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"The role of the Internet as a means of removing social exclusion in children with disabilities aged 13-18. A methodological empirical web research, perspectives and limitations »

Panagiota Neokosmidou University of Aegean

ABSTRACT: This thesis examines the issue of the role of the Internet as a means of eliminating social exclusion for children with disabilities and special educational needs aged 13-18. More specifically, it explores to what extent and in what way the internet and new technologies contribute to the alleviation of social exclusion through the analysis (qualitative and quantitative). On the research level, the study addressed 206 children with disabilities and special educational needs and 280 special education teachers. On the level of findings, the majority of children deal with the internet and new technologies. An important role for children to engage in the internet is the factors of age, type of difficulty and education, with older children and those studying at TEE to excel in digital training, compared to younger children attending Special Vocational Education and Training Laboratory and face major difficulties. One of the important findings that emerged in the context of this research was the failure to disclose children's disability when they were involved in online contacts because of the fear of rejection, while notable findings were found about why children with special educational needs make use of the internet. These reasons are mainly educational and entertaining. On the interpersonal level, the majority of children are limited to online contacts with relatives and friendly people, while social participation appears to be significantly limited as children have not been properly trained for it.

KEYWORDS: internet, children with special educational needs and disabilities, social exclusion, digital exclusion

I. INTRODUCTION

The Internet is an integral part of "social development". At the same time, it is a matter of intense reflection on whether it is a reflection of society, capturing all the manifestations of modern reality (Papanis, 2011). In the Internet environment, many conceptual constructions differ in their content. The space, time, community, and identity of people have a different dimension. It is an intangible space, in which the sense of collectivity is based on the development of social networks (Demetzis, 2002).

The contribution of the Internet to managing and studying the phenomenon of Social Exclusion is a modern way of managing it and is about to address the present work. The concept of social exclusion is multilevel and occurs in every social form, taking many dimensions and forms of inequality and differentiated management.

Numerous surveys show that the use of the Internet for children with disabilities can contribute dynamically to their development at the educational, interpersonal and social level (Sivin-Kachala 1998 • Papanis, 2011). Although this group, at the time of the Information Society, lacks, as research shows, even access to this instrument, what has been established is that its use by the study group can contribute to the removal of the social exclusion (Katsinas, Moeck & Gorski, 2005).

In order to investigate the above phenomenon, we will try to implement multidisciplinary online and traditional research. Related, foreign literature, argues that a) Internet surveys have immediate and cost-effective results. b). The sample, which will have access to the Internet as its main feature, extends to an unlimited geographical scope. c). The anonymity of the participation of participants in a research is ensured by concealing their true identity and personal data, a characteristic that leads to a sense of freedom and control of their participation in it (Alvarez & Chase, 2000. Piper & College, 1998. Papanis 2011). In addition to the application, analysis and processing of the findings, it is also expected to introduce restrictions and ethical issues in the conduct of research via the Internet, which will trigger further analysis and reflection (Frahkel & Siang, 1999)

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An attractive element of the web site is the space-time excess, as the geographical distances are nullified, giving them a place in virtual coexistence and social unification. Time in the virtual environment differs in terms of meaning, as it expands on the one hand, allowing flexibility in the classification of new data, while on the other hand it shrinks with regard to their transmission speed. The sensation of space also changes drastically, as this dimension is usually associated with the physical presence of the individuals and the expected interaction and intimacy that is dictated by direct and intimate contact. In the context of virtual reality, the situations and relationships that are developed are mediated by the digital environment, imparting to the site an intangible social structure, which has as its starting point the existence of social networks, a fact confirmed by N. Demetzis , which states: "that the common coherent element of the community is the network of social relations that are created within a particular place of common co-habitation" (Demertzis, 2002).

The Internet as a meeting place encourages group lectures, alternative discussions and forums for each type of subject, setting the foundations for a global dialogue, without limits and physical constraints, of a dialogue that is inferior to the possibility of representing all views, thus contributing to the emergence of human experience as the foundation stone of knowledge. It is obvious that the Internet is not an epitome of reality, but it is a complex social-technical construct, reproducing the conditions and contributing to the development of new data. The main field of the Internet is not its function as an antidote to a non-existent social life but its essential and important contribution to the activation of basic senses in entertainment, work and knowledge (Kus, 2003). Its main aim is to activate mechanisms that are capable of defining the new virtual framework of human cooperation. In this context, people are gradually committed to a set of innovative social forms, characterized by flexibility and flexibility (Dalu, 2008).

An example of the positive effect of the Internet and new technologies is the report by one of his most important supporters, Dyson (in: Barnett, 2005), which highlights the potential of this instrument for people to take control of their lives, redefining their role as citizens of a global society. Virtual personality can be an important source of self-assessment and internalized change. The existence of the digital world leads to the creation of new communities by activating our internal and external mechanisms. Navigating in the virtual environment reminds of the ability of an anthropologist who returns from a foreign culture to his home while trying to understand the arbitrary way of operating the real world and the processes that this can change (McGeer, 2004).

Nevertheless, virtual reality reproduces predominantly stereotypes and structural inequalities, contributing to the consolidation of digital exclusion and hence the unequal participation of people with disabilities in the social sphere. This new form of social exclusion is directly linked to Internet access and new technologies, both operationally and practically. Poor, sometimes non-existent, digital participation poses significant constraints and natural obstacles to wider social inclusion of people with disabilities (Adam & Kreps, 2004).

It is noteworthy that, despite the differences between the medical and social model, in terms of content attributed to the concept of disability, their positions seem to converge with respect to the undisputed positive effects of the use of new technologies and the Internet in the lives of the disabled. More specifically, for the medical model, it is the means of transition from the disability pathogenicity into a broad framework of "normality", enabling disabled people to escape the stigma of disease and biological disability.

On the other hand, in the social model of disability, it is considered that the use of technology provides the prospect of individuals joining the dominant socio-economic stratum by mitigating the obstacles their disability often poses. Consequently, the first model focuses on changing the individual towards and towards a better physical state, while the second focuses on the essential structural changes in society that are thought to be necessary, so that they can include all citizens, regardless of physical disability and disadvantages they have.

The predominant theory, which refers to the relationship between society and technology, is characterized as technological determinism, as there is a direct correlation between this and the social changes that take place. More specifically, William Ogburn (1964) believed that technological innovations encourage driving forces for wider structural changes (Sheldon, 2001). The key question that arises is to what extent people with disabilities are able to manage this instrument in order to ensure their social liberation and control of their personal lives. The conclusion is that the use of new technologies and the internet is shaped by the very same forces that shape disability as a social construction, contributing to the elimination of social exclusion. The choice to highlight either the skills or ultimately the disability and what this implies is a result of the disability management by the people who carry it. From related research, what has been proven is that the online environment enables the study group to demonstrate its educational and professional skills on an equal footing with that of people without disabilities (Pfeil & Zaphiris, 2009).

Consequently, what is perceived is that the digital divide is linked to multiple forms of gaps, as these are synergies of a variety of factors, such as social living conditions, unemployment, education opportunities, poverty and the wider social insecurity, but also the personalized way of managing the disability itself (Parsons & Hick, 2008).

III.

This paper attempts to highlight the use of appropriate online and traditional research methods to what extent the access of children with disabilities to computers and the Internet is linked to the improvement of quality of life in key areas of life (educational, social, interpersonal). For understanding and deepening of the phenomenon study followed a qualitative and quantitative survey to the analysis and interpretation of information and findings, which aimed to assess needs and the emergence of the internet as a means for removing social exclusion in children disability and special educational needs aged 13-18. The survey data were drawn in two ways. In the framework of qualitative analysis, using two questionnaires addressed to children with special educational needs and disabilities aged 13-18 years and special education teachers. Both questionnaires were answered by 206 children and 280 special education teachers. The main scale axes comprising two sections contain the following: the demographic type questions, the questions team are investigating the frequency and degree of knowledge of the particular instrument and the children's preferences regarding their online options, half a body of questions explores the accessibility and necessity of supporting equipment. Finally, it is investigated whether children disclose their disability and if not why they do not. In the second part of the questionnaire, the modified scale, Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0, is used. (WHODAS.2.0.), which aims to explore the role of the internet with regard to the different areas of life of children with disabilities, such as education, social life and social participation / day-to-day activities. It is a general assessment tool that measures health and disability in all cultures. Designed according to the International Classification of Functioning of Disability and Health (ICF) (World Health Organization, 2010).

2.1. Research questions

1) Who are emerging as the most basic reasons for dealing with the Internet among young people with disabilities? What are the percentages? How are they grouped?

2) How does the Internet help young people with disabilities to participate in educational activities?

3) To what extent do the services offered by the internet contribute to the achievement of good interpersonal and social relations of young people with disabilities?

4) In particular, how much does the internet use in accessing services for young people with disabilities in their capacity as citizens?

5) In consideration of all the above, do young people with disabilities believe that the Internet can limit and / or lift social exclusion? Does digital exclusion play a part in it?

2.2. Procedure

A combination of quantitative and qualitative research was attempted to carry out the research. More specifically, children with special educational needs and disabilities, and special education teachers complemented the questionnaires, while the first group participated in group focus group interviews. The main objective is the convergence of multiple descriptions, which lead to a high degree of reliability and validity, as well as a detailed picture of the described situation. The purpose of this research is to provide a more realistic picture of the reality, offering the possibility of verifying the variables under investigation (Bell, 2001).

Specifically, in the context of quantitative research, the above mentioned tools were supplemented by children and teachers for live and online, as the questionnaires were posted on official websites on special education.

At a second level of research, the implementation of qualitative methods was carried out by conducting groupfocused interviews. A key advantage of this research process is the fact that a framework is defined in advance so that the analysis is as simple as possible.

3. Results of the survey

Statistical Analysis (Student Questionnaires)

Descriptive statistical analysis of the measurement instrument includes the calculation of the frequency distributions for the demographic characteristics of the sample As we can see, the majority of our sample is 65.5%, while boys are only 34.5% of the sample. Concerning the composition of the family, 74.8% are left with their parents and 16.5% are left with only one parent, a condition often found in parents of children with disabilities and special educational needs. 49.5% have income in the category of 25.000-35.000 \in , while a large percentage belongs to the category of less than 15.000 \in (41.7%). Finally, the majority of children attend the TEE of the country 50% and 31.3% in the EYEK.

Variable	<u>N%</u>
Gender Boy	135 65.5
Girl	71 34.5
Family Status I live with my parents	154 74.8
I live alone	6 2.9

I live with one parent	34 16.5
I live with another relative	12 5.8
Annual Family Income Less than	15,000 € 86 41.7
	25.000-35.0000 € 102 49.5
	35,000 - 45,000 € 15 7.3
	45.00- 60.000 € 3 1.5
Student Specialist Elementary School	73. 4
Pupils of Special Gymnasium 32 15.5	
Student (s) of EEEK	64 31.1
Student TEE EAE	103 50.0
Fig.1 Descriptive statistics on demographic	c characteristics

In the context of the investigation of the role of the Internet and the elimination of the sense of social exclusion through the statistical analysis of the three basic dimensions (educational, interpersonal and social) what was found in accordance with the necessary non-parametric and parametric analyses (Kruskal-Wallis) indicated the existence of a statistically significant effect of the Student factor in the conceptual construction Social Participation / Daily Activities (EC3), $\chi 2$ (2) = 16,715, p <0.001

Post-hoc analysis using the Mann-Whitney non-parametric control and Bonferroni correction ($\alpha = 0.05 / 3 = 0.017$) revealed statistically significant differences in the distributions between the Gymnasium Students / 2.75, El. = 2.00, Me = 5.00) and Student EEEK. ($\Delta = 2.33$, El = 1.00 Me = 4.33), U = 575, p <0.001. At the same time, there was a statistically significant variation in the distributions of student EEK levels. ($\Delta = 2.33$, El = 1.00 Me = 4.33), U = 2022.5, p <0.001. At the same time, there 4.33 and Student TEE / EAE ($\Delta = 2.67$, El = 1.00 Me = 4.33), U = 2202.5, p <0.001.

This finding means that students of TEEs with answers respond to the Internet's contribution to education, interpersonal relationships and social participation / day-to-day activities to a greater extent than to students and students of EUEC.

Social Involvement / Daily Activ	vities				Ελάχισ	Μέγισ		χ_{2}		
(EC3)	N	M	TA	Δ	το	το	U	2	df	p
Gender Bo				2.5	1.00	5.00		-	-	
	5		3	0						
Gi	rl 71	2.5	0.5	2.5	1.00	4.00				
		4	6	0			4518			0.498
I	live 15			2.5	1.00	4.33		-	-	
wi	th my 4	0	7	0						
pa	rents									
Il	ive 34	1 2.6	0.7	2.5	1.67	5.00				
wi	th one	9	3	0			2530			
Family Stadus pa	rent						.5			0.759
Le	ess 86	5 2.6		2.5	1.00	4.33		-	-	
that	an	4	7	8						
15	.000€									
25	.000- 10) 2.6	0.7	2.5	1.00	5.00				
35	.0000 2	0	0	0						
Annual Family Income €							4169			0.557
Pu	pils of 32	2 2.7	0.5	2.7	2.00	5.00				
Sp	ecial	4	6	5						
G	ymnasi									
un	n									
St	udent 64	1 2.3	0.5	2.3	1.00	4.33				
(s)) of	8	6	3						
E.	E.E.K.									
St	udent 10		0.7	2.6	1.00	4.33				
(s)	of 3	7	4	7						
Student Specialist TI	ΞE								16.7	<
	Α Ε						-	2	15	0.001

Fig. 2 Case Studies of Conceptual Manufacturing Social Participation / Daily Activities (EC3) and demographic variables

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Comparison	U	р
Pupils of Special Gymnasium - Student (s) of EEEK	575	< 0.001
Pupils of Special Gymnasium - Student (s) of TEE EAE	1628	0.917
Student (s) of EEEK - Student (s) of TEE EAE	2202.5	<0.001

Fig.3 Pairing comparisons for conceptual construction Social Participation / Daily Activities (EC3) and Student Factor

3.1. Statistical Analysis (Teachers' Questions)

For the descriptive statistical analysis of the questionnaires collected by the Teachers, the exact same statistical methodology presented in Fig.4 was followed. More specifically, in the figure 4 shows the frequency distributions for the demographic characteristics of the teacher sample. Due to the small number of observations at some of the levels of the categorical Variable Studies, some levels have been merged to provide a sufficient number of observations for each category. It is noted that the majority of the sample is women (73.6%), while men account for 26.4% of the population.

Concerning the age group of the participants, the majority is in the 44 plus category (30.4%). In terms of education, 41.4% have completed some special education, while 32.9% hold a postgraduate or doctoral degree. It is noteworthy that 16.4. % working in special education structures has no training in the special education. The majority of the sample (52.5%) has just 0-5 years of educational service.

	N	%
Men	74	26.4
Women	206	73.6
24-28	22	7.9
29-33	52	18.6
34-38	69	24.6
39-43	52	18.6
44 plus	85	30.4
I have no training in special education	46	16.4
Training in special education	116	41.4
Special Education of the Departments of the Universities of Volos	26	9.3
/ Macedonia		
Teaching School in Special Education	92	32.9
Graduate / Doctorate in Special Education		
0-5 years	147	52.5
5-10 years	98	35.0
10-15 years	31	11.1
20-25 years	4	1.4
	Women 24-28 29-33 34-38 39-43 44 plus I have no training in special education Training in special education Special Education of the Departments of the Universities of Volos / Macedonia Teaching School in Special Education Graduate / Doctorate in Special Education 0-5 years 5-10 years 10-15 years	Men74Women20624-282229-335234-386939-435244 plus85I have no training in special education46Training in special education116Special Education of the Departments of the Universities of Volos26/ Macedonia92Graduate / Doctorate in Special Education92Graduate / Doctorate in Special Education1475-10 years9810-15 years31

Fig. 4. Descriptive statistics on the demographic characteristics of Teachers

Subsequently, non-parametric hypotheses statistical tests are used to investigate whether there is a differentiation in the distributions of the three conceptual structures for the different levels of demographic variables. Testing (EK1), $\chi 2$ (3) = 11.938, p = 0.008 (Table 8.18) and Social Involvement / Daily Activities (EC3), $\chi 2$ (3) = 11.437, p = 0.010 (Table 8.20.) Among the levels of the demographic characteristic Studies. For the case of EK1, the post-hoc analysis with the Mann-Whitney non-parametric control and the Bonferroni correction ($\alpha = 0.05 / 4 = 0.0125$) (Table 8.18.) Revealed the existence of statistically significant

 $(\Delta = 3.75, E\lambda = 1.25, Me = 5.00)$ and Special Education of the Departments of the Universities of Volos / Macedonia / Teaching School in Special Education ($\Delta = 4.00, E\lambda = 1.75, Me = 5.00$), U = 1042, p = 0.012, and between the levels of Special Education Training (D = 3.75, El. = 1.25, Me = 5.00) and Postgraduate / 2.00, Me = 5.00), U = 4209.5, p = 0.008.

What we have to note is that teachers holding a postgraduate or doctoral degree, with their answers, suggest that the internet contributes more to education and social participation / day-to-day activities than teachers who are graduates of a teaching or have just one training in the special treatment.

Educa	tion (EK1)	Ν	М	TA	Δ	Minimum	Maximum	U	χ^2	df	р
Sex	Man	74	3.72	0.73	3.75	1.25	5.00				
	Women	206	3.82	0.68	4.00	1.75	5.00	7011	-	-	0.300

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Age	24-28	22	3.84	0.75	4.00	2.00	5.00			
	29-33	52	3.93	0.70	4.00	2.25	5.00			
	34-38	69	3.82	0.73	4.00	1.25	5.00			
	39-43	52	3.77	0.65	4.00	1.75	5.00			
	44 plus	85	3.68	0.68	3.75	2.00	5.00 -	3.909	4	0.418
Studies	I have no training	46	3.61	0.82	3.75	1.75	5.00			
	in special education									
	Training in special	116	3.71	0.62	3.75	1.25	5.00			
	education									
	Special Education	26	3.94	0.83	4.00	1.75	5.00			
	of the Departments									
	of the Universities									
	of Volos /									
	Macedonia									
	Teaching School in									
	Special Education									
	Graduate /									
	Doctorate in									
	Special Education									
	1	92	3.93	0.65	4.00	2.00	5.00 -	11.938	3	0.008

Fig 5. Case Controls of Conceptual Education Education (EC1) and demographic variables

Studies		
Comparison	U	р
I have no training in special education	2189.5	0.074
Training in special education		
Special Education of the Departments of the Universities of Volos / Macedonia	465	0.117
Teaching School in Special Education	1777	0.125
Graduate / Doctorate in Special Education		
Special Education of the Departments of the Universities of Volos / Macedonia	938.5	0.003
Teaching School in Special Education	5262	0.863
Graduate / Doctorate in Special Education		
Training in special education	776.5	0.006

Fig. 6. Pairing comparisons for conceptual construction (EC3 Social Involvement / Daily Activities (EC3) and Student Factor.

4. Comparison of Students and Teachers Views

In this section, the results of the comparison of the views of the students and the teachers on the three conceptual constructions of the WHODAS 2.0 questionnaire are presented. More analytically, Mann-Whitney's non-parametric control revealed a statistically significant difference between the student's answers distributions ($\Delta = 3.80$, El = 1.00, Me = 5.00) and Teachers ($\Delta = 4.00$, 1.25, Me = 5.00) for EC1, U = 23473.5, p <0.001. More analytically, their answers attact that the interact can contribute to the advectional

More specifically, teachers with their answers state that the internet can contribute to the educational development of children as well as to their interpersonal relationships and social participation / daily activities to a greater extent than children themselves think for the same conceptual constructions

Below are the footnotes that capture this difference.



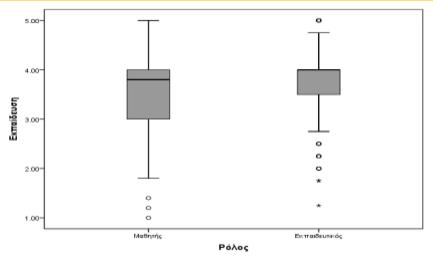


Figure 7. Tutorials of the conceptual construction Education (EK1) for each level of the Role Factor

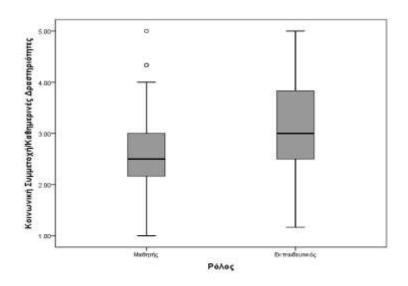


Figure 8. Tibograms of Conceptual Manufacturing Interpersonal Relationships (EK2) for Each Level of Role Agent

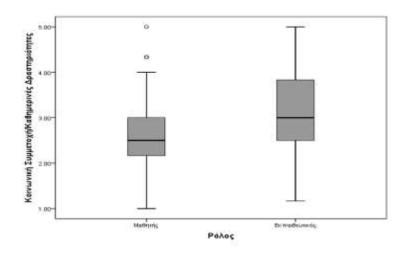


Figure 9. Thinkers of conceptual construction Social Involvement / Daily Activities (EK3) for each level of Role Factor

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IV. CONCLUSION

As it emerges from the quantitative analysis, the internet and new technologies according to the answers of children with special educational needs and disabilities, as well as special education teachers, can play a decisive role in the educational development of children. However, factors such as the functionality of disability, age, education and income and family status of children contribute to the choice of digital services as well as to the educational development of children. This finding also agrees with similar surveys that show that the type of disability greatly affects access to the use of new technologies. Thus, 40% of people with learning disabilities had access to the internet, and this rate was limited to 20% for people with visual difficulties. Also, the proportion of people with disabilities faces difficulties in handling new technologies, as they need much more time to write and send an e-mail compared to people without disabilities.

Furthermore, the main cause of the digital exclusion is that people with disabilities tend to think that the internet does not respond to their needs, enhancing exclusion, which is determined by socio-economic sources and a set of digital choices that are shaped by cultural particularities (Dutton & Helsper, 2007: 15). Moreover, it is remarkable that 28% of people with disabilities perceive the use of new technologies and the Internet as not important, while 11% consider that disability is a serious obstacle to ensuring access to all digital services (Papanis, 2011).

Furthermore, in the context of this research, the level of digital training for children is also defined by the part of children attending special education structures. More specifically, it was found that older children attending TEE in the IT department have developed a high degree of familiarity and digital functionality. They know a lot of computer applications and some kids are able to describe these functions. The minority knows computers to an excellent degree and contributes to their personal interest as well as the contribution of parents who play a leading role in their education. Children from SNEs who are experiencing greater difficulties with their disabilities have been found not to be very familiar with and to be so busy with computers.

A basic common element among children who know and handle computers and those who know less or not at all is that they almost all know the digital functions related to entertainment but fun like you tube and online games. Therefore, we would say that children, in order to learn any new ones about them, should be valued for them as a fun and entertaining function that they understand and are able to handle.

By linking these findings with the theoretical part of the research we would say that the use of ICT and the Internet in the training of children with disabilities primarily ensures the provision of equal educational opportunities independent of the physical and intellectual disabilities that this group faces. Participate actively in educational processes in a dynamic manner, ensuring the attainment of these people with educational capital in the context of an informal education so far (Kettlerin & Tindai, 2007. Kalyanpur, & Kilmani, 2005).

Investigating the contribution of the Internet to interpersonal relationships and the development of social participation of children, which we find both from the answers of children with special educational needs and disabilities as well as from the answers of the special education teachers, is that the contribution of the Internet is very great in the field of interpersonal relationships and social contacts with boys seem to use internet services to a greater extent than girls. It is worth pointing out that according to the correlation analysis for the five conceptual constructions of the questionnaire with Spearman's nonparametric correlation coefficient, there was a positive correlation between interpersonal relations and social participation. Consequently, it appears that the Internet allows children with special educational needs and disabilities to communicate, exchange opinions, ideas to be aware of the issues that concern them, actively participating in the social fabric in ways that under other circumstances might be almost impossible (Dobransky & Hargitai, 2007)

It is also noted in this category that age, disability functionality and type of school mediate reinforcement and determine the attitude of parents towards their or their children's involvement with social media. In particular, younger children who face non-functional types of disability attending EYEC have little or no contact with facebook either because they can not as parents have said, or because parents do not want and fear themselves. According to these findings, social networking tools such as facebook are exempt from the transient dimension of fashion, but they seem to consolidate themselves as a multicultural phenomenon that is constantly evolving and changing under the weight of one global collective need and contact. Communication between people appears to be placed on another basis, where live contact is not necessary. The ever-increasing use of social media reflects another content of social relationships (Elison et al., 2011). Research has shown that Facebook users are more likely to share opinions, feelings and experiences with people who know them, a feature that works to build links and interpersonal relationships. Self-disclosure and emotional intimacy are two dimensions of the content of social contact that can make a significant contribution to the social support that a person with special educational needs and disability can receive.

To sum up, we can say that it is necessary to apply the integration of new technologies to educational reality universally, as school is the lever of any social overthrow and deep foundation of new perspectives. This change requires the training of teaching staff in new technologies, as well as the handling of the necessary supporting

equipment. Supportive equipment that responds to the individual needs of students, ensuring effective education

across the body of the possibilities offered by the digital world. The existence of a variety of electronic systems, as well as the enrichment of the educational process with the appropriate educational software, enables the smoothing of any physical weaknesses as well as the mitigation of the learning difficulties faced by this particular category of children. In the context of the sociological dimension which has also been the subject of this work, we should point out that the Internet and new technologies, according to the findings of this research, are the leading actors in the lives of children, as the majority of them, with their answers, demonstrated how important digital technology is in their life, since it acts complementarily or entirely as a substitute for their interpersonal communication. The majority of this group states that the internet and the services it offers are the prime means they use to get in touch with people of the immediate and indirect family and friendly environment.

Through new technologies, children with special educational needs are informed, entertained, but also become observers of a life that they would unconsciously wish to live.

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