



ISSN 1304-8120 | e-ISSN 2149-2786

Araştırma Makalesi * Research Article

Social Media Addiction: A Study on Health Services Vocational School Students

Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı: Sağlık Hizmetleri Meslek Yüksekokulu Öğrencileri Üzerine Bir Araştırma

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Abstract: The increasing use of social media in the 21st century, has become worrisome problem. This research aimed to examine the social media addiction levels of Health Services Vocational School students. The research is a cross-sectional study and its sample consists of 506 associate degree students. Data were collected using the Personal Information Form and Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form. 72.1% (n=365) of the students were female, 68.4% (n=346) were between the ages of 18-20, 50.2% (n=254) connect to the internet via mobile phones, 79.4% (n=402) access social media sites more than once a day, and 58.3% (n=295) social media networks reduce their feelings of loneliness. It was identified that there was a statistically significant difference between students' family relationship, presence of close friend, daily phone usage hours, frequency of checking the phone, situations of enjoying life, time spent on the internet and social media sites and their social media addiction levels ($p<.05$). In study was students' social media addiction levels were moderate. In addition, the boost in the time spent a lot of on the internet and social media sites, the high daily phone usage hours, and the frequency of checking the phone increases the addiction levels of the students.

Keywords: Addiction, technology addiction, social media, social media addiction.

Öz: 21. yüzyılda sosyal medya kullanımının giderek artması endişe verici bir problem haline gelmiştir. Bu araştırma sağlık hizmetleri MYO öğrencilerinin sosyal medya bağımlılık düzeylerini incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Araştırma kesitsel bir araştırma olup örneklemini 506 ön lisans öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Veriler Kişisel Bilgi Formu ve Sosyal Medya Bağımlılık Ölçeği-Yetişkin Formu (SMBÖ-YF) kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Sosyodemografik verilere göre öğrencilerin %72.1'i (n=365) kadın, %68,4'ü (n=346) 18-20 yaş aralığında, %50.2'sinin (n=254) mobil telefondan internete bağlandığı, %79.4'ünün (n=402) günde bir defadan fazla sosyal medya sitesine girdiği ve %58.3'ünün (n=295) sosyal medya ağlarının yalnızlık duygularını azalttığı görülmektedir. Öğrencilerin; aile ilişkisi, yakın arkadaş varlığı, günlük telefon kullanma saatleri, telefonu kontrol etme sıklığı, internet ve sosyal medya sitelerinde harcadıkları zaman ve yaşamdan zevk alma durumları ile sosyal medya bağımlılık düzeyleri arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olduğu bulunmuştur ($p<.05$). Araştırma da öğrencilerin sosyal medya bağımlılık düzeylerinin orta düzeyde olduğu saptanmıştır. Ayrıca günlük telefon kullanma saatlerinin ve kontrol etme sıklığının fazla olmasına, internet ve sosyal medya

Geliş Tarihi:06.03.2024

Kabul Tarihi:22.04.2026

Yayın Tarihi:30.04.2026

Atıf: Öner, K.& Özkan, B. (2026). Social Media Addiction: A Study on Health Services Vocational School Students. Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 23(1), 47-56. Doi: 10.33437/ksusbd.1447611

sitelerinde harcanan zamanın artmasına bağlı olarak öğrencilerin bağımlılık düzeylerinin artırdığı belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bağımlılık, teknoloji bağımlılığı, sosyal medya, sosyal medya bağımlılığı.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century, which we call the digital age, undoubtedly makes people's lives easier in many ways. Digital technology platforms have made life easier and faster by enabling communication, accessing and sharing information. Social media, a communication platform, is defined as "internet-based, uneducated and permanent mass personal communication channels that facilitate the perception of interactions between users and derive value from the created content". If necessary precautions can be taken, it is possible to build a much better world with technology, "as long as humanity does not make itself the object of the machine, but remains its subject" (Carr & Hayes 2015; Güngör 2018; Ektiricioğlu, Arslantaş & Yüksel 2020). The development of technology and its easy accessibility allow social media to become more widespread (Güleryüz et al. 2020).

Today, developments in internet technologies have brought social media to a strong position. There are multiple social media networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and Google+. In social media, individuals feel freer and create a world of their own where they can shape their relationships as they wish. But the social network, in which we create a world of our own, also brings with it important problems. One of them is social media addiction (Doğan 2021). Individuals use social media tools in most of their free time in their daily lives. This situation can turn into social media addiction over time (Güleryüz et al. 2020).

According to internet usage data that may cause addiction; the rate of internet usage in our country in 2022 was 85% for individuals aged 16-74, 82.6% in 2021 and 79% in 2020 (Turkish Statistical Institute [TUIK], 2023). Social media users have grown faster than internet users in the last decade. Today, there are approximately 4.623 billion social media users. Among the most preferred social media platforms in the world, Facebook ranks first, followed by YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram (Digital 2022 Global Overview Report-January 2022). The most used social media applications by individuals in our country are WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram respectively (TUIK, 2023). According to studies conducted in Türkiye, Instagram is stated as the most frequently used, followed and news source social media (Çömlekçi & Başol 2019; Becan 2018; Hamurcu 2023). Looking at the numerical data, it is seen that the results can reach serious addictive dimensions.

Addiction is at a serious worrisome level mostly in young people (Andreassen 2015). While the unconscious and uncontrolled use of social media affects individuals negatively, the temporary relief of use, their ability to communicate regardless of their location, and the feeling of happiness may cause users to feel the need to take an active role in social media (Atlı et al. 2021; Kırık et al. 2015). Social media among young people is mostly used to spend free time, get to know people, exchange ideas, have fun, reach other people, individual communication, share information and message. Virtual gifts, messages and games seem to put an end to face-to-face communication. Young individuals, in particular, exhibit a notable inclination towards engagement with social media platforms. This increasing interest has made social media addiction a serious problem both in our country and in the world. Social media addiction has also been associated with deteriorated health and welfare level in studies (Bányai et al. 2017, Çömlekçi & Başol 2019; Kırık et al. 2015; Andreassen 2015). Although there are studies on young people, it is noteworthy that there are limited studies about students studying in health departments.

The importance of this study is that it was conducted to understand the effect of social media use on addiction levels in the young student group. This research can provide a basis for understanding the effects of social media usage habits on students' social and spiritual lives and for the development of education and awareness programs to prevent social media addiction. For this reason, the research was conducted to examine the social media addiction levels of students studying at a vocational school of health services.

Research Questions

1. What is the social media addiction mean score of the students?
2. Is there a significant difference between the sociodemographic characteristics of the study and excessive social media addiction

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study aims to examine the demographic characteristics and levels of social media addiction among university students enrolled in the Health Services Vocational School through a descriptive cross-sectional design.

Population

The population of the study consists of 550 students enrolled in the Home Health Care, Child Development, and First Aid and Emergency Assistance programs at Eldivan Health Vocational School (ESHMYO) of XXXXXXXX University. The sample of the research is comprised of 506 voluntary students, and an attempt has been made to reach the entire population. The study utilized the Personal Information Form and the Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form (SMAS-AF). The scales were administered to the students in face-to-face interviews

Measurements

Personal Information Form: There are 23 questions in this form that determine students' gender, age, family-mother-father-sibling relationship, parental attitudes, family income level, friend status, internet and telephone use, social media sites, academic success, and the presence of self-harming thoughts.

Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form (SMAS-AF): The validity and reliability study was conducted by Şahin and Yağcı in 2017. The aim of the scale is to assess the social media addiction levels of individuals between the ages of 18-65 and consists of 5-point Likert-style questions. The scale consists of two sub-dimensions and 20 descriptions. Items 5 and 11 in the scale are reverse scored. The factor loadings of the scale ranged from .61 to .87. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency, virtual tolerance and virtual communication coefficients were determined as .94, .92 and .91, respectively. The highest 100 and the lowest 20 points are taken from the scale. With a high score, it is considered to be "social media addict". The Cronbach alpha value of this study was 0.825.

Analysis of Data

The data was analyzed using SPSS 23. Mean, standard deviation, percentage and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical techniques were utilized in the research. The data are normally distributed and the kurtosis and skewness values were found to be between -1.5 and +1.5 (Tabacnich & Fidell 2013).

Limitations of the Research

The limitations of the study are that the sample of the study includes the students studying at xxxxxxxx University and the measurement tools used in the study. For this reason, it is thought that it would be useful to consider the research with other study groups.

Ethical Aspect of Research

The research was examined by the Ethics Committee for Scientific Research and Publication of XXXXX University and it was stated that it was ethically appropriate with the committee's meeting decision dated 30.04.2019 and numbered 128. institutional permission was also obtained on the same dates.

Procedure

The participants filled out the data collection tools after giving approval to be part of the study. The research was started after approval from the Ethics Committee of xxxxxx University and lasted approximately 25 minutes.

RESULTS

A total of 506 associate degree Health Services Vocational School students participated in the research. 72.1% (n=365) of the students are female and 68.4% (n=346) of the students are between the ages of 18-20. 80.4% (n=407) of the students have good family relations, 62.3% (n=315) have protective family attitudes, 52% (n=263) have protective father attitudes, 49.8% (n=252) the education level of the mother is literate or primary school graduate, and father's education level is 34.2% (n=173) literate or primary school graduate. 89.3% (n=452) of the students have medium family income, 95.3% (n=482) have a close friend, 78.7% (n=398) have a boyfriend or girlfriend, 38.1% (n=193) of them were studying First and Emergency Aid program and 50.4% (n=255) have poor academic achievement. It was that the students' Social Media Addiction Scale mean score was 52.8 ± 24.49 and a moderate level of addiction. Table 1 below includes the characteristics of variables related to social media.

Table 1. *Distribution of students' variables related to social media (n=506)*

Variables	n	%
Internet access features		
Home	71	14
Internet cafe	2	0.4
School	1	0.2
Mobile phone	254	50.2
Home-phone	59	11.7
Home-school-phone	38	7.5
School-phone	3	0.6
All	78	15.4
Average hours of computer use per day		
0-5 h	490	96.8
6-10 h	12	2.4
11 or more h	4	0.8
Average hours of phone use per day		
0-5 h	257	50.8
6-10 h	188	37.1
11-15 h	26	5.2
16-20 h	16	3.2
21-25 h	18	3.6
26 hours or more	1	0.2
Frequency of checking the phone (minutes)		
5-10 m	184	36.4
11-30 m	149	29.4
31-60 m	115	22.7

61-120 m	38	7.5
121 minute and over	20	4.0
Duration of using social media sites (years)		
Less than 1 y	36	7.1
1-3 y	122	24.1
4-6 y	191	37.7
More than 6 y	157	31.0
Frequency of use of social media sites		
Once a day	70	13.8
More than once a day	402	79.4
Several times a week	34	6.7
Time you spend on social media sites		
5-10 m	91	18
11-30 m	158	31.2
31-60 m	140	27.7
61-120 m	61	12.1
121 minute and over	56	11.1
Time you spend on the Internet (minutes)		
5-10 m	35	6.9
11-30 m	93	18.4
31-60 m	176	34.8

According to table 1, it is determined that 50.2% (n=254) of the students mostly connect to the internet via mobile phones, 96.8% (n=490) have daily average computer use between 0-5 hours, 50.8% (n=257) have daily average phone use between 0-5 hours, 36.4% (n=184) check their phone every 5-10 minutes a day, 37.7% (n=191) of the students have used social media sites actively for 4-6 years, 79.4% (n =402) enter the social media sites more than once a day, 31.2% (n=158) of time devoted to social networking platforms is between 11-30 minutes and 34.8% (n=176) of the time spent on the internet is between 31-60 minutes. Table 2 below includes distribution of the variables related to the mental status of the students.

Table 2. *Distribution of students' variables related to social media (n=506)*

Variables	n	%
Presence of thoughts of self-harm in the recent year		
Yes	53	10.5
No	453	89.5
Responses about harming yourself		
I did no harm, it remained in thought	489	96.6
Psychological	6	1.2
Physical	10	1.8

Responses to the impact of social media networks		
Reduces my sense of loneliness	295	58.3
Increases my sense of loneliness	211	41.7
The state of enjoying life		
Yes, I'm getting	370	73.1
No, I'm not getting	132	26.1
Partially	4	0.8

According to table 2, it is determined that 89.5% (n=453) of the students had no thoughts of harming themselves in the recent one year, 96.6% (n=489) only thought of harming themselves, 1.2% (n=6) psychologically harmed themselves and 1.8% of them (n=10) harmed themselves by Physical (drug, razor and wrist cutting) ways. While 58.3% (n=295) of the students stated that social media networks reduced their feelings of loneliness, 73.1% (n=370) stated that they enjoyed life. Table 3 below includes comparison of social media scale mean scores according to some variables of students.

Table 3. Comparison of social media scale mean scores according to some variables of students (n=506)

Variables		n	X	ANOVA		
				df	F	P
Family relationship	Bad	2	2.03	2	6.566	.002
	Moderate	97	2.82			
	Good	407	2.60			
Presence of close friend		Yes	482	1	4.282	.039
		No	24			
Average phone usage hours per day	0-5 h	257	2.00	21	2.667	.000
	6-10 h	188	2.77			
	11-15 h	26	2.38			
	16-20 h	16	3.13			
	21-25 h	18	2.61			
	26 hours and over	1	2.12			
Average daily phone check frequency(minutes)	5-10 m	184	2.79	4	9.085	.000
	11-30 m	149	2.69			
	31-60 m	115	2.49			
	61-120 m	38	2.34			
	121 minute and over	20	2.35			
Frequency of using social media sites	Once a day	70	2.47	3	2.900	.035
	More than once a day	402	2.68			
	Several times a week	34	2.54			
Time spent daily on social media sites (minutes)	5-10 m	91	2.42	4	6.295	.000
	11-30 m	158	2.62			
	31-60 m	140	2.66			

	61-120 m	61	2.75			
	121 minute and over	56	2.89			
Time spent daily on the Internet (minutes)	5-10 m	35	2.31	4	10.238	.000
	11-30 m	93	2.54			
	31-60 m	176	2.60			
	61-120 m	103	2.64			
	121 minute and over	99	2.94			
The state of enjoying life	Yes	370	2.58	3	5.542	.001
	No	132	2.81			
	Partially	4	2.85			

According to table 3, whether the mean scores of the social media addiction scale of the students differed significantly according to the above variables was examined with a single variance ANOVA. It was noticed that there is a significant difference between students' family relationship and social media addiction levels ($F:6.566=.002$, $p<.05$). In addition, it was concluded that the average of social media addiction of those with moderate family relationships is higher than the others. It was found that there is a significant difference between the presence of a close friend and social media addiction levels ($F:4.282=.039$, $p<.05$) and between daily phone usage hours and social media addiction levels ($F:2.667=.000$, $p<.05$). In addition, the average of social media addiction of those who use the phone for an average of 16-20 hours a day was found to be higher than the others. It was observed that there is a significant difference between the frequency of checking the daily phone and social media sites and the social media addiction levels ($F:9.085=.000$, $p<.05$; $F:2.900=.035$, $p<.05$). It was observed that there is a notable divergence between the time spent on social media sites and the internet and the social media addiction levels ($F:6.295=.000$, $p<0.05$; $F:10.238=.000$, $p<.05$). It was observed that there is a notable divergence between enjoying life and social media addiction levels ($F:5.542=.001$, $p<.05$).

DISCUSSION

In the study, Social Media Addiction Scale mean score was 52.8 ± 24.49 and a moderate level of addiction. Research findings show that those who check daily social media sites more than once a day have higher social media addiction levels. In addition, levels of social media addiction were found to be higher in those who check the phone every 5-10 minutes a day. Research findings that can compare the results obtained in the literature could not be reached. Therefore, an indirect discussion was made with similar research findings. In Baz (2018) research, 41% of students stated that they use social media first thing in the morning. Other studies have also found that students' social network addiction and the frequency of their daily use of social networks are effective (Aslantaş & Çağlayan 2023; Chae, Kim & Kim 2018). Accordingly, it can be said that frequent checking of media tools can be associated with the level of addiction.

The average social media addiction level of students who spend 121 minutes or more a day on social media sites was found to be higher. In addition, the fact that the item 'I spend time on social media longer than I planned' of the social media addiction questionnaire (3.24 ± 1.91) has a higher mean score than the other scale items support the finding. In the literature, it is possible to encounter similar research findings that overlap with our study finding. They found that students spend 1 to 15 hours a day on social media, and they also spend an average of 4 hours and 16 minutes on social media a day. As the time spent on these platforms increases, the level of social media addiction increases and even the use of social media to make use of leisure time has been found to be associated with addiction (Çömlekçi & Başol 2019). Zhu et al. (2021) study, 74.5% of nursing students stated that they spend 2-6 hours a day on social media and they use social media intensively. In existing studies in the literature, it has been observed that there is a positive relationship between the duration of daily social media use of the participants and social media addiction, and the level of addiction increases as the time they spend

on social media increases (Bhandarkar et al. 2021; Bölüktaş 2022; Bilgin 2018; Aktan 2018; Doğan 2021; Atlı et al. 2021; Topbaş & Karakaya 2021; Zıvdır & Karakul 2023). In addition, in the study of Fidan and Kuzhan (2022), it is seen that 78.2% of the students who participated in the research answered "I agree" to the statement "I usually use social media applications". This shows us that the majority of students use social media applications. Considering all these, it can be said that with the increase of time spent on social media sites, behavioural-based technological addictions in individuals will increase.

The average of social media addiction of students who spend 121 minutes or more on the internet a day was found to be higher than the others. In the literature, it is possible to encounter similar research findings that overlap with our study finding. In the study of Çiftçi (2018), it was seen that 36% of the participants use the internet between 3-5 hours a day and 36% use the internet for 5 hours or more per day and when their spending time on the internet is evaluated, their social media addiction levels increase. Deniz and Gürültü (2018) determined that there are significant differences between high school students' average daily internet use time and their social media addictions, and that their addiction levels increase as the time spent on the internet increases. In a similar study, when Aktan (2018) found that students could not understand how time passes when using social media ($X=3.36$). According to these data, it can be said that an increase in the time spent on the internet is directly associated with an increase in the time spent on social media sites.

The social media addiction levels of those who gave the answers 'partially' and 'no' to the students' enjoyment of life were found to be similar and high. Research findings that can compare the results obtained in the literature could not be reached. Therefore, it is discussed indirectly with similar research findings. Arıbaş and Özşahin (2022) stated that individuals who spend more time on social media begin to enjoy solitude after a while. It found a negative and weak relationship between adolescents' well-being and digital technology use (Orben & Przybylski 2019). Twenge et al. (2018) found that adolescents who spend less time in electronic communication are happier than others. Çiftçi (2018) determined that students who use the internet for more than 5 hours a day show asocial tendencies. Accordingly, it can be interpreted that individuals' life satisfaction and allocating more time for social media platforms are negatively related.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As a result, this study was revealed that university students have moderate social media addiction levels. In addition, it was detected that students' social media addiction levels increase because the reason of their family relationship, having a close friend, the frequency of using the phone, the frequency of checking their phone, the frequency of checking social media sites, the status of enjoying life and the duration of time spent on social media sites and the Internet. It can be suggested to raise awareness of university students regarding the utilization of social media, to conduct activities that include seminars, training and preventive guidance services, and to develop social media awareness in order to minimize its negative effects. In this regard, educators, guidance and psychological counsellors, social workers, health professionals and similar institutions and professions such as the media have important responsibilities.

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