

## Use of Social Networking Sites and Subjective Well-Being

*Sosyal Ağ Sitelerinin Kullanımı ve Öznel İyi Oluş*

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### Abstract

The aim of this article is to review the empirical studies on the relationship between the social networking sites use and subjective well-being of its users. Firstly, it has been pointed out that the outcomes of social networking sites use depend on the type of usage (active or passive). Next, the studies attempting to explain why passive social networking sites use is related to reduced subjective well-being have been compiled, and specifically, the studies in which social comparisons and feeling of envy has been offered as an explanatory mechanism have been summarized. A need for researching about which emotions other than envy may potentially be triggered by the passive social networking sites use and how subjective well-being changes depending on those emotions has been brought forward. In addition, answers given to the questions of whether the relationships between the passive social networking sites use and the users' emotions and subjective well-being depended on who have been contacted through social networking sites were sought.

**Keywords:** Social networking sites, subjective well-being, social comparisons, envy.

### Öz

Bu yazıda, sosyal ağ sitelerinin kullanımı ile kişilerin öznel iyi oluşu arasındaki ilişkinin incelendiği görgül çalışmaların gözden geçirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. İlk olarak, söz konusu ilişkinin, sosyal ağ sitelerinin kullanım türlerine göre (aktif ya da pasif) değiştiğine dikkat çekilmiştir. Ardından, sosyal ağ sitelerinin pasif kullanımının neden ve nasıl düşük öznel iyi oluşla ilişkilendiğini açıklamaya yönelik bulgular üreten araştırmalar derlenmiş ve özel olarak sosyal karşılaştırmaları ve kıskançlık duygusunu açıklayıcı faktör olarak öne süren araştırmalar özetlenmiştir. Ayrıca pasif sosyal ağ kullanımının kıskançlık dışında hangi duyguları tetikleyebildiğinin ve öznel iyi oluşun bu duygulara göre nasıl değiştiğinin araştırılması gerektiği gündeme getirilmiştir. Ek olarak, pasif sosyal ağ kullanımının hangi duyguları açığa çıkardığının ve öznel iyi oluşla ilişkisinin sosyal ağlarda kimlerle temas kurulduğuna göre değişip değişmediği sorularına da çalışmalarda verilmiş cevaplar incelenmiştir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Sosyal ağ kullanımı, öznel iyi oluş, sosyal karşılaştırma, kıskançlık.

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**TODAY**, social networking sites (SNSs) are among the most widely used platforms for interpersonal Internet communication. People may create online profiles on SNSs, present them to either a general or selected audience within their networks, and they may update those profiles as often as they want, they may share the self-prepared content (written expressions, images, videos etc.) with the people in their friends list/followers list, and they may follow the contents prepared by others. Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn are currently the most popular SNSs in our country. The purpose of each SNS is somewhat different: Twitter is mostly for sharing written expressions, Instagram is for sharing images; Youtube is for video sharing; Facebook is mostly used for entertainment and socializing whereas LinkedIn is used for professional life. Today, many people are members of more than one social network and spend great amount of time on these platforms. As of 2016, social networks have a total of 2.8 billion users worldwide and it is estimated that it will exceed 3 billion by 2021 (Statista 2018a). It is reported that users spend an average of 135 minutes per day on social networks (Statista 2018b). The SNSs used to be more popular among young people in the past, but now they are being used extensively by middle aged and elderly people.

As the use of SNSs has become more and more popular, social scientists became more interested in answering the question of what motivates people for SNS use. The Facebook is the SNS with the highest number of active users in the world (Statista, 2108c), therefore, most of the survey studies on SNS use have conducted by collecting data from Facebook users. According to the findings, people mostly use social networks to maintain contact with family and friends and to re-initiate contact with some old friends whom they have lost their contact. SNS have also being used to connect with people with common hobbies and interests, to follow posts sent by celebrities (athletes, politicians, etc.) and to establish romantic relationships (Joinson 2008, Smith 2011, Tosun 2012, Yang and Brown 2013). Social scientists have examined not only what SNSs are used for, but also their impact on individuals' subjective well-being. Before introducing the research that have attempted to answer this question, it would be appropriate to clearly define the meaning of the concept of subjective well-being.

Subjective well-being is personal evaluation of one's satisfaction from life (Diener 2009). If a person has a high level of subjective well-being, it means that the person experiences high level of positive affect and low level of negative affect, and she is generally satisfied with her life. The results of a study conducted in 41 countries have shown that people in every country describe their subjective well-being (more specifically, their happiness and life satisfaction) as "extraordinarily important and valuable" (Diener 2000). In another study, it was shown that when judging the desirability of someone else's life, people take her subjective well-being – her happiness and meaningfulness of her life- into account; rather than her wealth (King and Napa 1998). Since a high level of subjective well-being is a fundamental goal in life for many, people try to use the tools in their hands to increase their subjective well-being. In the digital age that we are in, SNSs are also tried to be used for increasing subjective well-being, however, research shows that SNS may be related to both increases and decreases in subjective well-being. In this review, examples will be given to the studies that give results in both directions, and then, the psychological processes in which the relationship between social well-being and subjective well-being is positively or negatively will be examined.

The following three conditions have been taken into account in establishing the framework for this review: First, the focus point of this review is the relationship between psychological well-being and the use of SNSs –rather than the general use of the Internet. In line with the criticism by Burke et al. (2011), it has been refrained from categorizing all kinds of Internet behavior under a single general theme and attempting to relate various psychological variables with this general concept. Second, studies on some very specific social networking behaviors (such as cyberbullying or cyber pornography) were not included in this review. Instead of explaining those behaviors with theories and concepts developed for understanding the general relationship between SNSs usage and subjective well-being, explaining them with some psychological processes specific to those behaviors were considered to be more appropriate. Thirdly, the purpose of this review is not to examine the pathological use of SNSs or the dependency to SNSs; rather, the aim is to understand the use of SNSs as a widely accepted activity in the daily life of the general population and how that type of usage is related to the psychological well-being of users. Therefore, the studies reviewed here are empirical studies in which data from psychologically healthy participants were collected. The studies with people diagnosed with clinical diagnosis are not included in this review.

It is noteworthy that studies on the relationship between SNS use and subjective well-being have significantly changed over time in terms of how the independent/predictor variable (SNSs usage) was addressed (Verduyn et al. 2017). In early studies, either the duration of using SNSs (how many minutes per day/per week) or its frequency (how many times within a day/a week) has been examined. However, this measurement has not been considered very good because of that people usually cannot remember correctly how long or how often they use social SNSs; and there is usually a confusion caused by differences in the time that people spent using SNSs on workdays /school day and on weekends/vacation time. In later studies, not only the duration or frequency of SNSs use, but also how people use them (i.e., how often they send messages, how often they visit profiles of others.. etc.) were accepted as valuable data, thus, participants were asked questions about how they use SNSs (for example, how often they sent messages, how often they visited others' profiles, etc.), and using the data obtained, the overall social network usage score was calculated for each of the participants. The Scale for Intensity of Facebook Use developed by Ellison et al. (2007) is an example of the measurement tools used in such studies. Recent studies have shown that each of the different uses of social networks (i.e., passive and active use) is considered as separate variables. Rather than assessing the overall social network use of individuals, it is more functional to make separate evaluations for each type of use, because the relationship between subjective well-being and each of those different types of activities on SNSs may differ in terms of their direction and their severity.

## **Different Uses of Social Networks**

Many social networks allow users to perform a range of different activities, for example, to one-to-one and simultaneous communication with others, sharing posts with a general audience, following others' posts, commenting on or “liking” the others' posts. These activities are broadly divided into two sections as active and passive (Burke et al. 2010, Deters and Mehl 2013, Krasnova et al. 2013, Verduyn et al. 2015). The “active use” refers to direct exchange with others and/ producing content to share with others.

The “passive use” refers to the consuming the information that other people offer without offering any information to them.

In some studies, a more detailed classification than the active-passive discrimination was made. For example, Frison and Eggermont (2015) defined three types of Facebook use: active-private (one-to-one communication with the target person), active-general (direct communication with the general audience) and passive use. Koroleva et al. (2011) examined Facebook usage in five categories: active participation, passive tracking, social browsing (searching Facebook to find old people) and social search (searching for new friends).

There have been many studies in which different types of uses have produced different results in terms of subjective well-being (Frison and Eggermont 2015, Verduyn et al. 2015). In several studies, it is reported that Facebook is used mostly for one-to-one communication, and secondly for passive monitoring. In many studies, it has been shown that different types of uses produced different results in terms of subjective well-being. More specifically, the relationship between subjective well-being and passive use was found to be negative (Krasnova et al. 2013, Kross et al. 2013, Shaw et al. 2015, Tandoc et al. 2015, Verduyn et al. 2015), whereas the relationship between self-disclosure and social use (active use) was positive (Kim and Lee 2011, Lee et al. 2011, Kim et al. 2013, Wang 2013). There are also studies showing that gender and personality have a mediator role in the relationship between active Facebook use and subjective well-being. For instance, in a study conducted among high school students in Belgium, it was found that the positive relationship between active Facebook use and subjective well-being is higher in female students than in males (Frison and Eggermont 2016), and in another study conducted in the U.S. among university students with high in neuroticism, active Facebook use in women has been found to be associated with a decrease in depression level (Simoncik et al. 2014).

At this point, it is necessary to draw attention to the methodological characteristics of the studies on the relationship between SNS use and subjective well-being. The studies presented in the above paragraph are cross-sectional, and their data were collected through questionnaires from adolescent or young adult students. Longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to make the claim that subjective well-being decreases with passive use of SNSs, and increases with active use of SNSs. Otherwise, it may also be possible to interpret the results as those who have high subjective well-being prefer to use social networks actively, and they avoid passive use.

There are a few longitudinal and experimental studies on the relationship between SNS use and subjective well-being. Verduyn et al. (2015), in the first of the two studies in which they examined the relationship between social networking and subjective well-being, participants were randomly assigned to one of those two experimental conditions: active Facebook use versus passive Facebook use conditions. Depending on which experimental condition that they are assigned to, they spent 10 minutes in their Facebook accounts by doing either active or passive activities. Researchers compared the mood measurements that they have taken before and after experimental manipulation, and they found a significant decrease in the emotional subjective well-being of those in the “passive use” condition. In the second study, the researchers observed the participants’ use of SNSs in their daily life. In the second study, the researchers observed the social network usage of the participants in daily life. For this purpose, they sent ques-

tions to the participants through SMS message five times a day for 6 days. They asked their mood at the moment that they received the message and how often they did various SNSs activities since the previous message. They analyzed the relationship between their current mood and how often they performed various social networking activities since the previous measurement, they also analyzed the relationship between their current mood and frequency of SNSs use until the next measurement. The results of this study also indicated that the use of passive Facebook reduces subjective well-being. There was no evidence of a relationship in which negative emotion increased passive Facebook use. In another study; Fardouly et al. (2015) randomly assigned participants to one of the two conditions of Internet use: a group of female participants spent 10 minutes passively on their Facebook pages, and those in the control group spent the same time on a non-Facebook website. The negative mood of those who spent ten minutes on Facebook was higher than those in the control group.

To sum up, according to the results of the studies reported in this section, the active use of SNSs is associated with increase in subjective well-being, and passive use is associated with decrease in subjective well-being. The researchers have not only figured out those relationships, but they also examined the underlying psychological processes. In the next section, the research in which the negative relationship between passive use of SNSs and subjective well-being have been attempted to be explained is summarized.

## **Effect of Passive Use of SNS on Subjective Well-Being?**

When the literature is examined, it is seen that the most popular answer given by the researchers to the question of how the passive use of social networks reduces subjective well-being is "by increasing social comparisons". Individuals have strong tendencies to compare their characteristics and performances in various fields in each context they are in. Social networks facilitate, accelerate and replicate this trend of people (Haferkamp and Krämer 2011). Before social networks have become part of our daily lives, some research on the social effects of various Internet tools have produced evidence about that in some of the communication environments on the Internet (i.e., chat rooms), people tend to present their ideal self rather than their real self (Walther 1996). With the spread of SNS use, it is observed that the tendency to present one's idealized selves have continue in the form of posting the pictures/videos of moments that the person feels most beautiful/happy/successful. As people wander through social networking sites, they observe the idealized self-presentations of others, and compare others' those idealized features with the actual features of their own. This may result in a false judgment that other people are much better and superior than themselves. Chou and Edge (2012) have tested and found empirical support for the assumption that as the time people spend on social networks become greater, their beliefs that others are better than their own self is higher.

According to Festinger (1954), who carried the concept of social comparison to a firm place in the social psychology literature, people make social comparisons sometimes with those who are superior to them, and sometimes with those who are lower (upward and downward comparisons, respectively). According to the findings of many studies conducted in face-to-face environment, downward comparisons may help people to feel good about themselves (Wheeler and Miyake 1992, Van der Zee et al. 1995, Locke and Nekich 2000, Bogart et al. 2004), and upward comparisons may increase the

self-development motivation of individuals (Collins 1996, Buunk et al. 1997). On the other hand, both upward and downward comparisons may trigger negative emotions in some circumstances: People may experience negative emotions when they face with a downward comparison targets if they think that it is possible for them to fall into the same situation with those targets or experience the same misfortune with them; they may also experience negative emotions when they face with upward comparison targets, if they think that they are unlucky or that they are unfairly disadvantaged (Suls et al. 2002). In studies where social comparisons in SNSs are examined, generally the only focus was upward comparisons, and such comparisons have been reported to have negative consequences such as increased depression, decreased self-confidence, body dissatisfaction, and feeling envy (Locatelli et al. 2012, Feinstein et al. 2013, Lee, 2014).

At this point, it should be noted that most of the studies mentioned are relational studies with cross-sectional design. It would be appropriate to mention here those few longitudinal and experimental research. In the Fardouly et al. (2015) which was mentioned in the previous section, first, women participants' levels of social comparison tendency as a personality trait were measured, and the ones with strong and weak tendencies were determined. Next, some of them were instructed to spend 10 minutes in Facebook pages while the others were instructed to spend that time in a webpage other than Facebook. At the end of the time, participants were asked about their level of satisfaction with their physical appearance. It is observed that among the women with a strong social comparison tendency, the ones who spent the time on Facebook had lower satisfaction with their physical appearance as compared to the ones in the control group. Similarly, in another experimental study, it was seen that among the participants who had a strong tendency to make a social comparison, the ones that visited their friends' page on Facebook differ from the ones who visit their own Facebook pages or a non-Facebook page: Those women had lower self-evaluations; their self-esteem was lower and they experienced negative affect more (Vogel et al. 2015).

People give various emotional responses to social comparisons, and the most typical emotional response to upward comparisons is envy. In some of the studies attempting to explain why and how subjective well-being is reduced by the passive use of social networks, an increase in the feeling of envy has been offered as an explanation, and even a term called "Facebook envy" has been proposed (Muisse et al. 2009, Krasnova et al. 2013). In a series of surveys conducted by Krasnova et al. (2013), participants were asked an open-ended questions about what feelings they felt when they remembered the last time they spent time in Facebook. When asked why they felt negative feelings such as anger and frustration, 29.6% of respondents reported that envy was the basis of these feelings. They stated that they became envious especially after they followed the others' posts on travels, social activities and social relations. When asked why they felt negative feelings such as anger and frustration, 29.6% of respondents reported that envy was the basis of these feelings. They stated that they became envious especially after they followed the others' posts on travels, social activities and social relations. The findings of some other studies showed that passive Facebook use predicted envy positively (Muisse et al. 2009, Ding et al. 2017).

In some studies, the feeling of envy triggered by the seeing the other's positive posts in SNSs has been considered as a mediator variable between passive use of SNSs and subjective well-being. For example, by the analysis of data collected from university

students in Germany, it was shown that passive use of Facebook has been shown to increase the feeling of envy and predict life satisfaction in the long run (Krasnova et al. 2013). In another study, the analysis conducted on a data from a sample of Chinese university students showed that the relationship between passive Facebook use and low subjective well-being was partially mediated by the feeling of envy, and this mediation effect was stronger for women than for men (Ding et al. 2017). The data collected from a sample of university students in the USA showed that the use of passive Facebook triggered envy and envy triggered depression. In some of the studies pointing to the relationship between passive SNS use and envy, it is assumed that people often make upward comparisons during their passive SNS use, and that the increases in envy is a result of doing those comparisons. Whether or not the upward social comparisons increases as the passive SNS use increases is usually not empirically tested in those studies. However, there has been a study in which a sequential relationship from the passive SNS use to upward social comparisons and from upward social comparisons to the feeling of envy were examined empirically and supported (Lim and Yang 2015). On the basis of all these findings, it can be argued that envy which felt after making upward social comparisons might have the key role in the trigger of negative psychological outcomes of the passive SNS use in the long run. However, in order to clarify the direction of the relationship between the variables, there is need for going beyond cross-sectional studies, and conducting some longitudinal and experimental studies.

The results of empirical studies that examined the relationship between Facebook use and the sense of jealousy through relational-longitudinal and experimental methods are as follows: Verduyn et al. (2015) collected data from a group of Facebook users for six-days, and they showed that the feelings of envy at a specific measurement time depended on how often the participants had used Facebook passively since the previous measurement. In addition, in a number of experimental studies, researchers assigned participants into one of two experimental conditions: One is upward comparison condition in which participants were asked to make self-comparisons on Facebook with a high standard target person (a person with high success and high attractiveness), and the other is a downward comparison condition in which participants were asked to make self-comparisons with a low standard target person (a person with low success and low attractiveness). According to the results, participants in the upward comparison condition, as compared to the ones in the downward comparison condition did, felt envy more and they had subjective well-being less. Thus, it was concluded that envy was felt as a result of upward social comparison (Haferkamp and Grammar 2011, Vogel et al. 2014, Appel et al. 2016).

## **Emotional Triggering of Passive Use of Social Networks**

In a study, not only envy, which is widely examined in SNSs context, as but also the shame has been examined as a potential emotion that may arise after social comparisons. Lim and Yang (2015) examined how envy and shame people felt in SNSs were related to behavioral (intention to switch to a different social network) and psychological (burnout) responses. According to the results, social comparisons trigger emotions of both envy and shame, however, envy was related to intention to switch, while shame was related to burnout.

Is it possible that passive use of SNSs is not only related to negative psychological

outcomes but also some positive ones? According to the Social Comparison Based Emotions Theory, which is developed to explain the emotional responses to social comparisons in face-to-face environments, the upward comparisons have the potential to trigger positive emotions such as inspiration, hope, admiration, as well as the negative ones such as jealousy, shame, sadness, and anger (Smith 2000). The type of emotions felt after social comparisons may depend on who the target of comparison is: When people think that some foreigners, or their competitors, or some people whom they feel emotionally distant are more successful / happier / richer than themselves, they may feel negative emotions; on the other hand, when they make social comparisons in areas which they don't feel competitive with targets whom they feel close, or with whom they identify themselves with (i.e.; family members or relatives, close friends, etc.) , they may react positively. Smith (2000) predicted that individuals may feel inspiration, admiration and hope after upward comparisons, but there is not much study looking for those emotions in the SNSs context (Kaşdarma 2016).

Social networks are platforms where people come together with their close friends, or with people whom they are relatively less close friends (i.e., friends of friends) or with whom they do not personally know (i.e., celebrities). The emotional response of individuals may vary depending on who are included to their friend list/follow list on SNSs and to whom they make social comparisons in SNSs. Therefore, passive use of social networks may trigger not only envy and shame, but also positive emotions that are proposed by Smith (2000). This is an understudied topic waiting for researchers' attention.

## **Effects of Followed Persons on Subjective Well-Being of Users**

In SNSs, many different types of interpersonal relationships may be sustained: Users can use SNSs as an extension of their social relations that are actively continuing in a face-to-face environment, or they can use them for meeting foreigners and starting new friendships, or interacting with acquaintances whom they know indirectly. Although all of them are called as “friends” or “followers” without any differentiation, it is very important to realize that there are various different types of social relationship in SNSs because the psychological consequences of the use of SNSs may depend on the types of those relationship (Tosun 2017). For instance, in their longitudinal study where they measured Facebook users' depression levels two times with 6-months interval, Bessiere et al. (2008) demonstrated that Facebook use reduces depression if individuals use Facebook for communication with their family and existing friends, however, Facebook use increases depression if individuals use Facebook to gain new friends although they have reported to receive a satisfactory level of social support in the face-to-face environment. In another study, the participants were presented with fake social network posts with a content that could arouse envy (i.e., “I got a last model smartphone” or “I had a very nice summer vacation”); and then, they were asked about their level of happiness and envy. According to the findings, feeling of happiness were high, and feeling of envy was low after reading those posts. Also, the intensity of the feeling of happiness varied depending on the tie strength with the imagined poster and the reader: The happiness felt after receiving the posts were higher when the poster was someone with strong ties rather than someone with intermediate or weak ties.

In summary, some recent studies revealed that it is necessary to take into account



the nature of the relationship between posters and readers in order to examine which emotions triggered by the passive use of SNSs, and whether passive SNS use reduces or enhances subjective well-being, Especially in “culture of relations” that our culture is also a part, (Kağıtçıbaşı 1996), in order to interpret research findings, it is important to recognize that people’s behaviors and the psychological consequences of those behaviors may depend on whom the person interacts with, and the type of relationship one has with her.

## Discussion

This review draws attention to the fact that studies examining the relationship of SNS use and subjective well-being reveal the following three outcomes: 1) When SNSs are actively used, subjective well-being increases and when they are passively used, subjective well-being decreases. 2) Passive use of SNS is related to a decrease in subjective well-being because it increases upward social comparisons and negative emotions -especially envy. 3) The passive use of SNSs is negatively related to subjective well-being only when upward comparisons are made with a stranger, or someone whom the user feels distant.

The findings of this study will contribute to making recommendations for users about how to use SNSs in a way that positively affects their subjective well-being. In the light of the findings described, SNS users can be recommended: 1) Users should use SNSs not only for passive monitoring, but also actively producing and posting content, leaving comments in the messages of others, and communicating directly with them. 2) Although users cannot avoid from making upward comparison in SNSs, they may prevent negative consequences of these comparisons. For this, they should first be aware of what they compare themselves with: The information that people present about themselves in SNSs often reflects not their actual selves but their idealized selves. When users be aware of this, they may experience negative emotions less intensely after making social comparisons in SNSs. 3) Users should be aware of who are in the friend lists of their SNSs. Depending on who are in their networks, each user may turn SNSs into an environment of social support or competition. When the majority of people in their social networks are the ones whom their positive posts would trigger feelings of happiness and proud, rather than competitive feelings, these networks can be platforms that enhances individuals’ subjective well-being.

This review may give some insights to researchers who want to study the relationship between social networking and subjective well-being. First of all, it is seen that the periods in which the relationships between demographic information (such as duration and frequency of use) and subjective well-being are examined in researches are past. In recent years, in order to come up with sound conclusions about the nature of relationship between SNS use and subjective well-being, researchers have gathered detailed data on how SNSs are used -as opposed to how often and how intensely they are used- and then, they attempted to examine these data in the context of various concepts and theories in psychology. It is evident in the studies discussed in this review that the concepts and theories developed in the offline environment - such as Social Comparison Theory and Social Comparison Based Emotions Model- could also be functional in explaining online behaviors. In addition, it is seen that there are only a few number of

longitudinal and experimental studies that allow researchers to make causal inferences and thus, researchers need to focus on such studies.

In most of the studies conducted in our country, data were collected from high school or college students, and usually researchers confined themselves to examine whether individuals' psychological well-being was depended on for how long or for how often individuals uses SNSs (i.e.; Doğan and Karakuş 2016, Söner and Yılmaz 2018). Still, there are some promising studies in which the psychological outputs of the SNS use were examined within a theoretical framework, and/or some samples other than the student samples were accessed, and/or some research designs other than cross-sectional research designs were used. For instance, Taşçıoğlu and Tosun (2018) used the Self-Presentation Theory for examining the relationship between SNS use and well-being. They examined the relationship between the type of self-presentation of people on Facebook (either real self-presentation or fake-exploratory or fake-deceptive self-presentations) and the levels of their life satisfaction and self-esteem. They did the analyses on data from two different samples: One was a sample of university students and the other was a sample of adults. In another study, the Self-Determination Theory was used to examine the relationship between SNS use and psychological well-being (Manuoğlu 2016). In this study, participants were asked to keep a diary of their SNS use for 14 days, and the results showed that any kind of activity on Facebook -whether active or passive - reduced psychological well-being if they are done frequently, but those activities were also found to increase psychological well-being if people could meet their autonomy needs through these activities. Two graduate theses were found when the literature is searched to find out studies in which the SNS use was examined in the framework of Social Comparison Theory or the Social Comparison-based Emotions Theory, which is its extension. In the study of Kaşdarma (2016), through the analyses of the survey data collected from university students, it has shown that the frequency of social comparisons was increased as both passive and active Facebook usage increased and in turn, negative emotions were triggered, and depression was increased as negative emotions increased. On the other hand, it has also been revealed that the use of private active Facebook (using Facebook for mutual communication with specified people) was associated with positive emotions triggered by the upward comparisons, and those positive emotions were associated with higher life satisfaction and lower levels of depression. In the other thesis work (Taşçıoğlu 2018), the researcher conducted one-to-one sessions with university students in which participants were given 7 minutes to spend on SNSs. Then, they were asked to report the SNS activities they did during that period, and to answer questions about their social comparison experiences. According to the findings, people may feel several different emotions with varying intensity levels when they make social comparisons with their close friends, acquaintances or celebrities that they follow on SNSs. The associations of social comparison experiences and the social comparison emotions to psychological well-being were not investigated in this study.

All the studies reported here, on the one hand, indicate that the psychological well-being implications of the use of social networks are quite complicated, while on the other hand, it is clearly seen that the studies in which this complicated relationship has been examined on some theoretical grounds have been increased in both domestic and

international literature, and some efforts have been put into doing studies using a variety of research strategies and data collection methods.

## **Conclusion**

There are many studies in the literature on the relationship between social networking and subjective well-being, but the results of those studies are inconsistent. There is need for more studies in order to clarify the inconsistencies among study results, and to come up with scientific based and satisfactory answers the questions which are frequently brought to the agenda in everyday life, such as “Does SNS use make us either happy or depressive?” The studies so far show that SNS use has a potential to increase our subjective well-being due to its characteristics such that making it easy to make self-presentations any time we want to, and receiving social support quickly when we need it. On the other hand, there are many studies showing that SNS use make it too easy to make fake self-presentations which cause people to have misperceptions about themselves and others, and in turn, lead them to experience negative emotion. It is possible to place the ongoing debate about how SNS use affect its users’ subjective well-being on a solid ground by doing this debate on the basis of some social psychology theories and concepts. The theories and concepts that have been used to help us to understand human relationships and their effects on individuals’ subjective well-being in face-to-face environments may also help us to understand human relationships and their effects on SNSs. We hope that this review in which the major studies on the subject were brought together would provide a foundation on which to build a solid ground to conduct further studies

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