Perceived Stress, Social Support and Social Media Addiction in University Students During COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 Pandemisi Sırasında Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Algılanan Stres, Sosyal Destek ve Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı

ⓘ Filiz TAŞ[1]

[1]Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University Faculty of Health Sciences, Public Health Nursing, Kahramanmaraş, Turkey

Abstract

Objective: The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between perceived stress, perceived social support and social media addiction in university students.

Method: The research is a descriptive, relational study. The sample consisted of 404 students studying at the Faculty of Health Sciences. Personal Information Form, Perceived Stress Scale, Perceived Social Support Scale, and Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form were used for data.

Results: During the pandemic period, 71.8% of students used their mobile phones for study. 73.8% stated that their study hours have decreased. 94.1% of the students stated that the time spent at home increased, and 91.8% stated that there was an increase in the hours of using a computer or phone due to the pandemic. There were significant differences between perceived stress, social support, and social media addiction levels according to various demographic variables.

Conclusion: The results showed that 86.9% of students increased their time spent online during the pandemic period. It was concluded that perceived stress and social support affect social media addiction.

Keywords: COVID-19, students, stress, social support, social media addiction

Öz

Amaç: Araştırmanın amacı, üniversite öğrencilerinde algılanan stres, algılanan sosyal destek ve sosyal medya bağımlılığı arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir.

Yöntem: Araştırma, tanımlayıcı ilişkisel bir çalışmadır. Örneklemi Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi'nde öğrenim gören 404 öğrenci oluşturdu. Veriler için Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Algılanan Stres Ölçeği, Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeği ve Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı Ölçeği-Yetişkin Formu kullanıldı.

Bulgular: Pandemi döneminde öğrencilerin %71,8'i ders çalışmak için cep telefonlarını kullandı. %73,8'i çalışma saatlerinin azaldığını, %94,1'i evde geçirilen zamanın arttığını, %91,8'i ise pandemi nedeniyle bilgisayar veya telefon kullanma saatlerinde artış olduğunu belirtti. Algılanan stres, sosyal destek ve sosyal medya bağımlılık düzeyleri arasında çeşitli demografik değişkenlere göre anlamlı farklılıklar olduğu bulunmuştur.

Sonuç: Sonuçlar, öğrencilerin %86,9'unun pandemi döneminde internette geçirdikleri zamanın artırdığını gösterdi. Algılanan stres ve sosyal desteğin sosyal medya bağımlılığını etkilediği sonucuna varıldı.

Anahtar kelimeler: COVID-19, öğrenciler, stres, sosyal destek, sosyal medya bağımlılığı

Introduction

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) that emerged unexpectedly in Turkey as well as all over the world, due to the epidemic, face-to-face education in universities was transformed into distance education, and the lifestyle and education life of all students changed (1). This unexpected and sudden situation caused the students to go out of their routines.

Stress occurs when the danger of impaired hemostasis is perceived (2,3). While stress can occur for many physical reasons, it can also occur for emotional reasons (4,5). The causes of stress vary from person to person. The stress response has complex physiological and behavioral effects in the organism (5). It is not possible to completely eliminate stress in daily life. However, some environmental factors and emotional situations are effective in the effects of stress and the ability to manage stress (5,6). The COVID-19 pandemic has become the most stressful event worldwide and presents a global challenge not only for the medically contagious disease but also for mental health (1,7). Measures taken by countries to reduce health problems related to morbidity and mortality caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, physical distancing, and stay-at-home orders negatively affected individuals (7,8). During the COVID-19 epidemic, computers and the internet as information technology became indispensable in every aspect of daily life (9). With the emergence of web2.0 technologies run over the Internet, individuals have become social network users(10). Today, the internet and social media applications have become a popular tool used by children, especially young people and adults (11).

Internet and information technologies have become indispensable during the epidemic period due to their widespread use in many countries around the World (11-13). Excessive or problematic use of the internet and social media (10,12) and spending at least 8.5 to 21.5 hours a week online are considered addictions (13). Social media is a collaborative term for websites and online tools that provide users with the opportunity to interact and share information and ideas (14). Considering the purposes of internet usage in Turkey, it is reported that the most preferred ones are YouTube, Instagram, Whatsapp, Facebook Twitter, respectively, with the use of social media in the first place (15). Social media addiction is when people get stressed when they are away from social media, they panic, they feel insecure(15,16). Social media addiction can cause mental health problems such as social phobia, social anxiety disorder, social appearance anxiety (17).

The World Stats 2021 research reports that the number of internet users worldwide has reached approximately 5 billion 168 million (65. 6%) (18). Internet usage rate in Europe is reported as 88.2% and social media usage as 60.3% (18). According to the same research, the internet usage rate in Turkey is 81.3% and the social media user rate is 67.3% (18). According to the 2020 statistical report published jointly by we are Social and Hootsuite (19), 74.0% of Turkey's population is internet and 64.0 % is social media users. It is stated that internet users spend 7.5 hours on the internet and 3 hours on social media (19). In the same report, it is reported that the rate of social media use in the 18-24 age group is 7.3% for women and 13.2% for men [19]. After the World Health Organization, declared a global epidemic on March 11, 2020, all higher education institutions were suspended on March 16 (17), As of March 23, all universities switched to distance education (20).

Due to the urgent processes during the pandemic period, students had stressful processes due to both the effect of the worrying environment created by the pandemic and the distance education method they had not encountered before (21). Stress affects the normal functions of people negatively, as well as being exposed to stress for a long time causes various health problems in people (22).

The role of social support as a source of coping with stress and protection against diseases many studies have reported that social support has a positive relationship with mental and physical health (14,23-25).

In recent years, the development and active use of the internet and mobile phones has led to the spread of social media, which is one of the communication tools (14). Social networks, which create the effect of face-to-face communication in the virtual environment, have become one of the most important branches of the internet (14). Many functions of social media, such as connecting with friends, finding new friends, sharing photos, videos and blog content, cause young people to use social media intensively (23). Internet in general and social media platforms in particular, besides providing support for the development of individuals, their uncontrolled use can lead to addiction (26).

As it can be said for each of the technological addictions, it may be inevitable for university-age individuals to spend excessive time on social media and accordingly to have problems in fulfilling their personal, social, educational and professional responsibilities. Studies examining the relationship between Internet social media use, technology addictions and stress and social support are limited. For this reason, it is important to examine the relationship between students' stress levels, social support status and social media addiction levels.

METHODS

Sample

This research is a descriptive, relational questionnaire-based study. The population of the research consisted of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th-grade students of the Nursing and Midwifery departments

of a state university studying at the Faculty of Health Sciences (N:516). The sample population was determined as a minimum of 220 with a known sampling method with a probability of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. The study data was completed with 404 students who accepted to participate in the research and filled out all the forms (participation rate 78%).

Inclusion criteria of students were being a student of the faculty of health sciences and having taken the previous semester (spring semester) courses by distance education method. Exclusion criteria were bein first-year students who have just started their university education and have not taken distance education before (N: 170).

Procedure

The research data were collected with google form and online forms. All the forms were sent to class Whatsapp groups at the same time through class representatives. The forms consisted of four parts. The first part consisted of 15 questions to describe the students' socio-demographic characteristics and internet usage characteristics. The second part consisted of the perceived stress scale (14 items), the third part consisted of the perceived social support scale (12 items), and the fourth part consisted of the social media addiction scale (20 items).

An informed consent form explaining the purpose of the study was sent to the students before they filled out the questionnaires. They were informed that they could participate in the study voluntarily. In addition to this, in the online form prepared, the first question "Do you agree to participate in the study?" was formed and their consent was obtained in this way. The online form, which each participant can fill in approximately 20-25 minutes, consists of 61 questions and has been arranged so that the participants can see all the questions at the same time after logging in. Within the scope of the study, to prevent the same participants from filling out the survey again, the Google Forms settings of the participants were enabled to limit the answers to one answer feature, allowing each participant to answer once. To prevent data loss, Forms settings have been adjusted to keep any questions from being left blank. In this way, it was obligatory to answer all questions.

Research data were collected between October and November 2020. Reminder messages were sent to students every 10 days to fill out the forms. Ethical approval of the study was received on 09.09.2020 from Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University Faculty of Medicine Nonclinical Research Ethics Committee. (decision number, 2020/17-16). "Personal Information Form", "Perceived Stress Scale", "Perceived Social Support Scale" and "Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form" were used to collect the data of the study.

Measures

Personal Information Form

The form consists of 15 questions including socio-demographic characteristics of individuals and their use of technological devices (age, gender, class, study style, use of technological tools, social media memberships, time spent in social media, etc.). The personal information form was prepared by the researcher in line with the literature (1,10-15).

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

The original version of the Perceived Stress Scale was developed by Cohen Kamarck and Mermelstein (1983) to determine the stress perceptions of individuals regarding various situations in their lives. Turkish validity of the scale was conducted by Eskin et al., (2013). The scale, which consists of 14 items in total, evaluates students' perceptions of stress regarding the learning environment through 5-point Likert-type items ranging from "never (0)" to "very often (4)". 7 items with positive statements (item numbers: 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13) are scored in reverse. The scores of PSS range from 0 to 56. A high score from the scale indicates an excess of the student's perception of stress (22). The perceived stress scale Cronbach's alpha value was reported as 0.84.

Perceived Social Support Scale (PSSS)

Original scale Zimet et al.,(1988) have been developed. The Turkish validity and reliability of the scale were done by Eker Arkar and Yaldız (2001). The scale is a 12-item scale. It includes 3 groups related to the source of the support, each of which consists of 4 items. These; family, friends, and a special person. Each item was evaluated using a 7-grade. The subscale score is obtained by summing the scores of the four items in each subscale. The total score of the scale is obtained by summing the subscale scores. A high score indicates high perceived social support (25). The Cronbach alpha value of the perceived social support scale was reported as 0.85.

Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form (SMAS-AF)

The Social Media Addiction Scale, the validity and reliability of which was made by Şahin and Yağcı (2017), is a scale consisting of two sub-dimensions and a total of 20 items. A five-point rating was used in the scale as "1-Not suitable for me at all" , "2-Not suitable for me", "3- Undecided" ,"4- Suitable for me" , "5-Very suitable for me". Negative expressions were reverse coded. Items 5 and 11 are reverse scored. The scale is divided into two sub-dimensions. The virtual tolerance sub-dimension consists of items 1-11, and the virtual communication sub-dimension consists of items 12-20. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 20, and the highest score is 100. A high score is considered as a social media addict (10). The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient for the overall scale was reported as 0.94.

Data analysis

SPSS 25.0 (Statistical Package for Social Science) package program was used to evaluate the data. In this study, the number of units (n), percentage (%), mean (standard deviation), minimum and maximum were given as summary statistics. The normal distribution of the data was evaluated by the Kolmogorov Smirnov test and Q-Q graph. Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the scales used. An Independent t-test was used in the comparison of binary variables in the statistical analysis of the study since the data were normally distributed. One-Way Anova test was used for comparison with three or more variables. Tukey HSD multiple comparison tests was used for differences between groups. It was decided whether there was a significant relationship between the scales by using correlation analysis. Pearson correlation test was applied in the correlation relationship since the data had a normal distribution. In the evaluations, p<0.05 was accepted as the level of significance.

Results

In this study, Cronbach's alpha values were 0.88 for the Perceived Stress Scale, 0.91 for the Perceived Social Support Scale, and 0.91 for the Social Media Addiction Scale. Perceived stress scale, Perceived social support scale and Social media addiction scale; Since the KMO value was greater than 0.80, the value obtained was evaluated as "very good" for factor analysis.

Students scored above the average on the "Perceived stress" (32.14±7.83), "Perceived social support" 52.23±17.73, and "Social Media Addiction scales 56.29±16.55.

They got 19.30±7.15 points from the "Family" dimension and 19.33±7.11 points from the "Friends" dimension, which is one of the sub-dimensions of the social support scale, and their scores are above the average. They got a moderate score of 13.59±8.69 from the "special person" sub-dimension.

They scored 33.68±9.81 high in the "Virtual tolerance" sub-dimension of social media addiction, and 22.60±8.18 low in the "Virtual communication" sub-dimension (Table 1)

The mean age of the students was 20.8±1.70. The youngest student is 18 years old and the oldest is 34 years old. It was determined that 85.4% were female, 97.0% were single, 56.9% were in the nursing department, 40.6% were in the second year, 59.9% lived in the city center for a long time, 80.7% had medium economic status (Table 2).

71.8% of students had used cell phones for the study, 73.8% pandemic during the course of working hours is reduced, the pandemic of 94.1% during that increased time spent at home, in the hours of use due to the pandemic of 91.8% computer or telephone said that increase. 97.5% of them stated that they have a smartphone, 86.6% of them used Instagram 57.7% of them youtube 47.0% of them Twitter 24.5% of them Facebook social networks. 86.9% of the students reported that the time spent on the internet increased during the pandemic period compared to before. Social networking sites, instant messaging programs, online games, and all other websites, 36.9% reported that they spent an average of 3-4 hours 22.5%, 5-6 hours 14.9% seven hours or more in a day (Table 3).

According to age groups, students in the 21-23 age group have higher perceived stress scores than 33.08±7.67 other

Table 1. Mean scores, factor loads and cronbach's alpha (α) results of the scales						
Scales	Factors	Min-Max	$\bar{x} \pm Ss$	Factor Load Range	Explained Variance	Cronbach Alpha (α)
Perceived Stress Scale	Perceived Stress Scale	0-56	32.14±7.83	1.092-.454	61.36±7.83	0.88
	KMO: .906; Bartlett: 2496.690; df: 91; p: .000					
Perceived Social Support Scale	Family	4-28	19.30±7.15	.634- .898	51.22±7.15	0.91
	Friend	4-28	19.33±7.11	.465- .480	50.68±7.11	0.93
	Special Person	4-28	13.59±8.69	.173- .327	75.62±8.69	0.95
	Total	12-84	52.23±17.73	1.814- 963	316.36±17.78	0.91
	KMO: .878; Bartlett: 4788.900; df: 66; p: .000					
Social Media Addiction Scale	Virtual Tolerance	10-50	33.68±9.81	1.079-.733	96.35±9.81	0.86
	Virtual Communication	10-50	22.60±8.18	1.401-.489	66.98±8.18	0.87
	Total	20-100	56.29±16.55	1.869-.993	274.18±16.55	0.91
	KMO: .924; Bartlett: 3801.313; df:190; p: .000					
KMO (Kaiser Mayer Olkin): Explains that the sample is sufficient for analysis.						

Table 2. Distribution of students' demographic data		
Data	N	%
Age 20.8±1.70		
Gender		
Female	345	85.4
Male	59	14.6
Marital status		
Single	392	97.0
The married	12	3.0
Department		
Nursing	230	56.9
Midwifery	174	43.1
Class		
2. class	164	40.6
3. class	104	25.7
4 class	136	33.7
Living place		
City center	242	59.9
District	97	24.0
Village	65	16.1
Economic Status		
Low	69	17.1
Middle	326	80.7
High	9	2.2

Table 3. Technological equipment use and characteristics of students during the pandemic period		
Data	N	%
The way you study during the pandemic?		
Mobile phones	290	71.8
Book	199	50.5
Computer	141	34.9
Change in working hours		
Decreased	298	73.8
Hasn't changed	72	17.8
Increased	34	8.4
Change in time spent at home		
Decreased	4	1.0
Hasn't changed	20	5.0
Increased	380	94.1
Change in computer or phone usage hours		
Decreased	10	2.5
Hasn't changed	23	5.7
Increased	371	91.8
* What technological tools do you own?		
Smart phone	394	97.5
Notebook PC	113	28.0
Laptop	112	27.2
Desktop Computer	42	10.4
Tablet	37	9.3
* Which social networking sites are you a member of?		
Instagram	350	86.6
YouTube	233	57.7
twitter	190	47.0
Facebook	99	24.5
Googleplus	24	5.9
Other*	22	5.05
Change in the time you spend online		
No Internet	12	3.0
Decreased	16	4.0
Hasn't changed	25	6.2
Increased	351	86.9
Average time spent on websites in a day		
less than 1 hour	29	7.2
1-2 hours	75	18.6
3-4 hours	149	36.9
5-6 hours	91	22.5
7 hours or more	60	14.9
* more than one option ticked. Tumblr, reddit, linkedin*		

age groups, and the difference was not significant ($p>0.05$). Perceived stress scores of midwifery students were higher than 33.79±8.24 nursing students 30.90±7.29 and the difference was significant ($p<0.00$). In terms of class scores, the perceived stress scores and social media scores of the 4th-grade students were higher than the students in the other class, but there was no significant difference between them ($p>0.05$). Perceived Stress in women was 32.56±7.84 higher than in men 29.75±7.43 and the difference was significant (t=2.565; $p<0.011$).

The Perceived Social Support score was 52.94±18.61 in the midwifery department students compared to 51.69±17.15 in the nursing department students and there was no difference. ($p>0.05$) The Social support score was 52.95±17.62 in females and 48.00±18.32 in males and the difference was significant (t=1.986; $p<0.048$). Perceived Social Support scores were determined as 55.00± 10.71 in single students and 51.62± 17.63 in married students and the difference was significant (t= 3.997; $p<0.00$).

It was determined that social media addiction differed significantly according to age groups (21-23 age group 58.68±16.78 points) and place of residence 56.29± 19.81 points for those living in the district) ($p<0.005$). It was observed that social media addiction did not differ between departments and according to gender ($p>0.005$). (Table 4).

Table 4. Statistical analysis of variables

Variables	N	%	Perceived Stress Scale x̄±SD	Perceived Social Support Scale x̄±SD	Social Media Addiction Scale x̄±SD
Age Group					
18-20 years	196	48.5	31.61± 7.91	51.72±17.26	54.95±16.11
21-23 years	187	46.3	33.08±7.67	52.10±18.59	58.68±16.78
24-26 years	16	4.0	29.18±8.48	56.81±14.44	46.25±16.27
27 years and up	5	1.2	27.60± 1.81	62.60±15.61	51.00 ± 8.42
			f=2.541 $p>0.05$	f=0.976 $p>0.404$	f=3.947 $p<0.00$
Department					
Nursing	230	56.9	30.90±7.29	51.69±17.15	56.76±15.96
Midwifery	174	43.1	33.79±8.24	52.94±18.61	55.67±17.35
Total	404	100	32.14±7.83	52.23±17.78	56.29±16.55
			t= -3.735 $p< 0.00$	t= -0.700 $p>0.484$	t=0.654 $p>0.514$
Class					
2. class	164	40.6	31.57±8.35	51.81±17.53	56.40±16.79
3. class	104	25.7	31.75±7.33	53.16±16.44	54.59±15.54
4 class	136	33.7	33.13±7.49	52.23±17.78	57.45±17.03
			f= 1.671 $p>0.189$	f= 0.278 $p>0.757$	f= 0.885 $p>0.414$
Gender					
Female	345	97.0	32.56±7.84	52.95±17.62	56.92±16.75
Men	59	3.0	29.75±7.43	48.00±18.32	52.61±14.97
			t= 2.565 $p<0.011$	t=1.986 $p<0.048$	t=1.854 $p>0.064$
Marital status					
Married	12	3.0	28.75± 4.35	51.62± 17.63	55.00± 10.71
Single	392	97.0	32.25± 7.89	55.00± 10.71	56.33± 16.71
			t= -1.527 $p>0.127$	t= 3.997 $p<0.00$	t= -0.274 $p>0.784$
Living place					
City center	242	59.9	31.80± 7.36	52.72± 18.67	55.84± 15.26
District	97	24.0	32.27± 8.57	48.29± 18.74	56.29± 19.81
Village	65	16.1	33.20± 8.37	52.23± 17.78	53.09± 16.55
			f=0.824 $p>0.439$	f= 1.928 $p>0.147$	f=2.984 $p<0.052$
t= Independent t test, f =One-Way ANOVA test					

There is a negative significant relationship between students' perceived stress and "perceived social support" (r= -.426; p=0.000). Perceived stress and social support sub-dimensions "family (r=-.444; p=0.000)", "friend" (r=-.339; p=0.000), and "special person" (r=-.229; p=0.000) was found to have a significant negative correlation. Social media addiction sub-dimensions of perceived stress ("Virtual Tolerance" (r=, 339; p=0.000) and "Virtual Communication" (r =. 239; p=0.000) and "Social media addiction" (r =. 319; p=0.000) there was a significant positive correlation. It was observed that there was a significant negative correlation between perceived social support and total social media addiction scores (r= -.106; p=0.05). It was determined that there was a negative, significant and strong relationship (r=-.148; p=0.000) between social support family sub-dimension and social media addiction (Table 5).

Discussion

This study examines the relationship between university students' perceptions of stress, perceptions of social support, and social media addiction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this study, it was determined that the stress level, social support perception level and social media addiction levels of the participants were above the average. It was observed that the perceived stress scores of the 21-23 age group were higher than the other groups in the age group variable.

In the study conducted by Göksu and Kumcagız (2020), it was determined that individuals' perceived stress and anxiety levels

in the COVID-19 epidemic were moderate (3). In the same study, it was reported that individuals in the 20-29 age group perceived the epidemic process as more stressful than other older age groups (3). Cao et al. (2020b), found that stress and anxiety levels were high during the COVID-19 outbreak in their study with university students in China. Toreles et al. (2020), reported in their study that the level of age-related stress changes and that young and old people experience higher levels of stress. Going out of the routine of encountering an unexpected situation, having restrictions at home, restricting their freedom, fear of losing loved ones may be the reasons for the increase in the stress perception of young people.

In this study, the level of perceived stress and social support were found to be higher in women. In the study of Wang et al. (2020), on the psychological reactions in the COVID-19 epidemic, it was found that women experience higher levels of anxiety than men. In studies, it has been reported that the COVID-19 epidemic increases the level of stress and anxiety in individuals, and the level of anxiety is higher in women (9,31). This research finding is in line with the literature. Women are more negatively affected by stress than men. It is thought that the high-stress level of women stems from traditional gender roles and this situation continues in extraordinary situations.

There was a negative relationship between perceived stress and perceived social support. There was a positive relationship between perceived stress and social media addiction. And there was a negative relationship was determined between social

Table 5. Correlation of students' PSS, PSSS and SMAS sub-dimension and total scores								
Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1PSS Total	1							
2 PSSS Family	- ,444**	1						
3PSSS Friend	-,339**	,579**	1					
4PSSS Special Person	-,229**	,373**	,270**	1				
5PSSS Total	-,426**	,817**	,765**	,747**	1			
6 SMAS-AF Virtual Tolerance	,339**	-148**	-,084	-,030	-,108*	1		
7 SMAS-AF Virtual communication	,239**	-,121*	-,073	-,013	-,085	,690**	1	
8 SMAS-AF Total	,319**	-148**	-,086	-,024	-,106*	,934**	,903**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								

support and social media addiction. Eker et al. (2001) stated in their studies that the support of family and close friends is a predictor of health. In the same study, it was reported that family ties are also important sources for physical health (25). It can be said that social media addiction increases in cases where family support decreases.

Increasing stress night cause students to turn to social media. Research findings have led to an increase in the duration of students staying at home, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic, along with cleanliness, distance and restriction. In this study, almost all of the students reported that the time they stayed at home increased, that there was a change in the hours of computer or phone use due to the pandemic and that the time they spent on the internet increased. Çiftçi reports in his study that gender, age, educational status and duration of internet users play a decisive role in social media addiction and duration of use (23). Studies have revealed that the perception of social support is associated with various variables such as school success (11,32), academic and social skills (33). Therefore, it can be said that students who receive parents, friends and school support are better socially and emotionally. It is thought that extraordinary situations are periods when family support should be more especially for young people.

In the study, 36.9% of the students reported that they spent an average of 3-4 hours a day for social networking sites, instant messaging programs, online games and all other websites, and 14.9% reported that they spent seven hours or more on the Internet. It was seen that most of the participants actively use the social media platforms Instagram, Youtube and Twitter.

In the literature, it was found that those who have social media membership have higher internet addiction scores than those who do not (34, 35). When the relevant literature is examined, there are studies showing that social media use is associated with internet addiction, It has been reported that the increase in the time spent on the internet is one of the factors affecting internet addiction (35-37). In studies on technology addiction, it has been reported that those who have an inadequate relationship with their families and who cannot spend time effectively with their families are among the risk factors that increase the use of technology (35, 38).

In the literature, there are studies stating that university students use the internet as a means of entertainment (24,39) and studies stating that they use the internet for research or access to academic information (23,26,40). In the study conducted by Karadağ and Yücel (2020), 3/4 of the students stated that they continue their distance education from their computers or tablets and 32% from their smartphones (41). The results of the study show parallelism with the literature. However, with the data obtained from the research, we can say that the majority of students are obliged to mobile phones and computers in a period when going out is limited during the Covid-19 pandemic period. This situation should be considered as an important factor in increasing the level of social media addiction by increasing the level of stress.

The limitations of the study can be stated as the inability to reach the entire universe due to the remote collection of research data via Google form. It is an important study in terms of evaluating the impact of the pandemic on university students as the strengths of the research. The strengths of the research are that the students are independent when filling out the forms, not being given a certain time, and allowing the students to fill out the form whenever they want. Students were not under pressure about their attitudes and behaviors. Therefore the data is valuable.

In conclusion, this study, which focuses on the relationships between the perception of stress social support and social media addiction, contributes to the literature in terms of understanding the COVID-19 experiences of university students. Studies on the subject show the importance of virtual interaction environments for students. Considering that changes and extraordinary situations in technology are a part of individuals' lives, researchers should continue to examine students' tendencies in technology use and their effects on individual life.

Unusual situations affect individuals negatively. The COVID-19 pandemic will go down in history as one of these periods. Young people who go out of their daily routines and whose freedoms are restricted should be seen as the most affected group during these periods. In such cases, the social support powers of the students should be the greatest support from family, friends, spouses and special friends. It should be noted that the interest in online networks may increase in students who do not receive sufficient social support and it will take the form of addiction after a while.

In addition to studies examining the relationships between stress, perception of social support and social media addictions in university students during the COVID-19 epidemic, research on different variables that affect students' social media attitudes will enrich the relevant literature. Effective use of social media tools by students in extraordinary situations where there is no face-to-face education can lead to a number of positive gains. The aspects of strengthening student-student and student-teacher relations and promoting a supportive learning environment should be considered and developed.

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