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# ALTER ALTERNATIVE SAFETY NETS

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**Turkish National Report | Development of capacity building  
methodology for educators of alternative education institutions  
for adults**

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## Table of Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2 Brief summary of the desk research and online questionnaires on how social and digital media are used for job search</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Desk research about how social and digital media are used for job search in Turkey	4
2.1.1. General Context	4
2.1.2. Use of digital and social media in the labor market	5
2.1.3. Social media in Turkey	5
2.1.4. The use of social media by Employers/Businesses	6
2.1.5. The importance of social networks for business viability	7
2.2. Online questionnaires on how social and digital media are used for job search	8
2.3 Focus Groups with educators and adults having dropped out of school and attending alternative educational institutions	17
2.3.1 Focus Group with Educators	18
2.3.2 Focus Group with Adults	19
<b>3 Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>4 Sources</b>	<b>22</b>



## 1 Introduction

When looking at the early age school dropout rates it can be seen that this situation is very common in Turkey. Unlike the EU member countries, the age range of leaving school at an early age is more between the ages of 15 and 17. According to the Turkish Labor Law, anyone over the age of 15 can participate in business life<sup>1</sup>.

People struggling with economic issues have to leave school at this age. However, the fact that these individuals do not attend formal education restricts their skills. As this situation negatively affects their chances of finding a job, individuals need to be harmonized with today's technological norms. There are many options in the digital world where they can both develop skills and find jobs more easily, but they cannot use digital options effectively because the digital competencies of early school leavers are not complete.

From this point of view, this content has been prepared in order to create capacity building methods for educators providing education in alternative education institutions within the scope of O1.

## 2 Brief summary of the desk research and online questionnaires on how social and digital media are used for job search

### 2.1 Desk research about how social and digital media are used for job search in Turkey

European Union Activities Center (EUAC), has conducted a desk research in Turkey about how social and digital media are used for job search, capitalizing on information provided by employers' stakeholders in their countries: corporate annual reports, researches and press releases made by Chambers and other employers' associations, articles, announcements etc.

#### 2.1.1. General Context

Today, internet usage is increasing rapidly all over the world. In parallel with the rapid growth in internet access, the activities carried out on the internet is expanding. Thus, communication, access to information, entertainment, banking, shopping and many other things have become available on the internet.

Turkey Statistical Institute (TurkStat), has announced the 2019 research data on household information technology (IT) usage. According to this; Internet usage was 75.3 percent in individuals aged between 16-74 in 2019. This rate was 72.9 percent in the previous year. Internet usage rates were 81.8 percent for males in the 16-74 age group and 68.9 percent for females. It was observed that 88.3 percent of households in Turkey have internet access from their homes<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.4857.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=30574>

According to a research done by an internet provider company, mobile Internet traffic in Turkey after an outbreak of COVID-19 increased 13%, while domestic internet traffic showed an increase of 21%<sup>3</sup>. The expansion of the use of the Internet has also made social media an inseparable part of people.

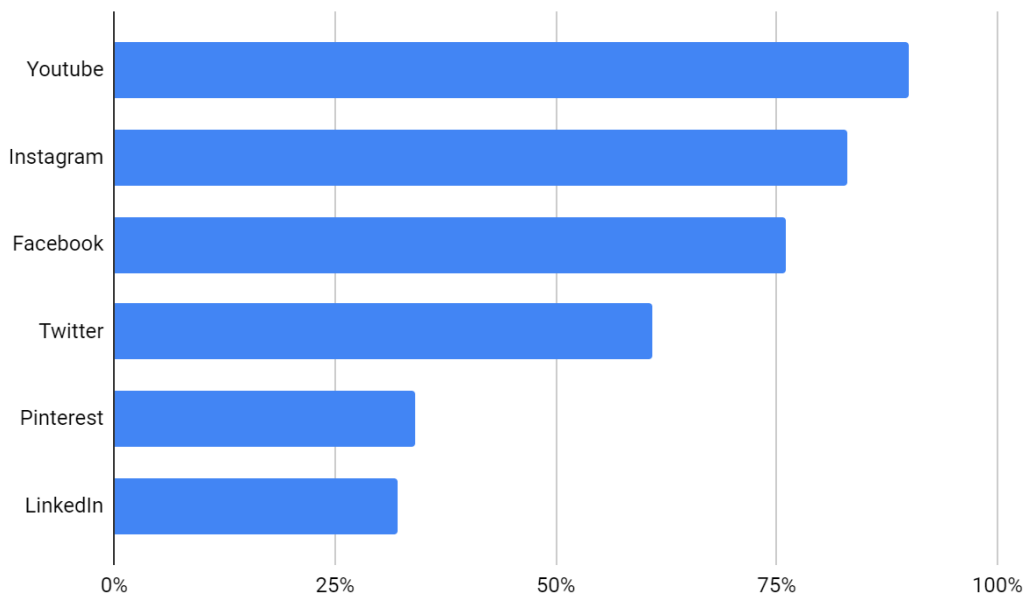
### 2.1.2. Use of digital and social media in the labor market

The ease and speed of access provided by social media to users increases the appeal of digital platforms. Thanks to the simultaneous sharing of information and bilateral communication on social media applications, it takes social media beyond communication.

In the 5 Year Development Plan, published by the government of the Turkish Republic in 2019, "human resources, labor market and employment policy" is expected to be passed to a new model. It is significant that the emphasis on qualified people stands out in the development plan. The plan supports people's capturing digital transformation and awareness of social media use<sup>4</sup>.

### 2.1.3. Social media in Turkey

According to "We Are Social 2020 Report" the number of social media users in Turkey has reached 54 million; In other words, 64% of Turkey's population uses social media. The most used platforms are YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and Skype<sup>5</sup>. However, platforms are not limited to these.

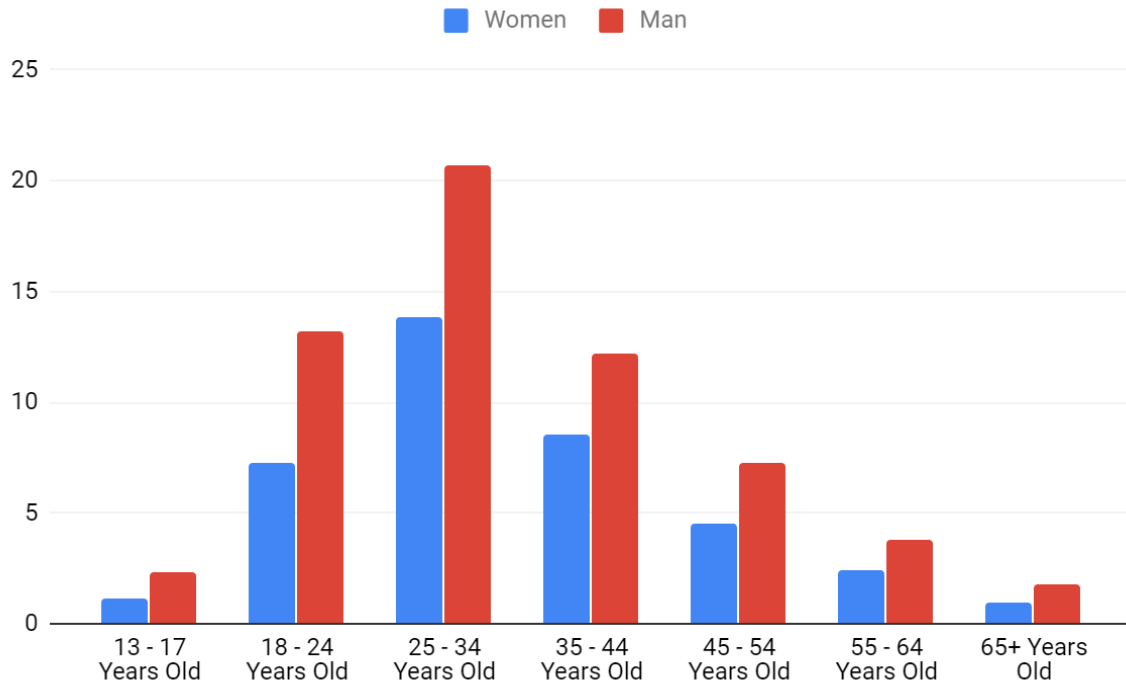


<sup>3</sup><https://www.haberler.com/turkiye-de-corona-virusu-sonrasinda-internet-13079673-haberi/>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/OnbirinciKalkinmaPlani.pdf>

<sup>5</sup><https://dijilopedi.com/2020-turkiye-internet-kullanimi-ve-sosyal-medya-istatistikleri/>

Looking at the use of social media in Turkey age distribution chart, we see that the highest utilization rate of social media is between 25-34 years of age. It also shows a similar result in the distribution of this ratio by gender according to the age of social media use. It is observed that the use of social media decreases with increasing age<sup>6</sup>.



When we look at social media usage habits in Turkey, 96% of the users are messaging through social media platforms once a month, 88% of them engage with others through their posts. Approximately 3 hours of social media time is spent and there are 9 social media accounts per average user<sup>7</sup>.

#### 2.1.4. The use of social media by Employers/Businesses

With the increasing use of the internet, the use of digital and social media has also affected employers. Social and digital media, on the other hand, are an alternative that interacts with its users and uses both aspects of its communication. For this reason, the most important thing to know in terms of social media is that all users are connected to each other with various relationships. Apart from creating their own social media policies employers in Turkey manage their recruitment processes in accordance with technological developments.

Employers examine the social media accounts of individuals in order to provide themselves with the opportunity to have more information than the application made, or the information provided with the CV of the applicant. The reasons for use are that it takes less time and effort to obtain information

<sup>6</sup> <https://dijilopedi.com/2020-turkiye-internet-kullanimi-ve-sosyal-medya-istatistikleri/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://dijilopedi.com/2020-turkiye-internet-kullanimi-ve-sosyal-medya-istatistikleri/>

and to check whether the application is suitable for the organization. It also gives the possibility to check the accuracy of the information in the candidate's CV. The fact that tracking candidates is less costly than other methods is also considered as one of the reasons for digitalization in recruitment processes.

The private information shared by the candidates in the recruitment processes and the posts that will harm their corporate identity have a negative effect on the employers. The most watched platforms by employers are Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn<sup>8</sup>. In addition to these social media platforms, digital employment sites such as KARIYER.NET, ELEMEN.NET, İŞKUR, ELEMENONLINE, SECRETCV are also highly preferred<sup>9</sup>.

### 2.1.5. The importance of social networks for business viability

In today's competitive workforce environment, it is important to understand and apply human resource trends to attract and retain talent. Innovative technologies, an increasingly global and diversified workforce and emerging business models are reshaping the expectations and experiences of employees. In addition, these factors affect companies' search for candidates and staff in aspects such as talent deficits, job growth or employee productivity and loyalty.

According to the Human Resources Trends report written by Randstad<sup>10</sup> in 2019, 60% of employers report that they will recruit new talent this year. New recruitments outweigh in the sales and technology / IT departments. This year, recruitment platforms come to the forefront as the most effective resource in finding talent, and the references of current employees follow it.

In the report, basic skills deficiencies in recruitment processes are; foreign language skills 65%, sectoral work experience 63%, required annual working experience 50%, soft skills 27%, management tools 24%.

Again, when looking at the methods used to select talent for recruitment in the same report, the category of social networks stands out as the category that showed the most significant increase with 33% increase in 2019 compared to 2018. When we look at the resources used to attract talent, the following table appears<sup>11</sup>;

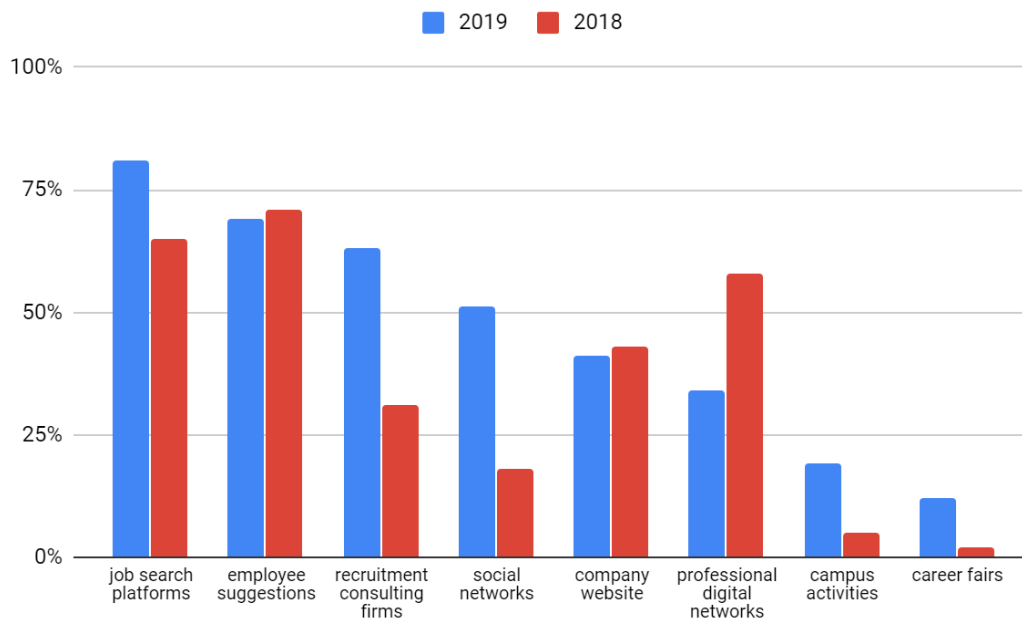
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<sup>8</sup><https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/749709>

<sup>9</sup><https://ikmagazin.com/insan-kaynaklari/turkiyedeki-insan-kaynaklari-siteleri/>

<sup>10</sup><https://www.randstad.com.tr/reports/ucretler-yan-haklar-isyeri-egilimleri-raporu/ik-trendleri-ve-ucret-raporu-2019.pdf>

<sup>11</sup><https://www.randstad.com.tr/reports/ucretler-yan-haklar-isyeri-egilimleri-raporu/ik-trendleri-ve-ucret-raporu-2019.pdf>



Thus, the result of "individuals need to reach the business and the businesses need to reach individuals" appears. Businesses have started to become more visible on social media with their corporate identities and have increased their use of social media day by day. The use of social media tools in recruitment processes is one of the most innovative applications that businesses can benefit from.

## 2.2. Online questionnaires on how social and digital media are used for job search

This section was prepared by EUAC in the scope of the ALTER project, to obtain information on the role of social media networks during the recruitment processes with the implementation of surveys conducted in addition to the literature review study. In order for the survey report to represent an objective and larger audience, information was obtained from 12 people holding positions such as employers, HR managers, managers, etc. working in different fields.

- 1) The answers given to the first question which is "Can you give general information about your organization?" are as follows; 30% legal consultancy activities, 30 % tourism firms, 10 % real estate sector, 10% press and publishing, 10 % social responsibility projects, and the remaining 10 % agricultural companies. According to the result, it is seen that people who left school at an early age can work in many different branches without focusing on a certain area.
- 2) 50% of the participants answered the question "Can you tell us about your role in the organization?" as that they are employers. 40% of the respondents responded that they are responsible for the board of directors or administrative affairs, while the remaining 10% respond that they play a role in recruitment processes.

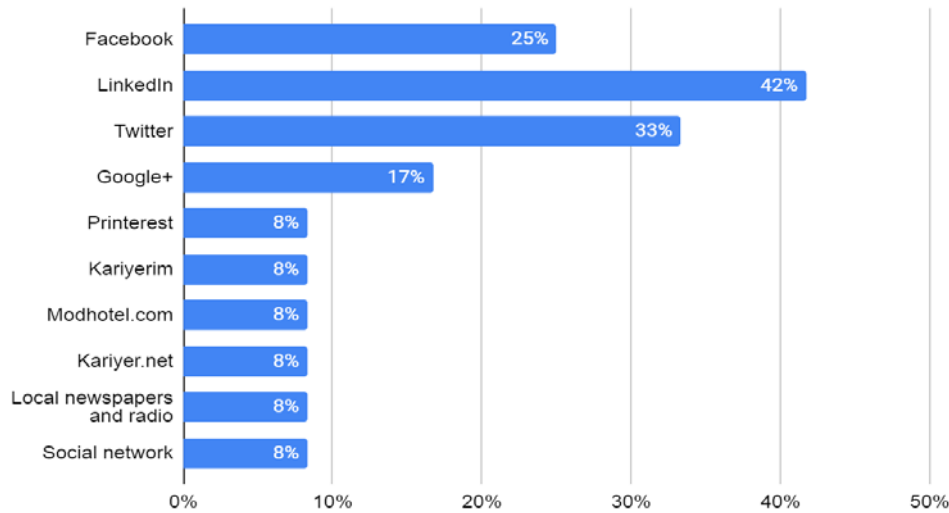
As the research findings show, it is understood that employers have the greatest say in recruitment processes. Then, the fact that the people from the board of directors are determinative in the





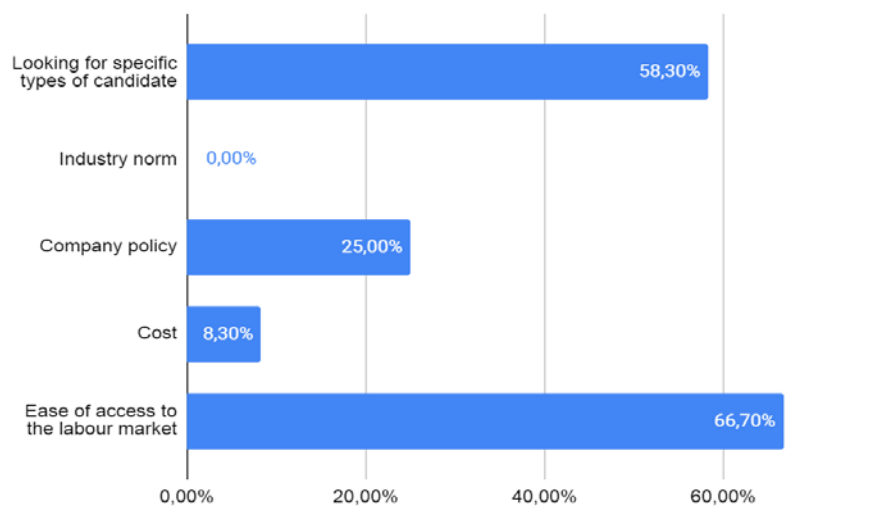
organizations indicates that the activities in the project should be carried out especially for the employer and the management team.

3) Do you use social media in your recruitment process? If so, which of the following networks have you hired through?



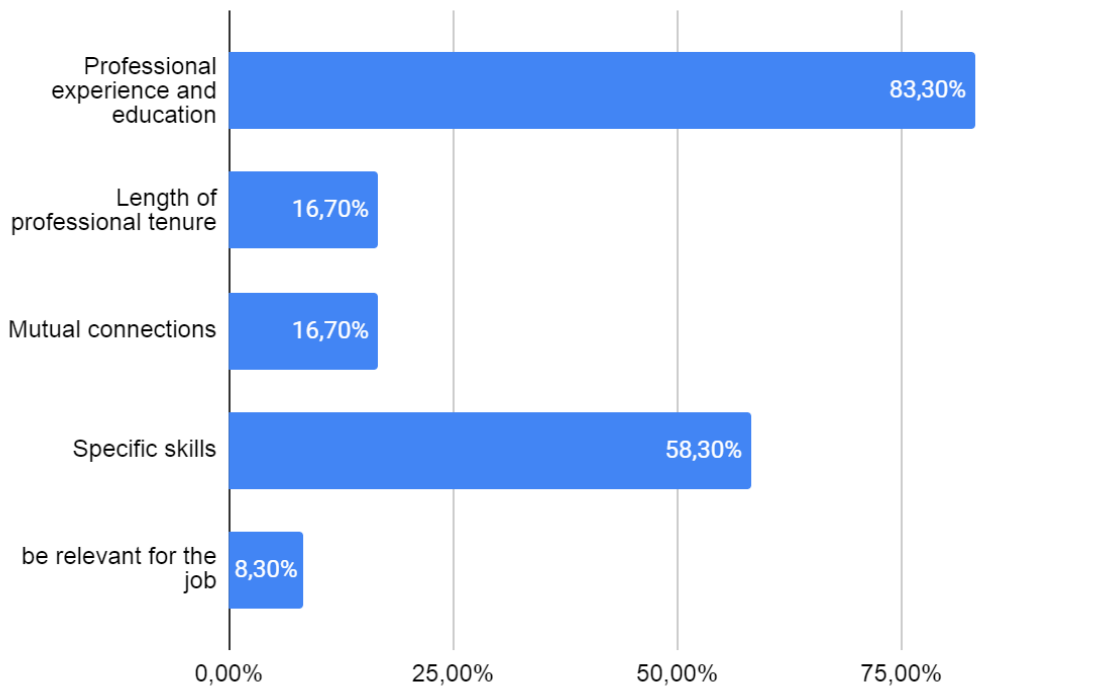
From this point of view, it is seen that people who are active in recruitment processes attach importance to different social media channels in these processes. It is also significant that while using social media channels for candidates in recruitment processes, more than one social media channel is used, rather than a single social media channel. In other words, while recruitment processes increase the social media skills of the candidates, it becomes apparent that their skills should be developed for more than one social media platform.

4) Why did you start using social media in recruitment?



Considering the responses, it is seen that people who play an active role in recruitment processes started to use social media because they search for certain candidate types and it provides ease of access to the labor market. Participant not marking the “industry norm” shows that the use of social media is still now completely widespread in the recruitment process in Turkey. For this reason, it is thought that the awareness of the people who are involved in the recruitment processes should be raised about the benefits of using social and digital media in recruitment.

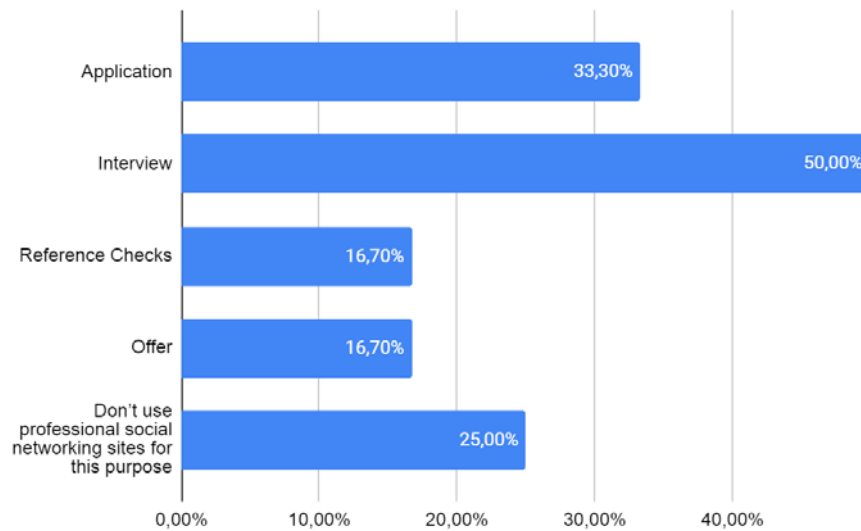
5) What do you look for in a candidate on social networks?



From this point of view, while increasing the digital skills of the candidates, the priority should be given to the "professional experience and trainings" section. In other words, it is necessary to teach these people how to bring their professional experience and education to the fore in social and digital media. At the same time, it is seen that learning to express their special skills on social media channels is also effective in people's recruitment processes. It is thought that it is effective in the recruitment processes when the candidates demonstrate their professional experience so that they are compatible with the professional experience sought in the advertisement while introducing themselves on social and digital media.

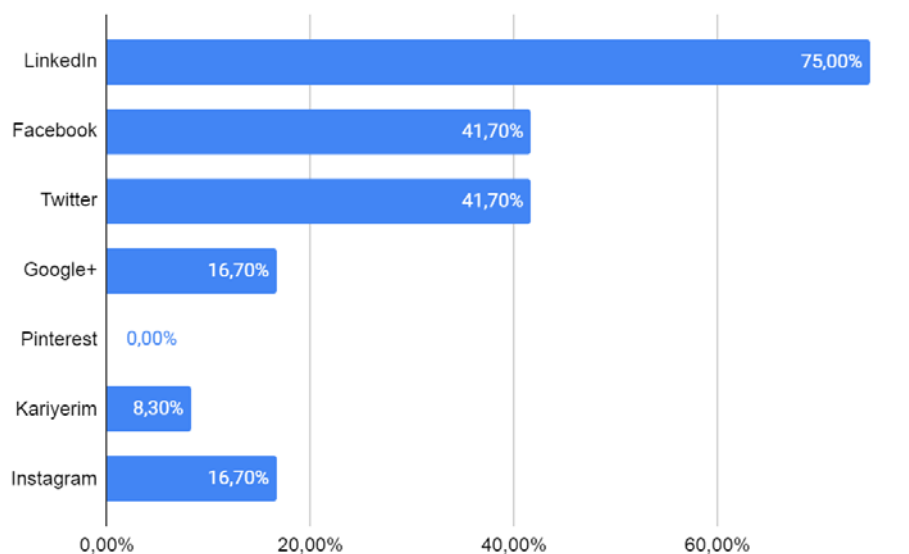


6) If you view professional social networking profiles during the recruitment process, at what stage do you do so?



According to the answers, the vast majority of the participants stated that they checked the people's social network accounts before making face-to-face interviews with them. In this case, people's social media accounts should be prepared to be checked at any time during their recruitment process. In the remaining part, it explains that even if it is not the first priority, it still plays a decisive role in recruiting candidates. It is thought that people who do not use social networks for this purpose should realize the advantages of this situation.

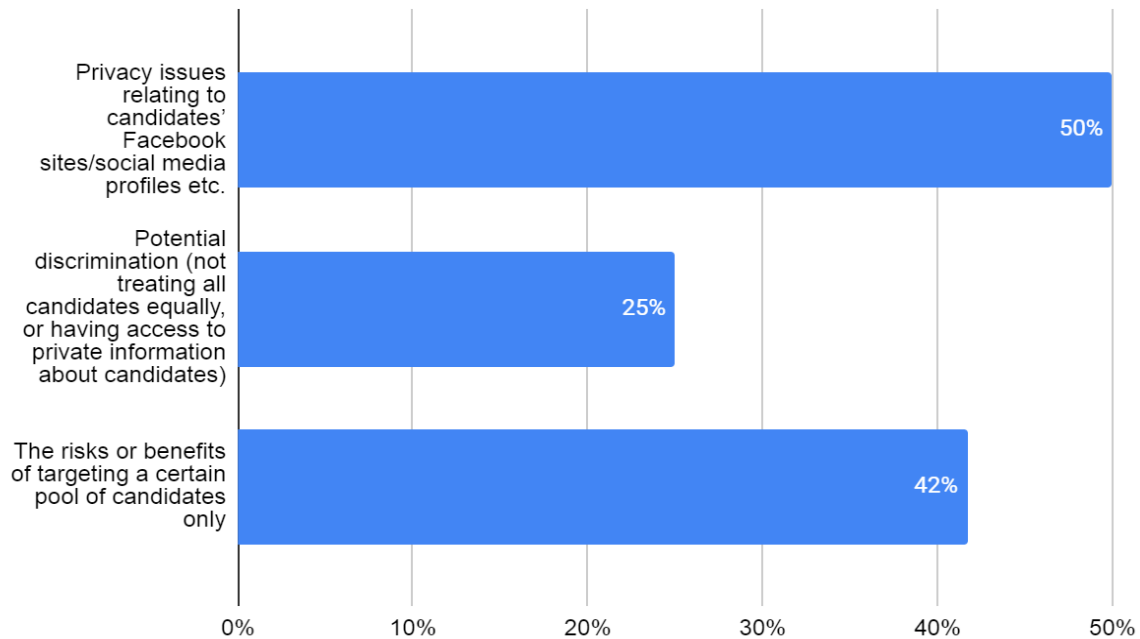
7) Which of the following sites would you use to research your interviewers prior to attending a job interview?





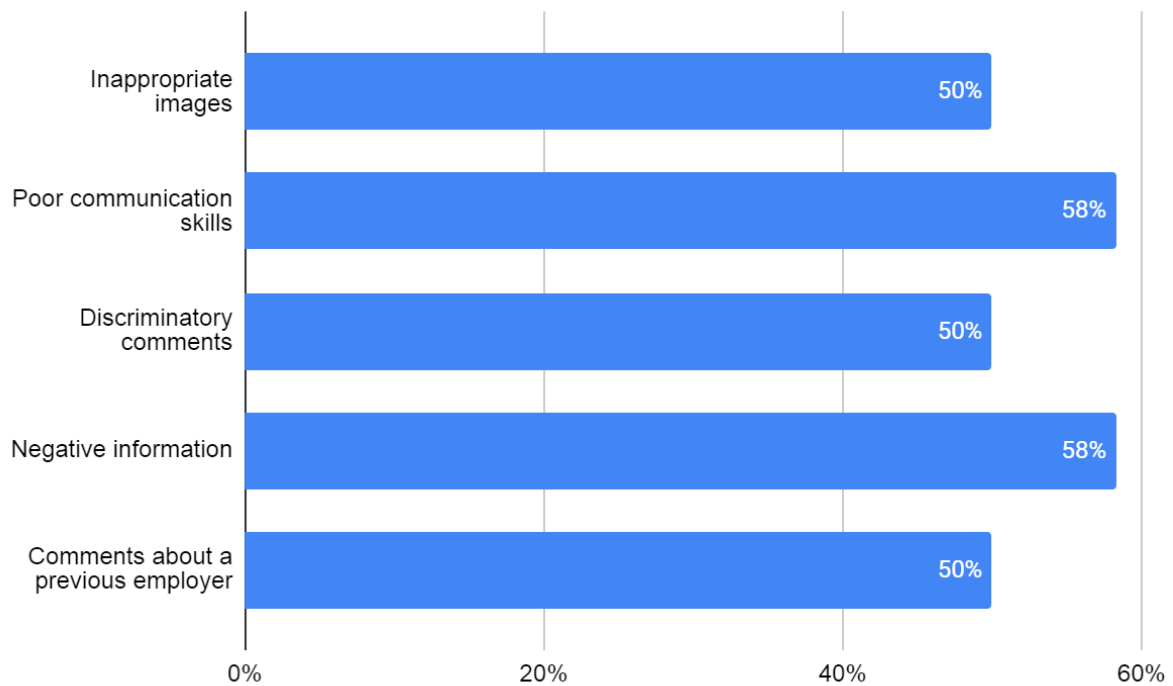
In the light of this information, it is seen that the candidates should keep their LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter accounts up-to-date, and know that their Google+ and Instagram accounts are being reviewed. In other words, while developing social networking skills of candidates, one should not focus on a single platform and different platforms should be considered.

8) Have you encountered any difficulties related to your use of social media for recruitment or thought about any potential problems? This could include:



In line with the responses received, the vast majority of people who are active in the recruitment processes see the candidate's confidentiality options on social networks as a problem and it seems that the applicants are hesitant to violate their rights. At the same time, these people think that targeting a certain type of candidate is a problem that comes with discrimination. For this reason, people involved in recruitment processes may need to be aware of how to behave ethically when examining candidates' social and digital media accounts.

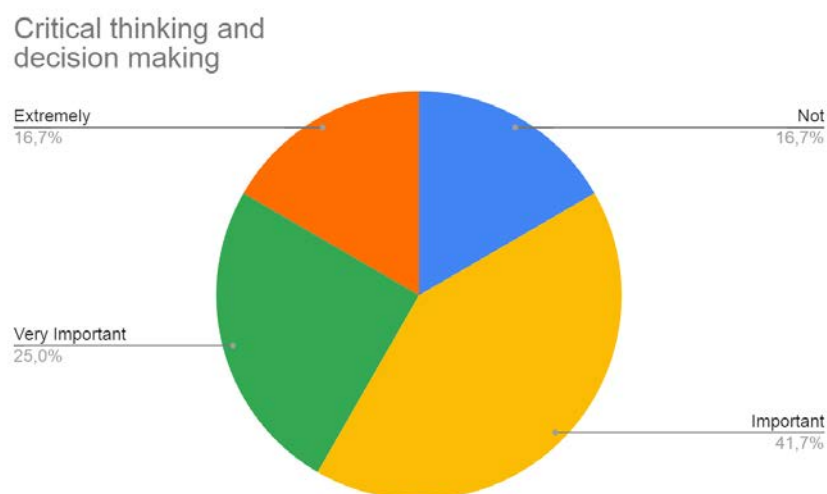
9) Please indicate the key reason/s to exclude a candidate from the hiring procedure.



Here, the vast majority of the participants did not mark a single item and chose more than one item at the same time. This means that candidates who are active in recruitment processes can leave many negative effects. It seems that each option is marked in this question, so candidates need to be careful in all situations where they can have a negative effect.

10) In your view, how important are the following skills for a good candidate?

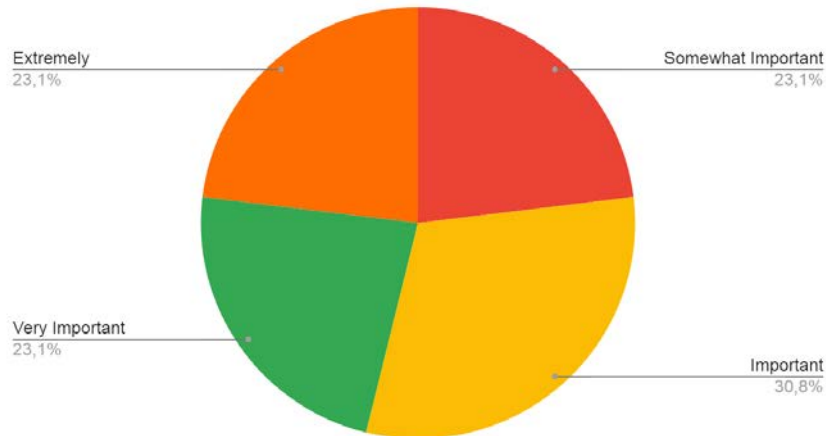
- Participants gave the following answers; 41.7% important, 25% very important, 16.7% extremely important and 16.7% not important for “Critical thinking and decision making”.





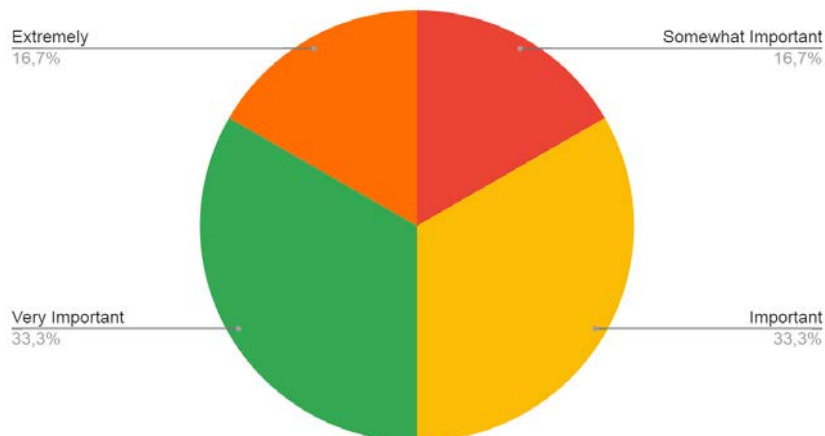
- Participants gave the following answers; 33.3% important, 25% very important, 16.7% extremely important and 25% somewhat important for “Browsing, searching and filtering data, information”.

Browsing, searching and filtering data, information



- Participants gave the following answers; 33.3% very important, 33.3% important, 16.7% extremely important and 16.7% somewhat important for “Interacting through digital technologies”.

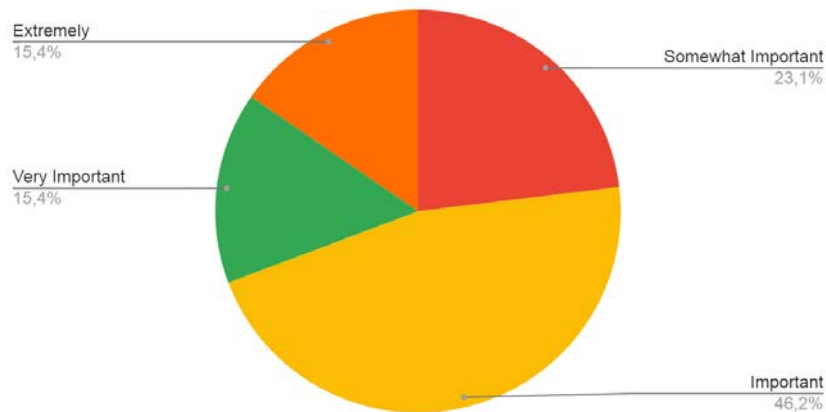
Interacting through digital technologies





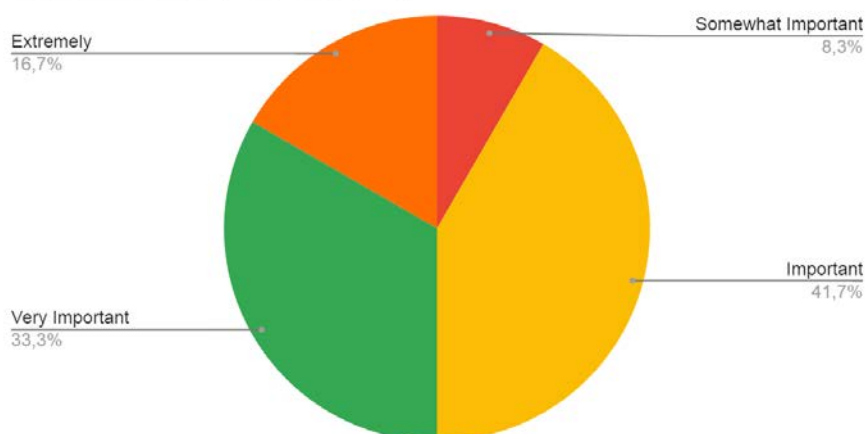
- Participants gave the following answers; 50% important, 16.7% extremely important, 16.7% very important and 16.7% somewhat important for “Using a wide range of communication tools (e-mail, chat, SMS, instant messaging, blogs, micro-blogs, social networks)”.

Using a wide range of communication tools (e- mail, chat, SMS, instant messaging, blogs, micro- blogs, social networks)



- Participants gave the following answers; 41.7% important, 33.3% very important, 16.7% extremely important, and 8.3% somewhat important for “Using of Office tools (word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and presentations)”.

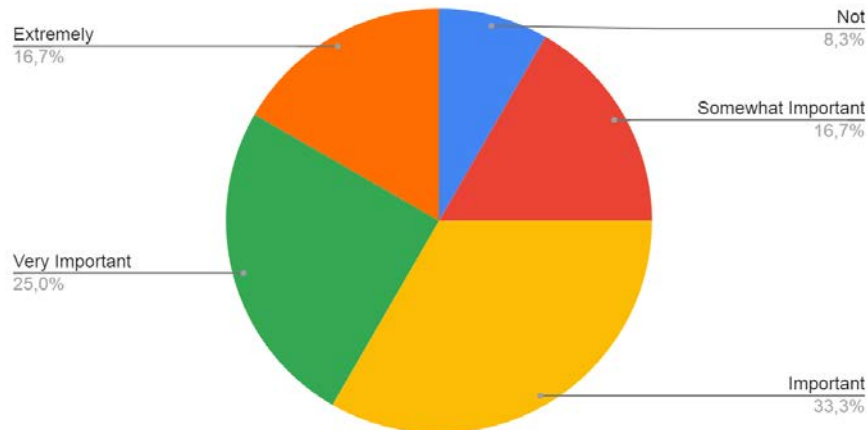
Using of Office tools (word processing, spreadsheets, databases and presentations)





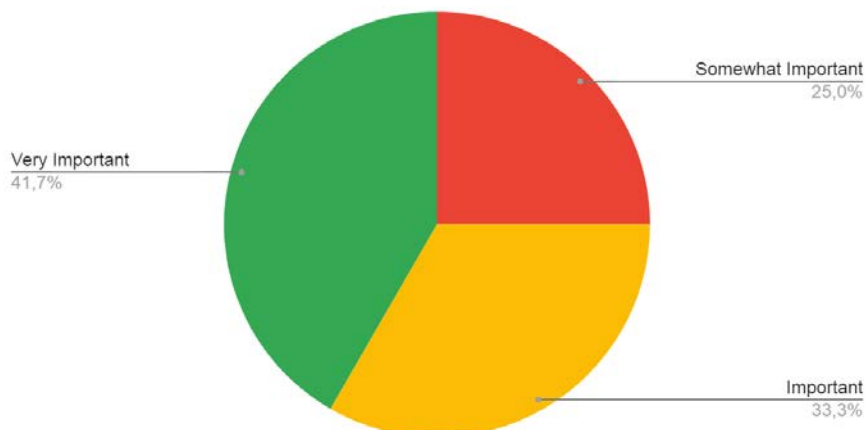
- Participants gave the following answers; 33.3% important, 25% extremely important, 16.7% very important, 16.7% somewhat important, and 8.3% not important for “Be aware of the copyright and the right to the protection of personal data, especially the right to my own picture”.

#### Be aware of the copyright and the right to the protection of personal data, especially the right to my own picture



- Participants gave the following answers; 41.7% very important, 33.3% important, and 25% somewhat important for “Creating and managing content with collaboration tools (e.g. electronic calendars, project management systems, online spreadsheets)”.

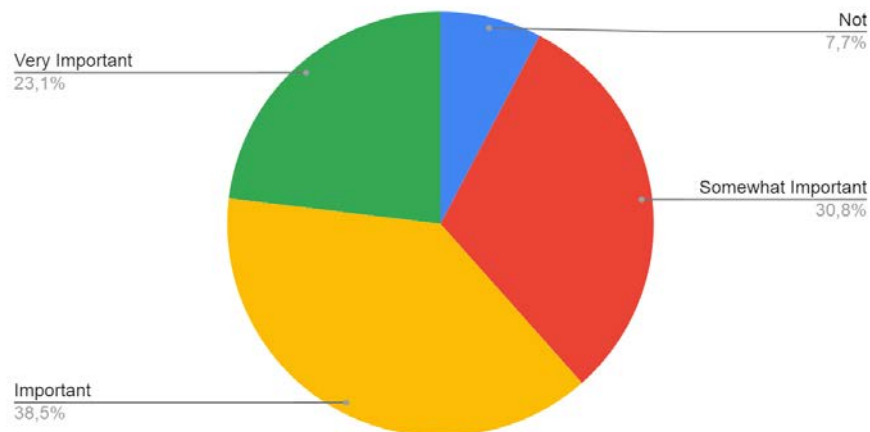
#### Creating and managing content with collaboration tools (e.g. electronic calendars, project management systems, online pr...





- Participants answered gave the following answers; 41.7% important, 25% very important, 25% somewhat important and 8.3% not important for the ability to "Producing complex digital content in different formats (e.g. text, tables, images, video)".

Producing complex digital content in different formats (e.g. text, tables, images, video).



In line with the answers, it is seen that the skills that the candidates seek in the recruitment processes differ. The reason for this situation may be the participation of the participants in different sectors. When the skills that the participants are looking for in recruitment processes are examined, they are generally answered as important for each skill. Again, considering the responses, it is thought that people who take part in the selection process of candidates pay more attention to the skills of "using a wide variety of communication tools, using Office tools, creating and managing content with collaboration tools" than other skills. Thus, it was concluded that the priority areas in the skills that candidates need to develop are these skills.

### 2.3 Focus Groups with educators and adults having dropped out of school and attending alternative educational institutions

The following focus group work has emerged as a result of face-to-face research with different individuals on digital literacy competencies that should be developed by adults who left and actively seeking a job. The study was carried out in two groups as adults who left school and attended alternative educational institutions and educators who could present an opinion on digital skills.

Questions to be asked to both focus groups were prepared by Symplexis, the leader of Output-1. Each of the project partners is expected to carry out focus group study in their home country. In this context, the situation in Turkey is reflected in the reporting of the two focus group studies conducted by the EU Activities Center (EUAC). Related studies took place in Turkey's Mersin province. Bozyazı Public Education Center was selected as an alternative education center. The study was conducted in Turkish and consent was obtained from each of the participants.



### 2.3.1 Focus Group with Educators

12 trainers participated in the focus group study with the trainers. Trainers participated in the study has been giving courses in alternative educational intuitions and providing training to adults in skill-building courses such as crafts and folk dances, education support courses such as English and mathematics, and vocational courses such as cooking and real estate.

When participants are asked about their views on the importance of the scope of our project, it is thought that developing digital skills with consensus will definitely be useful in finding a job. They also stated that they thought they would contribute to social development by benefiting the society in this way.

Regarding the main target groups in the institutions where the participants work, they stated that anyone who wants to benefit from 18 years old-and without upper limit can benefit from the trainings. According to the observations of the participants, although the trainings are open to everyone, it is stated that most of the trainees in the alternative training centers are job seekers and early school leavers.

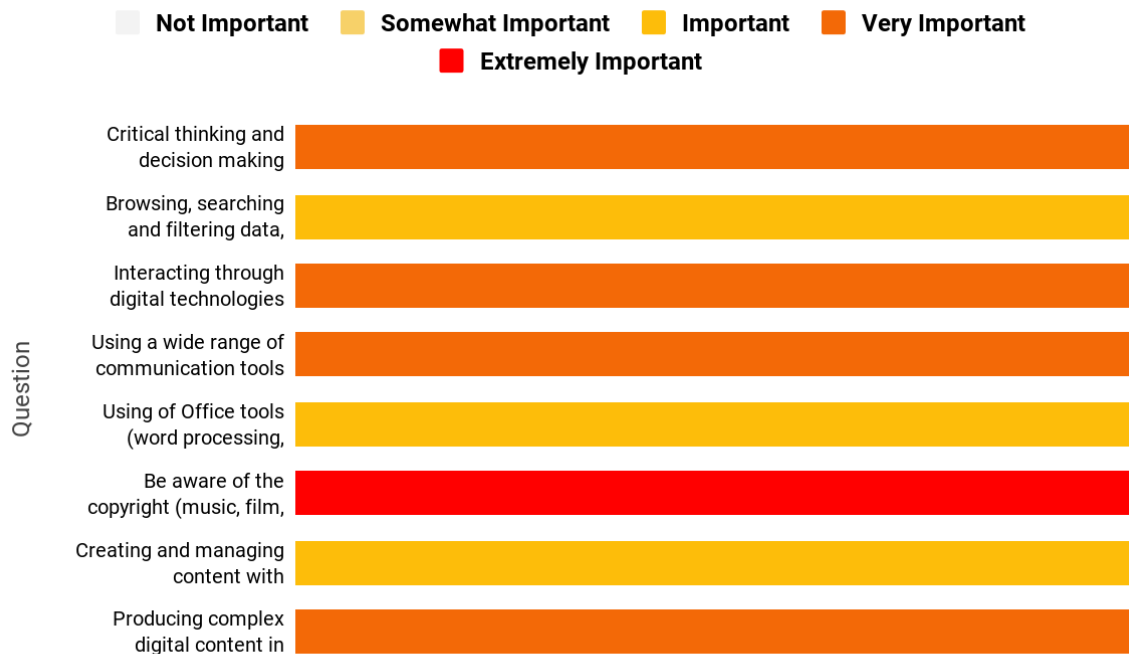
According to the experience of the participants about the knowledge and skill levels of adults in the social and digital field used in job search, the use of social and digital media is considered to be high but generally unconscious. For this reason, it has been stated that people are weak when using in job search processes. Since one of the participants experiences that one of the adults whom s/he trained acquired a job b selling goods on social media, S/he thinks that job search skills in digital and social areas can be very diverse.

On the question of the main difficulties that adults who want to develop their capacities in media and digital skills for job search, the majority of respondents stated that finding a job through social and digital means is very limited, since adults in the region live in a small city. It is thought that adults in this region find jobs through their acquaintances. One of the participants stated that adults have a problem of trust when searching for a job in digital media. Not having the same properties as stated in the job advertisement in reality, causes the confidence problem of the adult.

Regarding the basic difficulty faced by educators to provide education to adults, it was noteworthy that everyone stated the same opinion about the short training periods determined for the courses. It is also thought that the modules to be used for training are not sufficient in connection with the limited time.

When participants were asked whether they were properly qualified to train adults, it was conducted that all participants achieved this competence by passing certain trainings. It was stated in the courses that were given to educate the adults, especially how to give education to adults and its importance was emphasized. Moreover, all of the participants stated that they wanted to increase their capacity to provide education and training to adults and they were open to different types of alternative education.

Finally, the trainers were asked to determine the importance of the skills displayed in the graph below. The severity of the skills in the relevant graphic was formed according to the votes of the majority.



### 2.3.2 Focus Group with Adults

16 people participated in the focus group study with adults who left school at an early age. All participants completed the compulsory education at primary level. Considering the answers received, it was found that 18.75% of the participants completed an education at primary school level and the remaining 81.25% received secondary education (high school). It was seen that some of these adults completed or tried to complete distance secondary education after completing compulsory primary school education.

It was concluded that all but one person of the participants worked temporarily. Adults stated that their contracts with Turkey's employment agency which is İŞKUR lasted 3 months, and they will be unemployed at the end of the 3 months. When the participants were asked what their professions were, it was seen that there were the most cleaning staff among them. Then, the answers workman, and security guard were received. The participant who is not unemployed and left school at an early age serves as a janitor.

It was stated that 3 adults among the participant did not use any social media sites. The remaining participants all have a Facebook account. The following answers show that Instagram, Twitter and TikTok are also widely used. One of the participants said that s/he uses LinkedIn.



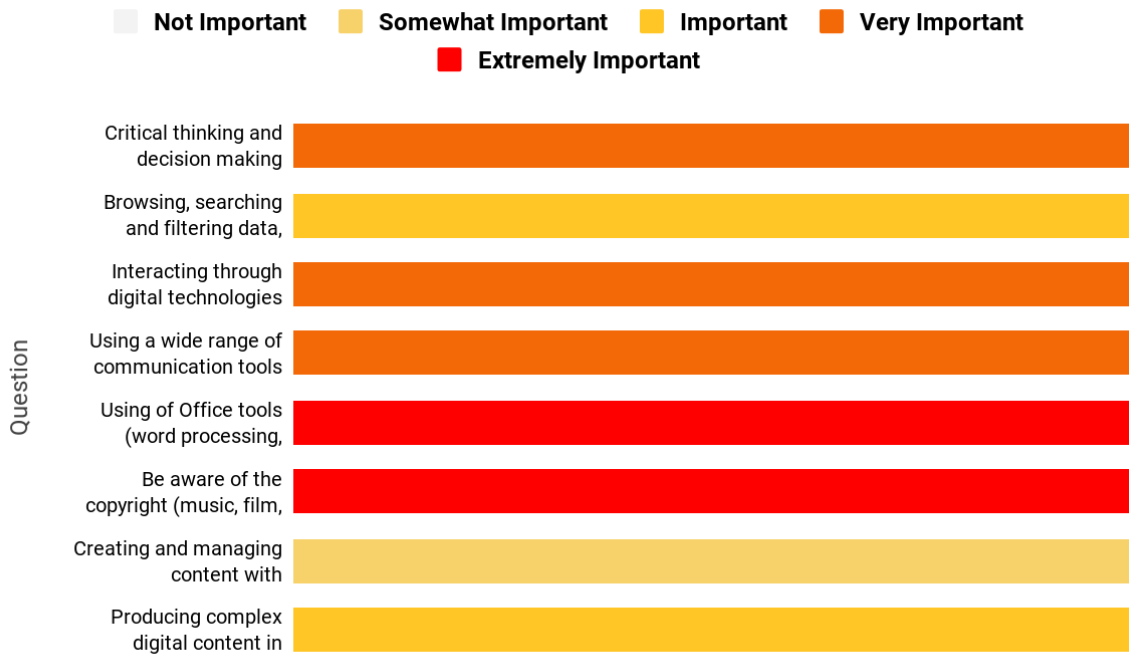
When asked about the method you prefer to find and apply for a job, the participant stated that all but one of the participants – currently working participant – are registered to İŞKUR and are looking for a job there. Among the participants, there are also those who prefer to find a job through acquaintances. These people stated that they are comfortable with finding a job on digital and social media. It has been observed that the majority of the participants use social media sites while looking for a job. They emphasized that job postings were shared from Facebook groups and that they received news from them. They also stated that they received news from WhatsApp groups that were established in the same way. There are people who find work by applying to institutions through their social media sites. They also said that they were looking for work on digital media (kariyer.net, elemanaraniyor.com, etc.)

All of the participants stated that when applying for a job, the institution controls their social media profiles. When asked about the main reasons for checking the following reasons were listed; to look at other job postings, to look at the working environment and conditions, to check the comments for any complaints from the institution, to see if there is someone we know who works in the institution, and to examine the qualifications/certificates that the advertisement wants from the person.

It turned out that none of the participants directly attended a training on “media literacy and digital skills”. They also added that there is no such course available in the region. On the other hand, all participants emphasized that they were positive and open to receive a training to improve their social and digital skills.

The replies of the participants to the question on the main challenges faced by people who drop out of school while searching employment revealed that they consider the age to be a major issue given the 35-years age limit for civil servants and the same perception in the private sector. Several of the participants stated that they could not meet the qualifications stated in the job advertisements and did not have the certificated since they could not complete secondary education. In addition, another participant stated that reaching the centers required for qualifications was limited because of the distance. One participant stated that s/he faced negative situation in his/her recruitment process because of his/her posts on social media.

Finally, adults who left school at an early age and whose job search process continued, were asked to determine the importance of the skills displayed in the graph below. The level of importance of the skills in the related graphic was formed according to the voted of the majority.



### 3 Conclusions and recommendations

Social and digital media has been used widely in human resources practices as it is used in every aspect of life. Finding and choosing staff processes are affected by this trend. People involved in recruitment processes; It uses social and digital media to use time well, to achieve appropriate results and to spend little effort. Therefore, in recruitment processes, candidates must learn to present all their skills and experiences in the best possible way.

People who left school at an early age work in different sector and in lower positions than people with a school diplomas. Even if these people actively use social and digital media channels, they have difficulty in using these channels actively in recruitment processes. Since they couldn't see the importance of social and digital media in recruitment processes before, they need to develop their awareness.

The educators interviewed within the scope of the project are aware of the importance of social and digital media in recruitment processes. According to educators, it is not understood that the importance of using social and digital media in job search processes of people who left school at an early age. Educators want to spread this awareness and provide people with these skills.

Both adults and educators think that the ALTER Project is very necessary to adapt to today's conditions. These people want to benefit from the results of the project. For this reason, they think that the project should be designed in a way that everyone can access.



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