

Aktif Olarak Fitness Yapan Bireylerde, Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı, Sosyal Medya Tükenmişliği ve Egzersiz Bağımlılığı Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Öz

Çağdaş toplumda, dijital teknolojilerin yaygın entegrasyonu; bağlantı, bilgi yayma ve kendini ifade etme konusunda benzeri görülmemiş yollar açmıştır. Bununla birlikte, bireyler kendilerini çevrimiçi etkileşimlerin karmaşık ağına giderek daha fazla kaptırdıkça, uyumsuz davranışlarla ilgili endişeler akademik ilgi görmeye başlamıştır. Bu söylem birbiriyle ilişkili üç olguda birleşiyor: sosyal medya bağımlılığı, egzersiz bağımlılığı ve sporcularda ortaya çıkan sosyal medya tükenmişliği kavramı. Titiz bir akademik araştırmaya dayanan bu olgular, teknoloji, fiziksel aktivite ve zihinsel sağlık arasındaki karmaşık dinamiklerin altını çiziyor. Sosyal medya bağımlılığının, egzersiz bağımlılığının ve fitness yapan bireylerde tükenmişliğin benzersiz tezahürünün incelikli boyutlarını araştıran bu tartışmanın amacı aktif olarak fitness yapan bireylerde, sosyal medya bağımlılığı, sosyal medya tükenmişliği ve egzersiz bağımlılığı arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Araştırmamızda ölçek sistemleri 3 bölümden oluşurken bu bölümler; kişisel bilgi formu, sosyal medya bağımlılık ölçeği, sosyal medya tükenmişlik ölçeği ve egzersiz bağımlılığı ölçeğidir. Araştırmada nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılırken, verilerin analizinde IBM SPSS 26 istatistik programında yararlanılmıştır. Elde edilen verilerin analizleri sonucunda, katılımcıların sosyal medya bağımlılıkları ile egzersiz bağımlılıkları aralarında anlamlı bir farklılığın olmadığı saptanmıştır. Fitness ile aktif olarak uğraşan bireylerin sosyal medya kullanımı konusunda bilinçli hareket ettikleri söylenebilir. Ayrıca katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu (n=334) egzersiz bağımlılığına dair belirtiler göstermesine rağmen egzersiz bağımlısı olmadıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Medya, Bağımlılık, Fitness, Egzersiz Bağımlılığı

Investigation of the Relationship between Social Media Addiction, Social Media Burnout and Exercise Commitment in Individuals Actively Engaged in Fitness

Abstract

In contemporary society, the widespread integration of digital technologies; It has opened unprecedented avenues for connection, information dissemination, and self-expression. However, as individuals become increasingly immersed in the complex web of online interactions, concerns about maladaptive behavior have begun to receive academic attention. This discourse converges on three interrelated phenomena: social media addiction, exercise addiction, and the concept of social media burnout in athletes. These facts, based on rigorous academic research, underscore the complex dynamics between technology, physical activity, and mental health. The purpose of this discussion, which investigates the subtle dimensions of social media addiction, exercise addiction and the unique manifestation of burnout in individuals who engage in fitness, is to examine the relationship between social media addiction, social media burnout and exercise adherence in individuals who actively engage in fitness. In our research, scale systems consist of 3 parts; personal information form, social media addiction scale, social media burnout scale and exercise addiction scale. While the relational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the research, IBM SPSS 26 statistical program was used in the analysis of the data. As a result of the analysis of the data obtained, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the participants' social media addictions and exercise addictions, and it can be said that individuals who are actively involved in fitness act consciously about social media use. In addition, as a result of the exercise addiction scale applied to measure the exercise addiction of the participants, it was concluded that even though the majority of the participants (n = 334) showed symptoms of exercise addiction, they were not exercise addicts.

Key Words: Social Media, Addiction, Fitness, Exercise Addiction

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Introduction

The intersection of digital technology and physical health has prompted a multifaceted examination within the field of behavioral health. Among the emerging concerns is social media addiction, which involves an individual's obsessive and excessive engagement with online platforms, potentially impacting mental health and interpersonal relationships and becoming a subject of scientific study. Simultaneously, individuals displaying an unhealthy preoccupation with physical activity, leading to adverse physiological and psychological outcomes, has brought attention to the phenomenon of exercise addiction. Particularly in the realm of sports, the mixture of social media and physical exertion has raised significant concerns, with social media burnout becoming a major research topic over the last five years and emerging as a new phenomenon particularly in the field of sports.

Our research examines the conceptual framework of the main dynamics involved; social media burnout is outlined as the magnitude to which a consumer sense exhausted while using social media. This definition considers social media burnout to be comprised of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, desensitization, and indecisiveness, conceptualized within a system (Han, 2018). Social media addiction, characterized by excessive and compulsive interaction with social media platforms, is frequently referred to as problematic social media use or excessive use of social media. This behavior can manifest in various forms, such as spending excessive time on platforms, constantly checking updates, and feeling anxiety or discomfort when unable to access social media platforms (Kim and Haridakis, 2009). Lastly, a significant component of our study, exercise addiction—also known as compulsive or obligatory exercise—is conceptualized as a behavioral disorder characterized by an unhealthy and excessive preoccupation with physical activity and exercise.

The fundamental dynamics of our research have been formed in line with the components of fitness and sports, which have become particularly popular in recent years. Based on this, our research measures the behaviors and attitudes of individuals involved in fitness within these concepts. The study aims to shed light on individuals engaged in fitness and stakeholders in the sports field. Especially in our country, while no research has been found that uses these variables together, the lack of application of these variables together in international literature also makes our research unique. Thus, the aim of our survey is to test the relation between social media addiction, social media burnout, and exercise commitment in individuals actively engaged in fitness.

Social Media Burnout

Social media burnout is becoming an increasingly recognized phenomenon, affecting users who frequently engage with these platforms. The term "social media burnout" refers to a state of emotional exhaustion that arises from the intense and prolonged use of social media, leading to feelings of overwhelm, fatigue, and disinterest in continuing social media activities. This exhaustion can stem from various factors including the high demand for social interaction, the pressure to maintain a particular online presence, and the overload of information (Bright et al., 2021).

One conceptual framework that helps to explain social media burnout is the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, traditionally used to understand workplace burnout. In the context of social media, "demands" refer to the effort required to maintain an active and engaging social media presence, while "resources" may include the perceived benefits received from social media use, such as social support or entertainment (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). When the demands exceed the resources, users can experience burnout, characterized by exhaustion, cynicism, and feelings of inefficacy.

The frequency and manner of social media use also play critical roles. Constant notifications, the pressure to respond promptly, and the unending influx of content can increase the demands placed on users, exacerbating feelings of burnout. Moreover, individuals who use social media passively, such as by scrolling without engaging, are more likely to experience higher levels of burnout than those who use these platforms more interactively (Van Dijck, 2013).

Further complicating this issue is the influence of personality traits. Users with a high need for social approval and those who experience fear of missing out (FOMO) are particularly susceptible to social media burnout. These individuals may feel compelled to continually check their devices and participate in social networking to avoid feeling out of the loop, leading to a vicious cycle of overuse and exhaustion (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Addressing social media burnout requires a multifaceted approach. Interventions might include setting boundaries around social media use, using features designed to track and limit usage, and fostering an online environment that promotes quality interactions over quantity. It is also crucial for social media platforms to consider the design elements that contribute to user burnout and work towards creating more sustainable ways of engaging with technology (Alter, 2017).

In summary, social media burnout is a multi-dimensional syndrome influenced by the excessive demands of online interactions, individual personality traits, and the specific dynamics of social media platforms. Ongoing research and adaptive strategies are essential to mitigate the impact of this modern stressor and to promote healthier engagement with digital technologies.

Social Media Addiction

Social media addiction, a concern marked by compulsive engagement that affects daily life, is becoming increasingly prominent in psychological discourse. Kuss and Griffiths (2011) define social media addiction as a subset of internet addiction characterized by an overwhelming urge to log on to or use social media, leading to significant impairment in various life domains. This compulsive behavior is conceptually framed within the broader spectrum of behavioral addictions, where the psychological processes mimic those of substance-related addictions, including mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, and conflict (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011).

The theoretical underpinnings of social media addiction suggest that it stems from an interplay of individual psychosocial factors and the inherently addictive attributes of social media platforms themselves. According to a study by Andreassen et al. (2012), the addiction is closely linked to the platforms' ability to provide immediate rewards with little effort. The platforms are designed to engage users continuously, exploiting the human desire for social connection and approval, reinforcing compulsive behavior.

Furthermore, Billieux et al. (2015) discuss how personality traits such as low self-esteem and high social anxiety predict higher susceptibility to social media addiction. These personality traits interact with the social media environment to exacerbate feelings of attachment to the online social realm, often at the expense of offline relationships. This dynamic underscores the biopsychosocial framework that views social media addiction as a multifaceted syndrome where psychological and social factors are mediated by biological processes.

In conclusion, social media addiction is a complex phenomenon that requires a multidimensional approach to understand and address. Intervention strategies must consider the addictive mechanics of social media design, as well as the psychological and social needs that these platforms satisfy. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to better understand the temporal dynamics of social media addiction and its long-term effects on mental health and well-being (Andreassen et al., 2012).

Exercise Addiction

Exercise addiction, often categorized within the broader scope of behavioral addictions, represents an area of increasing concern within the psychological and sports communities. This phenomenon is characterized by an unhealthy obsession with physical exercise, often leading to significant personal, social, and physiological repercussions. The current discourse around exercise addiction posits it as both a physical and psychological issue, where individuals experience

withdrawal symptoms and a compulsion to engage in exercise despite negative consequences (Hausenblas and Downs, 2002).

The conceptual framework of exercise addiction aligns closely with the criteria established for other addictive behaviors, incorporating elements such as tolerance, withdrawal, intention effects, lack of control, time, reduction in other activities, and continuance. These criteria are adapted to the context of exercise, suggesting that individuals increasingly prioritize exercise over other life activities, often resulting in physical injuries and strained personal relationships (Berczik et al., 2012).

One pivotal aspect of understanding exercise addiction is acknowledging the role of psychological factors such as self-identity and body image concerns. Research indicates that individuals who derive a significant portion of their self-worth from their physical capabilities or appearance are more prone to develop unhealthy exercise patterns. This is particularly evident in sports where a certain physique is highly valued, and can be exacerbated by social and cultural pressures to maintain an ideal body image (Cook et al., 2013).

Moreover, the role of endorphins released during exercise is significant. These biochemical changes can produce mood-enhancing effects similar to those experienced by addictive substances. Over time, individuals may begin to rely on these biochemical rewards, leading to a dependency that manifests as exercise addiction. This biochemical perspective provides a physiological explanation for the compulsive exercise behaviors observed in these individuals (Freimuth et al., 2011).

Addressing exercise addiction requires a comprehensive approach that involves psychological counseling, medical intervention, and the development of a balanced exercise regimen. It is crucial for health professionals to recognize the signs of exercise addiction early and to provide interventions that address both the physical and psychological aspects of the disorder. Preventative measures, including education about healthy exercise practices and promoting a balanced lifestyle, are also essential (Weinstein and Weinstein, 2014).

In conclusion, exercise addiction is a multifaceted disorder that demands a nuanced understanding of its psychological, physiological, and social dimensions. As research continues to evolve, it is imperative that both preventative and remedial measures are developed to address the needs of those affected by this condition.

Hypotheses

H1: It is thought that individuals actively engaged in fitness are not addicted to exercise.

H2: It is believed that individuals actively engaged in fitness use social media consciously.

H3: It is assumed that there is a significant difference between social media burnout and exercise addiction in individuals actively engaged in fitness.

H4: It is thought that there is no significant relation between social media addiction and social media burnout in individuals actively engaged in fitness.

Material And Method

Participants

The study group consists of individuals who are actively engaged in fitness sports and also actively use social media platforms. Of the 404 participants in our study, 185 (45.8%) are male and 219 (54.2%) are female. Additionally, when looking at the variable of time spent on social media, the majority of participants (30.9%) reported using social media for 2-3 hours per day. Responses to questions reflecting the time spent on exercise indicate that the majority (46.0%) of participants engage in physical activity for 1-2 hours daily.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants and Responses to the Personal Information Form

Variable	Answer	N	Mean (%)
Gender	Male	185	45.8
	Female	219	54.2
	Total	404	100.0
Time Spent on Social Media	0-1	36	8.9
	1-2	94	23.3
	2-3	125	30.9
	3-4	80	19.8
	4 and Above 4	69	17.1
	Total	404	100.0
Time Spent Exercising	0-1	121	30.0
	1-2	186	46.0
	2-3	64	15.8
	3-4	24	5.9

4 and above 4	9	2.2
Total	404	100.0

Research Model

In our study, the relational screening model, which is one of the quantitative research ways, was used (Karasar, 2016). This model, also known as the correlational research design, is particularly effective in identifying and analyzing the associations among multiple factors without manipulating the study environment (Creswell, 2014). By using this approach, we were able to systematically collect data and apply statistical techniques to explore potential correlations, thereby providing a robust framework for understanding the interdependencies within our research context (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2012). This methodological choice is supported by its extensive application in various fields, including education, psychology, and social sciences, where it aids in uncovering significant patterns and relationships (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2007).

Data Collection Tools

In our research, the data collection tools consisted of four sections. The first section used a personal information form that measured participants' personal choices and information. In the second section, the Social Media Burnout Scale was used, the third section utilized the Social Media Addiction Scale, and the final section employed the Exercise Addiction Scale.

Personal Information Form

This form, prepared by the researcher, included questions to determine participants' ages, genders, daily time spent on social media, and constantly time spent on exercise.

Social Media Burnout Scale

This scale, developed in the USA by Han (2018) to determine the condition of social media burnout resulting from social media usage, has been adapted into Turkish by Gündoğan. It is a 7-point Likert scale consisting of three sub-dimensions: emotional exhaustion, indecisiveness, and desensitization, totaling 11 items (Gündoğan, 2022).

Social Media Addiction Scale

The social media addiction scale was developed by Şahin and Yağcı (2017), based on its application to 1047 participants. This scale is a 5-point Likert type with two sub-dimensions (virtual tolerance and virtual communication) and consists of 20 items. The virtual tolerance sub-dimension includes items 1-11, while virtual communication comprises items 12-20. Items 5 and 11 are reverse-

scored, with the highest possible score being 100 and the lowest being 20. A higher score is interpreted as the individual perceiving themselves as a "social media addict" (Şahin and Yağcı, 2017).

Exercise Addiction Scale

The Exercise Addiction Scale was developed by Housenblas and Downs in 2002. The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Yeltepe and İkizler in 2007. The "Exercise Addiction Scale-21" consists of 21 items and 7 sub-dimensions: (1) tolerance, (2) withdrawal, (3) intention, (4) lack of control, (5) time, (6) reduction of other activities, and (7) persistence. Participants' symptoms of exercise addiction are assessed on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "Never (1)" to "Always (6)." A higher score indicates more symptoms of exercise addiction (Akgöl, 2019).

Data Collection

The research, approved by the Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University's Ethics Committee of Social and Humanities Research under decision number 082, protocol number 230082 dated 24.08.2023, was initiated thereafter. Data collection took place from 10.11.2023 to 12.12.2024, using online platforms and Google Forms to gather data from the relevant sample group.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS 26 statistical software. After performing missing data checks, reliability and normality distribution tests were conducted. Since the data showed a normal distribution, parametric tests accepted for the research data were applied. This included independent samples t-tests for the gender variable of participants and one-way ANOVA analysis between the scales of exercise durations and social media usage times. To examine the relationship between social media addiction, social media burnout, and exercise addiction, Pearson correlation analysis was employed. To investigate the predictive power of variables related to exercise addiction, simple linear regression analysis was conducted between the scales and their sub-dimensions.

Findings

Table 2
Responses Regarding Participants' Exercise Addiction

Exercise Addiction	N	Avarege (%)
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Non-addicted Asymptomatic	43	10.6
Non-addicted Symptomatic	334	82.7
Exercise Addict	27	6.7
Total	400	100.0

Note: Non-addicted Asymptomatic: No addiction symptoms; Non-addicted Symptomatic: Symptomatic but not addicted.

The Exercise Addiction Scale applied to measure participants' addiction revealed that the majority (n=334) exhibited symptoms of exercise addiction without being addicted. 10.6% of participants showed no symptoms at all. Another finding is that a small portion of participants, 6.7%, were identified as exercise addicts. From this, it can be inferred that persons engaged in fitness consciously participate in their exercise routines.

Table 3
Correlation Analysis Findings

Variable	1.	2.	3.
1. SMATS			
2. SMBTS.	.39**		
3. EATS	.08	.17**	
Avarege	47.46	25.32	67.36
Kurtosis	-.23	-.10	-.23
Skewness	.27	-.10	.27

Note1: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Note2: SMATS: Total Social Media Addiction Score, SMBTS : Total Social Media Burnout Score, EATS: Total Exercise Addiction Score

Upon examining Table 3, no significant relationships were found between Social Media Addiction and Social Media Burnout, whereas significant relationships were detected between Social Media Burnout and Total Exercise Addiction Scores. A simple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive power of the variables where significant relationships were detected (Büyüköztürk, 2014:91; Seçer, 2017, p:36). The results of the analysis are provided in Table 4.

Table 4
Simple Linear Regression Analysis Showing the Predictive Power of Social Media Burnout and Exercise Addiction Total Scores

Variable	B	β	t	p	R	R ²
Constant	6.50		11.47	<.001	.17	.03

Social Media Burnout Total Score	.61	.17	3.51	<.001
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The analysis results show that the Total Score of Exercise Addiction significantly predicts the Total Score of Social Media Burnout, [F (1,402) = 12.33, p<.001], with a contribution of 3% (R² = .03).

This analysis suggests a measurable impact of social media burnout on exercise addiction, emphasizing the intertwined nature of these behaviors and their influence on each other within the population studied. This connection highlights the complex relationship between digital and physical habits and their influence on mental and physical health.

Discussion and Conclusion

The data obtained from our research shows that individuals actively engaged in fitness exhibit symptoms of exercise addiction but are not addicted. It appears that these individuals sometimes exceed their exercise limits, but this excess is periodic and does not reach the level of addiction. These results can be inferred that individuals engaged in fitness consciously manage their exercise durations and avoid activities and exercises that could negatively impact their health.

Another finding is that individuals engaged in fitness use social media for 2-3 hours daily, indicating that such a significant amount of time on social media could lead to addiction.

Moreover, the research finds high levels of social media burnout among individuals actively engaged in fitness, suggesting that these persons turn to exercise as a way to escape the emotional disturbances experienced on social media platforms. Those who use exercise as an escape from social media might not plan their exercise times effectively and therefore exhibit symptoms of exercise addiction.

Our research also shows no significant difference between the social media and exercise addiction scores among participants, suggesting that individuals actively engaged in fitness are conscious of their social media use.

In the literature, a study by Okudan and Karakullukçu (2021) on students in sports education found that these students did not exhibit social media addiction behaviors, aligning with our findings. Another study by De la Vega and colleagues (2016) aimed to measure exercise addiction among athletes and leisure exercisers found that team sports athletes reported more passion and commitment to their activities compared to individual sports athletes, which resonates with our findings that individuals engaged in fitness are not exercise addicts. This study particularly highlights that exercise

addiction behaviors are more pronounced among team sports athletes, while those engaged in individual sports show no signs of exercise addiction, suggesting variations in exercise addiction across different sports or groups.

A study in Turkey by Yıldırım et al. (2017) using an exercise addiction scale similar to ours found that 44.53% of participants were symptomatic but not addicted, which is consistent with our finding that 82.7% of our participants are symptomatic but not addicted.

A significant result of our research is the relationship between social media burnout scores and exercise addiction among fitness enthusiasts. This finding is novel in the literature, suggesting that our study could contribute to the field and inform future research. Finally, the scales and concepts used in our study are frequently encountered in our increasingly digital world, highlighting the importance of studying these concepts to raise awareness among individuals about their potential impacts.

Our study revealed that while individuals engaged in fitness exhibit symptoms of exercise addiction, they are not addicted. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that exercise addiction behaviors are more pronounced among team sports athletes compared to those engaged in individual sports (Griffiths, Landolfi, and Szabo, 2023).. These athletes often demonstrate high levels of passion and commitment, which may sometimes be misinterpreted as addiction. However, the structured nature of team sports likely contributes to better management of exercise routines, thereby preventing actual addiction.

Additionally, the relationship between personality traits and exercise addiction has been extensively studied. Gonzalez et al. (2023) found that perfectionism and certain dark personality traits are significant predictors of exercise addiction. This supports our observation that fitness enthusiasts, who consciously manage their exercise durations, may possess personality traits that protect them from developing full-blown addiction (Gonzalez et al,2023).

Our findings also highlight the novel relationship between social media burnout and exercise addiction. Individuals who use exercise as an escape from social media-induced emotional disturbances might not effectively plan their exercise times, exhibiting symptoms of exercise addiction. This observation is consistent with the need for more research on the psychological and social factors contributing to exercise addiction, as emphasized by Godoy et al (2023) (Godoy-Izquierdo, Navarrón, López-Mora, et al., 2023).

In conclusion, our study contributes to the literature by emphasizing the need to consider both psychological and social dimensions when examining exercise addiction. Future research should

continue to explore these relationships to better understand the mechanisms underlying exercise addiction and develop effective strategies to mitigate its risks.

Ethics Committee Permission Information

Ethics review board: Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University Ethics Committee

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Statement of Researchers' Contribution Rates

Both authors contributed equally at all stages of the research.

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