Examining the Relationship between Social Media Burnout and Psychological Well-Being

Sosyal Medya Tükenmişliği ve Psikolojik İyi Oluş Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

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Abstract: Social media burnout is the emotional, mental, and physical fatigue individuals experience from using social media platforms. This fatigue consumes psychological resources, which can reduce psychological well-being. Therefore, it can be argued that social media burnout (SMB) and psychological well-being (PWB) have a negative relationship. In this context, this study aims to examine the relationship between the social media burnout level of social media users and their psychological well-being. This study uses a correlational design. The data of the study were collected with the "Social Media Burnout Scale" and "Psychological Well-Being Scale". The participants of the study consisted of 447 people (74.30% female / 25.70% male) who regularly use social media and whose ages range from 17 to 54. The study found that SMB is a negative predictor of PWB. In addition, having psychological problems and social media usage intensity was found to have a moderating role in the relationship between SMB and PWB. Gender was found to have no moderating role. Consequently, social media burnout is negatively correlated with psychological well-being. In addition, the psychological state of the individual and the social media usage intensity are important factors in the negative effects of SMB on PWB. In this context, it is important to focus on studies on the healthy use of SM.

Keywords: Social media, social media burnout, psychological well-being, moderation

Öz: Sosyal medya tükenmişliği, bireyin sosyal medya platformlarını kullanırken yaşadığı duygusal, zihinsel ve fiziksel yorgunluk halini ifade eder. Bu yorgunluk hali bireyin psikolojik kaynaklarını tükettiğinden psikolojik iyi oluşunu düşürebilir. Bu yüzden sosyal medya tükenmişliği ile psikolojik iyi oluş arasında negatif bir ilişki olduğu öne sürülebilir. Bu bağlamda bu çalışmada sosyal medya kullanıcılarının sosyal medya tükenmişlik düzeyiyle psikolojik iyi oluşları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu çalışma ilişkisel modelde yürütülen bir çalışmadır. Çalışmanın verileri "Sosyal Medya Tükenmişliği Ölçeği" ve "Psikolojik İyi Oluş Ölçeği" ile toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın katılımcıları düzenli olarak sosyal medya kullanan ve yaş aralığı 17 ile 54 arasında olan 447 kişiden oluşmuştur (%74.30 kadın / %25.70 erkek). Çalışmanın sonucunda sosyal medya tükenmişliğinin psikolojik iyi oluşu negatif yönde yordadığı bulunmuştur. Ayrıca sosyal medya tükenmişliği ve psikolojik iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkide, psikolojik problem yaşayıp yaşamama ve sosyal medya kullanım yoğunluğunun düzenleyici rolü bulunmuştur. Cinsiyet değişkenin ise düzenleyici rolünün olmadığı bulunmuştur. Sonuç olarak sosyal medya tükenmişliği psikolojik iyi oluşla negatif ilişkilidir. Ayrıca, bireyin psikolojik durumu ve sosyal medya kullanım yoğunluğu sosyal medya tükenmişliğinin psikolojik iyi oluş üzerindeki negatif etkisinde önemli faktörlerdir. Bu bağlamda sosyal medyanın sağlıklı kullanımı konusundaki çalışmalara ağırlık verilmesi önemli görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal medya, sosyal medya tükenmişliği, psikolojik iyi oluş, düzenleyicilik

Introduction

Internet use has become widespread in the 21st century (Tewksbury & Rittenberg, 2012). As a result, the opportunities offered by the internet have begun to be used more widely by people. Social media (SM) platforms are one of them (Schmidt & Schmidt, 2018). In addition to its contributions such as socialization, getting to know different ideas and people, and providing economic gain, SM can sometimes lead to harmful results. For example, when SM use is uncontrolled, it can increase SM addiction (Hou et al., 2019), sleep problems when time is spent frequently on SM (Tavernier & Willoughby, 2014), depression (Cunningham et al., 2021), stress (Wolfers & Sonja, 2022), anxiety (Vannucci et al., 2017), and relationship problems (Griffiths & Daria, 2017). As a result of the proliferation of social media in the age of technology, topics such as social media addiction (Tutgun-Ünal, 2020), social media disorder (Van Den Eijnden et al., 2016), digital fatigue (Watkins, 2024) have become the subject of research in literature. In addition to these, the concept of social media burnout has been the subject of study based on the idea that social media can also tire and exhaust people. Because it has been suggested that social media does not only cause addiction

and disorder but can also lead to the individual's exhaustion as a continuation of these two problems (Hsu et al., 2024). Thus, the concept of social media burnout (SMB) has also become the subject of study as a new concept. It is noteworthy that the subject of SMB has been examined in a limited number of relational studies in the literature and has not been examined longitudinally and qualitatively (Zheng & Ling, 2021).

The subject of SMB was first investigated by Han (2018) by considering the dimensions and theoretical foundations of occupational burnout, a problem experienced by individuals in business life. SMB is a state or syndrome in which an individual experiences emotional and mental exhaustion because of using SM platforms for a long time and in an uncontrolled manner. In fact, as SMB is a relatively recent phenomenon, there is still no agreement on its definition or standardized terminology (Liu & Ma, 2020). The three main factors for the intense occurrence of SMB are as follows (Qin et al., 2024):

a. The individual's urge to keep up with the constantly evolving algorithms on SM.
b. The individual's exposure to negative comments and cyberbullying on SM platforms
c. The individual's FOMO on important events or news

Like how SM use can lead to negative effects, SMB can also result in additional issues at this stage. Intensive and uncontrolled use of SM causes SM users to wear out mentally (Çelik & Diker, 2021). They may feel worn out, especially because it consumes their psychological resources. In this case, their well-being decreases, and they feel restless. In this context, SMB can reduce the psychological well-being (PWB) of individuals.

The concept of well-being encompasses a broad range of factors that reflect the physical, mental, and social health of individuals (Kahn & Juster, 2002). This concept holds significance both in terms of personal satisfaction and the quality of social relationships. Well-being is typically examined through various lenses, which include hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives. The hedonic approach emphasizes the experience of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, focusing on life satisfaction, happiness, and the overall sense of joy (Diener, 2000). In contrast, the eudaimonic perspective is rooted in the realization of personal potential and meaningful engagement in life, which is seen as essential for a deeper sense of well-being (Ryff, 1989). Well-being has different components. These are: "physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual well-being" (Seligman, 2011). Another dimension of well-being is subjective well-being, which encompasses individuals' general satisfaction with their lives, their emotional experiences, and their personal evaluations (Diener, 1984). In addition, one of the important components of well-being is psychological well-being (PWB). One important aspect of well-being is psychological well-being (Warr, 1978), which refers to the overall mental health and emotional stability of an individual.

PWB includes factors such as having supportive and rewarding relationships, contributing to the happiness of others, being respected by others, having a purposeful and meaningful life, engaging in and taking interest in one's own activities, self-esteem, and optimism (Diener et al., 2010). The concept of PWB is defined as determining and maintaining setting and accomplishing goals that bring purpose and fulfillment in life, personal progress and building functional connections with people (Keyes et al., 2002). In Ryff's (1989) definition, PWB is characterized as the person's acceptance of himself in all views, the ability to establish healthy connections with other people, having meaning, being willing to develop personally, the ability to work with autonomy and independence (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Ryff proposed a model consisting of six dimensions to explain PWB. Ryff's (1989) PWB model consists of six dimensions: "I) purpose in life, II) autonomy, III) individual development, IV) environmental mastery, V) positive relationships with other people, and VI) self-acceptance" (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Studies in the literature have revealed that there are some factors that increase or decrease psychological well-being. Individual (Huppert, 2009) or environmental factors (Briner, 2000) can increase the level of psychological well-being of individuals. In studies, factors such as patience (Doğan, 2017), mindfulness (Deniz et al., 2017), self-regulation (Fomina et al., 2020), self-confidence (Pettersson, 2018), and social competence belief (Holopainen et al., 2012) draw attention. Environmental factors are variables like social support (Adyani et al., 2018; Iraz et al., 2021), a happy marriage (Akdağ & Çankaya, 2015), healthy family environment and relationships (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021) and positive connections with other people (Umberson et al., 1996). There are many factors that increase PWB as well as

decrease it. For example, it is emphasized that many factors such as psychological problems (Bergersen et al., 2010; Karadeniz & Zabcı, 2020; Winefield et al., 2012), social problems (Huppert, 2009), unemployment (Mousteri et al., 2018) and security problems (Witte, 1999) reduce psychological well-being. In addition, different problems brought by the digital age can negatively affect and reduce the PWB of individuals. One of the issues stemming from SM use is the various negative impacts it can have, including SM addiction (Mitropoulou et al., 2022), smartphone dependency (Kumcagiz & Gündüz, 2016), and nomophobia (Bülbüloğlu et al., 2020; Yıldırım & Sezer, 2020), all of which can significantly impair PWB.

Consequently, social media has become an inseparable part of life. As a result, negative situations such as social media burnout are increasing day by day. This problem situation can negatively affect the psychological well-being of the individual by consuming the psychological resources he/she has. Therefore, it is thought that as social media burnout increases, personal well-being will decrease. In this context, the current study aims to examine the relationship between social media burnout and psychological well-being. Moreover, this study focuses on whether gender, social media usage intensity and having or not having a psychological problem have a moderating role in this relationship.

The Present Study

SMB has garnered increasing scholarly attention since 2018 (Dhir et al., 2018). While a culturally adapted scale for SMB has been developed for the Turkish context (Gündoğan, 2022), there remains a gap in the literature regarding its associations with other psychological and behavioral variables within Türkiye. Although prior studies have emphasized that nearly all SM users experience SMB to some extent (Bright et al., 2015), limited research has explored how SMB relates to individuals' positive psychological traits particularly PWB in the Turkish setting. Moreover, while the detrimental effects of SMB have been widely acknowledged, its potential impact on PWB has not been thoroughly examined. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the relationship between SMB and PWB, offering a novel contribution to the literature by contextualizing this relationship within a Turkish sample. Additionally, the gender variable is seen as a variable that has the potential to change the direction of the relationships between variables in research (Judge & Livingston, 2008). In addition, it was assumed that the intensity of social media use in the relationship between a variable, social media burnout, and a variable in this study could make a difference in the strength or direction of this relationship. It is emphasized that whether individuals feel or do not feel that they have a psychological problem has a role in shaping the connection between two or more variables (Frazier et al., 2004). In this context, the study explores the moderating roles of gender, the presence of psychological problems, and the intensity of SM use variables that have not been jointly examined in this context before. This study will make an important contribution to the literature in Türkiye. Because, while SMB has been studied globally, its impact on PWB in Türkiye remains unexplored. Moreover, this research provides original insights into how individual differences may shape the impact of SMB on PWB. Accordingly, the research questions of the current study are shaped as follows:

- Is SMB a significant predictor of PWB?

- Is gender, having psychological problems or not and social media use intensity moderators of the between SMB and PWB?

Method

This research is a correlational study that aims to examine the relationship between SMB and PWB of SM users. A correlational study is a type of research design used to assess the relationship or association between two or more variables (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017). In correlational studies, there is at least one dependent and one independent variable. In the current study, the dependent variable is SMB, while the independent variable is PWB.

Participants

The participants of the study were determined by the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling was used because of the ease of access to the sample and the fact that data was collected online. The study was conducted on adult individuals and volunteers who participated in the study were included. In this context, a total of 447 SM users aged 17 to 54 took part in the study. Among them, 332 participants (74.30%) were female, while 115 (25.70%) were male. Participants in the study self-reported their social media usage intensity as low, moderate, or high. In this regard, based on their SM usage intensity, 121 participants (27.10%) reported using SM at a low level, 133 (29.10%) at a moderate level, and 193 (43.20%) at a high level. Having a psychological problem or not was determined by the participants' self-reporting (yes/no). 233 (52.10%) of the participants reported that they had psychological problems, and 214 (47.90%) of them stated that they did not have any psychological problems. Additionally, 28 (6.30%) of the participants have one SM account, 93 (20.80%) have two SM accounts, 133 (29.80%) have three SM accounts, 103 (23%) have four SM accounts, and 90 (20.10%) have five or more SM accounts.

Scales

Social media burnout scale (SMBS): SMBS is a Likert-type measurement tool developed by Han (2018) to measure burnout experienced by SM users due to SM use. SMBS is a scale consisting of three sub-dimensions, namely "emotional exhaustion, ambivalence and depersonalization", and a total of 11 items. The scale is a 4-point Likert type (1=almost never, 2=occasionally, 3=most of the time, and 4=always). It is a self-reporting scale (e.g. item; I don't know why I use social media.) Higher scores indicate more social media burnout. The adaptation study to Turkish culture was conducted by Gündoğan (2022). As a result of the correlation analysis conducted for the language validity of the scale, the correlation values between the Turkish and English forms were found to be .92 for ambivalence, .84 for emotional exhaustion and .95 for depersonalization in the sub-dimensions, and .93 for the total scale. As a result of the adaptation study, the scale met the criteria for compliance values in Turkish culture (χ^2/df =2.32, AGFI=.92, GFI=.96, IFI=.95, TLI=.93, NFI=.91, CFI=.95, RMSEA=.05 and SRMR=.05). In this study, the internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .804.

Flourishing scale (FS): FS was developed by Diener et al., (2010). The scale is a one-dimensional, 8-item Likert-type measurement tool. The scale is a 7-point Likert type (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=undecided, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree and 7=strongly agree). FS is a scale based on the participant's self-report (e.g. item; I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.). High scores indicate high psychological well-being and feeling good about oneself. The scale was adapted to Turkish culture by Telef (2013). As a result of EFA, the total explained variance was calculated as %42. The factor loadings ranged from .54 to .76. In the adaptation study, the scale's Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was determined to be .80. Furthermore, the test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated at .86. The adaptation study found that the fit indices satisfied the required criteria (χ^2/df =4.645, RMSEA= .08, SRMR=.04, NFI=.94, RFI=.92, CFI= .95 GFI=.96 and IFI=.95). In this study, the internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .739.

Personal information form: A personal information form was prepared to determine various demographic characteristics of the participants within the scope of the study. This form consists of questions regarding gender, age, intensity of social media use, number of social media accounts and whether the participants have any psychological problems.

Process and Data Analysis

Initially, approval for the study was obtained from the ethics committee (X University ethics committee decision dated 29.02.2024, numbered 2024/04-05). Then, data was collected from SM users online. At the beginning of the data collection link, informed consent was provided, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, it was stated in the informed consent that participation was voluntary, no fee would be paid and no directly identifying information was requested from the participant. The data collection link of the study was delivered to volunteer participants via various SM tools. Thus, data were collected from 447 participants.

Correlation analysis, structural equation model (SEM) analysis and Hayes's "Process Macro" were used in the analysis of the study data. Since SEM analysis is considered an advanced analysis, it is recommended as an analysis used to reveal direct or indirect relationships between two or more variables (Hair et al., 2021). In this context, the predictive relationship between the two variables of the study (SMB and PWB) was examined with SEM analysis. In addition, the moderating roles of gender, having a psychological problem and SM usage intensity between the two variables were examined using Hayes's (2022) "Process Macro". Model 1 from the Process Macro models was used. In the SEM analysis, as criteria in the fit indices. The criteria used were ≤ 3 for χ^2/df, ≥ .90 for GFI, CFI, NFI, IFI and TLI, and ≤ .08 for RMSEA and SRMR (Kline, 2015).

Findings

In this section, firstly the correlation analysis regarding the connection between SMB and PWB is given. Also, descriptive statistics are given. Then, the results of predictive and moderation analyses are given.

An analysis of Table-1 reveals a significant negative relationship between SMB and PWB. (r=-.403, p<.001). The data distribution is considered normal, as the skewness and kurtosis values fall within the range of -1.5 to +1.5.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis

	1	2	Mean.	Sd	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
1. SMB	-		23.315	4.768	12	43	.601	.587	.739
2. PWB	-.403***	-	41.230	7.311	10	56	-.755	1.277	.804

***p<.001
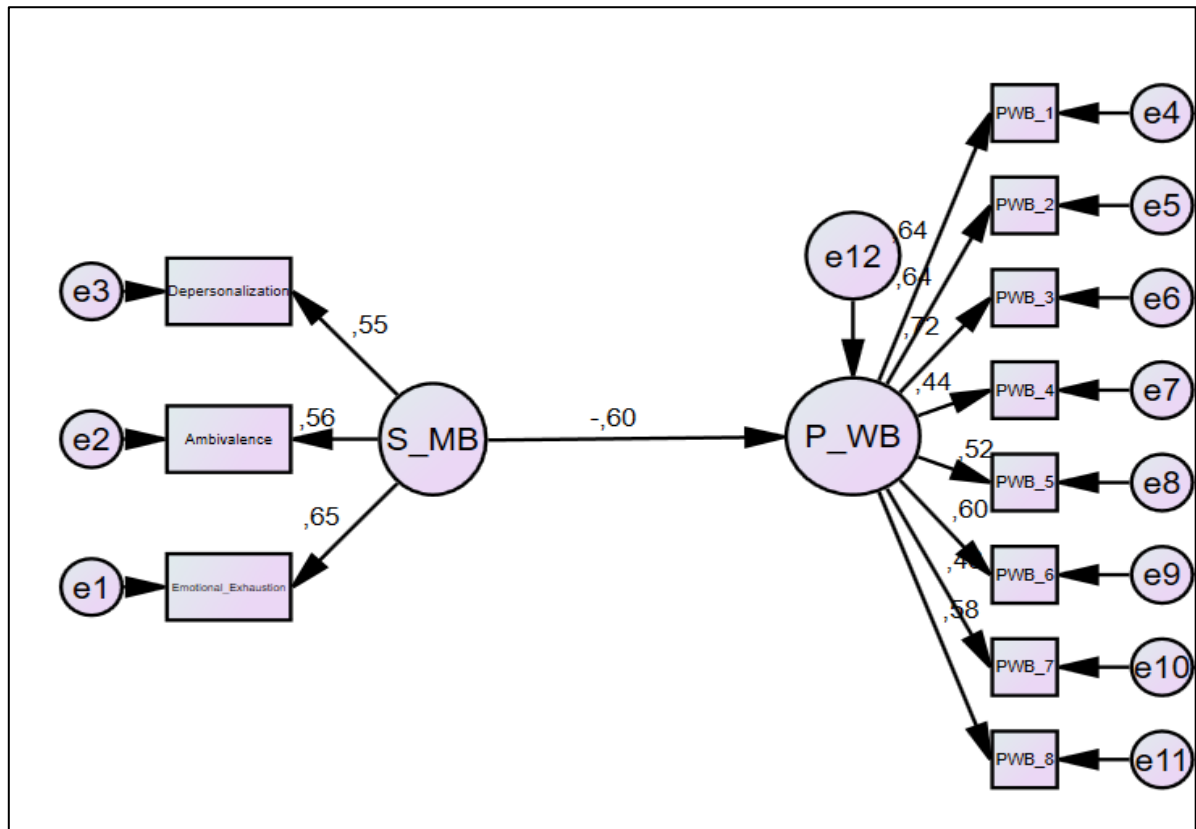
Figure 1. Predictive relationship between SMB and PWB

Table 2. The moderating role of gender, having psychological problems and SM usage intensity variables in the relationship between SMB and PWB

Moderating variable		β	SE	t	p	%95 CI
Gender	SMB	-.267	.200	-2.049	.04	[-.802, -.017]
	Gender	.259	3.441	1.257	.21	[-2.435, 11.088]
	SMB*Gender	-.267	.144	-1.111	.27	[-.443, .123]
Psychological Problem	SMB	-.107	.211	-.776	.43	[-.579, .251]
	Psy. problem	.572	3.139	2.665	.01	[2.198, 14.538]
	SMB*Psy. problem	-.558	.132	-2.245	.03*	[-.555, -.037]
SMUI	SMB	-.618	-.948	-5.229	.00	[-1.304, -.592]
	SMUI	-.495	-4.392	-2.365	.02	[-8.042, -.742]
	SMB*SMUI	.472	.154	1.975	.04*	[.001, .307]

*p<.05 (SE= standard error, SMB= social media burnout, SMUI= social media usage intensity)

As presented in Figure 1, the fit values of the SEM analysis were found to be χ2/df (106.048/41) = 2.587, GFI=.96, CFI=.94, NFI=.91, IFI=.94, TLI=.92, RMSEA=.06 and SRMR=.04. Thus, the model provided fit (Kline, 2015). SMB was found to be a negatively significant predictor of PWB (β =-.60, 95%CI [-.681; -.510], p<.001, R^2=.36).

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the gender variable does not have a moderating role in the relationship between SMB and PWB (β=-.267, 95%CI [-.443; .123], t=-1.111, p>.05). It is seen that the variable of having a psychological problem or not has a moderating role in the relationship between SMB and PWB (β=-.558, 95%CI [-.555; -.037], t=-2.245, p<.05). It is also seen that the variable of SM usage intensity has a moderating role in the relationship

between SMB and PWB (β=.472, 95%CI [.001; .307], t=1.975, p<.05).

Discussion, Conclusion, and Limitations

SMB has begun to be examined as a new research topic in recent years as a problem experienced by individuals who use SM intensively or uncontrolledly. SMB may have several detrimental effects on individuals. It is a problem that can negatively affect the PWB of individuals. In this context, the effect of SMB on PWB was examined in this study. In addition, in order to reveal whether there is an effect on the direction of this relationship in the relationship between SMB and PWB, gender, whether or not experiencing psychological problems, and the moderating roles of SM use were also examined.
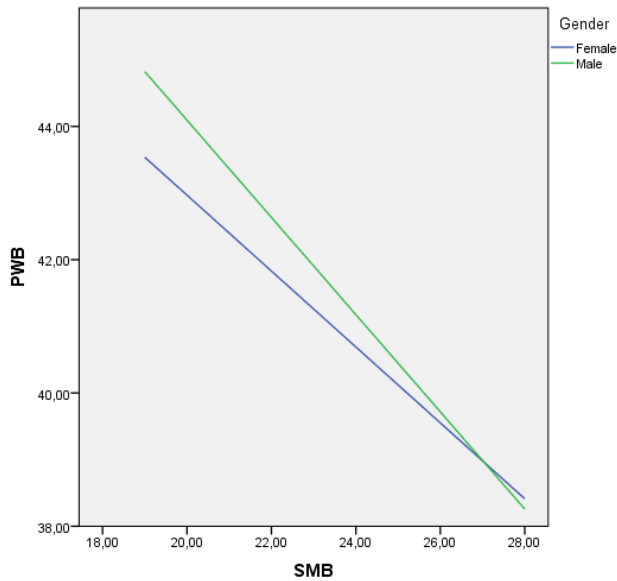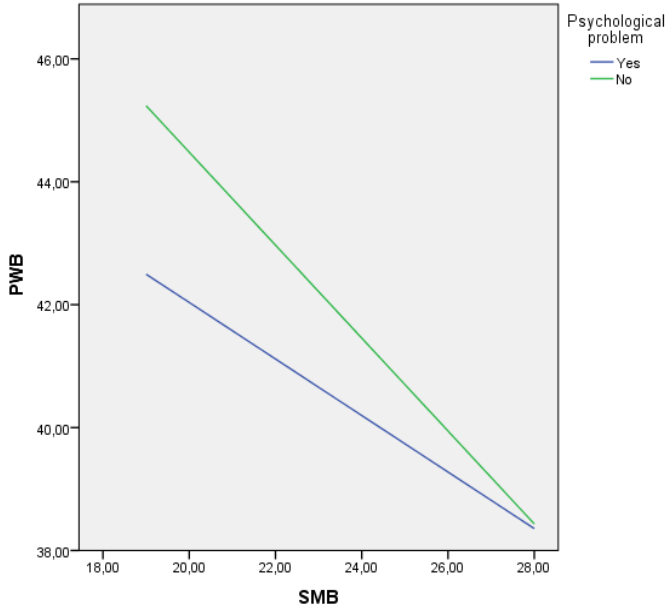
Figure 2. The moderating role of gender

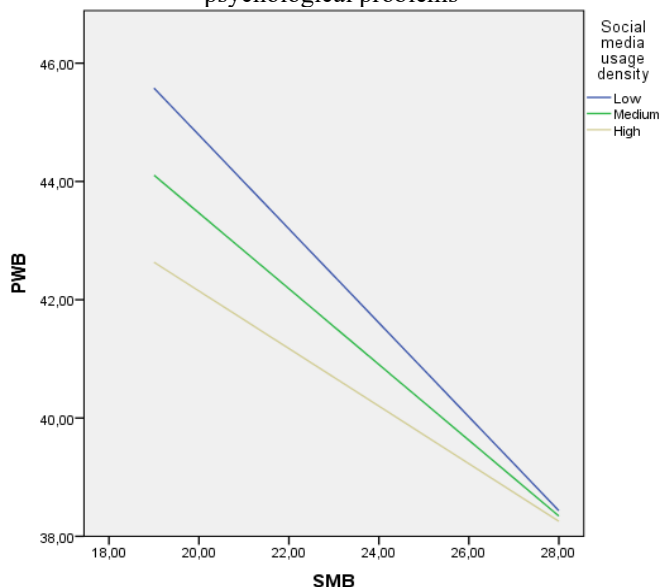**Figure 3.** The moderating role of having or not having psychological problems

Figure 4. The moderating role of SMUI

The first conclusion reached by the study was that SMB is a negative predictor of individuals' PWB. This result shows that individuals who experience SMB intensively will have a decrease in their psychological well-being because of this situation. Because the psychological health of individuals can be negatively affected because of overuse of SM (Noori et al., 2023). In other words, constant interaction on SM platforms can wear people out mentally and emotionally. Thus, SMB can negatively affect the general PWB of individuals by causing problems such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. A study concluded that the rise in SM use seriously reduces the well-being of SM users (Ostic et al., 2021). The current research results also point to this.

The second conclusion reached by the current study is that the gender variable does not have a moderating role in the relationship between SMB and PWB. This result shows that gender does not affect the connection between these two concepts. Accordingly, the negative interaction between SMB and PWB is valid for both men and women. As a result, the relationship between SMB and PWB is independent of gender. This situation shows that the effects of SM use on mental health are a problem independent of gender differences. Although the gender variable is considered a critical factor in terms of the psychological state of people and its effects on SM use, it is now emphasized that in the 21st century, the gender variable does not cause differences in most problems, such as problems related to SM (Crocco et al., 2018). It is possible that cultural factors may influence how gender roles manifest in online behavior and mental health outcomes, potentially masking nuanced gender differences in this context. Moreover, measurement limitations such as binary gender categorization or the potential insensitivity of the instruments used to capture gender-specific experiences might contribute to the non-significant result. Alternatively, it may indicate that the tools used in this study were not adequately sensitive to detect subtle, culturally mediated gender differences.

The study concluded that the variable of whether or not an individual has a psychological problem has a moderating role in the relationship between SMB and PWB. This result shows that the psychological state of individuals can play a significant role in the relationship between SMB and PWB. In other words, the psychological state of individuals is an important factor affecting the relationship between SMB and PWB. How an individual's SMB problem due to SM use affects their PWB may depend on whether the individual also has psychological problems (Matthes et al., 2020). The research also revealed this. As a result, individuals who believe they have psychological problems may be more negatively affected by SMB. In this case, while the impacts of SM use become more pronounced, PWB may also be negatively affected as a result.

Finally, in the current study, it was found that the variable of individuals' SM usage intensity has a moderating role in the link between SMB and PWB. According to this result, SM usage intensity may be an important factor in understanding the relationship between SMB and PWB. Individuals' SM usage habits can affect the dynamics between SMB and PWB (Choi et al., 2016). Among these habits, individuals' SM usage intensity is also included. As a result of the current study, the intensity of SM use was found to be a moderate factor in the negative relationship between SMB and PWB.

The current study is a study with original results that addresses the relationship between SMB, which is a new

research topic, and the concept of PWB, but it also has some limitations. First, the research findings were collected cross-sectionally. This limitation can be reduced by collecting data longitudinally and revealing the temporal interaction. In this context, future studies could examine the relationship between SMB and PWB over three or six months to assess causality. Again, the results were collected with scales based only on the individual's self-report. To reach more in-depth results, collecting data with qualitative data collection techniques such as interviews and observation can contribute to reducing this limitation. In addition, a mixed-method study may reduce this limitation. Another limitation of the study is that it was conducted in Turkish culture and on Turkish participants. When new studies are conducted by including different cultures, this limitation will be reduced, and the generalizability of the research results will increase. Moreover, correlational studies do not provide causality inference. Therefore, this limitation can be overcome by designing experimental or longitudinal studies. The number of male participants in the study is less than the number of female participants. This limitation can be overcome in new studies by having close numbers of men and women.

In addition, some suggestions can be made based on the results achieved by the study. In order to reduce SMB, which is a situation experienced by SM users in particular, informative training can be given on more controlled and healthy SM use. In this context, educators and mental health experts can design programs on the subject. As a result, SMB can decrease because of healthy social media use. Thus, the well-being and psychological health of individuals will not be negatively affected by SM use. Since this study is a "cross-sectional study", researchers can design experimental studies in new studies and plan group studies to improve the negative effects of SMB. Policies can be developed by the authorities for the healthy use of SM. Within the scope of these policies, more controlled use of SM platforms can be provided. In addition, mental health services can be made more effective for individuals at high risk of unhealthy SM use and their access to spiritual support can be facilitated.

Author Contributions

The author declares that no other author contributed to the study and that he has read and approved the final version of the study.

Ethical Declaration

This study was conducted with the approval decision taken at the 2024/04 meeting of the Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Protocol No. 2024/04-05) dated 29.02.2024.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

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