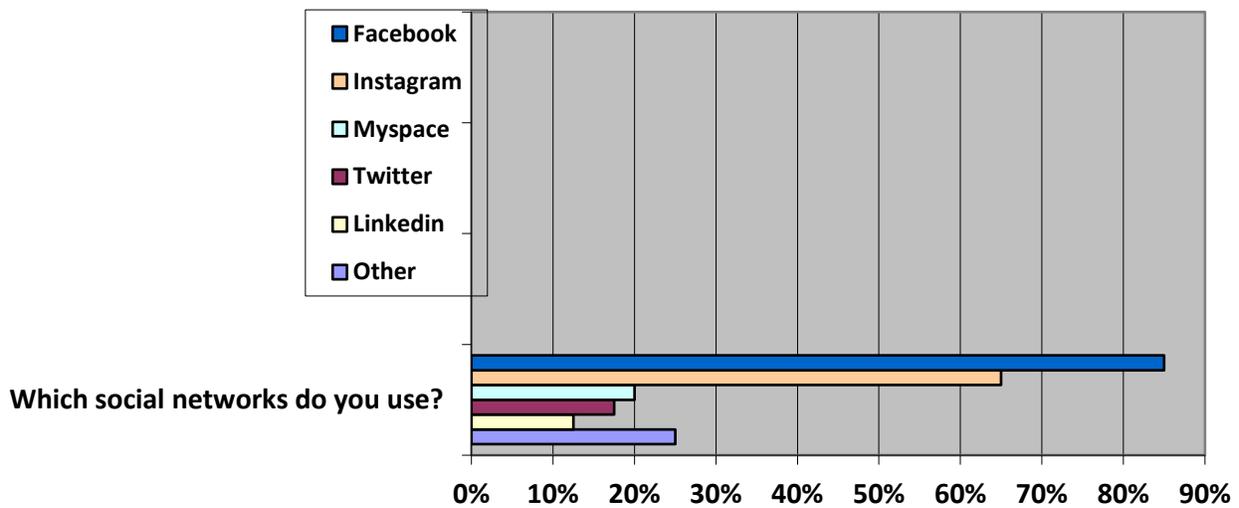


Table 4.4 – Social networks used

In the question “Which social networks do you use?”, 85% of the participants answered they mostly use Facebook mostly to stay in touch with their family member, relatives and friends, 65% of respondents apart from Facebook they also use Instagram, 20% of participants use MySpace, 17.5% use Twitter, 12.5% use LinkedIn and about 20% of the respondents said they use some other social networks without indicating their name. It is obvious that social networks are a global phenomenon that is here to stay and has greatly affected our life. According to the respondents they use social networking sites a lot, because they can easily communicate to one another or to a whole group, they can discuss school assignments/tasks, they can post ideas, comments and website links and even they can spend their free time playing online games that these social networking sites offer.

**Why do you think social networking sites are important?**



*Table 4.5 – The importance of social networks*

The percentage of the respondents which were asked, *why they think social networking sites are important?* 50% of them stated that they use social networks to stay in touch with family, relatives and friends, 21% stated they use social networks for educative purposes, especially to cooperate with their peers on lessons discussed at school and collaborating on any given task or assignment, 19% say they use social networks to be informed, whereas 10% stated they use social networks just for fun on their free time.

### Your skills using social network?

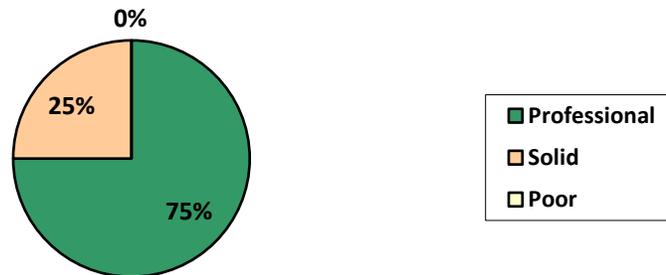


Table 4.6 – Skills in using social networks

Over 75% of respondents proved to be very professional on using social networks, only 25% of them stated that their skills are solid since they have recently created accounts on some of the networking sites. Based on their interest in using these sites, soon they will join the other 75% of professionals.

### Do you think social networks can help you to get better results in your studies?

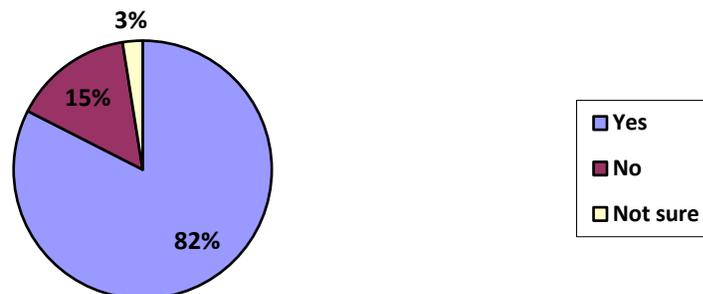


Table 4.7 – The possible impact of social network in the attaining better study results

When the respondents were asked if social networks can help them to get better results in their studies, an overwhelming majority of 82% replied positively, while 15% of the participants said they don't think social networks can assist them in getting better results in their studies, and 3% of the respondents were not sure.

When the respondents were asked “*In what ways would social networks assist you in your studies?*” The response to this question is a clear indicator that students are frequently using social media for a wide range of purposes, such as:

*Searching for answers on internet and cooperating with fellow students; for communication, cooperation and studying; one can find a lot more information on internet than in a book; correlation with friends and colleagues, analyzing opinions and statutes and so on; improving English skills; doing homework; asking others for help; becoming a member of a study group; getting information about topics discussed whenever a student is absent from school; exchanging information and stay in touch with colleagues; and improving general knowledge.*

This question was also debated in an open discussion, and students spoke extensively about the positive effects of social networks, they mostly highlighted the online collaboration with their peers since they no longer had to travel from one side of their village to the other one just to meet their peers to cooperate or seek advice on any issues, they face during the learning process.

Regarding on the following question: “*What are the positive aspects of social networks?*” their answers were: *stay in touch with family, relatives and friends; stay informed about things happening around; share ideas and opinions; help each other in many issues; facilitate relations between school and the student on different information that teachers may convey to the students; discuss about homework with peers; learn new things and exchange information, one can express his/her talent that might have been underestimated.*

A large number of respondents stated that online learning is a kind of enjoyment for them and them like it a lot more than the school environment. They explained some of the reasons for that, such as: some students are hesitant to be engaged in the classroom environment, either they feel shy or they would feel embarrassed in front of their peers if they would give a wrong answer to the teacher and in some cases they are afraid that the teacher would give them a low or negative mark.

*Broadcasting* is another method which can be used to improve our skills in listening English language, using this we can listen radio and TV also there are many programs and online web pages where we can find by searching on the Internet, we can choose what do we want to listen for our needs.<sup>14</sup>

When they participants were asked “**What are the negative aspects of social networks?**” most of them indicated: *wasting too much time online; health issues when staying too long in front of a PC or on a smart phone; improper language use; some people may use social media for bad intentions; addiction to social networks and loosing grip with everyday life; online friendship; performing less physical activities.*

Most of the respondents, claimed that they are afraid being ridiculed by their peers and it leads to the assumption that if they make mistakes or errors when posting their work or comments online it can be viewed by a large number of people and they may appear awkward, foolish and incompetent, and “losing face” in the sight of their peers. As we know that adolescence is a sensitive and formative period in everyone’s life, therefore high school students are hyper-aware of how they are perceived by their peers. They try to assert themselves and project confidence within their community, hence a large number of students avoid taking part in online study activities that will show any of their weakness. For example, speaking or writing in a foreign language in group work is an activity that makes one very vulnerable. This is not the case with college students, they say that they would welcome any comments or new ideas from their colleagues or professors. According to them the excessive use of social networks may have impacts on the physical aspects of individuals such as: weakened perceptive skills, finger and back pain, neck pain, damaging their eye sight and the increased weight which was recently ranked one of the main factors of obesity.

And lastly the respondents were asked to “**Write any additional comments**”, they wrote some concise but quite interesting comments, such as:

*One can share, photos, feelings and ideas with family and friends; if social networks are used at early age, children may get addicted to them by playing different games and leisure activities*

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<sup>14</sup>[https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/F044%20ELT48%20The%20Use%20of%20the%20Media%20in%20English%20Language%20Teaching\\_v3.pdf](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/F044%20ELT48%20The%20Use%20of%20the%20Media%20in%20English%20Language%20Teaching_v3.pdf)

*which sometimes may lead to segregation from the real life, and real life activities; social media and networks could have both impacts, negative and positive ones. However, as we live in global world, its use it is a sort of “must” use; social networks play an important role in our life.*

Further, research results show that in addition to “Facebook”, they also quite often use the “Instagram”. However, other social networks are not being widely used. This research results confirms that, for the moment, the most popular social network is “Facebook” followed by “Instagram”.

Perhaps this is because "Twitter" is mostly used to build professional networks, and so the respondents do not use it frequently.

The findings show that students, regardless of physical distance, use social networks and current technologies to create new things, learn new things in new ways, and interact in new ways. These new technologies may be valuable instruments in educational processes, and teachers and institutions should take them seriously. It has been observed that young people use information technology such as personal computers, smart phones, and tablets for their studies well as to communicate with family, relatives, and friends via social media.



*Picture 4.8 – Student’s devices use to access internet*

During a week, nearly 85% of students spend between one and five hours read different websites and social networks. Encouraging a large number of respondents say they use social networking sites to discuss educational topics such as homework, tasks and school assignments. The use of social networks seems to be an excellent supplementing tool to facilitate group work on projects and can be used for assignments, class discussions, and discussions supporting the work they do at schools. There may be differences in students' responsiveness to establish group collaboration and the sense of group responsibility involving the integration of social media into their school courses. Students of younger age are more familiar with the internet and information technologies. Female students are more socially oriented than male students, according to the study, and social networks provide them with more options for participation in their academic goals, such as opportunities to build connections and share information with others.



*Picture 4.9 – Classroom community*

In rural regions, gender and age effects in students' classrooms were found to be limited, with female students demonstrating a stronger feeling of classroom community than male students, as well as an interest in online communication and being more supportive than male students. Female students were more concerned with feeling connected to their professors and classmates. In general, and in particular, female students outperformed male students when it came to learning through social networks or online media. People can use social networking sites and online media to engage in intercultural debate and critical thinking since they provide a worldwide, interactive, and information-sharing platform. Online social media, according to research, improves peer-to-peer interactions and informal learning. According to the results of the questionnaire and interviews, a high percentage of students have already utilized Facebook for learning activities and to collaborate with one another.

#### **4.4 Discussion of the results**

The study of this research shows that social networks help to build classroom communities and it can be used:

1. If used appropriately, social networks may increase students' engagement by cultivating classroom community and stimulating collaboration among them.
2. As a supplement tool to the classroom discussions, many of the students were already familiar with social networks, especially Facebook. Which they use it frequently and can easily navigate in it. Facebook users had the impression like valued participants and were willing to contribute to their group discussions on the subjects they study at school.
3. Social network users reported that they became more acquainted with their classmates, and

Latest findings show that online social media can be used effectively for academic discussions, and it is quite comparable with others research done in foreign countries overall.

According to Facebook groups and discussion facilities which are focused on the academic use were studied by De Villiers (2010). This research of postgraduate distance learning students who joined a voluntary Facebook group in order to discuss academic topics and content, it was found that learning and perceptions were superior when participating in those discussions, which included items, designed to get beyond the study materials needed for the project or assignment.

Social networks, namely Facebook was used as a learning tool in a preliminary management of information systems course to build up a better learning environment that fostered collaboration and communication by Ractham, Kaewkitipong and Firpo (2012). Additional data gained by Ractham and his team were that Facebook usage in the classroom can be time consuming for the teachers, yet frequent communication with students is very important in order to keep a high level of interest and activity in the learning environment in general.

#### **4.5 Benefits from social networking sites**

In terms of the advantages that students gain from using social networking sites, The findings revealed that kids can gain a lot from social networking sites. However, the main three benefits were:

1. Social networking sites improve technology proficiency.
2. Enhance social skills, and
3. Help students communicate in new ways with new people.

Large extent, our research results are in harmony with findings that there is increasing evidence that social networking sites improve technology proficiency, enhance social skills, and encourage learning. Our research results point to the fact that social networking sites help students communicate in new ways with new people, this is to some extent harmonious with findings that many students are using new media and technologies to create new things in new ways, learn new things in new ways, and communicate in new ways with new people. Zhang, Zhongfei & Zhang, Ruofei (2009) said, "Through Multimedia and network technology we can

offer students not only sources of authentic materials but also an attractive and a friendly interface, vivid pictures and pleasant sound which to a large extent overcomes the lack of authentic language environment and arouses students' interest in learning English". (P. 5.)<sup>15</sup>

#### **4.6 Skills acquired from the use of social networking sites**

Our findings do not appear to support the notion that social networking sites increase academic writing skills, as many respondents stated that they primarily use informal language when conversing with their friends, unless they are communicating with their teachers. However, our findings are harmonious with results that students who regularly use social networking sites enhance technology and communication skills, creativity, and openness to new and diverse views. From these findings it is clear that students gain some education related skills from using social networking sites even though the importance of these skills may vary from different age groups.

#### **4.7 Research Questions:**

##### **1. What can be the impact of social networks, in teaching?**

Recently, social networks have demonstrated that they can assist in the establishment of a new mode of communication and collaboration in which students and teachers do not need to communicate in a face-to-face classroom environment. They change the way of teaching and learning environment which undeniably bring impacts in the whole learning process. The effect of social networking sites in teaching and learning process are mostly reflected on teaching and learning styles, the communication and collaboration between students and their teachers. The learning and teaching process has progressed to the point where it is no longer constrained by the four walls of a classroom. We observe communication growing in the bosom of a variety

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<sup>15</sup> Zhang, Zhongfei & Zhang, Ruofei (2009). Multimedia Data Mining: A Systematic Introduction to Concepts and Theory (page 5). London: CRC Press

of highly popularized social networking sites, notably among younger generations overall, especially with the ongoing development in technology and generally in science.

At this point in time, the best use of social networks can be organized as a combination of traditional classroom and online teaching as anticipated by Schmidt and Brown (2004). They I think that such a mixture may possibly enhance the teaching and learning environment as well as skills of technology use of both students and teachers. The quality of experimental learning when using social networks needs to be achieved by exploring the teaching style, evaluating students' preferred learning styles, at the same time having a sound knowledge about online and traditional learning and teaching tools and carefully selecting them, and lastly, implementing, revising, and reflecting the online teaching plans.

According to Schmidt the process will be more effective if classroom action research are implemented by teachers along the way (Schmidt, 2002).

They can be used as tools that allow users to easily create content by social interaction, using our keyboards or mobile devices experts are easy to reach, if we know how to find them and how to connect to them.

## **2. What physical and electronic structures best support teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

Schools, classrooms, and libraries are all examples of learning settings. And it is surely in locations like these that much of today's learning takes place. But, because we live in an innovative, interconnected society, this will not be the case in the future. These learning scenarios can be online, virtual, and even further away. To put it another way, it doesn't have to be a physical space at all. An improved way to think of a modern learning environment may be a framework that organizes and supports the conditions in which understudies achieve their information in a best conceivable way, these frameworks have to be contained the valuable human connections, special learning needs of each understudy and adequate bolster required for successful learning. The learning environment is the tool, structure and society that can most motivate students and teachers to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. These knowledge

and skills are the requirements of all of us in life in a globalized world. These skills include teamwork, communication, interpersonal skills and leadership skills.

Furthermore, learning spaces should be able to:

- Smoothly integrate a wide range of modern-day technologies and teaching modalities.
- Originate learning practices, physical environments and human support that will maintain the teaching and learning processes for best skills outcomes.
- Share best practices and incorporate present day skills into classroom practice that supports professional learning communities and enables cooperation among the teachers too.
- Facilitates students to learn in an appropriate, real world perspective such as through project-based work.
- Provides impartial access to quality learning technologies, tools, and resources.
- Offers an interior design for individual, group, and team learning.
- Supports a larger community and international involvement in learning, online and face to face.

### **3. What are the technologies for student support, and what are the guiding principles for the planning of those electronic technologies and social networks?**

The present trend of technology revolution has a great impact in transforming our work, the teaching and learning process and our daily routines. This impact is transforming the way young people and children play, communicate with each other, access information, and learn. But, till now, this technology revolution has not transformed most of teaching and learning processes in our classrooms and schools. We all know that communication and information technologies are very useful in the teaching process. They play an important role in motivating and engaging the students. Consequently, teachers must do their best to integrate such tools as social networking sites and a wide range of technology in teaching.

The use of modern technologies should be inclusive, specific and everywhere, but teaching process should drive the technology instead of technology driving the teaching process.

The social practices of the new generations are always evolving as is the technology and digital or online communication. New innovations will come forward at an increasingly faster rate, our society needs to look after our future by designing modern and attractive learning environments for our students.

Nowadays, student supporting technology should offer the following basic remedies:

- 1- Core network: wireless access, routing and switching, network security.
- 2- Communications, including audio and video: videoconferencing, rich media on-demand, overhead projectors, telepresence, telephony and its applications.
- 3- School building control: physical security, video monitoring via security cameras.

## **Chapter V**

### **5.0 Recommendations**

It came out clearly that social networking sites are broadly being utilized by students of diverse age groups and as such it is prompted that the educational educate ought to take learning to where the students are, that's on the social systems. It is also recommended that educational institutions in developing countries like Kosova should permit integration of social media in the learning process because learners gain a lot of useful skills from use of online social media. Lastly, it is strongly recommended that online social media should not be banned in educational institutions because of the benefits and skills that learners gain from using them. To this effect, it is therefore recommended that educational institutions that banned use of social networking sites should lift the ban and all educational institutions are hereby advised promote the positive effect that social networking sites can have in education, at the same time to advise the students to refrain from negative and inadequate use of online social media.

### **5.1 Learning environment**

Usually learning environments are places such as schools, classrooms and libraries but nowadays we live in a technology interconnected world so these learning environments can also be online , virtual and remote sometimes we don't even need to be physical location at all. Learning environment is a system where people achieve their knowledge in a best possible way because this system is very constructive human relationships and give a unique support for effective learning. The tools, institutions, and society that best encourage students and teachers to acquire the necessary information and skills that life in a globalized world needs of us all are known as study environments. As a result, this research looks at how technical systems and physical locations affect learning, but it also considers how those resources can best promote the positive human relationships that are so important to the learning process. One should keep in mind that space, time, technology and culture, have a direct impact on teaching and learning process and that their influence is collective.

Learning is effective when all the above-mentioned systems are properly incorporated into a faultless whole in which each system supports and strengthens the others. Schools are supposed to dedicate themselves to more than just the mind body connection alone in order to educate the whole child.



*Picture 5.0- Student centered learning methodology – group work*

Modern learning environment is considered as a united and interactive system which:

- Generates best learning practice, necessary human support and a physical environment that best supports teaching and learning processes.
- Facilitates students to learn in a relevant and real-world context (e.g. through project based or other applied work).
- Permits reasonable access to high quality learning tools such as technologies, and other additional resources.
- Offers an appropriate architectural and interior design for individual, group and team learning.
- Can support local and international community to be involvement in the learning process, both face to face and online.

These environments encourage learning that is adapted to the needs of the individual students. So this type of learning process can occur anytime and anywhere it depends whenever the learner desires. Learning often offers the chance to obtain skills and their knowledge using learning strategies that are adapted and personalized according to the learner's which depends on their own learning style and preferences. School design is an important issue for most of our schools these days. Many of our school buildings are old, overcrowded, and in desperate need of repair. Obviously, nowadays there are many schools that have well advanced past this obsolete model. Nowadays most of the classrooms are very flexible, colorful, and more engaging with learning strategies. Students may no longer sit in rows, technology is more present, in the form of a whiteboard, computers and overhead projectors. But these classrooms are just the beginning, a lot more needs to be done for learning to truly thrive.

Basically, schools should be able to offer an environment that best supports and enhances the learning process, encourages innovation and fosters positive relationships, to sum up, be a tool for learning.

The previous century school designs do not fit well today's complex educational needs. School designs may either slow down or support and enhance such a strong education program. Learning plans which are best described as plans for adaptability when no one can predict how instructive innovations, educating modalities and procedures will advance within the future, learning spaces ought to be able to adjust to anything changes long-term may bring which we don't know, however.

Nowadays in favor of every student, every school should encourage intellectual curiosity with social interactions like "Design Share", an organization that dedicates sharing the best innovations with different practices in schools which will give outstanding support as an annual awards program to identify outstanding school design across the world. According to this organization, schools have to create environments where the children know each other and know their teachers, as people and not just academically.

The very important fact which we have to consider is that schools which advance availability, invitingness, openness, collaboration and interaction within the cruel time they ought to diminish pressures that will possibly lead to acts of inattentiveness, acting up, and bullying of students.

Teachers need spaces and tools that promote collaborative planning and information sharing.



*Picture 5.1- Flexible group work using some of the available technology and equipment*

## **5.2 Connecting with the world**

According to John Dewey, the noted American educator and philosopher, observed that learning that endures is “*got through life itself.*” Modern learning environments may have a small physical space, but learning activities extend out into the local community and the world at large so students can get in touch with their peers worldwide to share information and data on common problems. So every student and teachers may ask for the advice of world prominent experts to assist them in investigation of their projects which will be useful for them in any

time. Technology obviously facilitates such connections, but a proper school physical structure, plays an important role in facilitating these essential contemporary learning experiences. (p.9)<sup>16</sup>



*Picture 5.2 – Technology facilitated learning environment*

### **5.3 Students’ supporting technology**

Social networks and modern technology need maintenance to stay up to date. At the same time, student and even teachers need training and constant support to maximize benefits from the technology. Public educational system with a low budget is often incapable to compete with the private educational institutions, due to their limited technical support personnel. It's exceptionally vital for each school to be given with a few inventive educational frameworks that execution as a issue into a learning opportunity setting up the programs which is able organize and prepare each student into bunches or on their possess. At the same time those

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<sup>16</sup>Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills: “21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments, page 9, <http://mcdougall.rockyview.ab.ca/one-to-one/white-paper-1-1>

students gain important technical skills, while working on other important skills like project planning, teamwork and time management.

Despite the fast development pace which seems to be connected with technology, educators are advised to slow down when it comes to making important technology decisions. Experts 21<sup>st</sup> said, “Day by day using the following critical thinking skills encourages the authorities to gather data from many sources, examine assumptions, and foresee alternative scenarios to make the informed adequate choice” (p. 19.) <sup>17</sup>

In our case, here in Kosova with not enough resources and high expectations, a careful technology planning approach is a must.



*Picture 5.3 – Students’ supporting technology*

Government officials and technology planners may find it useful to use a baseline strategy. For our country, at this point it is not possible to provide the entire school labs and staff with the

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<sup>17</sup> Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills: “21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments, page 19, <http://mcdougall.rockyview.ab.ca/one-to-one/white-paper-1-1>

latest digital technology. In some situations, it would be very reasonable that teachers should first be equipped with the necessary classroom tools for instructional and professional effectiveness which would be for the benefit of every student. Each teacher for least necessity ought to have a portable workstation with web network with fitting applications for scholastic and regulatory back in general. Classrooms should be equipped with overhead projectors or whiteboards for in class display and presentations. As a basic tool for digital media production for the school libraries and the lab, school technology should support at least many concurrent who have access to online electronic resources. Within the future, as more assets may ended up accessible, extra gadgets such as notebooks or tablets for understudies may be given. Instructive and organizational proficiency depends on telecommunications framework adaptability, with adequate transmission capacity to completely back web, communication, and neighborhood region activity, furthermore, save assets that permits future extension and the utilize of modern applications.



*Picture 5.4 – Classroom supporting technology*

Schools should be equipped with Local Area Network, for everyday school needs and they should cover the whole school building such as classrooms, library, administrative and counseling offices, and any other school premises. Usually for instructional purposes "LAN" operates with videoconference, remote access for educational purposes which gives enormous support to distance learning.

Within schools, the LAN should be designed to support the following:

- Basic network: routing, switching, network security and wireless internet access
- Building security controls: physical security of the school (video monitoring)
- It should support a wide range of communications (audio and video): telephony, videoconferencing, rich media on demand and telepresence, as shown on the following picture.



*Picture 5.5 – Distance learning and remote access for educational purposes*

Every educational institution should provide high-speed internet access to their students 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to create technology-supported learning environments. This access will increase the learning support systems that carry out online evaluation and data recovery for educators, while teachers can browse curriculum resource websites and portals where students may be interested when schools' libraries share electronic. When using high speed internet connections, students, teachers and families can have a full access to media rich educational resources that supports their participation in anytime and anywhere learning communities. The internet access is critical in overcoming segregation of low socio-economic communities especially in rural areas.

It may too be valuable to connect such a organize to higher instructive educate, in that way a national inquire about and instruction organize may be made. Adaptable learning situations that empower productive learning and the inventive utilize of time that advance persistent or life learning prepare, the up-to-date innovation that underpins collaboration among the understudies and the rest of the world, all these frameworks are vital as it were as distant as they effectively bolster person associations on which much of the learning depends. John Dewey long ago, envisioned schools as “miniature communities” that reflected the social relations and activities of a wider society in which they were set.

Lots of schools many years ago have been isolated from the outside world where classrooms from other classrooms, without any proper cooperation among the teachers and schools. Recently that has changed thanks to technology and internet use, students and teachers can be connected via technology and their collaborative arrangements. Study showed that an educational community was filled with a positive background. But what is the positive school background? According to the Change Leadership Group at Harvard, said “invisible but powerful meanings and mindsets” that shape the learning environments even more than the rigid four walls of the classroom. What positive backgrounds are most effective? The answer is „many“. Findings suggest that there is no one education system for everyone, which is why it is of paramount importance that schools are capable to foster their innovative teaching

methods, develop their own personnel and adequately manage curriculum and classroom that best fit the needs of their students. (p. 22.)<sup>18</sup>

In our daily lives, we all have some common elements that unite us in real life such as trust and respect, so it should be in all school communities where every staff must be strongly committed to the good of all. Each student merits to have full commitment who needs to memorize must have full commitment since it'll influence their educational, social, enthusiastic, and physical well-being. There is strong proof, that a better community and parental participation yields better results and important educational advantages.

Strong home-school relations can result some of the outcomes listed herein:

- When their parents are involved in their education, children show better results in school
- Student achievements are higher, with after school learning opportunities
- Community youth development programs encourage intellectual performance
- Integrating community services at schools promote resilience in children. (p.23.)<sup>19</sup>

Advances in technology can enable much of the above-mentioned learning, research indicate that tools are only as much effective as the users of these tools. Along with modern architectures of our schools with sophisticated technology infrastructures, support must come for school staff members to further expand their technology skills.

We must construct schools that can go beyond the traditional schools that many of us experienced when we were young. Recently the world is facing the increasing use of the internet where people day by day become addicted to the internet and technology starting from all ages starting from children to adults so our world has demands for environments which are flexible and where the teaching takes place is required to have a mix of media, equipment, and virtual and real relationships. These courses of action will advance sound societies of shared regard

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<sup>18</sup> Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills: “21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments, page 22,  
<http://mcdougall.rockyview.ab.ca/one-to-one/white-paper-1-1>

<sup>19</sup> Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills: “21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments, page 23,  
<http://mcdougall.rockyview.ab.ca/one-to-one/white-paper-1-1>

and bolster among understudies, instructors, families, and the society, serving their long lasting learning needs and bringing together learners around the world in tending to worldwide challenges, issues and openings.

## Chapter VI

### 6.0 Conclusions

The Internet is a wonderful teaching tool when used correctly. Students can research just about everything. Using technology and social networking helps learning a foreign language quickly and easily using the various computer applications. If we compare the way of learning a language before we can find many differences. Every type of language teaching has had its own technologies to support it. Technology contributes to student motivation, higher order thinking, and mastery of basic skills. Students respond more to real communication as opposed to the more structured kind in a classroom, feeling more relaxed and engaged, and being more willing to take risks with their new language. Foreign language teachers have a specific niche: Their job is to teach students a whole new language, including the nuanced rules of grammar and cultural norms. Computers, smartphones, tablets, the internet, apps, and websites are all around us and it is a rare day when a student or teacher does use at least one of these technology tools to learn or teach a language.

Nowadays lots of surveys try to investigate applying social networking sites in education. A few of the thinks about appeared that social networking sites which are being utilized in instruction understudies had parts of benefits and abilities amid learning among surveys and interviews which were the foremost imperative instruments of the consider. Data was gathered from students from different educational institutions in Kosova. The most popular social websites nowadays which people use enormously are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Myspace, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Moreover, it is additionally concluded that youthful learners to a few expand utilize social organizing innovations for think about purposes, basically when conducting gather work on assignments or assignments.

Overall research results recommend students to obtain different useful skills which give results during use of social network sites which present collaboration skills, research, and technology proficient skills. Advantages of social networking sites and online media incorporate improvement of students' technology skills which increase students' social skills which help them to be in touch with different people.

## 6.1 Current trends

Lately, an enormous number of educators and students have a discussion about applications of social networking sites that should make use of positive effects in education which are obtained from study analyses. Online social networking sites are a way of conveying and sharing information with a large audience. Every human being in life has the chance to produce, give out, and give an opinion about their needs about internet connection. All the learners of different ages cooperate in different kinds of web platforms, web pages, and wikis.

Instructors who need to talk the same dialect with the understudies apparently pay the same consideration to these modern communication advances and they attempt to coordinate the social organizing locales in their educating exercises separated from their individual users.

Students can further explore and investigate on topics they are interested in, using online social networking sites. By establishing connections with other people that have the same interest, students can learn and exchange their knowledge with others, whom they may not have had the opportunity to interact with.

## 6.2 Importance of social networking sites in education

Social networking sites that affect personal and professional people's lives are no longer ignored but are very important to combine social media tools that are based on the curriculum. Teachers can use social media to help them prepare their lesson plans in accordance with the changing demands of their students and society.

- **Immediate Feedback:** The use of social networking sites provides students with immediate feedback. Social networking sites allow teachers to present the students immediate instructional guidance in and outside of the classroom.
- **Understanding and recognizing the learners' needs:** The use of social networking sites allows teachers to quickly recognize students' learning needs. The continuous submission of student viewpoints provides teacher with enough material so as to assess student learning.

- **Enhances communication:** Use of social networking sites in or outside the classroom provides enough opportunities to transform the passive and one way communication or teacher centered to an active and student centered, two-way communications. Teachers can share links and information to a wide range of learning resources, at the same time they can post homework assignments, and share news with the student community.
- **Creates a collaborative atmosphere:** The basic nature of social networking sites stimulates collaboration among learners and teachers. To a large extent it supports the theory of social constructivism, whose main belief is that students learn better in their natural social environment.
- **Increases students' engagement.** Social networking sites have the potential to increase student engagement. Student engagement is defined as students' participation in activities and circumstances that are linked with high quality learning. (Kuh, 2003). The use of social media tools offers the teachers an opportunity to reach the students who are hesitant to be an active member of the teaching – learning process.

### 6.3 Social networking sites and approaches to learning

- **Constructivist Approach:** Constructivism is an approach/paradigm that believes that learning is an active and constructive process. The learners create or construct their own subjective representations of objective reality. It involves the process of construction and restructuring prior knowledge. Social media tools support the constructivist theory to a large extent.
- **Social Constructivism:** The collaborative character of learning and the role of cultural and community context in the learning process are central to the social constructivist approach. The act of creating meaning and being a member of a knowledge community are both defined as learning. The source of cognitive processes is assumed to be social interactions, which are described as a byproduct of them. Community ideals are at the heart of social networking services, which are established and flourish on them. Online social networking technologies,

such as Facebook and wikis, are particularly suited for cooperative learning settings because of their collaborative nature. is considered as the process meaning making and being the part of knowledge community. Cognitive functions are believed to originate in and are explained as results of social interactions. Social networking sites are built and thrive from community concepts. The collaborative characteristic of online social networking tools like Facebook, wikis etc. make them well suited for cooperative learning environments.

#### **6.4 Specific use of social networking sites in education**

- **Exchange of academic information**

- Some online social media tools like Facebook, MySpace, blogs, etc. provide a program where can be published or shared academically orientated information with links to tremendous online resources which are available occasionally for students, teachers who can exchange information related to the content of study.

- **Dialogue and Discussion**

One of the most important features of social media tools is encouraging the participants to get involved based on discussion and collaborations among participants. Social media also permits the students to put their own viewpoints and inquiries to the teachers as well as other students. Facebook, MySpace, twitter, blogs can be used as tools to initiate a dialogue or a discussion.

- **Sharing videos and pictures**

Online social media tools such as YouTube, Podcasts, Flickr are created to share the media online known as a quote "Pictures are worth a thousand words", whose pictures and videos are shared differently on offer at social networking sites which are very interesting learning experiences for students.

- **Reflective journal writing**

Online social networking tools like twitter and blogs can be used to support students in maintaining their own reflective journals. Reflective journal is a way of critical and analytical thinking about student's own work in progress. Developing learning and evaluation skills helps students perform self-assessment and recognize what they know and what needs to develop and would like to learn by reflecting on the act of learning thoughts, ideas and feelings. In addition, these journals provide the teachers with sufficient data to evaluate the progress of their learners.

- **Project-based Learning**

Online social media tools often may play an important role when working on project-based learning, since project-based learning requires interaction between student groups beyond classrooms. Students' project teams that are geographically dispersed can also use social media to keep in touch, share ideas, and develop their projects.

## **6.5 Present situation, challenges and concerns**

- **Lack of infrastructure:** Properly integrated online social media in curriculum demand infrastructure and resources, which in a country like Kosova is still long task to meet.
- **Lack of training or technological expertise among teachers:** It is a fact that many teachers need training and technical expertise to effectively integrate online social media in the teaching learning process.
- **Cyber bullying:** Internet and technology use to constantly harass or harm other people deliberately is termed as cyber bullying. The age group of learners makes them the easy target for cyber bullying.
- **Social media may often be a distraction:** There is a fear among the teachers that online social media such as Facebook and Twitter may divert students' attention from participating in their classroom learning process which may ultimately be disruptive to the learning process.

- **Discourage face to face conversation:** Those who oppose the use of online social media for academic purposes argue that it will reduce face to face conversation, which ultimately will lead to decrease in the current system values.

## 6.6 Future studies and research

Based on the research results, there is a great potential for positive social outcomes. Clearly, by any measure, social network sites are continuously changing the way we establish, maintain our relationship and communicate with others. As they keep evolving and spreading, we expect social networking effects to occur and their social usefulness to increase. This research analyses only a few networking sites that are mostly used nowadays, more networking sites should be taken in consideration in future studies. Although this research brings a number of interesting and significant insights, many of them still have to be validated, there are still a lot of social and economic aspects to be researched as well as the impact social networking sites on Kosova's society in general.

Many questions remain for researchers and future studies including:

- Safety issues when using social networks, personal privacy, how to be protected from cybercrimes?
- Are there any addiction disorders?
- What are the health impacts?
- How can social network sites support students as they make life transitions, such as moving to another town or country?

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*“Integrimi i teknologjisë informative të komunikimit në mësimdhënie dhe nxënie”*, Instituti Pedagogjik i Kosovës – Arbnesha Mexhuani, Prishtinë 2014

The author presents a research on the productive use of information technology and internet in the teaching and learning process. This research covers topics related to the general use of information technology in the education process in Kosova, advantages and disadvantages of the internet use, however it doesn't particularly cover the positive use of social networking sites.

*“Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning”*, by Andrew Churches, educator from New Zealand, published on Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills ([www.21stcenturyskills.org](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org).)

This eBook is designed to detail some of the aspects needed for students to learn new things in new ways so they can live and work in a changing world. It begins by identifying the framework and then presents new thinking on learners, educators, and learning spaces, finally, it outlines new ways of looking at computing for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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*Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki, Finland: Kirsti Lonka, and Mind the Gap Research Group: Lauri Hietajärvi, Mona Moisala, Heta Tuominen-Soini, Lauri. J. Vaara*

*Institute of Behavioral Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland: Kai Hakkarainen, Katariina Salmela-Aro, Vincent Cho, Ph.D. and Adam Steiner, M.Ed. – Boston College, United States*

*This document is available on the Internet at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/studies>*

The aim of this paper is to provide a review on how we currently understand the role of schools and education in the digital era. This topic is not easy to tackle and there is no current research that can objectively tell us what the most beneficial way would be to move forwards. The problem goes far beyond technology. Current research literature indicates that we are moving from an individualistic knowledge acquisition culture towards a collaborative knowledge creation culture of learning.

“*From chalkboards to tablets: the emergence of K-12 digital learner*”, by Project Tomorrow, June 2013, USA

The goals of the Speak Up project are to stimulate new discussions around how technology tools and services can transform education, and to provide a context to help education, parent, policy and business leaders think beyond today and envision tomorrow.

“*English Language Learning and Technology*” by Carol A. Chapelle, Iowa state university, USA. John Benjamins Publishin Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia.

This book contains lectures on applied linguistics in the age of information and communication technology.

“*Enhancing social participation in young people with communication disabilities living in rural Australia: outcomes of a home-based intervention for using social media.*” By Raghavendra P1, Newman L, Grace E, Wood D.

*Disability & Community Inclusion, School of Health Sciences, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia.* <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26043751>

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of a home-based intervention using social media to enhance social networks of young people with disabilities and communication difficulties

“Social Networking in the Online Classroom: Foundations of effective Online Learning”

*E-journal* Volume 12-13. Number 1 (March 2003), by Robert Woods. Spring Arbor University and Samuel Ebersole, University of Southern Colorado, USA.

This study points out the importance of establishment of social networks among participants engaged in a collaborative learning process. Quality education in the *traditional, face-to-face setting* depends on interaction among students and faculty and that learning is, first and foremost, an interactive, communal activity. In fact, students who feel socially connected to other students and faculty report higher levels of learning than those who report being less connected. Put another way, dialogue is the lifeblood of effective learning.

## Appendix

Online questionnaire made by Google forms about the use of social networks:

*\*\*\* (This questionnaire aims to collect data on how young people use social networks, various portals, and the Internet in general, through personal computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones and other electronic devices. Results from this questionnaire will help me in compiling the topic in postgraduate studies (master). Thank you for your cooperation.)*

*\*\*\* (Ky pytesor ka per qellim grumbullimin e te dheneve se sit e rinjet perdorin rrjetet shoqerore, portalet e ndryshme dhe ne pergjithesi internetin, permes kompjutereve personal, llaptopeve, tableteve, telefonave te menqur dhe paisjeve te tjera elektronike. Rezultatet nga ky pytesor do te me ndihmojne ne perpilimin e temes ne studime postdiplomike (master). Ju faleminderit per bashkpunimin tuaj.)*

\* Required/Kerkuar

### 1. Do you use internet? \*

Check all that apply

- Yes
- No

### 2. How often do you use internet? \*

Check all that apply.

- Every day
- 2 times per week
- 3 times per week
- 4 times per week

### 3. How many hours per day do you use internet? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Less than 1 hour per day
- 1 hour per day
- 2 hours per day
- More than 2 hours per day

**4. Which social networks do you use? \***

*Check all that apply.*

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Myspace
- Twiter
- Linkedin
- Other (tjeter)

**5. Do you consider social networking sites to be important? \***

- Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No
- Relatively important

**6. Why do you think social networking sites are important? \***

- Mark only one oval.*
- Stay in touch with family, friends and relatives
- Be informed
- Educative purpose
- Have fun

**7. Your skills in using social networks: \***

- Mark only one oval.*
- Professional

- Solid
- Poor

**8. Do you think social networks can help you to get better results in your studies? \***

- *Mark only one oval.*
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**9. In what ways would social networks assist you in your studies?**

(Në çfarë mënyre do mund të ju ndihmojnë rrjetet shoqërore në studimet tuaja?)

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**10. What are the positive aspects of social networks?**

(Cilat janë aspektet pozitive të rrjetëve shoqërore?)

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**11. What are the negative aspects of social networks?**

(Cilat janë aspektet negative të rrjetëve shoqërore?)

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**12. Please write any additional comments if you have any?**

(Ju lutem shkruani nëse keni ndonjë koment shtesë.)

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## Interview Questions

### Teachers' interview questions:

1. Do you think your school fulfills the conditions and criteria to meet the needs and requirements of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century?
2. Is your school properly equipped with IT infrastructure?
3. Do you think your schoolteachers are ready and skilled to use the information technology and modern teaching tools?
4. It is well known that today, over 90% of students have access to internet and spend most of their time on social networks through personal computers, laptops, tablets and smart phones. Do you think that it may be possible for students to use online social networks as a group collaboration tool (from their homes) at the same time being monitored and mentored by teachers as facilitators in various tasks and projects?
5. If the students are working as a group in a project or task assigned by their teacher and they are performing their work online using internet. Do you think it may increase their level of responsibility and accountability about the duties and responsibilities they may have to their group?
6. Do you think social networks can be used as teaching tools to support direct, traditional "face to face" teaching presently used in Kosova?
7. Do you think it is important that teachers provide learning and collaboration opportunities for students where they spend most of their time - social networks and the Internet (posting educational material)?
8. Do you think students and teachers at your school are willing to move from the stage of blackboard and a chalk to the stage of tablets, digital projectors and other technology tools in general?
9. It is known that in rural areas the majority of students do not have access to the informal education (training courses). Do you think that cooperation in relations "student-teacher", "student-student" and "student- wider community" using internet can eventually improve their knowledge?
10. Additional Comment (if any) in connection with the use of IT, the internet and social networks as supporting tool towards increasing the teaching quality process:

**Students' interview questions:**

1. What are your skills in using computer technology?
2. What do you think about incorporating technology in the teaching and learning process?
3. Do you find it easier to cooperate with each other using online social media?
4. What were the positive and negative aspects of using technology and social media for during the experiment?
5. Did you get proper instructions to fulfill your tasks?