Examining the Relationship between Teachers' Self-Disclosure Behaviors on Social Media and Their Social Anxiety and Need for Social Approval on Social Media[*][1]

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between teachers' self-disclosure behaviors on social media and their social anxiety and need for social approval. Using a relational survey model with a quantitative design, data were collected from 467 teachers. Findings indicate that teachers tend to self-disclose on social media at a moderate level, being more cautious when sharing personal emotions and thoughts. Single teachers disclose themselves more than married ones, and female teachers experience higher social anxiety than males. Moreover, self-disclosure increases with greater social media usage but decreases with age. Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between the need for social approval and social anxiety. Regression results showed that only the need for social approval and social media daily usage significantly predicted self-disclosure on social media, while age and social anxiety did not. These findings suggest that teachers' online sharing tendencies are influenced primarily by their need for social approval and frequency of social media engagement.

Keywords: Self-disclosure on social media, Social media anxiety, Need for social approval, Teachers.

Introduction

Social media, an indispensable part of modern human life (Sönmez, 2013), has evolved beyond its primary purpose of communication, becoming a multifaceted virtual environment where individuals engage in diverse social, professional, and recreational activities (Çalışkan & Mencik, 2015). Defined as web-based services (Kuşay, 2010), social media enables real-time interaction without temporal or spatial boundaries (Barkuş & Koç, 2019) through personal profiles (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) and facilitates multidimensional sharing of user-generated content (Breakenridge, 2009; Çiftçi et al., 2017). By allowing users to participate in global communities (Roy & Chakraborty, 2015; Srivastava & Banaji, 2011), these platforms have become integral to social interaction and self-expression (Demirel & Karanfiloğlu, 2020; Perez-Torez, 2024; Raiziene et al., 2022).

The increasing integration of social media into everyday life has significantly influenced educational practices as well (Çetinkaya & Sütçü, 2018; Kumar & Nanda, 2024; We Are Social, 2020). With their ability to enhance access to information, facilitate communication, and foster collaboration, social media

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platforms have been adopted as professional tools in education (Avcı, 2020; Demirtaş, 2017; Ellison, 2008; Glimps & Ford, 2008; Goodyear et al., 2014; Grosseck & Holotescu, 2008; Tess, 2013; Qi & Wang, 2018). Research indicates that social media use in educational settings supports teacher–student interaction (Kamnoetsin, 2014), accelerates access to information (Aydın & Çelik, 2017), and contributes to both students' academic and affective learning processes (Demir, 2020; Yaylak, 2017). Furthermore, social media enhances teachers' professional development and knowledge-sharing opportunities (Grant, 2008; Greenhow et al., 2020).

Despite these benefits, the increased visibility of teachers on social media has introduced new professional and ethical challenges (Duran & Bayar, 2020). The act of sharing personal information, thoughts, and experiences online—defined as self-disclosure (Özdemir & Erdem, 2016; Wang et al., 2016)—blurs the boundaries between teachers' personal and professional identities. Social media's interactive nature enables students to access aspects of teachers' lives beyond the classroom, including their personal values and habits (Leonardi, 2014; Richey et al., 2018). While such transparency may foster closeness and trust, it may simultaneously raise concerns regarding professionalism, privacy, and classroom authority. (Akkoyunlu et al., 2015; Köse & Elçi, 2021). Hence, understanding teachers' self-disclosure behaviors on these platforms has become an important area of inquiry.

Teachers' social media engagement is also influenced by emotional and psychological factors, among which social anxiety plays a key role. Teachers' engagement with social media is also shaped by emotional and psychological factors, among which social anxiety appears to play a key role. Defined as excessive worry or discomfort in social interactions (Beck & Emery, 2015; Greco & Morris, 2005; Leary, 1983), social anxiety may lead teachers to fear misinterpretation or criticism of their online posts (Tonbuoğlu & İşman, 2014). Such concerns can make them perceive constant surveillance and evaluation by others (Morrison & Heimberg, 2013; Öner, 2022). Despite these anxieties, many teachers continue to disclose personal information, which suggests the presence of other motivational forces that shape their online behavior.

One such factor is the need for social approval, referring to individuals' desire for validation and acceptance from others (Fehr & Falk, 2001; Johnson et al., 2012). Teachers, as respected public figures and societal role models, may feel additional pressure to conform to social expectations online (Aydın & Çelik, 2017). Their social media engagement may thus serve multiple purposes: maintaining professional visibility, seeking belonging within digital communities (Van Den Beemt et al., 2018), influencing others' perceptions, and gaining social approval or recognition (Öner, 2022). This need for acceptance may, in turn, interact with their levels of social anxiety and their willingness to engage in self-disclosure.

Present Study

Although the literature provides valuable insights into social media's role in education, few empirical studies have examined the interrelationships among teachers' self-disclosure behaviors, social anxiety, and need for social approval in the context of social media. Previous research has primarily focused on the general advantages and risks of social media use or on students' perspectives, leaving the psychological and social dynamics influencing teachers' online self-presentation underexplored. This study addresses this empirical gap by investigating how teachers' social anxiety and need for social approval relate to their self-disclosure behaviors on social media. By clarifying these relationships, the

study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of teachers' digital identities and to the broader literature on professional behavior in online environments.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to examine the relationship between teachers' self-disclosure behaviors on social media, the social anxiety they experience on these platforms, and their need for social approval. In line with this objective, the study seeks to answer the following sub-problems: In accordance with this aim, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

1) What are the teachers' self-disclosure behaviors to their students on social media, their social anxiety on social media, and their need for social approval?

2) Do teachers' self-disclosure behaviors, needs for social approval and social anxiety levels differ according to gender and marital status?

3) Is there a significant relationship between teachers' need for social approval, their level of social anxiety on social media, and their level of self-disclosure, their ages and social media daily usage?

4) Are social anxiety on social media, need for social approval on social media, social media daily usage, and age variables together significant predictors of self-disclosure scores on social media?

Method

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design within the framework of a correlational survey model to explain the relationship between teachers' self-disclosure behaviors on social media, their social anxiety, and their need for social approval on social media. Quantitative research is based on the principle of expressing and measuring data numerically (Ekiz, 2009). Accordingly, the correlational survey model was selected to investigate the existence of relationships between two or more variables, how they change together, and the degree and direction of these relationships (Karasar, 2010).

Sample

The study population consists of 1,059 teachers working at different educational levels in Bayburt, Turkey, during the 2023-2024 academic year. The sample group, representing a limited portion of the population and allowing for generalizations, was determined using an appropriate sampling method (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012). Based on voluntary participation, the sample consists of 467 teachers. Participants were selected based on their ownership of a social media account, engagement in sharing content, and potential to communicate with students via social media. Demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information on Participants

Variables	Factor	N	%
Gender	Female	318	68.1
	Male	149	31.9
Marital Status	Married	321	68.7
	Single	146	31.3
	Mean	Sd	Min-Max
Age	34.94	7.164	23-59
Social Media Daily Usage Time (minute)	104.41	66.504	10-420

Data Collection

The necessary permissions for the research were obtained from the Bayburt Provincial Directorate of National Education (Decision No: E-17306000-604.02.01-172235, date: 01.12.2023). Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the purpose, scope, and ethical principles of the study, and written informed consent was obtained. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. Data were collected from 467 volunteer teachers (318 women, 149 men) working in Bayburt during the 2023-2024 academic year. Of the 550 data collection instruments distributed, 467 were returned. Data were collected both face-to-face and online. Convenience sampling method was used to facilitate data collection in terms of time, cost, and accessibility (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012).

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments used in the study are described below:

Personal Information Form

Participants in the study were given a personal information form prepared by the researcher for the purpose of determining their personal characteristics. The form included questions regarding gender, marital status, field of study, years of service, job level, educational status, and daily social media usage time.

Teacher Self-Disclosure on Social Media Scale

The Teacher Self-Disclosure Scale via Social Media, developed by Demir and Demir (2021), is a four-factor model. The goodness-of-fit values for the four-factor model were found to be excellent (p = .000; X^2/DF = 2.92; SRMR = .05; CFI = .968; NFI =.97, and NNFI = .98) or within acceptable limits (RMSEA = .068; RMR = 0.055, and GIF = 0.90). The AGFI value ($\geq$ 0.86) is within an acceptable range. The reliability value of the scale, with internal consistency values ranging from 0.96 to 0.74, was found to be 0.70. The total Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale was measured as 0.94, indicating a high level of reliability. It was calculated as 0.937 in this study. The scale consists of four factors and 21 items in total. The scale items, prepared in a 5-point Likert style, are scored from '1-Strongly Disagree' to '5-Strongly Agree'. The

lowest possible score on the scale is 21, and the highest possible score is 105.

Social Anxiety Scale for Social Media Users

The Social Media Anxiety Scale, developed by Alkış and colleagues (2017), was conducted in two main stages. The first sample data was used to provide evidence for the validity and reliability of the structure. The four subscales of the scale are: shared content anxiety, privacy anxiety, interaction anxiety, and self-evaluation anxiety. As a result of exploratory factor analysis, it was found that the scale accounted for 62.65% of the total variance. The data collected in the second stage were used to confirm the four-factor structure of the Social Media Users' Anxiety Scale. DFA results show that the four-factor structure model fits the sample data well with all fit indices. The RMSEA value was determined to be 0.05, indicating that the model shows a close fit. The scale measured a CFI value of 0.95, a TLI value of 0.95, and an NFI value of 0.93. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the four factors ranged from 0.80 to 0.92, indicating satisfactory reliability. Furthermore, the total Cronbach's Alpha value for the scale was measured at 0.93 in this study. The 21-item Likert scale is scored on a scale ranging from '1 = never' to '5 = always'.

Social Approval Need Scale

Karaşar and Öğülmüş (2014) developed the Social Approval Need Scale. The internal consistency coefficients of the three subscales comprising the scale are 0.83 for sensitivity to others' judgements, 0.80 for social withdrawal, and 0.80 for making a positive impression, while the overall internal consistency coefficient of the scale is 0.90. The test-retest method was applied at two-week intervals, and a high correlation of 0.90 was found between the two applications. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.84, and the reliability coefficient found in the test-retest results is 0.82. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, the scale's fit values were found to be (X^2/DF = 2.11, RMSEA = 0.06, NNFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.95, RMR = 0.06, NFI = 0.90, IFI = 0.95). Scale items are scored between '5- Strongly Agree' and '1- Strongly Disagree'. The possible scores on the scale range from 25 to 125. There are no reverse-scored items on the scale. Furthermore, the total Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale was measured as 0.95 in this study.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 20.0 statistical software. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the characteristics of the research group and variables. Independent samples t-tests were applied for categorical variables with two groups. The relationship between age and social media daily usage, as demographic variables, was examined through correlation analysis. The direction, degree, and nature of relationships between self-disclosure, social anxiety, and needs for social approval on social media were examined using Pearson correlation analysis. Kurtosis and Skewness values were assessed to determine the normal distribution of variables, with coefficients falling within the acceptable range of +1.50 to -1.50. Given the suitability of the data for normal distribution, parametric techniques were applied (Seçer, 2015; Tabachnick et al., 2013). Before comparing the means obtained for independent variables to determine whether there is a difference, it is necessary to determine whether the group variances are homogeneously distributed. Homogeneity of group variances was examined using Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. For variables consisting of two groups, the t-value calculated based on the homogeneity of variances was used.

Table 2

Kurtosis and Skewness Values of Variables

Variables	N	M		Kurtosis		Skewness	
		Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
Self-Disclosure on Social Media	467	2.1728	.70140	.313	.225	.527	.113
Social Anxiety Scale for Social Media Users	467	2.3842	.75696	-.225	.225	.309	.113
Need for Social Approval	467	2.4194	.71401	-.523	.225	.050	.113

Findings

The findings derived from the analysis of the data obtained in the study are presented in accordance with the sub-problems of the research.

What are the teachers' self-disclosure behaviors to their students on social media, their social anxiety on social media, and their need for social approval?

The findings regarding teachers' self-disclosure on social media, social anxiety, and the need for social approval they experience on social media are presented in Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics Table of Self-Disclosure Scale in Social Media

Dimensions/Factor	N	M	Sd
Communication-Trust	467	2.34	.92
Reason for Self-Disclosure	467	1.93	.90
Self-Disclosure Tendency	467	2.35	.95
Frequency of Self-Disclosure	467	1.83	.84
Average	*467*	*2.17*	*.70*

The findings obtained after the descriptive analyses are presented in Table 3. According to this, it is seen that the teachers have the highest averages in the communication and trust dimension and self-disclosure tendency dimensions of the sub-dimensions of the self-disclosure behaviors scale in social media. According to the determined score intervals, teachers gave answers at the level of partially agree on the issues of communication, trust and tendency while disclosing themselves on social media. However, they gave disagree level answers in terms of the reason and frequency of self-disclosure. This situation shows that teachers open themselves moderately in order to strengthen bonding and communication with their students, to increase participation in the lesson and to share about the agenda, but they are more distant in sharing their personal feelings, thoughts and beliefs.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics Table of Social Anxiety Scale for Social Media Users

Dimensions/Factor	N	M	Sd
Shared Content Anxiety	467	1.77	.81
Privacy Concern Anxiety	467	3.17	1.18
Interaction Anxiety	467	2.68	1.11
Self-Evaluation Anxiety	467	1.93	.98
Average	*467*	*2.38*	*.75*

The findings obtained after the descriptive analyses are presented in Table 4. Accordingly, it is seen that teachers have the highest averages in the dimensions of privacy anxiety and interaction anxiety, which are sub-dimensions of the social anxiety scale for social media users. Based on these findings, it can be stated that while teachers have social anxiety about privacy violations and exceeding the limits of privacy in social media, they also have similar concerns about interacting and communicating. However, it is seen that they do not experience anxiety about disapproval or negative judgement of the shared content. Considering the overall average of the scale, it can be said that teachers have a moderate level of anxiety about social media use.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics Table for the Need for Social Approval Scale

Dimensions/Factor	N	M	SD
Sensitivity to the Judgement of Others	467	2.71	.84
Social Withdrawal	467	1.84	.63
Creating a Positive Impression	467	2.39	.78
Average	*467*	*2.42*	*.71*

The results derived from the descriptive analyses are presented in Table 5. As observed, the sensitivity to others' judgments and the overall mean scores of the sub-dimensions of the need for social approval scale are the highest. According to the established score ranges, this indicates that teachers exhibit ambiguity regarding the extent to which they value others' opinions and judgments, their concern about how their posts may be evaluated, and whether they tend to engage in or avoid social interactions. Additionally, it can be inferred that they display uncertainty regarding their alignment with others' expectations and their efforts to cultivate a positive image.

Do teachers' self-disclosure behaviors, need for social approval on social media and social anxiety levels differ according to gender and marital status?

Demographic variables are considered as gender and marital status variables and the findings of the

analyses are presented below.

Table 6

Gender

Factor	Gender	N	M	Sd	*t*	*p*
Self-Disclosure on Social Media	Female	318	2.11	.67	-2.895	.004*
	Male	149	2.31	.75		
Social Anxiety in Social Media	Female	318	2.43	.74	2.006	.045*
	Male	149	2.28	.76		
Need for Social Approval	Female	318	2.42	.73	.167	.867
	Male	149	2.41	.67		

*p<.05

The findings obtained from the independent samples t-test analysis conducted within the scope of the research are presented in Table 6. Upon examining the relevant table, it can be observed that teachers' self-disclosure behaviors on social media vary based on gender. *(t=-2.895, p<.05)*. Accordingly, it can be concluded that male teachers exhibit higher self-disclosure behaviors on social media compared to female teachers. Additionally, Cohen's d (d=0,28) was calculated, and it was determined that the effect of gender on this difference remained within small limits. In terms of social anxiety experienced on social media, it can be observed that teachers' behaviors differ based on gender. (*t*= 2.006, *p*<.05). Based on these findings, it can be stated that female teachers experience more social anxiety on social media platforms than male teachers. Also, Cohen's d (d=0,19) was calculated, and it was determined that the effect of gender on this difference remained within small limits. Another dependent variable analyzed in the study was teachers' needs for social approval. It can be observed that teachers' needs for social approval do not differ based on gender. *(t*= .167, *p*>.05). This finding shows that women and men have similar characteristics in terms of needs for social approval.

Table 7

Marital Status

Factor	Marital Status	N	M	SD	*t*	*p*
Self-Disclosure on Social Media	Married	321	2.12	.68	-2.550	.011*
	Single	146	2.29	.72		
Social Anxiety in Social Media	Married	321	2.37	.76	-.540	.590
	Single	146	2.41	.74		
Need for Social Approval	Married	321	2.42	.71	.166	.868
	Single	146	2.41	.71		

p<.05

The findings obtained from the independent samples t-test analysis conducted within the scope of the research are presented in Table 7. Upon examining the relevant table, it can be observed that teachers' self-disclosure behaviors on social media vary based on marital status (t = 2.550, $p<.05$). Accordingly, it can be said that marital status makes a difference on self-disclosure behaviors. These findings show that single participants disclose themselves more on social media platforms compared to married participants. Additionally, Cohen's d (d = 0,24) was calculated, and it was determined that the effect of gender on this difference remained within small limits. However, it can be stated that marital status does not make a difference in terms of social anxiety (t = -.540, $p>.05$) and needs for social approval (t = .166, $p>.05$) experienced by teachers on social media.

Is there a significant relationship between teachers' need for social approval, their level of social anxiety on social media, and their level of self-disclosure, considering their ages and social media daily usage?

Pearson correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between teachers' social media daily usage, age, self-disclosure behaviors on social media, social anxiety experienced on social media and need for social approval, and the findings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Pearson Correlation Coefficients between Variables (N = 467)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self-Disclosure on Social Media	—				
2. Social Anxiety in Social Media	.045	—			
3. Need for Social Approval	.108*	.424**	—		
4. Social Media Daily Usage (min)	.107*	.139**	.092*	—	
5. Age	-.031	-.087	-.059	-.261**	—

According to the results of Pearson correlation analysis, it was found that there was a weak but significant relationship between teachers' self-disclosure behaviors on social media and needs for social approval (r = .108, $p<.05$) and social media usage (r = 0.107, $p<0.05$). This finding can be interpreted as the need for social approval will increase as the self-disclosure behavior on social media increases and the social media daily usage may be an effective factor in this process. There was a medium and significant positive correlation between social anxiety experienced in social media and needs for social approval variables (r = .424, $p<.01$). This finding shows that teachers' increasing social anxiety in social media may also increase their need for social approval. On the other hand, a negative and significant correlation was found between age and social media daily usage (r = -.261, $p<.01$). This indicates that the social media daily usage decreases with increasing age. However, no significant relationship was found between the age variable and self-disclosure on social media, social anxiety experienced on social media and social approval need. Another finding is that there is no significant relationship between self-

disclosure behavior on social media and social anxiety ($r = .045$, $p>.05$). In other words, it can be said that teachers who open themselves to their students on social media platforms do not experience social anxiety or experience low levels of social anxiety.

Are social anxiety on social media, need for approval on social media, social media daily usage, and age variables together significant predictors of self-disclosure scores on social media?

The results of the regression analysis conducted to determine whether social anxiety, needs for social approval, social media daily usage and age variables significantly predict self-disclosure behavior on social media are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Regression Analysis on Prediction of Self-Disclosure on Social Media

	Variable	B	Standard Eror B	β	t	p	Bilateral r	Partial r
	Fixed	1.846	.227		8.136	.000		
	SASM	-.013	.047	-.014	-.266	.790	.045	-.012
SDSM	NSA	.103	.050	.105	2.061	.040	.108	.095
	Social Media Usage	.001	.001	.099	2.057	.040	.107	.095
	Age	-.0001	.005	-.001	-.010	.992	-.031	.000

$R = .146$, $R^2 = .021$, Adjusted $R^2 = .021$, $F_{(4,462)} = 2.514$, $p = .041$

Social anxiety on social media, need for approval on social media, social media daily usage and age variables together reveal a low-level significant relationship with self-disclosure scores on social media. These variables explain approximately 2% of the total variance in social media self-disclosure. According to the standardized regression coefficients, the order of importance of the predictor variables on self-disclosure on social media was found as need for social approval, social media daily usage, age and social anxiety on social media. It is seen that the need for social approval in social media and the social media daily usage are significant predictors. It is possible to state that age and anxiety experienced in social media do not have a significant effect. According to regression analyses, the mathematical model for predicting self-disclosure on social media can be expressed as follows. Self-disclosure on social media= 1.846-0.013. (SASM) +0.103. (NSA) +0.001. (Social Media Daily Usage)-0.0001.Age

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between teachers' self-disclosure behaviors on social media and their social anxiety and need for social approval in these environments. According to the research findings, teachers exhibit a moderate tendency toward self-disclosure behaviors toward their students. In the literature, it is stated that personal sharing in teacher-student relationships has positive effects on student motivation, confidence, and the learning process (Cayanus & Martin, 2016;

Kamnoetsin, 2014; Korthagen et al., 2014; Lam, 2012). However, it has also been found that some teachers avoid personal sharing with their students on social media. This situation parallels the moderate level of social anxiety experienced by teachers. The main reasons for social anxiety include privacy violations, blurring of professional boundaries, and uncertainties regarding the impact of sharing on students. Indeed, previous research has shown that teachers' tendency to limit their use of social media is generally associated with reasons such as protecting their professional image, avoiding disclosure of private information, and distancing themselves from socio-political content (Akiti, 2012; Akkoyunlu et al., 2015; Demir, 2018; Gross & Acquisti, 2005; Hew, 2011; Tonbuloğlu & İşman, 2014; West et al., 2009). Research findings indicate that teachers have a moderate need for social approval and exhibit an indecisive attitude in this regard. Teachers appear to adopt an approach guided by their own values and beliefs rather than the opinions of others in their social media posts, thereby maintaining a balance consistent with their levels of social anxiety. This level of need for social approval indicates that teachers are seeking healthy social interaction (Baytemir et al., 2017; Çalış, 2020; Gökkaya et al., 2020; Karaşar & Baytemir, 2018; Saraçoğlu & Kahyaoğlu, 2021).

According to the gender variable, male teachers' levels of self-disclosure were higher than those of female teachers. This difference may be explained by factors such as cultural norms, perception of anonymity, and freedom of emotional expression. In contrast, female teachers exhibited higher levels of social anxiety, which may be related to gender roles and privacy concerns (Alkış et al., 2017; Elhari et al., 2018; Lai et al., 2023). No significant difference was found between gender and the need for social approval (Gökkaya et al., 2020; Değirmenci & Demirli, 2019; Karaşar & Öğülmüş, 2016). In terms of marital status, single teachers disclosed more about themselves on social media, whereas no significant differences were observed in social anxiety or the need for social approval. This finding may be explained by the tendency of single individuals to fulfill their emotional sharing and social support needs through social media (Kaytanoğlu, 2021; Özmatyatlı & Cirhinlioğlu, 2019).

According to the research findings, social anxiety and the need for social approval experienced on social media explain only 2% (R^2 = .021) of the variance in teachers' self-disclosure behavior on social media. This low percentage suggests that self-disclosure behavior is largely influenced by other variables that were not measured in the present study. Although a significant relationship was found between social media anxiety and the need for social approval, these variables did not make a significant contribution to the model. In contrast, the variables of need for social approval and social media usage time were found to significantly predict self-disclosure behavior on social media.

According to the results, as teachers' need for social approval increases, their level of self-disclosure on social media also increases. This suggests that teachers share more content on social media to gain approval, build professional relationships, and support their professional development (Akkaya & Kanadlı, 2019; Demir, 2020; Kırnık et al., 2018). It has been observed that the duration of social media use also supports self-disclosure behavior, but this effect is limited (Christofides et al., 2011; Danet et al., 2020). In contrast, some studies (Balcı & Gölcü, 2020) show an inverse relationship between duration of use and self-disclosure.

The age variable shows a negative and weak effect on self-disclosure behavior on social media. It may be inferred that with increasing age, individuals tend to be more cautious and selective in their online interactions and attach greater importance to digital privacy and the protection of personal information

(Kisilevich et al., 2012). This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that younger users tend to use social media for socializing and self-expression, whereas older age groups prefer to use it for professional and knowledge-based purposes (Kara, 2016; Tekedere & Arpacı, 2016; Vural & Bat, 2010).

The study found no significant relationship between teachers' social anxiety on social media and their self-disclosure behavior. It can be assumed that teachers' professional roles—requiring transparency, trust, and effective communication—help balance their anxiety levels within social media environments. This is consistent with previous studies showing that individuals experience lower anxiety in social media-based communication (Caplan, 2005; Peter et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2011; Weidman et al., 2012; Zorbaz, 2013). However, a positive relationship has been found between the need for social approval and social anxiety. Increased need for social approval can elevate teachers' anxiety levels in social media environments (Çalış, 2020; Karaşar & Öğülmüş, 2016; Leary, 2001). These findings indicate that teachers' attempts to align with social norms and protect their professional identity may result in more cautious behavior on social media platforms.

Recommendations

The limited research on teachers' social media use, social anxiety, and need for social approval highlights a gap in understanding this important area. Examining teachers' self-disclosure behaviors on social media may provide valuable insights into how digital interactions influence their professional attitudes and classroom practices. Comprehensive studies examining the relationship between self-disclosure, social anxiety, and approval needs could inform teacher training and educational policies. Future qualitative research is recommended to explore teachers' perceptions, motivations, and boundaries in their social media use in greater depth.

This study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design prevents the establishment of causal inferences between the examined variables. Future research may benefit from employing longitudinal or experimental designs to better understand the directionality and long-term effects of these relationships. Second, as the data were obtained through self-report instruments, responses may have been influenced by social desirability or subjective bias. To mitigate this issue, future studies could incorporate multiple data sources, such as observational or qualitative methods. Third, the sample was limited to a single geographic region, which restricts the generalizability of the results. Including participants from diverse regions and cultural contexts in subsequent studies would allow for comparative and cross-cultural analyses. Lastly, the use of a single data collection method may have introduced common method variance. Future research should consider employing mixed-method approaches or alternative measurement techniques to reduce this potential bias.

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