

Chapter 3

Academics' Attitudes Towards Feasibility of Social Media in Public Administration Education: A Case Study of Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary public administration faces new requirements caused by increasing role of the digital age. Future public administration practitioners need more advanced teaching tools as well as to improve the quality of teaching and learning methods figuring out predictable or unpredictable challenges. Social media have become commonplace and operate on a free service model; thus, it can be used in education to improve the interactivity of students and instructors such as online collaborative work, peer-to-peer instruction, and supporting participation. But it is commercially driven, and education isn't the main target. Thus, there are some serious issues of data privacy, confidence, and security. The instructors' attitudes are also important for using social media. Some instructors claim that social media improves student communication and motivation, whereas others claim that they may cause for the distraction from serious learning endeavors. This study aims to evaluate the academics' attitude about social media using in public administration education at the university level in Turkey.

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INTRODUCTION

Global forces demand fundamental changes of the social, economic, political, and administrative systems throughout the countries (Kim, 2008, p. 41). Because of these changes the contemporary public administration faces new challenges caused by globalization and increasing role of the information age (Purec, 2013). This circumstance in public administration brings about some problems which involve complexity. The dynamic changing environment causes complex deficiencies involving unpredictability, stakeholder's inseparability and unforeseen outputs of the implemented policies.

Along with these evolutions the advent of new ICTs brought a lot of new assumptions about radical changes in the entire society, public services and public institutions too (Şandor, 2012, p. 156). Governments attach importance to ICT and are attuned to this transformation by education especially public administration education. Public administration can expand its educational tools as including ICTs in the training of future public administration practitioners. Thus, public administration education has to take into account those environmental actors. Especially, social environment is a main determining actor. Due to globalization and ICTs, society and its expectations are enhancing. To respond and adjust to this situation, public institutions have to be flexible at public services. There is one key to handle this challenge: Skillful practitioners on flexible public policy making and its implementation.

The main challenges about public administration education can be counted at four points (Alford & Brock, 2014, pp. 152, 153): First, public sector purposes can be less tangible, more complex, and more interdependent than in the private sector. Because its results are not easy to measure. Second, the environments surrounding government organizations are more political ones, comprising many stakeholders with differing interests, who can influence purposes, processes, and resources through multiple channels of 'voice', amplified and often distorted by the media. Related to this, public sector agencies typically have more complex accountabilities. Third, public management education tends to have an action orientation; its analyses and concepts tend to be directed towards making and implementing decisions. Fourth, implementation typically has to navigate complex systems in which managers shared authority, calling for political astuteness to get things done.

Public servants, therefore need particular capabilities in qualitative as well as quantitative analysis to assist often tricky judgments about priorities and trade-offs. Learning about judgment, in particular, requires for repeated experience with real and varied situations, something more suited to object-oriented interaction than traditional lectures monologues (Brock & Alford, 2015, p. 7).

The weight of the research shows that traditional lecturing is open to critique on a number of grounds comparing with interactive approaches (Alford & Brock, 2014, pp. 146-147). First, traditional lecturing simply does not work very well in terms of student learning and mastery of information. An educational research shows that student learning is limited in various respects when lecturing is the primary form of teaching which puts forward a hierarchy of methods in a 'Cone of Learning', which calibrated the percentage of retention by students six weeks after learning. It found that traditional lectures led to retention of 4%–8% of learning, and lectures with visual materials of 12%–18%. By contrast, teaching methods entailing student interaction with lecturers, and with each other in co-operative learning groups, led to retention rates of between 60% and 90%. Secondly and consequently, traditional lecturing is not popular among students.

In addition to this, at the past few decades sharp advances in ICTs have transformed the ways students learn and the ways students get and exchange information, communicate to each other and their instructors, and more important, the ways they learn skills and build up their knowledge. Students use

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