

## The Relationship Between Digital Addiction and Life Satisfaction

Çağrı İLK<sup>1</sup>, Cemal GÜLER<sup>2</sup>

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

<sup>1</sup>Acıbadem University,  
Faculty of Sport Science,  
İstanbul/Türkiye

<sup>2</sup>İstanbul University-  
Cerrahpaşa  
Faculty of Sport Science  
İstanbul/Türkiye

### Abstract

This study aimed to explore the relationship between digital addiction and life satisfaction among university students across their demographic characteristics. A sample of 264 university students, including 148 females and 116 males, was selected through a random sampling method. "Digital Addiction Scale" was used to measure the digital addiction levels of the participants, and "Life Satisfaction Scale" was used to examine the satisfaction they received from life. Descriptive statistical methods, such as percentage and frequency, were employed to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. The data were assessed for normal distribution based on the skewness and kurtosis values. Additionally, parametric tests such as independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA test were employed. Pearson's correlation analysis was employed to determine the relationship between the sub-dimensions of the scale. The findings indicated a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of the digital addiction scale based on participants' age, frequency of digital tool use, and level of welfare. However, no significant difference was found in the sub-dimensions of digital addiction and life satisfaction levels according to gender and grade level variables. On the contrary, there was a correlation between the life satisfaction scale and sub-dimensions of the digital addiction scale. Consequently, the relationships between digital addiction and life satisfaction levels varied depending on the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants.

**Corresponding Author:**  
Cemal GÜLER  
cemal.guler95@gmail.com

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## Dijital Bağımlılık ile Yaşam Doymumu Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

### Öz

Çalışmanın amacı, üniversite öğrencilerinin dijital bağımlılık ve yaşam doymumu arasındaki ilişkinin demografik değişkenlere göre incelenmesidir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda tesadüfi örneklem yöntemi ile seçilen 148'i kadın 116'sı erkek olmak üzere toplam 264 üniversite öğrencisi araştırmaya dahil edilmiştir. Katılımcıların dijital bağımlılık düzeylerini ölçmek amacıyla "Dijital Bağımlılık Ölçeği" ile yaşamdan aldıkları doymuları incelemek amacıyla ise "Yaşam Doymumu Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Katılımcıların demografik özelliklerine ait dağılımları tespit etmek için tanımlayıcı istatistik yöntemlerinden yüzde ve frekans kullanılmıştır. Verilerin çarpıklık ve basıklık değerlerine bakılarak normal dağılım gösterdiği bulunmuş ve parametrik testlerden Bağımsız Örneklem t-Testi ve Tek Yönlü Varyans Analizi uygulanmıştır. Ölçek alt boyutları arasındaki ilişkiyi tespit etmek için ise Pearson korelasyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Sonuç olarak katılımcıların yaş, dijital araç kullanım sıklığı ve refah düzeylerine göre dijital bağımlılık alt boyutları arasında anlamlı farklılık tespit edilmiştir. Cinsiyet ve sınıf değişkenine göre ise dijital bağımlılık ve yaşam doymum düzeyleri alt boyutları arasında anlamlı farklılık bulunmamıştır. Diğer yandan yaşam doymum ölçeği ile dijital bağımlılık ölçeği alt boyutları arasında ilişki olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak katılımcıların sosyo demografik özelliklerine göre dijital bağımlılık ve yaşam doymum düzeyleri arasındaki ilişki farklılık göstermektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Dijital bağımlılık, Üniversite Öğrencisi, Yaşam Doymumu.

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## Introduction

Today, digital technologies constitute a substantial and expanding portion of people's leisure time worldwide. Individuals with internet access spend almost 2.5 hours daily on social media. Currently, there are 3.8 billion social media users. According to a study encompassing 57 countries, people spend more time on social media than watching television (Allcott et al. 2022). The term “digital addiction” encompasses various aspects of this issue, including internet addiction, the widely discussed problem of gaming addiction, and the recent problem of social media addiction or digital media addiction. Digital addiction not only covers addiction to online activities but also offline activities using digital devices, including offline gaming addiction (Meng et al. 2022). With the rise of digital addiction in recent years, a significant area of research has emerged. Digital addiction shows global variation, ranging between 8.9% in Eastern and 4.60% in Western countries. There is some disagreement in the literature regarding the definition of digital addiction. While it can be defined as excessive time spent on digital devices and overdependence on them, it is also suggested that it is characterized by behavioral characteristics such as mood fluctuations, preoccupation, and negative impacts on relationships (Cemiloglu et al. 2022). Digital addiction is a behavioral technology addiction, often fueled by a sense of incompleteness. It has given rise to a dependent generation that does not have a social life, feels lonely in the absence of mobile devices, closely follows every application on their phones, craves information about the latest innovations, makes friendships only through social media, and creates new identities on social media (Yengin, 2019). With the development of technology and new generations' easy adaptations, the types of addiction have also evolved, including internet addiction, computer game addiction, phone addiction, social media addiction, and TV addiction (Yalçın, 2021). The uncontrolled use of technology can cause social, psychological, and physical consequences (Karabulut, 2023).

Life satisfaction is another critical concept analyzed in this study, as it is one of the most important determinants of an individual's overall well-being and quality of life. It includes the evaluation of one's quality of life and well-being based on their choices (Özgür et al. 2010). Satisfaction is the fulfillment of an individual's wishes, desires, and needs, while life satisfaction is the outcome of a person's gains versus their expectations (Karabulut and Özer, 2003). Physical, social, emotional, mental health, psychological well-being, functional and effective communication, and maintaining social relationships are the determinants of life satisfaction. Besides, life satisfaction is an indicator of the quality of life in society. It is a sign of mental health and is positively associated with various favorable personal, psychological, behavioral, social, interpersonal, and personal outcomes (Kermen et al. 2016). Life satisfaction measures the extent to which individuals enjoy their lives. Multiple variables affect life satisfaction, including socio-

demographic factors, such as age, gender, psychological characteristics, lifestyle, leisure pursuits, and satisfaction with leisure (Tokay Argan and Mersin, 2021). Life satisfaction, a psychological trait based on a person's perspectives, expectations, and fulfillment, impacts their social and professional lives. It reflects the perception of what one wants and the corresponding reality realized through comparison. That is, life satisfaction emerges with an individual's expectations of life and the level of fulfilled expectations (Ülker Tümlü and Receptoğlu, 2013). When expectations are unmet, many problems arise, which can negatively impact mental health. The challenges can lead to a sense of despair and reduced life satisfaction and mood fluctuations (Türkel & Dilmaç, 2019).

The advancements in digital technology have changed social relationships and expectations in life. Despite the benefits of technology, there are also negative aspects that negatively affect interpersonal relationships, communication, and social life. Especially during university education, individuals' relationship with technology is prominent, and their expectations from life begin to develop. Accordingly, it is thought that the results obtained from the study will give us an idea about the variables in which the frequency of digital technology use of children and university students differ and how they affect their life satisfaction. At the same time, we think that the result that will be obtained regarding whether there is a relationship between the use of digital technology and the life satisfaction of the individual will provide benefits regarding the fact that the use of digital technology during the university period should be managed in a way that students will be more satisfied with life. In this regard, this study aims to explore the levels of digital addiction and life satisfaction among university students.

## **Method and Materials**

During the current research, we acted within the framework of the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive".

This study employed a relational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, to determine the relationship between digital addiction and life satisfaction among university students. A relational survey model is used to discern changes between variables (Karasar, 2011). The sample comprised 264 university students, with 56.1% (148) female (56.1%) and 43.9% (116) male (43.9%) enrolled at Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Sports Sciences. The sample was selected using a random sampling method.

### **Personal Information Form**

The first part includes questions about the participants' gender, age, grade level, daily frequency of digital tool use, and level of welfare.

### **Digital Addiction Scale (DAS)**

In the second part of the study, the "Digital Addiction Scale" developed by Kesici and Tunç (2018) for university students was utilized to evaluate participants' digital addiction levels. The five-point Likert type scale has 19 items and five sub-dimensions, with the reliability coefficients of "overuse" (.78), "non-restraint" (.93), "inhibiting the flow of life" (.83), "emotional state" (.86) and "dependence" (.86). The overall internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .93.

### **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)**

In the third part of the study, the "Satisfaction with Life Scale," developed by Diener et al. (1985) and adapted into Turkish by Dağlı ve Baysal (2016), was administered to assess participants' satisfaction with life. The five-point Likert scale has five items and one sub-dimension. The overall internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .90.

### **Data Analysis**

SPSS 25 software package was used to determine the distribution of the demographic characteristics of the participants. Descriptive statistical methods of percentage and frequency were used as well. The results indicated normal distribution based on the skewness and kurtosis values. Then, parametric tests were conducted, including an independent sample t-test and a one-way ANOVA test. Pearson's correlation analysis test was performed to show the correlation between the sub-dimensions of the scale.

### **Findings**

Table 1  
Distribution of Scale Scores

Sub-dimension	Item	Avg.	Sd	Min	Max	Skew.	Kurt.
SWLS	5	2.96	.73	1.00	4.60	-.385	-.044
DAS	19	3.07	.71	1.00	4.89	-.612	.258
Overuse	5	3.11	.78	1.00	5.00	-.679	.350
Non-restraint	3	3.12	1.01	1.00	5.00	-.214	-1.00
Inhibiting the flow of life	4	3.37	.81	1.00	5.00	-.670	.336
Emotional state	4	3.28	.86	1.00	5.00	-.474	-.439
Dependence	3	2.26	.90	1.00	5.00	.694	-.339

*SWLS: The Satisfaction with Life Scale, DAS: Digital Addiction Scale*

Table 1 shows the distributions of the scale scores. The mean score obtained from the life satisfaction scale is  $2.96 \pm 73$ . The highest average score from the sub-dimensions of the digital addiction scale is  $3.37 \pm 81$ , specifically from the sub-dimensions of "inhibiting the flow of life."

Table 2  
Distribution of Demographic Characteristics

Variables		n	%
Gender	Male	116	43.9
	Female	148	56.1
Age	18-20 Years old	98	37.1
	21-23 Years old	85	32.2
	24-26 Years old	81	30.7
Grade Level	1. Grade	42	15.9
	2. Grade	90	34.1
	3. Grade	56	21.2
	4. Grade	76	28.8
Daily frequency of digital tool use	1-2 hours	51	19.3
	3-4 hours	70	26.5
	5-6 hours	69	26.1
	7 or more hours	74	28.0
Level of Welfare	Bad	74	28.0
	Medium	83	31.4
	Good	107	40.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>264</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the analysis results regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants. Accordingly, 56.1% of the participants are "Female," 37.1% are "18-20 years old", 34.1% are "2nd grade", 28.0% report using digital tools for "7 or more hours " and 40.5% have a "Good" level of welfare.

Table 3  
Digital Addiction and Life Satisfaction Scale Scores Based on Gender

Sub-dimension	Gender	N	Avg.	Sd	F	p
Overuse	Male	116	3.07	.78	.828	.801
	Female	148	3.15	.78		
Non-restraint	Male	116	3.17	1.00	.786	.452
	Female	148	3.07	1.02		
Inhibiting the flow of life	Male	116	3.42	.83	.751	.827
	Female	148	3.34	.80		
Emotional state	Male	116	3.32	.91	.710	.387
	Female	148	3.24	.83		
Dependence	Male	116	2.29	.96	.551	.079
	Female	148	2.23	.84		
Life satisfaction	Male	116	2.98	.69	.384	.305
	Female	148	2.95	.76		

Table 3 presents the independent sample t-test results regarding the statistically significant differences in digital addiction and life satisfaction levels based on participants' gender. The results indicated no significant difference in participants' digital addiction and life satisfaction levels by gender ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 4  
Digital Addiction and Life Satisfaction Scale Scores Based on Age

Sub-dimension	Age	N	Avg.	Sd	F	p
<b>Overuse</b>	18-20	98	3.21	.72	4.620	<b>.011</b>
	21-23	85	2.90	.88		
	24-26	81	3.22	.69		
<b>Non-restraint</b>	18-20	98	3.19	.95	5.157	<b>.006</b>
	21-23	85	2.84	1.13		
	24-26	81	3.32	.90		
<b>Inhibiting the flow of life</b>	18-20	98	3.43	.76	3.048	<b>.049</b>
	21-23	85	3.20	.89		
	24-26	81	3.50	.76		
<b>Emotional state</b>	18-20	98	3.31	.82	3.765	<b>.024</b>
	21-23	85	3.08	.97		
	24-26	81	3.44	.77		
<b>Dependence</b>	18-20	98	2.30	.90	1.572	.210
	21-23	85	2.12	.83		
	24-26	81	2.35	.96		
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	18-20	98	3.03	.74	.679	.508
	21-23	85	2.93	.69		
	24-26	81	2.92	.75		

Table 4 shows the one-way ANOVA test results that aimed to reveal if there was a statistically meaningful difference in participants' digital addiction and life satisfaction levels based on age. Accordingly, a significant distinction was observed between the age factor and the sub-dimensions of "Overuse," "Non-restraint," "Inhibiting the flow of life," and "Emotional state" ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 5  
Digital Addiction and Life Satisfaction Scale Scores Based on Grade Level

Sub-dimension	Grade	N	Avg.	Sd	F	p
<b>Overuse</b>	1. grade	42	3.24	.74	.497	.685
	2. grade	90	3.08	.77		
	3. grade	56	3.07	.83		
	4. grade	76	3.11	.78		
<b>Non-restraint</b>	1. grade	42	3.10	.93	.742	.528
	2. grade	90	3.15	1.02		
	3. grade	56	2.95	1.02		
	4. grade	76	3.21	1.04		
<b>Inhibiting the flow of life</b>	1. grade	42	3.50	.75	.520	.669
	2. grade	90	3.35	.83		
	3. grade	56	3.30	.81		
	4. grade	76	3.39	.83		
<b>Emotional state</b>	1. grade	42	3.38	.85	.331	.803
	2. grade	90	3.28	.88		
	3. grade	56	3.27	.91		
	4. grade	76	3.22	.83		
<b>Dependence</b>	1. grade	42	2.38	1.01	.388	.762
	2. grade	90	2.23	.90		
	3. grade	56	2.29	.88		
	4. grade	76	2.20	.85		

<b>Life satisfaction</b>	1. grade	42	3.06	.75	.329	.805
	2. grade	90	2.96	.74		
	3. grade	56	2.91	.77		
	4. grade	76	2.95	.67		

In Table 5, a one-way ANOVA test was utilized to check if there was a statistically meaningful difference in participants' digital addiction and life satisfaction levels based on their grade levels. The results revealed no significant difference between the given variable and digital addiction and life satisfaction levels ( $p>0.05$ ).

Table 6

## Digital Addiction and Life Satisfaction Scale Scores Based on the Frequency of Digital Tool Use

Sub-dimension	Digital Tool Use	N	Avg.	Sd	F	p
<b>Overuse</b>	1-2 hours	51	3.23	.69	4.415	<b>.005</b>
	3-4 hours	70	3.30	.67		
	5-6 hours	69	2.86	.80		
	7 hours and above	74	3.09	.85		
<b>Non-restraint</b>	1-2 hours	51	3.15	.95	3.532	<b>.015</b>
	3-4 hours	70	3.41	1.01		
	5-6 hours	69	2.86	1.02		
	7 hours and above	74	3.06	1.00		
<b>Inhibiting the flow of life</b>	1-2 hours	51	3.41	.75	2.095	.101
	3-4 hours	70	3.56	.80		
	5-6 hours	69	3.24	.86		
	7 hours and above	74	3.30	.81		
<b>Emotional state</b>	1-2 hours	51	3.31	.80	2.878	<b>.037</b>
	3-4 hours	70	3.45	.81		
	5-6 hours	69	3.03	.86		
	7 hours and above	74	3.32	.93		
<b>Dependence</b>	1-2 hours	51	2.20	.85	.128	.944
	3-4 hours	70	2.29	.96		
	5-6 hours	69	2.23	.80		
	7 hours and above	74	2.28	.97		
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	1-2 hours	51	3.05	.67	.603	.614
	3-4 hours	70	2.99	.66		
	5-6 hours	69	2.88	.72		
	7 hours and above	74	2.96	.82		

In Table 6, a one-way ANOVA test was applied to show if there was a statistically significant difference in participants' digital addiction and life satisfaction levels based on the daily frequency of digital tool use. The findings indicated a significant difference between the frequency of digital tool use and the sub-dimensions of "Overuse," "Non-restraint," and "Emotion state" ( $p<0.05$ ).

Table 7  
Digital Addiction and Life Satisfaction Scale Scores Based on the Level of Welfare

Sub-dimension	Level of welfare	N	Avg.	Sd	F	p
<b>Overuse</b>	Low	74	3.20	.71	3.189	<b>.043</b>
	Normal	83	3.22	.73		
	Good	107	2.97	.83		
<b>Non-restraint</b>	Low	74	3.21	.95	4.106	<b>.018</b>
	Normal	83	3.31	1.04		
	Good	107	2.91	1.01		
<b>Inhibiting the flow of life</b>	Low	74	3.39	.73	.953	.387
	Normal	83	3.46	.81		
	Good	107	3.30	.87		
<b>Emotional state</b>	Low	74	3.34	.85	2.730	<b>.067</b>
	Normal	83	3.41	.82		
	Good	107	3.13	.89		
<b>Dependence</b>	Low	74	2.28	.95	.320	.727
	Normal	83	2.30	.93		
	Good	107	2.20	.84		
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	Low	74	2.96	.74	.025	.976
	Normal	83	2.98	.72		
	Good	107	2.95	.73		

In Table 7, a one-way ANOVA test was employed to uncover if there was a statistically significant difference in participants' digital addiction and life satisfaction levels based on their welfare levels. Accordingly, there was a significant difference between the welfare level variable and the sub-dimensions of "Overuse," "Non-restraint," and "Emotional state" ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 8  
The Correlation Between Digital Addiction and Life Satisfaction Scale Sub-Dimensions

Sub-dimension		Overuse	Non-restraint	Inhibiting the flow of life	Emotional state	Dependence	Life satisfaction
<b>Overuse</b>	r	1					
	p						
<b>Non-restraint</b>	r	.781**	1				
	p	.001					
<b>Inhibiting the flow of life</b>	r	.630**	.675**	1			
	p	.001	.001				
<b>Emotional state</b>	r	.693**	.650**	.708**	1		
	p	.001	.001	.001			
<b>Dependence</b>	r	.466**	.442**	.283**	.472**	1	
	p	.001	.001	.001	.001		
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	r	.057	.132*	.143*	.075*	.122*	1
	p	.354	.032	.021	.227	.047	

In Table 8, the Pearson correlation analysis was utilized to reveal if there was a correlation between the digital addiction scale and life satisfaction scale sub-dimensions. The analysis results



indicated a positive correlation between the life satisfaction scale and the sub-dimensions of "Non-restraint," "Inhibiting the flow of life," and "Dependence."

## Conclusion and Discussion

This study aims to investigate whether university students' digital addiction and life satisfaction levels varied based on their gender, age, grade level, frequency of digital tool use, and level of welfare.

The analysis showed no significant difference in participants' digital addiction and life satisfaction levels based on gender. However, Arslan (2020) studied the digital addiction levels among university students and found a significant difference in the "Inhibiting the flow of life," "Emotional state," and "Dependence" sub-factors of the DAS. In another study conducted by Arslan and Bardakçı (2020), a significant difference was observed in digital addiction levels by gender. Similarly, Avşaroğlu et al. (2005) found a significant difference in participants' life satisfaction by gender. These results are different from those in our study.

As seen in Table 4, while a significant difference was observed in participants' digital addiction levels by age, no meaningful difference was found between their life satisfaction and age. The difference was observed in the sub-dimensions of "Overuse," "Non-restraint," "Inhibiting the flow of life," and "Emotional state." In a study conducted by Çukurluöz (2016) on digital addiction levels among high school students, a significant difference was observed in digital addiction levels based on age. Demirel et al. (2022) also reached a similar finding, suggesting a statistically significant difference between the sub-dimensions of the digital addiction scale and age. A study conducted by Aydnır (2011) on the life satisfaction levels among university students showed no significant difference in life satisfaction levels according to age. It can be inferred that there are similarities as well as differences between the results of the research in the literature and our study.

As seen in Table 5, participants' digital addiction and life satisfaction levels were evaluated based on their grade levels, and no significant difference was found between the given variable and scale sub-dimensions. In a similar study by Altınok (2021), a significant difference was observed in digital addiction levels for this variable. Ünal and Korkmaz (2023) revealed a difference in the "Inhibiting the flow of life" and "Emotional state" sub-dimensions based on their classes. Yelpaze and Yakar (2019) also reported no difference in the literature. Consequently, there are similarities as well as differences between the results of the research in the literature and our study.

Table 6 shows the analysis results regarding participants' digital addiction, life satisfaction levels, and daily frequency of digital tool use. Accordingly, there was a difference in the sub-

dimensions of "Overuse," "Non-restraint," and "Emotional state." In a study by Erzincanlı (2022), a significant difference was found between digital addiction levels based on the frequency of digital tool use. In a similar study, Altınok (2021) found a significant difference between the time spent on digital tools and life satisfaction levels. The study results align with the literature review.

According to the one-way ANOVA analysis results in Table 7 regarding the links between participants' digital addiction and life satisfaction levels based on their level of welfare, there was no difference between the mentioned variables. In contrast, a significant difference was observed in the sub-dimensions of "Overuse," "Non-restraint," and "Emotional state." Similarly, Demirel et al. (2022) observed significant differences between the digital addiction scale and welfare levels. In a study by Köylü (2022) on the life satisfaction levels among university students, a significant difference was found between welfare and life satisfaction levels. Our results share similarities as well as differences with the relevant literature.

The analyses results performed to check the relationship between digital addiction and life satisfaction sub-dimensions indicated a relationship at the level of sub-dimensions.

Consequently, digital addiction and life satisfaction levels varied based on particular socio-demographic characteristics.

Technology is a practical tool that makes our lives easy and allows speedy access to information. Along with its advantages, technology may reach addictive levels and become harmful. The literature on digital addiction has predominantly focused on young individuals. Thus, studies on adults can be expanded. At the same time, young people should use the beneficial aspects of digital technology to enhance their life satisfaction and fulfill their personal desires. Future studies should focus on different sample groups and research themes like happiness, loneliness, and self-efficacy.

### **Ethics Committee Permission Information**

Ethics review board: Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Committee Chairmanship

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## Statement of Researchers' Contribution Rates

The data collection process of the research was carried out by the first author, the process related to the introduction part was carried out by the first author, and the issues related to the method, findings and discussion and conclusion were carried out by two authors.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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