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AUTHORS: Neslihan Cansu Salihoglu, Abdullah Çetin

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Examining preschool teacher's use of social media in terms of their professional development

Neslihan Cansu Salihoğlu^{a*} , Abdullah Çetin^b 

^a MEB, Türkiye.

^b Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Türkiye.

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Highlights

- The development of technology and the changing needs of students and teachers have necessitated the use of digital content in education.
- Teachers use social media to improve themselves or enrich the teaching process.
- Improving teachers' technological-pedagogical field knowledge is important for the beneficial use of social media.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate how preschool instructors use social media for professional development. Explanatory sequential design, one of the mixed research methods, was used in the research. The quantitative study group of the research consists of 213 preschool teachers working in Kahramanmaraş province in the 2020-2021 academic year, and the qualitative study group consists of 16 preschool teachers. "Social Media Usage Questionnaire" and semi-structured "Interview Form" were used as data collection tools in the research. For the analysis of quantitative data in the study, frequency, percentage and arithmetic averages were calculated using the SPSS 21 package program. Content analysis was used in the analysis of qualitative data. It was determined that teachers find Instagram, Youtube, Whatsapp and Pinterest useful in terms of their professional development. It has been found that social media helps teachers to see things from multiple viewpoints, keep up with innovations, access diverse activities, advance their knowledge and abilities and access activities for all developmental domains. It has been determined that teachers share their posts on social media in order to be useful for their colleagues and for informational purposes. It was concluded that the use of social media facilitated the implementation of the preschool education program and enriched the learning environment.

Article Info: Research Article

Keywords: Social Media, Preschool Teacher, Professional Development

1. Introduction

Preschool is the most fundamental period of life when learning is at its fastest. Preschool education should be tailored to the needs of the child and individual differences. Children's cognitive, social-emotional, and motor development should be supported, and they should be assisted in acquiring self-care skills (Preschool Education Curriculum [PEC], 2013). From 3 to 6 years age, cognitive development influences children's academic, emotional, behavioral and social development (Anderson & Reidy, 2012). In early childhood, children's emotional and social experiences also form the basis for cognitive development and academic achievement (Macblain, 2021). The prepared programmes and learning strategies need to be careful and systematic to support learning outcomes in various fields (Supartini et al., 2020). For these reasons, all

* Corresponding Author: MEB, Türkiye.
e-mail addresses: neslihancansu2016@hotmail.com, abdcetin46@gmail.com

areas of children development need to be supported through different learning methods in the educational process.

The pre-school education programme in Türkiye is child-centered, flexible, eclectic, circular and play-based. Learning through discovery and the development of creativity are at the forefront. Furthermore, it is a program that promotes the use of daily life experiences and close-environment opportunities in education, with a focus on parental education and participation (PEC, 2013). Preschool education must keep up with innovations and updated information (Marklund, 2015). According to Barnett (2003), the quality of preschool education will have long-term social, economic, and educational benefits, but these benefits will only be realized when teachers are professionally competent, and their deficiencies are overcome. Sheridan et al. (2011) stated that preschool teaching is a changing profession, that teachers should have different competencies, and that they should create learning environments that are appropriate for changing conditions and circumstances. The professional development of preschool teachers is considered important in this regard.

Today, teachers' knowledge and use of the Internet and social media tools can make significant contributions to their professional development. Teachers must catch up with contemporary trends by using social media applications that allow communication with students and information transfer (Bayyar, 2019). Social media allows instructors to cooperate, enriches learning and teaching processes with its flexible structure and rich content, and provides teachers with great ease in the education process (Yavuz, 2017). It is believed that groups that support communication, sharing, personal and professional development, and groups for professions on social media will be especially beneficial for teachers (Günaydın, 2017). Furthermore, teachers can utilize social media for a variety of purposes, including quick communication, sharing beneficial apps, keeping up with advances, alerting parents, exchanging ideas with colleagues, and convenient access to information and sources. It is observed that the correct use of social media in educational settings can have many advantages. It provides teachers with the opportunity to learn more about their students and reach them easier, create their own archives, and provides students with the opportunity to review their subjects, create their portfolios and present them in the future (Düzen Soysal, 2019).

Marklund (2015) stated that computer technologies and tablets have taken a place in children's lives, so they should be included in education too. Preschool teachers have recently been using many online applications as educational tools (Chen, 2016). It is seen that applications such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp are frequently used (Avcı, 2020). The use of social media tools in preschool education has benefits for the teacher, the child, and the classroom, from planning to evaluating the learning-teaching process (Uyanık Aktulun & Elmas, 2019). The use of social media can also enable preschool teachers to follow experts by creating personal learning networks, receive material support, and exchange information; ensure that parents are more actively involved in the education process through social media tools in school-family communication; and announce problems more easily through social media (Uyanık Aktulun & Elmas, 2019).

The learning needs of the age group addressed by preschool teachers change over time and by nature, they learn in different contexts. Therefore, preschool teachers need more research and may tend to use technology more (Arikan et al., 2017). A lot of materials (visual, auditory, or concrete) are used in the preschool period in order to concretize education and provide the opportunity to learn by doing and experiencing. The short attention span of children makes the need for these materials even greater. They may also need support in many other areas such as educational planning, paperwork, regulations, creating stories, finding games, music, drama activities, and material design. This situation, which causes preschool teachers to search, can be completed through social media websites or teacher groups formed on social media. Through these teacher groups, problems and needs related to the preschool education process can be shared, discussions about the field can be held or information about the regulations can be shared. Lipscomb et al. (2021) emphasized in their study that peer discussions were important in reshaping preschool teachers' views on teaching and learning. Lüfdahl Hultman and Ribaeus (2021) also emphasized the impact of peer discussions on the formation of core values in the preschool period. Bett and Makewa (2018) concluded in their study that social media groups would be especially effective for the professional development of teachers in developing countries. The fact that teachers from different cities and schools

can participate in the groups created through social media is thought to provide a wide range of peer discussion environments. In order to organize creative activities, preschool teachers need to participate in educational projects, use educational technologies, collaborate in the educational environment and participate in communities of educators (Aribovna, 2021).

The effective use of social media tools in education has always been discussed in the context of harm-benefit balance (Uyanık Aktulun & Elmas, 2019). Recently, studies have also been conducted to examine teachers' use of social media from different perspectives (Çopur, 2020; Karakaya, 2019; Logan, 2019; Mart & Campbell Barr, 2020; Sarah, 2019; Yaşar, 2021; Yıldırım, 2021; Yılmaz, 2019). However, it was observed that the studies on social media and teachers' professional development mostly focused on Facebook or groups formed on Facebook (Bett & Makewa, 2020; Deniz, 2016; Logan, 2019; Yaşar, 2021; Yavuz, 2017; Yılmaz, 2019). With the rapid change in technology, social media has also changed with new apps and updates every day. Therefore, there was a need to conduct a more comprehensive study. Furthermore, the conditions led by the pandemic that started in 2020, such as distance education, live lessons, and the organization of professional development activities on social media apps, have also led preschool teachers to use social media tools more and in a wider context, as in all branches. Therefore, it is believed that preschool teachers' use of social media should be examined in terms of their professional development. It is believed that this study will be important in terms of the creation of new apps, the development of apps for pre-schools, the identification of deficiencies in the system, and the better use of social media. Accordingly, the following questions were asked in order to investigate which social media tools preschool teachers prefer to use, the frequency of their use, what kind of posts they share on social media, what kind of activities they participate in, and which activities they utilize social media for.

1. How much time do preschool teachers spend on social media?
2. For what purposes do preschool teachers use social media?
3. What are preschool teachers' social media usage preferences?
4. For what purposes do preschool teachers use social media for their professional and personal development?
5. What kind of posts do preschool teachers share on social media about their profession?
6. For what purposes do preschool teachers share their posts on social media?
7. What are the activities that preschool teachers learn from social media and use in their lessons?
8. What are the effects of preschool teachers' knowledge gained from social media on the implementation of the preschool curriculum?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Model

The research model is a mixed research method. The mixed research method is defined as using both quantitative and qualitative data and reaching a conclusion by utilizing the advantages of both methods (Creswell, 2021). The mixed research method addresses qualitative and quantitative approaches, and confirmatory and exploratory questions at the same time, leading to stronger inferences and providing more diversity of views (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2020). The study utilized a sequential explanatory design. In the first stage of the sequential research, a questionnaire was applied and then a semi-structured interview form was used to obtain further information.

2.2. Study Group

The random sampling method was used for the quantitative part of this study. The study population includes 581 preschool teachers who will be working in Kahramanmaraş during the 2020-2021 academic year. The study's sample consists of 213 preschool teachers.

The study group for the qualitative dimension of the research was chosen using the criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling types. The status of using social media for professional development was determined as a criterion in the questionnaire used in the quantitative dimension of the research. The qualitative study group consisted of 16 volunteer preschool teachers who stated in the applied questionnaire that they used social media for professional development.

Table 1 shows the age, sex, marital status, length of service in the profession, and the institution of employment of the research study group.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Quantitative Study Group.

	Group	f	%
Age	20- 29	44	20.7
	30- 39	138	64.8
	40- 49	28	13.1
	50- 59	3	1.4
Sex	Male	21	9.9
	Female	192	90.1
Length of Service	1-10 years	117	54.9
	11-20 years	85	39.9
	21-29 years	9	4.2
	30 years and over	2	0.9
The Institution You Work For	Independent kindergarten	100	46.7
	Public kindergarten	3	0.5
	Elementary School	62	28.6
	High School	3	1.0
	MoNE R&D	2	0.5
	Middle School	38	15.2
	Special education kindergarten	2	0.5
	Private school	3	5.2

Table 1 shows that the majority of the teachers are female. It seems that the majority are between 30-39 years of age. They mostly work in independent kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools. Their length of service in the profession is mostly between 1-10 years.

The qualitative participants of the study were coded as T1...T16 in order to comply with ethical rules. The characteristics of the study group are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of the Qualitative Study Group.

Code	Sex	Age	Employment Duration	The Institution
T1	Female	37	14	Elementary School
T2	Male	32	9	Kindergarten
T3	Female	38	5	Middle School
T4	Female	32	10	Kindergarten
T5	Female	31	9	Kindergarten
T6	Female	31	8	Elementary School
T7	Female	29	7	Middle School
T8	Male	32	8	Middle School
T9	Female	29	8	Middle School
T10	Female	38	16	Middle School
T11	Female	30	9	Elementary School
T12	Female	29	8	Middle School
T13	Female	35	12	Middle School
T14	Female	33	12	Middle School
T15	Female	38	16	Middle School
T16	Female	45	23	High School

Table 2 shows that the study group consisted of two male and 14 female preschool teachers. The fact that the number of female teachers in the study group is higher than that of male teachers is due to the fact that in Türkiye, most of the pre-school teachers are female. Their ages ranged between 29 and 45 years. Their length of service in the profession varies between seven and 23 years. In terms of the institution, they work in, nine teachers work in secondary school, three teachers work in elementary school, three teachers work in kindergarten, and one teacher works in high school.

2.3. Data Collecting Tools

Data collection techniques in scientific research should be used in accordance with the characteristics of the research (Cemaloğlu, 2014). The questionnaire technique was used for the quantitative portion of the study, and the interview technique was used for the qualitative portion. After reviewing the literature and addressing the problem, the researcher created a questionnaire with closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed with the necessary arrangements based on expert opinions. Following that, a pre-application was sent to ten preschool teachers, and necessary arrangements were made based on the feedback. Following the arrangements, a questionnaire with 11 items and demographic questions was created.

A semi-structured interview form was prepared in order to thoroughly examine preschool teachers' use of social media in their professional and personal development. The interview form was designed to address all aspects of the research problem. Two experts in the field reviewed the interview form questions, and the necessary arrangements were made and implemented.

2.4. Data collection

A questionnaire was used to collect data in the quantitative study. Before administering the questionnaire, the Kahramanmaraş University Institute of Social Sciences obtained ethical permission, and the Kahramanmaraş Provincial Directorate of National Education granted permission for the application. The prepared questionnaires were distributed to preschool teachers via the internet. The questionnaire form was hand-delivered and filled out by hand for teachers who could not be reached via the Internet. The purpose of the questionnaire was explained to the participants prior to administration.

The interview method was used to collect qualitative data. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 16 preschool teachers who volunteered and used social media for professional development, according to the findings of the quantitative study, using a semi-structured interview form. Before the interview, audio recordings were obtained with the participants' permission.

2.5. Data Analysis

The quantitative portion of this study was conducted using a questionnaire. The questionnaire data were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows 22 program. Categorical variables were evaluated by frequency analysis and presented as percentage frequencies.

The content analysis method was used to examine the qualitative data in this study. The aim of the content analysis is to find concepts and relationships that will help to explain the collected data. The process of coding the data, finding themes, organizing codes and themes, and defining and interpreting the findings, known as content analysis, makes the data understandable (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Interviews with 16 participants were analyzed together with an expert and a researcher.

During the study's data analysis, expert opinions and literature were used, the study group's characteristics were explained, and the participants' perspectives were included in detail. Consistency was attempted to be ensured in the stages of data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting in order to ensure internal validity in the study, as well as whether the findings and results from the data collected before and after the application reflected reality or not, and their consistency was controlled by reviewing previous studies and the literature. In order to ensure the external validity of the study, the research model, data sources, data collection tools, data collection process, data analysis and interpretation, and the structuring of the findings were described in detail. Furthermore, the research data are stored appropriately and can be re-examined.

In this study, the findings from the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data are presented together for each research question. The purpose here is to see whether the data supports each other and provide a comparison to the reader.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings Related to Preschool Teachers' Frequency of Social Media Use

Table 3 below shows the findings regarding the frequency of preschool teachers' internet and social media use.

Table 3. Preschool Teachers' Frequency of Social Media Use

		f	%
Preschool teachers' social media use status	Yes	201	94.4
	No	12	5.6
Frequency of preschool teachers' social media use (in days)	3- 4 days a month	3	0.9
	3-4 days a week	9	3.8
	Everyday	201	95.3
The duration of preschool teachers' social media use (in hours)	Less than 1 hour	58	27.4
	1-3 hours	112	52.8
	3-5 hours	26	12.3
	5-7 hours	16	7.1
	7 hours and over	1	0.5

Table 3 shows that almost all preschool teachers have social media accounts. It was found that the majority of preschool teachers spend 1-3 hours each day on social media.

3.2. Findings Related to Preschool Teachers' Purposes of Social Media Use

Table 4 shows the findings regarding the purposes of preschool teachers' social media use.

Table 4. Preschool Teachers' Purposes of Social Media Use

Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Using social networks for professional development	100	46.7	89	41.5	4	1.4	9	3.8	11	5.2
Using social networks for finding new friends	15	6.1	10	3.5	11	4.0	64	30.8	113	55.6
Using social networks for gaming	13	5.1	17	7.1	17	7.1	63	29.9	103	50.8
Using social networks for online chatting	26	11.9	80	38.8	17	7.5	38	17.4	52	24.4
Using social networks for communication with friends	62	29.2	114	54.1	12	5.3	11	4.8	14	6.7
Using social networks for sharing (pictures, videos, status, music, etc.)	58	27.3	92	43.9	15	6.8	21	9.8	27	12.2
Using social networks to exchange information on subjects they do not know (hobbies, news, information...)	92	43.6	92	43.6	4	1.9	10	4.3	15	6.6

Table 4 shows that preschool teachers use social media mostly for professional development and to exchange information about unfamiliar topics. They also use social media to communicate with their friends and share information, according to the findings. The use of social media to find new friends and play games was not preferred by preschool teachers.

3.3. Findings Related to Preschool Teachers' Preferences for Social Media Use

Table 5 below shows the findings of the quantitative research on preschool teachers' preferences for social media use. Figure 1 shows the findings obtained as a result of the qualitative research on preschool teachers' preferences for social media use.

Table 5. Preschool Teachers' Preferences for Social Media Use

	1st place preference rate%
Facebook	8.70
Twitter	8.70
Instagram	18.93
Linkedin	7.16
WhatsApp	27.37
YouTube	11.51
Pinterest	7.42
Telegram	6.91
Other (Pages of internet, blogs etc.)	3.32

Table 5 shows that the social media applications first preferred by preschool teachers are, in order Whatsapp (%27.37), Instagram (18.93), Youtube (11.51), Facebook (8.70), Twitter (8.70), Pinterest (7.42), LinkedIn (7.16), Telegram (6.91) and Others (3.32). There are differences in the ranking of social media applications that preschool teachers prefer to use. The most preferred social media application is Whatsapp.

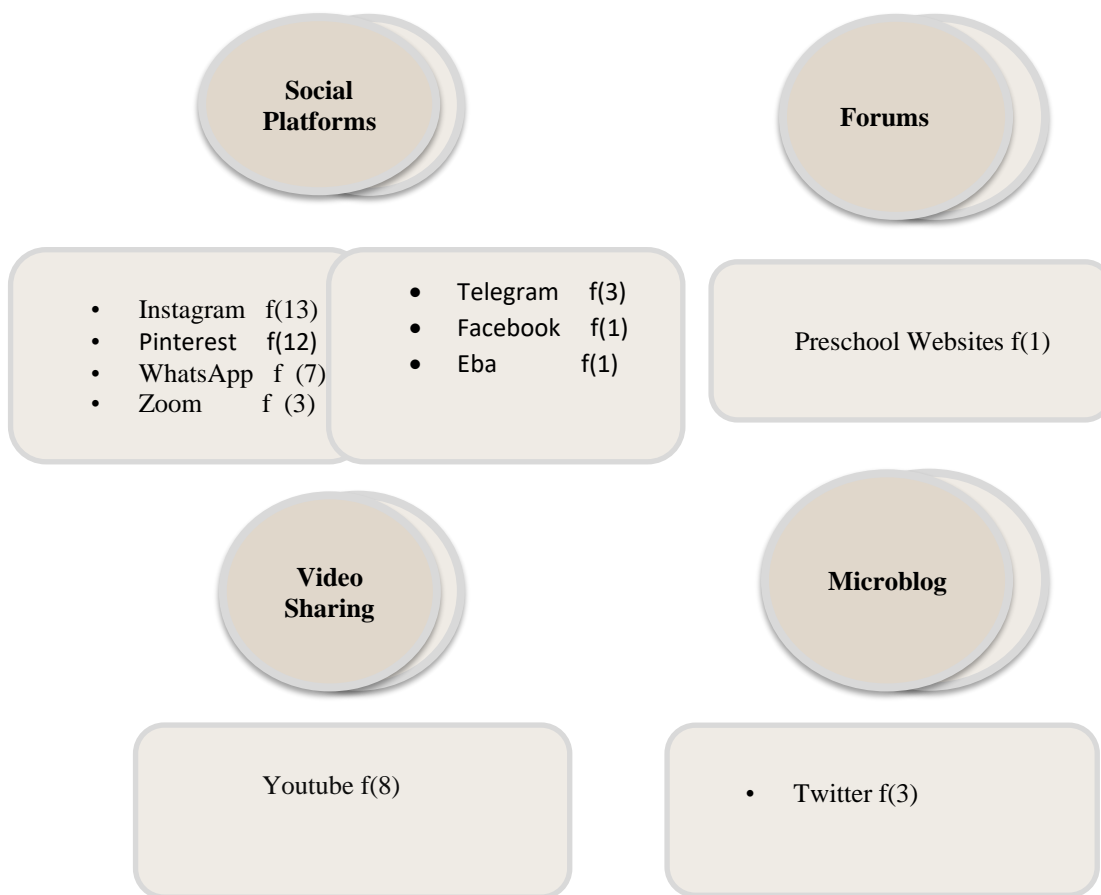


Figure 1. Social Media Pages that Preschool Teachers Find beneficial for Their Professional Development.

Figure 1 shows that the social media tools that preschool teachers find beneficial for their professional development and use are Social Platforms, Forums, Microblogs, and Video sharing platforms.

It is observed that preschool teachers prefer to use Instagram because it provides them with the opportunity to find different posts and see other teachers' experiences. T14 expressed his opinion on this subject as follows: *"I only use Instagram as social media. I follow teachers like me who have opened a page on this subject."* It is also observed that they prefer to use Pinterest because it offers examples of activities and different content for specific days and weeks. T2 explained his opinion on this subject as follows: *"I look at Pinterest to see if there are better activities or studies that I am trying to do and how others have done them."* It is observed that teachers prefer WhatsApp because it has the feature of forming groups and provides ease of sharing information and documents. T10 expressed his opinion on this subject as follows: *"I mostly use WhatsApp to share in parent and teacher groups"*. It is observed that Zoom and Eba are preferred by teachers because they can conduct live lessons and remote activities. T11 explained his opinion on this subject as follows: *"We were able to hold live lessons from Eba, we were able to continue education, and we also used Zoom application for many educational activities remotely."*

There is a teacher (T13) who stated that he benefited from the activities on preschool websites that are forum pages. T13 stated, *"I benefit from different preschool websites. They are so beneficial in many ways."* There are eight teachers (T1, T4, T6, T7, T8, T11, T15, T16) who use YouTube, one of the video-sharing sites. It is observed that YouTube is preferred by teachers because it offers music, educational videos, and different content. Among these teachers, T8 stated that *"...I use YouTube to find and learn different activities, we listen to songs, we watch videos..."*

There are three teachers (T3, T5, T8) who use Twitter, one of the microblog sites. It is observed that teachers prefer Twitter because it offers quick information from field experts and competent people. Of these teachers, T8 stated his opinion as *"I use Twitter to follow the people I trust in the field"*.

The findings show that teachers' opinions in the qualitative dimension of the research support the quantitative dimension. It was determined that the most used and preferred social networks in both dimensions were Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Pinterest.

3.4. Findings Regarding the Purposes for Which Preschool Teachers Use Social Media in Their Professional and Personal Development

Figure 2 shows the findings obtained from teachers' views on the purposes for which preschool teachers use social media in their professional and personal development.

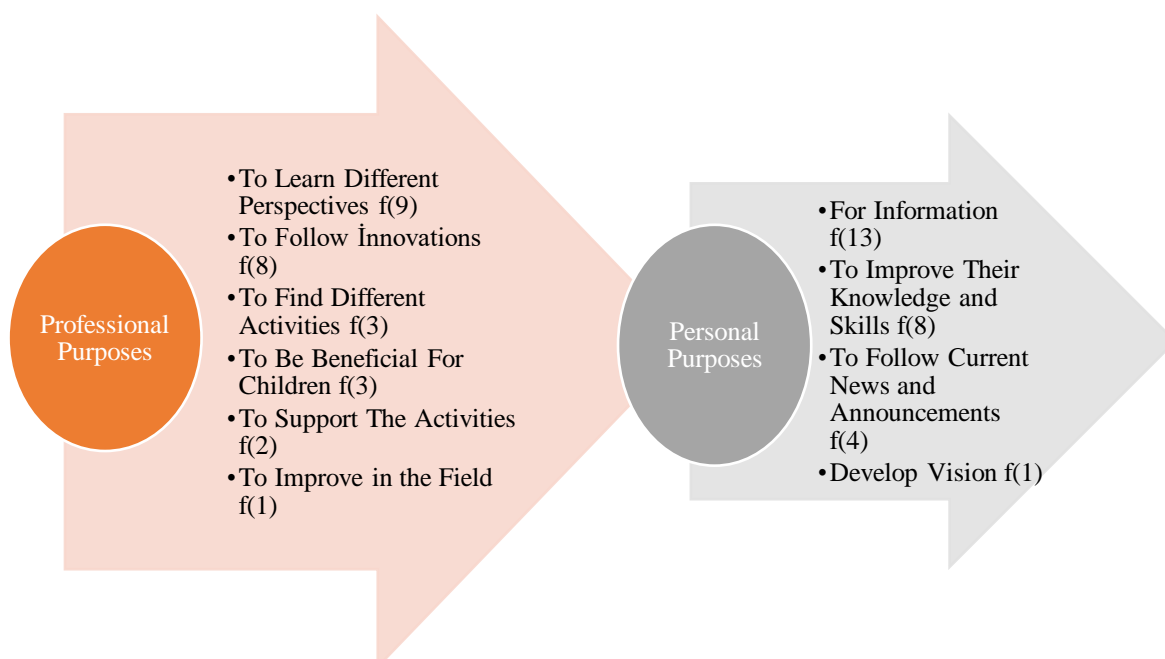


Figure 2. Preschool Teachers' Purposes of Using Social Media for Professional and Personal Development.

Figure 2 shows that preschool teachers use social media for personal and professional purposes. Among professional purposes, nine teachers (T2, T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10, T12, T13) used social media to learn different perspectives and eight teachers (T1, T4, T6, T7, T8, T10, T12, T16) used it to follow innovations, three teachers (T5, T13, T14) used it to find different activities, three teachers (T9, T14, T15) used it to be beneficial for children, two teachers (T2, T15) used it to support the activities and one teacher (T3) used it to improve in his field.

It is observed that preschool teachers learn different perspectives through the pages, people, or groups they follow on social media. T7 expressed his opinion on this subject as follows: *"I generally use it to share information and to follow different approaches."* It is observed that they follow innovations by accessing current activities and learning new and different ideas. T6 expressed his opinion on this subject as follows: *"I use it for getting information for new activities, on innovative education methods...I use it in order to have enough equipment for children who are the hosts of the technology age."* When they used the activities they prepared themselves, they found different activities with the content shared on social media, supported children's development through the activities used, and enriched their activities with educational videos/songs and games. In this regard, T2 stated, *"I find songs and videos to support my activities. I usually look for how I can play different games in the classroom, I follow the pages to learn different perspectives... I especially search for new and popular concepts, I try to find and complete my own deficiencies,"* and T5 stated, *"I use it to find different activities to spark children's creativity."*

In terms of personal development, thirteen teachers (T1, T2, T3, T4, T6, T7, T8, T10, T11, T13, T14, T15, T16) stated that they use social media for information, eight teachers (T2, T6, T9, T11, T12, T13, T15, T16) used it to improve their knowledge and skills, four teachers (T5, T8, T10, T12) used it to follow current news and announcements, one teacher (T7) used it to develop his vision.

It has been observed that preschool teachers learn something new and conduct research on a subject that is unfamiliar to them through social media. T2 expressed his thoughts on the subject, saying, *"I do research when there is a subject I am not familiar with, for example, if I am interested in wood, I do research on it..."* It has been observed that it assists them in learning new skills and improving themselves. T3 expressed his thoughts on the subject, saying, *"I use it to access more information about my own talent at the highest level and to progress"*, while T7 expressed his opinion as *"I paint, I follow famous painters and artists; I try to learn different perspectives"*. It is observed that they follow current news and announcements. T10 expressed her opinion on this subject saying, *"As both a mother and a woman, I use it to find different apps, to learn new things, to follow the news, and to be informed."*

3.5. Findings Related to Preschool Teachers' Posts about Their Professions on Social Media

Table 6 shows the findings obtained from teachers' opinions on what kind of posts preschool teachers share about their profession on social media.

Table 6. Preschool Teachers' Posts About Their Professions on Social Media.

Posts Shared	Participants
Sharing Educational Videos, Photos, Posts	T1, T4, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T12, T14, T15
Sharing Activity Examples	T3, T5, T7, T8, T10, T11, T13, T14, T16
Sharing Activities done in the Classroom	T3, T5, T7, T8, T10, T11, T13, T14
Sending Informational Messages	T1, T2, T3, T6, T7, T12, T14
Not Posting on Personal Account	T13, T14
Sharing Official Letters	T6
Sharing New Apps	T6
Sharing Changes in Regulation	T2

Table 6 shows that preschool teachers shared educational videos, photos, and texts (f:10), shared activity examples (f:9), shared activities done in the classroom (f:9), shared informational messages (f:7), did not prefer to share on their personal pages (f:2), shared official letters (f:1), shared new applications (f:1), and shared changes in regulations (f:1).

It was determined that preschool teachers shared educational videos, photos, and texts on social media for the benefit of their colleagues, their students' parents, or their social circle. T5 stated his opinion on this subject saying, *"I share the studies, texts, and activities that I like and that I think will be beneficial for students and my colleagues"*. It was observed that they shared examples of activities for their colleagues to benefit from. T10 expressed his opinion on this subject saying, *"I share all kinds of activities that can provide the objectives and achievements of preschool education. Science, nature, music, art... I share all the activities that I think are beneficial."* It was decided that they would share the activities that took place in their class for other colleagues or parents to see and get ideas from. T11 expressed his opinion on this subject saying, *"On social media, I share the activities I do in my classroom and different activities that I want my colleagues to see,"* and T13 said, *"I share some of the activities we do in the classroom with the parents in the WhatsApp group."* It was found that they shared informational messages to keep their students' parents or school administrators informed. T14 stated, *"I constantly share informational messages via WhatsApp. Since we are in the pandemic, I share texts and videos explaining the plans and activities."* It was also determined that there were teachers who did not prefer to post on their personal pages. T13 expressed his opinion on this subject as follows: *"I only share on WhatsApp groups. I do not share anything from my personal accounts."*

3.6. Findings Related to Preschool Teachers' Purposes of Sharing on Social Media

Table 7 below shows the findings obtained as a result of the quantitative study on the purposes of preschool teachers' sharing on social media.

Table 7. Preschool teachers' professional sharing purposes through social media.

		f	%
The purpose of professional sharing on social media	Informing others	178	55.6
	Being beneficial	115	35.9
	Being more in sight	17	5.3
	Financial Gain	3	0.9
	Being appreciated	7	2.2

Table 7 shows that the most common purpose of preschool teachers' social media posts is to inform others. The second most common purpose was to be beneficial, followed by being more in sight, being appreciated, and financial gain, respectively.

3.7. Findings Related to the Activities Preschool Teachers Learned from Social Media and Used in Lessons

The findings obtained from teachers' opinions on the activities that preschool teachers learned from social media and used in their lessons are shown in Figure 3.

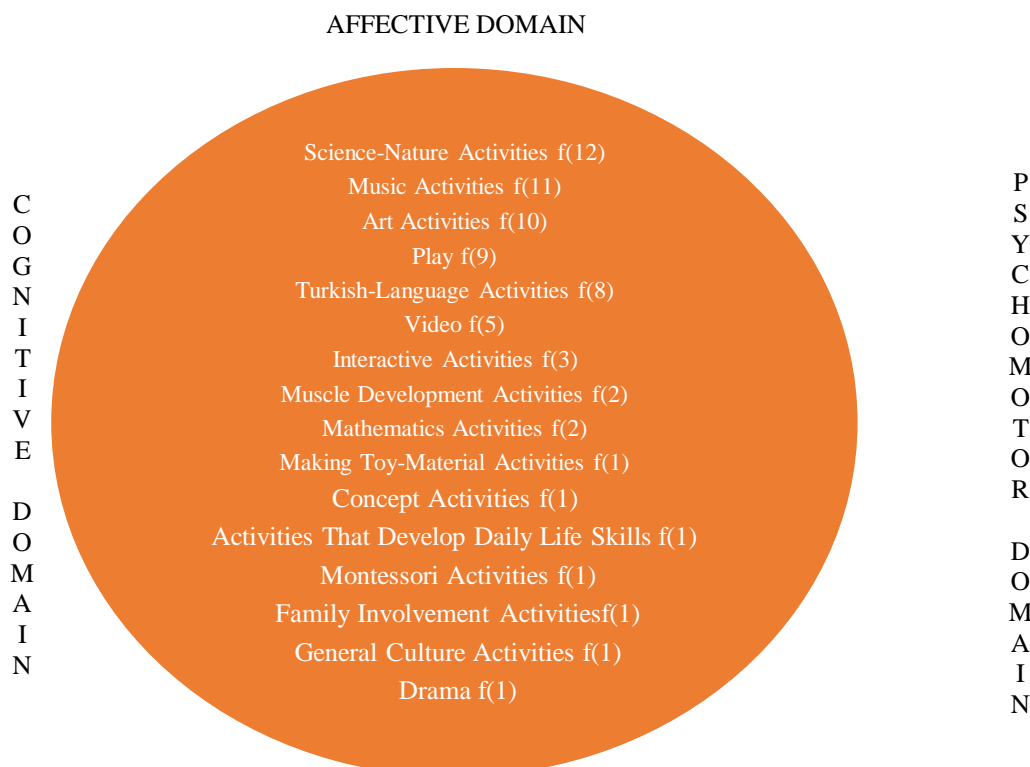


Figure 3. Activities that Preschool Teachers Learned from Social Media and Used in Lessons.

Figure 3 shows that preschool teachers use activities to develop affective, psychomotor and cognitive skills in their lessons by learning from social media.

Twelve teachers learned science and nature activities (T1, T2, T3, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T13, T15, T16), eleven teachers (T1, T2, T3, T4, T6, T7, T9, T10, T11, T12, T14) learned music activities, ten teachers (T1, T3, T5, T6, T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15) learned art activities, nine teachers (T1, T2, T6, T9, T10, T11, T13, T15, T16) learned play activities, eight teachers (T1, T2, T4, T5, T9, T10, T12, T14) learned Turkish-language activities, five teachers learned video activities (T1, T2, T3, T4, T7), three teachers learned interactive activities (T5, T6, T7), two teachers learned mathematics activities (T12, T15) and two teachers (T7, T15) learned activities for muscle development, one teacher learned concept activities (T8) and one teacher (T12) learned activities for making toy-materials, one teacher (T3) had family involvement activities, one coach (T5) learned general culture activities, one teacher (T11) learned drama activities. There is one teacher (T5) who learned activities that develop daily life skills and one teacher (T12) who learned Montessori activities.

It was found that preschool teachers used social media to learn activities in many different fields. For science-nature activities, it was determined that they used social media, especially for researching experiments, watching videos of experiments, or videos with scientific content such as natural phenomena and transformation. For art activities, it was determined that they found different and creative activities and used them in their classrooms, and for Turkish-Language activities, they used online content, songs, and videos. The following are preschool teachers' perspectives on the activities they obtained from social media and used in their classrooms:

"I most benefit from science and nature activities. I use social media for many examples of activities. I can find a lot of stuff like songs, videos, games, stories, art activities." (T1)

"I use it especially for play activities. I look for songs, videos, and experiments on social media and use the ones I like by connecting them with our activities." (T2)

"I find and use art activities, interactive games, riddles and puzzles, activities that develop daily living skills, and general culture activities." (T5)

"I usually use it for cutting and coloring activities related to motor skills. I benefit from TUBITAK activities, science and nature activities, educational videos and songs from Youtube, and interactive activities on EBA." (T7)

"There is rich content on social media. I implement the activities, experiments, and games that I find beneficial in this rich content in my own classroom. Generally, I can say that these activities are music, science, Turkish, games, and literacy activities." (T9)

3.8. Findings on the Effects of Preschool Teachers' Social Media Information on the Implementation of the Preschool Curriculum

Figure 4 shows the findings obtained from the opinions of preschool teachers about the effects of the information they obtained from social media on the implementation of the preschool curriculum.

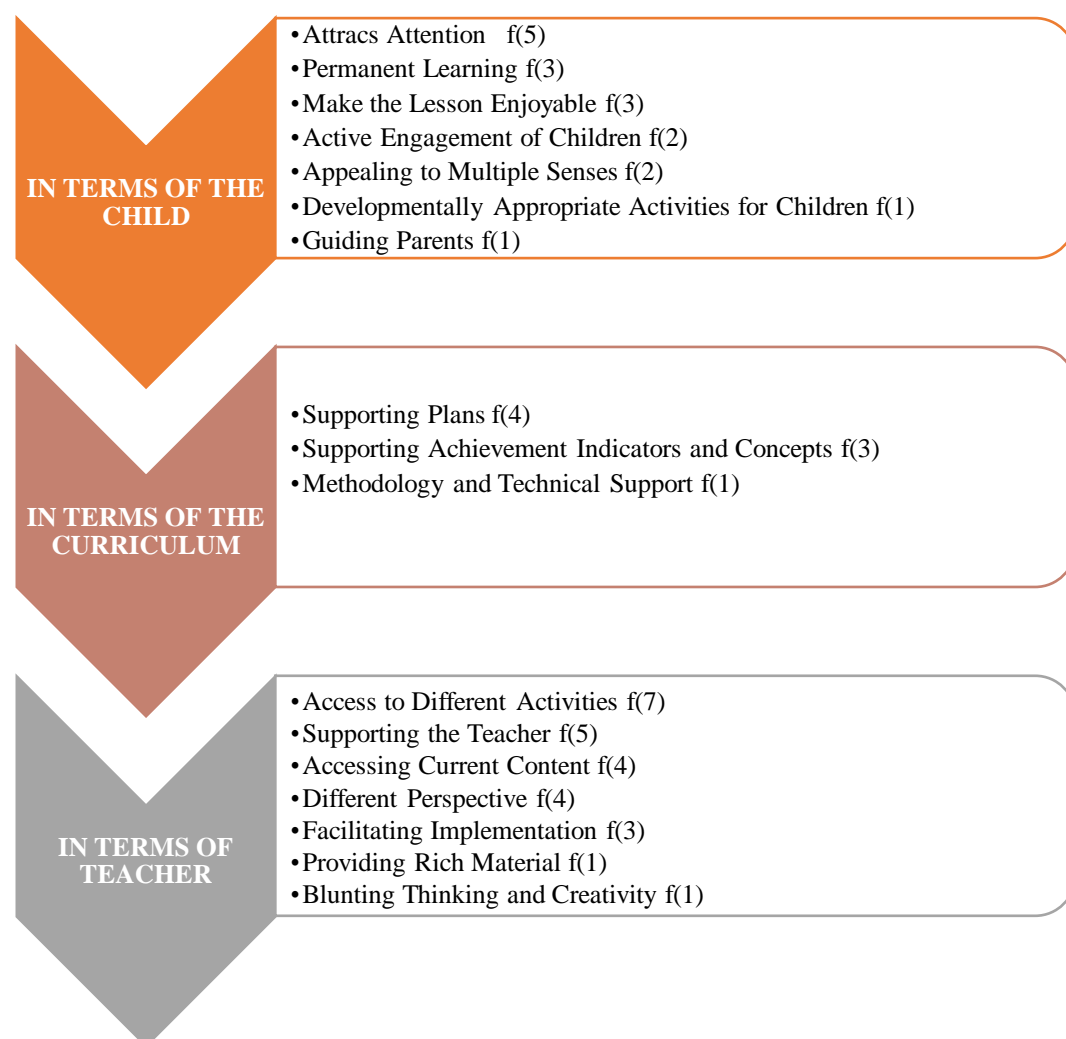


Figure 4. Effects of Preschool Teachers' Social Media Information on the Implementation of the Preschool Curriculum

Figure 4 shows that the information obtained by preschool teachers from social media has an effect on the implementation of the preschool curriculum in terms of the child, the curriculum, and the teacher.

It was determined that the activities obtained from social media attracted children's attention because they were interesting and had audio-visual features (T2, T4, T8, T14, T15). T2 stated that *"...for example, when you play a song about the alphabet, it attracts children's attention more, they don't want to hear your voice all the time..."* It was determined that the activities used provided permanent learning by creating different learning environments and appealing to multiple senses (T1, T2, T15). T1 expressed his thoughts on this subject as follows: *"Because it provides access to many different activities, it is possible to appeal to multiple senses with different activities while teaching a concept. It offers continuous learning through a variety of activities that appeal to the various senses of children of our era."* It was concluded that

these activities made the class and the activities enjoyable (T2, T12, T15) and ensured the children's active engagement (T8, T14). T15 expressed his thoughts on the subject as follows: *"It can be boring to practice with books all the time." Children enjoy and learn without even realizing it through activities such as songs, stories, and plays.*"

Regarding the curriculum, four teachers (T2, T5, T6, T12) said the plans were supportive, three teachers (T5, T10, T11) said they supported the achievement indicators and concepts, and one teacher (T6) said they supported methodology and techniques.

Since the information received through social media is readily and easily accessible, it was found that it facilitated the implementation of the curriculum and plan. T12 expressed his opinion on this subject as follows: *"It provides ease and integrity in the implementation of the plans." It helps to break up the monotony of traditional preschool education with contemporary and varied activities.*" It has been determined that the availability of information and activities relevant to each subject and concept simplifies and diversifies the implementation of activities for the intended achievement indicators. T5 expressed his opinion on the subject as follows: *"It makes it easier for us to implement our daily education plans. It increases diversity. It helps students achieve the desired learning outcomes and indicators and increases the variety of activities for the concepts we wish to teach."* Furthermore, it was established that the information learned aided in the use of various methods and techniques, as well as the usage of material relevant to the method and technique employed. T6 expressed his opinion on this subject as follows: *"It has an impact on the development of the content of my daily plans. It helps me to create new learning environments by integrating the most recent activities and contents with the most effective methods and approaches, while also considering the readiness of my class."*

In terms of teachers, seven teachers (T1, T6, T10, T12, T13, T15, T16) stated that it provided access to different activities, five teachers (T2, T3, T6, T8, T14) stated that it supports the teacher, four teachers (T6, T8, T10, T12) stated that it enabled access to up-to-date content, four teachers (T7, T10, T11, T16) stated that it provided a different perspective, three teachers (T7, T11, T12) stated that it facilitated the application, one teacher (T7) stated that it offered rich material, one teacher (T11) stated that it blunts thinking and creativity.

Social media was found to offer teachers different ideas, activities, and examples. T10 stated his opinion on this subject as follows: *"I try to give the same achievement in different ways. The more examples we see, the more beneficial it becomes. Instead of repeating myself, I use what my colleagues do on social media while carrying out the plan."* It was found that it supported the teacher in areas where the teacher felt incompetent or when the teacher was tired. T2 expressed his opinion on the subject as follows: *"There are classrooms without smart boards, so when you get tired in the classroom, you cannot always sing the songs in music activities yourself; therefore, I think it is very supportive at those points."* It has been determined that it provides access to current content and provides different perspectives. T12 explained his opinion on this subject as follows: *"I believe that with current and varied activities, preschool education is no longer classical and monotonous, but has become fun."* It is also believed that the ease with which information is available on social media blunts thinking and creativity. T11 stated on this subject as follows: *"I believe that finding the information ready-made blunts thinking and creativity."*

4. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the findings of the study, preschool teachers use social media for professional and personal development. Teachers found Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Pinterest to be beneficial to their professional development. Teachers were found to have gained new perspectives, followed innovations, participated in various activities, improved their knowledge and skills, accessed activities for all areas of development, and participated in educational activities using social media. Öngören (2022) found in her study that when the pre-school teachers use the information and communication technologies, their professional development is supported and they benefit from the preparing activities, presenting visual materials, watching videos and online applications in teaching process. Aydoğmuş et al. (2023) concluded that teachers use social media in education as a tool that enables participation in various projects, seminars and trainings and promotes educational activities. Teachers' social media posts were found to be beneficial to other colleagues or informative. Demirtaş et al. (2022) established that teacher access the information

more easily through the social media applications and use the social media for informational purpose. According to the findings, the use of social media facilitates the implementation of the preschool curriculum, enriches the learning environment, attracts attention, and supports the teacher. Although it is difficult to distinguish and calculate the time spent in cyberspace versus real life, it has been observed that with the increase in preschool education applications, preschool teachers are using social media more (Kara, 2013; Marklund, 2015).

The findings indicate that preschool educators use social media platforms for exchanging information, accessing information, improving their skills, gaining diverse perspectives, and staying aware of current developments while social media is not often used by preschool teachers for fun such as gaming or socializing with new friends. According to Uslu (2015), the presence of diversions such as games and applications on social networks is a disadvantage when considering their potential for educational purposes. It is clear that this is not the case for preschool teachers.

The findings indicate that among social media platforms, preschool teachers prefer WhatsApp, Instagram, and Youtube. Moreover, Instagram, Pinterest, Youtube, and WhatsApp are perceived by preschool teachers as advantageous for their professional growth and development. According to the findings of Demirtaş et al.'s (2022) study, preschool teachers preferred to use WhatsApp the most. Similarly, Avcı (2020) discovered in his research that teachers use the Instagram most and they use the social media for professional development. The study findings revealed that EBA was one of the most advantageous applications for professional purposes. The present circumstance can be attributed to the recent updates and modifications to EBA, resulting in the introduction of diverse features and changed circumstances. According to Tutar (2015), the EBA platform includes a lot of educational content for both teachers and students and serves as a significant developmental resource within educational portals.

Preschool teachers' social media posts were mostly intended to inform and benefit others. Similarly, Yılmaz (2019) discovered in his research that teachers mostly shared posts about the learning process, followed the rules and official announcements, participated in the shared activities, and applied them in their classes. Ayçiçek (2020) and Özdiñç (2014) also found that communication and sharing between teachers and parents on social media was beneficial to children and educational efficiency. It is thought to be significant in terms of increasing mutual interaction, improving the parties, and improving the educational environment's quality.

There are many activities related to all developmental areas that preschool teachers use in their lessons by obtaining them from social media. The most frequently used activities were determined to be Science-Nature activities, Music activities, Art activities, Play activities, Turkish-Language activities, and Family involvement activities. According to Arıkan et al. (2017), further research is needed due to the nature of early childhood education and the constant change in learning needs. In this context, these resources may be used to implement innovations and employ various learning-teaching methods. Receiving assistance in these areas can be associated with preschool teachers receiving assistance in areas in which they believe they are incompetent. According to Kıldan and Pektaş (2009), preschool teachers require in-service training for science-nature activities. Preschool teachers in Burak and Çörekçi's (2021) study stated that using technology in music education is necessary because it improves creativity, makes learning effective, makes the lesson fun, and increases attention. In Ayçiçek's (2020) study, parents and teachers deemed the usage of social media advantageous in terms of improving engagement within the context of family involvement activities. When viewed from various angles, it is possible to conclude that preschool teachers profit from social media in order to deliver better education.

It was discovered that information collected from social media has a wide range of consequences on preschool curriculum implementation in terms of the child, the curriculum, and the teacher. It was determined that it enables teachers to enrich the educational environment by accessing various activities, receiving support where the teacher is incompetent, facilitating access to innovations with up-to-date content, facilitating learning by attracting students' attention, and assisting with plan implementation. According to Uyanık Aktulun and Elmas (2019), the use of social media platforms in preschool education provides advantages for the teacher, child, and classroom, from planning to evaluating the learning-teaching process. According to Aydoğmuş et al. (2023), teachers have beneficial uses for education such as preparing lessons through social media, informing parents, attracting students' attention during the lesson, monitoring

and evaluating students, and adding content to EBA. It was also shown that the information gained from social media causes the participants to lose their critical thinking and inventiveness. Firat (2023) discovered in his study that the activities that preschool teachers employ from social media do not help children to develop their uniqueness. Participants in Günaydın's (2017) study stated that social media can be beneficial or harmful depending on the intended use. According to Aribovna (2021), the usage of technology is also vital for teachers' creativity skills. Demirezen and Alakurt (2022) also noted that adopting the correct technology in learning environments can make learning simpler and that it is critical for teachers to better themselves in this regard. According to Masoumi (2021) and Chen (2016), developing teachers' technological-pedagogical knowledge and abilities is critical for the efficient implementation of the curriculum. Zinskie and Griffin (2023) stressed that teachers need to know the necessary privacy rules when using social media, what are the circumstances of appropriate and inappropriate use and the professional risks associated with the improper uses. For these reasons, social media should be used carefully and precisely by selecting the beneficial and educational aspects of social media. It is considered that instructors might benefit from using the information gained by running it through their own knowledge filter.

4.1. Suggestion

- 1- Studies should be conducted to increase pedagogical and technological competencies for the correct use of social media by teachers for their professional development.
- 2- Through social media platforms, flexible-time, MoNE-approved, certified vocational trainings should be organized for teachers in the areas they need at times convenient to them.
- 3-Course contents and activities to be shared on social media can be developed for preschool teachers to use in their classrooms.

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