

INVESTIGATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATORS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

OCTOBER 2019

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

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October 2019, 122 pages

The aim of this study is to examine social media usage of early childhood educators. A qualitative research is conducted in order to get opinions of early childhood educators on their personal and professional usage of the social media. In addition, participants' opinions on responsible social media usage are gathered. The study was conducted during the 2018-2019 academic year with 25 early childhood educators who are working in Yenimahalle and Keçiren districts of Ankara. Questions of semi-structured interviews are prepared by taking opinions from five experts who are academicians in the field of Early Childhood Education. In addition, a pilot study is conducted with three early childhood educators. The findings of the study showed that all of the participants use at least one social media platform. Most of the participants have positive attitudes towards social media. They use several social media platforms, and they find social media necessary and beneficial in both personal and professional life. In their professional life, participants use social media in preparing activities for daily program, parent involvement, and using social media as an educational tool. Moreover, most of the participants do not hesitate to be 'friend' with their

colleagues because they see their colleagues as real friend. However, they generally do not be friends with the parents of the children on social media because of professional reasons. The results of the study showed that responsible social media usage means privacy, time management and ethical issues for participants of the study.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Social Media Usage

ÖZ

OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN SOSYAL MEDYA KULLANIMLARI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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Ekim, 2019, 122 sayfa

Bu araştırmanın amacı, okul öncesi eğitimcilerinin kişisel ve mesleki yaşamlarında sosyal medya kullanımlarını incelemektir. Ayrıca, okul öncesi eğitimcilerinin sorumlu sosyal medya kullanımı üzerine görüşleri de alınmıştır. Bu araştırma, 2018-2019 eğitim-öğretim yılı içerisinde, Ankara'nın Yenimahalle ve Keçiören ilçelerinde Milli Eğitime bağlı devlet okullarında çalışan 25 okul öncesi öğretmeni ile yapılmıştır. Araştırma nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden, temel nitel araştırma deseninde tasarlanmış ve veriler yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme sorularıyla toplanmıştır. Görüşme soruları hazırlanırken Okul Öncesi Eğitimi alanında akademisyen olan beş kişiden uzman görüşü alınmış ve üç katılımcıyla pilot çalışma yapılarak görüşme soruları son haline getirilmiştir. Yapılan analizler sonunda, bütün katılımcıların en az bir sosyal medya platformu kullandığı belirlenmiştir. Katılımcıların çoğunun sosyal medyaya karşı olumlu tutumlarının olduğu ve bu katılımcıların birden fazla sosyal medya platformunu aktif olarak kullandıkları bulunmuştur. Ayrıca katılımcılarının çoğu sosyal medyayı gerekli ve yararlı bir gelişim olarak görmektedir. Katılımcılar mesleki hayatlarında sosyal medyayı etkinlik hazırlarken ve aile katılımında kullanmaktadırlar. Ayrıca, sosyal

medyayı bir eğitim aracı olarak kullanan katılımcılar da bulunmaktadır. Katılımcılar iş arkadaşları olan diğer öğretmenleri sosyal medyada ‘arkadaş’ olarak eklemekten çekinmemektedir ve bunun sebebini de iş arkadaşlarını gerçek hayatlarında da arkadaş olarak gördükleri olarak belirtmişlerdir. Bunun yanı sıra, katılımcılar sınıflarındaki çocukların ailelerini arkadaş olarak eklemek istememekte ve arada bir sınırın olması gerektiğini düşünmektedir. Katılımcılar sorumlu sosyal medya kullanımı kavramını mahremiyet, zaman yönetimi ve etik gibi kavramlarla açıklamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul Öncesi Eğitim, Sosyal Medya Kullanımı

To my family

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a thesis was one of the hardest jobs I have ever had to do. Completing the thesis would not be possible if I did not receive guidance, support and love from people around me. Before expressing my gratitude to those people, I want to thank Mustafa Kemal ATATÜRK as a woman and as a researcher. I am so grateful to have a model like him.

I want to express my gratitude to my supervisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Volkan ŞAHİN. His guidance and support was very important through my process of writing the thesis. I also want to thank my committee members, Asst. Prof. Dr. Serap SEVİMLİ ÇELİK and Asst. Prof. Dr. Aysel TÜFEKÇİ AKCAN for their worthy advice and comments.

I would like thank to Prof. Dr. Gülümser GÜLTEKİN AKDUMAN, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Refika OLGAN, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Suat KOL, Asst. Prof. Dr. Aysel TÜFEKÇİ AKCAN, Gülhan YILMAZ BURSA for their expert opinions, and their worthy suggestions.

Special thanks for the participants of the study for their patience and honest contributions for the study.

I would like to thank my friends who were there when I need support and opinion. I would like to thank Emine BOZKURT and Osman BASİT for their contributions in coding, and analysis process. In addition, I would like to thank Kübra ENGİN and Ümmühan AKPINAR for motivating me, their support was really helpful. I also want to thank to the best officemates, Dr. Aysun TURUPCU DOĞAN, Dr. Semiha YÜKSEK USTA, Hatice PASLI, Merve ÖNGEN for being the friend more than colleagues. In addition, I want to express my feelings about Duygu KARAKAYA. She is the best early childhood teacher that I know who dedicated

herself to this job. I am very happy to have such an honest and selfless friend in my life. Finally, I want to thank Emine KARADAŞ. Her emotional support is irreplaceable. I am so lucky to have friends like them.

I would like to express my feelings and gratitude for my family. I am so lucky to have such open-minded parents, Murat KARAKAYA and Serpil KARAKAYA. They always supported me in all aspects of my education. In addition, they trusted me even when I did not trust myself. I would like to thank to my brother who is my life long best friend, Ahmet KARAKAYA.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, human beings have tried to develop new ways to communicate. They have invented new tools or materials in order to communicate and used art in order to explain or transfer their ideas, their daily life activities, etc. With the development of technology, people have invented more complex, multi-dimensional communication tools, with which the transfer of voice, image and video of everything is facilitated (Vural & Bat, 2010). Today, these tools surround the world around people, and every day, people are exposed to a lot of media messages, voice and audio-visual stimuli in their daily life.

People have used different media tools in order to deliver information, share ideas, etc. Media can be defined as any material, person or event that creates situations which enable the learner to gain knowledge, attitudes and skills (Reiser & Gagne, 1983). Development of technology has impacted media tools dramatically. Development of mass communication tools and the Internet are very important technological developments that have shaped today's media-saturated world. Now, people are surrounded by audial, visual and audio-visual stimuli through screens, billboards and print media materials (Koltay, 2011).

People have enhanced the effect, the availability and the variation of media messages. As a result, media tools and media messages are globalized with the developments in technology. Before the advent of the Internet; people relied on newspapers, journals and television in order to share their ideas and inform people about a situation. These media tools were very effective in conveying media messages to a large group of people (Kellner & Share, 2007). The common features of these technologies were that the content was created by one person,

company or a group, and audiences were passive receivers of any information that was released by the media tool (Cherow-O'Leary, 2014). The development of the Internet has changed the role of the audience: people have found places to state their ideas on different platforms (Kol, 2017).

Digital revolution started with the invention of computers and their proliferation around the world. With the digital revolution, the world has evolved, and technological devices have integrated into the daily lives of people. This revolution also brought different questions to a lot of fields (Abdelgawad & Wheeler, 2009; Ross & Sennyey, 2008).

Web 2.0 tools refer to web tools that provide participatory action and user interaction (Conole & Alevizou, 2010). Web 2.0 tools provide a platform on which all media or application users work collaboratively in order to create content. Since it is possible to send or receive voice, image or video to people all around the world (Vural & Bat, 2010), personal web pages and online encyclopedias are being replaced by blogs and wikis with the development of web 2.0 tools (Kaplan & Haeinlein, 2010). The invention of web 2.0 tools provide opportunities to people to be a part of a content creation process: audiences are involved in the process of selecting, filtering, observing, distributing and interpreting the events on the platform (Hermida, Fletcher, Korell & Logan, 2012).

Social media platforms are Internet-based applications that are built on the ideology and technology of Web 2.0 tools in order to serve a user-generated content (Kaplan & Heinlein, 2010). By means of the social media tools, people have found ways to express their ideas, feelings and attitudes towards any kind of object, brand, policy, etc. In addition, people have created their own content and found opportunities to share their content with a lot of people (Vural & Bat, 2010). The most popular examples of social media platforms are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc.

Social networking has become a global phenomenon with billions of users all around the world (Pew, 2010). The world statistics show that there are almost 4

billion people who are active social media users (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). This popularity of social media use has affected the behaviors and habits of people. For instance, there is a significant change in the marketing system with the development of social media. In social media, consumers create “consumer-generated media” and share their ideas about a product there (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Therefore, people’s habits of deciding how to buy a product have changed over time. In addition, social media has affected people’s career. New jobs such as social media influencer have appeared. The effects of social media on people’s lives cannot be explained with only one example; people’s lifestyles have been significantly influenced by social media. Every experience including playing, working, communicating, and socializing has started to have online dimensions (Livingstone & Bulger, 2013). By means of this new media, human life has been shaped and evolved in a different area. People have gained new desires, like sharing what they experience in their life.

Social media has impacts on different fields. Education is one of these areas which is affected by the development of social media. People’s behaviors and habits have changed and evolved with the dramatic change in media tools, and people’s learning styles, needs and interests have been correspondingly affected (Christ & Potter, 1998). Therefore, educational systems should be responsive to this change; all components of the educational system should be adapted to these changes. In addition, the educational system should meet the needs of the new generation who is born into a media-saturated world.

Social media brought some facilities to the educational systems. From an early childhood education perspective, social media provides fast communication between parents and the early childhood educator (Balci & Tezel Şahin, 2016). Also, a lot of social media platforms are created in order to share activities (Routh et. al, 2014), and by means of social media platforms, it is easy to bring audiovisual materials to the early childhood classroom (McManis & Gunnewig, 2012). On the other side, social media use has brought about issues of ethics, safety, and addiction. Therefore, in order to derive some benefits, social media users should be informed. Teachers are the most fundamental component of the

educational system, and their knowledge may influence others such as children and parents. Early childhood educators should know how to act on social media responsibly (Feeney & Freeman, 2015). Thus, in the following part of the thesis, early childhood educators' current attitudes, behaviors and thoughts about social media will be examined.

1.1. Problem of the Study

The proliferation of social media tools among people has brought new challenges and issues to a lot of fields such as marketing, policy, education, etc. (Sahsi, 2012; Harb, 2011; McCarroll & Curran, 2013). Education is one of those fields impacted by technological developments in social media (İnci, Akpınar & Kandır, 2017). The effects of social media in early childhood education are observed in several aspects: the child, the teacher and the parent (Fadilah, 2018; Feeney & Freeman, 2015). In the current study, early childhood educators' social media use will be examined, and the purpose of the study will be presented in this part of the chapter.

Early childhood educators are an important component of early childhood education as they have a great influence on child development, and they also play a significant role in informing parents about their child's development (Yalçın, Yalçın & Macun, 2017). Early childhood educator's knowledge and responsibility on any topic could affect the other components. The development of the child could either be supported or hindered depending on the educator's awareness and knowledge. (Yalçın, Yalçın & Macun, 2017). In the current study, early childhood educators' social media use will be examined in order to understand possible needs of the teachers while using social media professionally. Lack of literature on this topic shows that there is a need for studies in this area.

Social media use has gained importance for people in the last decade in Turkey. Currently, 72% of the population uses the Internet, and 63% of the population uses social media actively (Kemp, 2019). The statistics reveal the fact that social media use is popular among people. Studying social media can be crucial in understanding people in all fields. It is also important in early childhood education.

Children are born into a world which is infused with digital technology now. Interactive media tools and media messages are integrated with essential human experience. Digital technologies such as computers, smartphones and tablets are used by a lot of children. There are a lot of channels on YouTube which produce “child-themed” content and they have billions of subscribers (Papadamou et al., 2019). Therefore, children’s exposure to social media and the Internet has increased over time. Due to this increased amount of social media exposure, children have become targets of consumerism. As a result, the amount of advertisements that target children increases. Zevenbergen (2007) claimed that any young child is a potential of consumerism in this day and age. In addition, social media platforms promote applications on mobile phones. According to Shuler, there are over a billion applications in Apple Store, and the majority of these applications are for children who are under the age of 8. These applications are online games and educational games (2009), so children are constantly stimulated to interact with digital technologies. Children in their early childhood period, however, are not capable of judging the content of the media. They tend to perceive the media messages as true (Livingstone& Bober, 2004). Therefore, children should be given media literacy education in order to gain survival skills to protect themselves from the possible disadvantages. At this point, adults in children’s lives should take responsibilities to guide children.

Children are also affected by social media indirectly. If adults involved in children’s lives are active users of social media, children become aware of social media tools at a very young age. Not having an account on social media does not mean that social media cannot influence children (Holloway et.al, 2013). Young children might have access to their parents’ social media accounts, or older siblings might teach and enable them to use social media. Most children even know how to use filters on Instagram and Snapchat (Children’s Commissioner, 2017).

Posting children’s photos and videos online increases the digital footprints of children. Digital footprint refers to any online activity that is recorded on online platforms (Sürmelioğlu & Seferoğlu, 2019). Digital footprints of individuals are

not manageable because no one can be sure whether those digital recordings will ever disappear (Holloway et.al, 2013). Every moment of childhood is recorded and shared, but the decision to do so is not made by the child. Therefore, sharing so much about the child may violate the children's right (Holloway et.al, 2013). Adults involved in children's lives, especially parents, should be informed about this situation.

Early childhood education aims to support children to make them reach their full potential (Yalçın, Yalçın & Macun, 2017). In such a world which is surrounded by a lot of different media tools, ignoring and avoiding the Internet and social media may not be an easy option. Using social media with educational purposes is indeed possible. Using social media consciously in the classroom can provide good opportunities for the teacher to communicate with the parents, share materials and support children's development and skills. For example, by using Pinterest, parents could incorporate fun educational activities in their children's education (Routh et. al, 2014). Facebook can also be used as a tool for fostering parent-child involvement (Balcı & Tezel Şahin, 2016). The conscious use of social media, in sum, could provide a lot of opportunities for the teacher and parent.

In early childhood education settings, professional relationships with the components of education are crucial. However, scholars state that social media has blurred the line between personal and professional life (Feeney &Freeman, 2015). For example, when a teacher becomes a "friend" with any member of his or her professional life, the teacher's private life will be exposed to those who are members of the classroom society. This may harm the teacher's professional image. The teacher may even be fired from his/her job due to his/her social media posts (Carter et al., 2008).

In conclusion, social media use of early childhood educators should be examined. The lack of the literature is the biggest indicator of the issue. If educators' social media use were known, possible advice and policies could be regulated. Teachers are active components of the early childhood education system. Their knowledge on social media use can affect parents and children. Therefore, teachers'

knowledge on social media is the problem of this study. When teachers' level of knowledge is known, possible precautions can be taken, and some programs and/or courses can be developed in order to improve teachers' awareness on social media use in their professional life. Therefore, there is a need to search social media use of in-service early childhood educators.

1.2. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine in-service early childhood educators' use of social media and its reflection on their professional life. The effects of social media on curriculum and classroom, teachers' behaviors on social media and teachers' opinions on responsible social media use are included under the title of "Social Media in the aspect of Professionalism". With these purposes, the research questions are:

RQ1: To what extent do early childhood teachers utilize social media tools in their professional lives (gathering information, creating curriculum, parent involvement)?

RQ2: To what extent are early childhood teachers' professional practices affected by their personal social media habits?

RQ2 a- How do teachers use social media in their activities in order to create a curriculum?

RQ2 b- What are early childhood teachers' attitudes towards social media platforms?

RQ3: What are early childhood educators' opinions regarding responsible social media use in their professional life?

1.3. Significance of the Study

Teachers' knowledge and awareness of using social media is very crucial in terms of early childhood education. In order to understand the current level of in-service teachers' awareness of using social media in early childhood classrooms, these research questions are important to investigate.

Studies about social media and education are conducted generally at higher educational levels (Samuel-Peretz et.al. 2017; Kearney& Bailey 2016; Görü Doğan 2015). In this research, social media for educational use provides benefits for learners. Currently, there is little research about social media use in early childhood education, which shows how important this study is. If teachers' behaviors on social media are determined, further research on integrating social media into early childhood education can be done.

By studying in-service early childhood educators' use of social media, we can also have an insight into their attitude towards using social media in their professional settings. There is a very thin line between using social media effectively and responsibly with an educational perspective and doing harm to children's confidentiality and privacy (Feeney &Freeman, 2015). By means of this study, possible problems can be identified, and solutions can be provided.

The results of the study reveal the need for a guideline for using social media responsibly. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has recommendations to early childhood educators (Feeney &Freeman, 2015). In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education published a notice for teachers not to post students' photos and videos on their personal social media account (MEB, 2017). More detailed guidelines may be published for early childhood educators to follow.

When recommendations to these problems are proposed, program developers will find ways to work on these problems. This will affect children indirectly. Teachers and parents will be aware of the responsibilities of social media use in early childhood education. In addition, children's development will be supported by another source on social media when teachers use the power of social media in an efficient and effective way.

1.4. Definition of Important Terms

Social media: Websites or internet applications that provide opportunities for users for creating and sharing content, or participating in social networks (Lexico, 2019).

Social media presence: In the current study, the opinions and attitudes towards personal and professional use of social media.

Media-saturated world: Media saturated world refers to today's world where screen technologies and media messages surround the environment.

Media Literacy: Media literacy can be described as the skills that are necessary for people in order to use media tools and get media messages effectively. These skills are determined as access, analysis, evaluation, and content creation via media tools in different ways (Aufderheide, 1993).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this part of the thesis, a literature review is done in order to provide a basis for the study which will be presented. The topics included in the literature review are “social media phenomenon and education”, “the role of social media in early childhood period” and “the role of social media on the professional life”.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

In this part of the literature review, the theoretical framework of the study is presented. The theory which is the basis for the study is the Ecological Systems Theory, which was presented by Urie Bronfenbrenner. The theoretical framework title includes two sub-titles: Ecological Systems Theory and Media in Ecological Systems Theory.

2.1.1. Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological Systems Theory was presented by Urie Bronfenbrenner. His theory emphasizes the value of nurture in human development. According to Bronfenbrenner, human development is affected by environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). These environmental systems have effects on humans at different levels.

Environmental systems in human development are defined by Bronfenbrenner. He uses the “russian doll” metaphor in order to explain these systems. According to Bronfenbrenner, environmental systems are nested structures and one structure encompasses the next structure (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). These environmental

systems are called “microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. Each of these systems influences human development. Moreover, these systems reciprocally affect each other.

Microsystem is the smallest unit which the individual is born into. This environmental system includes small social environments of individuals like family, peer group, school and workplace (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Mesosystem includes the relationships of microsystems around the individual. School-parent relationship is an example to this situation. Schools may influence parents and this effect might change the way parents have an effect on their children (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Exosystem is another layer of the ecological system. The development of the individual is affected indirectly by the relations in the exosystem. The relation between parent and parents’ workplace are examples in Bronfenbrenner’s article, and this relation impacts the individual indirectly (1994).

The other layer of the ecological system is *macrosystem*. The effect of the culture, sub-culture and customs on the development of an individual takes place in this layer of the ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Chronosystem is in a different dimension of the ecological system. This parameter refers to the time individuals live in. People in similar environments could demonstrate different developmental characteristics at a different time. Therefore, the chronosystem impacts all systems around the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

To sum up, with Ecological Systems theory, Bronfenbrenner interprets his own approach to human development. The environmental systems in his theory have different effects on the development of an individual. Media, technology and the Internet take different places in these environmental systems. In the following title, the media, and place of technology in the Ecological Systems Theory are defined and explained.

2.1.2. Media in Ecological Systems Theory

In this part, media tools and media messages are discussed according to the Ecological Systems Theory. First, Bronfenbrenner's terminology of molar activities is explained and the media aspect of the situation is integrated to the subject. Second, the layered structure of the Ecological Systems Theory is discussed from a media standpoint.

In Ecological Systems Theory, Bronfenbrenner emphasizes the importance of daily activities in human development. Daily activities are called "molar" activities in Bronfenbrenner's works. According to Bronfenbrenner, daily activities have a significant effect on human development (1979). People's habits, skills and social relations are shaped by molar activities they have throughout the day.

As stated before, molar activities play a great role in human development. When the media aspect of the situation is examined, it could easily be said that media is integrated into the daily lives of people. Children are exposed to different kinds of media tools and media messages from the day they are born. People use different media tools in order to communicate, socialize, play, etc. (Mchale, Dotterer & Kim, 2009). Because media-oriented activities take place in human's daily lives, they indisputably have big effects on human development. Media tools and media messages shape the way people think, act and behave.

Bronfenbrenner has come up with the Ecological Systems Theory, and laid the structure of environmental systems, which is explained in the previous part. It is impossible to place media in just one layer in the Ecological Systems Theory. Media tools and media messages are integrated into all the layers in Ecological Systems (O'Neill, 2015). The figure presented below shows the place of the media in Ecological Systems Theory. Considering media and human interaction, it is seen that media is integrated into all layers of the environmental systems around the human being.

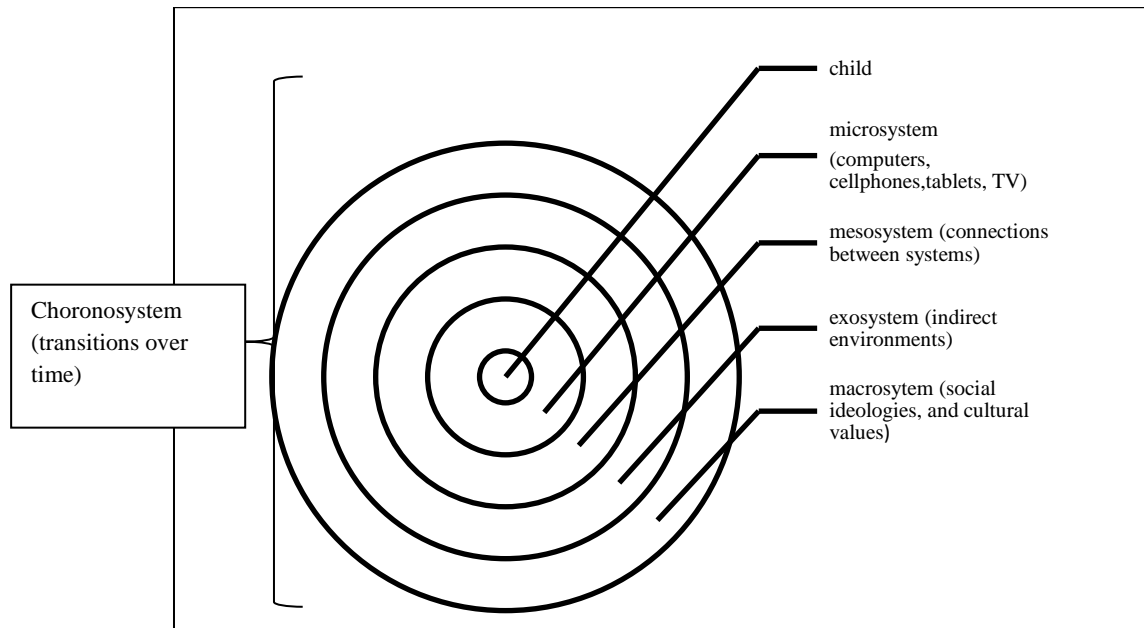


Figure 1. Media in ecological systems theory (adapted from Johnson & Pupilampu, 2008)

In the microsystem, there are a lot of media tools and media messages. There are televisions, smart phones, computers and tablets that people spend most of their time on. All of these media tools and media messages have significant effects on people's daily activities (Mchale et. al., 2009). Considering the development of a child, the effects of media can be seen in his/her physical, cognitive and social development (Jordan, 2004). According to Jordan, media exposure causes physical problems such as obesity. Junk food consumption and inactivity while interacting with media tools may cause childhood obesity (2004). On the other hand, when media tools are used conscientiously, they may help improve the cognitive and linguistic development in children (Elkin, 2016). Therefore, the effect of media tools and media messages on human development in the microsystem is very important.

In the mesosystem, child development is affected by connections between systems (Johnson & Pupilampu, 2008). The relationship between peer group, home and school is affected by the media tools and media messages. In this environmental layer, media related regulations in school settings could affect human development (Mchale et. al., 2009). Internet portals of schools which allow parents to see their

children's homework are an example of this situation (Johnson & Puplampu, 2008).

In the exosystem, a child's development is affected by indirect environmental factors. Whereas, in the microsystem and mesosystem, the development of the human is affected directly. In this layer of the Ecological Systems Theory, parent's use of the Internet at work, for example, could determine a child's Internet access at home (Johnson & Puplampu, 2008).

In the macrosystem, development is influenced by social ideologies and cultural values. Media tools and technology can be used as tools to spread ideas, and these ideas could affect human development (Johnson & Puplampu, 2008).

In the chronosystem, technological developments over time have had significant effects on media tools. With the development internet devices, people's habits at home settings have changed (McHale et. al., 2009). Therefore, these technological developments have an impact on human development at the chronosystem level.

To sum up, in this part of the literature review, the media is examined in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. According to relevant literature, media cannot be placed in one layer of the Ecological Systems Theory (Johnson & Puplampu, 2008; Mchale et. al., 2009; O'Neill, 2015; Jordan, 2004). Media is integrated into all environmental systems around the person. Media's effect on the microsystem and mesosystem is very significant because people are directly affected by these systems. Therefore, developments in media technologies have a direct effect on the fields which are related to humans.

2.2. Social Media

In this part of the literature review, social media and its relation to the current study will be examined. The subtitles of this part are "General Information about Social Media", "The Role of Social Media in Education" and "The Role of Social Media in Early Childhood Education".

2.2.1. General Information about Social Media

The development of Web 2.0 tools allowed Internet users to participate in the content creation process. Internet users have contributed to content creation process by observing, filtering, selecting, commenting, etc. (Hermida et. al, 2012). These facilities which are provided by Web 2.0 tools have become the basis for social media (Duffy, 2008).

With the development of technology and invention of smartphones and Internet-connected devices, the use of social media tools has become popular among people all around the world (Boyd &Ellison,2008). In 2019, 57% of the world population is Internet users, and 45% of the world population is active social media users (Hootsuite & We Are Social, 2019). People visit social media platforms because the content on social media continues to exist, and there are always new ones on these platforms (Vural & Bat, 2010).

Social media is defined as “websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking” (Lexico, 2019). People can create their own profiles and interact with other people via social media tools (Çam & İşbulan, 2012). There are various social media platforms which serve different purposes. With different social media tools, people can communicate with their friends, get information, create content and share the content with an online community (Lee et al., 2015).

2.2.2. Components of Social Media

Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre (2011):

According to Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, social media consists of seven functional building blocks, which are important to define social media tools. These building blocks are “identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups” (2011).

Identity refers to the way people reflect themselves on social media by creating their own social media account (Kietzmann et. al, 2011). Users may prefer to share their personal information and life with a group of people on social media. Through social media, individuals give clues about their physical appearance, thoughts and their social behavior (Back et al., 2010).

Conversations is another important component of social media (Kietzmann et. al, 2011). A lot of social media platforms such as WhatsApp are established in order to facilitate conversations among people (Church & Oliveira, 2013).

Sharing the content is also provided by social media tools (Kietzman et. al, 2011). Via this facility, people may exchange, receive and distribute the content. Therefore, the dissemination of any information, news and event has gained speed with social media (Hermida et. al, 2012).

Via social media tools, people may state their *presence* (Kietzman et. al, 2011). Most of the social media platforms include this facility to enable users to share their location (Zheng, 2012). Therefore, presence has become an important component of social media tools.

With social media, people specify their *relationships* with other people (Kietzman et. al, 2011). That means, social media tools give people the facility to be ‘friend or fan’ online. With the help of social media tools, it is easier to contact people online when it is very difficult in real life (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016).

Social media platforms may provide opportunities for *reputation* (Kietzman et. al, 2011). Creating content and sharing it with other people on social media may build a sense of trustworthiness among the followers of the content creator. A growing number of followers could attribute fame and dignity to social media users. Social media influencer is the term that applies to this situation (Freberg et. al, 2011).

Finally, social media may serve people to find their ‘tribe’. Social media may bring interest *groups* together (Kietzman et. al, 2011). People with the same

interests and hobbies come together and share their work on social media platforms like Facebook (Kietzman et. al, 2011).

Social media consists of these seven components, and these components make social media platforms attractive and interesting for a lot of people.

Kaplan & Haenlein, (2010):

According to Kaplan & Haenlein, these opportunities are “collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds” (2010). Via social media tools, users in collaboration can create contents called *collaborative projects*. Wikipedia is an example of this project. In Wikipedia, users of the social media platforms work collaboratively in order to create content (Kane, 2009).

Blogs are another facility of social media, and they are the primary versions of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). With blogs, people have found the opportunity to share their stories, online diaries with a group of people. In blogs, content creation process is done by one person, and other users contribute by commenting on the content (Thevenot, 2007). Thus, people have found opportunities to share their ideas online with a group of people by blogging.

Content communities refer to social media platforms like YouTube. In these types of social media platforms, users do not need to create a personal account if they are not going to share content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Individuals may reach a wide range of contents thanks to this opportunity which is provided by social media tools.

Another opportunity provided by social media platforms is *social networking sites* (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In *social networking sites*, people create their own social media account and they interact with others. Facebook is an example for social networking sites. People can find opportunities to share audio, visual and audio-visual content on Facebook (Öztürk & Talas, 2015).

Social media tools also provide opportunities for *virtual game worlds* and *virtual social world*. On virtual platforms, people may create their avatar in order to play games or interact with other people. Social media tools provide these opportunities for users, and these opportunities are used by different social media platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2.2.3. Social Media Platforms

In this part of the literature review, social media platforms mentioned throughout this thesis are explained.

Facebook:

Facebook was launched in 2004. Facebook is a social media platform which provides social networking opportunities. People create their account and connect with their friends and relatives. People can share their content with the ones they have classified as 'friends' (Ellison et. al, 2007).

Instagram:

Instagram was launched in 2010. Instagram is a social media platform which provides opportunities for users to share photos and short videos. People create their own account, share photos on their profile. In addition, they can share photos which disappear 24 hours after they are first posted (Lee et. al, 2015).

Twitter:

Twitter was launched in 2006. Twitter is a social media platform that allows users to state their ideas in maximum 280 characters. People create their accounts and 'tweet' their ideas or opinions. The most talked topic around the country or world becomes a trend topic (TT) (Jungherr, 2016).

WhatsApp:

WhatsApp is an application for smartphones which uses phones' Internet connection to interact with other users via direct messaging. In addition, group chats provide opportunities to exchange messages and conversations within a group created by WhatsApp users (Bouihnik & Deshen, 2014)..

Pinterest:

Pinterest is a social media platform which provides people opportunities to share visual materials. Users may 'pin', and categorize the content in order to reach their audiences easily and fast (Routh et. al, 2014).

YouTube:

YouTube is a social media platform to share video content. Content creators on YouTube share their own content with other people. YouTube not only allows users to reach millions of videos, it also gives them the opportunity to share their own content (Papadamou et. al, 2019).

EBA:

EBA is a social media platform which was created by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. This social media platform provides academic support for students and educational materials for teachers. Users can also find opportunities to share their own content. The content, however, is controlled by the managing mechanism (Aktay & Keskin, 2016).

2.3. The Role of Media in Education

In this part of the literature review, the role of social media in education is discussed.

2.3.1. Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants

Children who are born into a world which is full of screens have different habits. They may even have different thinking skills and learning styles. Prensky (2001) underlined this generational difference by creating a terminology. He calls people who are born into a media-saturated world “digital natives”, and the rest are called “digital immigrants”.

According to Prensky (2001), modern day students’ thinking and information processing skills are fundamentally different from others. Therefore, their learning preferences and styles are different. For example, fast exposition of information is not extraordinary to them and they are not willing to read long articles, and books. Instead, they prefer graphics rather than losing so much time on reading an article, for instance. They are willing to network with their peers, and when they network, their function is optimal. In addition, they generally choose to play games instead of serious work. On the other hand, digital immigrants have no similar interests and desires with this generation, and they typically show no appreciation to habits of this generation.

The gap between digital immigrants and digital natives seems to create a dilemma in the educational system: digital immigrants are in the position of ‘teacher’ and digital natives are in the position of ‘student’. There is a metaphor in order to explain this situation. It is like an immigrant teaching language to the native speaker of that language. Therefore, this generational gap creates problems in the educational system. Because teachers are digital immigrants, they have two different attitudes towards their students. “Smart teachers” try to learn from their students, and they also integrate their lessons into the thinking style of their students. “Not-so-smart teachers”, on the other hand, resist the difference between their students and them. Therefore, they always criticize the way children study, or think, etc. For instance, they criticize children when they study and listen to music at the same time or are interacting on social media with their friends. As a result, these teachers always complain about today and yearn the old days when they were students (Prensky, 2001). Thus, the gap between teachers and students has

widened due to the development of technology, namely social media. In such a world, children are more capable of understanding the development of technology compared to adults. Therefore, this situation should be considered while preparing educational programs for these children. Digital immigrants need to be willing and ready to adapt to change. If they are, they will start to understand their students.

Children are more curious about digital products. It is found that people have more digital items when they become parents because of children's pressure, and according to parents, media-rich homes are well-provided (Livingstone & Das, 2010). Because digital items are usually bought for children, parents are not as much interested in those digital items as their children. This situation creates skill differences between parents and children. Parents see themselves as less skillful at the Internet in Europe. In addition, children think that they are more adept at dealing with the media and technology than their parents. Parents are confident about their searching skills on the Internet, but they are not so confident of setting programs such as virus programs (Livingstone & Bober, 2004).

Even if children develop their skills via technology, this does not show that they are conscious users of technological devices. Livingstone and Bober state that four in ten students trust the content or information on the Internet in Europe (Livingstone & Bober, 2004). Taking all of this into account, because children lack the ability to judge the content on the Internet, the negative use of the Internet may cause some problems.

In conclusion, people in the educational system and their situation in a media-saturated world has been explained. With the review of literature in this part, it can be inferred that older people who are parents and teachers in the educational system need to adapt to the developing technology by improving their skills (Prensky, 2001). On the other hand, students should also gain skills to judge the content of which they are incessantly exposed to on the Internet and social media. There are life skills that help survive in the media-saturated world, and both children and adults need to develop new skills in order to benefit from the technological developments. The position of the teacher in a media-saturated

world should be questioned. Teachers should gain required skills in order to survive, get benefits and guide children.

2.3.2. Studies that Utilize Social Media in Education

Social media integrates every aspect of human life. Every human experience has online dimensions including socializing, playing and doing business (Livingstone & Bulger, 2013). Therefore; integrating social media into the education process could be a good idea for educators. Opportunities such as easy communication and online groups provided by social media tools can facilitate effective learning (Öztürk & Talas, 2015). In this part of the literature, studies which incorporate social media into the educational process are presented. Most of the studies are conducted in higher education environments. There are very few studies designed for young children.

In 2017, Çetinkaya made an effort to understand the effects of social media on student success. The study group included grade 10 students in a high school. WhatsApp was chosen by the researcher in order to support students' learning. Information texts were sent to students via WhatsApp group as support message. The results of the study showed that the learning environment which was supported by WhatsApp had more positive effects on students' success. In addition, students' opinions on using WhatsApp as a support technology were analyzed with qualitative methods. Most of the students stated positive opinions regarding the method used in the study (Çetinkaya, 2017).

In 2014, Susilo conducted a study in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of social media tools in supporting students' English learning. The study was conducted in an Open University, in Indonesia. Participants attended online discussions, link sharing and wall posting processes on Facebook and WhatsApp. Data was collected and analyzed with qualitative methods. Findings of the study showed that Facebook and WhatsApp were valuable social media platforms in supporting English learning, and online tutoring. The facilities like announcing, sharing ideas and resources were found important (Susilo, 2014).

In 2015, Willemse studied the effectiveness of WhatsApp in improving primary healthcare education. A qualitative and exploratory study was conducted with undergraduate nurses. The online discussion groups were established for the purpose of enhancing students' theory, and clinical practice in health care education. Results of the study showed that WhatsApp was an important tool in terms of availability of resources, anonymity, clarification and usefulness (Willemse, 2015).

In 2016, Kalelioğlu conducted a qualitative study on Facebook's effectiveness as a learning management system. The participants of the study were pre-service teachers in a distance learning class on computer education. Participants attended a 14-week Facebook-based course. Opinions of participants were taken after the course. The findings of the study demonstrated that there were both positive and negative opinions about Facebook's effectiveness as a learning management system. The features like sharing the course material, instant messaging, having discussions and ability to upload were emphasized by participants. On the other hand, the fact that other participants could see uploaded files was listed as a negative aspect of Facebook by the participants (Kalelioğlu, 2016).

In 2013, Toğay and his colleagues studied the effects of social media tools' use on the educational process. A quantitative research was conducted among 60 vocational high school students. In this study, participants were supported by social networking tools such as web seminars, e-portfolios, and social media websites in the learning process during a semester. A questionnaire was applied in the data collection process. The results of this study indicated that supporting the learning process with social networking tools facilitated students' learning. (Toğay et al., 2013)

In 2014, Bouihnik & Deshen did a qualitative research on teacher and student communication on WhatsApp. For their study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with high school teachers who created WhatsApp groups with their students. According to the results of the study, some of the benefits of using WhatsApp groups are nurturing the social atmosphere, sharing ideas in an

educational platform, and having dialogues. Some teachers, on the other hand, stated that they get annoyed by the unnecessary chat, and nonsensical messages. Participants also stated that WhatsApp is a quick, cheap and direct way of communicating with students (Bouihnik & Deshen, 2014).

In 2015, Görü Doğan integrated social media into a flipped learning course on computer education. A qualitative research design was chosen by the researcher, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants of the study. The results indicated that social media features provided opportunities for instantaneity, continuity, feedback, sharing and democracy. In addition, permanent learning was supported because the shared content was easily reached (Görü Doğan, 2015).

In conclusion, social media in the educational process is mostly used with university and high school students (Çetinkaya, 2017; Susilo, 2014; Görü Doğan, 2015; Bouihnik & Deshen, 2014; Kalelioğlu, 2016; Willemse, 2015). Most of the studies have found that integrating social media into the educational process would be beneficial and effective for learning (Görü Doğan, 2015; Willemse, 2015). Two main negative opinions on using social media in an educational environment emerge from different studies: unnecessary conversation and accessibility of homework by other participants (Bouihnik & Deshen, 2014; Kalelioğlu, 2016). Facebook and WhatsApp are seen as important tools for integration. Twitter is also seen as an educational tool by some researchers (Linn et. al, 2013). Overall, there are benefits of integrating social media into the curriculum.

2.4. The Role of Social Media in Early Childhood Education

In this part of the literature review, the role of social media in early childhood education is examined with three aspects in mind: children, parents and the early childhood educator.

2.4.1. Social Media and Young Children

Due to technological developments, reaching technological devices and the Internet is easier than it was in the past. Therefore, technology is integrated into every aspect of an adult's life including work, play and the way we get information, which inevitably impacts children's lives as well. For example, the media exposure of children has increased (Gutnick, Robb, Takeuchi, & Kotler, 2011). Children between the ages of 0 and 8 spend more time on the Internet and social media than they did in the past.

There is a trend among young children to use Internet connected devices. These devices are various and using technological devices with touchscreens is getting more widespread among children. These touchscreen devices such as tablets and smartphones have a wide appeal for children. The possible risks of using Internet are increasing eventually (Holloway, Green & Livingstone, 2013).

With the development of touch-screen technology, social media platforms are explored by young children also (Holloway et. al, 2013). According to Holloway, Green and Livingstone, online activities that young children on social media do are watching videos, socializing and playing online games (2013). On YouTube, there are a large number of videos which target young children including toddlers and preschoolers. Therefore, YouTube has become a new version of television for young children. However, child-targeted content could be harmful for children (Papadamou et. al, 2019). Watching an excessive amount of online videos may cause health issues in young children, for example.

Childhood obesity and attention disorders may appear with excessive use of screen technologies (Jordan, 2014). Because media messages in these tools are speed-changing and interesting, children's attention on concrete or real materials is shortened (Jordan, 2014). In addition, spending time with screen technology is time consuming and it does not require any movement. Indeed, advertisements on these screens encourage children to consume unhealthy products. Therefore, lack

of movement and consumption of excessive amount of junk food lead to childhood obesity (Jordan, 2014).

Although, there are attempts at providing safe-content, the safe use of the Internet cannot be guaranteed. A study in Turkey shows that even though parents are aware of filters which provide safe Internet for families, they do not use filtered Internet (Demirel, Yörük, & Özkan, 2011). Therefore, this situation causes more risk factors for children.

There are also ethical considerations about young children and social media. Posting children's photos and videos online would be problematical in two aspects. Firstly, social media platforms are public platforms and children are not capable of protecting themselves from the possible harms. Therefore, children's personal information should not be shared publicly (Minkus et. al, 2015). Secondly, children have the right to hide their personal information. If an adult shared a child's personal photos and personal information online, the child's right of privacy would be violated. Therefore, parents or other adults should not make decisions in children's behalf when sharing children's photos and videos online (Ahern et. al, 2007).

The effect of the Internet and social media is not always negative. When the Internet and social media is used consciously, children's development and learning can be supported. It should be known that technology cannot benefit children by itself, so education should be delivered with technology in order to reap benefits (McManis & Gunnewig, 2012). Educational videos and content that encourage talking and singing, for example, on social media would support children's language development (Elkind, 2016). The adults around children also play an important role because children need to be guided on how to use social media wisely while they are interacting with media tools (Linn, 2009).

In conclusion, young children are also aware of social media tools. In addition, they are exposed to social media content. Social media tools would be both beneficial and harmful for children (Papadamou et. al, 2019; Elkind, 2016). In

order to use social media in a beneficial way, parents and early childhood educators should be informed.

2.4.2. Social Media and Parenting

Social media platforms provide opportunities for users in order to present personal data about themselves. Parents use social media platforms sometimes to share personal information about their children (Brosh, 2018), which is quite common now. Social media platforms have billions of children photos taken on different occasions. Children's digital footprints start even before they are born (Brosh, 2016). Children's online identities are created and shaped by parents. The future is uncertain about this issue. It is uncertain how children will be affected by the situation (Steinberg, 2017).

The term "sharenting" is created in order to explain the phenomenon of parents' sharing their children's photos and videos (Brosh, 2016). Parents post their children's photos with different purposes. Transition to parenthood affects parents physically, psychologically and socially (Brosh, 2018). Blogging the experience of parenting may provide opportunities for parents to find their community. In addition, sharing photos of their children is expected by their social media community. When parents post their children's cute photos, their audience likes and comments on them, which makes parents post even more (Steinberg, 2017).

Posting children's photos online without the child's consent is a kind of violation of privacy rights of the child. Parents are seen as the digital protector of the child. When parents want to post their children's photos on social media, the permission is usually taken by the parents only (McDaniel et. al, 2012). However, parents may not be informed about possible harms of posting children's photos online. Therefore, treating parents as the digital protectors of children is not appropriate. Parents should have basic knowledge of children's rights on social media platforms.

There are a lot of bloggers and social media influencers who are parents themselves. Basically, these people increase their popularity by posting children's photos online. This type of parenting could affect the child's development negatively. Children become famous on social media; they are recognized by people. The age, name, physical appearance, and religion of the child are known by a large amount of people (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017). This is a significant example of violating the privacy rights of children. In addition, these children's photos could be used by people who use the internet to lift these photos and commit internet pedophilia.

If blogger parents and their children gain popularity on social media, children could be used for commercial purposes (Choi & Lewallen, 2018). Because they have an account which is followed by a wide audience, the products they use attract notice. Therefore, children and their parents start to make advertisements on social media platforms.

In conclusion, parents should be informed that posting children's photos is a violation of privacy rights of the child. Parents should also be informed about possible harms of posting children's photos online before they make decision about their children's photos (Steinberg, 2017).

2.4.3. Social Media and Early Childhood Teachers

In today's media-saturated world, social media and social media tools are integrated into the daily lives. In such a world which is full of technology, it is very difficult to avoid social media tools because they are important components of communication (Odabaşı, 2017). In early childhood education, social media is used by teachers, children and parents. Therefore, the early childhood education is very likely affected by the development of social media. In this part of the literature review, social media in early childhood education will be examined with related literature. The limited number of studies on this issue reveals the importance of the current study for literature.

When social media tools are used consciously, they support children's development in different aspects. Children's language and literacy skills can be supported when new technologies are integrated into the curriculum (McManis & Gunnewig, 2012). In addition, social media use could increase children's operational skills and knowledge (Geist, 2012; Mcpake et. al, 2013). Furthermore, children collaborate when they use the Internet, and their problem solving skills can improve (as cited Heft & Swaminathan 2002; Wang & Ching 2003 in McManis & Gunnewig, 2012). Moreover, children are enthusiastic about using new media technologies. Integrating new media into the educational process may provide engaging and enjoyable experiences for children (NAEYC, 2012). Therefore, social media and social media tools could support children's development if the educator is capable of using and integrating social media into the curriculum.

The early childhood educator should be well informed about social media and the Internet use for educational purposes. The teacher should have some media literacy in order to have the ability to use social media in a beneficial way for children (Verniers & Tilleul, 2014). Teacher's knowledge on media use is important because the role of the teacher is essential for informing parents about social media use and protecting their children from the possible harms of social media.

2.4.3.1. Parent Involvement

Related literature on social media and early childhood education is reviewed. Throughout the process of literature review, it was realized that much of the studies are done on the parent involvement aspect of the early childhood education.

In 2016, Balcı & Tezel-Şahin examined Facebook's convenience in parent involvement activities. They stated that Facebook's opportunities such as creating groups, sharing visuals, and articles facilitated communication, and as a result, the

collaboration process. In addition, Facebook could be useful in informing parents about child development (Balcı & Tezel-Şahin, 2016).

In 2014, Yost & Fan conducted a qualitative study in a child-care center with directors, educators and parents. Via semi-structured interviews, participants are asked about social media use in the parent involvement process. The findings of the study showed that social media tools were effective in communication and collaboration process. Parents had the opportunity to be informed about daily activities in early childhood education process (Yost & Fan, 2014).

In 2014, Routh and her colleagues created a Pinterest account for parent education. They posted activity ideas for parents. Throughout the study, the account reached over 200 followers. From this experience researchers recommended that Pinterest would be a good platform in order to inform parents. The reason is that parents are already users of Pinterest. In addition, posting on Pinterest is more discoverable by the parents. However, the evaluation would not be possible via this method (Routh et. al, 2014).

In conclusion, there are studies on social media's use on parent involvement in early childhood educational settings. Social media is a good way for the parent involvement process because it is a quick, easy and cheap way of communicating with parents (Yost & Fan, 2014; Balcı & Tezel-Şahin, 2016).

2.4.3.2 Social Media in the Aspect of Professionalism

A virtual platform was given to people with the development of social media tools. People have found opportunities to communicate; share ideas, photographs and videos online. In addition, they also “like” and leave comments to each other. Therefore, social media has provided social networks for families, friends and professionals. On the other hand, this platform has brought some issues about privacy and online safety (Zurbriggen et. al, 2016). The privacy issues on social media influence relationships in the real world such as friendships and professional

relationships. Social media's effect on professional relationship is the topic of this title.

Social media accounts of people generate a lot of information about an individual's private life. It is becoming a background source for employers to make judgments about prospective employees. Therefore, a job candidate's use of social media may determine his/her employment prospect (as cited Clark & Roberts, 2010 in Zurbriggen, Hagai, & Leon, 2016).

Social media phenomenon is integrated into professional life as well. Before social media, there was a strict line between private life and professional life. People in the workplace would create a professional profile and interact with their colleagues through this profile. However, this strict line has changed with social media. Now people in the workplaces are getting connected via social media, and this situation blurs the line between personal and professional life (Carter, Foulger, & Ewbank, 2008). In educational settings; professional life includes students, parents, other teachers and directors. When these parts of professional life are connected on social media, there are possible risks and benefits. Some teachers state that being connected with parents and students on social media is facilitating the communication (Carter et al., 2008). Therefore, sometimes there is a positive aspect of social media in professional life of teachers. On the other hand, being connected with parents on social media may lead to some problems. Teacher's private life could be visible by the people from the school society. Some activities can be seen as "inappropriate behaviors" in educational settings. Teachers' posts on social media such as candid photos, political issues, sexual preferences may cost teachers' job. That means, teachers may be fired from their job because of their social media posts (Carter et al., 2008).

In early childhood education, some ethical issues appeared. Firstly, problems about social media occurred when teachers posted children's photos without parents' permission. Some parents did not want their children to be on the digital world in any shape or form. Therefore, the situations like these brought discussions on social media use in early childhood classrooms (Feeney & Freeman, 2015).

Researchers in NAEYC argued about ethical and professional issues about smartphones and social media use in early childhood settings. They made some recommendations. Because when used consciously, social media and smartphones can be beneficial, prohibition of smartphones may not be a good idea. However, constant alerts from smartphones could be distracting for teachers. One recommendation is that there can be a smartphone of the classroom, so teachers will not get personal alerts and messages. Another recommendation is that teachers should not post children's photos on their personal accounts without parents' permission (Feeney &Freeman, 2015). In addition, there may be a social media account of the kindergarten; children's photos can not be used without permission. Another recommendation for social media use is that because being online "friend" with parents and other teachers would blur the line between private life and professional life, parent's requests on social media should kindly be rejected. Finally, teachers should not put critical comments about educational programs and other teachers on their personal social media account (Feeney &Freeman, 2015).

As a conclusion, the professional behavior is very important in early childhood educational settings, and the teacher must be the one who knows how to use social media in his/her professional life. Therefore, the teacher should enhance his/her skills in order not to create an ethical problem.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In this part, the methodology of the study will be presented. There will be six sub-titles which will facilitate the flow of the study. These sub-titles are research questions, the design of the study, participants, pilot study, instrumentation and data collection, data analysis and trustworthiness of the study.

3.1. Research Questions

The aim of the study is defined with the research questions of the study:

RQ1: To what extent do early childhood teachers utilize social media tools in their professional lives (gathering information, creating curriculum, parent involvement)?

RQ2: To what extent are early childhood teachers' professional practices affected by their personal social media habits?

RQ2 a- How do teachers use social media in their activities in order to create a curriculum?

RQ2 b- What are early childhood teachers' attitudes towards social media platforms?

RQ3: What are early childhood educators' opinions regarding responsible social media use in their professional life?

3.2. The Design of the Study

In this part of the method chapter, the design of the study will be described, and the reasons why a qualitative research is chosen will be explained in detail.

The design of the study is discussed and determined by the researchers. The nature of the research questions helped researchers to investigate and conduct the research in the most efficient way. Therefore, qualitative research is chosen in order to conduct the study. Merriam (2009) stated that a qualitative study focuses on the meaning in the target context. The main aim of the qualitative study is to reveal descriptive and realistic aspects of the topic (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Researchers who are planning to conduct a qualitative study are interested in how people understand and interpret their experiences about an issue. Therefore, the general information which can be gathered by a quantitative research would not be enough to find out such information. Therefore, qualitative approach has been adopted as the main methodology of the study.

Cresswell (2007) stated that a qualitative study includes participants' opinions, experiences and behaviors. Thus, researchers collect data by interviewing, analyzing documents and observing a behavior. Depending on the research questions, the data collection method is defined as face to face semi-structured interviews by the researchers. In order to get more detailed information from the participants, and make interpretations about the topic, this design is chosen. Semi-structured interviews provide a framework for all participants and it gives the opportunity to vary the questions by the answers of participants (Lichtman, 2006).

In conclusion, researchers aimed at investigating social media use of early childhood educators. As the researchers, we gave importance to the thoughts and experiences of the participants. With this purpose in mind, to gather in depth and detailed information, a qualitative research method was chosen (Turan, 2015). The interview method was chosen in order to have real interaction and active communication. Semi-structured interviews provide more natural dialogues and the flow can be shaped depending on the nature of the study (Lichtman, 2006). Therefore, specific experiences of the participants would be revealed by the semi-structured interviews.

3.3. Participants

The target group of this study was the early childhood educators who work in public schools in Ankara. The reason of choosing teachers who work in a public school is that private schools may have the rules for social media use, and it was desired to know early childhood educators' own decision. Therefore, early childhood educators who work in public schools were chosen. For this study, two of the districts are chosen: Yenimahalle and Keçiören. These districts are close to where the researcher lives, so it was a choice of convenience. Researcher has negotiated with the possible participants and the ones who volunteered for the interview were chosen.

The sample size of a qualitative study depends on the research question and the desired information. Therefore, there is not a minimum or maximum limit in order to conduct a qualitative study (Marshall, 1996). The main aim of the qualitative study is to increase knowledge. When no new information can be received from the sample units, data collection is finished by the researcher (Turan, 2015). For this study, researchers wanted to collect as much data as possible, so the sample size was not determined. However, researchers had a foresight that there would be between 20 and 30 participants.

3.3.1. Demographic Information of the Participants

As it was mentioned before, the aim of the study is to gain a deeper understanding on the social media use of the early childhood educators. Twenty-five early childhood teachers participated in this study. All of the participants are currently working in public schools. Some private kindergartens may have rules and regulations regarding what their teachers may or may not share. As the researcher, it was desired to get early childhood educators' own opinion. Therefore, the participants are chosen depending on this aim.

All participants of the study were females (100%). The gender distribution of the participants is shown at the Table 1.

Table 1.

Gender distribution of the participants

Gender	Number of participants	%
Female	25	100
Male	-	-

Teaching experience of the participants ranged between 3 and 38 years. 4 of the participants have experience between 0 and 5 years (16%), 8 of the participants have experience between 6 and 10 years (32%), 8 of the participants have experience between 11 and 15 years (32%), 2 of the participants have experience between 21 and 24 years (8%), and 3 of the participants have experience over 25 years (12%). The teaching experience of the participants is shown in table 2.

Table 2.

Teachers' experience in educating

Years	Number of participants	%
0-5	4	16
6-10	8	32
11-15	8	32
16-20	-	-
21-24	2	8
25+	3	12

Educational background of the participants is shown in table 3. 19 of the early childhood educators who are the participants of the study graduated from a university with a Bachelor's degree (76%). 6 of the participants graduated from an Open University with a Bachelor's degree (24%).(see Table 3)

Table 3.

Educational backgrounds of the participants

Type of the degree	Number of participants	%
Bachelor's degree from formal training universities	19	76
Bachelor's degree from open university	6	24

Demographic questions were asked to collect the age-group experience of the participants. According to the results, 4 of the early childhood educators are experienced in 0-36-months' age-group (%16), 13 of the participants are experienced in 36-48-months' age-group (%52), 19 of the participants are experienced in 48-60-months' age-group, and 25 of the participants are experienced in 60-72-months' age-group (%96). As shown in table 4, most of the participants are experienced in 60-72-months' age-group.

Table 4.

The age-group experience of the participants

The age group	Number of participants	%
0-36 months	4	16
36-48 months	13	52
48-60 months	19	76
60-72 months	24	96

*Each participant has given more than one answer

In conclusion, the demographic information of the participants is demonstrated in the tables above. In the following part, the findings of the study depending on the research questions will be discussed.

3.4. Instrumentation and Data Collection

A qualitative research method is used while conducting the study. Data collection method is determined as semi-structured interview. According to Creswell (2003), there are different ways to collect data in qualitative research such as observations, interviews and document analysis. When the aim of the study is taken into consideration, it is decided to use interviews as the main method.

Interviews are explained in the literature as an effective method, and it provides face-to face interactions (Fetterman, 1989; Merriam, 1998). Therefore, in order to get detailed information, interview method is chosen by the researchers. After deciding the technique of data collection, it was desired by the researchers to have a flexible interview with the participants. Therefore, semi-structured interview

method is chosen depending on the aim of the research. With semi-structured interviews, the frame of the interview is drawn by the researcher, and the flow of the conversation with the participant would be flexible depending on the responses that the researcher got. Therefore, the feelings, experiences and intentions of the participant would be understood by the researcher (Edwards& Holland, 2013). Because feelings, experiences and intentions cannot be observed, semi-structured interview could provide this opportunity.

For the current study, an interview protocol is prepared by the researcher. In order to create an interview protocol, the review of the literature is taken into consideration. The comments and suggestions of the thesis advisor were crucial in designing the interview protocol. After preparing the draft of the interview questions, the interview protocol was sent to experts to take their opinions. For the study, 5 expert opinions were taken. Experts were the researchers in the field of Early Childhood Education. With their comments and suggestions, some changes were made in the interview questions. Three new questions were added, and the forms of the some questions were changed.

A pilot study for a qualitative research provides an opportunity to understand how the interview will pass, or what will fail in the study (Teijlingen &Hundley, 2001). Therefore, in order to test the interview, a pilot study was conducted with three participants. With this way, interview was tested, and participants were asked to have some contributions and make suggestions. After the pilot studies, one more question was added, and one question was edited depending on the responses of the pilot study participants.

With the expert opinion and pilot study, interview questions were edited and the final version of the interview protocol appeared (Appendix B). The final version of the interview protocol included 6 questions which are related to demographic information of the participants, and 10 questions which are related to the research questions presented at the beginning of the method part.

Data collection started in October, 2018 and it finished in December, 2018. The average interview duration was 15-20 minutes. The duration was optimal because the participants of the study were working educators in school settings. Participants who volunteered were selected for the study. Researcher requested a quiet place from the school administrator. Most of the interviews were conducted in quiet places such as the library, playground, and the computer lab. The privacy issues are explained to the participant. That means all of the participants are made sure that the information that they share will be protected by the researcher.

Before giving any study instruments, participants were given voluntary attendance sheet (Appendix A). The researcher informed participants about the research and shared her contact information. In addition, the researcher guaranteed privacy for research participants and the confidentiality of the data. Agreeing on the data collection process, participants signed this sheet as volunteers. While participants were filling the demographic information form, they were informed in a friendly and professional attitude about the questions on the demographic information form. With this way, a friendly atmosphere was created, and participants were encouraged to talk, and share their ideas on the topic. The duration of the interviews was determined by the flow of the conversations.

3.5. Data Analysis

In this part, the data analysis methods are explained. Data analysis in a qualitative study aims at the meaning making of a data set. This meaning making procedure includes combining the interpretation of the views of participants, researcher and literature (Turan, 2015). Findings of the research provide the concrete evidence to the interpretation of the researcher.

During the semi-structured interviews, the researcher audio-recorded the interviews with permission from the participants. In order to respect the privacy of the participants, their names were not included, instead pseudonyms were used. The analysis of data started with the data collection.

Recordings of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher. With this way, the privacy of the data was protected, and the researcher became familiar with the data to be analyzed. The obtained data was transcribed after the interview sessions as soon as possible to understand the data and assess data collection process.

When the data collection process was completed, transcribed data sets were created, and data was coded and categorized by the researcher. Then, categorized data was transferred into suitable tables. By determining themes depending on the research questions and findings, the meaning making process was completed. These steps are suggested and explained in the book written by Merriam (2009).

3.6. Trustworthiness of the Study

In this part of the method chapter, the trustworthiness of the study will be explained. In order to satisfy confirmability and trustworthiness issues, some methods are applied by the researcher.

3.6.1. Validity

In this part, steps which are utilized in order to provide internal validity of the study will be explained.

Before preparing the research questions, literature was examined, and the research questions were prepared. With this way, a framework was formed by the researcher. After that, initial interview questions were prepared by the researcher with the advice of the thesis advisor. Then, five expert opinions were taken. The experts in the study are experts in the Early Childhood Education field. With the advice of the experts, interview questions were reshaped by the researcher. After that, a pilot study was done with three participants. After some suggestions, the interview protocol was finalized.

In order to provide validity of the study, researchers applied some of the methods which are suggested by Creswell. These methods are “member checking, peer review, rich and thick description” (Creswell, 2007). Member checking required

participants of the study to reflect the rough drafts of their interview transcripts (Creswell, 2007). For the current study, randomly selected five participants reflected their interview transcripts. For providing peer review issue, researcher asked another researcher to ask solid questions during the coding process of the analysis. Therefore, the researcher's bias and position in the study is challenged. Throughout the study, the researcher quoted the expressions of the participants often. With this way, exact statements of the participants will be the rationale to the tables of the findings. Therefore, the data collector bias will be reduced. Creswell gave the name of the method as "rich and thick description" (2007).

3.6.2. Reliability

Inter-coder reliability was suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). In this method, the codes are compared with other experts. For this method, the codes are done separately by two research assistants in the early childhood education field. A table is prepared showing the agreements and disagreements. The formula $(\text{agreements} / (\text{disagreements} + \text{agreements}))$ is utilized. When the result is over .70, the inter-coder reliability is achieved. For the current study, the result of the formula is .76. After the comparison two researchers discussed and agreed on the differences.

3.7. Ethical Considerations of the Study

Before conducting the study, necessary permissions were obtained. The ethical permission for the study is obtained from Metu Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix C). In addition, in order to conduct the study in public schools, necessary permissions were obtained from the Ministry of National Education (see Appendix D).

Before each interview session, participants are informed that the data that were gathered will not be shared with any person. In addition, the identity of the participants will not be revealed under any condition. Interviews are conducted in a silent place such as library, play room and teachers' room where there is any other person. Researcher used pseudonyms while analyzing data.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings of the study will be discussed and the categories will be explained in tables depending on the research questions.

The findings of the study are given three themes. The results are concluded under themes of “Participants’ social media usage in their professional life, Social media usage and attitudes of participants and opinions on responsible social media usage”. In the continuation of this part, themes of the analysis will be explained in detail. The interview questions on each theme will be stated under the theme titles.

Research questions are matched with the questions in interview questions. After that themes are created depending on the research questions. In Table 5, interview questions and research questions are matched, and demonstrated.

Table 5.

Matched list of findings

Research Question	Interview Question	Theme
RQ1	7,10,11,12	Participants’ social media use in their professional life
RQ2a	6	Social media use and attitudes of participants
RQ2b	8,9,11,13,14,15,16	
RQ3	11,17	Opinions on responsible social media use

4.1. Participants’ Social Media Usage in Their Professional Life

One of the aims of this study is to examine professional social media use of the participants. This aim of the study was presented as research question 1 (RQ1) in

the introduction part. Interview questions 7, 10, 11 and 12 are analyzed under this title (see appendix B). The findings of this part will be presented throughout the thesis.

4.1.1. Social Media Platforms

Participants are asked about their social media usage in their professional life. As shown in Table 5, 20% of the participants use Facebook (n=5), 48% of the participants use Instagram (n=12), 20% of the participants use YouTube (n=5) 76% of the participants use WhatsApp (n=19), and 80% of the participants use Pinterest (n=20), in their professional life. Participants also mentioned the social media platform which is named as EBA. This platform is produced by the Ministry of National Education. In this site, educational materials, videos and visuals are shared. (See in Table 6).

Table 6.

Social media platforms which are used in professional life

Social media Platform	Number of participants	%
Facebook	5	20
Instagram	12	48
Twitter	-	-
YouTube	5	20
WhatsApp	19	76
Pinterest	20	80
Other	3	12

4.1.2. Purposes of Using Social Media in Professional Life

Participants are asked about the purposes of social media use. The responses of the participants were coded and categorized. The table below is made according to those codes and categories. The categories for this table are “Preparing daily program, Source of information, Parent involvement and informing the followers”.

Participants mentioned 28 times that they benefit from social media to prepare daily lesson plans while explaining the purpose of their social media usage. The codes under this category are “activity inspiration, activity adaptation and activity

ideas for special days”. Participants also asserted that they benefit from social media as a source of information (n=21). The codes under the category of “Source of information” are “following the experts in the field, experience sharing with colleagues, getting knowledge about current issues in the field and getting information about legislations”. Moreover, participants have mentioned that they benefit from the social media in parent involvement (n=33). The codes under the category of “Parent Involvement” are “Informing parents about parenting, communication with parents and informing parents about daily activities”. Finally, participants have also mentioned that they inform their followers (n=5). The codes under the category of “Informing followers” are “making educational shares and sharing the posts of experts” (see in Table 7).

Table 7.

Purposes of social media usage in professional life

Categories	Codes
Preparing daily program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Inspiration (n=16) • Activity adaptation (n=8) • Activity ideas for special days (n=4)
Source of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the experts in the field (n=7) • Sharing experience with colleagues (n=6) • Getting knowledge about current issues in the field (n=4) • Getting information about legislations (n=4)
Parent involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with parents (n=18) • Informing parents about parenting (n=4) • Informing parents about the daily activities (n=11)
Informing the followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making educational shares (n=3) • Sharing posts of experts(n=2)
Using social media as educational material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational video (n=5) • Using visuals in the social media platform (n=2)

*Each participant has given more than one answer

4.1.2.1. Category 1: Preparing Daily Program

Most of the participants stated that they use social media while they are preparing daily lesson plans. Almost all participants use social media as a go-to resource to get activity ideas. The codes of this category are “activity inspiration, activity adaptation and activity ideas for special days”. Some of example expressions of the participants are listed below:

“I look for activities. For example, there are activities on Pinterest. I sometimes use those activities, and sometimes adapt activities for my classroom. I try to find activities which are suitable for the age group of children in my classroom.” (P6)

“I use social media for educational purposes. I search activities for special days. For example, I searched for an activity for the 23rd of April on YouTube.” (P1)

4.1.2.2. Category 2: Source of Information

Participants have also mentioned that they use social media platforms as a source of information. They follow experts or their colleagues in order to be informed or share information. The codes under this category are “following experts in the field, sharing experience with colleagues, getting knowledge about current issues and getting information about legislations”. Some of the example expressions of the participants are listed below:

“There are pages on social media which provide activities for children. I follow them on Instagram and Facebook. I follow them for professional development. I graduated from university nine years ago. National curriculum has been updated since then, so I can follow the development and update my knowledge.” (P13)

“I think that social media is a must because there are new developments in a lot of fields. It is easier to follow these developments on social media, so I find social media beneficial to seek information.” (P1)

“I use social media in order to seek information and develop my professional skills. I try to enrich my activities by following experts on social media.” (P16)

4.1.2.3. Category 3: Parent Involvement

The participants of the current study stated that they use social media in parent involvement. The codes of this category are “communicating with parents, informing parents about daily activities and informing parents about child development.” Example expression is below:

“In my professional life, I do not share my activities with my followers, but I follow the pages that share activities. I share my activities with the parents of the children in my classroom. I have a WhatsApp group with them. Using WhatsApp group facilitates communication.” (P17)

4.1.2.4. Category 4: Informing Followers

None of the participants have an open account as an educational social media account. However, some of the participants share educational content in their social media account. The codes of this category are “making educational shares, sharing posts of experts”. An example expression is below.

“I make educational shares on Instagram. I feel responsible for people who follow me. Because my profession is about child development, I want to inform my friends about child development. I share on special days like the 21st of March, which is World Down Syndrome Day.” (P4)

4.1.2.5. Category 5: Using Social Media as an Educational Material

Some of the participants stated that they use social media in their classroom activities as an educational material. Codes of this category are “educational video, and using visuals from the social media”. An example expression has been presented below.

“In my classroom, I use social media to enrich activities. I use educational videos to visualize what I teach to the children....” (P2)

4.1.3. Photos of the Children

Participants have been asked about their tendency to share children’s photos. The responses of the participants are categorized as “In personal social media accounts and Sharing with parents”. Participants have mentioned 28 times the category “In personal social media accounts”. The codes under the category of “In personal accounts” are “sharing the photo of the child, without showing the face of the child, sharing with parental permission”. Most of the participants have mentioned that they do not share children’s photos in their personal social media account, they also stated that they share the photos with the parents (n=23). Therefore, the codes under the category of “Sharing photos with parents” are “sharing the photo of the child, sharing with parental permission, not sharing the photo of the child” (see in Table 8).

Table 8.

Sharing the photos of children

Categories	Codes
In personal social media accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing the photo of the child (n=3) • Without showing the face of the child (n=3) • Not sharing the photo of the child (n=19) • Sharing with parental permission (n=2)
Sharing photos with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing the photo of the child (n=4) • Sharing with parental permission (n=15) • Not sharing the photos with parents (n=4)

*Each participant has given more than one answer

4.1.3.1. Category 1: In Personal Social Media Accounts

Most of the participants do not share the photo of the child in their personal account. There are few participants who share the photo of the child. The codes in this category are: “sharing the photo of the child, without showing the face of the child, not sharing the photo of the child, sharing with parental permission.” Some of the example statements of the participants are listed below.

“I do not share the photos of the children. I pay attention to this. I do not even take photos of children.” (P8)

“If I am going to share the photos of the children on stories part of the Instagram, I use some applications, and I blur the faces of the children. I never share the face of the children.” (P16)

“Ministry of National Education sent warning for not posting the children’s photos on social media. I do not share the photos of the children because of that reason. I do not see a problem on posting children’s photos.”(P10)

4.1.3.2. Category 2: Sharing Photos With Parents

While interviewing participants, it is noticed that participants share photos of children with their parents. The points that participants pay attention are coded under this category. The codes under this category are “sharing the photo of the child, sharing with parental permission, not sharing the photos with parents”.Some of the example expressions are listed below:

“I do not share the photos of children on social media platforms that there are lots of people. Instead, there is a WhatsApp group with parents, and I share the photos in that group.” (P7)

“I got parental permission to share photos of the children in order to share in WhatsApp groups with parents and on the official school website.” (P6)

4.1.4. Social Media Groups With Parents

As mentioned before, participants have indicated that they benefit from social media in parent involvement. Most of the participants mentioned that they set a social media group with parents (n=19). Therefore, a table is made in order to demonstrate the strategies of participants for using social media groups with parents. The categories for the table are “Having a WhatsApp group, Rules of groups and The way of sharing photos of children”. The codes under the category of “Having a WhatsApp group” are “Group which involves educator, group which does not involve the educator, announcement group, not having a group with parents”. The codes under the category of “Rules of Groups” are “Banning unnecessary chat, Banning the personal compliant, just making announcement, time limit”. Finally, the codes under the category of “The way of sharing photos of children” are “Photos which involve all children, natural photo during the activity, and photos where children look good.”

Table 9.

Strategies for using social media groups with parents

Categories	Codes
Having a social media group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group which involves educator (n=10) • Group which does not involve the educator (n=6) • Announcement group (n=3) • Not having a group with parents (n=6)
Rules of Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banning unnecessary chat (n=4) • Banning the personal compliant (n=2) • Just making announcement (n=5) • Time limit (n=3)
The way of sharing photos of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos which involve all children (n=7) • Natural photo during the activity (n=5) • Photos where children look good(n=6)

*Each participant has given more than one answer

Comments of participants about having a WhatsApp group with the parents of children in the classroom:

4.1.4.1. Category 1: Having a Social Media Group

Participants stated that they have different strategies about social media groups. The codes under this category are “group which involves educator, group which does not involve the educator, announcement group, not having a group with parents.” Some of the example expressions of the participants are listed below:

“We have a WhatsApp group with parents; I share daily activities and inform parents about them.” (P4)

“There is a WhatsApp group which involves the parents, but I am not included in that group. I send posts to a parent who is chosen, and she conveys the post the WhatsApp group. When I am included to the WhatsApp group, parents write things that they cannot say in real life. Problems and discussions do not end when I am in the WhatsApp group.”(P5)

“Because of past experiences, I do not prefer to set up a WhatsApp group with parents. Everything causes a problem and discussion. Therefore, I do not set up a WhatsApp group.”(P23)

“In the past years, I started Whatsapp groups, but problems occurred and I decided not to initiate any WhatsApp groups. This year, one of my colleagues showed me the announcement group version of WhatsApp. Only the director of the WhatsApp group can post, and the other group member cannot comment or send something.” (P7)

4.1.4.2. Category 2: Rules of Groups

The rules of the social media groups with parents are coded in this category. Codes under this category are “banning unnecessary chat, banning the personal compliant, just making announcement, time limit”. Some of the example expressions listed below:

“... I do not want the WhatsApp group to be a chat group. Therefore, I warn parents in order to prevent unnecessary chat in that group.” (P18)

“When a parent criticized something on the WhatsApp group, other parents are affected by the situation. Therefore, at the beginning of the year I warned parents to state their problems in private conversation.” (P19)

“This year, one of my colleagues showed me the announcement group version of WhatsApp. Only the director of the WhatsApp group can post, and the other group member cannot comment, or send something.” (P7)

“When a WhatsApp group is set up, parents could write any time of the day. I am a person and I have my own private life, so I put a time limit to write on WhatsApp group. After 8 p.m., parents and I do not write anything on the WhatsApp group. If parents write after the time limit, I do not answer their questions.” (P20)

4.1.4.3. Category 3: The way of Sharing Photos of Children

Throughout the interviews, it was noticed that participants utilize different strategies while sharing photos with parents. The codes under this category are “photos which involve all children, natural photo during the activity, photos where children look good.” Comments of participants about the way of sharing photos of children:

“... I pay attention to include all of the children in the photo. This is very important for the parents of children. In addition, I pay attention to children’s clothing, and physical appearance. I put the photos that parents will like. Parents pay much attention to this. For example, I share a photo while children are having their breakfast. One parent asks why there are just olives on the plate.”(P14)

“I do want children to pose in photos. Instead, I take photos during activities, while children are playing.” (P3)

4.1.5. Social Media Pages Which are Related to Field

Participants have asked about the social media pages which are related to early childhood education. Therefore, participants have stated the social media accounts, pages that they followed. The social media account that participants have followed is listed on the table. Participants described how they benefit from those pages. The codes in this category are to get activity ideas, to adapt activities, to be informed about child development, to be informed about legislation and to decorate the educational setting. In addition, participants have been asked about their criteria to follow those pages. The codes under this category are educational content, scientific content, creative content, equity in socio-economic status, equity in age-group and consistency of shares with the purpose (see in Table 10).

Table 10.

Social media platforms

Categories	Codes
Name of the Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Önceokulöncesi (n=9) • Gülçin Öğretmen (n=7) • Teacherella (n=5) • Lolapest (n=4) • Akademisyenanne (n=3) • Üstün Dökmen (n=2) • Doğan Cüceloğlu (n=2)
The way of benefiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get activity ideas (n=12) • To adapt activities (n=7) • To be informed about child development (n=6) • To be informed about legislation (n=3) • To decorate the educational setting (n=2) • To get ideas for material development (n=3)
Criteria for following the pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational content (n=6) • Scientific content (n=3) • Creative Content (n=3) • Equity in socio-economic status (n=2) • Equity in age-groups (n=2) • Consistency of shares with the purpose (n=1) • Plagiarism (n=1)

*Each participant has given more than one answer

4.1.5.1. Category 1: Name of the Platform

The names of the social media platforms are demonstrated in the table above. The names of the platforms are searched on the Internet, and list of the social media platforms is down below:

Önceokulöncesi: There is a webpage, a Facebook account, and an Instagram account with this name. On the Facebook account, there are approximately 730.000 followers. In Facebook, there are educational materials like prepared curriculums for early childhood education. In Instagram, there are around 135.000 followers. In this account, there are activity ideas for early childhood teachers.

Gülçin Öğretmen: There is a YouTube account with this name, and there are around 185.000 followers. This account belongs to a music teacher, and she sings songs, and shows rhythmic activities for children.

Teacherella: There is an Instagram account with this name with around 45.000 followers. The account belongs to an early childhood educator. She shares activity ideas for early childhood educators.

Lolapest: There is an Instagram account with this name with around 20.000 followers. An early childhood teacher shares activity ideas for her colleagues.

Akademisyaane: There is an Instagram account with this name with about 900.000 followers. An academician from Hacettepe University shares activity ideas for young children.

Üstün Dökmen: This account belongs to Üstün Dökmen who is a psychologist. There are 516.000 followers on Instagram. Book suggestions, and information about child development is shared in this account.

Doğan Cüceloğlu: This account belongs to Doğan Cüceloğlu who is also a psychologist. On Instagram, there are approximately 1.5 million of followers.

4.1.5.2. Category 2: The way of Benefiting

Participants' way of benefiting from social media platforms is coded under this category. The codes of this category are "to get activity ideas, to adapt activities, to be informed about child development, to be informed about legislations, to decorate the educational setting to get ideas for material development". Some of the example statements of participants are listed below:

"First, I got information about the children and materials. Then, I took the visuals and adapted them to my classroom. I generally take activity ideas from the pages that make activity shares." (P1)

"I generally use Instagram and Pinterest. I do not share, but I benefit from pages that share about early childhood education. I like to discover these pages; they increase my creativity and knowledge. I use these pages while preparing daily activities." (P2)

"I follow Lolapest for organizing my classroom. She shares good activity ideas for classroom organization. She gives ideas for preparing graphs for weather conditions and height graph, etc..." (P3)

"I get activity ideas but I do not follow the pages. I write activity names to Google and find activities from there." (P25)

"I follow the experts in the field. I develop my pedagogical information and learn new things. I also get knowledge about legislations. It is easier to get information from social media than" (P14)

4.1.5.3. Category 3: Criteria for Following the Pages

The criteria of the participants for following the social media accounts are coded in this category. The codes of this category are “educational content, scientific content, creative content, equity in socio-economic status, equity in age-groups, consistency of shares with the purpose, plagiarism”. Comments of the participants about their criteria of following the social media pages:

“I follow the pages who emphasize creativity. I do not follow the pages that cause information pollution. In addition, I follow the pages my friends suggest to me.”(P10)

“The social media page should be creative. I do not like it when all of the children make the same material at the end of the activity. If there is creativity about discovery, scientific experiments, and activities which are done outside, I follow these pages. It is important for me to interact with scientific content...” (P18)

“I pay attention to the physical and financial equality. For example, our possibilities are different than teacher who works in independent kindergartens. Materials and physical conditions are really different. I also do not follow the private kindergarten pages because of the same reason.” (P11)

“I do not like when a Montessori page shares posts related to religious education. Because I follow that Instagram account for content related to Montessori philosophy, I do not want it to share different posts.” (P6)

4.2. Social Media Usage and Attitudes of Participants

In this part of the findings chapter, findings which are about research question 2 (RQ2) will be presented.

4.2.1. Social Media Usage in Personal Life

4.2.1.1. Weekly Social Media Usage

The social media usage of the participants per week is asked. According to the results, 8 of the participants use social media between 0 and 5 hours in a week (32%), 5 of the participants use social media between 6 and 10 hours in a week (20%), 3 of the participants use social media between 11 and 15 hours in a week (12%), 2 of the participants use social media between 16 and 20 hours in a week (8%), 2 of the participants use social media between 21 and 25 hours in a week (8%), 2 of the

participants use social media between 26 and 30 hours in a week (8%) and 3 of the participants use social media over 30 hours (12%).

Table 11.

Participants' social media usage per week

Social Media Usage per week	Number of the participants	%
0-5 hours	8	32
6-10 hours	5	20
11-15 hours	3	12
16-20 hours	2	8
21-25 hours	2	8
26-30 hours	2	8
30+ hours	3	12

4.2.1.2. Social Media Platforms

The social media platform that participants use is asked. According to results, 15 of the participants are Facebook users (60%), 18 of the participants have Instagram accounts (72%), 4 of the participants are Twitter users (16%), all of the participants are WhatsApp users (100%), 8 of the participants have YouTube accounts (32%), and 22 of the participants are Pinterest users (20%), and 3 of the participants mentioned other platforms (12%).

Table 12.

Type of the social media platform that participants use in their personal life

The social media platform	Number of the participants	%
Facebook	15	60
Instagram	18	72
Twitter	4	16
Whatsapp	25	100
Youtube	8	32
Pinterest	5	20

*Each participant has given more than one answer

4.2.2. Attitudes Towards Social Media

4.2.2.1. Attitudes Towards Social Media in General

During the interviews, it was noticed that participants of the study have different attitudes towards social media. When the participants learnt that the interview is about social media use, some of the participants stated that they were not the social media users. However, as it was mentioned in the demographic information part, all of the participants are WhatsApp users. It was preferred to conclude that some of the participants have negative attitudes towards social media. Therefore, they resist the use social media, and they use very limited social media platforms. In addition, they spend limited time with social media.

Participants' general features are categorized and demonstrated in the Table 13. Participants who have positive attitudes towards social media use various social media platforms and they spend more time on social media platforms. In addition, they described social media with positive words such as necessary, beneficial and practical. Therefore, they use social media in their daily life with different purposes. On the other hand, participants who have negative attitudes towards social media use very limited social media platforms, and they spend less time on social media platforms. Moreover, they describe social media with negative words such as dangerous, unnecessary and not trustworthy.

Table 13.

Participant's attitudes towards social media in general

Categories	Codes
Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using various social media platforms (n=20)• Spending more time on social media platforms (n=20)• Describing social media with positive words such as beneficial and practical (n=20)• Integrating social media to the daily life (n=20)
Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using very limited social media platforms (n=5)• Spending very little time on social media (n=5)• Describing social media with negative words such as unnecessary, dangerous, and not trustable (n=5)

For example, P1 has Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube and Pinterest accounts. In addition, she reported that she uses social media 13 hours for a week. She stated that “I think that social media is a must because there are new developments in a lot of fields. It is easier to follow these developments on social media, so I find social media beneficial to seek information.”

P22 has WhatsApp and Pinterest account, and she stated that she uses social media almost 1 hour in a week. She stated that “People who I want to interact with are in my life and I communicate with them, so I think that social media is unnecessary. I do not have time to spend on social media, and I think it is a waste of time and unnecessary”

4.2.2.2. Different Social Media Identity

The participants of the study are asked if they have another social media profile which is different from their real identity. Most of the participants (n=23) stated that they do not have another social media identity. 2 of the participants stated that they have different social media accounts.

Table 14.

The other personal identity

Availability of other profiles on social media	Number of participants
Yes	2
No	23

The answers of the Participant 5 and Participant 7 who have different social media identity are written down below.

“Yes, I have, it is about my interest area. I knit toys and use this account to share them with people.” (P5)

“Yes, we have. It is about my husband’s job, kind of a selling account.” (P7)

4.2.2.3. Social Media Posts

In this part, the findings about participants’ social media posts in their personal life will be presented. This part consists of two tables. The first table presents the social media

shares of the participants. The second table demonstrates the shares that participants avoid.

4.2.2.3.1. The Social Media Shares in Personal Life

Participants are asked about their social media shares and posts. Therefore, participants explained what they post on their social media account. Then, the categories depending on the responses of the participants emerged. The categories on this subject are no sharing, personal life photos, nature photo, and educational shares. 4 of the participants asserted that they do not share anything on their social media account. The codes under the category of ‘no sharing’ are ‘because of security issues’ and ‘no need to share’. 14 of the participants asserted that they share about their personal life on their social media account. The codes under this category are “special occasions, family photos, with good clothing and hobbies”. 4 of the participants stated that they share nature photos, and the codes under this category are “view photos and travel photos”. 9 of the participants stated that they share educational posts on their social media account. The codes under this category are “shares about profession, shares related to current issues, and special days”. Finally, 4 of the participants have asserted that they share others’ shares on their personal account. The codes under this category are “videos, and quotes of famous people”.

Table 15.

The social media shares in personal life

Categories	Codes
Not sharing (Anti-sharing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of security issues (n=2) • No need to share (n=2)
Personal life photos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special occasions (n=3) • Family photos (n=6) • With good clothing (n=3) • Hobbies (n=2)
Nature photos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View photos (n=2) • Travel photos (n=2)
Educational shares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares about profession (n=5) • Shares related to current issues (n=2) • Special days (n=2)
Sharing other’s shares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos (n=2) • Quotes of famous people (n=3)

*Each participant has given more than one answer

4.2.2.3.1.1. Category 1: Not Sharing (Anti-Sharing)

This category is created because there are participants who do not prefer to post anything on their personal accounts. They prefer to be silent on social media. In addition, there are participants who have negative attitudes towards social media in this category, and they do not have to use most of the social media platforms. The codes of this category are “because of security issues and no need to share”. Example expressions of the participants:

“I do not trust the security on social media. The data of me may be used with different purposes, so I do not share anything. I do not pay my bills on the Internet. I sometimes follow news on the Internet, and I generally browse Pinterest. That’s all. I do not want to see other people’s personal life” (P25)

“I do not share anything about my personal life. I find it unnecessary.” (P3)

4.2.2.3.1.2. Category 2: Personal Life Photos

Most of the participants stated that they share personal life photos on their social media. The codes in this category are “Special occasions, family photos, with good clothing and hobbies”. In this category, participants stated that they share when they look good, with their family, in special occasions and they share their hobbies. Example expressions for this category are:

“I share when I look good, with good clothing and make up on.” (P9)

“I only post my son’s photos on my Instagram account. I want this account to be a gift to my son. There are shares from the day he was born, including his first words.” (P14)

“... If I went to somewhere like a wedding, I would share photos of that event.” (P2).

“... I would share stuff about my hobbies (knitting), motherhood and education. Therefore, I share about my personal life, and professional life.” (P7).

4.2.2.3.1.3. Category 3: Nature Photos

The participants in this category stated that they share about nature. Codes in this category are “View photos and travel photos”. Travel photos include the

participants, and view photos is just the photo of nature. Example expressions of the participants for this category are:

“My account is more like a traveler account. I share nature photos and the places which I have seen...” (P18)

4.2.2.3.1.4. Category 4: Educational Shares

This category presents the participants who make educational shares in their social media accounts. The codes in this category are “shares about profession, shares related to current issues, and special days”. Example expressions of the participants for this category are:

“I pay attention to make educational shares. When I come across information which is interesting for me, I share it. For example, I would share about child development.” (P1)

“... I generally post on special days, and weeks. I share my thoughts and feelings about Atatürk for example...” (P4)

4.2.2.3.1.5. Category 5: Sharing Other’s Shares

There are also participants who share the shares of others. The codes in this category are “Videos and quotes of famous people”. Example expressions of the participants for this category are:

“... I share funny videos with my friends, and I also share about classroom activities.” (P11).

“... I sometimes share important quotes of famous people. For example, I have shared the quote from İlber Ortaylı because I found it important to share.” (P17)

4.2.2.3.2. Especially Avoided Shares

Participants were asked what social media shares they would. The categories in this issue are “political shares, food included shares, violent shares and private life shares. 11 of the participants stated that they avoid making political shares. The codes under this category are ‘political ideas and shares which specify political side’. 9 of the participants asserted that they avoid making food included shares. The codes under this category are ‘photos while eating and food photo’. 10 of the participants implied that they avoid making violent shares. The codes under this

category are ‘insulting words, physical violence included shares’. Finally, 7 of the participants stated that they avoid making private life shares. The codes under this category are ‘intimate photos, romantic written posts’.

Table 16.

Especially avoided shares

Categories	Codes
Political shares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political ideas (n=7) • Specifying political side (n=4)
Food included shares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos while eating (n=3) • Food photo (n=6)
Violent shares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insulting words (n=5) • Physical violence included shares (n=3)
Private life shares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimate photos (n=5) • Romantic written posts (n=2)

*Each participant has given more than one answer

4.2.2.3.2.1. Category 1: Political Shares

Most of the participants stated that they avoid making political shares. Codes in this category are “political ideas and specifying political side”. Some of the example expressions of the participants listed below:

“I avoid making political comments. I do not specify my side and I do not share my political opinions.” (P12)

4.2.2.3.2.2. Category 2: Food Included Shares

Participants have also stated that they avoid making food included shares. The codes in this category are “photos while eating, and food photo”. Some of the example expressions of the participants listed below:

“Food, dinner table. I do not share these kinds of photos. There are people who cannot afford food.” (P13)

“I never share about eating and drinking. I get angry when people share photos of them eating food.” (P15)

4.2.2.3.2.3. Category 3: Violent Shares

Some of the participants stated that they avoid making violent shares on their social media account. Codes in this category are “insulting words and physical violence included shares.” Some of the example expressions of the participants listed below:

“I generally do not like sharing posts which include insulting words. I also do not share about my political ideas.” (P18)

4.2.2.3.2.4. Category 4 Private Life Shares

Some of the participants have stated that they avoid making private life shares on their social media accounts. The codes of this category are “intimate photos, and romantic written words”.

“... I do not share my private life about my family. I do not like when people share intimate photos with their husbands.” (P16)

4.2.2.3.3. Social Media Usage With School Society

The participants are asked about online relationship they have with the other components of the early childhood classroom. Most of the participants see their colleagues as the friend, so they subscribe or accept the requests of their colleagues (n=8). On the other hand, most of the participants are not online ‘friend’ with their principal and the parents of the children in their classroom. From the interviews, it was obvious that participants do not want to be online ‘friends’ with the parents of the children. Some participants banned the parents so they cannot send friendship requests. Some participants stated that they do not use social media as a private place so they do not mind if they become friends with anyone from the school society (see table 17).

Table 17.

The online relationships between teacher and the other members of the school

Categories	Codes
With colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Friends’ in social media accounts because they are friends in real life (n=8) • ‘Friends’ in social media because they do not use social media privately, so they do not hesitate to be ‘friend’(n=3) • Not ‘friends’ in social media account but there is no reason not to be ‘friend’(n=6) • Not ‘friends’ in social media account because there is no necessity (n=3)
With the principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Friends’ in social media accounts because they are friends in real life (n=3) • ‘Friends’ in social media because they do not use social media privately, so they do not hesitate to be ‘friend’(n=3) • Not ‘friends’ in social media account but there is no reason not to be ‘friend’ (n=9) • Not ‘friends’ in social media account because of hierarchical issues (n=4)
With the parents of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They became ‘friends’ after the school is closed (n=4) • ‘Friends’ in social media because they do not use social media privately, so they do not hesitate to be ‘friend’(n=3) • Not friends in social media account but there is no reason not to be ‘friend’ (n=4) • Not friends in social media account because of professional preferences (n=7) • The parents of the children are blocked in the social media account (n=2)

4.2.2.3.3.1. Category 1: With Colleagues

The online relationships participants had with their colleagues are coded in this category. The codes of this category are “Friends’ in social media accounts because they are friends in real life, Friends’ in social media because they do not use social media privately, so they do not hesitate to be ‘friend’, Not ‘friends’ in social media account but there is no reason not to be ‘friend’, Not ‘friends’ in social media account because there is no necessity”. Some of the example expressions listed below:

“I follow my colleagues and my principal on social media accounts. We spend a lot of time together and become like family members. By adding them on social media, we know more about each other. In addition, it provides easier communication.”
(P13)

4.2.2.3.3.2. Category 2: With the Principal

The codes under this category are “Friends in social media accounts because they are friends in real life, ‘Friends’ in social media because they do not use social media privately, so they do not hesitate to be ‘friend’, Not ‘friends’ in social media account but there is no reason not to be ‘friend’ Not ‘friends’ in social media

account because of hierarchical issues”. Some of the example expressions listed below:

“I have two or three of my colleagues added to my social media account, and I do not follow my principal. It is not on purpose. If they sent requests, I would accept those.” (P8)

“I have my colleagues on my social media account. I see them as a friend, so I do not hesitate to include them in my social media accounts. I do not follow my principal because of hierarchical concerns. I can reach my principal whenever I want. It is not necessary to connect via social media.” (P16)

4.2.2.3.3.3. Category 3: With the Parents of Children

The codes under this category are “They became ‘friends’ after the school is closed, ‘Friends’ in social media because they do not use social media privately, so they do not hesitate to be ‘friend’, Not friends in social media account but there is no reason not to be ‘friend’, Not friends in social media account because of professional preferences. The parents of the children are blocked in the social media account”. Some of the example expressions listed below:

“I do not become friends on social media with the parents of children. Parents have not requested friendship on social media until now. If they sent a request, I would not accept it because this is my private life, and I do not want parents to see my personal life...” (P2)

“I do not become friends throughout the semester. After the semester, I would accept the requests from the parents...” (P4)

“I just include parents on WhatsApp. I do not include them in my other social media accounts. I have a double major in Psychological Counseling and Guidance. One of the classes was about ethical issues. That class improved my perspective. I would not be comfortable when parents know my private life...” (P19)

“I do not include parents of the children on social media. I ban them from my social media accounts. When they send a request to me, it becomes a dilemma for me. If I do not accept their request, they will think differently. If I accept their request, I will not be comfortable. Therefore, I have banned them on social media, so they cannot find me.”(P18)

4.2.2.3.4. Opinions Towards Social Media

There are two tables in this part. In table 17, participants’ opinions on the effectiveness of social media tools are demonstrated. In table 18, participants’

opinions on the effects of social media on the components of the early childhood education are shown.

4.2.2.3.4.1. Opinions of Participants on the Effectiveness of Social Media Tools

In table 18, opinions of the participants on the effectiveness of social media tools are demonstrated. Most of the participants stated positive opinions towards social media. Responses of the participants are coded and positive codes are “practical way to search, easy to use, rich content, chance to share experience, chance to get creative ideas, renewing the knowledge and a chance to learn the information”. The codes under the category of negative opinions are “information pollution, increase in addictive behavior and excessive time consumption” (see table 18).

Table 18.

Opinions of participants on the effectiveness of social media tools

Categories	Codes
Positive opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical way to search (n=8) • Easy to use (n=6) • Rich content (n=6) • Chance to share experience (n=7) • Chance to get creative ideas (n=5) • To renew the knowledge (n=6) • Learn information (n=5)
Negative opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information pollution (n=4) • Increase in addictive behavior (n=3) • Excessive time consumption (n=7)

*Each participant has given more than one answer

4.2.2.3.4.1.1. Category 1: Positive Opinions

Positive opinions of the participants on the effectiveness of social media are coded in this category. The codes of this category are “practical way to search, easy to use, rich content, chance to share experience, chance to get creative ideas, to renew the knowledge and learn information”. Some of the example expressions listed below:

“Teachers should benefit from social media. The new age requires this. We can see various activities. We can follow innovations and renew our knowledge. New information or changes on education can spread speedily.”(P12)

“We are living in a technology age. We can reach everything speedily. Social media provides a practical way to reach information and it is easy to use. I think it is beneficial. As teachers, we can prepare activity pools and we can benefit from the experiences of other teachers.” (P18)

4.2.2.3.4.1.2. Category 2: Negative Opinions

Negative opinions of the participants on the effectiveness of social media are coded in this category. The codes of this category are “information pollution, increase in addictive behavior and excessive time consumption.” Some of the example expressions listed below:

“Social media can be used in an effective way. However, users should be informed. A lot of people cannot use social media effectively. There is information pollution on these types of platforms. People cannot understand how much time they spend on social media.”(P24)

4.2.2.3.4.2. Participants’ Opinions on the Effects of Social Media on the Components of the Early Childhood Education

In table 19, participants’ opinions on the effects of social media on the components of the early childhood education is demonstrated. Responses of the participants are coded and categorized. From the teacher’s aspect, teachers have positive opinions that they could reach various activities, so creating a curriculum is easier with social media. In the parent aspect of the situation, participants have positive and negative opinions. Some of the participants stated that parents are more informed about child development. On the other hand, according to some participants, with social media parents behaved like they know more than the teacher. Therefore, this situation causes problems. From the child’s aspect, most of the participants asserted that children are not aware of social media (n=8). Some of the participants stated that social media causes addictive behaviors and children are exposed to harmful content (see table 19).

Table 19.

Participants’ opinions on the effects of social media on the components of the early childhood education

Categories	Codes
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to create curriculum (n=10) • Fast communication in parent involvement (n=6) • Facilitated the experience shares (n=5)
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More informed about the classroom activities (n=6) • More informed about the child development (n=4) • They think they know much more than the teacher (n=7)
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are not aware of the social media (n=8) • They watch videos instead of active playing (n=6) • Addictive behaviors (n=4) • Exposition to violence and sexual content(n=3)

*Each participant has given more than one answer

4.2.2.3.4.2.1. Category 1 Teachers

Participants’ opinions on the effects of social media on teachers are coded in this category. The codes of this category are “easier to create curriculum, fast communication in parent involvement, facilitated the experience shares”. Some of the example statements of participants are listed below:

“... For teachers, social media has improved our perspectives. I found opportunities to see my colleagues from different work conditions. Sharing our experiences has improved our creativity, and it has become easier to prepare daily programs...” (P13)

“We see a lot of activity examples, and this is beneficial. We can communicate with parents in an easier and more effective way...” (P3)

4.2.2.3.4.2.2. Category 2 Parents

Participants’ opinions on the effects of social media on parents are coded in this category. The codes of this category are “more informed about classroom activities more informed about child development they think they know much more than the teacher”. Some of the example expressions are below:

“Let’s begin with parents. Parents think that they know a lot of things about child development because of social media. Actually, they do not know anything. You cannot be a doctor by just watching some surgery videos. Parents demand different things about their children, and I know it is not possible at this developmental stage...” (P13)

“...Parents also get information from social media. I am sometimes surprised by the knowledge parents have...” (P3)

4.2.2.3.4.2.3. Category 3 Children

Participants' opinions on the effects of social media on children are coded in this category. The codes of this category are "children are not aware of the social media; they watch videos instead of active playing, addictive behaviors exposition to violence and sexual content". Some of the example expressions of the participants listed below:

"...I think children are not aware of social media yet in early childhood years. Maybe they are watching videos." (P13)

"...Children are influenced by social media. They are exposed to harmful content such as violence." (P3)

4.3. Opinions on Responsible Social Media Usage

The third research question was about participants' opinions about responsible social media usage. The interview questions for this part are:

In the table 20, participants' opinions on responsible social media usage is demonstrated. Participants' responses are categorized and the categories in this issue are "behaviors on social media, time management, ethical issues and purpose of usage". Most of the participants mentioned about not wasting too much time on social media (n=11). In addition, participants also emphasized the code "being careful with the shares" (n=7).

Table 20.

Participants' opinions on responsible social media usage

Categories	Codes
Behaviors on social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following the accounts which have good content (n=3)• Eliminating friendship requests (n=6)• Being careful with the shares (n=7)• Having a closed account to other accounts (n=2)
Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not wasting the time (n=11)• Spending time on good content (n=4)
Ethical issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not sharing the photo of the child (n=5)• Not sharing private life too much (n=8)
Purpose of usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim to learn new things (n=4)• Aim to communicate (n=3)

*Each participant has given more than one answer

4.3.1. Category 1: Behaviors on Social Media

Participants stated their ideas about responsible social media usage. The responsible social media behaviors are coded in this category. Codes of this category are “following the accounts which have good content, eliminating friendship requests, being careful with the shares having a closed account to other accounts”. Some of the example expressions of the participants listed below:

“I try to arrange my friends and follow list. I do not accept request when I do not know the person. My account cannot be examined by other people.” (P8)

4.3.2. Category 2: Time Management

Another category about responsible social media use is time management. The codes of this category are “not wasting time and spending time on good content”. Some of the example statements of the participants are listed below:

“We should avoid using an excessive amount of social media. We should follow positive things and learn new things. There are a lot of unnecessary shares, and following these types of shares leads to time consumption... Responsible social media use is managing time and following qualified content for me.” (P1)

“Some people become obsessive to the social media. Constantly they renew their Instagram page and they cannot take off their eyes from their mobile phone. There should be a time limit such as 10-15 minutes. In addition, children’s photos should not be posted onto a social media page. I think that these behaviors are irresponsible.” (P5)

4.3.3. Category 3: Ethical Issues

One of the categories about responsible social media use is ethical issues. The codes under this category are “not sharing the photo of the child and not sharing private life too much”. Some of the example statements of the participants are listed below:

“Social media deviated from its purpose, so I have closed some of my accounts. We are exposed to too much private life, and this is time consuming. Instead, beneficial activities can be found, and a beneficial platform can occur.” (P22)

4.3.4. Category 4: Purpose of Usage

Purpose of usage is another category of this table. The codes under this category are “aim to learn new things and aim to communicate”. Some of the example expressions in this category are listed below:

“People should have knowledge on their interests, and they should follow pages depending on their interest. With this way, they would learn new things...” (P10).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, there will be three main parts which are discussion, implications and recommendations. The findings of the study will be discussed with the related literature. Then, implications of the study for early childhood educators, school administrators and decision makers will be presented. Finally, recommendations for future studies will be explained.

5.1. General Summary of the Study

A qualitative study is conducted in order to understand social media presence of early childhood educators. Data is gathered with semi-structured interviews. The results of the study are combined under three themes. The names of these themes are “Participants’ social media use in their professional life, social media use and attitudes of participants and opinions on responsible social media use.” In the first theme, findings about professional use of the participants are demonstrated. It is revealed that participants use social media for preparing daily lesson plans, parent involvement and seeking information. Therefore, it could be said that social media is integrated into different components of social media. In the second theme, findings about participants’ social media usage and their attitudes towards social media are demonstrated. Participants’ personal social media use habits and their attitudes towards social media are found. It was found that all participants use at least one social media platform, but they may have different attitudes towards social media. Finally, in the third theme, participants’ opinions responsible social media use are taken. It was found that participants relate to responsible social media use with their behaviors on social media, time management and ethical issues.

5.2. Discussion

When media tools are examined from an ecological perspective, it could be said that media tools and media messages are integrated into all of the systems around an individual (Johnson & Pupilampu, 2008). It is possible to see direct and indirect effects of media on an individual's development (Mchale et. al, 2009). Media would affect children's physical, psychological and emotional development (Jordan, 2004). Results of the current study revealed that most of the participants are active social media users. From the children's aspect, social media's presence in school settings affects children's development directly because of the interactions with teachers and peers in the microsystem of the ecological systems. Teachers' social media use in the classroom and sharing daily routine with parents would be examples of direct effects of social media on children. In addition, the findings of the study revealed that there are attempts to regulate teachers' behaviors on social media. This would be an indirect effect from decision makers and it could be placed in macrosystem of the ecological systems theory. From the teacher's aspect, social media is actually integrated into the daily lives of early childhood teachers. The results of the study showed that social media plays a big role in early childhood teachers' personal and professional lives. Early childhood teachers adapted social media in preparing daily lesson plans and parent involvement. Therefore, development of social media has effects in the microsystem level. In addition, there are indirect effects of social media on early childhood teachers. For example, the findings of the study revealed that parents' presence on social media affects teachers' behaviors on social media. This would be placed in mesosystem of the ecological systems.

5.2.1. Participants' Social Media Usage in Their Professional Life

Development of social media affected the differentiation between personal and professional life. A person's personal image and professional image were mixed and the line between them was blurred (Kind, Genrich, Sodhi &, 2010). Now people are becoming 'friends' with their colleagues or their bosses on social media. In addition, they sometimes make unprofessional shares on their social

media account (Chretien, Greysen, Chretien & Kind, 2009). This issue is also valid with the current study. Development of social media and the invention of smartphones have brought discussions about professional use of social media. In this part, the findings about early childhood educators' professional use of social media will be discussed. Because of the lack of literature, findings will be discussed with studies in different fields.

Early childhood educators' professional use of social media is important because they are responsible for the education of young children. Their behavior on social media would affect the behaviors of parents and protect children from possible harms of social media. The findings of this study revealed that early childhood teachers use Facebook, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube and EBA in their professional life.

The findings showed that participants used social media in order to create curriculum, be informed about the field, communicate with parents, inform the followers, and take advantage of educational materials. Most of the participants use social media in order to create curriculum and get activity ideas. Participants mentioned the social media accounts with activity ideas for early childhood educators. Most of the participants including teachers who had a negative attitude towards social media used social media platforms for this purpose. Some participants used activities found on social media directly, and some participants adapted those activities to their classroom. Therefore, social media platforms played an important role on participants' process of creating curriculum. Social media became a source for early childhood educators to find various activities. There were a lot of social media accounts that shared activity ideas for early childhood education classroom, so there are both beneficial and harmful activities. When social media was used as an educational tool, it would be an effective way to reach parents (Seger, 2011). Teachers' ability to eliminate the content and find qualified content played an important role. Therefore, early childhood educators should have basic information on social media literacy.

Development of social media required necessary skills for the users. According to Rheingold (2010), required skills for having social media literacy are attention, participation, cooperation, network awareness and critical consumption. These skills will help the users to use social media consciously. They would also protect themselves from the possible harms of social media. Giving such education to early childhood educators is very important. Results of the study showed that most of the early childhood teachers are active social media users. In addition, they use social media in their professional life as well. If they have social media literacy, they would be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of social media. They would also inform parents about the issue.

The findings of the current study showed that social media has become a source of information for the participants. Therefore, teachers used social media both for being informed about child development and for informing their followers about child development. The credibility of the information released by different social media was not reliable. In other words, that information was rumors manipulated by the public opinion (Wu, Liu, Liu, Wang & Tan, 2016). The judgment of the information should be done by the teacher, so teacher should be good at judging the content of the social media. Another issue about information appearing on social media pages is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a significant issue on social media, and the rate of plagiarism on social media is high (Özkaya, Güner & 2019). One of the participants remarked this issue. P4 stated that “I do not follow the social media platform when the source of the share is not stated”. That idea about the social media pages should be increased among early childhood teachers, and the effort of producing knowledge should be valued by professionals. Early childhood educators should also be informed in order to judge the content of the shares on social media and they should be sensitive about the ethical issues like plagiarism.

Another finding of the current study was that early childhood educators used social media in parent involvement. All participants who used social media in parent involvement used WhatsApp as the parent involvement tool. In their article, Balci & Tezel-Şahin stated that Facebook would be an effective way in order to provide

parent involvement (2015). The findings of the current study showed that early childhood teachers tend to use WhatsApp as a parent involvement method.

Participants used these social media groups in order to communicate with parents, to inform parents about daily activities and to inform parents about parenting. Participants had different ways of using these social media groups. Most of the participants had social media group with parents, and they were in these groups. Some participants were not included in the social media group with parents. They contacted just one parent, and that parent conveyed the message to the social media group. Some participants used the version which was used as announcement groups. Participants who were not included in the social media group had some previous experiences. Therefore, it could be said that using social media as the parent involvement tool might cause some problems. These problems may be related to blurred line between personal and professional lives of the teachers (Feeney & Freeman, 2015). In order to prevent the problems between parents and early childhood teacher, a national guideline would be developed. Because NAEYC guideline is developed for teachers and parents in America, that guideline may not be valid in Turkey.

Participants were asked about the rules that they set in order to manage the social media groups with parents. Code for this category was “just making announcements, banning unnecessary chat, banning personal compliant and time limit”. It could be inferred that participants faced with different problems, and they found ways in order to cope with the conflicts. This situation might be related to the line between personal and professional life (Feeney & Freeman, 2015). Taking parents to a social media platform which was a click away to the teacher would create some problems.

Another purpose of the participants using social media in parent involvement was to inform parents about daily activities. Most of the participants stated that they sent parents’ photos about daily activities. Throughout the interviews, it was noticed that participants developed different ways in order to send photos of their child to parents. Most of the participants stated that they created a document for

permission of the parents. Some of the participants who sent photos to parents stated that parents of the children looked at the photos closely, and they criticized the teacher. Therefore, some of the participants remarked that they were careful before they sent the photo to the parents. Some of the participants made sure that all of the children were in the photo, and they all looked good. They did not send the photo if a child's clothing was not good. On the contrary, some of the participants did not like to send the photos in which children posed. Instead, they sent photos while children were doing their activities, playing, etc. Some participants took the photos of the children during activities, and children were not aware of the situation. Getting permission from the children should be valued by the early childhood educators. Children have privacy rights (Brosch, 2018). They should be informed when their photos are taken. Therefore, participants developed different ways in order to inform parents about daily activities. The important thing was that sending photos to the parents became a time consuming job for some participants. In addition, teacher's use of social media in classroom would be questioned. When a teacher took his/her phone in order to take pictures of children, notifications in the cell phone would be distracting so teacher would miss a problem which is happening in the classroom. Feeney & Freeman suggested that early childhood teacher should not use smartphones in classroom (2015).

Most of the participants were sensitive about sharing the photos of the children on their personal account. Ministry of education published a notice for teachers not to share children's photos and videos (MEB, 2017). The sensitivity of the participants might be related to this notice. P10 on this issue stated that "Ministry of National Education sent warning for not posting the children's photos on social media. I do not share the photos of the children because of that reason. I do not see a problem on posting children's photos". Three of the participants stated that they shared the photo of the child. Two of them stated that they have parental permission, so they did not see a problem sharing the photo of the child. However, in order to do that, teacher should be certain that parents have knowledge about the possible harms of this behavior. Posting children's photo on social media might cause different problems such as violating child's right to be private (Brosch, 2018).

Development of social media has created new occupations. For example, famous people on social media are called social media influencers. Social media influencers are people, pages or the content creators who have large number of 'friend' or followers on a social media platform (Freberg et. al, 2011). These pages gain money by making advertisements on their account. In addition, if a social media influencer creates content on YouTube, he/she earns money by being watched by a populations. There are a lot of pages on social media related to children and early childhood education. Some of these accounts are relevant to motherhood, and child care. The owners of these accounts are generally mothers, brand owners, etc. There are also accounts about early childhood education which are owned by early childhood educators. These pages create content about daily activities, they give song suggestions, etc. Moreover, there are pages which are owned by experts on the field of early childhood education. Because these pages are followed by a lot of people, participants were asked if they benefited from these pages. Most of the participants were aware of the pages on social media. Participants who were not active social media users were also aware of the social media pages. Their way of searching these activities was searching the activity name on the Internet, and they reached those social media pages. The results of the current study showed that participants knew the social media pages which were related to early childhood education. The pages that they referred to were managed by early childhood education teachers. They liked these kinds of shares, so the motherhood pages were not remarked by teachers as the pages that they liked to follow.

Participants were asked how they benefited from the social media pages. Most of the participants stated that they got activity ideas from social media. Participants remarked that social media was an easy way to search for an activity. They could find various activity types and create a portfolio for activities. There were also participants who followed the experts in the field, so they got informed about child development, and current issues in the field. Thus, participants generally used these social media accounts in order to create daily lesson plans, and in order to get information.

The criterion of participants following the social media pages was asked during the interview. Most of the participants stated that the content of the social media page should be educational. Some of the participants stated that they wanted scientific or creative content. There were participants who did not state any criteria, and also some criteria were unexpected. For example, the consistency of age group and socio-economic status was a criterion for some of the participants. Participants stated that they did not follow the social media pages which shared activity ideas for different age group. In addition, they stated that they did not follow when a private school suggests activity ideas because of economical inconsistency.

In social media, there are lots of pages create content about children, child development and early childhood education. It will be inappropriate to label the content of these social media pages because there are both useful and harmful content for users. The important issue is eliminating the content of the social media pages. Therefore, informing early childhood educators in order to use social media in a beneficial way is important.

In the current study, participants were asked about the online relationships with the school society. The results of the study showed that most of the participants did not see problem to add colleagues on social media. Most of the participants stated that they saw their colleagues as their friend and they did not hesitate to include them on their personal social media account. On the contrary, they generally thought that there should be a line between parents and teachers. Therefore, most of the participants did not accept friendship requests from parents. Most of the participants were not 'friend' with their principal on social media. The reasons of the situation showed difference among participants. Four of the participants stated that they did not add their principal on social media for hierarchical reasons. The main point of these results was that participants decided how to behave on social media. They generally used the trial and error method, which was very obvious in social media groups with parents. However, there should be an official template on this issue. There is a template in NAEYC, and it has suggestions for early childhood educators (Feeney & Freeman, 2015). This kind of template would be useful as a pathfinder for teachers in Turkey.

The results of the current study showed that participants preferred to use social media tools in their professional life. Most of the participants thought that social media is an effective way; they had positive opinions on effectiveness of social media. Findings of the study showed that participants thought that social media was practical, and it has rich content. Therefore, participants could find opportunities to share experiences, and they could renew their knowledge. There were some participants who thought there was information pollution on social media and social media led excessive time consumption, also it increased addictive behaviors of participants. Although there were few negative thoughts, most of the participants thought positively on social media and they were willing to use social media in their professional life. Social media platforms might be established by scholars with credible information. Therefore, reaching the early childhood educators would be more effective.

Participants were asked about the effects of social media. In teacher aspect, participants had positive opinions. They thought that development of social media facilitated the process of creating curriculum, and social media has provided fast communication in parent involvement. Therefore, participants generally thought that social media had positive effects on teacher's aspect of early childhood education. In parental aspects, there were both positive and negative opinions of participants. Some of the participants stated that parents followed expert in the field, and they got knowledge about child development and childcare. On the contrary, some of the participants stated that parents demanded unnecessary, impossible things because they followed the experts on social media.

All in all, the findings of the current study showed that early childhood educators use social media in their professional life. Because there was no official template for early childhood educators, so they decided how to use social media platforms by themselves. An official template would be created by the scholars, and by decision makers. Early childhood educators generally used trial and error method especially in order to set professional boundaries with parents. It was obvious that there was a lack of literature in the issue, and more studies should be conducted in order to define problems.

5.2.2. Social Media Usage and Attitudes of Participants

Social media is a quickly growing digital place with a lot of users from all over the world. It has affected almost all aspects of human life. People use social media in shopping, business, education, etc. (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). People place social media in their personal and professional life. In the current study, with the interview questions, participants' personal use of social media was examined, and the participants explained how they used social media and how they behaved in social media. In this part of the discussion, the findings about social media usage and attitudes of the participants toward social media will be discussed. Because of the lack of studies in the field, the findings will be discussed with worldwide literature.

According to data presented by Global Web Index, people who use social media for more than 2 hours a day were segmented as heavy users of social media (Bolewitz, 2018). In the current study, weekly social media usage of the participants is demonstrated. Depending on the segmentation of the Global Web Index, 11 of the participants of the study can be called as heavy users of social media. In addition, people who use social media less than 30 minutes a day are called light-users of social media (Global Web Index, 2018). In the current study, 8 of the participants could be segmented as light-users of the social media. Therefore, most of the participants of the study are light-users or heavy users of social media.

Civic Science published a report which compared heavy users of social media and general population (Bolewitz, 2018). According to this report, heavy users of social media are generally younger people. The rate of heavy users of social media is decreasing with the age, so it supports the findings of the current study. For example, P22 have 38 years of experience.

In their personal life, all of the participants were WhatsApp users, which is an application commonly used on smartphones and computers. The least used social media platform by the participants was Twitter. According to statistics, Twitter

was used less than Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp by worldwide social media users. In this point, the findings were similar with the world statistics. However, Pinterest was used less than Twitter by worldwide social media users (Chaffey, 2019). Participants who were Twitter users stated that they used Twitter in order to be informed about the news. For example, P3 on this issue stated that “I follow the news and current issues on Twitter”. It was found that the content which includes news spread better when it was compared to other contents on Twitter (Leavitt, Burchard, Fisher & Gilbert, 2009). This might be the reason why participants who have Twitter account prefer following the news.

Most of the participants stated that they did not use different social media identity. Two of the participants stated that they had a secondary social media identity. One of the participants stated that they had a selling account, and the other participant stated that she had a secondary account for her hobby. Participants were asked about their secondary social media identity, because the reason why they needed a secondary identity was wanted. In addition, it was also researcher’s curiosity if there were influencers or users of educational account among the participants. The findings of the current study showed that most of the participants did not use secondary social identity and they did not create content for large groups on social media platforms. In addition, in the continuum of the discussion part it was mentioned that most of the participants were the followers of the pages that shared educational content such as activity ideas and information about child development. Therefore, participants of the study were not content creators for large group of people, so the results of the study will not include these early childhood educators.

Participants were asked about their social media shares in the current study. Categories which reflected the responses of the participants were shown. The most common shares of the participants were “family photos and educational shares”, and four of the participants preferred to be silent on their social media account. According to a study results, most shared pictures on Instagram were categorized as friends, food, gadget, activity, captioned photo, selfie, pet and fashion (Hu, Manikonda & Kambham, 2014). The categories of this study showed some

similarities with the categories of the current study. The category of the “personal life photos” in the current study showed similarity with the category of the “friends”. In addition, “captioned photos” was similar with category of “quotes of famous people”. Therefore, shares of the participants of the current study showed some similarities with shares of the general user on Instagram. Different from the general user, participants made educational shares. On this issue, P6 stated that “I feel responsible to make educational shares because there are people who have children on my social media account, and I want to inform them about child development.”

Participants were asked about shares they avoided. “Political shares” and “Food included shares” were the most repeated categories by the participants. Participants of the study avoided stating their political ideas on social media. This density of teachers on avoiding political shares might be related to fear of losing occupation. Job seekers looked the social media posts of applicants. If they saw inappropriate posts of applicants, they would reject applications, or fire the employee (Garone, 2013). Therefore, the reason for avoiding political shares might be related to fear of losing job. The second most repeated category was “food included shares”. However, food category was the most popular shares of Instagram (Hu et.al, 2014). Seeing a lot of shares on social media might create a negative attitude towards making food included shares on social media. There were more categories about the shares that participants avoided such as private life photos and violent shares

Development of Web 2.0 tools led the development of social media platforms (Çam & İşbulan, 2012). With Web 2.0 tools, various types of social media platforms were created. Today, there are social media platforms which could be used for different purposes (Ajjan&Hartshorne, 2008). With social media platforms, people may transfer audio, visual and audio-visual content and written content to a group of people from all over the world (Dearstyne, 2007). Social media platforms have come to a point that they cannot be separated from the Internet (Sundaram, 2018). However, social media gives people the opportunity to create a profile and it allows all of the users to have the ability to create and share

content (Lenhart & Madden 2007). Therefore, some sites on the Internet may not be social media platform. The confusion about the definition of social media is also observed in the current study.

Most of the participants did not include parents to their personal social media accounts. They thought that there should be line between parents and the teacher. NAEYC recommended that parents and teacher should not be “friend” on social media with each other (Feeney & Freeman, 2015). Some participants developed strategies to cope with this situation. Some participants did not sent request to the parents or they did not accept the requests of the parents. Interestingly, there were participants who blocked parents of children on social media. These participants did not want to deal with rejecting friendship request of parents. Some participants set rules about not adding parents on social media. There were also participants who did not see problem on adding parents on social media. These participants added parents because they did not see their social media page as a private place. In addition, some participants accepted the requests of parents after children graduated from school in order to be informed about growth of children. Therefore, most of the participants were aware that there should be a professional line between parents and teachers. They utilized different ways in order to deal with the situation. In Turkey, there was no such official template about how to behave on social media for early childhood educators. Therefore, participants utilized their own way depending on their past experiences.

Throughout the data collection process, it was noticed that some of the participants defined themselves as not social media users. However, when further questions were asked, it was found that all of the participants used at least one social media platform. It could be inferred that some of the social media platforms were not perceived as social media platform by the participants. Examples of this situation could be WhatsApp, and Pinterest. Depending on results of the current study, participants who marked these social media platforms defined themselves as not social media users. The lack of knowledge on definition of social media might cause issues like this. Therefore, informing teachers about definition of social media would be significant.

In the current study, it was concluded that some participants had negative attitudes and most of the participants had positive attitudes towards social media. Participants who had negative attitudes and opinions towards social media used very limited social media platforms, and they spent little time on social media. In addition, they generally defined themselves as not social media users. According to the results of the current study, these participants used WhatsApp and sometimes Pinterest. They reached out the social media platforms by searching on Google because they did not have social media accounts.

In analysis process, it was noticed that the participants who had negative attitude towards social media were more experienced educators who were older than the other participants. These participants mentioned about social media with negative words. There were five participants who had negative attitudes towards social media, the experience level of them range between 23 and 38. This situation could be related to the fact that these participants were not born into a media-saturated world, in other words these participants were not digital natives. The terminology of digital natives and digital immigrants was proposed by Prensky (2001). Digital immigrants are the generation who are not born into a media saturated world. Therefore, this generation is not capable of using technology as the digital native (Prensky, 2001). They are more critical about communication technologies and they are afraid of using the technology in their daily life.

Social media is a place that can affect education positively and negatively (Faizi, Afia & Chibeb, 2013; Cramer & Hayes, 2010). In this evolving world the Internet and social media have gained importance in a lot of fields such as marketing, policy, education, etc. (Sahsi, 2012; Harb, 2011; McCarrol & Curran, 2013). In addition, social media is integrated into the daily life, and it has effects on social life (Chuckwuere & Chuckwuere, 2017). Avoiding social media is not the solution to prevent possible harms. Therefore, an individual should have necessary information to use social media in a beneficial way. Educators are especially important because they play an important role in children's development (Palermo, Hanish, Martin, Fabes & Reiser, 2007; Eving & Taylor, 2009). To have influence on development of children who are born into a media-saturated world, teachers

should have knowledge about social media. Therefore, they are able to raise a generation who can benefit from social media and protect themselves from possible harms.

The results of the current study showed that participants who had positive attitudes towards social media used more than one social media platform, and they integrated social media into their daily life. They spent more time on social media platforms. In addition, these participants described social media with positive words.

The participants who had positive attitudes towards social media were younger when they were compared with the participants who had negative attitudes. When the time they spent on social media was examined, there were participants who spent an excessive amount of time on social media. For example, three of the participants reported that they used social media more than 30 hours a week. Social media addiction could seem to be a danger for these participants, and informing teachers who spend too much time on social media could help them recognize this issue.

Tools of the Internet might cause spending excessive time consumption (Fasli & Ozdamli, 2018). This excessive usage of the Internet might cause Internet addiction. Young stated that Internet addiction might cause issues like losing a job and relationship problems (2004). Social media might also cause addictive behaviors, and this addiction was called as social-notification-addiction by the psychologists (Çam & İşbulan, 2012). The results of the study revealed that there might be early childhood educators who were Internet-addicted.

5.2.3. Opinions on Responsible Social Media Usage

People have a lot of opportunities with the development of social media, and social media is integrated into all aspects of people's life. Today, a lot of daily routines such as communication, socialization, business and leisure time activities

have online dimensions (Livingstone & Bulger, 2013). Having social media in daily life brought some issues such as privacy (Zurbriggen et al., 2016).

Social media is such a platform which may be used in positive and negative ways (Livingstone & Brake, 2010; Picazo-Vela, Gutiérrez-Martínez, & Luna-Reyes, 2012). Users of the social media should have information about ethics, and how to use social media properly. Early childhood educators are also important because their knowledge on any issue will be helpful for other people like parents and children. In addition, their lack of knowledge about the issue will affect those components as well. The third research question is established in order to understand early childhood educators' opinions on responsible social media usage.

The results of the study showed that early childhood educators had different opinions about responsible social media usage. Some of the participants emphasized "behaviors on social media". In this category, participants mentioned the responsible actions of the user such as following, accepting requests, having a closed account. These findings of the study were related to privacy issues. Some of the early childhood educators knew that users of the social media should pay attention to the privacy. Social media changed privacy understanding of the people (Uyanık, 2013). Most of the participants were compliant about that they were exposed to the private life photos too much. People shared their life on social media; there were people who had experiences for sharing.

The second category was about time management. Some of the participants thought that time consumption should be decreased, and people should not spend excessive amount of time on social media. This category might be related to social media addiction. Most of the participants emphasized this issue.

Ethical issues were the other category of findings. It was reported by the participants that sharing the photos of children was an irresponsible behavior.

The findings of the current study showed that participants had ideas on responsible social media usage. These ideas generally based on their observations and

experiences. Therefore, they had guesses what responsible social media usage should be. Teachers should be educated about responsible social media usage, and also they should have the necessary information to educate parents and children about social media.

Responsible social media should be defined by the decision makers. While doing this, cultural values of the people who live in Turkey should be taken into consideration. Components of the responsible use of social media for early childhood education should be defined, and maybe a national guideline should be created. One of the components about social media usage of the participants would be about social media use in the classroom. Using social media in the educational setting would be distracting for teachers (Feeney & Freeman, 2015). Another component of responsible social media use would be about online privacy of children. Teachers take photos of children while they are doing activities. The photos of children should not be shared without parental permission (Feeney & Freeman, 2015). In addition, parents should be well informed about online risks of posting children's photos (McDaniel et. al, 2012). Online relationship of people in school society should not affect professional life of the early childhood teachers. Being 'friends' with parents on social media would create such conflicts. These lines of professionalism on social media should be drawn by decision makers, so teachers would not have to cope with problems.

5.3. Implications

Social media has become a phenomenon which affects a lot of fields. The current study was designed to give clues about how early childhood educators used social media in their personal and professional life. In this part of the thesis, the implications of the study for early childhood educators, parents, teacher education programs and Ministry of National Education will be presented.

The findings of the current study framed how early childhood educators used social media in their personal and professional lives. In the current study, it was revealed that early childhood educators had a lack of information about social

media, and its usage. Most of the participants used trial and error approach while using social media in their professional lives. They used social media depending on their past experiences or their colleagues' past experiences. However, they should learn how to behave on social media, especially on issues like privacy, professionalism, and eliminating the content which was released by the social media. In addition, early childhood educators should be open to innovations and changes in technology. They should educate themselves in order to be beneficial for the future generation and the parents of children.

The findings of the current study also showed that early childhood educators use social media for almost all aspects of the early childhood education. Participants turn to social media for curriculum design, parent involvement, classroom activities, etc. Therefore, it could be inferred that social media is integrated into early childhood classrooms. The teacher education programs should include media related classes and inform pre-service early childhood educators on how to behave on social media and how to benefit from social media. Media literacy classes would be helpful to use technology and social media properly. In addition, social media literacy should be acquired by the early childhood teachers. In addition, there should be classes which are about ethics, privacy and children's rights.

Social media literacy would be taught to pre-service early childhood teachers. In order to be a media-literate individual, there are necessary skills. These skills are defined by Rheingold which are attention, participation, cooperation, network awareness and critical consumption. Gaining these skills in undergraduate programs would be helpful for future teachers to get benefit from social media tools.

Ministry of National Education issued a publish notice for teachers on posting children's photos and videos. In the current study, the findings of the study demonstrated that the notice of the Ministry of National Education is effective because most of the participants do not share children's photos and videos. However, there should be further attempts at social media use in early childhood education. An official template could be provided for teachers to use. The online

platform which is called as EBA was mentioned by the participants. There might be more functional social media platforms established for teachers to communicate with parents. Having a social media group created some problems for teachers. Therefore, another social media platform might separate teacher's personal life and professional life.

All in all, the findings of the current study revealed that social media took an important place in early childhood education. Therefore, decision makers should pay attention to this topic. The beneficial way of using social media in early childhood education should be supported, and possible harms of using social media should be prevented.

5.4. Recommendations

The current study contributed to the literature by giving clues about social media use in early childhood education. In this part of the thesis, the suggestions for future research will be made.

Current study revealed that there was a lack of literature on the issue, and further studies should be done in order to have a broader view about social media use in early childhood education.

The social media should be investigated from the parent and school administrator aspect. Because early childhood education involves these components, they should also be aware of professional social media use. In addition, just giving related education to teachers may not be effective by ignoring other components.

Media literacy and social media literacy of the early childhood educators should be increased. With this way, early childhood educators would acquire the skills which are necessary to survive in such a media-saturated world. Media literacy education is important to reach and use all types of media messages including the basic print media and technologically complex media. Media literate individuals would use media tools with various purposes like entertainment, work or access to the culture

(Kellnerr & Share, 2007). In addition, media literacy education helps individuals to create their own media content and share it with a larger community. In this way, media literacy education gives opportunity to the people to be creative (Nagle, 2018). Therefore, increasing media literacy skills of early childhood educators would help them cope with technological problems. Media literacy skills of teachers would be increased with seminars, or courses.

Social media's use as an educational material should be tested. There should be more studies on social media in the learning process of children. There are such studies in higher levels of education, and they are generally successful (Willemse, 2015; Çetinkaya, 2017). Social media use in early childhood education would be effective.

The pages which are followed by early childhood educators would be examined, and their credibility would be tested. The current study revealed that participants used social media in the process of creating curriculum. Therefore, more social media platforms might be established by the scholars in order to give early childhood educators credible platforms.

In conclusion, the social media is a kind of a platform which is not studied enough. Any attempt is valuable, and it will contribute to the literature.

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APPENDICES

A: VOLUNTARY ATTANDANCE SHEET

ARAŞTIRMAYA GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu çalışma Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi İlköğretim Bölümü yüksek lisans öğrencisi ve Nafia Kübra KARAKAYA tarafından, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İlköğretim Bölümü öğretim üyelerinden Yrd. Doç. Dr. Volkan ŞAHİN danışmanlığında yürütülen yüksek lisans tez araştırmasıdır. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Araştırmanın amacı, bir okul öncesi eğitimcisinin profesyonel hayatında sosyal medya kullanımını ve sosyal medya kullanırken aldığı sorumluluklarını incelemektir. Araştırmada Okul Öncesi Eğitimcileri ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılacaktır.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden araştırmacı ile yapılacak bire bir görüşme seanslarına katılmanız beklenmektedir. Yaklaşık olarak 45-60 dakika civarında sürmesi beklenen görüşme seansında, size demografik bilgiler haricinde 2 tane yapılandırılmış ve 8 tane de yarı yapılandırılmış sorular sorulacaktır. Görüşme esnasında toplanan veriler, daha sonra içerik analizi ile değerlendirilmek üzere cevaplarınızın ses kaydı alınacaktır.

Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?

Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Çalışmada sizden kimlik veya kurum belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından

değerlendirilecektir. Katılımcılardan elde edilecek bilgiler toplu halde değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır.

Katılıminızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:

Görüşme, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz görüşmeyi yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda araştırmacıya görüşmeden çıkmak istediğinizi söylemek yeterli olacaktır.

Riskler:

Bu çalışma ile ilgili her hangi bir risk öngörülmemektedir.

Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:

Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için ODTÜ İlköğretim Bölümü öğretim üyelerinden Yrd. Doç. Dr. Volkan Şahin (E-posta: vsahin@metu.edu.tr) ya da yüksek lisans öğrencisi Nafia Kübra Karakaya (E-posta: karakaya.nafia@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

KATILIMCININ:		
İsim ve Soyadı	Tarih	İmza

İki nüsha olarak dağıtılacak formun bir kopyasını doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz. Diğer kopyasını kayıtlarınız için saklayabilirsiniz.

B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

LÜTFEN SORULARI CEVAPLAMADAN ÖNCE OKUYUNUZ

Bu arařtırmada vermiř olduėunuz bilgiler arařtırmacının gvencesi altındadır. Arařtırmanın verileri hibir kurum, kuruluř, kiři ile paylařılmayacaktır. Katılımcılardan alınan veriler katılımcıların kimliklerinden baėımsız olarak deėerlendirip, sadece bilimsel amalarla kullanılacaktır.

Blm I – Demografik Bilgiler

1) Eėitim Durumunuz:

Lise n lisans Lisans Lisansst

2) Mezun Olunan Kurum:

.....

3) Meslekte kaıncı yılınız?

4) Hangi yař gruplarıyla alıřtınız? (Ltfen size uygun olan hepsini iřaretleyiniz.)

0-36 ay 36-48 ay 48-60 ay 60-72 ay

5) Sınıfınızda ka ėrenciniz var:

0-10 10-20 20-30

Blm II

6) zel hayatınızda (eėlence, sosyal hayat vb.) hangi sosyal medya platformlarını kullanıyorsunuz?

Sosyal Medya Platformu	Hesabın aıldıėı zaman (Yıl, ay)	Haftalık Kullanım sresi (saat)	
Facebook			
Instagram			
Twitter			
Whatsapp			
Youtube			
Pinterest			
Diėer.....			

7) Profesyonel/mesleki yaşamınızda (bilgi edinme, ders programları, alan uzmanlarını takip, veli iletişimi vb.) hangi sosyal medya platformlarını kullanıyorsunuz?

Sosyal Medya Platformu	Platformun Kullanım Amacı (bilgi edinme, ders programları, alan uzmanlarını takip, veli iletişimi vb.)	Haftalık Kullanım süresi (saat)		
Facebook				
Instagram				
Twitter				
Whatsapp				
Youtube				
Pinterest				
Diğer.....				

8) Sosyal medyada kişisel hesaplarınızın yanı sıra kullandığınız ikincil veya üçüncül profiller veya hesapları var mı? Eğer varsa kullanım amaç ve nedeniniz nedir/nelerdir?

9) Kişisel hayatınızda sosyal medya paylaşımları yaparken nelere dikkat edersiniz? Özellikle yapmaktan kaçındığınız paylaşımlar nelerdir?

10) Mesleki hayatınızda sosyal medya kullanırken nelere dikkat edersiniz?

-meslektaşlarınızla mesleki paylaşım yapar mısınız (Etkinlik, problem davranış ile başetme, mevzuat, vs.)

11) Öğrencilerinize ait fotoğrafları sosyal medya hesaplarınızda paylaşıyor musunuz? Paylaşırken nelere dikkat edersiniz?

12) Sosyal medyada eğitim amaçlı oluşturulmuş sayfaları takip ediyor musunuz?

-Bu hesaplar nelerdir?

-Nasıl yararlanıyorsunuz?

-Bu hesapları takip etme kriterleriniz nelerdir?

13) Okul müdürünüz ve diğer öğretmen arkadaşlarınız sosyal medya hesaplarınızda kayıtlı mı? Bu durumun kişisel veya mesleki hayatınızda olumlu veya olumsuz yanlarını gözlemliyor musunuz?

- 14) Sınıfınızdaki çocukların velileri sosyal medya hesaplarınızda kayıtlı mı? Bu durumun kişisel veya mesleki hayatınızda olumlu veya olumsuz yanlarını gözlemliyor musunuz?
- 15) Sizce sosyal medyanın bugünkü duruma gelmesi okul öncesi eğitimine bir etkisi var mıdır? Gözlemlerinizi nelerdir?
- 16) Size göre öğretmen eğitim öğretim sürecinde sosyal medyadan yararlanmalı mıdır? Cevabınız evet ise hangi amaçla yararlanabilir olabilir?
- 17) Sorumlu Sosyal medya kullanımı size ne ifade ediyor? Sizce bir öğretmenin bir sorumlu sosyal medya kullanımı nasıl olmalıdır? (Örnekle açıklayınız.)

C: HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (METU)

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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18 MAYIS 2018

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgili: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Volkan ŞAHİN

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Nafia Kübra KARAKAYA'nın "Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Sosyal Medya Kullanım Alışkanlıkları Üzerine Bir İnceleme" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2018-EGT-080 protokollü numarası ile 11.05.2018 - 30.09.2019 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN

Başkan V

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

Üye

Doç. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI

Üye

Doç. Dr. Zena ÇITAK

Üye

Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

D: APPROVAL OF THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION



T.C.
ANKARA VALİLİĞİ
Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 14588481-605.99-E.16406486
Konu : Araştırma İzni

14.09.2018

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİNE
(Rektörlük)

İlgili: a) MEB Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğünün 2017/25 nolu Genelgesi,
b) 15/08/2018 Tarihli ve 51944218-300 sayılı yazımız.

Üniversiteniz Temel Eğitim Anabilim Dalı Okul Öncesi Eğitimi yüksek lisans programı öğrencisi Nafia Kübra KARAKAYA'nın yürüttüğü "Okul Öncesi Eğitimcilerinin Sosyal Medya Kullanımları Üzerine Bir İnceleme" konulu tez çalışması kapsamında uygulama talebi Müdürlüğümüze uygun görülmüş ve uygulamanın yapılacağı İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğüne bilgi verilmiştir.

Görüşme formunun (2 sayfa) araştırmacı tarafından uygulama yapılacak sayıda çoğaltılması ve çalışmanın bitiminde bir örneğinin (cd ortamında) Müdürlüğümüz Strateji Geliştirme (1) Şubesine gönderilmesini rica ederim.

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E: TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN SOSYAL MEDYA KULLANIMLARI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

1. GİRİŞ

İnsanoğlu için iletişim her devirde bir ihtiyaç olmuştur ve bu yüzden insanlar daha iyi iletişim sağlayabilmek için yeni yollar arayışında olmuştur. Teknolojinin gelişmesiyle daha karmaşık ve çok boyutlu iletişim aletleri icat edilmiştir. Öyle ki günümüzde; sesin, videonun, görsel-işitsel medya mesajlarının iletilmesi kolaylaşmış ve yaygınlaşmıştır (Vural & Bat, 2010).

İnsanlar bilgi edinmek, fikirlerini paylaşmak gibi amaçlar için değişik medya araç-gereçleri kullanmaktadır. Medya; öğrenenlerin bilgi, tutum ve yetenek kazanmaları ve bilgiye ulaşıp paylaşımlarını sağlayan her şey olarak tanımlanabilir (Reiser & Gagne, 1983). Gelişen teknoloji ve internet, insanın etrafındaki medya mesajlarını artırmış ve günümüz insanların medya araç-gereçleri ile çevrili bir dünyaya doğmasına neden olmuştur (Koltay, 2011).

Web 2.0 araçlarının gelişmesinden önce, televizyonlar ve gazeteler gibi içerik oluşturucusunun sadece bir kişi, kurum veya kuruluş olduğu medya araçları vardı (Kellner & Share, 2007). Bu medya araçlarının seyircisi durumunda olan insanların, içerik oluşturma sürecine bir etkisi bulunmuyordu (Cherow-O'Leary, 2014). İnternetin gelişmesi, izleyici durumundaki insanlara, içerik üretim sürecine katılma hakkı tanıdı. Böylelikle insanlar, bir ürün, haber veya politika hakkında fikirlerini belirtme imkânı bulmaya başladılar (Kol, 2017).

Web 2.0 araçları kullanıcılarla etkileşimde bulunma ve işbirlikli içerik oluşturma imkanı sağlamıştır (Conole & Alevizou, 2010). Böylelikle insanlar birlikte içerik üretebilecekleri platformlara sahip olmuş; işitsel veya görsel iletilerini dünyanın

değişik yerlerinden insanlara gönderme olanağı bulmuşlardır (Vural & Bat, 2010). Sonuç olarak, kişisel web sayfaları ve çevrimiçi ansiklopediler yerlerini wikilere ve bloglara bırakmıştır (Kaplan & Haeinlein, 2010).

Sosyal medya Web 2.0 araçlarını kullanan internet temelli uygulamalar veya web sayfaları olarak tanımlanabilir (Kaplan & Heinlein, 2010). Sosyal medya araçlarının geliştirilmesiyle, insanlar herhangi bir konu üzerinde fikir belirtebilir, içerik üretebilir ve ürettiği içeriklerini bir toplulukla paylaşma imkânı bulabilirler. Bu gibi özellikler sosyal medyayı global bir fenomen haline getirmiş, ve dünya çapında kullanıcılarını artırmıştır. Bugün, dünya üzerinde dört milyardan fazla sosyal medya kullanıcısı bulunmaktadır (Perrin & Anderson, 2019).

Sosyal medyanın kazanmış olduğu bu popülerlik, birçok bilim alanına değişik sorular getirmiştir. Örneğin, reklamcılık ve pazarlamacılık alanında sosyal medyaya adapte edilmiş, yeni stratejiler ortaya konulmaya başlamıştır. Tüketici merkezli bir reklamcılık stratejisi önem kazanmıştır çünkü artık insanlar sosyal medyada bir ürün hakkındaki fikirlerini açıkça beyan eder hale gelmişlerdir (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

İnternet ve teknolojinin insanların günlük davranışları üzerinde etkisi büyüktür (Christ & Potter, 1998). Bu sebeple, sosyal medya araçlarının eğitim üzerindeki etkisinden bahsetmek bir zorunluluk haline gelmiştir. Eğitim sisteminin, sosyal medyanın insanların hayatına getirdiği bu yeni alışkanlıklara adapte olması gerekmektedir. Ayrıca, insanların yeniçağın gereksinimlerine ayak uydurabilmesi için gereken yeteneklerin ve bilginin eğitim sistemi tarafından sağlanması gerekmektedir.

Duruma okul öncesi eğitimi çerçevesinden bakılırsa, sosyal medyanın etkileri okul öncesi eğitimde de görülmektedir. Sosyal medya veliler ve öğretmenler arasındaki iletişimi hızlandırmıştır (Balcı & Tezel Şahin, 2016). Ayrıca sosyal medya platformlarında birçok sayfa okul öncesi eğitime yönelik paylaşımlar yapmaktadır. Bu durum öğretmenlerin etkinlik hazırlarken olan davranışlarına yarar sağlamış veya zarar vermiş olabilir. Sosyal medyanın eğitim materyali olarak kullanılması,

sınıf içerisinde işitsel ve görsel materyaller getirilmesine sebep olmuştur (McManis & Gunnewig, 2012). Öteki taraftan, sosyal medyanın okul öncesi eğitimde kullanılması, bazı etik sorunları da beraberinde getirmiştir. Sınıftaki çocuğun fotoğrafının sosyal medya hesaplarında paylaşılması, çocuğun zararlı içeriğe maruz kalması gibi durumlar sosyal medya ile ilgili başlıca mevzulardan sayılabilir. Çocuğun sosyal medya ile çevrili bir çevrede yaşayabilmek için gerekli hayati becerileri kazanması ve sosyal medyadan gelebilecek zararlardan korunması için okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sosyal medya hakkındaki bilgileri artırılmalıdır (Feeney & Freeman, 2015). Bu tezde, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sosyal medya kullanımları hakkındaki görüşlerini alma üzerine bir çalışma yapılacaktır.

2. LİTERATÜR TARAMASI

İnternet ve sosyal medyanın insan hayatına etkisine Ekolojik bir bakış açısından bakılırsa, bu teknolojilerin insan hayatına etkisi mikrosistemden makro sisteme kadar bütün seviyelerde görülmektedir. Evde bulunan akıllı telefonlar, bilgisayarlar ve tabletler mikrosistemde insan gelişimini direkt olarak etkilemektedir. Diğer sistemlere de bakıldığında, internet ve sosyal medyanın insan hayatına entegre olduğu görülecektir (Mchale et. al., 2009). Gerek öğretmenin, gerekse çocuğun etrafındaki ekolojik sistemlere etkisi bulunan sosyal medyanın akademik düzeyde çalışılması çok önemlidir.

Sosyal medya, Web 2.0 araçlarının geliştirilmesiyle başlamıştır. İnsanların içerik üretme sürecine dahil olmasını sağlayan bu araçlar, bir çok internet sitesi ve telefon uygulamaları girişimleriyle bu günkü halini almıştır. İnternet kullanıcıları olarak insanlar, içerik üretim sürecine içerik seçmek, filtrelemek, gözlemlemek, yorum yapmak ve paylaşmak gibi davranışlarla katkıda bulunmuşlardır (Hermida vd., 2012). Bu ilgi çekici özellikleri sosyal medya araçlarının insanlar tarafından tercih edilmesini hızlandırmıştır. Günümüzde sosyal medya araçları global bir fenomen haline gelmiştir. Dünya genelinde milyonlarca insan aktif sosyal medya kullanıcısıdır (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

Sosyal medya araçları insanların kendi profillerini oluşturabildikleri ve bu profillerde kendi içeriklerini istedikleri kişilerle paylaşabildikleri platformlar sağlamaktadır. Değişik sosyal medya platformları farklı amaçlara hizmet etmekte ve insanlara öğrenebilecekleri ve boş zaman geçirebilecekleri fırsatlar tanımaktadır (Çam & İşbulan, 2012).

Kietzman, Hermkens, McCarthy ve Silvestre (2011), sosyal medyanın bileşenlerini tanımlamışlardır. Bu araştırmacılara göre sosyal medya araçlarının yedi bileşeni vardır. Bunlar kimlik, sohbet, mevcudiyet, ilişkiler, ün ve gruplar olarak belirlenmiştir. Sosyal medyada bireysel kimliklerin oluşturulabilmesi, sosyal medyanın birinci bileşenidir. İnsanların diledikleri kişilerle sohbet edebilmesi ise ikinci bileşendir. Sosyal medya araçları sayesinde birey, mevcudiyetini belirtebilir. Bu insanların nerede olduklarını yer bildirimini yaparak belirtmeleriyle olur. Sosyal medya hesaplarında, insanlar arkadaş veya hayran gibi sıfatlar edinir. Bu da sosyal medyanın sağlamış olduğu diğer bir bileşendir. Sosyal medya hesaplarında takipçi sayısını artıran insanlar bir çeşit üne kavuşur ve diğer insanlar tarafından tanınır hale gelir. Bu da araştırmacıların bahsettiği diğer bir bileşendir. Son olarak, sosyal medya platformları sayesinde insanlar kendileri ile aynı zevkleri paylaşan insanlarla etkileşimde bulunabilir (Kietzman vd., 2011).

Medya ile çevrelenmiş bir dünyaya evrilmemizin, eğitim sistemine etkileri vardır. Bu konu ile ilgili Prensky alana bir terminoloji getirmiştir. Prensky, medya araçları ile çevrilmiş bir dünyaya doğan çocuklar dijital yerliler, bu çevreye doğmamış çocuklar ise dijital göçmenler olarak adlandırılmışlardır. Prensky'ye göre, teknolojinin gelişmesi bu iki kuşak arasında bir nesil farkı oluşturmuştur. Dijital bir dünyaya doğan çocuklar, daha oyun odaklı ve birden fazla işi bir arada yürütebilmektedirler. Onlar uzun yazılar okumak yerine kısa görselleri incelemeyi tercih ediyorlar (Prensky, 2001). Eğitim sisteminde bu durumdan doğan bir çelişki oluşuyor. Dijital yerliler, öğrenci konumunda dijital göçmenler de öğrenci konumunda olduğu için bu nesilsel farklılık öğrencilerin öğretmenler tarafından anlaşılmasına sebep oluyor (Prensky,2001).

Sosyal medyanın ve eğitim ile alakalı çalışmalar genelde yükseköğretim düzeyinde yapılmıştır. Sosyal medyanın öğretim programına dâhil edildiği çalışmalar genelde başarıyla sonuçlanmıştır (Çetinkaya, 2017; Susilo, 2014; Willemse, 2015). Sosyal medyanın okul öncesi eğitimde de yeri vardır, ancak bu konuyla ilgili araştırmalar çok sınırlıdır. Bu durum ise yapılan araştırmanın gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Okul öncesi dönemindeki çocuğun sosyal medya ile iletişimi vardır. Bu durum dokunmatik ekran teknolojisinin yaygınlaşmasıyla daha da artış göstermiştir. Çocukların sosyal medya üzerindeki etkinlikleri, oyun oynamak, sosyalleşmek ve çevrimiçi video izlemek gibi etkinliklerdir (Holloway, Green & Livingstone, 2013). Bunun yanı sıra, çocuklar etrafındaki yetişkinlerin sosyal medya kullanımlarından da etkilenmektedir. Çocuğun fotoğrafını sosyal medya hesaplarında paylaşmak, çocuğun dijital ayak izlerini artırır (Brosh, 2016). Bu fotoğrafların internet üzerinde olması, hiçbir zaman kaybolmayacağı riskini de barındırmaktadır. Ayrıca, çocuğun iradesi olmaksızın çocukların fotoğrafını çekmek ve internet üzerinden paylaşmak çocukların mahremiyet hakkını ihlal etmektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sosyal medya kullanırken profesyonel tutumları çocukların gelişimini direkt olarak etkilemektedir. NAEYC okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sosyal medya kullanırken profesyonel tutumları ile ilgili bir bildiri hazırlamış, ve okul öncesi eğitimcilerine tavsiyeler vermiştir. Birinci olarak, okul öncesi eğitimcileri sınıf içerisinde sosyal medya kullanmalarına ilişkindir. Sınıf içerisinde sosyal medyayı kullanmak, öğretmen için dikkat dağıtıcı olabilir. Ayrıca, öğretmenin kişisel sosyal medya hesabında çocukların fotoğraflarını paylaşması etik bir ihlale sebep olur. Son olarak da, okul öncesi öğretmenin iş arkadaşları ve çocukların velileri ile sosyal medya üzerinden bir etkileşimde olması mesleki ve özel hayat arasında bulunması gereken çizgiyi azaltır ve değişik problemlerin oluşmasına sebep olabilir (Feeney & Freeman, 2015).

Araştırma Soruları

1. Okul öncesi öğretmenleri, profesyonel hayatlarında sosyal medya araçlarını nasıl kullanıyorlar?
2. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin günlük yaşamda sosyal medya kullanım alışkanlıkları, profesyonel hayatlarını nasıl etkiliyor?
- 2.1. Okul öncesi öğretmenleri hangi sosyal medya platformlarını kullanmayı tercih ediyor?
- 2.2. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sosyal medyaya karşı tutumları nedir?
3. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sorumlu sosyal medya kullanımı hakkındaki görüşleir nelerdir?

3. YÖNTEM

1. Çalışmanın Deseni

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin görüşlerini daha detaylı almak ve onların gerçek yaşantılarını öğrenmek için araştırma deseni olarak nitel araştırma seçilmiştir.

2. Çalışma Grubu

Çalışma grubu için, Ankara'nın Yenimahalle ve Keçiören ilçelerindeki devlet okulunda çalışan okul öncesi eğitimcileri seçilmiştir. Çalışma 25 kişi ile yapılmıştır. Katılımcıları devlet okullarından seçmenin temel sebebi, özel okulların sosyal medya ile ilgili politikalarının olabileceği ve bu durumun başka bir çalışma konusu olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır.

3. Veri Toplama Araçları

Veriler, yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmelerle toplanmıştır. Görüşme protokolü hazırlanırken, ilgili alanyazın taramanmış, okul öncesi alanında akademisyen olan 5 kişiden uzman görüşü alınmış ve pilot çalışma yapılmıştır. Böylelikle, görüşme protokolü son halini almıştır. Çalışmanın yapılabilmesi için, ODTÜ insan hakları etik komisyonundan ve Milli Eğitim Bakanlığından gerekli izinler alınmıştır.

Çalışma katılımcıları gönüllülük esasıyla seçilmiş, ve veriler kişilerin isimlerinden bağımsız bir şekilde analiz edilmiştir.

4. BULGULAR

1. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin profesyonel hayatında sosyal medya kullanımı

Araştırmanın sonucunda, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin profesyonel hayatlarında sosyal medya kullanırken, Pinterest (n=20), Whatsapp (n=19), Instagram (n=12), Facebook (n=5), Youtube (n=5) ve Eba'yı (n=3) kullandığı bulunmuştur.

Katılımcıların profesyonel hayatlarında sosyal medya kullanım amaçları ise günlük programı hazırlarken, bilgi almak için, aile katılımında, takipçilerini bilgilendirmek için ve sosyal medyayı eğitimsel materyal olarak kullanma kategorilerinde toplanmıştır.

Katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu (n=19), çocukların fotoğraflarını kendi kişisel sosyal medya hesaplarında paylaşmamaktadır. Çocuğun fotoğrafını kişisel sosyal medya hesabında paylaşan öğretmenlerden bir kısmı veli izni ile (n=2), bir kısmı da çocuğun yüzünü fotoğrafta göstermeyerek paylaşmaktadır (n=3). Velilerle çocukların fotoğrafını paylaşan katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu, veli izni ile paylaşmaktadır (n=15).

Katılımcılar veliler katılımını sosyal medya üzerinden sağlamak için değişik stratejilere başvurmaktadır. Bu stratejiler, bir sosyal medya grubu açarken kullanılan stratejiler, sosyal medya grup kuralları ve çocukların fotoğraflarını velilerle paylaşırken kullanılan stratejiler olarak üç kategoriye ayrılmaktadır. Veliler ile birlikte sosyal medya grubuna sahip olan katılımcıların hepsi Whatsapp kullanmaktadır. Birinci kategoride, katılımcı öğretmenlerin çoğunun velilerle birlikte bulunduğu bir Whatsapp grubu vardır (n=10). Bunun yanı sıra, bazı katılımcılar velilerin bulunduğu Whatsapp grubuna katılmamaktadır, onlar bir veli aracılığıyla mesajlarını tüm gruba iletmektedirler (n=6). Bazı katılımcılar ise Whatsapp'ın yeni sürümü olan sadece grup kurucusunun duyuruları paylaştığı bir

sürümü kullanmaktadırlar (n=3). İkinci kategoride, katılımcıların sosyal medya gruplarını yönetirken koydukları kurallar yer almaktadır. Bu kategoride, katılımcıların çoğu gereksiz sohbet ortamı oluşturmayı (n=4), bazıları kişisel şikâyeti(n=2) ve birkaçı ise zaman sınırı koymayı kural olarak belirlemiştir(n=3). Son olarak üçüncü kategoride, katılımcıların çocukların fotoğraflarını paylaşırken kullandığı stratejiler ele alınmıştır. Katılımcıların çoğu çocukların hepsinin bir karede olduğu fotoğrafları paylaşırken(n=7), bazı katılımcılar is etkinlik sürecinde gelişen doğal fotoğrafları veliler ile paylaşmaktadır (n=5). Ayrıca, çocukların iyi görünmesine dikkat eden katılımcılar da vardır (n=3).

Tablo 9’da katılımcıların sosyal medyadaki eğitim içerikli paylaşım sayfalarından hangilerini takip ettikleri, bu sayfalardan nasıl yararlandıkları ve takip etme kriterlerinin neler olduğu gösterilmiştir. Katılımcıların en çok takip ettiği hesaplar Önceokulöncesi, Gülçin Öğretmen, Teacherella, Lolapest, Akademisyenanne, Üstün Dökmen ve Doğan Cüceloğlu olarak tespit edilmiştir. Katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu bu sayfalardan günlük etkinlikleri planlarken yararlandıklarını, bazıları bilgi kaynağı olarak gördüğünü belirtmiştir. Katılımcılara bu sayfaları takip etme kriterleri sorulduğunda katılımcılar eğitimsel, bilimsel ve yaratıcı içeriğe göre takip ettiklerini belirtmiştir.

2. Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Sosyal Medya Kullanımı Ve Sosyal Medyaya Karşı Tutumları

Araştırma sonuçları, katılımcıların günlük yaşamlarında sosyal medya kullanırken, Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, Youtube, Pinterest ve Twitter kullandıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Haftalık sosyal medya kullanım sürelerine bakıldığında, katılımcılarının çoğunun 0-5 saat aralığında sosyal medya kullandığı tespit edilmiştir.

Araştırma süresince, bazı katılımcılar sosyal medya kullanıcısı olmadıklarını belirtmiştir. Görüşmeler süresince bu katılımcıların en az bir sosyal medya platformu kullandıkları fark edilmiştir. Bu sebeple katılımcılar arasında sosyal medyaya geliştirilen tutumlar iki kategoride birleşmiştir. Birinci kategori, sosyal

medyaya karşı pozitif tutumu olan, ikinci kategori ise sosyal medyaya karşı negatif tutumu olan katılımcılardan oluşmaktadır. Sosyal medyaya karşı pozitif tutumda olan katılımcılar birçok sosyal medya platformunu kullanmakta, sosyal medyayı günlük hayatlarına adapte etmektedirler. Bunun yanısıra, bu katılımcılar sosyal medyayı daha çok gereksiz, güvensiz gibi negatif kelimelerle tanımladıkları tespit edilmiştir.

Katılımcılardan yalnızca iki tanesi sosyal medyada kendi adlarından başka ikincil bir hesaba sahip olduklarını belirtmiş. Bu katılımcılardan birisi hobisi ile ilgili bir hesaba sahip olduğunu, diğeri de bir satış hesabına sahip olduğunu belirtmiştir.

Katılımcılar kişisel hayatlarında paylaşım yaparken genellikle özel hayatına dair paylaşımlar yaptıklarını, ayrıca katılımcıların hobileri ile ilgili paylaşımlar yaptıkları belirlenmiştir. Eğitimsel paylaşım yapan katılımcılar genellikle kendi meslekleriyle ilgili paylaşımlar yapmaktadır. Çoğu katılımcı siyasi içerik paylaşmaktan kaçınmakta, yemek ile ilgili görseller yapmak istememektedir.

Katılımcıların çoğunluğu sosyal medyanın etkililiği hakkında pozitif görüşlere sahiptir. Katılımcılar sosyal medyanın pratik ve kullanımı kolay olması ve zengin içerikler sunması ayrıca paylaşım yapma olanağı sağlamasını profesyonel hayatlarında etkili bulmaktadırlar. Katılımcıların sosyal medya ile ilgili negatif düşünceleri ise sosyal medyanın bağımlılık yapması ve sosyal medyada bilgi kirliliği bulunmasıdır.

Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, katılımcıların çoğu (n=8), okulda çalışan iş arkadaşlarını gerçek arkadaşları olarak gördükleri için sosyal medya hesaplarına arkadaş olarak eklemekten çekinmemektedir. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu okul müdürlerini sosyal medya hesapları üzerinden kaydetmemekte ve bunun böyle geliştiğini okul müdürlerini arkadaş olarak eklemekte bir sakınca görmediklerini belirtmektedirler. Okul müdürlerini ast-üst ilişkisinden dolayı eklemediğini belirten katılımcılar da vardır. Katılımcılar, sınıftaki çocukların velileri ile genelde sosyal medya üzerinden arkadaşlık kurmamakta ve hatta velileri sosyal medya hesaplarından engelleyen katılımcılar da bulunmaktadır.

3. Katılımcıların Sorumlu Sosyal Medya Kullanımı Hakkındaki Görüşleri

Bu temada, katılımcılara sorumlu sosyal medya kullanımı hakkındaki görüşleri sorulmuştur. Katılımcıların cevapları sosyal medya üzerindeki davranışlar, zaman yönetimi, etik durumlar ve kullanım amacı kategorilerinde birleşmiştir.

Sosyal medyadaki davranışlar kategorisinde, katılımcılar sorumlu sosyal medya kullanımını gizli bir hesaba sahip olmak, her gelen takip talebini kabul etmemek, paylaşımlarda özel hayatı çok paylaşmamak gibi kodlarla anlatmışlardır.

Katılımcıların birçoğu sorumlu sosyal medya deyince, sosyal medyada geçirilen zamana vurgu yapmıştır. Zamanı boşa harcamamak, iyi içerik üzerinde zaman geçirmek bu katılımcıların verdiği cevaplara oluşturulan kodlardır.

5. TARTIŞMA VE ÖNERİLER

Duruma ekolojik perspektif ile bakıldığında, sosyal medya araçlarının Ekolojik Sistemler Teorisindeki her bir ekolojik alana entegre olduğu görülmektedir. Mikrosistem düzeyinde, sosyal medya öğretmenin günlük hayatına etki etmiş ve öğretmenin günlük alışkanlıkları sosyal medya araçlarından etkilenmiştir. Duruma çocuğun açısından bakıldığında da, mikrosistem düzeyinde sosyal medya çocuğun gelişimine direkt etkide bulunmaktadır (Jordan, 2004). Mezosistem düzeyinde ise, teknoloji ve sosyal medyanın okulda kullanılması örnek gösterilmesi sayılabilir. Ailelerin okulda olup biten olayları bir tıkla görebilmesi, sosyal medyanın birey gelişimi üzerindeki etkilerine sebep olabilir. Ekzosistem düzeyinde, sosyal medya ve internetin birey gelişimi üzerindeki etkilerini görmek yine mümkündür. Bir çocuğun annesinin işyerinde internete erişiminin olması, evdeki internet erişimi gerekliliğini artırabilir. Bunun da çocuğun gelişimine etkisi olur (Johnson & Pupilampu, 2008).. Makrosistem düzeyinde ise, kanunların ve kuralların sosyal medya üzerinden yayılması, bireylerin bu kurallardan daha hızlı haberinin olmasına sebep olabilir (Johnson & Pupilampu, 2008). Yapılan çalışmanın sonucu da göstermiştir ki, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin bir çoğu sosyal medya araçlarını aktif olarak kullanmaktadır. Bu durum, onların veli iletişimini hızlandırmış,

günlük program hazırlamalarını etkilemiştir. Öğretmenlerin sosyal medyayı profesyonel hayatlarında kullanması, çocukların gelişimine etkisi olduğunu düşünmek yanlış olmayacaktır.

Sosyal medyanın geliştirilmesi ve yaygınlaşmasının profesyonel hayata etkileri olmuştur. Sosyal medya kişinin kişisel hayatını paylaştığı bir mecradır. Bir kişi iş arkadaşını veya işiyle ilgili bir kişiyi sosyal medya üzerinden 'arkadaş' olarak eklediğinde, iş arkadaşı kişinin özel hayatına maruz kalır. Bu durum, profesyonel hayat ile özel hayat arasındaki keskin çizgiyi bulanıklaştırır (Kind, Genrich & Sodhi, 2010). Yapılan diğer çalışmalar okul öncesi eğitimde de böyle bir durumun oluştuğunu kanıtlar niteliktedir (Feeney & Freeman, 2015). Ayrıca, okul öncesi eğitimcilerinin sosyal medyayı nasıl kullandıkları da araştırmanın bir boyutudur. Konu ile ilgili alanyazın eksikliği, tartışma kısmında diğer alanlarda yapılan çalışmalara yer verilmesine sebep olmuştur.

Yapılan çalışma, okul öncesi eğitimcilerinin profesyonel yaşamlarında, Facebook, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube ve EBA'yı kullandıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Katılımcılar, bu sosyal medya platformlarını aile katılımında ve günlük plan hazırlarken kullanmışlardır. Ayrıca, katılımcılar, alanla ilgili bilgi almak için ve mevzuat ile ilgili gelişmeleri takip etmek için de sosyal medyayı kullanmaktadırlar. Katılımcıların hepsi, en az bir sosyal medya platformunu profesyonel hayatlarında kullanmaktalar. Bu durum, katılımcıların sosyal medya bilgilerinin önemini gösteriyor çünkü sosyal medyayı hem yararlı yönde hem de zararlı yönde kullanmak mümkündür. Sosyal medya üzerinde bir çok sayfa, okul öncesi eğitim alanında bir çok şey paylaşmaktadır. Bu bilgilerin doğruluğunu ve yanlışlığını ayırt etmek ise sosyal medya kullanıcısının bir görevidir. Belki de okul öncesi öğretmenleri için bir sosyal medya okuryazarlığı bilgisinin gerekliliğini ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

Sosyal medyayı bilinçli kullanabilmek için, bireyin bazı hayati becerilere ihtiyacı vardır. Rheingold (2010), bu becerileri dikkat, katılım, işbirliği, iletişim şebekesi farkındalığı (*network awareness*) ve eleştirel tüketim olarak tanımlamıştır. Bu

becerileri okul öncesi eğitimcilerine kazandırmak ve onların sosyal medyayı doğru kullanmasını sağlamak çocukların gelişimine pozitif yönde bir etkide bulunabilir.

Yapılan araştırma sonuçları göstermiştir ki, okul öncesi eğitimcileri sosyal medyayı aile katılımında kullanmaktadırlar. Bu durumun etkisini belirten araştırmalar da yapılmıştır (Balcı, Tezel-Şahin, 2016). Yapılan araştırma, okul öncesi eğitimcilerinin aile katılımında sosyal medya kullanımını etkili bulduğunu göstermiştir ancak katılımcılar aile katılımında sosyal medya kullanırken bir çok problemle karşılaşmış ve kendilerine göre yeni yöntemler geliştirmeye çalışmışlardır. Bazı katılımcılar sosyal medya gruplarına kurallar koymuş, bazı katılımcılar ise sosyal medya grubuna bir veli aracılığıyla katkıda bulunmuştur. Bütün bu sonuçlar, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sosyal medya kullanırken deneme yanılma yöntemini kullandıklarını ve bir rehber niteliğinde yönergelere ihtiyaç duyduklarını ortaya koymaktadır.

Araştırmaya katılan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çoğunun çocukların fotoğraf ve videolarını kişisel sosyal medya hesaplarında paylaşmadıklarını, ailelerle paylaşırken de genelde aile izni aldıkları görülmüştür. Bu konuda Milli Eğitim Bakanlığının yayınlamış olduğu genelge etkili olmuştur diye bir çıkarım yapılabilir. 2017 yılında Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı öğretmenlere çocukların fotoğraf ve videolarını sosyal medya hesaplarında paylaşmamaları için bir genelge göndermiştir. Fakat sosyal medya üzerinde öğretmen hesaplarını inceleyen bir kişi öğretmenlerin öğrencilerinin görsellerini sosyal medya hesaplarında paylaştıkları görülebilir.

Araştırmada, katılımcılara iş arkadaşlarını, velileri ve müdürlerini sosyal medyada ekleyip eklemedikleri ile ilgili sorular sorulmuştur. Araştırma sonuçları, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin iş arkadaşlarını daha çok arkadaş olarak gördüklerini ve sosyal medyada eklemekten çekinmediklerini göstermiştir. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu, müdürlerini sosyal medya üzerinde eklememiştir, fakat bu durumun böyle geliştiğini bir sakınca olmadığını belirtmiştir. Ayrıca, müdürleri ast-üst ilişkisinden dolayı eklemeyen katılımcılar da vardır. Katılımcılar genelde velileri sosyal medya hesaplarında eklememiş ve velileri ile arasında bir mesafe olması

gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. Velileri sosyal medya hesabında engelleyen katılımcılar da bulunmaktadır. Mesleki hayat ve özel hayatın ayrı olması için, NAEYC sosyal medya üzerinden arkadaş olarak eklenmemesi gerektiğini önermiştir (Feeney & Freeman, 2015).

Sorumlu sosyal medya kullanımı hakkında alınan katılımcı görüşleri göstermiştir ki, katılımcılar sorumlu sosyal medya kullanımını zaman kontrolü, sosyal medya üzerindeki davranışlar ve etik durumlarla ilişkilendirmektedir. Sosyal medyayı pozitif ve negatif yönde kullanmak çok mümkündür (Livingstone & Brake, 2010; Picazo-Vela, Gutiérrez-Martínez, & Luna-Reyes, 2012). Okul öncesi eğitimcilerinin sosyal medyayı negatif yönde kullanması, çocukların gelişimini olumsuz etkileyecek ve etik haklarını ellerinden alınmasına sebep olacaktır. Araştırma sonucu, katılımcıların sorumlu sosyal medya kullanımları ile ilgili bazı görüşlerinin olduğunu ve bu görüşlerin genelde onların gözlemlerine ve tecrübelerine dayandığını göstermektedir.

Sorumlu sosyal medya kullanımı ile ilgili karar vericiler tarafından bir bildirge oluşturulması, okul öncesi eğitimcilere rehber niteliğinde bir kaynak sağlayacak ve okul öncesi dönemdeki çocukların gelişimine katkıda bulunacaktır.

Yapılan araştırma, okul öncesi öğretmenlerin sosyal medya alışkanlıkları ile ilgili genel bir çerçeve oluşturmuştur. Konu ile ilgili çalışmaların azlığı, çalışmanın önemini ortaya koymakta ve ileride yapılacak olan çalışmalara ışık tutmaktadır.

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TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English) : INVESTIGATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

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