

An Examination of the Views of Preschool Teachers on the use of Social Media for Professional Development

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Abstract

Teachers use social media actively and it is worth researching to learn about teachers' views on social media. The purpose of this study is to examine the views of preschool teachers on the use of social media for professional development. The research was designed with the case study approach as one of qualitative research methods. The participants of this study consisted of twenty-five preschool teachers. A semi-structured interview form was used to learn the opinions of the teachers. The interview form consisting of eight questions was applied face to face to preschool teachers in the spring term of the 2020-2021 academic year in Ankara. The data were analyzed by descriptive analysis technique. As a result of the data analysis, it was found that preschool teachers use social media platforms for professional development and benefit from these platforms effectively. Teachers emphasize that social media has an important contribution to their professional development, but they also state that one should be careful against disinformation. It is recommended that teachers are provided with media literacy training. Teachers should be conscious about acting in accordance with children's rights and ethical principles when using social media for professional purposes.

Keywords: Preschool teachers, professional development, social media

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Introduction

Social media has changed education and learning processes and has become an integral part of this process for all educational levels, including early childhood. In the literature, the role of social media in educational environments is defined as communication, cooperation, and providing information (Zhao, 2013). It is indicated that social media use in education facilitates the interaction between the teacher and the family (Fan & Yost, 2018) and enriches the learning experience (Epstein, 2013). Stansbury (2011) on the other hand, explains the use of social media at school by emphasizing the areas of connecting with other teachers, cooperative learning, intercultural communication, distance learning, and personal and professional development. Using social media means being aware of new teacher roles and new approaches to learning and teaching (Pineda Hoyos, 2014).

It is stated that the rate of social media use by all members of society, including teachers, has increased during the pandemic process, in which the entire world has been deeply affected (Digital, 2020). Teachers are also among the user profiles that actively use social media. On the other hand, with the compulsory closure of schools, distance education has started to be used. Therefore, during this period, teachers conducted educational work and student-parent communication via social media applications. In the process that started with the closure of schools on March 16, 2020, in Turkey, teachers and students employed the technology they had previously used in the education and training process compulsorily much more frequently. The Covid-19 pandemic has been effective in the increased use of digital devices, online resources, social media networks, and e-learning activities (Mulenga & Marban, 2020). Social media has become one of the significant resources from which teachers can benefit.

Some important issues should be emphasized in the relationship between education and social media. Sharing the faces of children in social media posts, violating the privacy of children, and the credibility of the information obtained through social media are on the table. Sharing children's faces and abusing children's privacy is a violation of children's rights. Marin, Carpenter, and Tur (2021) pointed out the concept of educational social media in their study and draw attention to the necessity of data privacy awareness among teachers. Media literacy education can prevent misinformation on social media. Social media creates a secondary world that is almost parallel to the world we live in. The documentary named Social Dilemma broadcast on the digital broadcasting platform Netflix begins with: "We've gone from the information age to the disinformation age" (Orlowski, 2020) This impressive statement puts forward the significant role of media literacy in the twenty-first century. Potter (2005) states that there is a fine line between the media world and the real world and points out the need for media literacy. Individuals expecting a social benefit tend to think that the message is credible when they believe the message that they get from social media can be used in real life. Thanks to its multi-dimensional messages, the media is capable of shaping individuals' perception of reality significantly. That is why besides all its advantages, one should be cautious and try to get the most benefit with the least harm.

In-service training processes in Turkey targeting schools and teachers follow top-down training direction. The professional exchange and development opportunities offered to teachers are frequently planned by the Ministry of National Education. Most training is executed by profiting from courses and seminars. Even though there are criteria for in-service training applications, inadequacies exist in the selection of applicants in terms of suitability, prioritization, and transparency (European Training Foundation, 2020). The majority of the in-service training planned for 2020 was canceled due to the pandemic or kept on going with distance education. It is known that the training planned for 2021 was also carried out through distance education (Ministry of National Education [MONE], 2021). There is no development-oriented and comprehensive evaluation or support system for teachers (İlğan, 2013). In order to receive some support from their experienced colleagues, teachers can benefit from social media platforms, and positively contribute to their professional development by asking questions to their colleagues and exchanging ideas. From time to time these contributions appear as colleague solidarity, which is expressed as the support of people working in the same profession for each other. Colleague solidarity of teachers on social media and their search for help is regarded as an important clue while determining the pre-service and in-service training needs of teachers (Ünüvar, Yavaşdemir,

& Tagay, 2018). Considering that learning is an active process, it requires teachers to update their professional knowledge, communicate with their colleagues, and share their knowledge and experiences with each other (National Association for The Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2010). Reanalyzing teachers' levels of professional competence and professional development is regarded as a requirement. As a result of various elements hindering professional development, social media stands out as the main source of reference guides for teachers whose professional development is not sufficiently supported.

The literature review demonstrates that social media and education research are mostly directed at the use of social media tools in the classroom (Epstein, 2013; NAEYC, 2012). However, teachers' use of social media has the potential to turn into an important opportunity in early childhood education. Various resources explain in detail the contributions of social media tools to teacher education and professional development (NAEYC, 2012). Richardson & Mancabelli (2011) emphasized the importance of creating "Personal Learning Networks" in the professional development of teachers. It has been stated that prospective preschool teachers can develop a digital environment to share information with their colleagues and to be aware of current activities through e-mobile learning (Gözüm & Demir, 2022). Veziroğlu Çelik et al. (2018) stated in their research that preschool teachers use social media to find different activities and methods. Teachers engage in new forms of professional development made possible by the evolution of the internet. Teachers use social media for professional learning and information sharing (Bissessar, 2014; Manca & Ranieri, 2014; van Bommel & Liljekvist, 2015). The use of Twitter is encouraged, especially in pre-service teacher education programs. It is stated that pre-service teachers can be supported with Twitter in the subjects of field experience, emotions, cooperation, classroom, and relationships (Munoz, Pellegrini-Lafont, & Cramer, 2014). Teachers initiate and orchestrate their professional development on the Internet. However, studies on how preschool teachers use social media in their professional development seem to be insufficient. That is why the need for research on how social media contributes to preschool teachers in terms of professional development and whether it has a contribution has arisen. Within this context, the study aims to examine teachers' views regarding social media use for professional development purposes. In accordance with the aim of the study, answers were sought by asking the following research questions:

1. How do teachers use social media for professional development?
2. Which social media platforms do teachers use the most for professional development?
3. Which social media accounts do teachers follow for professional development?
4. From which aspects are teachers supported professionally when they follow social media?
5. What do teachers think about the reliability of the professional knowledge they get from social media?
6. How do teachers apply the knowledge they get from social media?
7. What do teachers think about the necessity of using social media for professional development?
8. What do teachers consider when sharing about their profession on social media?

Method

Research Design

This study used the qualitative method. As one of the qualitative research designs, the study was carried out based on the case study approach. The case study approach studies a current phenomenon in its real-life context (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2005). Yin (2003) defined the case study as exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. The event and situations examined in case studies are limited to time and space in their natural context. This study was carried out during the pandemic period when social media was used extensively by teachers, and kindergartens were kept open during this period. The study is a case with this feature.

Participants

The study group of the research consisted of twenty-five preschool teachers chosen among preschool teachers working in public kindergartens in the Etimesgut district of Ankara province during the 2020-

2021 academic year. The sample group was determined by using purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is the deliberate classification of samples in line with the purpose of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). In line with the purpose of the research, it was worked with preschool teachers, who were the only branch working face-to-face during the pandemic period.

Table 1.
Sociodemographic Information of Teachers

Variable		n
Gender	Woman	25
	Man	0
Age	20-24	4
	25-29	7
	30-34	4
	35-39	4
	40 and up	6
Education degree	Bachelor's	23
	Master's	2
Professional experience (year)	1-5	8
	6-10	7
	11-15	4
	16- 20	2
	21 and up	4
Daily time spent on social media	30 minutes or less	1
	30-60 minutes	5
	1-2 hours	9
	3-4 hours	8
	5-6 hours	2
	More than 6 hours	0
Total		25

Table 1 demonstrates that 25 of the preschool teachers, in other words, all of them, are women. It is seen that 4 of the teachers are 20-24 years old, 7 of them are 25-29 years old, 4 of them are 30-34 years old, and 4 of them are 35-39 years old. All of the teachers hold a bachelor's degree, and only 2 of them have a master's degree. 8 of the teachers have a seniority of 1-5 years, 7 of them 6-10 years, 4 of them 11-15 years, 2 of them 16-20 years and 4 of them have a seniority of 21 years and above. The findings show that teachers spend between 1-2 hours and 3-4 hours on social media in a day. None of the teachers spend more than 6 hours a day on social media. 9 of the teachers spend 1-2 hours a day, 8 of them 3-4 hours a day, 5 of them 30-60 minutes a day, 2 of them spend 5-6 hours and 1 of them spends less than 30 minutes on social media.

Data Collection Tools

In the research, the "Information Form" was used to determine the sociodemographic characteristics of the teachers, and the "Semi-structured Interview Form" was used to assess the opinions of the teachers.

Information Form: It is a form developed by the researchers to determine the gender, age, education degree, professional experience, and time spent daily on social media of the teachers participating in the research. The form consists of five questions.

Semi-structured Interview Form: It is a form developed by researchers to determine teachers' views on the use of social media for professional development. While creating the form, the literature that includes teachers' social media usage habits and professional development resources was used. After the literature review, the questions of the Semi-Structured Interview Form were formed. The questions prepared for the interview form were first presented to six field experts working in the child development departments of universities for their opinions. Following the feedback received from the experts, the interview form was finalized, and the internal validity of the form was ensured. For example, in the first question form, it was planned to ask the teachers a question like "Do you include your students in the photos you use in your social media posts?" However, one of the experts stated

that this is a question about ethics rather than professional development. Therefore, this question was removed from the form. The final version of the form consisted of eight questions as follows:

1. How do you use social media for professional development?
2. Which social media platforms do you use most for professional development?
3. Which social media accounts do you follow for professional development?
4. How are you supported professionally while following social media?
5. What do you think about the reliability of the professional information you get from social media?
6. How do you apply the knowledge gained from social media?
7. What do you think about the necessity of using social media for your professional development?
8. What do you consider when sharing professional posts on social media?

Data Analysis

The interview form was applied to the teachers by the second researcher in the spring term of the 2020-2021 academic year. First of all, appointments were made by phone with the teachers and the meeting was set for Monday, March 8, 2021. The purpose of the research was explained and general information regarding questions was provided to the teachers on the day of the meeting. Individual and face-to-face interviews were conducted with each teacher. The teachers were provided to answer the interview form in detail. Audio recordings were used during the interview with the permission of the teachers. All interviews were completed between 8-12 March 2021. An interview took approximately 20 minutes with each participant. In order to protect participants' privacy, instead of using their names, codes were given to the participants. Interview forms were numbered from 1 to 25 and each of them was given the codes "T1", "T2" meaning "teacher 1", and "teacher 2".

Table 2.

As a result of content analysis, categories and subcategories

Categories	Subcategories
Using social media in terms of professional development	Activity examples, Video, Song, Education, Not using social media
Social media platforms used for professional development	Instagram, Pinterest, Whatsapp, Youtube, Facebook, Google, Telegram, Twitter
Followed social media accounts	okuloncesietkinlik, okuloncesi.cilginlik, once.okul.oncesi akademisyenanne, tcmeb, nalan_ogretmen, serapogretmen babaokulu_teacher
The aspects teachers are supported professionally when they follow social media	Theory and practice, Finding the activity, Learning about child development, Creativity, In the execution of official proceedings, Seminar and panel, Book recommendation
Thoughts on the credibility of professional information obtained from social media	Doubting the accuracy of the information, The information they receive from accounts they trust is correct, Not getting information, Having accurate information on Twitter
The status of using the information obtained through social media tools in the learning process	Increase in productivity, Increased interest, and motivation in children, Creativity, Suitable for children's developmental levels, Self-assessment
Thoughts regarding the necessity of using social media for professional development	To follow new developments, Ease of access to content, Communication speed, Too many alternatives, To understand the world of the new generation, Media literate, Taking a lot of time, Feeling inadequate, Making people lazy
Things they consider while professionally sharing on social media	Not sharing children's faces, Sharing the right information, Getting permission from parent and child, Suitable for children's age and developmental levels

The sociodemographic characteristics of the teachers are presented with frequency tables. The data obtained from the interview form were analyzed with the content analysis approach. A content analysis table was created from the categories and sub-categories for the answers given by the teachers to the questions. Content analysis is an analysis method that aims to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). This method was applied to organize the concepts that emerged in the collected data within the framework of the research questions and to reveal the basic categories that could explain the data. The data was analyzed thoroughly and accordingly, categories were created. In order to ensure the reliability of the study, the data were analyzed independently by the two researchers and the compatibility percentage was calculated using the formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (2015). A compatibility percentage above 70% is considered reliable (Miles & Huberman, 2015). It is seen that the percentage of agreement between coders was 90%. Thus, it was determined that the level of compatibility between the coders was good and the reliability of the data analysis was ensured. Additionally, direct quotations from the data are presented in the results section with a descriptive approach. In qualitative research, while recording data using tape recorders, rich descriptions and inter-rater reliability ensure reliability and contribute to validity (Creswell, 2013).

Results

In this section, the views of preschool teachers on the use of social media for professional development are presented. As a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the questions directed to the teachers, the opinions of the teachers were gathered under the themes. The themes in question were created in the context of the questions in the interview form.

By examining the data obtained from the interviews, subcategories were formed from the sentences and words that are important within the framework of the purpose of the research. The opinions expressed by the teachers were first gathered under similar topics. Afterward, opinions were analyzed and those compatible with each other were categorized and subcategories were determined.

Category 1: Using Social Media in Terms of Professional Development

'How do teachers use social media for professional development?' The answers given to the question are given in Table 3.

Table 3.

Teachers' views on social media for professional development

Subcategories	n
Learning activity examples	11
Video	5
Song	5
Education	3
Not using social media	1

Nearly all of the preschool teachers participating in the research use social media for professional development. Looking at the use of social media for the professional development of preschool teachers, it is seen that they use social media primarily to look at examples of activities. Regarding this finding, a teacher states that (T8):

Usually, I follow the websites where teacher groups are members. They have activity pools, and I follow them. The Ministry of National Education has a website called the General Directorate of Basic Education. I can find activities targeting preschool. They have activity pools. I look at these activity pools.

"Video" and "song" are indicated as second priority in the cases of using social media in the professional development of preschool teachers. Regarding this finding, a teacher states (T5): "I use social media mostly for videos and songs. As I believe they will make it more fun for the children."

Thirdly, preschool teachers use social media for "seminars" and "training". An example given by the teacher is: "There have been seminars carried out via internet because of the pandemic. I participated in almost all of these remote seminars."(T7)

Another teacher expresses that she does not use social media a lot except sharing information and knowledge by saying:

I do not use social media, except WhatsApp. I use WhatsApp only for informing the parents, sending homework, and talking about the students during the pandemic. Except for this, I do not use social media. I use it for the content I choose for the children from Educational Informatics Network (EBA) and to inform the parents. I care about their education. (T10)

Category 2: Social Media Platforms Used for Professional Development and its Reasons

'Which social media platforms do teachers use the most for professional development?' The answers given to the question are given in Table 4.

Table.4

Social Media Platforms Used for Professional Development and its Reasons

Subcategories	n
Instagram	9
Pinterest	5
Whatsapp	4
Youtube	3
Facebook	1
Google	1
Telegram	1
Twitter	1

When we look at the social media platforms that preschool teachers use, it is determined that the majority of teachers use Instagram, and half of them use Pinterest, WhatsApp, and YouTube along with Instagram. Facebook, Google, Telegram, and Twitter are rarely used social media platforms by teachers. Hence, as social media platforms, preschool teachers use Instagram, Pinterest, WhatsApp, and YouTube the most for the purpose of professional development. When we look at the reasons why these platforms are preferred, some answers are given such as the fact that these platforms are more popular, the information is up-to-date and easily accessible, and the variety of activities is high. Regarding this, a teacher states (T3): "I use Instagram the most. Since it is more up-to-date and richer in content. We can easily access many local networks via Instagram. That is why, I prefer Instagram the most."Regarding this, another preschool teacher states (T13): "I use Instagram more and people are usually concentrated there. I mean it has become more popular. I prefer using Instagram as it contains a great number of activities."

About YouTube, another preschool teacher explains how they benefit from social media platforms in the process of learning by stating: "It works great for me at school. I click and open something from YouTube at school and children get an idea or they can concrete a subject while explaining. That is why I use YouTube the most."(T17)

The results show that preschool teachers using WhatsApp mostly use this platform to make exchange information with families. A small part of the working group stated that they do not use social media platforms too much for professional purposes.

Category 3: Followed Social Media Accounts

'Which social media accounts do teachers follow for professional development? The answers given to the question ' are given in Table 5. The majority of preschool teachers state that they follow Instagram and Pinterest as social media accounts. Some preschool teachers specify that they follow the YouTube and Telegram pages of these accounts along with Instagram and Pinterest.

When we look at the views of the preschool teachers regarding the accounts they follow, it is determined that the majority of them follow activity pages. When we look at the pages that are most closely followed by the teachers, it is seen that these pages are "okuloncesietkinlik, okuloncesi.cilginlik, once.okul.oncesi". It was determined that another majority of the teachers follow academicians and preschool teachers. The most closely followed page is the 'akademisyenanne' page. When we look at the preschool teachers followed, the most followed teacher accounts can be listed as

'nalan_ogretmen, serapogretmen, and babaokulu_teacher.' Some of the teachers follow the Ministry of National Education's Instagram page (tcmeb).

Another teacher does not specify the accounts she follows by saying: "There is no principal account. For example, there are some accounts opened abroad. I usually follow them but there is no certain answer to this account question. In general, I follow the accounts related to the profession group." (T8)

Table 5.
Followed Social Media Accounts

Subcategories	<i>n</i>
okuloncesietkinlik (instagram)	6
okuloncesi.cilginlik (instagram)	4
once.okul.oncesi (instagram)	4
akademisyenanne (instagram)	3
tcmeb (instagram)	3
nalan_ogretmen (instagram)	2
serapogretmen (instagram)	2
babaokulu_teacher (instagram)	1

Category 4: The aspects teachers are supported professionally when they follow social media

'Which aspects are teachers supported professionally when they follow social media?' The answers given to the question ' are given in Table 6.

Table 6.
The aspects teachers are supported professionally when they follow social media

Subcategories	<i>n</i>
Theory and practice	7
Find activity	6
Learn about child development	4
Creativity	4
In the execution of official proceedings	2
Seminar and panel	1
Book recommendation	1

The majority of preschool teachers indicate that they feel supported with regard to creativity in theory and practice, finding activities, and knowledge acquisition in child development. Regarding this matter, a teacher states (T15):

As I said I try to follow academic topics. Such as scholarly articles. Most of the time, I try to follow children's development, their development levels, and surveys aiming at understanding these levels. Apart from these, I try to follow preschool activities, mind games, or informative games and activities that can further develop children and support their cognitive development.

Another group of preschool teachers states that social media support them in the functioning of official acts and in preparing a plan. Regarding this, a preschool teacher states (T5): "For official acts in particular, we might need to fill out some forms. I think it can be useful as we can pass to each other in similar acts."

Some preschool teachers also state that they saw their inadequacies on social media and completed these aspects with seminars and panels. Regarding this matter, a preschool teacher states (T7): "This is what usually happens in seminars. In the pages we follow, we look if there are new activities. To be honest, the seminars are really helpful for me. I mean, we think that we know so much but obviously, there are things we do not know. I watched and listened to some dialogues organized in the form of panels, particularly in our field."

Another preschool teacher states she is supported by getting book suggestions from social media and adds: "I just look at the activities, because I can't get such deep information from social media, but

there are books that are recommended. I can read them. Actually, I use the platform as an advertisement tool. I mean I want to see them by trying."(T4)

Category 5: Thoughts on the Credibility of Professional Information Obtained from Social Media

‘What do teachers think about the credibility of the professional information they obtain from social media?’ The answers given to the question ' are given in Table 7.

Table 7.

Thoughts on the Credibility of Professional Information Obtained from Social Media

Subcategories	n
Doubting the accuracy of information	11
The information they receive from accounts they trust is correct	9
Not getting information	4
Having accurate information on Twitter	1

Nearly all of the preschool teachers state that they are hesitant about the accuracy of the information they obtained from social media, however; they think that the information they get from the accounts they trust is credible. Regarding this matter, a preschool teacher states (T3):

There might be a piece of information that is credible, but surely there might be which are not. In other words, I believe that I have already reached the credible information by following our well-equipped, really knowledgeable teachers who have achieved certain accomplishments in their field, and mistakes can of course occur on many pages.

In another aspect, the preschool teachers express that they only look at the activity examples from social media and do not generally get much information from it. Regarding this matter, a preschool teacher states (T4):

Sure, I do not use things that I am not sure about its credibility. Yet, as I say I prefer content regarding activity examples, poems, and games, rather than information-based content. They do not even have to be completely credible. If it fits my group, I use it.

Another preschool teacher states that there is more accurate information on Twitter :

Some accounts are limited. The information shared on these accounts can be wrong. I usually prefer more formal accounts, for example for these topics I use Twitter. Because the platform is more formal. For example, some people may share false information about the Ministry of National Education. This is why I follow the official websites of the Ministry of National Education, and I follow them on Twitter because it is safer than Instagram. (T13)

Category 6: The Status of Using the Information Obtained Through Social Media Tools in the Learning Process

‘How do teachers give place to the information they obtain from social media in the implementation processes?’ The answers given to the question ' are given in Table 8.

Table 8.

The Status of Using the Information Obtained Through Social Media Tools in the Learning Process

Subcategories	n
Increase in productivity	10
Increased interest and motivation in children	6
Creativity	5
Suitable for children's developmental levels	3
Self-assessment	1

It is determined that the preschool teachers participating in the research tried to transfer the knowledge and activity ideas they obtained through social media platforms to the learning processes. Preschool teachers emphasize that when they use the knowledge and activity ideas, they have obtained through social media in the learning process, the efficiency in the process increases in parallel with the interest

and motivation of the children. About this, a preschool teacher (T22) explains the practices she has been doing as follows:

I use them within the activities. I used it in classroom activities and live lessons. Wherever I need the plan of the day about the concepts that I would like to use. It can be a game, it can be a finger game, I combine it with my concepts and use it fluently in my activity.

It is determined that preschool teachers use social media to obtain different perspectives and creative activity ideas to make their learning experiences more effective and interesting. A preschool teacher on this subject states (T1): "I use them in the applications in class. When I see creative games by means of activities, different dramas, parkour games; I apply them in my classroom."

Another preschool teacher indicates that she employs activities by taking children's development levels into account by saying: "First of all, I use the ones that are suitable for the development levels of the children. This is how I use them. I mean according to the children's development levels."(T3)

Preschool teachers also mention self-criticism by comparing their behaviors with the information they get from social media by saying, "Considering the knowledge I have acquired from the articles or interviews, I try to ask myself and affirm it regarding how I behave. I try to self-criticize." (T5)

Category 7: Thoughts Regarding the Necessity of Using Social Media for Professional Development

'What do teachers think about the necessity of using social media for professional development?' The answers given to the question ' are given in Table 9.

Table 9.

Thoughts Regarding the Necessity of Using Social Media for Professional Development

Subcategories	n
To follow new developments	6
Ease of access to content	5
Speed	4
Too many alternatives	3
To understand the world of the new generation	2
Media literate	2
Take a lot of time	1
Feeling inadequate	1
Making people lazy	1

The views on whether using social media is necessary for their professional development are examined, all of the preschool teachers except one who participated in the research expressed positive opinions. More concretely, the self-development of preschool teachers is extremely important, and the continuity of the learning process should be ensured. At this point, teachers indicate that social media is an exceptionally useful source. The opinions of preschool teachers demonstrate that the use of social media has become absolutely important and has gained weight in terms of being able to follow the current developments, the easiness of accessing the contents, its speed and abundance of alternatives, and enabling communication and sharing. One of the teachers (T1) having this belief expresses:

Yes, I think social media is necessary. We live in an information age. Profiting from social media and technology has positive impacts in every aspect. We can easily access the information. In the professional sense, it is a great blessing for us to have such an endless resource at our disposal at any time we want. I can find everything I am looking for and reach it in no time.

Another preschool teacher supporting this view states (T14):

I think it is extremely important as we live in the internet age. Today, accessing the internet and smartphones is really easy. I find it positive. Because access is easy. We see more and more alternatives. At its simplest, we can make presentations to children in a way that addresses more senses of them by profiting from the internet. I find it necessary.

On the other hand, some preschool teachers like others, express that it is necessary to use social media tools, as they contribute to personal and professional development, and they explain that the reason behind this is to understand the new generation's world and to be able to communicate with them in addition to the curriculum. By emphasizing this view, a preschool teacher considering the use of social media is necessary states (T7): "Yes, definitely. Not only for our professional development, but it is also an environment that young people follow a lot, whether it is Facebook or Instagram. Perhaps, it is necessary to better understand and get to know them."

Another noteworthy aspect of preschool teachers' opinions is their statements that social media and using social media will contribute to individual and professional development if used appropriately and correctly. Teachers who support this opinion emphasized the importance of good media literacy in a teacher who uses social media. Regarding this matter, a preschool teacher states (T5): "I do not have a clear opinion on whether it should be completed or not. Of course, the more open we are to improving ourselves, the better, but as I previously stated, I believe we must filter and adapt. I believe we must be selective."

There are also preschool teachers who gave partially negative responses about the importance of social media in teacher self-development. Preschool teachers who have this opinion emphasize that these actions take a long time, the teacher may feel inadequate, and social media makes people lazy. At the same time, they stated that while social media is being used more due to the pandemic, face-to-face education is more beneficial. Regarding this matter, a preschool teacher states (T10):

To be honest, I do not think it is necessary. There were no smartphones before. We used to send these things in small letters or, before the pandemic, in small meetings by arranging a suitable time for children and a suitable time for parents. But now, I cannot say we do not use smart technology. It also helped to make our job easier. It also made people a little lazy. They were having difficulty finding time. They are now studying from home. It seems to be better for them, but I believe it is better to face to face. We used to do small face-to-face training, but now we need a phone, there is nothing to do anymore.

Category 8: Things They Consider While Professional Sharing on Social Media

'Things They Consider While Professional Sharing on Social Media' are given in Table 10.

Table 10.

Things They Consider While Professional Sharing on Social Media

Subcategories	n
Not sharing	13
Not sharing children's faces	10
Sharing the right information	1
Getting permission from the parent and child	1

Preschool teachers who share or do not share stated that they did not think it was appropriate to share children's faces, and they emphasized the importance of sharing accurate information. Teachers stated that they make all efforts not to violate the children's rights. They also stated that they obtained permission from the parents and children before sharing the children's faces. Regarding this matter, a preschool teacher states (T18): "I make certain that the children's faces are not visible. Because we are not permitted to share photos without parental consent. As a result, if I take photos of their faces, I usually put emojis on them or try to visualize the activity without taking them"

Another preschool teacher thinks (T10): "As you have said, I am sharing after double-checking the accuracy of what I am about to share. Because teaching someone the wrong thing starts a chain reaction that cannot be reversed. It is critical to me that it is correct."

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

According to the answers obtained from the first research question, teachers primarily use social media to find examples of activities, videos, and songs to receive training, or to attend seminars. According to the answers obtained from the fourth research question, it is understood that following social media provides teachers with theoretical and practical support in the fields of creativity, activity diversity,

child development, and education. Teachers can share their professional knowledge and experience with their colleagues and participate in educational discussions by working collaboratively with colleagues around the world, they can support their creativity, thus support the lifelong learning process (Carlson & Gadio, 2002). One of the most significant results of this study is that preschool teachers use social media for professional development and make contributions. Furthermore, most of the teachers agree that using social media for professional development is necessary, useful, and simple. Teachers can be said to use social media for professional development to improve themselves, follow innovations, be inspired in their profession, and access up-to-date, creative, and innovative content. The obtained results are consistent with the results of a study conducted by Dermentzi, Papagiannidis, Toro, and Yannopoulou (2016). According to the findings of the current study, social media is an effective way to stay in touch with other teachers. In another study, teachers reported that social media allowed them to stay up to date on developments in their fields (Tenopir, Volentine, & King, 2013, Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2013). According to McLoughlin, Brady, Lee, and Russell (2007), teachers use social media to overcome document and material deficiencies in their institutions, communicate with parents more easily, reach leaders in their fields more easily, and gain support to improve the quality of learning processes. Social platforms have the potential to provide significant socio-cultural opportunities through learning experiences such as interaction, feedback correction, group belonging, ease of access to information, content structuring, and ease of sharing content (Yokuş & Yanpar Yelken, 2019). Uyanık-Aktulun and Elmas (2019) emphasized the advantages of social media for preschool teachers, such as the ability to create personal learning networks, collaborate with colleagues, access rich content documentation, develop their creativity, and find career opportunities. All studies focusing on the role of social media in teacher professional development concluded that social media promotes teacher professional development (Ostaszewski, Moisey, & Reid, 2011; Visser, Calvert Evering, & Barrett, 2014). Similar to the literature, it can be said that social media is a powerful source of professional development for teachers.

According to the answers obtained from the second research question, teachers use Instagram, Pinterest, WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Google, Telegram, and Twitter. According to the answers obtained from the third research question, it is understood that teachers, follow the pages of preschool teachers, academicians, activity pages, and official accounts on Instagram. Similarly, teachers stated that they used Instagram the most, and it was seen that teachers followed the accounts on Instagram. In a study, it was emphasized that applications such as Facebook and Instagram can be used to support problem-solving and cooperative learning skills (Kıcı & Dilmen, 2014). In the study, it was determined that Instagram can be used to support learning, similar to the literature.

According to the answers obtained from the fifth research question; teachers doubt the accuracy of professional information obtained from social media and think that the information they receive from the accounts they trust is correct. However, it is understood that they rely on the accuracy of information obtained from accounts they trust without raising too many concerns. This complicates the use and dissemination of false information. While some of the teachers confirmed the accuracy of the information, they obtained from the media by asking others, it was discovered that some of them passed through their logic filter. Professional development for preschool teachers is actively pursued through the use of social media. However, the tendency of teachers to use content obtained from accounts they trust without questioning suggests that teachers need to be supported in media literacy. Tekin and Işıkoğlu Erdoğan (2020), in a study they conducted, revealed that preschool teachers have no idea about media literacy and that media literacy means controlled use of media by teachers and being selective. Similarly, Güneş and Toran (2022) discovered that preschool teachers needed assistance with technology literacy, using technological platforms, and creating digital content and that they were lacking technological pedagogical content knowledge proficiency. Gözüm, Metin, Uzun, and Karaca, (2022) emphasized that teachers' ICT use, competencies, and self-efficacy in the distance education process became a priority in early childhood education. Also, Gözüm and Demir (2021), drew attention to the relationship between technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge that teachers acquired in the pre-service period. Uyanık-Aktulun and Elmas (2019) also emphasized that preschool teachers and prospective teachers should keep technology literacy at the forefront of their education and professional lives and that they should be constantly supported by pre-service and in-service training programs developed by institutions. It is reported that power lies within media literacy in

today's digital era (Rogow, 2017). Furthermore, preschool teachers can be said to have responsibilities in the process of children becoming media literate. According to Donohue (2017), adults who are responsible for children are media consultants for children. It is concluded in this context that preschool teachers must be media literate as well as support the media literacy of children. Preschool teachers believe that it is critical to improving themselves, that the learning process should be continuous, and that social media is a great resource at this point, but they also believe that social media wastes a lot of time. This demonstrates the importance of media literacy training for teachers. Media literacy consists of six basic actions, the first of which is to access the media on purpose (Herdzina & Lauricella, 2020, Scheibe & Rogow, 2012). Teachers who understand how to use media tools purposefully can manage the time they devote to social media and improve their ability to avoid harm by reaping the benefits of social media. In the research, it can be said that teachers should be supported in terms of media literacy, similar to the literature.

According to the answers obtained from the sixth research question; teachers stated that the information they obtained through social media tools increased productivity and motivation in children, and supported creativity. It has been found that when preschool teachers incorporate social media into their implementation processes, it has a positive impact on both classroom environments and children. It has been determined that applications based on ideas obtained from social media are more creative, fun, and interesting and that the learning process is more efficient. It can be said that other resources that preschool teachers can use to enrich their implementation processes are limited. Uyanık-Aktulun and Elmas (2019) emphasized that by using social media posts, preschool teachers can create new arrangements in educational environments, design new materials, and provide different learning experiences for children. Similar to the literature, it can be said that social media will bring innovation to the learning environment.

According to the answers obtained from the seventh research question, teachers stated that thanks to social media, they follow new developments, provide easy access to content, social media is fast, offers them many alternatives and media literacy is important. In one study, teachers emphasized the possibility of social networks to access information, share information, access and interact with people (Tombuloğlu & İşman, 2014). Results from another study demonstrated that an individual's use of social media as professional learning spans understanding, networking, professional identity development, and transformative learning (King, 2011). In the research, it can be said that social media is an innovative, fast, and easily accessible learning resource, similar to the literature.

According to the answers obtained from the eighth research question, teachers stated that they attach importance to not sharing children's faces while sharing professionally on social media, obtaining permission from children and their families for sharing, and sharing accurate information. Some teachers stated that they did not share anything but were only followers. More than half of the preschool teachers said they do not share anything on social media and only use it for follow-up. Teachers are active media consumers, but they are not active content creators. Producing media content is one of the core actions of media literacy, and producing media content involves generating and expressing ideas through the media (Herdzina & Lauricella, 2020, Scheibe & Rogow, 2012). It can be said that teachers should be supported in their ability to create media content and connect that content to the larger world. The various results of the current study show the importance of supporting preschool teachers in media literacy.

Teachers who shared stated that they paid attention to the accuracy of the information they conveyed and that they generally shared activities and educational content for families. In particular, teachers emphasized that they are careful not to share children's faces and that they attach importance to children's rights. It can be said that teachers are conscious and sensitive in this regard. Teachers can create and share social media content for professional development purposes as long as children's privacy rights are respected. If the teacher share sharing of the photographs, sounds, and images of children on social media without consent, this means a violation of the child's personality rights and private life. Due to these violations, there are court decisions in Italy, Austria, and Turkey that punish the child's family or prohibit sharing (Serin, 2019). The Convention on the Rights of the Children aims to protect the child against the negative effects of mass media with Articles 13 and 17 (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, n.d.). The media contains contradictions as both a tool for

the child's free expression and a factor that can harm his mental, physical, and cultural development. It has been stated in a circular issued by the Ministry of National Education that it is a crime to make audio, text, photo, and video recordings of children and to illegally share them in various digital and printed media and that necessary measures will be taken to prevent these situations (MONE, 2017). Marin, Carpenter, and Tur (2021) stated that teachers who use social media for professional purposes lack knowledge of data privacy policies and regulations, and they drew attention to the data privacy and data literacy training needs of educational social media users.

Preschool teachers take responsibility for their professional development by searching social media about their interests, following various accounts, accessing media content, and engaging in lifelong learning. Teachers create a learning network by communicating with their colleagues using social media. Preschool teachers must raise the children's awareness of learning activities based on social platforms during this process. In order to make effective use of social platforms, preschool teachers need to be made aware of how they can use these platforms for professional development.

Preschool teachers can benefit from comprehensive and effective media literacy training to make their use of social media more efficient for professional development. These courses can be delivered via social media platforms. When using social media for professional purposes, teachers who create and share media content should be made aware of children's rights and ethical principles. If preschool teachers use social media correctly, it can be an excellent tool for information dissemination. It will also contribute to the promotion and appreciation of early childhood education services on a larger scale. Researchers can deepen their research on the relationship between social media and teachers' lifelong learning processes.

Limitations

This research is limited to the teachers working in the public kindergartens in the Ankara province in the spring term of the 2020-2021 academic year.

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