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Social Media and Religious Education

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SUMMARY

Based on the words of Heraclitus, "*the only thing that does not change is change itself*", one of the biggest changes that modern times have brought to human life is undoubtedly social media and the great change and transformation it brings. This new process, which facilitates the communication of individuals and societies with each other in written and visual form, has brought everyone closer to each other, while at the same time it has caused them to question each other and discover their differences and closeness. This environment, where everyone participates and no one is excluded and can look different from what they are, has succeeded in attracting people from all walks of life to its magical world, regardless of young or old. While individuals' perception of religion is affected positively or negatively by this change, access to religious knowledge has become much easier without being subject to time and place restrictions. This has brought along problems such as access to correct religious information, how it contributes to people's understanding and practice of religion, or perception management. Now, while changing times direct people's perception of religion, social media has become a tool from the celebration of religious holidays and days to the reference to the importance and holiness of religion. In addition, religious communities and groups have come to consider it their duty to guide and convey people through social media. The modern times in which such an environment and transformation are experienced have brought with them the following problems. How the society's theoretical and practical perception of religion is directed, what is the religious perception of people who do not think like themselves, how reliable the shared religious content is, or how healthy it can be to obtain religious information from such an environment, etc. are the questions are the first that come to mind. While the main axis of our article is to what extent the virtual religion perception atmosphere is reflected in reality in quotes created by social media, we will also try to touch on its effect on education in general and religious education in particular.

Keywords: Social Media, Religion, Religious Education, Religious Knowledge, Perception of Religion, Theory and Practice, Religious Groups and Communities.

ENTRANCE

Religion has always been one of the most important phenomena that have shaped societies since the first human on earth. Plutarch, one of the philosophers of the first age, said, "*Wander around the world, you will find cities without walls, literature, law, and wealth. But you will not find a city without a temple, without a god, without prayer, without sacrifice.*" is a reflection of this fact. History has shown and continues to show us that a society that does not belong to any religion and does not feel a sense of belonging cannot exist. The most concrete proof of this is that Russia could not remain without any religion for more than seventy years. When Russia under the communist regime collapsed in 1990, the Orthodox church was undoubtedly one of the first institutions opened by the people.

While this historical event confirms to us once again that religion is an indispensable phenomenon, it shows that religion, which was weakened in the West by rationalist movements for a period, is on the rise again as a phenomenon that drags societies. Religion has served as a glue for societies by providing the unity of belief, culture and value for centuries. While religion undertakes such duties, it also changes and transforms societies. The most obvious example of this is how societies change radically when a new religion arrives. The difference between pre-Islamic Arab society and post-Islamic Arab society is an indicator of this transforming and transformative effect. It is the fact that this change is inevitable in the process of sending a new religion and prophet as a result of the corruption/falsification of a religion in divine religions. As time, place and conditions change, the perception and practices of religion also differ. The sectarianization process that emerged over time and the differences in practice also explain this evolution. This evolution can sometimes be positive from a worse structure to a higher structure, as in the rising times of the Islamic society, and sometimes it can be negative, as in the medieval Christian world. While religion sometimes initiates this change and acts as a catalyst, sometimes it can try to invalidate this change. Therefore, every society can recode the appropriate religious, cultural, moral, social behaviors, practices and perceptions in accordance with the spirit of the time.

In addition to the sociological functions of religion, the biggest factor shaping individuals and societies in the last two centuries has been the processes and phenomena brought about by Modernism and Modernism. Modernization includes not only the economic impact of the industrial revolution, but also urbanization, rising rationalism and the decline of religion, social, political and cultural change and transformation. While religion, which is involved in most areas of life, has been pushed into the background with modernism, this change and transformation has become almost inevitable even for those who claim to be religious. This constant and inevitable change has affected and continues to affect everything related to religion and religion within a

process. These processes have started to happen thanks to new factors that accelerate and direct social change. The dizzying change, especially in the field of communication, has transformed the world into a small village. Where there used to be distances that limited people, now only a partial language problem remains, which is overcome through various translation programs. Especially the development of mass media is important in this context. Because this area constitutes the social aspect of communication. The transformative speed of the mass media has been faster and more effective than the media and other elements. Even the media organizations lagged behind the mass media, and they found themselves benefiting from the mass media. There are now two types of media: traditional media, that is, written and visual media, and the other is social media, that is, the new media platform.

Social media, which has become easier to access and use day by day, thus occupying an important place in daily life and culture, has also become an area where people's religious beliefs and thoughts are shared. For example, e-mails are sent to each other on holy nights and holidays, pages with religious content are visited, sermons and sermons are listened, thoughts are shared in religious conversations and forums, and information is exchanged about exemplary practices related to religious life. In particular, the fast and easy adaptation of the phenomenon of religion to the virtual environment, the enrichment of virtual worship, rites and contents have led religion and religious education to gain a meaning and content outside of traditional patterns.

Unlike the unilateral donor position of traditional media, people can be both active and passive in social media. While every person who easily accesses social media conveys the comments and ideas they want to all over the world, they can appear in short-term celebrities, which are a new social phenomenon. This is what Andy Warhol said, "*Everybody will be famous for 15 minutes one day.*" brings to mind the word. That's what Warhol said. People who shoot the song they sing and upload it to the internet or retweet a word they wrote and are followed by millions on thousands of shared internet and their ideas are respected stand out as the new celebrities of the modern age. There is no difference in the religious aspect of social media. Now, people who guide people from the internet and whose conversations are clicked by hundreds of thousands are the new phenomena of social media, and they have become the new sermon platforms of the new age in the environments where these communiqués are shared. Normally, a clergyman or educator who has enough influence to address at most one mosque community can reach more people than he can imagine through social media. This undoubtedly increases the power of influence.

While the traditional media shapes the societies in the direction they want, it has made its presence felt as the fourth force alongside the legislature, executive and judiciary for a long time. However, the written and visual media, which we define as classical media, has begun to shake its throne with the developing transformative power of social media. Now, while people set their own agenda instead of the agenda imposed on them by others, it has taken on the identity of everyone's media, not a segment. Now, the task of determining the agenda of the society can take place even at the initiative of any person in the society, not a group that holds the power.

It is clear that the media with such functions, and social media in particular, have an impact on the way societies and individuals perceive the world. Therefore, it is clear that an evaluation independent of the agenda in many fields such as religion, politics, art, culture, economy and education and the public opinion and perception that emerged due to this agenda would be wrong. Therefore, social media, which is much more common and useful than traditional media in the formation and reflection of the existing religious perception in the society, has come to the fore as an important reality in our age. In this article, where we will evaluate social media from the perspective of religious education, we will try to deal with religion, society and social media phenomena and the relationship between them. But there is no doubt that more successful results will be achieved if social media is handled as a tool rather than a goal. Although the perception of religion regressed for a while with the industrial revolution and rationalism, it has come to the fore as the rising value of the world today. Moreover, this time, religion has increased its influence even more by making an effective power such as social media a tool for itself. Because of the fact that social media has turned into such a tool, the things that are discussed and trended in the social media, which are reflected in the social media, of course, provide us with important information and data when evaluating the society. What social media users think about religious issues, their perspectives on Islam, their level of interest in current religious issues, their reaction to and likes on religious posts are valuable resources for first-hand opinions and religious education.

SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS AND TOOLS

In the past, the traditional press that comes to mind when the media is mentioned, namely television and newspaper, has been increasingly replaced by social media, which we will call the media of the new age, in the last ten years. Well, what are the important aspects of social media that distinguishes it from traditional media and even makes it popular, that it has suddenly become a concept that affects almost every field from education to culture, from culture to religion, from religion to social life. First of all, social media is very easy in terms of transportation and accessibility. In social media, unlike traditional media, people are active, not passive. Users can not only be news makers, but also contribute to the process with their likes or dislikes, or they can remain neutral. Social media, which offers multi-directional communication opportunities, can be monitored instantly, and share and like rates can provide rapid data acquisition in terms of ratings. In addition, while providing the opportunity to be reached again and again, social media offers an alternative to the one-way, static and unchangeable feature of traditional media by providing individuals with the opportunity to change the sharing, open new comments and forums or delete them.

To take a brief look at the social media networks and tools that offer such new expansions, the first ones that come to mind are the social media networks Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp, while video sharing sites such as YouTube as well as blogs and dictionaries where online comments can be entered are some of the prominent ones.

While the social networks that people are members of by creating a profile page are evaluated with the number of followers and the likes received, any shared photo, video or comment is subject to the evaluation criteria by the fact that it can receive tens of hundreds of likes and comments, while social media itself can often even surpass the profile owner. Social networks have become popular virtual places where people, whether familiar or not, can

offer friendships, comment and like on profile pages, message and share videos. We will try to briefly touch on some, if not all, of the prominent ones and their connection with religious education.

Facebook

Facebook, which was founded in February 2004 with the logic of a virtual school yearbook by a Harvard university student named Mark Zuckerberg, has gone far beyond its purpose and has become the most popular social networking network in the world. Today, Facebook has with approximately 2 billion active users. Among the reasons for using Facebook, meeting new people, reaching people whom they knew but could not find before, spending time and socializing stand out, while using it in education stands out as a new usage area different from the others. Now, social networks such as Facebook have become an effective factor in almost every social, political and economic field in the world.

Facebook describes itself as: "*Our goal in creating Facebook was to make the world more open and transparent. Thus, we believe that people will understand each other better and get closer to each other. Facebook promotes openness and transparency by giving people more opportunities to share and connect, and certain principles guide Facebook in achieving these goals. Adherence to these Principles should be limited only by law, technology and changing social norms. Therefore, we set these Principles as the starting point for the rights and responsibilities within the Facebook Service.*"[1]

This success achieved by Mark Zuckerberg and this revolution he opened in communication also attracted the attention of filmmakers, and on October 22, 2010, the movie featuring his life and Facebook's installation stage was screened in cinemas and once again drew attention to Facebook.

[1] https://tr-tr.facebook.com/principles.php.

Twitter

Twitter is a social network where users can write posts called "tweet" limited to 140 characters. In addition to being a world-famous social network, Twitter is an instant messaging and follow-up system with a simple interface that brings people closer to each other. There is also an "Agenda" section on Twitter. This section shows the topics that are currently popular. While writing an article, "HashTag" of that topic is written to refer to the relevant discussion topic and the topic we wrote appears in the relevant discussion. For example, if we share something called #religiouseducation in our article, this article will be gathered on the same page as a discussion or agenda. When it is very popular, it can be seen in the agenda section that we see on the left.

Among the social media tools, Twitter is more effective than the others in determining the agenda in terms of giving the last minutes of the agenda at the speed of the agency. "According to a study on this subject, Twitter is also the source of 12.2% of the news in the traditional media. This rate is 34.6% in tabloid news, 15.7% in columns, and 10.5% in political news. While the topics that are on the agenda through the pages opened on education and religion in accordance with the day and time, while attracting the attention of the users, discussion environments can also be created by writing hashtags.[2]

Created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone and Evan Williams in March 2006 and launched in July 2006, Twitter has more than 535 million active users today. It is a controversial issue that Twitter has a market value of 41.09 billion dollars and is one of the first channels that comes to mind when social media is mentioned, and its earnings are very low compared to the number of users. Twitter, which is one of the important networks of social media, has a small but effective usage area where content is more dominant than visuality. For this reason, although it offers a limited area for educational content, it is a different medium from others in terms of impact and emphasis.[2]

Instagram

"Instagram, a free photo sharing program, was established in October 2010 and offers its users the opportunity to use digital filters, add effects and share on various social media platforms, including Instagram. It was announced that Instagram was acquired by Facebook for 1 billion dollars. This social network, which has become quite popular, continues its innovations and updates. As the last update, the tagging feature called "mention" has been added to the photos. This feature, which has been added to this social network, which is frequently used by young people, has started to attract the attention of many brands. Brands have also started to organize campaigns on Instagram on some special days.

You can also see which of your friends are using this application on Instagram. Thus, you have the opportunity to connect with your social media friends through this application. In addition, the application also includes the feature of liking and commenting photos. Thanks to a newly added feature, it allows you to keep track of your own photos and adjust privacy settings thanks to tagging."[3]

It is a platform with great potential for people who want to be more phenomenal. It is also the most suitable platform for those who want to do business on the Internet. An example of the reputation of the site, which has great potential in advertising for the bosses of its own business, is the owner of the meat restaurant, which is popular with the hashtag #saltbae and is named after Nusret.

[2]Lokman Cerrah, *Sosyal Medyada Din Algısı Twitter Örneği,* (Doktora Tezi), 10, Erzurum, 2015. [3]http://bilgihanem.com/instagram-nedir-nasil-kullanilir/

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a very popular communication tool. WhatsApp is an application that can be used free of charge on mobile phones and has various versions, primarily allowing you to send and receive text messages, pictures, music and files, and make voice calls with the people in your list. After installing the application on your phone, you will see the users of the WhatsApp application registered in your contacts in your list, you can make a normal phone call by making a voice call to these contacts. You can also message with your WhatsApp contacts, all these processes are completely free.

In order to communicate with more than one person within the WhatsApp application, you can set up a group and make conversations, share pictures, music and voice messages. WhatsApp is also an effective communication tool for sending files and sharing locations. In short, WhatsApp is an application that offers great and very simple features to communicate with someone.[4]

It is very likely that WhatsApp, which facilitates access to more than one person by making multiple sharing and establishing groups, will also be used for education. In groups established for educational purposes as instant communication, out-of-school education can be provided, and it can also be used without time and place restrictions for accessing information. The platform that unites educators and students makes education possible at all times in a classless environment, enabling easy access to information and removing walls and barriers. While this facilitates education, it strengthens the student-teacher, that is, the sender-receiver relationship.

 Undoubtedly, the developing and widespread technology is now indispensable for education, and today, when social networks are now a kind of identity, everyone can benefit from it in their own way. Our duty is to adapt the education in the R&D studies to this process and touch the spirit of the time.

YouTube

YouTube is a video hosting website. It is a very rich video sharing based website where more members share videos rather than social media networks with profiles. It is headquartered in San Bruno, California, in the United States. It was founded on February 15, 2005 by 3 former PayPal employees. It was acquired by Google in November 2006 for $1.65 billion.

"On the platform called YouTube, users can watch existing video clips and also have the opportunity to upload their own video clips to YouTube when requested. The categories on the platform include user-developed content, personal amateur video clips, movie and TV program tracks, and music videos.

The video clips that users upload to YouTube reach approximately 3 million daily and approximately 5 billion video clips are watched every day. Video clips that are out of terms of use are deleted by YouTube authorities after necessary investigations through user notifications.

Users who are members of YouTube have the opportunity to evaluate and grade the video clips they watch, and also to write comments about the video clips watched. According to the terms of use of the YouTube site, users can upload videos with copyright permission. Violence, pornography, advertisements, threats and criminal content are not allowed to be uploaded on YouTube. Companies that own the copyright have the right to delete the added videos. This right is frequently applied in music and movie videos."[5]

[4]http://www.mobilshift.com/whatsapp-nedir-ne-ise-yarar/

[5]http://bilgihanem.com/youtube-nedir-nasil-kullanilir/

Blogs and Online Commentary Dictionaries

 Blog, diary or Weblog are web sites similar to diaries that can be created by people who write what they want, in the way they want, without requiring technical knowledge. Anyone who knows how to use a computer and can access the internet can be a blogger, while a writer can also be called a blogger. To be a blogger, it is necessary to be a good researcher and observer. Blogging requires filtering and compiling a lot of information, connecting, writing and sharing. It also makes people accountable to their followers. Blog content consists of many links to news stories, photos, pictures, comments, video and audio recordings. Blog is one of the social media elements where personal information is shared and informed, and it has started to be recognized and widespread in Turkey since the early-2000s.

Wikipedia, "Ekşi Sözlük", "İnci Sözlük" and "Uludağ Sözlük" etc. are participatory modern era dictionaries, mostly used in TURKEY, that can comment on almost any subject, meaning or current event entered by users. The history of participatory dictionaries is based on "Ekşi Sözlük". The software and design of "Ekşi Sözlük", which was opened with the first entry on February 15, 1999, was a first in the internet world. The formation, which allows to open a title and enter a topic on a particular subject in a simple way, has ensured that the information is organized and easily accessible. The recruitment of writers to the "Ekşi Sözlük", which became popular over time, began to be made in a certain order after a while and was restricted. Thereupon, dictionaries like "Ekşi Sözlük", called clone, started to be opened. Participating dictionaries continued to be opened each year following these first clones. While participatory dictionaries such as "İnci Sözlük" and "Uludağ Sözlük", which we mentioned before, emerged in this period, their number has now reached several dozen. Dictionaries, which are the most important Turkish resources of social media over time, still maintain their popularity.

These social dictionaries, which provide information on almost every type of subject, enter comments and even make researches, do not fail to mention religion and religious education. Some of them may even belong to a community with a certain religious sensitivity, such as Religious Education Institution Dictionary. The topics covered here are a fun medium for those who want to catch up with the day while observing the priorities of the community.

These prominent areas of social media, some of which we are trying to mention, now have the feature of being a new type of libraries for acquiring and sharing information. It was unthinkable for religious education to separate itself from this change. The components of education, namely the trio of school-student and teacher, are now able to communicate at any time and place, beyond being connected only at a certain time and place of the day. While the frequently said "*school is not just four walls*" is now taking place with social media, changing times have almost made it necessary to review education methods and methods.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

While education is the name given to the process of creating desired behavioral changes in individuals through learning experiences, religious education is expressed as the educational activities of knowledge, emotions and thoughts belonging to a religion or belief. The role of education in general and religious education in particular cannot be ignored in the individual and social personality development of a person. One cannot be preferred to the other, nor can one be separated from the other. Undoubtedly, education is affected by time and social change. And the main factor that triggers this change is the fact that education is confined to a screen while it extends beyond the four walls in a world that is shrinking with the development of communication opportunities. While this technological development brings great opportunities, on the other hand, it has confined individuals to tiny screens rather than freeing them from four walls. In particular, social media has outstripped all of them, and profiles created like identity have become the opportunities of the modern age to show up and express themselves. Now, while education is being moved from the classroom to the screens, this change and transformation has affected all aspects of life and education, affecting especially the youth. Now, while the educational environments of the new age are online information and communication tools, where and how we will place education in this change is one of the most discussed issues. So, how do we construct the relationship between social media and religious education? For this reason, we will try to examine the subject with the positive and negative aspects of social media and education in general and religious education in particular, and aspects that are open to development.

Positive and Negative Aspects of Social Media Use

Thanks to social media, individuals now have access to official or informal information first-hand and in the easiest way without the limitation of time and place. While it used to be necessary to mix a teacher, a connoisseur, an encyclopedia, catechism or the Qur'an about a subject that was curious in the past, now everything can be done easily and quickly by correspondence and instant feedback through social media or groups created.

While social media simplifies and ordinaryizes access to information, it also prevents information from being monopolized by a certain group. In order to access information, instead of following the procedures, it is now sufficient for people to create a profile and follow the person who has the information or to ask questions on the online pages.

"*It makes access to libraries easy and fast, and even the social media environment enables digital libraries. The Internet and the Web have removed the barriers of time and space, enabling access to information services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, thus saving libraries from being just brick-and-mortar businesses. For this reason, libraries are striving to use Web 2.0 technologies to better respond to their information needs and to provide services comparable to those offered by social networks such as Facebook. More and more libraries offer personalized content and personalized news via RSS feeds, diaries and Wikis.*"[6]

While social media tightens interpersonal relations, it also facilitates contact with people who cannot always be contacted by sharing experience and information. It facilitates learning and makes it fun, as it enables the knowledge to be given through learning without being aware of it.

In addition to these positive features, social media can also have some harmful aspects in terms of education and religious education. The fact that access to information is so easy pushes individuals, especially students, to laziness and convenience, and blunts the development of thinking skills and creativity.

Another negative effect of social media use is addiction. Although it is generally referred to as internet addiction, social media use constitutes a large part of internet use. Although its name is social, the addiction that occurs after a certain period of time isolates the individual, distances him from the real world, and leaves him alone even in crowds. While social media addiction and friendships made without meeting before create an abstract environment, they can prevent the person from going to school or focusing even if it is school.

Another factor is that the vehicle in which social media is used is a mobile phone, making it difficult to control. The fact that children and young people who need to be educated constantly deal with the phone and feel the need to be online also cause different problems in education. While cheating and recording inappropriate situations by taking photos or videotaping violate privacy, spending time on social media instead of listening to lectures also harms education.

[6]Cerrah, 42.

Use of Social Media in Religious Education

Social media, which has become easier to reach and use day by day, therefore, now has an important place in daily life, has also become an area where people's religious beliefs and thoughts are shared. For example, e-mails are sent on holy nights and holidays, pages with religious content are visited, sermons and sermons are listened, thoughts are shared in religious conversations and forums, and information is exchanged about exemplary practices

related to religious life. In particular, the fast and easy adaptation of the phenomenon of religion to the virtual environment, the enrichment of virtual worship, rites and contents have led religion and religious education to gain a meaning and content outside of traditional patterns.

Now, people who guide people from the internet and whose conversations are clicked by hundreds of thousands are the new phenomena of social media, and they have become the new sermon platforms of the new age in the environments where these communiqués are shared. Normally, a clergyman or preacher who has enough influence to address at most one mosque community can reach more people than he can imagine through social media. This undoubtedly increases the effect power proportionally.

During the periods when sects and communities were living a kind of underground life, while the tapes of sermons for religious preaching and guidance were circulating in religious circles, they also reached outside Islamic circles thanks to the rapid development of internet technology. The tool for this was cassettes in the 80s, videotapes in the 90s and the internet in the 2000s. When the video sharing site YouTube was opened, this door was opened thanks to the videos uploaded for religious education, and it almost reached the top thanks to Facebook.

- **Use of Facebook in Religious Education**

While Facebook's rich infrastructure sharing environment embodies abstract concepts thanks to its video and animation content, the constantly renewed content always keeps the interest alive. In addition, thanks to the Facebook groups that can be established, it becomes easier to follow the course content and paves the way for more regular study. Especially since students spend more time on social media rather than class time, content that attracts attention will increase the interest in the lesson, while the teaching activity will be adapted to out-of-school time in a fun way, and this will open the way for unknowingly learning.

"*In particular, Facebook can be used to support collaborative learning, research, inquiry, discussion skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, to share materials effectively, to follow daily events, news, people or groups, to be involved in discussion environments.*"[7]

It is clear that Facebook is one step ahead of the others due to both the number of active users and the rich content and sharing opportunities. Thanks to its popularity, it offers the most ideal to reach more people. Because, in terms of religious education, it is easier to use, richer and easier than others. Other social science fields that can be benefited from and inspired by him are also noteworthy as they will provide convenience to religious educators in this field.

- **Use of Twitter in Religious Education**

Twitter, on the other hand, gives more space for creative and critical thinking than other social media environments, as it provides a limited share of 140 characters and offers more opportunities to the person. In addition, it facilitates inter-institutional and intra-corporate communication with colleagues of individuals sharing the same institution, while saving resources and time.

[7]Lokman, 43.

"McCool (2011) in his study, in which he interviewed lecturers who use Twitter, said that Twitter is used at different times for course support or simultaneously as blended learning environments. Twitter at different times in the classroom; asking questions, giving feedback, sharing content, links, syllabus and lecture notes, outside the classroom; He stated that it is used to be aware of or inform about current events, to carry out collaborative works and to manage the process. In addition to these usage purposes, the instructors stated that Twitter can also provide solutions to the social existence and environmental awareness problems experienced in the distance education or online learning process. According to Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2011) Twitter increases students' responsibility in the learning process. According to Johnson (2011), communication with teachers and students continues outside the classroom thanks to Twitter, and thus the social bond between them is strengthened. In this way, students' trust in their teachers can increase. According to Mislan and Elavsky (2011) Twitter can increase teacher-student and student-student communication and social bond, which is difficult to provide especially in crowded classrooms. Especially with Twitter, students can maintain their communication with their friends and teachers. (Leaver, 2011).

According to Stieger and Burger, educators can use Twitter as an effective tool to evaluate the curriculum and curriculum applied in the learning-teaching process. By sharing ready-made question patterns or questionnaires, educators can get immediate feedback from the students about the program and make the necessary changes. Studies show that Twitter is used in many ways in the learning and teaching process. These uses can be listed as follows:

- Content creation and information sharing

- Communication and social bonding

- Creating a collaborative and participatory environment."[8]

Twitter's theoretical but more practical possibilities for education in general and religious education in particular are very useful for religious education. There is no doubt that well-equipped religious educators are needed in order to use social media tools better and more actively. While Twitter leaves a wider area for users compared to Facebook, it pushes the student to critical and creative thinking for education, while it pushes the individual from being a mere buyer to being a producer like other social media tools. This is in line with the aims of education.

- **Use of WhatsApp in Religious Education**

The reason why WhatsApp is more successful than other messaging applications is that it offers both effective and simple use and free and unlimited communication. In addition to this, bringing many innovations in the field has made it more popular. The application, which is not only focused on communication and entertainment, has now become one of the active areas used by official institutions such as ministries for communication. Now, including announcements, it can be done via WhatsApp, and groups established for educational purposes show that the future is in this direction. Live examples in this direction are increasing day by day.

There are quite innovative R&D studies on the WhatsApp program in terms of being an example to the subject. "Manisa Provincial Directorate of National Education R&D Unit Officer Necmettin OKUMUŞ stated that they will present the e-mathematics project to the students via the WhatsApp platform. A team of volunteer teachers will help students with math questions they can't solve. Namely; When the student is stuck on any math question, he will send the photo of the question to the group that will be created within the scope of the 'e-mathematics' project on WhatsApp.

[8]Mehmet Menteşe, *Sosyal Medya Ortam ve Araçlarının Eğitimde Kullanımına İlişkin Okul Yöneticilerinin ve Öğretmenlerin Görüşleri,* (Yüksek Lisans Tezi), 18, Ankara, 2013.

Volunteer teachers in this group will also inform the student by explaining the solution of the problem. The WhatsApp group to be established will also turn into a platform where students will interact and share information.

In this way, it was determined that they aimed to help students preparing for exams such as YGS, LYS and TEOG in mathematics. He said that his branches will be included in the project in a similar way."[9]

As can be seen, it is quite possible that the program, which can address such different fields, can also be used in areas such as Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, elective religion courses and non-formal religious education. While WhatsApp, which is widely used among young people, is used for educational purposes, it is seen that it also offers interesting and entertaining opportunities for young people.

- **Use of Blogs and Online Interpretation Wikis and Dictionaries in Religious Education**

Since blogs are now pushing users from passive followers to active participation, they facilitate the communication of students and educators to follow each other, while also directly adding the individual to learning in useful channels. Thanks to blogs, classroom portals are created, opening the way for active and collaborative learning. Now, conversations, communiqués and guiding activities are done thanks to these blogs that go beyond borders and classes. Sharing experiences and observations easily and democratically, including question-answer activities, saves time and space, while also providing reinforcement and permanence of learning. In addition, as with all social media tools, the fact that it does not require high-level technical knowledge makes blogs attractive for everyone. While school websites, student and teacher portals make it easier to follow the course, they offer regular, one-stop and effective access and sharing areas.

The modern age encyclopedias open to everyone, which we call wikis, are now Wikispaces Classroom, Google Classrom or Edmodo etc. It brings a new perspective to education while providing opportunities to reinforce the course environment with virtual but participatory active classes established thanks to the applications called. It not only warns students what to do, but also offers a sharing environment that is always open to asking questions. While it makes religious education regular and followed from secondary education to higher education level, it also makes the education environment compatible with the new educational tools of the new age.

Finally, thanks to the environments that foster critical and creative thinking, where it creates online dictionaries open to everyone, the number of which is expressed by several dozen, creates environments where students can share their ideas about education, religious education and current issues and improve themselves. The online sharing-based environment created in this way pushes users to research and learn more in order to improve themselves, and also brings a serious alternative to the presentation method education technique given in the classrooms. In this way, while opening the door to permanent learning, students also use the learning technique in a fun way without being aware of it.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is now an irrevocable reality that technology and what it brings with it are an essential need. In particular, the aspect of this change regarding communication has been faster and more effective than the others. The most popular and effective medium that comes to mind in recent years when communication is mentioned is social media. While the transformative and transformative effect of social media surrounds everyone, the most affected segments are the youth and students. For this reason, the fact that the majority of social network users are young people and students has brought to mind the use of these environments for educational purposes. Along with the fact that social media allows widespread, easy and multiple communication, how this field of activity can be utilized in education has also been a subject of discussion.

[9]http://www.egitimajansi.com/haber/whatsapp-uzerinden-egitim-donemi-basliyor-haberi-48295h.html.

While classrooms with blackboards in the past are replaced by Interactive Panels connected to the internet today, the need to learn this skill area has arisen not only for students but also for teachers. In this direction, the Ministry of National Education tries to close this gap with in-service training courses. Technological developments, which only constitute a contemporary aspect, have been moved to a different medium with the use of social media.

Four walls, which used to come to mind when talking about education, have now been moved to more flexible times and places. Now, while individuals cease to be mere buyers, they themselves have become an element of production. While these social and active networks encourage sharing-based and collaborative learning, they have turned education into a medium to be enjoyed. Implicit knowledge that cannot be transferred beyond the school

bureaucracy and procedure is experienced and learned through social media. In this way, tacit knowledge is enriched with visual and auditory elements and returns to the individual again.

"McLoughlin and Lee, the possible benefits of social networks, which can be considered as pedagogical tools, in an educational context;

- Social support and connectivity,

- Collaborative knowledge discovery and sharing,

- Content creation,

- They list information and information clustering and content modification.

When Muijs is considered in an educational context, social networks are:

- School development,

- Increasing opportunities (for example, collaborating with businesses)

- They state that they have benefits such as resource sharing."

It is clear that the positive effect of the use of social media tools in religious education outweighs the negative effect. It has been seen that it enriches education, provides support rather than an alternative to traditional methods, provides quick feedback, contributes to sociality while increasing interaction outside the classroom, and increases the role of the teacher while providing effective communication with students. Social media, which contributes to course materials, is one of the channels that should be emphasized and developed in terms of creating environments that contribute to creative thinking while increasing motivation when used wisely and effectively. However, it is another point to be considered that social media may not be productive for every lesson, along with every student and individual receiving education.

Finally, to make some suggestions; While reorganizing educational environments in accordance with new technological developments supports social media-based education, in-service training can be given to teachers who are deficient in this regard. In addition, innovative studies should be encouraged and educators should lead in this regard. In this way, while students do not slip into the channels of social media that will pose a danger to them, it is also possible to provide information in a controlled and safe manner. Especially, Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge teachers and institutions and organizations that provide non-formal religious education should not hold back both in terms of adapting to social media and in delivering this new type of education to students in a healthy and safe way, on the contrary, they should strive to be at the forefront in this regard. In this way, while the harmful aspects of social media are eliminated by educators, the harm can be minimized.

In addition, a section on social media or a social media literacy course on its own can be added to the media literacy course added to the curriculum in secondary education institutions. For this purpose, the beginning of seminars on social media literacy in schools in recent years draws attention as a positive step taken in this direction. In addition to all these, progressive and research-oriented studies on such new and rapidly developing social media and religious education should be encouraged and supported.

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