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LAS REDES SOCIALES: USO EN EDUCACIÓN BÁSICA.

SOCIAL NETWORKS: USE IN BASIC EDUCATION.

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ABSTRACT

Human beings are social by nature, and therefore, they feel the need for contact among individuals; this is the basic principle underlying the rise to so-called "social networking" on the Internet. A cross sectional descriptive study, whose population consisted of 209 tenth grade students of basic Education of Riobamba Unit from September to June of 2015, out of which a sample of 108 students was taken through a non-probabilistic criteria based sampling - was conducted. The purpose was to describe the use of social networks by the studied sample. The instruments used allowed to observe that most of the students use social networks once or twice a week for half an hour, and that they predominantly use Facebook; there were predominant respondents whose information about the advantages and disadvantages of social networking was rated as very good, not there being any in the category of poor; there was prevalence of the students who reported access to social networks through public and private wifi; and the students considered that teachers do not use social networks for academic purposes.

Keywords: social networks, ICT, basic education, guidance.

RESUMEN

Los humanos somos seres sociales por naturaleza, y en consecuencia sentimos la necesidad de contacto entre los individuos; este es el principio básico en el que sustenta el origen a las llamadas “redes sociales” en Internet. Se realizó una investigación descriptiva - transversal cuya población estuvo compuesta por 209 estudiantes de décimo de básica de la Unidad Educativa Riobamba del período septiembre-junio del 2015 y de ella se tomó una muestra de 108 a través de un muestreo no probabilístico en base a criterios. El propósito fue describir el uso de redes sociales por la muestra estudiada. Los instrumentos aplicados permitieron observar que la mayoría de los estudiantes declararon que utilizan las redes sociales una o dos veces a la semana por espacio de media a una hora, y que principalmente utilizan Facebook; predominaron los encuestados con cuya información respecto a las ventajas y desventajas de las redes sociales fue valorada como muy buena, no habiendo ninguno en la categoría de insuficiente; prevalecieron los estudiantes que declararon acceder a las redes sociales a través de wifi públicas y privadas; y que los estudiantes consideraron que los profesores no utilizan suficientemente las redes sociales para fines académicos.

Palabras clave: redes sociales, TICs, educación básica, orientación.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are social by nature, and therefore, they feel the need for contact among individuals; this is the basic principle underlying the rise to so-called "social networking" on the Internet

The virtual social networks constitute an important stage in the development and use of Internet, therefore they have been a growing object of research in the last years. According to Boyd and Ellison, the birth and evolution of the social networks can be seen in three moments: one since their birth in 1997, characterized by the creation of numerous virtual communities that paved the way to diverse combinations of users profiles; another, starting in 2001, with an approach to the economic scenario, appearing professional networks of exchange and business becoming a powerful instrument for globalized economy; And then, after 2010 when the social networks attract the attention of

researchers of different disciplines and work fields, when observing their enormous socializing potential, also becoming, privileged scenarios for the development of promising research lines. [1]

The web services of social networks should allow people with common interests to be in contact through the net, and exploit resources like the establishment of subgroups, public or private messaging or chat, among others. The origin of these it is as heterogeneous as they, themselves: some of them, as Facebook, were born to support different congregations of students in the North American campus, while others are of more professional profile, as LinkedIn, guided to establish contacts of labor and commercial type by means of what we call networking. [2]

The social networks are very much involved with the new active and participating methodologies in the education, especially, with the one denominated collaborative work, understood as the exchange and the development of knowledge on the part of reduced groups of equals that look for identical academic aims. [3]

For some specialists, these could also work as platforms of consolidation of certain learning communities. Most of the potentialities of the social networks are fully useful for some learning methodologies, if one keeps in mind that the collaborative work increases the motivation; favors higher levels of academic achievement, since individual and group learning feedback each other; improve the retention of what has been learned; potentiates critical thinking and multiplies the diversity of the knowledge and experiences that are acquired. [4]

The virtual communities of learning are social networks whose main objective is related to the learning. Internet provides shared spaces that allow to exchange information in an effective way, facilitating this way the development of activities among geographically separated students, thus optimizing, the work carried out in aspects like space, the timing, methodologies or the environments (bureaucratic-functional, personal, school, academic, professional and educational). [5]

The educational environment deserves a constant revision of the use that adolescents give to these tools of the Internet, that was why, it was decided to carry out a research with the purpose of describing the use of social networks for the students registered in tenth grade of the basic Educational Unit "Riobamba", in the school year 2014-2015.

METHOD

A cross sectional descriptive investigation with mixed focus was carried out;

A survey that was validated by the professors of the National University of Chimborazo was designed. It was applied during the days previous to the semester end exams.

POPULATION

The population was composed by 209 tenth grade students of basic Education of Riobamba Unit (15 years old students) from September to June of 2015, out of which a sample of 108 students was taken through a non-probabilistic criteria based sampling.

A database was made using Microsoft Excel for the best understanding and analysis of the data.

The statistical processing was carried out through descriptive techniques, using relative and absolute frequencies.

The will of the participants in the investigation was kept by means of the subjects and legal tutors' signed consent, to be consistent with ethical framework of scientific research.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

When analyzing the investigation variables the situation regarding the use of the social networks by the tenth grade students of the basic Educational Unit "Riobamba" could be verified, where the female sex prevailed among the studied sample, for 88%. What coincides with the national tendency as for the female presence in secondary education in Ecuador according to the 2010 demographic study and a study carried out by investigators of the Coast Higher Polytechnic School (ESPOL). [6]

Chart 1. Social Networks in which the sample possess active accounts.

SOCIAL NETWORKS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Facebook	108	100.00
Twitter	12	11.11
Instagram	32	29.63
YouTube	36	33.33
WhatsApp	30	27.78
Others	18	16.67

Source: own elaboration.

100% of the students of the sample manifested that they used the social network Facebook (chart 1). The professors from this academic unit should take advantages of this use frequency during the teaching-learning process.

A study on the student mobilizations in Chile, allowed observing that it was decided to use the social network Facebook to advertise the materials and to motivate participation, due to their high indexes of acceptance and of use among the young students. [7]

Most of those interviewed manifested that they connect more frequently in the afternoon (67.59% of the sample).

Chart 2. Time that the members of the sample dedicate to the social networks the days that they connect.

TIME	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
30-59 minutes	67	62.04
1 at 3 hours	28	25.93
4 hours or more	13	12.04
TOTAL	108	100.00

Source: own elaboration.

The students that connect from half an hour to one hour a day stood out, constituting 62.04% for of the sample (chart 2); it was observed that most of the sample is connected to the social networks from their house for 80.56%. This coincided with an investigation carried out in a private university of Lima, in which prevailed the students that made a moderate use of the social networks keeping several indicators in mind, among them the time that they devoted to this activity during the day. [8]

89 out of the 108 students declared to have one or two private devices with capacity of connecting to the social networks; being the computers and cellular telephones those that prevailed.

Chart 3. Quantity of times a week that they regularly make use of the social networks.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
1 to 2 times a week	48	44.44

3 to 4 times a week	26	24.08
5 times or more	34	31.48
Total	108	100.00

Source: own elaboration.

The highest number interviewed subjects uses the social networks from one to twice a week constituting the population's 44.44% (Chart 3). For reason, this characteristic should be taken into account by the professors to benefit the teaching-learning process, since those interviewed considered that they are not used sufficiently in this sense.

This result coincided with study carried out in Andalusia on the use of the social networks by young people, in which it was evidenced that most of the sample connected between several days a week and daily. [1] Every day this communication means becomes present in the social life of young people that is why it should be appropriately used in the educational contexts. However, the interviewed students pointed out that their teachers use it very little for academic purposes.

Chart 4. Valuation of the information that the sample possessed about the advantages and disadvantages of the social networks.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Excellent	5	4.63
Very good	62	57.41
Good	23	21.30
Fair	18	16.67
Insufficient	--	--
Total	108	100.00

Source: own elaboration.

There was predominance of those interviewed whose information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the social networks was valued as very good, for 57.41% of the sample (chart 4), it was also relevant that no one showed an insufficient information in this respect.

According to Peruvian researchers, the young people are not always able to recognize the disadvantages of the use of the social nets; this it is a situation that if not controlled, it can end up in the addiction to this practice in detriment

of the physical or personal contact, of outdoors activities, the practice of sports, and others. [8]

In the home of the students included in the investigation, the people who make more use of the social networks they are basically the young members and young siblings constituting 83,33%.

Chart 5. Way of internet connection to have access to the social networks.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Wifi of massive access	71	65,74
Cybers centers	39	36,11
Plans for motives	29	26,85
Personal net	29	26,85

Source: own elaboration.

The students that declared to have access to the social networks through public and private wifi in different centers that possess this service for different causes prevailed for 65,74% (chart 5).

The connection services in the educational institutions of Ecuador are increasing every day according to the fulfillment of national policies as for the use and reach of the TIC. The wide covering of existent connections allows the youths to have access from different points to the Internet using mobile devices through the wifi. [9]

There are multiple experiences and pedagogic theories on the use of social networks with didactic and educational purposes, but with the obtained results, it could be verified that these continue being insufficiently used with this purpose in the studied context, even when the employment levels and the available resources would facilitate this type of academic activity.

CONCLUSIONS

- Most of the students declared that they use the social networks once or twice a week for a half an one hour time, and that they mainly use Facebook.
- Those interviewed whose information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the social networks was valued as very good prevailed, not being any in the category of insufficient.

- The students that declared to have access to the social nets through public and private wifi prevailed.
- The students considered that the professors do not use the social networks sufficiently for academic purposes.

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