

The effect of popularised foods on social media on adolescents' desire to try

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ABSTRACT

Adolescents are more sensitive to environmental effects owing to their developmental characteristics and can be easily affected by the content they encounter on social media. This study aimed to investigate the effect of foods that have gained popularity on social media on adolescents' desire to try them. A questionnaire form including sociodemographic questions, questions about popular food consumption habits, questions about the reason for wanting to try new foods, the social media craving scale and the perception of being affected by social media phenomena scale was applied to 2420 high school students in Elazığ city centre between January 2025 and May 2025 with the necessary permissions. Significant and positive correlations were found between the questions on popular food consumption habits and the scores obtained from the social media craving scale and the scale of perception of being affected by social media phenomena ($p < 0.05$). As the scores obtained from the social media desire scale and the perception of being influenced by social media influencers scale increased, the rate of participants' preference for popular foods also increased. It was concluded that popular foods frequently encountered on social media increase adolescents' desire to try new foods.

Keywords: Social media, Phenomenon, Popular food, Adolescent, Nutrition



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Introduction

Adolescence is a developmental period that continues with the experience of psychosocial maturation after changes in biological and emotional areas and ends with the acquisition of independence and social productivity characteristics. Adolescent individuals strive to adapt to these changes on the one hand, and on the other hand, they strive to form their personalities (Türkbay et al., 2005). Personality development continues throughout life, but the most striking structure occurs during adolescence (Archer, 1989). It is known that socialisation through the Internet and similar applications affects the formation of personality, which is increasing among young users every day (Castells, 2002).

Social media platforms have paved the way for popular cultural elements to reach the masses faster, easier, and without using intermediaries (Karaduman, 2017). Today, social media platforms are used more widely by all age groups, especially children and young people, than traditional media (Ergen, 2019). The alternative structure of social media, which is mainly for individual use and allows individuals to interact with other individuals, reveals that it is a social phenomenon (Babacan, 2016).

Young people follow social media influencers and become role models for them. Young people follow them with admiration and envy their lifestyle. In this context, it is inevitable that social media influencers who are described as opinion leaders will have an impact on young people (İren, 2019). There have been efforts to develop different scales to measure the place and importance of social media phenomena that have positive and negative effects on adolescents in their lives (Pertegal et al., 2019; Rodgers et al., 2021). Social media use and the number of social media influencers are increasing today. However, no studies have been conducted in Türkiye examining the impact of social media on foods that have become popular among adolescents. This study aims to investigate the effect of social media on adolescents' nutrition, particularly their tendencies to consume popular foods.

Materials and Methods

Study Population

This cross-sectional study was conducted with 2420 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 in eight public schools in Elazığ/Türkiye, between January 2025 and May 2025, after obtaining ethics committee approval and approval from the Ministry of National Education. The Ministry of National Education has permitted these programs to be held in Science High Schools, Imam Hatip High Schools, Anatolian High

Schools, and Vocational High Schools, as they reflect different segments of society. A sample size calculation was performed in our study, drawing on data from a similar study by Caner et al. Using these data, a power analysis was conducted to determine the required sample size for our study, targeting a similar effect size (Cohen's $f \approx 0.25$) at an alpha level of 0.05 and a power of 0.95. The analysis indicated that a total sample size of approximately 1720 participants would be sufficient to achieve robust statistical power for detecting significant differences across groups (Caner et al., 2022). Therefore, with a planned sample size of approximately 2000 participants, our study was designed to ensure reliable and comprehensive findings across nutritional status and social media influencers. Before starting the study, the volunteer participants and their parents signed a voluntary consent form. Patients who dropped out of the test and those with psychological disorders were excluded from the study.

Collection of Data

The study data were collected through a face-to-face survey. The survey asked questions about the individuals' age, gender, how many hours they watched TV per day, how many hours they used social media, and how many hours they slept per day. In addition, three main meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and three snacks (morning, afternoon, and night) were recorded for meal consumption. The Social Media Craving Scale (SMCS), questions about food consumption habits, questions about the reason for wanting to try new foods, and questions from the Social Media Phenomenon Influence Scale for Adolescents were used.

Social Media Craving Scale (SMCS)

The SMCS, developed by Savcı and Griffiths (2019) by modifying the Penn Alcohol Craving Scale (Flannery et al., 1999), consists of five items and a single subdimension. As a result of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), it was seen that the SMCS consists of a dimension that explains 55.75% of the total variance. This one-dimensional structure was tested in two different samples using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). As a result of the CFA, it was determined that the SMCS had acceptable, appropriate index values. The reliability of the SMCS was evaluated using Cronbach's α internal consistency coefficient, corrected item-total correlation coefficients, and the test-retest method. It was observed that the scale had usable values (Savcı & Griffiths, 2021).

Perception Scale of Being Affected by Social Media Influencers for Adolescents

The scale for the perception of being affected by social media phenomena in adolescents is one-dimensional. There were no reverse-scored items on the scale. The lowest score that could be obtained from the scale was eight, and the highest score was 40. An increase in the score obtained from the scale indicates that adolescents' rate of being affected by social media phenomena increases (Sağır, 2019).

Anthropometric Measurements

Body weight (kg) was measured using a Tanita BC 545N portable body analyser. A Leicester brand stadiometer was used for height measurements. While the head was in the Frankford plane and the individual was in an upright position, the measurement was recorded with a sensitivity of 0.1 cm by taking deep breaths. The students' Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated by dividing their body weight by the square of their height (body weight/height (kg/ m²)) (Gibson, 2005).

Statistical Analysis

Data were evaluated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 26.0 (SPSS 26.0). While performing statistical analysis of the data, the percentage (%) rate was used for qualitative variables; mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) were used for quantitative parametric variables. Statistical analysis of the data used for comparison was performed using the Pearson correlation technique.

Results and Discussion

The study population consisted of 2420 participants (41.9% male, 58.1% female) with a mean age of 15.64±1.14 years. Of the participants, 62.4% were studying at Anatolian High School, 22.9% at Imam Hatip High School, 11.1% at Science High School, and 3.6% at Vocational High School. BMI provides information on obesity and lifestyle status (El Kari et al., 2023). In a study involving 933 adolescents, it was reported that the average BMI was 20.71±4.00 kg/m² (Meşe Yavuz & Koca Özer, 2019). When the anthropometric measurements of the participants were examined, the average BMI was 21.16±3.61 kg/m². The participants had a normal average BMI. Lin, in a study conducted in Taiwan involving 1060 middle school students, found that the prevalence of Internet addiction among middle school students during the COVID-19 outbreak was quite common at 24.4% (Lin, 2020). When the findings regarding social media use in this study were examined, the social media networks most used by the participants were YouTube (81.6%), Instagram (77.8%), Google (68.9%),

TikTok (57.1%) and Snapchat (50.5%) (Table 1). Taylan and Işık (2015) determined that the daily Internet usage time of the participants was 2 hours and 45 minutes in their research conducted with the participation of middle and high school students (Taylan & Işık, 2015). Tiggemann and Slater (2014) determined in their research that participants spend an average of over 1.5 hours on social media per day (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014). In studies conducted with adolescents, it was observed that the average Internet and social media usage time is between 1 and 3 hours per day (Balıkcıoğlu & Volkan, 2016; Gökçearslan & Günbatar, 2012; Şimşek, 2019). In this study, it was observed that participants mostly spend 2-4 hours on daily social media networks. The fact that a significant majority of participants spent time on this subject shows that social media has become an increasingly mental and emotional tool for adolescents.

Social media tends to affect food choices and eating habits. Social media tends to affect food choices and eating habits (Dalky et al., 2017). A study observed a relationship between increased consumption of foods with poor nutritional content, decreased fruit and vegetable consumption, and increased screen time (Pérez-Farinós et al., 2017). When this study examines the social media platforms that increase the desire for popular food the most, Instagram ranked first at 71.5%. This was followed by TikTok (52.6%), YouTube (48.2%), Pinterest (10.5%) and Snapchat (9.8%) (Table 1). The fact that the desire for popular food increases the most on visual and video-based platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube can be thought of as revealing the power of visual content on social media to direct adolescents' food preferences.

Poor health conditions are common among adolescents who do not sleep sufficiently (Noland et al., 2009). It has been stated that adolescents should sleep 8.5-9.5 hours from the age of 13 to adulthood; children between the ages of 5-12 should sleep 9-11 hours per day (Karadağ, 2007). In our study, 51.2% of the participants stated that they slept for 6-8 hours on average, 27.7% slept for less than 6 hours, and 21% slept for 8 hours or more. The results of this study were similar to those reported in the literature. Adolescents usually receive information about nutrition from their families, magazines, websites, peers, or coaches. The rate of those who obtain nutritional information from health-related professional groups is quite low (Partida et al., 2018). In this study, the sources from which the participants received the most information about nutrition and diet were 45.4% from their families, 40.5% from the Internet, 26.5% from social media, and 18.4% from dietitians (Table 1).

Table 1. Analysis results regarding participants' social media usage and physical health

Variable		n	%
Social media networks used	Instagram	1882	77.8
	Facebook	302	12.5
	Tiktok	1381	57.1
	YouTube	1975	81.6
	Twitter	628	26.0
	Pinterest	825	34.1
	Vine	51	2.1
	Google	1667	68.9
	Snapchat	1221	50.5
	Other	202	8.4
Time spent on daily social media networks	0-30 min	112	4.6
	30 min - 1 hour	236	9.8
	1-2 hours	664	27.4
	2-4 hours	1062	43.9
	6 hours or more	346	14.3
Number of weekly social media visits	0-8 times	330	13.6
	9-30 times	882	36.4
	31-57 times	656	27.1
	58 times or more	552	22.8
How long have you been using social media?	Less than 1 year	260	10.7
	1-3 years	857	35.4
	3-5 years	723	29.9
	More than 5 years	580	24.0
Which social media platforms increase your desire for popular foods?	Instagram	1720	71.5
	Snapchat	236	9.8
	TikTok	1265	52.6
	Pinterest	252	10.5
	YouTube	1160	48.2
	Linkedin	63	2.6
	Facebook	70	2.9
	Reddit	52	2.2
	Twitter	153	6.4
	Other	133	5.5
Average daily sleep duration	Less than 6 hours	671	27.7
	6-8 hours	1240	51.2
	8 hours and above	509	21.0
The most informative source on nutrition and diet-related topics	Dietitian	442	18.4
	Doctor	566	23.5
	Newspaper/magazine	69	2.9
	TV	212	8.8
	Sports	320	13.3
	Social media	639	26.5
	Other	263	10.9
	Internet	975	40.5
	Family	1092	45.4
	Friend	463	19.2
Amount of water consumed daily	1-3 glasses	571	23.6
	4-6 glasses	784	32.4
	6-10 glasses	590	24.4
	Over 10 glasses	475	19.6

Table 2. Analysis results regarding participants' meal consumption status

Main meal	Breakfast		Lunch		Dinner	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Every day	1046	43,2	1046	43,2	2120	87,6
5-6 times a week	295	12,2	295	12,2	140	5,8
3-4 times a week	377	15,6	377	15,6	74	3,1
1-2 times a week	323	13,3	323	13,3	48	2,0
Never	379	15,7	379	15,7	38	1,6
Snack	Morning		Afternoon		Night	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Every day	327	13,5	405	16,7	581	24,0
5-6 times a week	122	5,0	180	7,4	201	8,3
3-4 times a week	173	7,1	307	12,7	300	12,4
1-2 times a week	288	11,9	460	19,0	456	18,8
Never	1510	62,4	1068	44,1	882	36,4

Breakfast, an important meal of the day, has serious effects on starting the day vigorously, understanding, perceiving, remembering, and working efficiently in the activities we engage in during the day. It also contributes to nutritional status, increases development in learning and cognitive skills, and may contribute to the effectiveness of education (Ayhan et al., 2012). Özdemir (2008) found that the proportion of students who consumed breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day was, respectively. When the main meal consumption habits of the participants were examined, it was observed that 43.2% of them consumed breakfast and lunch daily. Among the participants, 87.6% consumed dinner Daily (Özdemir, 2008). When the main meal consumption habits of the participants were examined in this study, 43.2% of them consumed breakfast and lunch daily. Among the participants, 87.6% consumed dinner daily. When snack habits were examined, 62.4% of them did not consume morning meals, 44.1% did not consume afternoon meals, and 36.4% did not consume night meals at all. The percentages of those who consumed snacks every day were 13.5%, 16.7%, and 24.0% for morning, afternoon, and night meals, respectively (Table 2). These results are consistent with the literature.

Adolescents do not make an effort to change their eating behaviours, ignore the health problems they encounter in the future, and prefer short-term satisfaction from food to long-term health problems (Neumark-Sztainer et al., 1999). In a study, 66.5% of the participants showed that food and drink photos shared on social media networks attracted their attention, and that these visuals provided an opportunity to try new tastes (Pekerşen & Kaplan, 2020). In our study, most of the participants (66.5%) answered "Yes" to the statement "I think the reason why I want to try popular foods I see on social media

is because of the food's texture, colour, consistency, etc., features." The percentage of participants who said "No" to the statement "I think the reason why I want to try popular foods I see on social media is because the channel/influencer I follow tried them." was higher (67.2%) (Table 3). Based on the findings, this tendency of adolescents can be interpreted as the desire for food not only because the channel/influencer tried it, but also because everyone tried it.

It has been suggested that healthy foods attract less visual attention than unhealthy foods and do not trigger a desire to eat in individuals (Samson & Buijzen, 2020). In a study conducted by Ronto et al. (2020), adolescent students generally stated that unhealthy foods are both more delicious, attractive, and cheaper, and therefore prefer unhealthy foods at a higher rate (Ronto et al., 2021). In this study, the majority of the participants (56.8%) answered "Yes" to the statement "If I like the taste of popular food I see on social media, even if it is unhealthy, it will not change my desire for that food." The majority of the participants (84.1%) answered "No" to the statement "My family/friends sometimes worry about my interest/desire for popular food on social media." (Table 3). This shows that such behaviours are generally considered normal in the social environment and that being influenced by social media has become commonplace among adolescents.

Frequent viewing of food-related content and advertisements on social media applications causes eating behaviours to change and the desire to eat unhealthy foods to increase. Since a large part of social and emotional development occurs during adolescence, and adolescents spend time using the Internet and mobile phones, the impact of online social networks on them is high (Mohsenpour et al., 2023). Based on this, it is parallel

to this study that popular foods on social media attract the attention of adolescents and increase their desire to eat. When the findings regarding the participants' popular food consumption habits are examined, in the responses given to the question "Which food have you tried before?", the most tried foods are noodles (75%) and Dubai chocolate (66.2%), while egg coffee (3.1%), transparent soda dessert (6.9%) and sesame egg (10.4%) are among the least tried foods (Table 4). Based on these findings, the practicality and low cost of noodles, the appeal to the palate with its aromatic content and its frequent presence on social media, and the luxurious and different taste experiences of Dubai chocolate, its aesthetic presentation, and its prominence in social media trends have been effective in these two products being the most tried foods among adolescents. It has been observed that adolescents care more about sensory appearance than health in food selection (Ilgaz et al., 2018). In a study conducted by Ronto et al., adolescents viewed unhealthy foods as more attractive and delicious, and chose unhealthy foods because they were cheaper (Ronto et al., 2021). It is thought that foods with unusual ingredients far from the palate, such as egg coffee, transparent soda dessert, and sesame eggs, may be less preferred by adolescents due to both their unusual taste profiles and their lack of aesthetic appeal on social media.

Students who have fears about fat, sugar, and salt consumption, which negatively affect healthy nutrition, try to consume

foods containing these food components in smaller amounts (Power et al., 2010) in the responses given by the participants to the question "Which one is more suitable for a healthy lifestyle?", stuffed onion (46.9%) and pickled garlic (37.2%) were the most suitable foods. In contrast, transparent soda dessert (3.6%) and egg coffee (4.4%) were the least suitable foods. Adolescents find stuffed onions and pickled garlic more suitable for a healthy lifestyle, which may be because these foods are seen as nutritious with their traditional and natural structure. In contrast, modern and unusual foods such as transparent soda dessert and egg coffee are less preferred by adolescents because of their unfamiliarity with artificial ingredients, as they are considered unhealthy. In the responses given by the participants to the question "Which one can cause health problems if consumed excessively?", Dubai chocolate (48.8%) and noodles (60.6%) were the most frequently mentioned foods that can cause health problems if consumed excessively. In contrast, stuffed onion (11%), pickled garlic (12.9%), and sesame eggs (13%) were the least frequently mentioned foods (Table 5). Adolescents who think that Dubai chocolate and noodles are harmful to health if consumed excessively because of their high sugar, salt, and additive content may have found stuffed onion, pickled garlic, and sesame eggs less risky because they perceive them as natural, homemade, and nutritious.

Table 3. Analysis Results for Reasons for Desire to Try New Foods

	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
I think the reason why popular foods I see on social media create a desire to try them is because of the food's texture, colour, consistency, etc.	1610	66.5	810	33.5
I think the reason why popular foods I see on social media create a desire to try them is that everyone tries them, and their tastes arouse a sense of curiosity in me.	1476	61.0	944	39.0
I think the reason why popular foods I see on social media create a desire to try them is entirely due to my weakness for new foods.	927	38.3	1493	61.7
I think the reason why popular foods I see on social media create a desire to try them is because of the channel/influencer I follow.	793	32.8	1627	67.2
If my friends try the popular food I see on social media and I do not try it, I feel incomplete, and this strengthens my desire to try that food.	600	24.8	1820	75.2
If I like the taste of a popular food I see on social media, even if it is an unhealthy food, it cannot change my desire for that food.	1374	56.8	1046	43.2
After trying a popular food on social media, I feel happy, and I am more willing to try the next new food that comes out.	879	36.3	1541	63.7
My family/friends sometimes worry about my curiosity/desire for popular foods on social media.	384	15.9	2036	84.1

Table 4. Analysis Results for Popular Food Consumption Habits

	Which food have you tried before?	Which food are you most excited to try?	Which one do you think you will have a hard time eating?	Which food is more accessible to you?	What food do you encounter most in popular culture?
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Sushi	534 (22.2)	746 (31.1)	846 (35.1)	317 (13.1)	815 (33.8)
Dubai chocolate	1594 (66.2)	875 (36.5)	170 (7.0)	803 (33.3)	1918 (79.7)
Sesame eggs	250 (10.4)	126 (5.3)	532 (22.0)	497 (20.6)	119 (4.9)
Stuffed onions	678 (28.2)	349 (14.6)	536 (22.2)	709 (29.4)	490 (20.3)
Mussels	754 (31.3)	484 (20.2)	536 (22.2)	357 (14.8)	418 (17.4)
Noodles	1805 (75.0)	393 (16.4)	163 (6.8)	1338 (55.4)	805 (33.4)
Egg coffee	74 (3.1)	139 (5.8)	1473 (61.0)	153 (6.3)	116 (4.8)
Transparent soda dessert	166 (6.9)	270 (11.3)	342 (14.2)	144 (6.0)	143 (5.9)
Garlic pickle	876 (36.4)	193 (8.1)	492 (20.4)	638 (26.4)	328 (13.6)
Granular coffee	662 (27.5)	183 (7.6)	347 (14.4)	426 (17.6)	245 (10.2)
Cheese-stuffed jalapeño	446 (18.5)	389 (16.2)	370 (15.3)	220 (9.1)	549 (22.8)
Other	200 (8.3)	306 (12.8)	118 (4.9)	212 (8.8)	148 (6.1)

Table 5. Health Beliefs About Popular Foods

	Which one is more suitable for a healthy lifestyle?	Which food do you think is closer to traditional Turkish cuisine?	Which one do you prefer to consume regularly for a healthy life?	Which of these can cause health problems if consumed excessively?
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Sushi	289 (12.0)	105 (4.3)	291 (12.0)	730 (30.3)
Dubai chocolate	314 (13.0)	187 (7.7)	440 (18.2)	1176 (48.8)
Sesame eggs	755 (31.3)	404 (16.7)	566 (23.4)	314 (13.0)
Stuffed onions	1132 (46.9)	1802 (74.6)	691 (28.6)	266 (11.0)
Mussels	291 (12.0)	303 (12.6)	243 (10.1)	485 (20.1)
Noodles	229 (9.5)	86 (3.6)	357 (14.8)	1459 (60.6)
Egg coffee	106 (4.4)	92 (3.8)	91 (3.8)	660 (27.4)
Transparent soda dessert	86 (3.6)	81 (3.4)	70 (2.9)	550 (22.8)
Garlic pickle	898 (37.2)	890 (36.9)	568 (23.5)	311 (12.9)
Granular coffee	210 (8.7)	119 (4.9)	264 (10.9)	641 (26.6)
Cheese-stuffed jalapeño	272 (11.3)	103 (4.3)	190 (7.9)	373 (15.5)
Other	231 (9.6)	152 (6.3)	402 (16.6)	158 (6.6)

Individuals who manage to influence people who use social media and are followed by them at a high rate have become well known on social media (Özcan, 2020). When the results of the scale of perception of being influenced by social media phenomena were examined, the average total score of the participants was determined as 15.91 ± 7.03 . When the scale items were examined, the items with the highest averages were influenced by the shares, preferences, speech patterns, and styles of social media. Social media has the ability to positively influence adolescents. However, this effect may not be positive at times, and for this reason, they need to develop critical thinking skills against messages of phenomena. Being influenced by social media can have negative effects on adolescents' lives and personalities (Yurdakul, 2022). In this study, the items with the lowest averages were those in which the participants tried to apply the behaviours of the phenomena to their own lives less and saw them less as opinion leaders for society. This shows that, although the participants followed the phenomena, they did not take them as examples without questioning.

The extent to which social media and social media influencers affect children and adolescents has often been covered in different studies, and it has been proven that children and adolescents use social media excessively, and influencers are examples for themselves (Burroughs, 2017; Martínez & Olsson, 2019). No significant correlations were found between the questions "Which do you think you will have difficulty eating?" and "Which excessive consumption may cause health problems?" ($p > 0.05$) (Table 6). On the other hand, significant and positive correlations were found between the other questions about popular food consumption habits and the scores obtained from the social media craving scale and the perception scale of being affected by social media influencers for adolescents ($p < 0.05$). In this study, participants' thoughts about which foods they would have difficulty eating or which foods could be harmful to their health were not found to be related

to their exposure to social media. However, a significant relationship was found between other questions, such as the desire to try popular foods and the social media craving scale, and the perception scale of being affected by social media influencers for adolescents. This shows that social media increases adolescents' interest in popular food. Significant positive correlations were found between the level of desire to try new foods and the scores obtained from the social media craving scale and the perception scale of being affected by social media influencers for adolescents ($p < 0.05$). Accordingly, when the scores obtained from the social media craving scale increased, the participants' desire to try new foods also increased. Similarly, when the scores obtained from the perception scale of being affected by social media influencers for adolescents increased, the level of desire of the participants to try new foods increased. The content shared on social media platforms and the influencers followed positively affect young people's motivation to discover new tastes. The findings show that with an increase in the influence of social media, the tendency of adolescents to try new foods also increases.

Table 7 presents the linear regression analysis results conducted to determine the effect of the social media craving scale and the perception of being affected by social media influencers scale on the level of desire to try new foods. The established regression model was found to be statistically significant ($F_{(2,2417)} = 246.765$, $p < 0.001$). The analysis results indicate that the independent variables explain approximately 17% of the total variance in the level of desire to try new foods ($R^2 = 0.170$). When the regression coefficients are examined, it is observed that the social media craving scale ($\beta = 0.252$, $t = 13.168$, $p < 0.001$) and the perception of being affected by social media influencers scale ($\beta = 0.270$, $t = 14.097$, $p < 0.001$) positively and significantly predict the level of desire to try new foods. These findings demonstrate that as adolescents' social media cravings and their perceptions of being influenced by social media phenomena increase, their desire to try popular new foods also increases significantly.

Table 6. Correlation analysis results for the relationships between popular food consumption habits, the level of desire to try new foods, the social media craving scale and the perception of influence from social media phenomena scale

		Social media craving scale	Perception scale of being affected by social media influencers for adolescents
Which food have you tried before?	r	0.173	0.140
	p	0.000	0.000
Which food are you most excited to try?	r	0.106	0.140
	p	0.000	0.000
Which do you think you will have a hard time eating?	r	0.012	0.004
	p	0.546	0.852
Which is more suitable for a healthy lifestyle?	r	0.100	0.119
	p	0.000	0.000
Which food do you think is closer to traditional Turkish cuisine?	r	0.097	0.096
	p	0.000	0.000
Which do you prefer to consume regularly for a healthy life?	r	0.134	0.133
	p	0.000	0.000
Which is a more accessible food for you?	r	0.103	0.051
	p	0.000	0.013
Which can cause health problems if consumed excessively?	r	0.006	-0.023
	p	0.776	0.261
Which food do you encounter most in popular culture?	r	0.126	0.050
	p	0.000	0.014
Level of Desire to Try New Foods	r	0.318	0.332
	p	0.000	0.000

Pearson correlation analysis

Table 7. Linear regression analysis results for the effect of the social media craving scale and perception of influence from the social media phenomena scale on the level of desire to try new foods

Independent Variables	β	Std. Error	Std. β	t	p	95% CI	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	0.536	0.133		4.020	0.000	0.274 - 0.797		
Social media craving	0.428	0.033	0.252	13.168	0.000	0.365 - 0.492	0.939	1.065
Perception of being affected by social media influencers	0.080	0.006	0.270	14.097	0.000	0.069 - 0.092	0.939	1.065

Dependent Variable: Level of Desire to Try New Foods

$F_{(2, 2417)} = 246.765$ $p = 0.000$ $R^2 = 0.170$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.169$

Limitations

A limitation is that the study was conducted in schools designated by the Ministry of National Education and, therefore, may not reflect the city and country as a whole. The desire to try new foods is scalable, and popular foods and related questions can be expanded.

Conclusion

Consequently, as teenagers' perceptions of social media addiction and the impact of social media events increase, their desire to try popular new foods also increases significantly. It has been predicted that content presented with visual aesthetics, social interaction, and attention-grabbing elements on social media can affect the sensory curiosity, social comparison behaviours, and emotional eating tendencies of adolescents. It has been determined that the influencer effect is not the only determinant and that the community effect is more prominent. However, taste appreciation is an effective element in continuing consumption despite unhealthy content. It has been concluded that social media is effective in adolescents' food preferences not only based on visual appreciation but also on psychosocial dynamics such as social approval, belonging, and identity construction. Popular foods are not only a nutritional element for adolescents, but also cultural and social indicators of the digital age.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest: The author(s) declare that they have no actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest related to this article.

Ethics committee approval: This study was approved by the Firat University Non-Interventional Research Ethics Committee (approval number: 2025/01-04) and complied with ethical rules. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki for human studies, and informed consent was obtained from all included participants.

Data availability: The data will be made available upon request by the author(s).

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