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## Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article

# Evaluation of the Relationship Between Social Media Addiction and Aggression<sup>1</sup>

## Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı ve Saldırganlık Arasındaki İlişkinin Değerlendirilmesi

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### ÖZ

Sosyal medya iletişim çağının yaygın bir şekilde kullandığı bir araç olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bireylerin özgürce görüşlerini paylaştıkları ve kendilerini rahatça ifade ettikleri bu yeni sanal dünya ayrıca şahsi, kurumsal ve kamusal olmak üzere birçok farklı hedeflerde kullanılmaktadır. Sosyal medya sayesinde, geçmişte kurulan sosyal ilişkiler ve günümüze kadar yüz yüze yürütülen ilişkiler artık yerini yeni kurulan sanal ilişkilere bırakmıştır. Bu yeni dijital dünya aynı zamanda bireylerin günlük hayatta pek sergilemediği kaba ve hiçbir sorumluluk almadığı agresif davranışları rahatça sergilemelerine olanak sağlamaktadır. Sosyal medya bağımlılığı ve saldırganlık arasındaki korelasyon, dünya genelinde ve ülkemizde yaygın bir şekilde kendini gösterebilmektedir. Ruhsal erozyon diyebileceğimiz ve genellikle sosyal medya bağımlılığı ile ortaya çıkan, depresyon, asosyalite, duygusal boşluk vb. durumlar, saldırganlığı tetikler özellikteki durumlar olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Çalışmanın verileri Çorum ilinde ikamet eden 296 bireyden anket yoluyla toplanmıştır. Çalışmada sosyal medya bağımlılık ölçeği olarak Şahin ve Yağcı (2017) çalışmasında oluşturulan ölçek kullanılırken, saldırganlık tutumunu ölçmek içinse Buss ve Perry (1992) çalışmasında oluşturulan ölçek kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucunda katılımcıların sosyal medya bağımlılığı düzeyi eğitim seviyesine ve online alışveriş yapma durumuna göre değişirken, cinsiyet ve çalışma durumuna göre değişmemektedir. Saldırganlık düzeyi ile ilgili de cinsiyete göre değişirken, çalışma durumu, eğitim seviyesi ve online alışveriş durumuna göre değişiklik göstermemiştir. Ayrıca, sosyal medya bağımlılığı ile saldırganlık puanı arasında doğrusal orta düzeyde pozitif bir ilişki vardır. Son olarak bu çalışmada cinsiyete göre sosyal medya kullanım süresi, paylaşım sayısı ve saldırganlık puanında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur. Sosyal medya bağımlılığı ve saldırganlık ile ilgili ileride yapılacak çalışmalar için de önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

### ABSTRACT

Social media has emerged as a widely used tool in the communication age. This new virtual world, where individuals freely share their views and express themselves, is also used for many different purposes including personal, corporate, and public usages. Because of using social media, social relationships established in the past and face-to-face relationships until today have been replaced by newly established virtual relationships. This new digital world also allows individuals to easily exhibit rude and aggressive behaviors that they do not demonstrate in daily life. The correlation between social media addiction and aggression can be widely seen worldwide and in our country. Depression, being anti-social, social media addiction, which we can call mental erosion which usually occurs with social media addiction. The data of the study were collected by a questionnaire form from 296 individuals residing in Çorum. While the scale created in Şahin and Yağcı (2017) study was used as the social media addiction scale, the scale created in the Buss and Perry (1992) study was used to measure the aggression attitude. As a result of the study, while the social media addiction level of the participants varies according to their education level and online shopping status, however, it does not change according to gender and working status. While the level of aggression varied according to gender, it did not differ according to employment status, education level, and online shopping status. In addition, there is a linear moderate positive relationship between social media addiction and aggression score. Finally, in this study a statistically significant difference was found in the duration of social media use, the number of shares, and aggression score according to gender. Implications are provided related to social media addiction and aggression for future research.

<sup>1</sup>This study is a part of the first author's master thesis namely "Evaluation of the relationship between social media addiction and aggression".

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## Introduction

Social media, which is constantly changing and developing, has become an indispensable tool for today's societies (Zeybek, 2012, p. 289). Social media, which is at the ultimate point of information sharing worldwide through the Internet, makes the notion of time and space unimportant, allowing individual and collective life to be carried to brand new dimensions. Therefore, the most meaningful social definition corresponding to the description and understanding of this new process occurring in the global network cycle is "network society". In the words of Manuel Castells (2003), "individuals now live in a globally and locally woven, interconnected network society". With the concept of network society, the concept of space has disappeared, and individuals have the opportunity to communicate without limits and space utilizing the internet (Yengin, 2012, p.106).

One of the characteristics of social media, which is one of the main elements of our age and the digital economy, is that it is very fast and easily accessible. All individuals generally use social media networks for a little or at no cost (Maigret, 2012, p. 343). Another feature is the existence of user groups that are highly active and participatory in creating and sharing content on the Internet (Eraslan, 2018, p. 17). While classical media products are created, experts in their fields and those who have graduated from a certain education field usually do business. Almost every person can produce content in social media without having the necessity of a diploma, and the different abilities of these stakeholders, who both produce and use them, provide a rich perspective on the issues (Asan, 2012). Since social networks provide user-based development, they have allowed the Internet to be enriched with other content and formed the basis of a commercial area that has not been seen before. The share of social networking sites in developing a new understanding of the economy is quite large. Social media, which is an inseparable part of our lives today, has disadvantages as well as benefits. The effect of social media varies according to what purpose and how we use it (Güngör, 2016, p. 405)

We can define aggression as a concept that encompasses all emotional, physical, verbal, and sexual acts that the other party perceives as harmful, even if it is done to harm or not intentionally done, against all living or non-living beings by the individual or group. Although aggression is seen in humans and animals, it has been observed that it occurs in different forms in two species (Şahin, 2003). Human aggression emerges as a species that attacks its species, deliberately tortures and injures it, even though it is not exposed to any dangerous situation and meets basic needs such as nutrition and protection. Accordingly, different types of aggression emerge (Tok, 2001). Aggression is also classified as verbal or physical, hostile aggression, and instrumental aggression in addition to being classified as indirect or direct (Bilgin, 1995).

Social media tools are an inseparable part of our daily lives and support interpersonal communication during the day. Users enrich both their social and business lives (Thayer & Ray, 2006). Violence and aggression exist in social media as in many areas of life. One of the most common acts of aggression in social media is making insulting and negative comments about the posts made on social media platforms. Mengü and Mengü (2015, p. 225) stated that social media, which is used unconsciously and uncontrollably, causes violence, psychological attacks, and deception of people with fake accounts. From this point of view, the concepts of social media addiction and aggression and the relationship between them will be examined in this study.

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### ***Social Media Addiction***

Technology-based communication is accepted as an integral part of the modern age in today's world. Social relations established in the past and face-to-face relations until today have left their place to newly established ones. These relations are transformed into new types of social relations established through social networks namely social media (Eraslan, 2015). While the social aspect of social media creates internet users, the media side shows that it is open to interaction (Yüksel, 2021, p. 87). In changing and transforming the world with technology, internet technology has become an essential part of people's lives. People see the internet as the only tool to have information and communicate about where they are. Along with its positive effects, technology has also revealed the concept of social media addiction, which is a negative effect (Başaran et al., 2017, p. 288).

Four social factors are thought to play a possible role. It is known that these are related to gender differences, how intensely individuals use social media, to what extent social media meets people's needs, and individuals' activities on social issues (Andreassen, Billieux et al., 2016). The nature of gender affected online activities; compared to women, men are more likely to be addicted to online games and online gambling. In contrast, women are more likely to become addicted to social media, messaging, and online shopping (Davenport et al., 2012). Secondly, studies indicated a relationship between Facebook usage and social media addiction (Vishwanath, 2014). Other studies have confirmed a relationship between any frequency of social media use and Facebook. Third, Pelling and White (2009) estimated that the need for belonging of social media users is directly related to the tendency to depend heavily on social media. Fourth, it proposes social comparison as another social determinant of social media addiction. We get an idea of our abilities through comparison with others, and we can identify ourselves with those who are better (Vogel et al., 2015). Finally, previous research leads us to conclude that there are four psychological states. These are stress, empathetic anxiety, conscientiousness, and depression, which are the determinants of social media addiction.

Researchers investigating social media addiction have indicated that there is a relationship between stress and social media addiction. According to these studies, perceived stress and problematic social media use increased with increasing stress. (Hou et al., 2017). It is thought that the use of social networks has an essential role in reducing the heavy burden of stress on people, reducing depressive symptoms, and alleviating the feeling of loneliness. It is stated that those who use social networks frequently in real life are inadequate and depressed in terms of sociability and real-life sharing, that the use of social media increases as it provides these individuals with rewards such as self-efficacy and life satisfaction, and that this increase. It has been claimed that it creates serious problems in many areas such as business life and education, is used even more to alleviate the resulting emotional state, and that this vicious circle is an essential factor in the formation of addiction (LaRose et al., 2003). Beside stress, another factor that affects social media addiction was individual differences in empathy. Although a relationship has not been clearly explored between empathy and internet addiction, studies indicated how a lack of empathy may be related to social media addiction (Melchers et al., 2015). According to Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012), social networks directly relate to human nature needs such as being a part of the group, being recognized, loved, and being special. Social media platforms allow users to find their friends and that with their friends, the users flirt, share information, communicate, are invited to events, and socialize.

Finally, depression and social media addiction are related. The relationship between problematic social media use and depressive symptoms is bidirectional. Each increases or contributes to the effect of the other; in other words, it has been claimed that social media addiction and depression each increase or decrease the impact of the other (Seabrook et al.,

2016). For instance, Shensa et al. (2017) found a positive relationship between social media addiction and participants' depressive symptoms that they were experienced in the past.

Since the existence of the world, there have been changes and transformations in society's culture and thought systems, but aggression and violence have always existed (Tuzgöl, 1998). When we look at the event from the perspective of history, from BC 3600 to now, it is assumed that there have been 4,500 wars in the world since 3600 and more than 3.5 billion people were killed in these wars (Michaud, 1994).

### ***Aggression***

Aggression consists of basic human instincts. Aggression is a social tendency to harm. At the very bottom of aggression, the main emotion that drives it is frustration. The person tends to be aggressive when he/she thinks that he/she is restricted and blocked by someone else. Aggression occurs when the basic needs of the person are not met. The concept of aggression is explained in different ways in many sources in literature. It is stated in literature that aggression is an innate feature and the effect of aggression on learning experiences is related to brain problems, temperament, hormonal changes, media, parental attitudes and behaviors, easily accessible weapons, and cognitive processes (Durkin, 1995; Eron, 1994).

We can define aggression as a concept that includes all the emotional, physical, verbal, and sexual acts that are done to harm or harm the other person, even if they do not aim to harm, and that the other party perceives as harmful. Although aggression is seen in humans and animals, it has been observed that it occurs in different forms in two species (Şahin, 2003).

It is possible to see the individual's aggression as a species that attacks, tortures, and injures those of his kind, even though his needs, especially nutrition and protection, are met, and he is not at risk. Accordingly, other types of aggression emerge (Tok, 2001). Although aggression can be classified directly or indirectly, it can also be categorized as hostile and instrumental aggression (Bilgin, 1995). Berkowitz (1989) underlined the role of intention in aggression. When we bring these together, intentional behavior is the crucial point of harmful behavior. In Anderson and Bushman's (2002) proposition, harming another person who does not hurt himself is defined as aggression.

Violence can be defined as causing excessive harm to another entity. First of all, the intent is fundamental to both aggression and violence. The distinction between aggression and violence lies in the intended outcome and the intensity of the action involved. Anderson and Bushman (2001) argued that the ultimate purpose of violence is to inflict violence deliberately. For example, they are intentionally killing a person for no reason or any reason or attacking with the intent to kill.

### ***Aggressions Exposure to Social Media***

With the advances in computer and internet environments and the spread of these technologies worldwide, the violence in the classical media is also reflected in the virtual world. It is seen that exposure to violent broadcasts, whether as a passive participant on television or as an active user such as video games and computer games, causes effects such as violence, aggression, introversion, alienation, and a high level of mental and emotional arousal in children and youth. The preventive control mechanisms against aggression and violence are loosened by those who follow aggressive behavior and actions. It is a finding determined by various studies that children and young people who are exposed to these effects become aggressive and their tendency to resort to violence increases.

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Social media and the internet move individuals from local to global brought innovations in many issues; while the individual has difficulty in reaching people related to their interests in the local area, thanks to the new environment, he has the chance to contact friend groups related to their interests (Düvenci, 2012). On the other hand, experts stated that using social media tools as an 'addiction' will negatively affect anxiety disorder, communication problems in social areas, and a depressed mood (Tutgun-Ünal, 2015).

Buss and Perry (1992) defined aggression in three different dimensions namely: verbal or physical aggression, aggression in the context of passive or active behavior, and aggression in direct or indirect behavior. All the definitions mentioned clearly show that aggression is a common concept. A social media environment where communication is established faster than before shows us that the essential element of aggressive behavior is a communication area that spreads to different dimensions in a new social environment. This situation has led to new aggressive behaviors that are transformed and spread through social life. Aggressive behaviors we encounter in the social media environment appear as a criminal act psychologically and legally. At another essential point of this issue, we can say that the group most exposed to social media aggression in adolescents and young adults (Myers, 2015).

Anderson and Huesmann (2003) listed the effects of violent games in their study: Violent games increase mental trauma. It has been observed that children who play violent games increase heart rhythm and blood pressure compared to those who do not play. It has been determined that it causes excessive dopamine hormone secretion in the human brain. Children with a violent orientation are more likely to lead violent lives after playing violent games. An increase in aggressive thoughts is observed in men, women, children, and adults who play violent games. It increases feelings of aggression. Aggression increases lives. It desensitizes you to violence. It reduces social sharing. Gentile and Stone (2005) stated that children involved in violent games could not socialize, and social problems occurred.

In our age, social expectations, increasing workload and insufficient time have led to the spread of social media materials in the lives of individuals. Adults and children have been using these technological materials intensively everywhere, from sleeping environments, as if they were competing among themselves. According to Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout (2005), individuals between the ages of 8-and 18 consume a long time, such as six and a half hours every day, in front of technological materials such as television and computers, despite their negative effects.

Today, social media tools are indirectly used as a basis for rude notifications and different emotions. Social media is used for passive attacks, with posts about a person or situation. People exposed to negative comments by any individual openly express their anger in the environment they live in. Passive attacking is so common on social platforms that Twitter users utilize the hashtag '#Passiveaggressive' to characterize such comments. One of the passive-aggressive behaviors observed in social media tools is humiliating behavior by tagging your friend for anger or any reason or making negative comments about him under a post that may disturb him.

Nowadays, unfriend someone on any virtual platform is one of the common behaviors that was made in social media platforms. In today's world, where digital tools have become indispensable for human life, it is observed that the? First gets angry with the person who offends the individual and turns this anger into action by showing an act of unfriending through social media. In other words, aggression and violence, which are the dark sides of human nature, spread through the media based on social media in the transition from the

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individual to the social.

A necessary passive-aggressive behavior exhibited through social media platforms is sharing his/her personal situation, with an attitude targeting the addressee (\*receiver) whose sharing aims to impose an indirect threat not only with a person he/she is angry with in real life but also with all his/her friends. Another passive-aggressive behavior on social media is when individuals deliberately label people they dislike. This attitude is accepted as an essential indicator of aggression. From this point of view, this study aims to examine how social media addiction and aggression change according to gender, employment status, education, and online shopping status. In addition, it will also be analyzed whether the number of sharing and using social media changes according to these demographic variables. Finally, the relationship between social media addiction and aggression will also be explored.

## Method

### *Participants*

In the study, a questionnaire was applied to 296 individuals residing in Çorum with the simple random sampling method. Of the participants in the study, 148 (50%) were female, and 148 (50%) were male. The distribution of the participants in the survey by education level is given in Table 1. 200 (67.6%) of the participants stated that they work in a regular job, 96 (32.4%) stated that they do not work in a regular job. The distribution of the participants for shopping via social media is that 152 (51.4%) of them do their shopping via social media, while 144 (48.6%) do not shop through social media.

**Table 1:** Distribution of participants by education level

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Middle school	11	3,7	3,7
High school	24	8,1	11,8
Associate Degree	34	11,5	23,3
Bachelor degree	129	43,6	66,9
Master degree	71	24,0	90,9
Doctoral degree	27	9,1	100,0
Total	296	100,0	

### *Data collection tool and Data analysis*

While the scale created in Şahin and Yağcı (2017) study was used as the social media addiction scale in the study, the scale created in the Buss and Perry (1992) study was used to measure aggression attitude. The social media addiction scale consists of 20 questions in total. The validity and reliability of the Turkish version of the Buss-Perry aggression scale, which consists of 34 questions, was conducted, and it was determined that the scale overlapped with the original form (Madran, 2012). The data obtained from the survey were analyzed with the SPSS 26 program. Frequency and percentage analysis were performed to determine the distribution of the answers given to the questionnaire. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine the conformity of the scores obtained from the answers provided by the individuals to the normal distribution. Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis test, which are non-parametric tests, were used to determine the difference according to demographic variables. Correlation and regression analyzes were used to reveal the relationships between the variables.

## Findings

According to the results obtained, it was seen that the variables did not have a normal distribution. Non-parametric techniques should be used in all analyzes to be made. The next stage of the study tested whether there was a difference in score types according to some characteristics. Since the variables were not normally distributed, non-parametric Mann-Whitney and Kruskal Wallis tests were used. The concept of average rank is used in the realization of these tests. Rank is defined as the rank number given to the scores given by individuals, from smallest to largest. Related hypotheses for this test

$H_0$  : It does not differ according to the type of variable involved,

$H_1$  : It differs according to the type of variable involved,

The data showing how the social media addiction and aggression score changes according to the gender variable are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Results of difference analyzes by gender

Variables	Group		Average rank	Significance (p)	Result
Social media addiction	Male	148	147,68	,868	$H_0$ hypothesis cannot be rejected.
	Female	148	149,32		
Usage period	Male	148	137,28	,023	$H_0$ hypothesis is rejected
	Female	148	159,72		
Number of shares	Male	148	157,65	,056	$H_0$ hypothesis is rejected
	Female	148	139,35		
Aggression score	Male	148	157,55	,069	$H_0$ hypothesis is rejected
	Female	148	139,45		

When Table 2 is examined, a statistically significant difference was observed in the duration of social media use, the number of shares and aggression score according to gender. Accordingly, the duration of use is higher in women than in men, and the number of shares and aggression are higher in men than in women. However, there was no significant difference in the social media addiction score. In other words, women and men have the same level of social media addiction.

The data showing how the working status of the participants affected their social media addiction and aggression scores are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Results of difference analyzes by working status

Variables	Working Status	Group		Average rank	Significance (p)	Result
Social media addiction	No	96		149,18	,924	$H_0$ hypothesis cannot be rejected.
	Yes	200		148,17		
Usage period	No	96		166,25	,013	$H_0$ hypothesis is rejected.
	Yes	200		139,98		
Number of shares	No	96		147,94	,936	$H_0$ hypothesis cannot be
	Yes	200		148,77		

					rejected.
Aggression score	No	96	154,42	,410	$H_0$ hypothesis cannot be rejected.
	Yes	200	145,66		

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference only in terms of usage time and working status. According to the results obtained, the duration of social media use of non-working individuals was higher than that of employees. It is seen that the status of working or not working does not make a significant difference in terms of social media addiction, aggression, and the number of shares.

**Table 4:** Results of difference analyzes by education level

Variable	Education level	Group	Average rank	Significance (p)	Result
Social media addiction	Pre-education level	11	89,36	,032	$H_0$ hypothesis is rejected.
		24	152,17		
		34	119,81		
		129	149,23		
		71	165,58		
		27	157,07		
Usage period	Pre-education level	11	96,00	,121	$H_0$ hypothesis cannot be rejected.
		24	146,88		
		34	166,93		
		129	140,54		
		71	160,63		
		27	146,87		
Number of shares	Pre-education level	11	148,86	,503	$H_0$ hypothesis cannot be rejected.
		24	177,33		
		34	150,29		
		129	139,97		
		71	150,64		
		27	155,61		
Aggression score	Pre-education level	11	112,77	,391	$H_0$ hypothesis cannot be rejected.
		24	163,46		
		34	136,41		
		129	156,99		
		71	142,54		
		27	140,07		

When Table 4 is examined, there is a statistically significant difference only in the social media addiction score to the education level. According to this, while the addiction score of individuals with high school and the pre-education level was the lowest, the social media addiction score of individuals with master's and doctoral education levels was higher than other education levels.

**Table 5:** Results of difference analysis according to online shopping situation

Variables	Online shopping Group		Average rank	Significance (p)	Result
Social media addiction	No	144	139,11	,066	$H_0$ hypothesis is rejected.
	Yes	152	157,40		
Usage period	No	144	141,63	,192	$H_0$ hypothesis cannot be rejected.
	Yes	152	154,00		
Number of shares	No	144	133,28	,003	$H_0$ hypothesis is rejected.
	Yes	152	162,92		
Aggression score	No	144	148,76	,959	$H_0$ hypothesis cannot be rejected.
	Yes	152	148,25		

When Table 5 is examined, there is a statistically significant difference in the social media addiction score and the number of shares according to the status of online shopping from social media, while there is no significant difference in the duration of use and aggression score. It has been found that the number of shares and social media addiction scores of people who shop online are higher than those who do not.

#### *Examining the Relationships Between Social Media Addiction, Aggression, Number of Shares and Duration of Use*

Correlation analysis is a statistical method that gives information about the degree and direction of linear relationships between variables. Since the variables did not have a normal distribution, linear relations were revealed with the help of Spearman correlation coefficient.

**Table 6:** Correlation results between social media addiction, aggression, number of shares and duration of use

			Social media addiction	Usage period	Number of shares	Aggression score
Spearman's rho	Social media addiction	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,374	,222	,315
		Significance	.	,000	,000	,000
		N	296	296	296	296
	Usage period	Correlation Coefficient	,374	1,000	,263	,173
		Significance	,000	.	,000	,003
		N	296	296	296	296
	Number of shares	Correlation Coefficient	,222	,263	1,000	,196
		Significance	,000	,000	.	,001
		N	296	296	296	296
	Aggression score	Correlation Coefficient	,315	,173	,196	1,000
		Significance	,000	,003	,001	.
		N	296	296	296	296

When Table 6 is analyzed, the following findings can be obtained:

- There is a linear moderate positive relationship between social media addiction and duration of use. The duration of social media usage of individuals with high social media

addiction is also high.

- There is a weak linear positive relationship between the duration of social media addiction and the number of shares. The sharing numbers of individuals with high social media addiction are also high.

- There is a linear moderate positive correlation between social media addiction and aggression score. Aggression scores of individuals with high social media addiction are also high.

- There is a weak linear positive relationship between the duration of use and the aggression score. Individuals with a high duration of use are individuals with a more aggressive structure.

- There is a weak linear positive correlation between the number of shares and the aggression score. Individuals with a high number of shares have a more aggressive structure.

Linear regression analysis is one of the most frequently used approaches in modeling a system consisting of dependent and independent variables. In this part of the study, the variables affecting the aggression score were investigated. For this purpose, social media addiction score, duration of use, and the number of shares were considered independent variables, and analysis was carried out with the help of a simple linear regression model.

**Table 7:** Examining the effect of other variables on the level of aggression

Model	Dependent variable:				
Aggression score	Coefficient Estimates	Standard error (SE)	T	Sig.(p)	
Constant term	1,807	,183	9,880	,000	
Social media addiction score	,261	,053	4,897	,000	
Usage period	,003	,017	,171	,864	
Number of shares	,010	,005	2,062	,040	

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that there is a statistically significant effect of other variables on the aggression score, except the duration of use. Accordingly;

- Social media addiction affects aggression positively. The increase in social media addiction increases aggression.
- Similarly, the aggression of individuals with increasing number of shares on social media also increases.

## Discussion

Social media platforms, which have become a part of our daily lives, are increasingly under the influence of us and increasing the number of users and the level of addiction day by day. These networks, which we use effectively in all areas of our lives, are used as a tool to ensure our communication with family, friends, and individuals with whom we interact socially. It is a fact that these tools, which make our lives easier, help us catch the flow of life, but the fact that we use them more and more every day has exposed us to some negative consequences. People who want to use their time more efficiently have started to spend most of their time on social media without realizing it. This situation has caused individuals who aim to save time to face the waste of time. On the other hand, the experiences in the virtual world have started to cause us to form emotional bonds with our real life and experience mental disorders. The gain goal turned into a spiritual erosion and began to cause material and moral losses.

This study aims to present comprehensive research that proves the phenomenon we mentioned above. For this purpose, a questionnaire was applied to 296 individuals in the

study. In the survey application, it was seen that there is a demonstrable relationship between social media addiction and aggression. For example, When the participants included in the study were classified according to their social media addiction, it was determined that 50% of those with social media addiction were male and 50% were female. It was found that there was no significant difference in terms of gender according to social media addiction. When the duration of social media use was examined by gender, a statistically significant difference was observed in the number of shares and aggression score. Accordingly, the duration of use is longer in women than in men; the number of shares and aggression are higher in men than in women. However, there was no significant difference in the social media addiction score. In other words, men and women have the same addiction structure.

In the Kaplan (2019)'s study, based on the results of an independent sample t-test analysis; When the gender variable and the mean score of the purpose of social media use were compared with the male and female variables, there was no significant difference between the sub-dimensions of social interaction and communication purpose ( $p>0.05$ ) (Kaplan, 2019).

Eşitti (2015) 's research results indicated a statistically significant difference between problematic internet use and gender: male participants generally have a higher tendency to use problematic internet than female participants. Çam and İşbulan (2012, p. 17) In their research, it was determined that teacher candidates of different genders use Facebook significantly differently. Esen's (2010, p. 74) research results; When internet addiction mean scores and gender variables were compared, it was determined that there were significant differences according to gender. In addition, it was determined that the average Internet addiction score of male participants was significantly higher than the average Internet addiction score of female participants.

In this study, when social media addiction, duration of use, number of shares, and aggression score are examined, the following findings are obtained:

- There is a positive relationship at the level of 0.374 between social media addiction and the duration of use. The duration of use of individuals with high social media addiction is also high.
- There is a 0.222 linear weak positive relationship between the duration of social media addiction and the number of shares. The number of shares of individuals with high social media addiction is also high.
- There is a linear moderate positive correlation of 0.315 between the duration of social media addiction and the aggression score. Aggression scores of individuals with high social media addiction are also high.
- There is a 0.173 linear weak positive correlation between the duration of use and the aggression score. Individuals with a high duration of use are individuals with a more aggressive structure.
- There is a 0.196 linear weak positive correlation between the number of shares and the aggression score. Individuals with a high number of shares have a more aggressive structure.

Accordingly, the highest relationship among the variables is between social media addiction and the duration of social media use. When the duration of social media usage of women and men increases, it is seen that addiction increases regardless of gender.

When we reviewed the literature, Elhai et al. (2018) measured the relationship

between smartphone use and social media in people experiencing depression, anxiety, and stress. The result of the study indicated that there is no relationship between using social media and depression, anxiety, and stress depending on age and gender. They also found that not using social media also led to mood disorders. The available data support the phenomenon that we confirmed during the study.

When we review the studies conducted in our country, the relationship between social connection and internet addiction, social network addiction, digital game addiction and smartphone addiction was measured in a study conducted on 201 adolescents by prosecutor and Aysan (2017). As a result, it is seen that the social connection is 25%. However, the most important effect in explaining social media addiction comes from internet addiction, followed by addiction to social networks, digital games, and smartphones.

Another study conducted by Balcı and Baloğlu, (2018) examined the relationship between social media addiction and depression. The sample of the study composed of 303 university students enrolled in 19 different faculties/schools. Findings of the study indicated that, duration, and frequency of social media using influence social media addiction. In other words, as the duration and frequency of social media use increase, social media addiction also increases. Parallel with this study, in our research it was found a positive relationship between social media addiction and the duration of use, hence the duration of use of individuals with high social media addiction is also high.

Another factor investigated in this study is the relationship between social media addiction and aggression. According to the regression analysis, the variables affecting the aggression score, age, social media addiction, duration of use, and the number of shares were considered independent variables. When the simple linear regression model is examined, it is seen that since the duration of use is  $0.864 > 0.05$  in terms of significance, the effect of other variables on the aggression score is statistically significant. Age affects aggression negatively, and as age increases, the level of aggression decreases. Social media addiction has a positive effect on aggression, and as the use of social media increases, aggression increases in the same direction.

In this study, Donat Bacioğlu and Özdemir (2012) in which they examined the relationships between the aggressive behaviors and age, gender, achievement status, and anger. The population of the study was 520 primary school students. The findings of the study indicated that, significant and positive relationships were found between students' aggressive behaviors and age, gender, academic achievement, and anger. As age increases, aggressive behaviors also increase; It clearly shows that gender is an essential predictor of aggressive behaviors. There is a relationship between academic achievement and total aggression and physical aggression behaviors, which confirms our study.

In another study conducted by Fengqiang et al. (2016), a significant relationship was found between the variables examined: the higher the individual's internet addiction score, the higher the aggression level, and Internet addiction directly affect aggression. In conclusion, internet addiction can positively predict aggression, and life events and social support partially mediated the relationship between internet addiction and aggression.

In this study, Demirhan (2004) examined whether the aggression levels of general high school students with different levels of self-disclosure differ in terms of personal and social qualities and family qualities. The sample of the research consists of 946 students. The findings, which caused a differentiation in the aggression levels of the general high school students, also showed differentiation according to gender, the presence of friends of the opposite sex, the behavior and attitude of the parents, and the way they perceived it. In this

context, it was seen that the aggression levels of the students did not differ according to the grade and success level, their way of perceiving themselves, the study environment at home, the perception of the family's income situation, the working status of the mother, and the education level of the parents.

In another study conducted by Cengiz (2010) on adolescent individuals, it was concluded that male students' aggression levels were higher than their female counterparts. It was found that there was no significant difference in the aggression rates of secondary school students at the grade level. On the other hand, it was determined that the economic status of the family and the high level of education did not cause a significant difference. Our study findings show parallelism with these results regarding aggression between the genders.

This study confirms the effect of social media addiction on aggression and shows us a linear relationship between exposure to media violence and aggression. Finally, a statistically significant difference was observed in the duration of social media use, the number of shares, and aggression score according to gender when the study was examined. Accordingly, the relationship between duration of use, number of shares and aggression was revealed. However, a significant difference was observed between the variables of social media addiction. In other words, as many studies have shown, social media addiction causes aggressive behavior in different ways. Although these behavior patterns and types are linked to different variables, it turns into an incurable plague of our age, which is closely related to all of us.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

As a result, the survey data we have presented in the study reveals a relationship between social media addiction and aggression. Also, related literature supports relationships between social media addiction, age-gender relationships, and mental disorders. A statistically significant difference was found in the duration of social media use, the number of shares, and aggression score according to gender. Accordingly, the duration of use is higher in women than in men, and the number of shares and aggression are higher in men than in women. However, there was no significant difference in the social media addiction score in terms of gender.

Most importantly, the studies carried out in our country and the samples taken seriously support the thesis on aggression and social media use. The positive relationship between social media addiction and aggression can show itself widely worldwide and in our country. Situations such as depression, asociality, and emotional emptiness, which we can call mental erosion and which usually occur with social media addiction, are situations that trigger aggression.

There was a statistically significant difference between social media addiction and education level. Based on this, while the addiction score of individuals with high school and pre-education level was the lowest, the social media addiction score of individuals with master's and doctoral education levels was higher than other education levels. Furthermore, it has been found that the number of shares and social media addiction scores of people who shop online are higher than those who do not. As emphasized by Akyazı (2015) and, Öcal and Koca (2020), social media platforms are very important for both customers and producers. By the help of social media, people can choose what they like and what they prefer to buy.

Finally, many studies in the literature specifically focus on social media platforms. These studies have shown us that nowadays, people spend most of their time in social environments and social media (Arik & Arik, 2020; Zeybek, 2015). Peoples whom exposed to

depressive tendencies in social media platforms are more exposed to problems related with psychological in the future. Due to the fact that psychological and health problems that may arise in the future, we should be more aware of how to use social media. Considering this point, individuals should be educated with media literacy in terms of accessing relevant resources from the media and social media and analyze critically and use social media effectively (Öztay & Öztay, 2021). This study suggested to educate individuals in term of social media literacy and learning how to interact without aggression as mentioned in Türk (2021) in order to protect individuals from negatives sided of social media.

It is of great importance that social media analyzes, which are seen in large numbers in western societies, are carried out in eastern societies with different socio-economic levels. In this context, evaluating a concept such as aggression, which varies depending on many factors, in other societies may be explanatory in terms of understanding aggression and preventing it without taking action. It is thought that studies with more participants on this subject will be beneficial.

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