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Social Work Educators' Use of Information Technology in Social Work Education

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Abstract

One of the areas where technology is used extensively, especially information and communication technologies, is education. Social work education is gradually changing from traditional practices to technology based. In this study, the use of information technology by social work educators teaching at universities in Türkiye is discussed. The participant of the study consists of 414 social work educators teaching in Türkiye. Data within the sample were collected via Google Forms. “Personal Information Form”, "21st Century Skills Teaching Scale" and "Attitude Scale Towards the Use of Technology in Education" were used in the research. The obtained data were analyzed via SPSS 29 for Windows software. According to the results, the majority of the participants find information technologies necessary in social work education and use these technologies at a moderate level or quite a lot. When the relationships between the scales are examined, it is seen that there is a statistically significant, negative relationship between the participants' Attitude Scale towards the Use of Technology in Education scores and the 21st Century Skills Teaching Scale scores. It is recommended that future researches examine social work educators' relationships with information technologies at a longitudinal level.

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Introduction

The era we are in is an era of dizzying technological developments. Access to information has become easier and faster with the introduction of the internet into our daily lives. It is possible to see traces of technology in every area of life, from health to engineering, from education to tourism. It is stated that with the transition from Industry 1.0 to Industry 5.0, the transition from Society 1.0 to Society 5.0 - that is, to a super-smart society - has begun. With the transition to the digital age, everyday concepts have changed and become digital (Gencer & Aktan, 2021). When it comes to information society, one of the first concepts that comes to mind is "information technologies". *"All technologies used in the collection, processing, storage, transmission of information from one place to another through networks and presentation to the service of users, including communication and computer technologies"* are defined as information technology (Tonta, 1999). Among the main institutions that undertake important tasks in the information society are universities and therefore educators/academics. Information technologies have a special importance in education in terms of providing effective and flexible methods for the professional development of teachers and educators (Hamidi et al., 2011).

According to Aggarwal (2000; cited in Yilmaz and Horzum, 2005), 21st century education is independent of time and space, is oriented towards goals and results, is student-centered, is focused on active teamwork, is aimed at learning and should accommodate differences in skills and language. In addition, two concepts that come to the fore in 21st century education are “lifelong learning” and “information society”. The phenomenon of education in the digital age and the issue of information society at the university level, which constitute the main subject of this study, also include the lifelong learning processes of educators at the university. In this context, the following elements are emphasized as the basic factors of digital transformation in higher education (Koral-Gümüşoğlu, 2017): (1) Social profile, (2) Student profile, (3) The role of the educator, (4) Teaching methods, (5) Institutional requirements. Especially in terms of the role of the educator, in the digital age and therefore in the information society, educators/academics are no longer the sole owner and absolute transmitter of knowledge. Rather, they are in a guiding position in transferring knowledge to students and in subjecting this knowledge to correct analysis and synthesis. On the other hand, it would not be wrong to say that beyond the transfer of knowledge, the issue of acquiring skills has increasingly become a priority educational goal. In general, for university-level educators and specifically for social work educators, the primary issue has now become to train students “on the basis of skills”. Parallel to the Industry 5.0 and Society 5.0 processes mentioned above, another concept mentioned at the university level within education is the Teaching Staff 4.0. In this process, it is suggested that the academic teaching force trained in learning and teaching using technology-enriched learning environments can be called ‘Teaching Staff 4.0’ (Elçi & Vural, 2017). In this regard, it is emphasized that technology literacy will not be sufficient for teaching staff, and that it is necessary to integrate “technology-enriched learning environments” into the education program in line with the requirements appropriate to their field of study for integration with information technologies.

The social work profession emerged in the late 19th century in Europe and North America as volunteer efforts to address the increasing paradox of poverty in an increasingly productive and prosperous economy. During the period until the late 1800s, when religious-based organizations were dominant, the efforts of a number of

voluntary benefactors – or more accurately, volunteers – to aid those in need due to poverty-related problems are considered the first (non-institutional) applications of social work (Aktan, 2024). By the 20th century, working for social welfare had become a profession, and social work gained a professional identity in the 1930s (Stuart, 2013). The subject of this study, social work education, has an institutional history of approximately one hundred and fifty years. The beginning of social work education in a formal sense is based on the work of the Charity Organization Society, the first examples of which were seen in England and later became widespread in the USA, focusing on poor families (Alptekin, 2016). Mary Richmond's emphasis and call for field work, which is considered one of the milestones in social work education, led to the implementation of the oldest known social work education programs in Boston, New York and St. Louis in the USA (Austin, 1997). These efforts, starting from England and extending to the USA, later brought about the spread of social work education to Europe, especially Central Europe. Social work education, which developed in different stages in various countries from the beginning of the 20th century to the end of the Second World War, spread to developing countries with the encouragement of the United Nations, as stated by Koşar and Tufan (1999). The beginning of social work education in Türkiye corresponds to 1961.

In terms of the subject, the point that social work education has reached in terms of information technologies is remarkable. As mentioned earlier, when social work education was initiated in New York in the late 19th century, technology mainly consisted of the telephone, which was only two years old at that point. During the Great Depression in the 1930s, social work students who were receiving education were introduced to a new form of technology called the electric typewriter. Social workers were introduced to fax machines starting in the 1960s, and by the 1980s, social work students were able to leave messages via answering machines. Since the beginning of the new millennium, technology has become a part of social workers' service delivery and social work education. Today, with the inclusion of the internet in the information society, current alternatives to information technologies in education such as online, distance or hybrid education have become a part of social work education (Reamer, 2019). From a broader perspective, innovations such as information classroom technologies, simulation technologies, synchronous and asynchronous lessons, virtual and augmented reality, and social work education, have radically changed and transformed the perspective on information technologies in education, in terms of facilitating access to information (Çalış, 2024; Tuncay, 2020; Yıldırım et al., 2020; Leidner & Jarvenpaa, 1995). As emphasized by Ayalp (2023), social work educators need to consider their students' digital disabilities or lack of experience in online learning.

Literature Review

With the digitalization of education, interest in academic studies in this field has increased. The tendency of educators to use information technologies is an important indicator of technological literacy. In parallel with the use of information technologies in education, especially in the West, it is possible to see different application examples in social work education, as mentioned in the introduction. Therefore, the existence of research inherent in digitalization for social work education in the information society is gaining importance. In her study on blended learning, which refers to the enrichment of traditional education methods with online education materials, Ayala (2009) states that this new approach may have great potential for social work education. Moore (2005) found in

his study that social work educators perceive online education as less effective than face-to-face education, especially in teaching practice courses and clinical skills. Waldman and Rafferty (2008), in their study on technology-enhanced learning and teaching in social work in the United Kingdom, emphasized the importance of social work educators' engagement and skill development in using learning technologies. In a study evaluating the current use of distance learning in social work education (Siegel et al., 2014), the findings showed that the use of distance learning is increasing and that the most common problems reported by educators were related to the adaptation of teaching materials for course delivery and faculty preparation. Diaconu et al. (2020) conducted a study to address the barriers perceived by social work educators to technology-enhanced education. According to the results, there were six themes of barriers: lack of institutional support, lack of technology support, constantly changing technology, difficulty in choosing due to too much technology, lack of knowledge about designing online courses, and time-consuming monitoring of student participation in online courses. Another study involving 376 social work educators revealed that schools are critical in developing more opportunities for educators to have online teaching experiences and increasing their comfort and proficiency levels with technology (Levin, Fulginiti, & Moore, 2018).

When Turkish literature is examined, it is seen that studies addressing the use of information technologies in social work education are limited. The relationship between artificial intelligence and social work, along with the opportunities and risks it offers, was discussed by Başcıllar, Karataş and Pak-Güre (2022). Alptekin, Topuz, and Zengin (2017) examined the current status of social work education in Türkiye and revealed the current status of social work education in Türkiye, which could not grow until 2006 and entered an uncontrolled growth trend without infrastructure and planning after this year. In a study conducted by Saruç and Aslantürk (2021), 47.6% of social work educators who participated in the study stated that the distance education method was not suitable for social work education, 35.7% stated that this type of education should only be used to support formal education, and 14.3% stated that distance education methods were only suitable for theoretical courses. Again, 56.8% of all participants stated that social work education was not sustainable with the distance education method, and 13.6% stated that it was difficult to implement education in this way, but that it could be a method that could be used when necessary. In their study examining the technology use of social work educators, Ege and Altındağ (2018) reached the following conclusions: educators generally use technology effectively, more than half of them do not find the technological facilities of the university they work at sufficient; they receive the greatest support in technological matters from research assistants, they mostly prefer online videos to get information about technology, etc. In addition, there is a study by Yılmaz (2021) that addresses the use of virtual clients in social work education. The study emphasizes that the reasons such as the inability to conduct practical courses during the pandemic and the fact that theoretical courses remain at an abstract level necessitate the use of technological tools in general and simulations in particular in social work education.

As can be seen, the use of information technologies in education in general and social work education in particular is a subject that needs to be emphasized. The main subject of this study is to address information technologies from the perspective of social educators in social work education, which has a history of approximately sixty years in Türkiye. The relationship that educators establish with information technology and the dimensions of this relationship constitute the purpose of this research.

Three research questions and four hypotheses were determined in relation to the research purpose. These are as follows:

Sub-problems:

- Does the average daily time spent by social work educators using information technologies vary according to gender?
- Do social work educators' attitudes towards the use of technology in education vary according to their personal characteristics?
- What is the relationship between social work educators' attitudes towards the use of technology in education and the sub-dimensions of teaching 21st century skills?

Hypotheses (H1):

1: According to social work educators, the technological opportunities offered by the universities they work at are generally inadequate.

2: Social work educators use information technologies in social work education mostly at a moderate level.

3: There is a positive and significant relationship between social work educators' level of use of information technologies in social work education and their attitudes towards the use of technology in education.

4: According to their academic titles, participant group with the highest technology use habits and level of information technology use among social work educators are research assistants.

Method

This study, which addresses educators' use of information technology in social work education, aims to reach a holistic and deep understanding of this relationship and its results by focusing on the dimensions of the relationship that educators establish with information technologies. The research, designed in a quantitative design, is correlational research based on the relational screening model. Correlational studies are studies conducted to determine the relationships between two or more variables and to obtain clues about cause and effect (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

Sample

In this study, the use of information technology by social work educators teaching at universities in Türkiye is discussed. Participants of the study consists of social work educators teaching in Türkiye. The universe of the research consists of educators working in social work departments in Türkiye. Using the complete census method, it was determined that there was a total of 441 educators in 68 social work departments. 414 educators participated in the research.

Data Collection

Data was collected from the educators via Google Forms. The data of the research was collected between January 2024 and March 2024. The following measurement tools were used during the data collection process of the research:

1. Personal Information Form
2. 21st Century Skills Teaching Scale Turkish Form
3. Attitude Scale Towards the Use of Technology in Education

Personal Information Form

The personal information form prepared for the basic information of the participants consists of 10 questions. These questions include gender; age; academic title; university of employment; number of years of employment; technology usage habits; average daily time spent with technology and its components; attitude towards information technologies in social work education; level of use of information technologies in social work education, and technological opportunities offered by the university of employment.

21st Century Skills Teaching Scale Turkish Form

The scale, adapted to Turkish by Özyurt (2020), consists of 10 items and three sub-dimensions. The sub-dimensions of the scale are benefit of technology, collaboration, innovation and problem solving. The scale, developed in a 7-point Likert-type format, is scored within the options of "I am completely sufficient (7)" and "I am not sufficient at all (1)".

Attitude Scale Towards the Use of Technology in Education

The scale, developed by Öztürk (2006) in a 5-point Likert-type format, consists of a total of 39 items, 15 positive and 24 negative, and three sub-dimensions. The first sub-dimension is "Reflection of Technology Use in Education on Teaching Processes" and contains 16 items. The second sub-dimension is "Self-Improvement in the Use of Technology in Education" and contains 14 items. The third sub-dimension is "Technology Use and Classroom Management in Education" and contains 9 items. The positive items in the scale are scored from 5 to 1 with the options "strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1)", while the negative items are scored from 1 to 5 with the opposite options.

Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study were analyzed using the SPSS for Windows 29.0 software. Descriptive statistical methods (number, percentage, mean and standard deviation) were used when evaluating the data. In order to test the reliability of the scales, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated for the entire scale and its sub-dimensions. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to evaluate the normal distribution of the data used, and the Levene test was used to assess the homogeneity of variances. In the comparison of quantitative data was used for the difference between more than two independent groups, Kruskal-Wallis test was used, and in cases where there was a difference, Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction were used to find the group that created the difference. Spearman's rank correlations were used to test the relationship between numerical variables. The relationships between categorical variables were evaluated with the Pearson chi-square test. For the Mann-

Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction, the significance value was considered as $p<0.017$. A $p<0.05$ value was considered statistically significant.

Results

When the participants' technology usage habits are examined; it is seen that 20.3% use it moderately, 40.1% use it quite a lot, and 39.6% use it all the time. When the distribution of the participants' average daily time spent with technology and its components is examined; it is seen that 17.4% has less than 3 hours, 61.4% has 4-6 hours, and 21.3% has 7 hours and above. When the participants' attitudes towards information technologies in social work education are examined; it is seen that 14.5% find it moderately necessary, 54.1% find it quite necessary, and 31.4% find it completely necessary. When the participants' level of use of information technologies in social work education is examined; it is seen that 47.8% moderately, 33.8% quite a lot, and 18.4% always use it. When the technological opportunities offered by the universities where the participants work are examined, it is seen that 9.7% find it very insufficient, 21.7% insufficient, 32.9% moderately sufficient, and 35.7% very sufficient.

Table 1. Participants' Responses According to Personal Information Form

Variables	**Options**	**n**	**%**
Gender	Female	240	58.0
	Male	174	42.0
Age	23-32	110	26.6
	33-42	196	47.3
	43-52	62	15.0
	53 and above	46	11.1
Academic title	Research Assistant	108	26.1
	Lecturer	64	15.5
	Lecturer Dr.	24	5.8
	Assistant Professor	72	17.4
	Associated Professor	98	23.7
	Professor	48	11.6
Number of years of employment	Less than 5 years	116	28.0
	5-14 years	214	51.7
	14-23 years	40	9.7
	23 years and above	44	10.6
Technology usage habits	I use it moderately	84	20.3
	I use it quite a lot	166	40.1
	I use it all the time	164	39.6
Average daily time spent with technology and its components	Less than 3 hours	72	17.4
	4-6 hours	254	61.4
	7 hours and above	88	21.3

Variables	Options	n	%
Attitudes towards information technologies in social work education	I find it moderately necessary	60	14.5
	I find it quite necessary	224	54.1
	I find it completely necessary	130	31.4
Level of use of information technologies in social work education	I use it moderately	198	47.8
	I use it quite a lot	140	33.8
	I use it all the time	76	18.4
Technological opportunities offered by the university	Very insufficient	40	9.7
	Insufficient	90	21.7
	Moderately sufficient	136	32.9
	Very sufficient	148	35.7
Total		**414**	**100.0**

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference between the 21st Century Skills Teaching Scale and the Benefit of the Technology, Collaboration and Innovation, and Problem Solving sub-dimensions scores according to the participants' number of years of employment, technology usage habits, daily average time spent with technology and its components, their attitudes towards information technologies in social work education, and their level of use of information technologies in social work education. There is no statistically significant difference between the 21st Century Skills Teaching Scale and sub-dimensions scores according to the participants' academic title and technological opportunities offered by the university ($p>0.05$).

Table 2. Comparison of 21st Century Skills Teaching Scale Scores Based on Participants' Responses

Variables		21st Century Skills Teaching Scale **Mean±SD**	Benefits of the Technology **Mean±SD**	Collaboration **Mean±SD**	Innovation and Problem Solving **Mean±SD**
Gender	Female	5.50±0.75	5.36±0.91	5.79±0.78	5.38±0.87
	Male	5.69±0.73	5.76±0.90	5.81±0.76	5.54±0.82
	Z	-2.606	-4.808	-0.536	-1.720
	p	0.009*	<0.001**	0.592	0.085
Age	23-32[1]	5.40±0.81	5.53±0.89	5.56±0.82	5.19±0.97
	33-42[2]	5.62±0.67	5.59±0.83	5.83±0.70	5.49±0.79
	43-52[3]	5.78±0.74	5.56±0.91	6.08±0.83	5.73±0.77
	53 and above[4]	5.52±0.84	5.22±1.31	5.86±0.70	5.5±0.77
	KW	13.245	2.453	18.858	17.548
	p	0.004*	0.484	<0.001**	<0.001**
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	0.009	-	0.003	0.001

Variables		21st Century Skills Teaching Scale **Mean±SD**	Benefits of the Technology **Mean±SD**	Collaboration **Mean±SD**	Innovation and Problem Solving **Mean±SD**
	p^{1-3}	0.001	-	<0.001	<0.001
	p^{1-4}	0.379	-	0.055	0.066
	p^{2-3}	0.073	-	0.013	0.059
	p^{2-4}	0.318	-	0.876	0.618
	p^{3-4}	0.065	-	0.065	0.115
Academic title	Research Assistant[1]	5.56±0.71	5.67±0.74	5.67±0.75	5.39±0.89
	Lecturer[2]	5.48±0.85	5.42±0.99	5.76±0.94	5.31±0.90
	Lecturer Dr.[3]	5.60±0.72	5.28±0.90	5.81±0.72	5.69±0.84
	Assistant Professor[4]	5.69±0.73	5.69±0.98	5.81±0.80	5.59±0.69
	Associated Professor[5]	5.56±0.70	5.53±0.84	5.87±0.72	5.35±0.86
	Professor[6]	5.61±0.80	5.24±1.20	5.94±0.63	5.65±0.84
	KW	2.479	9.867	4.268	7.548
	p	0.780	0.079	0.512	0.183
Number of years of employment	Less than 5 years[1]	5.44±0.80	5.52±0.87	5.56±0.85	5.28±0.93
	5-14 years[2]	5.59±0.72	5.54±0.88	5.82±0.74	5.44±0.82
	14-23 years[3]	5.98±0.60	5.97±0.74	6.17±0.67	5.85±0.71
	23 years and above[4]	5.54±0.76	5.09±1.22	5.95±0.61	5.56±0.77
	KW	17.607	12.807	19.108	16.178
	p	0.001*	0.005*	<0.001**	0.001*
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	0.063	0.631	0.008	0.087
	p^{1-3}	<0.001	0.006	<0.001	<0.001
	p^{1-4}	0.449	0.182	0.011	0.200
	p^{2-3}	0.001	0.006	0.007	0.001
	p^{2-4}	0.722	0.060	0.433	0.636
	p^{3-4}	0.006	0.001	0.083	0.115
Technology usage habits	I use it moderately[1]	5,26±0,73	4,91±1,08	5,66±0,75	5,23±0,74
	I use it quite a lot[2]	5.40±0.72	5.34±0.76	5.65±0.81	5.27±0.83

Variables		21st Century Skills Teaching Scale **Mean±SD**	Benefits of the Technology **Mean±SD**	Collaboration **Mean±SD**	Innovation and Problem Solving **Mean±SD**
	I use it all the time[3]	5.91±0.65	6.04±0.71	6.02±0.68	5.74±0.84
	KW	57.121	99.344	20.063	32.340
	p	<0.001**	<0.001**	<0,001**	<0,001**
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	0.120	0.003	0.657	0.582
	p^{1-3}	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	p^{2-3}	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Average daily time spent with technology and its components	Less than 3 hour[1]	5.18±0.75	4.88±1.13	5.55±0.74	5.12±0.75
	4-6 hours[2]	5.61±0.73	5.57±0.83	5.81±0.76	5.48±0.86
	7 hours and above[3]	5.82±0.68	5.92±0.72	5.97±0.79	5.62±0.85
	KW	28.940	42.321	12.804	18.694
	p	<0.001**	<0.001**	0.002*	<0.001**
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	<0.001	<0.001	0.006	<0.001
	p^{1-3}	<0.001	<0.001	0.001	<0.001
	p^{2-3}	0.019	<0.001	0.081	0.224
Attitudes towards information technologies in social work education	I find it moderately necessary[1]	5.00±0.77	4.67±0.97	5.33±0.90	5.01±0.81
	I find it quite necessary[2]	5.56±0.71	5.49±0.85	5.81±0.73	5.44±0.83
	I find it completely necessary[3]	5.87±0.64	6.00±0.69	5.99±0.69	5.67±0.82
	KW	51.154	84.748	26.335	27.486
	p	<0.001*	<0.001*	<0.001*	<0.001*
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	p^{1-3}	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	p^{2-3}	<0.001	<0.001	0.021	0.015
Level of use of	I use it moderately[1]	5.30±0.71	5.11±0.91	5.63±0.76	5.20±0.83

Variables		21st Century Skills Teaching Scale **Mean±SD**	Benefits of the Technology **Mean±SD**	Collaboration **Mean±SD**	Innovation and Problem Solving **Mean±SD**
information technologies in social work education	I use it quite a lot[2]	5.63±0.68	5.66±0.74	5.78±0.74	5.49±0.81
	I use it all the time[3]	6.20±0.54	6.37±0.55	6.25±0.68	6.03±0.65
	KW	77.941	116.523	34.199	52.256
	p	<0.001*	<0.001*	<0.001*	<0.001*
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	<0.001	<0.001	0.025	0.001
	p^{1-3}	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	p^{2-3}	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Technological opportunities offered by the university	Very insufficient[1]	5.71±0.53	5.53±0.70	5.98±0.58	5.64±0.61
	Insufficient[2]	5.41±0.88	5.36±1.01	5.59±0.84	5.31±1.01
	Moderately sufficient[3]	5.57±0.72	5.60±0.98	5.77±0.76	5.40±0.84
	Very sufficient[4]	5.65±0.72	5.57±0.87	5.9±0.76	5.53±0.80
	KW	5.901	4.371	12.649	4.472
	p	0.117	0.224	0.005*	0.215
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	-	-	0.005	-
	p^{1-3}	-	-	0.088	-
	p^{1-4}	-	-	0.525	-
	p^{2-3}	-	-	0.064	-
	p^{2-4}	-	-	0.002	-
	p^{3-4}	-	-	0.145	-

Z: test statistics for Mann-Whitney U test, KW: Kruskal-Wallis test, *p<0.05, **p<0.001

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference between the Attitude Scale towards the Use of Technology in Education and the Reflection of Technology Use in Education on Educational Processes, Self-Improvement in the Use of Technology in Education, and the Use of Technology in Education and Classroom Management sub-dimensions scores according to the participants' technology usage habits. There is a statistically significant difference between the Reflection of Technology Use in Education on Educational Processes, Self-Improvement in the Use of Technology in Education, and the Use of Technology in Education and Classroom Management sub-dimensions scores according to the participants' gender, academic title, attitudes towards information technologies in social work education, and level of use of information technologies in social

work education. ($p<0.05$).

Table 3. Comparison of Attitude Scale towards the Use of Technology in Education Scores based on Participants' Responses

Variables		Attitude Scale Towards the Use of Technology in Education **Mean±SD**	Reflection of Technology Use in Education on Educational Processes **Mean±SD**	Self-Improvement in the Use of Technology in Education **Mean±SD**	Use of Technology in Education and Classroom Management **Mean±SD**
Gender	Female	2.48±0.23	1.80±0.40	3.64±0.64	2.0±0.55
	Male	2.45±0.20	1.69±0.36	3.92±0.62	1.75±0.50
	Z	-1.163	-2.589	-4.421	-3.994
	p	0.245	0.010*	<0.001**	<0.001**
Age	23-32[1]	2.48±0.22	1.72±0.36	3.84±0.69	1.87±0.49
	33-42[2]	2.47±0.20	1.72±0.37	3.82±0.58	1.86±0.49
	43-52[3]	2.39±0.26	1.79±0.46	3.54±0.61	1.84±0.57
	53 and above[4]	2.56±0.19	1.91±0.38	3.58±0.74	2.18±0.72
	KW	13.660	9.731	13.059	7.557
	p	0.003*	0.021*	0.005*	0.056
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	0.514	0.869	0.832	-
	p^{1-3}	0.069	0.466	0.006	-
	p^{1-4}	0.014	0.005	0.076	-
	p^{2-3}	0.124	0.359	0.001	-
	p^{2-4}	0.002	0.003	0.081	-
	p^{3-4}	0.001	0.108	0.480	-
Academic title	Research Assistant[1]	2.45±0.21	1.67±0.34	3.88±0.60	1.81±0.48
	Lecturer[2]	2.51±0.17	1.69±0.38	3.97±0.69	1.86±0.47
	Lecturer Dr.[3]	2.53±0.18	1.96±0.39	3.50±0.61	2.12±0.47
	Assistant Professor[4]	2.49±0.25	1.76±0.39	3.69±0.67	2.02±0.58
	Associated Professor[5]	2.42±0.23	1.72±0.41	3.79±0.55	1.75±0.54
	Professor[6]	2.48±0.24	1.93±0.36	3.38±0.66	2.13±0.60
	KW	9.290	23.131	31.432	22.645
	p	0.098	<0.001**	<0.001**	<0.001**
Number of	Less than 5	2.47±0.23	1.69±0.37	3.86±0.64	1.86±0.47

Variables		Attitude Scale Towards the Use of Technology in Education **Mean±SD**	Reflection of Technology Use in Education on Educational Processes **Mean±SD**	Self-Improvement in the Use of Technology in Education **Mean±SD**	Use of Technology in Education and Classroom Management **Mean±SD**
years of employment	years[1]				
	5-14 years[2]	2.47±0.21	1.75±0.38	3.78±0.62	1.87±0.54
	14-23 years[3]	2.46±0.19	1.71±0.46	3.77±0.63	1.89±0.59
	23 years and above[4]	2.48±0.25	1.95±0.35	3.40±0.70	2.09±0.64
	KW	1.698	15.835	13.769	2.872
	p	0.637	0.001*	0.003*	0.412
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	-	0.187	0.410	-
	p^{1-3}	-	0.757	0.400	-
	p^{1-4}	-	<0.001	<0.001	-
	p^{2-3}	-	0.292	0.736	-
	p^{2-4}	-	0.001	0.001	-
	p^{3-4}	-	0.005	0.026	-
Technology usage habits	I use it moderately[1]	2.47±0.18	1.92±0.38	3.42±0.60	2.07±0.56
	I use it quite a lot[2]	2.52±0.19	1.82±0.39	3.73±0.57	2.01±0.49
	I use it all the time[3]	2.41±0.25	1.59±0.32	3.96±0.67	1.69±0.51
	KW	23.031	48.348	39.938	32.634
	p	<0.001**	<0.001**	<0.001**	<0.001**
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	0.039	0.034	<0.001	0.160
	p^{1-3}	0.007	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	p^{2-3}	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Average daily time spent with technology and its components	Less than 3 hour[1]	2.45±0.22	1.88±0.42	3.42±0.68	2.07±0.66
	4-6 hours[2]	2.48±0.21	1.75±0.39	3.83±0.60	1.86±0.50
	7 hours and above[3]	2.44±0.24	1.65±0.34	3.83±0.67	1.84±0.54
	KW	3.043	11.075	18.290	4.687
	p	0.218	0.004	<0.001	0.096

Variables		Attitude Scale Towards the Use of Technology in Education **Mean±SD**	Reflection of Technology Use in Education on Educational Processes **Mean±SD**	Self-Improvement in the Use of Technology in Education **Mean±SD**	Use of Technology in Education and Classroom Management **Mean±SD**
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	-	0.030	<0.001	-
	p^{1-3}	-	0.001	<0.001	-
	p^{2-3}	-	0.064	0.785	-
Attitudes towards information technologies in social work education	I find it moderately necessary[1]	2.50±0.19	2.13±0.35	3.13±0.55	2.23±0.56
	I find it quite necessary[2]	2.48±0.20	1.79±0.36	3.68±0.55	1.96±0.49
	I find it completely necessary[3]	2.44±0.25	1.51±0.27	4.18±0.55	1.63±0.49
	KW	5.687	107.248	113.765	53.952
	p	0.058	<0.001*	<0.001*	<0.001*
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	-	<0.001	<0.001	0.002
	p^{1-3}	-	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	p^{2-3}	-	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Level of use of information technologies in social work education	I use it moderately[1]	2.48±0.19	1.87±0.39	3.53±0.62	2.04±0.52
	I use it quite a lot[2]	2.45±0.24	1.70±0.37	3.85±0.57	1.80±0.52
	I use it all the time[3]	2.47±0.25	1.51±0.28	4.19±0.59	1.69±0.53
	KW	0.339	51.868	67.701	28.116
	p	0.844	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction				
	p^{1-2}	-	<0.001	<0.001	0.002
	p^{1-3}	-	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	p^{2-3}	-	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Technological opportunities offered by the	Very insufficient[1]	2.53±0.22	1.75±0.40	3.95±0.67	1.88±0.44
	Insufficient[2]	2.47±0.20	1.78±0.40	3.76±0.66	1.87±0.51

Variables		Attitude Scale Towards the Use of Technology in Education **Mean±SD**	Reflection of Technology Use in Education on Educational Processes **Mean±SD**	Self-Improvement in the Use of Technology in Education **Mean±SD**	Use of Technology in Education and Classroom Management **Mean±SD**
university	Moderately sufficient[3]	2.45±0.21	1.73±0.38	3.74±0.62	1.88±0.56
	Very sufficient[4]	2.47±0.24	1.75±0.38	3.72±0.65	1.93±0.57
	KW	3.230	0.962	3.145	0.690
	p	0.358	0.810	0.370	0.875

Z: test statistics for Mann-Whitney U test, KW: Kruskal-Wallis test, **p*<0.05, ***p*<0.001

When the relationships between the scales in Table 4 are examined, it is seen that there is a statistically significant, negative relationship between the participants' Attitude Scale towards the Use of Technology in Education and sub-dimension scores and the 21st Century Skills Teaching Scale and sub-dimension scores (r: -0.143; p<0.01).

Table 4. Relationships between Scales

Scales and Sub-dimensions		**Attitude Scale Towards the Use of Technology in Education**	**Reflection of Technology Use in Education on Educational Processes**	**Self-Improvement in the Use of Technology in Education**	**Use of Technology in Education and Classroom Management**
21st Century Skills Teaching Scale	r_s	-0.181**	-0.322**	0.355	-0.377
	p	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Benefits of the technology	r_s	-0.180	-0.410**	0.476**	-0.437**
	p	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Collaboration	r_s	-0.192**	-0.254**	0.217**	-0.284**
	p	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Innovation and Problem Solving	r_s	-0.137*	-0.245**	0.270**	-0.298**
	p	0.005	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

r_s: Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, **p*<0.05, **p*<0.01

Table 5 shows the analysis findings of the Chi-Square test conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between technology and its components, gender, age, and academic title. According to these findings, while there is a statistically significant difference between age and academic title and Average Daily Time Spent with Technology and Its Components, there is no statistically significant difference between gender. (p>0.05). The correlations between the scales are shown in Figure 1.

Tablo 5. Chi Square Analysis Findings Regarding Gender, Age, and Academic Title According to Average Daily Time Spent with Technology and Its Components

Variables		**Average Daily Time Spent with Technology and Its Components**				
		Less than 3 hours n (%)	**4-6 hours n (%)**	**7 hours and above n (%)**	χ^2	*p*
Gender	Female	40 (16.7)	150 (62.5)	50 (20.8)	0.343	0.842
	Male	32 (18.4)	104 (59.8)	38 (21.8)		
Age	23-32	14 (12.7)	60 (54.5)	36 (32.7)	14.944	0.021*
	33-42	38 (19.4)	122 (62.2)	36 (18.4)		
	43-52	10 (16.1)	40 (64.5)	12 (19.4)		
	53 and above	10 (21.7)	32 (69.6)	4 (8.7)		
Academic title	Research Assistant	18 (16.7)	46 (42.6)	44 (40.7)	52.511	<0.001**
	Lecturer	12 (18.8)	42 (65.6)	10 (15.6)		
	Lecturer Dr.	8 (33.3)	16 (66.7)	0		
	Assistant Professor	16 (22.2)	48 (66.7)	8 (11.1)		
	Associated Professor	8 (8.2)	76 (77.6)	14 (14.3)		
	Professor	10 (20.8)	26 (54.2)	12 (25)		

*p<0.05, **p<0.001

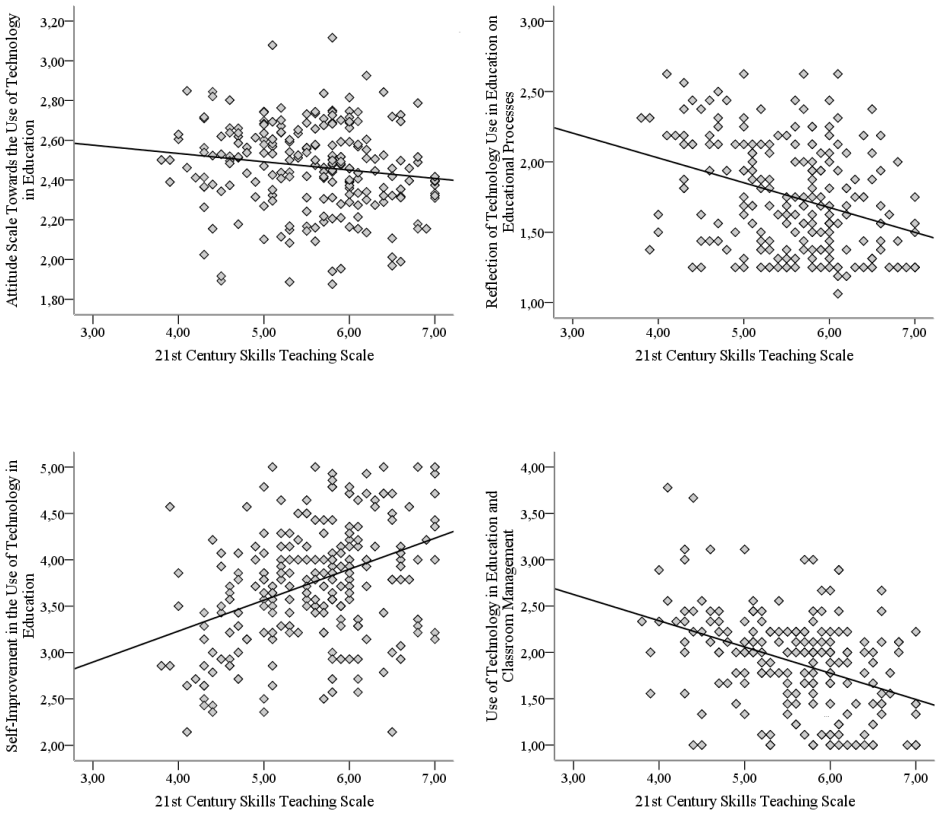

Figure 1. Correlation between Scales

Discussion

In this study, which examines the use of information technologies in social work education by social work educators in Türkiye, a total of 414 educators were included in the study. There is a relatively balanced distribution of participants according to their gender. When academic titles are examined, it is seen that the highest participation rate is from research assistants (108 participants) and the lowest participation rate is from assistant professors (24 participant). In terms of number of years of employment, the highest group is represented by educators who have worked for 5-14 years (214 participants), and the lowest group is represented by educators who have worked for 14-23 years (40 participants). In terms of technology usage habits, the intensive use of technology by the participants is striking. The average daily time spent with technology and its components is concentrated between 4-6 hours (254 participants). When the participants' attitudes towards information technologies in social work education are examined, it is seen that it is mostly considered quite necessary (224 participants). The participants' level of use of information technologies in social work education is concentrated between moderately and quite a lot. Participants mostly state that they find the technological opportunities offered by the university they work at very insufficient or very sufficient.

According to the results of the study, in line with the participants' responses to the personal information form, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference between the 21st Century Skills Teaching Scale and the Benefit of Technology, Collaboration and Innovation, and Problem-Solving sub-dimensions scores, except for the academic title. It was found that the participants who found information technologies completely necessary in social work education had higher scores on the 21st Century Skills Teaching Scale and the Benefit of Technology, Collaboration and Innovation, and Problem-Solving sub-dimensions than the participants who found information technologies moderately or quite necessary in social work education. It was found that the participants with a moderate use of information technologies in social work education had higher scores on the Reflection of Technology Use in Education on Educational Processes and Use of Technology in Education, and Classroom Management sub-dimensions than the participants with quite a lot and all the time use of information technologies in social work education. Within the sub-problems addressed within the scope of the research, it was observed that while there is a statistically significant difference between age and academic title and Average Daily Time Spent with Technology and Its Components, there is no statistically significant difference between gender. A statistically significant, negative relationship was measured between the scales and their sub-dimensions used in the study.

Within the scope of the hypotheses put forward within the scope of the research, although it is predicted that the technological opportunities offered by the university where social work educators work are insufficient, it has been concluded that approximately 68% of the educators find them to be moderately or very sufficient. It has been predicted that social work educators mostly use information technologies at a moderate level in social work education, and this hypothesis has been confirmed. (43.5%). It has been predicted that there would be a positive and significant relationship between the level of use of information technologies in social work education by social work educators and their attitudes towards the use of technology in education. Although the scores of the participants were close to each other, no statistically significant difference was found. It has been predicted that

the group with the highest technology use habits and information technology use levels among social work educators according to their academic titles are research assistants. While the participant group with the highest technology use habits is research assistants, the participant group with the highest level of use of information technologies is composed of assistant professors. Therefore, this hypothesis has been partially confirmed.

When we look at the academic studies conducted on the subject, it is seen that the use of information technologies in the context of social work is included. Although it was not conducted directly with social work educators, a study by Mishna et. al. (2021) found that the professionals who use information and communication technologies most in social work are older and experienced practitioners. In this study, the level of information technology use in social work education does not show a regular increase or decrease according to seniority according to academic title. It was found that the level of information technology use in social work education of participants whose academic title is research assistant, lecturer and assistant professor is higher than the participants whose academic title is lecturer Dr. In a focus group study (Csiernik et. al., 2008) in which social work educators were included and the relationship between information technologies and social work was discussed, educators' opinions were sought on the dark and bright sides of information technologies in social work education. Educators stated that using technological components such as presentations in the classroom environment is an indicator of professionalism and keeping up with the times. In this study, it was found that there was a statistically significant, negative relationship between the educators' Technology Use in Education and Classroom Management sub-dimension scores and the Benefit of Technology sub-dimension scores.

In another study conducted by Diaconu et. al. (2020) on the barriers perceived by social work educators regarding teaching with technology, the lack of institutional support, which represents one of the variables of this study - the technological opportunities offered by the university in question - was revealed as a barrier. In a study involving 376 social work educators in the USA, the perceived effectiveness of online social work education was measured. It was found that educators perceived online social work education as less effective in preparing students to become social workers than traditional and on-site education (Levin, Fulginiti, & Moore, 2018). At this point, it is important to emphasize that the integration of distance education requires institutional support and resources, leadership, faculty participation, pedagogical adaptation specific to the practice profession, etc. When the outputs in question are compared with this study, it can be said that the results are similar in terms of the high level of technology usage habits. The results are also similar in terms of the time spent with technology. On the other hand, in this study, the number of educators who expressed a positive opinion about the adequacy of technological opportunities by the university they worked at is much higher. It is thought that the time difference between the two studies and the difference in the participants' perceptions of adequacy have an effect on this difference.

It is important to know that the use of information technologies in social work education brings with it some opportunities and risks. As emphasized by Aktan (2024) and Tuncay (2020), while educational technologies offer opportunities such as access to education and information, low education costs, equal opportunities and social justice, and awareness raising, they also pose risks such as lack of infrastructure and equipment, lack of knowledge and skills of the educator, limited communication and interaction opportunities, loss of locality, and ethical issues.

In a study examining the use of technology by social work academics by Ege and Altındağ (2018), it was found that 82.9% of educators generally used technology effectively. The time educators spent in front of the computer was stated as a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 12 hours, and the average was found to be 5.6 hours. In the same study, 39.3% of the participants stated that they could not use technology effectively. The reasons for this were cited as inappropriate classroom environments, inadequate equipment, and inadequate technical support. In addition, almost half of the participants (46.4%) stated that they did not find the technological facilities of the university they worked at sufficient. When the outputs in question are compared with this study, it can be said that the results are similar in terms of the high level of technology usage habits. The results are also similar in terms of the time spent with technology. On the other hand, in this study, the number of instructors who expressed a positive opinion about the adequacy of technological opportunities by the university they worked at is much higher. It is thought that the time difference between the two studies and the difference in the participants' perceptions of adequacy have an effect on this difference.

Conclusion

In this study, the use of information technologies in social work education, which has been carried out at the institutional level in Türkiye since 1961, has been addressed from the perspective of social work educators. Although technological transformations in education are not a very new subject, the use of information technologies in social work education is a relatively new phenomenon. When it comes to Türkiye, the issue of the integration of technology and its components into education is a subject that has not yet been sufficiently discussed for the social work discipline. In this case, the need to focus on the approach of social work educators to the issue on an academic level arises.

In Türkiye, social work education continued its existence within a single university until the early 2000s based on a generalist approach (Alptekin, 2016). At this point, the basic requirements of social work education (qualified academics, curriculum, professional qualifications, etc.) have not yet been fully met, while the number of social work departments has increased disproportionately. While traditional education-training methods continue to exist within this discipline, the higher education requirements of the 21st century have made technological integration mandatory. Social work, which still cannot meet the sufficient in-field trainer infrastructure on a departmental basis, is also struggling to train qualified graduates integrated into the information society. The tendency of social work educators to use information technologies becomes more important at this point.

As revealed in this study, social work educators have a certain technological habit. They spend a certain amount of time with information technologies (mostly 4-6 hours) regardless of the content. In addition, the vast majority (13.5% moderate level, 54.1% quite necessary, 31.4% completely necessary) find information technologies necessary in social work education. Similarly, three-quarters of social work educators (77.3%) use information technologies moderately or quite a lot in education. On the other hand, the rate of educators who find the technological opportunities offered by the university they work at sufficient is only 4.3%. In this context, important roles and responsibilities fall on schools as well as educators in terms of the integration of information technologies into higher education. Improving the infrastructure conditions required by departments is at the

forefront of these. If we summarize on the basis of the scales used in this study; the attitudes of the participants towards the use of technology in education are effective in terms of improving themselves in this regard and reflecting this to the educational processes. Teaching 21st century skills based on information technologies directly affects the benefit of technology, collaboration, innovation and problem solving.

Recommendations

This study, which focuses on the use of information technologies by social work educators in social work education, is a cross-sectional study as it includes usage experiences over a certain period of time. It should be noted that usage patterns will change over time. Although this study includes all social work educators in Türkiye, the number of educators working in the process may change. Although the concept of information technologies is included in the study, the contents of this technology are not detailed. Participants' technology usage habits were evaluated in terms of moderate, quite a lot and all the time. It may be useful to focus on what these habits include in future studies. In addition, the use of artificial intelligence, one of the most important information technology elements of the 21st century, can be included in social work research. Finally, it is useful to state that there is a need for studies that address the relationships of social work educators with information technologies at a longitudinal level.

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