

# A RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LONELINESS AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: THE CASE OF MUŞ ALPARSLAN UNIVERSITY

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## ABSTRACT

Many innovations have occurred in the fields of communication under the influence of developing and changing technologies. With these developments, internet use has moved to a different dimension with Single technology. Single technology enable the production and dissemination of content in social media channels. Social media users continue to use it for needs such as having fun, socialising and obtaining information. According to Wearesocial 2023 Turkey report, young individuals use social media the most. Young individuals spend a significant portion of their time on these networks due to their active use of social media channels. Thus, it was tried to understand whether there is a relationship between social media use and loneliness. The sample of the study consists of Muş Alparslan University students. In the context of the survey conducted on 378 people, it was aimed to analyse the relationship between individuals' social media usage rates, social media usage purposes, time spent on social media and loneliness. Among the results of the study are that the participants like to use social media and spend time on social media, check their social media account as the first thing when they wake up in the morning, and use social media to be informed about current events. It was also concluded that there was no relationship between social media use and loneliness.

**Keywords:** Social Network, Social Media, New Media, Loneliness, Social Media Use.

## ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN YALNIZLIK İLE SOSYAL MEDYA BAĞIMLILIĞI İLİŞKİSİ ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA: MUŞ ALPARSLAN ÜNİVERSİTESİ ÖRNEĞİ

### ÖZ

Gelişen ve değişim gösteren teknolojilerle birlikte, iletişim alanında da pek çok yenilik meydana gelmiştir. Bu gelişmelerle birlikte internet kullanımı Web 2.0 teknolojileriyle farklı bir boyuta geçmiştir. Web 2.0 teknolojileri sosyal medya mecralarında içeriklerin üretilmesi ve yayılmasına olanak sağlamaktadır. Sosyal medya kullanıcıları eğlenmek, sosyalleşmek ve bilgi edinmek gibi ihtiyaçlarla kullanımını devam ettirmektedir. Wearesocial 2023 Türkiye raporuna göre sosyal medyayı en fazla genç bireyler kullanmaktadır. Genç bireylerin sosyal medya mecralarında aktif kullanmalarında dolayı zamanlarının önemli bir kısmını bu ağlarda geçirmektedir. Sosyal medya mecralarının devamlı olarak yenilenmesi kullanıcıların aktifliğini pekiştirmekte ve dolayısıyla sosyal medya daha fazla zaman geçirilmesine neden olmaktadır. Böylece sosyal medya kullanımı ile yalnızlık arasında bir ilişkinin olup olmadığı anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Çalışmanın örnekleme, Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. 378 kişi üzerinde gerçekleştirilen anket bağlamında bireylerin sosyal medya kullanım oranları, sosyal medya kullanım amaçları, sosyal medya geçirilen zaman ve yalnızlık ilişkisinin çözümlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışma ile birlikte katılımcıların sosyal medyayı kullanmayı ve sosyal medyada zaman geçirmeyi sevdiği, sabah uyandığında ilk iş olarak sosyal medya hesabını kontrol ettiği, sosyal medyayı güncel olaylardan haberdar olmak kullandığı çıkan sonuçlar arasındadır. Ayrıca sosyal medya kullanımı ile yalnızlık arasında bir ilişkinin olmadığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal Ağ, Sosyal Medya, Yeni Medya, Yalnızlık, Sosyal Medya Kullanımı.

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## INTRODUCTION

Social Media Users can share emotions, thoughts, photos, music and videos on social media and spend a significant part of their time here by making new friends. Individuals can relieve their stress by sharing on social networks, come together to form groups and express themselves more easily with the content they produce (Soysal 2016: 17). Providing access to social media platforms with fixed and mobile devices causes individuals' socialisation spaces to change and face-to-face communication requirements to disappear day by day (Albayrak 2019: 930). The intensive use of social media brings along some problems in the lives of users over time. As a result of people's intensive use of social media platforms, addiction also emerges. In today's conditions, a large part of human life is spent on social media channels. Social media users are online as if they want to prove that they exist in these channels and spend a significant part of their time here by checking their social media accounts first thing when they wake up in the morning. Users can be happy or unhappy with the likes and comments on the content they share on their social media accounts (Yüksel 2019: 2).

As a result of excessive use of social media, social, physical and psychological problems occur in users. Individuals who have reached the addiction level of social media use isolate themselves from social life, and their family and friendship relationships become disorganised. In addition, it affects individuals physically, posture disorder, health problems caused by weight and inactivity, and eye disorders caused by looking at the screen too much can also occur. People who see themselves as excluded from society and who are not at peace with themselves, seeking the support they cannot find in social life in social media channels accelerates this process (Yüksel 2019: 3). This study focuses on whether there is a relationship between social media use and loneliness among university students. A comprehensive field research was conducted online and face-to-face between March and May 2023; the developed questionnaire form was applied to 378 volunteer participants. Within the framework of the findings obtained in the field research, the social media usage rates of university students were examined and the relationship between social media use and loneliness was analysed.

### Concept of Social Media

There are many reasons underlying the development and change of internet technologies, which are among the reasons shaping the new media. Especially towards the end of the 20th century, the changes and developments in the institutional and economic sense, which are expressed as globalisation under the influence of the capitalist system, have enabled the internet to turn into

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a global medium that provides information flow to the whole world (Aydoğan & Kırık 2012: 62-63). Social media are online platforms that provide users with the opportunity to share information, thoughts, interests and information and create mutual interaction (Sayımer 2008: 123). Social media is an application area that enables the sharing of information, thoughts and experiences by public websites and rapidly incorporates the Internet into our lives (Weinberg 2009: 1). Social media is a medium that provides news, information and brings people together. “The most advanced level of these tools in the past is the social communication networks that have emerged with the development of internet technologies and included in our lives” (Taşdelen 2014: 83). Social media is a virtual medium in which millions of individuals communicate, express opinions and shape their thoughts, and share many messages (Özutku et al. 2014: 82).

Social media has different characteristics from traditional media. The most important difference that constitutes its uniqueness is that anyone can create, comment and contribute content on social media (Scott 2010: 38). Kaplan (2016: 671) defines social media as “the digital world, a world where everything goes, where everything is permissible, where we are here and now, where life is here and now. Here and now. This is a very important and very dangerous thing”.

Social media are websites where users can express themselves online, communicate with other people, express opinions, comment and contribute with their thoughts in online environments between groups (Köksal & Özdemir 2013: 325). Social media is a medium that aims to produce as a system built on the basis of following and being followed. Users who are included in the social media system obtain their existence in the amount of following and being followed (Oğuzhan 2015: 103).

### **Solitude**

Loneliness is defined as “an unpleasant emotional state experienced as a result of the difference between the individual's existing relationships and the desired social relationships” (Peplau & Perlman 1981: 31). When loneliness is mentioned, the times when an individual is alone come to mind. However, a person may feel lonely even in the presence of other people. There may be times when people feel lonely due to the lack of satisfaction from the communication with other individuals and the lack of communication. Therefore, the concept of loneliness includes different dimensions (İmamoğlu 2003: 92). Loneliness is “a cognitive awareness of one's social

and personal relationship inadequacy that leads to feelings such as unhappiness, emptiness and longing” (Asher & Paquette 2003: 75).

Humans are social beings with a basic need for belonging by nature. In addition, when they are unable to fulfil these belonging requirements, significant disorders may occur (Heinrich & Gullone 2006: 712). Loneliness can vary from temporary moods to chronic conditions; individuals suffering from short-term loneliness are unlikely to seriously define their problems or seek professional help. Individuals are likely to turn to others for help because loneliness is severe or unmanageable. Social pressures in the society are one of the obstacles preventing others or individuals from accepting that they are lonely (Perlman & Peplau 1984: 37).

It is generally recognised that loneliness causes depression, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, etc. Loneliness is among the hidden reasons for hospitalisation or placement in nursing homes. Problems such as excessive alcohol use, severe anxiety states, loss of self-esteem, stress and powerlessness are among the pathological consequences of loneliness (Gierveld 1998: 76). A person who feels that he/she is lonely not only feels unhappy, but also feels insecure, thus increasing his/her sensitivity to threats from all sides and activating the mechanism of maintaining a disharmonious life (Cacioppo et al. 2006: 1056).

### **Literature Research**

The increasing use of social media attracts the attention of many disciplines and is being researched. Many studies have been conducted on social media use and loneliness. According to the study conducted by Özgür in 2013, it is seen that the dependency levels of the participants on social networks are low, and the dependency between loneliness and social network use is at a medium level (Özgür 2013). According to the study conducted by Balcı and Tiryaki in 2014, it is seen that female participants spend more time on social media than male participants and there is no significant relationship between loneliness and addiction among the participants (Balcı & Tiryaki 2014). According to the study conducted by Savcı and Aysan in 2016, it was concluded that loneliness increased with the increase in the urge to use social media and there was a relationship between social media use and loneliness (Savcı & Aysan 2016). According to the study conducted by Doğan and Karakuş in 2016, there is a relationship between loneliness and social media use (Doğan & Karakuş 2016).

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## **Research**

Under this title, the subject and purpose of the research, population and sample, data collection techniques, research questions, data analyses and data collection techniques used in the analysis are discussed. The research was determined using the field research method. With the questionnaire applied to 378 participants, the research was made visible by considering the most used social media platforms, frequency of social media use, purposes of social media use, the relationship between social media use and loneliness and similar factors.

## **Subject and Purpose of the Study**

“A Research on the Relationship Between Loneliness and Social Media Addiction of University Students: The Case of Muş Alparslan University” aims to analyse whether the social media use of university students is related to loneliness. Understanding the purposes of using social media, the time spent on social media and the relationship between privacy is important in terms of understanding and analysing today's practices.

The questions tried to be reached in the research were formulated as follows:

- Which social media platforms are the most used by university students?
- How is the frequency of social media use of university students?
- What are the social media usage purposes of university students?
- How is the time organisation of university students when using social media?
- What is the relationship between social media use and loneliness?

## **Population and Sample of the Study**

The population of this study, which aims to determine whether the social media usage purposes of university students and the time they spend on social media have a relationship with loneliness, consists of Muş Alparslan University students. In this study, quota sampling, one of the quantitative research methods, was used. The purpose of quota sampling is to create a small model that has taken place in the universe and to ensure that some important groups in the universe can be represented in the sample. In order for this situation to occur, the proportions of the groups in the universe should be known. Since the current situations cannot be known, the proportions determined by previous studies are used (Gürtan 1982). The field research was conducted face-to-face and online between March and May 2023. Firstly, a pre-test of 50 people was applied and reliability was tested. As a result of the pre-test, the reliability degree

(Cronbach's Alpha) was measured as 0.886. Thus, the reliability of the pre-test of the research was ensured (Akgül & Çevik 2005). Afterwards, the questionnaire form was delivered to 410 people in terms of representing the university students. The 32 incomplete or incorrect questionnaires were not included in the analysis and analyses were carried out on 378 questionnaires. After all questionnaires were administered, the reliability level was re-measured and determined as 0.846. Therefore, it was concluded that the study was highly reliable (Akgül & Çevik 2005). The data obtained in the field research were tested through SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics 22) programme.

### Findings

In the field research conducted, the distribution of gender, income and expense status of the participants is presented in Table 1, the distribution of social media daily usage time is presented in Table 2, the distribution of the use of social media platforms is presented in Table 3 and the distribution of the frequency of use of social media platforms is presented in Table 4. While making use of descriptive data on social media usage purposes, time spent on social media and loneliness levels of the participants, independent two-sample t-test was used when compared according to gender.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Demographic Data

Demographic Characteristics	Categories	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Woman	205	54,2
	Male	178	45,8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100</b>
Income Status	0-1250	181	47,9
	1251-2500	142	37,6
	2501-3750	35	9,3
	3751-5000	0	0,0
	5001-6250	19	5,0
	6251-üstü	1	0,3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100</b>

Two demographic characteristics, gender and income status, were taken into consideration. Of the participants, 205 54.2% were women and 178 45.8% were men. Considering the income status of the participants, the income group in the range of 0-1250 TL constitutes the majority with a rate of 47.9%. In addition, the income group in the range of 1251-2500 TL with a rate of 37.6%, the income group in the range of 2501-3750 TL with a rate of 9.3%, the income group in the range of 5001-6250 TL with a rate of 5.0% and the income group in the range of 6251-+ (above) TL with a rate of 0.3% come respectively.

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**Table 2.** Daily Social Media Usage Time

	Number (n)	Lowest	Highest	$\bar{x}$ (mean)	ss
<b>Your Daily Social Media Usage Time.</b>	378	1 saat	20 hours	4,7	2,3

Participants were asked to indicate their daily social media usage time. Accordingly, daily social media usage time was determined as minimum 1 hour and maximum 20 hours. The average daily social media usage time of the participants was calculated as 4.7 hours. According to the findings of the analysis, it shows that university students intensively spend time on social media accounts.

**Table 3.** Distribution of Social Media Usage

Social Media Platforms	Number (n)	Percentage (%) in 378 people	Total Percentage (%)
<b>Youtube</b>	287	75,9	18,8
<b>Instagram</b>	350	92,6	22,1
<b>Whatsapp</b>	375	99,2	24,6
<b>Facebook</b>	151	39,9	9,8
<b>Twitter</b>	93	24,6	6,2
<b>Messenger</b>	105	27,8	8,5
<b>Pinterest</b>	11	2,9	0,7
<b>LinkedIn</b>	2	0,5	0,1
<b>Snapchat</b>	56	14,8	3,6
<b>Tiktok</b>	96	25,4	6,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.519</b>		<b>100</b>

In the questionnaire form, the participants were asked to indicate the social media platforms they use. Thus, descriptive statistics are given in Table 3. Thus, Youtube (287), Instagram (350), Whatsapp (375), Facebook (151), Twitter (93), Messenger (105), Pinterest (11), LinkedIn (2), Snapchat (56) and Tiktok (96). While Whatsapp is the social media platform that the participants use the most, Instagram, Youtube, Facebook, Messenger, Tiktok, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest and LinkedIn come next.

**Table 4.** Distribution of Frequency of Social Media Use

	Every day	Every other day	Every four days	Once a week	Once a month	Total
<b>Youtube</b>	137 %47,7	100 %34,8	35 %12,2	10 %3,5	5 %1,7	<b>287</b> <b>%100</b>
<b>Instagram</b>	229 %65,4	98 %28,0	19 %5,4	4 %1,1	0 %0	<b>350</b> <b>%100</b>
	266	99	8	2	0	<b>375</b>

<b>Whatsapp</b>	%70,9 96	%26,4 53	%2,1 2	%0,5 0	%0 0	<b>%100</b> <b>151</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	%63,6 56	%35,1 29	%1,3 8	%0 0	%0 0	<b>%100</b> <b>93</b>
<b>Twitter</b>	%60,2 44	%31,2 43	%8,6 11	%0 5	%0 2	<b>%100</b> <b>105</b>
<b>Messenger</b>	%41,9 5	%41,0 1	%10,5 3	%4,8 1	%1,9 1	<b>%100</b> <b>11</b>
<b>Pinterest</b>	%45,5 0	%9,1 0	%27,3 0	%9,1 0	%9,1 2	<b>%100</b> <b>2</b>
<b>LinkedIn</b>	%0 17	%0 16	%0 15	%0 6	%100 2	<b>%100</b> <b>56</b>
<b>Snapchat</b>	%45,5 71	%28,6 17	%26,8 3	%10,7 3	%3,6 2	<b>%100</b> <b>96</b>
<b>Tiktok</b>	%74,0	%17,7	%3,1	%3,1	%2,1	<b>%100</b>

When the distribution of the frequency of social media use of university students is examined, it is seen that users use Youtube 47.7%, Instagram 65.4%, Whatsapp 70.9%, Facebook 63.6%, Twitter 60.2%, Messenger 41.9%, Pinterest 45.5%, Snapchat 45.5%, Tiktok 74.0% "every day".

**Table 5.** Data on the Purpose of Social Media Use

Purpose of using social media	Levels of participation					$\bar{x}$ (mean)	ss
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	I agree	Absolutely agree		
<b>1. I like using social media and spending time on social media.</b>	%1,6	%3,4	%6,3	%50,3	%38,4	4,20	0,82
<b>2. I check my social media account or accounts first thing in the morning when I wake up.</b>	%3,4	%5,6	%3,7	%48,7	%38,6	4,13	0,96
<b>3. I use social media to be informed about current events.</b>	%2,1	%2,9	%2,6	%41,8	%50,5	4,35	0,84
<b>4. I use social media to keep in touch with groups of friends.</b>	%3,2	%1,1	%2,6	%40,7	%52,4	4,38	0,85
<b>5. I use social media to participate in social projects.</b>	%2,4	%5,6	%8,7	%38,4	%44,9	4,28	2,26
<b>6. I use social media to see my friends' posts and share content.</b>	%2,9	%3,4	%3,2	%54,2	%36,2	4,17	0,87
<b>7. I use social media to escape from the real world.</b>	%5,3	%4,0	%4,2	%50,3	%36,2	4,08	1,01

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<b>8. Spending time on social media relaxes me when I am unhappy.</b>	%3,7	%2,6	%3,7	%51,1	%38,9	4,18	0,91
<b>9. I feel free while using social media.</b>	%3,7	%4,2	%7,4	%48,7	%36,0	4,08	0,96
<b>10. I prefer the friendships I make on social media to real life friendships.</b>	%6,6	%4,8	%3,4	%48,4	%36,5	4,14	2,37
<b>11. I express myself better to people I meet on social media.</b>	%5,3	%5,6	%6,6	%52,1	%30,4	3,97	1,02
<b>12. I prefer to be on social media even when there are people around me.</b>	%3,7	%6,1	%5,8	%50,5	%33,9	4,04	0,98

When the descriptive data related to the purpose of using social media are examined, it is seen that the participants mostly like to use social media and spend time on social media ( $\bar{x}=4,20$ ,  $ss=0,82$ ), check their social media account first thing when they wake up in the morning ( $\bar{x}=4,13$ ,  $ss=0,96$ ), use social media to be informed about current events ( $\bar{x}=4,13$ ,  $ss=0,96$ ), and use social media to be informed about current events ( $\bar{x}=4,13$ ,  $ss=0,96$ ), 35,  $ss=0,84$ ), to keep in touch with groups of friends ( $\bar{x}=4,38$ ,  $ss=0,85$ ), to participate in social projects ( $\bar{x}=4,28$ ,  $ss=2,26$ ), to see friends' posts and share content ( $\bar{x}=4,17$ ,  $ss=0,87$ ), and to escape from the real world ( $\bar{x}=4,08$ ,  $ss=1,01$ ). In addition, it is seen that spending time on social media is relaxing in unhappy times ( $\bar{x}=4,18$ ,  $ss=0,91$ ), feeling free while using social media ( $\bar{x}=4,08$ ,  $ss=0,96$ ), and friendships established on social media are preferred to friendships in real life ( $\bar{x}=4,14$ ,  $ss=2,37$ ), express themselves better to people they met on social media ( $\bar{x}=3,97$ ,  $ss=1,02$ ), and prefer to spend time on social media even when there are people around ( $\bar{x}=4,04$ ,  $ss=0,98$ ).

**Table 6.** Analysis of the Purpose of Social Media Use According to Gender (t test)

Purpose of using social media	Gender	Number (n)	$\bar{x}$ (mean)	SS	t	p
<b>1. I like using social media and spending time on social media.</b>	Woman	205	4,19	0,83	-0,343	0,92
	Male	173	4,21	0,82		
<b>2. I check my social media account or accounts first thing in the morning when I wake up.</b>	Woman	205	4,04	1,07	-2,015	0,18
	Male	173	4,24	0,82		
<b>3. I use social media to be informed about current events.</b>	Woman	205	4,27	0,94	-2,135	<b>0,04</b>
	Male	173	4,45	0,69		
<b>4. I use social media to keep in touch with groups of friends.</b>	Woman	205	4,34	1,00	-0,993	<b>0,00</b>
	Male	173	4,42	0,64		
<b>5. I use social media to participate in social projects.</b>	Woman	205	4,07	1,04	-1,900	0,46
	Male	173	4,53	3,13		

<b>6. I use social media to see my friends' posts and share content.</b>	Woman	205	4,07	0,88	-2,355	0,09
	Male	173	4,28	0,84		
<b>7. I use social media to escape from the real world.</b>	Woman	205	4,00	1,09	-1,516	0,37
	Male	173	4,16	0,90		
<b>8. Spending time on social media relaxes me when I am unhappy.</b>	Woman	205	4,16	0,97	-0,512	0,25
	Male	173	4,21	0,83		
<b>9. I feel free while using social media.</b>	Woman	205	4,06	1,10		
	Male	173	4,12	0,77	-0,590	<b>0,00</b>
<b>10. I prefer the friendships I make on social media to real life friendships.</b>	Woman	205	3,96	1,22	-1,556	0,93
	Male	173	4,35	3,23		
<b>11. I express myself better to people I meet on social media.</b>	Woman	205	3,86	1,13		
	Male	173	4,10	0,85	-2,373	<b>0,00</b>
<b>12. I prefer to be on social media even when there are people around me.</b>	Woman	205	3,96	1,06		
	Male	173	4,14	0,88	-1,273	0,09

"I use social media to be informed about current events" ( $t=-0,661$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), "I use social media to keep in touch with groups of friends" ( $t=-0,661$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), "I feel free while using social media" ( $t=-0,661$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), "I express myself better to people I meet on social media" ( $t=-0,661$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), the answers given by men are significantly higher than the answers given by women. Thus, it is seen that men mostly use social media to be informed about current events and to keep in touch with friend groups compared to women. In addition, it was concluded that male participants feel free while using social media and express themselves better to people they meet on social media compared to female participants.

**Table 7.** Data on Time Spent on Social Media

Time spent on social media	Levels of participation					$\bar{x}$ (mean)	SS
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	I agree	Absolutely agree		
<b>1. Being disturbed by someone while using social media makes me angry.</b>	%2,9	%5,8	%6,3	%48,9	%36,0	4,09	0,95
<b>2. I spend more time on social media than I planned.</b>	%2,6	%5,8	%7,9	%51,1	%32,5	4,05	0,93
<b>3. I disrupt some of my work because I spend a lot of time on social media.</b>	%4,5	%4,8	%7,4	%52,9	%30,4	4,00	0,98
<b>4. I think that my productivity decreases because I spend a lot of time on social media.</b>	%3,7	%5,8	%10,6	%47,6	%32,3	3,98	0,99

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<b>5. Because I spend a lot of time on social media, I often neglect my family members.</b>	%5,4	%10,6	%10,1	%43,4	%31,5	3,86	1,10
<b>6. I am criticised by the people around me for spending too much time on social media.</b>	%8,7	%8,7	%14,3	%42,6	%25,7	3,67	1,19

When the descriptive data related to the time spent on social media are analysed, the participants mostly stated that being disturbed by someone while using social media is annoying ( $\bar{x}=4,09$ ,  $ss=0,95$ ), more time is spent on social media than planned ( $\bar{x}=4,05$ ,  $ss=0,93$ ), some transactions are disrupted due to spending too much time on social media ( $\bar{x}=4,00$ ,  $ss=0,98$ ), decreased productivity due to spending too much time on social media ( $\bar{x}=3,98$ ,  $ss=0,99$ ), neglected family members due to spending too much time on social media ( $\bar{x}=3,86$ ,  $ss=1,10$ ) and criticised by the people around ( $\bar{x}=3,67$ ,  $ss=1,19$ ).

**Table 8.** Analysis of Time Spent on Social Media by Gender (t test)

Time spent on social media	Gender	Number (n)	$\bar{x}$ (mean)	SS	t	p
<b>1. Being disturbed by someone while using social media makes me angry.</b>	Woman	205	4,00	1,00	-2,072	0,80
	Male	173	4,20	0,88		
<b>2. I spend more time on social media than I planned.</b>	Woman	205	3,93	1,02	-2,730	0,07
	Male	173	4,19	0,80		
<b>3. I disrupt some of my work because I spend a lot of time on social media.</b>	Woman	205	3,91	1,08	-1,800	<b>0,00</b>
	Male	173	4,09	0,84		
<b>4. I think that my productivity decreases because I spend a lot of time on social media.</b>	Woman	205	3,85	1,04	-2,813	0,21
	Male	173	4,14	0,92		
<b>5. Because I spend a lot of time on social media, I often neglect my family members.</b>	Woman	205	3,69	1,12	-3,398	<b>0,02</b>
	Male	173	4,07	1,05		
<b>6. I am criticised by the people around me for spending too much time on social media.</b>	Woman	205	3,58	1,20	-1,628	0,32
	Male	173	3,78	1,18		

The answers given by men to the questions "I neglect some of my work because I spend a lot of time on social media" ( $t=-1,800$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), "I neglect family members because I spend a lot of time on social media" ( $t=-3,398$ ;  $p<0,05$ ) are significantly higher than the answers given by women. Thus, it is seen that men are more likely than women to neglect some transactions and neglect their family members because they spend a lot of time on social media.

**Table 9.** Participants' Loneliness Levels

Loneliness levels	Levels of participation					$\bar{x}$ (mean)	ss
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	I agree	Absolutely agree		
<b>1. I do not have a friend with whom I can express myself correctly.</b>	%18,5	%41,0	%27,2	%9,0	%4,2	2,39	1,02
<b>2. There is no one I can turn to if I have any problems.</b>	%23,8	%52,9	%13,5	%5,8	%4,0	2,13	0,97
<b>3. I feel like an outcast.</b>	%27,2	%52,4	%10,8	%6,1	%3,4	2,06	0,96
<b>4. I am an introvert and I am unhappy because of this situation.</b>	%31,0	%50,8	%8,7	%5,6	%4,0	2,00	0,98
<b>5. I feel isolated from other people.</b>	%28,3	%51,3	%10,1	%5,3	%5,0	2,07	1,02
<b>6. There are many people around me, but I feel lonely.</b>	%23,3	%48,4	%16,9	%7,4	%4,0	2,20	1,00
<b>7. I can find friends and make new friends whenever I want.</b>	%10,8	%22,2	%41,3	%18,5	%7,1	2,88	1,05
<b>8. I am an approachable and friendly individual.</b>	%5,6	%9,0	%37,0	%34,7	%13,8	3,42	1,02

When the descriptive data regarding the loneliness levels of the participants are examined, it is seen that they mostly have friends they can express themselves ( $\bar{x}=2,39$ ,  $ss=1,02$ ), and that they have people they can apply to when they encounter any problem ( $\bar{x}=2,13$ ,  $ss=0,97$ ), were not introverted ( $\bar{x}=2,00$ ,  $ss=0,98$ ), did not feel excluded ( $\bar{x}=2,06$ ,  $ss=0,96$ ), isolated ( $\bar{x}=2,07$ ,  $ss=1,02$ ) and lonely ( $\bar{x}=2,20$ ,  $ss=1,00$ ). In addition, it was also found that they were friendly and approachable ( $\bar{x}=3,42$ ,  $ss=1,02$ ).

**Table 10.** Analysis of Participants' Loneliness Levels According to Gender (t test)

Sosyal medyada geçirilen zaman	Gender	Number (n)	$\bar{x}$ (mean)	SS	t	p
<b>1. I do not have a friend with whom I can express myself correctly.</b>	Woman	205	2,42	1,09	0,629	<b>0,02</b>
	Male	173	2,35	0,93		
<b>2. There is no one I can turn to if I have any problems.</b>	Woman	205	2,14	1,02	0,307	<b>0,04</b>
	Male	173	2,11	0,90		
<b>3. I feel like an outcast.</b>	Woman	205	2,12	0,98	1,450	0,17
	Male	173	1,98	0,94		
<b>4. I am an introvert and I am unhappy because of this situation.</b>	Woman	205	2,00	0,98	-0,065	0,79
	Male	173	2,01	0,99		
<b>5. I feel isolated from other people.</b>	Woman	205	2,15	1,05	1,605	0,13
	Male	173	1,98	0,97		
<b>6. There are many people around me, but I feel lonely.</b>	Woman	205	2,22	1,02	0,435	0,55
	Male	173	2,17	0,99		
<b>7. I can find friends and make new friends whenever I want.</b>	Woman	205	2,90	1,08	0,370	0,50
	Male	173	2,86	1,02		
<b>8. I am an approachable and friendly individual.</b>	Woman	205	3,41	1,08	-0,024	<b>0,04</b>
	Male	173	3,42	0,93		

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The answers given by men to the questions "I do not have a friend with whom I can express myself correctly" ( $t=0,629$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), "There is no one I can apply to when I face any problem" ( $t=0,307$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), I am a friendly and approachable individual ( $t=-0,024$ ;  $p<0,05$ ) are significantly higher than the answers given by women. Thus, it is seen that men have friends with whom they can express themselves more than women and that they have people they can apply to when they encounter any problem. It was also concluded that male participants were more friendly and approachable than female participants.

### **CONCLUSION**

Technological developments and changes transform and shape social life. Social media brings a new dimension especially in the field of communication. Social media, which is used intensively especially among young people, is becoming a part of their lives. Social media, which eliminates time and space limitations, provides ease of use and increases its usage day by day. Since social media platforms remain up-to-date and add new features, they keep users active and this increases the use of social media. The sample of this study, which aims to reveal the relationship between social media use and loneliness, consists of Muş Alparslan University students. 378 participants were analysed based on the findings obtained as a result of the research. Individuals participating in the field research conducted,

- a) 54.2 per cent were women and 45.8 per cent were men.
- b) 47%,9% of the participants are in the income group between 0-1250 TL. The fact that the amount of scholarship received by the students is 1250 TL supports this result.
- c) It is seen that the participants use social media for at least 1 hour and at most 20 hours on a daily basis. On average, each participant spends 4.7 hours on social media.
- d) According to the research, the most used social media platform was Whatsapp (99.2%), while the least used social media platform was LinkedIn (0.5%).
- e) Descriptive data on the purpose of social media use are as follows: It is seen that the participants mostly like to use social media and spend time on social media, check their social media accounts first thing in the morning when they wake up, use social media to be informed about current events, stay in touch with friend groups, participate in social projects, see friends' posts and share content, and escape from the real world. In addition, it was found that spending time on social media is relaxing in unhappy times, feeling free while using social media, preferring friendships established on social media to friendships in real life, expressing

themselves better to people they meet on social media, and preferring to spend time on social media even when there are people around.

f) The data on the purpose of using social media in the context of genders are as follows: It is seen that the males participating in the research mostly use social media to be informed about current events and to stay in touch with friend groups compared to females. In addition, it was concluded that male participants feel free while using social media and express themselves better to people they meet on social media compared to female participants.

g) Descriptive data on the time spent on social media are as follows: It is seen that the participants are mostly annoying to be disturbed by someone while using social media, spending more time on social media than planned, disrupting some transactions due to spending too much time on social media, decreasing productivity due to spending too much time on social media, neglecting family members due to spending too much time on social media and being criticised by individuals around them.

h) The data on the time spent on social media in the context of genders are as follows: it is seen that the men participating in the research neglect some transactions and neglect their family members because they spend more time on social media than women.

i) Descriptive data on loneliness levels are as follows: It is seen that the participants mostly have friends with whom they can express themselves, there are people they can apply to when they encounter any problem, they are not introverted, they do not feel excluded, isolated, and lonely. It is also among the results that they are friendly and approachable.

j) The data on loneliness levels in the context of genders are as follows: it is seen that the male participants in the research have friends that they can express themselves more often than the female participants and that they have people they can apply to when they encounter any problems. In addition, it was concluded that male participants were more approachable and friendly than female participants.

In 2021, Polat (2021) wanted to determine the levels of loneliness and addiction with social media use. A negative relationship was found between loneliness and social media use. This study also supports the results of our study. As a result, it was concluded that the participants liked to spend time on social media, spent more time than planned, and there was no relationship between social media use and loneliness.

Based on the results obtained in the study, the following suggestions can be taken into consideration in order to guide future studies.

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- Addiction levels of social media use can be investigated.
- The effects of the relationship between social media use and loneliness on high school students can be examined.
- The results can be supported by qualitative studies on loneliness and social media use.

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