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Social Media and Fear of Crime: Development of a New Scale to Measure Perceptions

Sosyal Medya ve Suç Korkusu: Algıları Ölçmek İçin Yeni Bir Ölçek Geliştirilmesi

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Abstract

This study aims to develop a scale to understand the effects of content on social media platforms on individuals' fear of crime. Several scales have already been developed to measure fear of crime. These scales assess individuals' fears of becoming victims of crime in their daily lives, focusing on concerns related to victimization in their homes, workplaces, and social environments. This study seeks to measure individuals' fear of crime specifically arising from content on social media platforms. In this context, the scale was inspired by Ferraro's (1995) scale and adapted to evaluate social media platforms. Initially, the scale consisted of 10 items, but after various analyses, one item was removed, reducing the scale to 9 items. Following Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), a unidimensional structure was adopted based on SPSS recommendations. An online survey was conducted with 423 participants over three months. As the dataset exhibited normal distribution, *t*-tests and ANOVA analyses were performed to test the null hypotheses. The results of the study largely align with findings in literature. For instance, women and older individuals reported higher levels of fear of crime compared to men and younger individuals. In conclusion, the scale, named the Social Media and Fear of Crime Scale, was found to be applicable. Thus, the study is expected to contribute to addressing a significant gap in the literature by directly measuring the impact of social media platforms and content on fear of crime.

Keywords: Crime, Fear of Crime, Fear of Crime Scale, Indirect Victimization, Social Media

Öz

Bu çalışma, sosyal medya platformlarındaki içeriklerin bireylerin suç korkusu üzerindeki etkilerini anlamak amacıyla bir ölçek geliştirmeyi hedeflemektedir. Suç korkusunu ölçmek üzere daha önce geliştirilmiş birden fazla ölçek bulunmaktadır ve bu ölçekler bireylerin günlük yaşamlarında karşılaşılabilecekleri suç mağduru olma korkularını değerlendirmektedir. Bu çalışmada ise bireylerin suç korkularını doğrudan sosyal medya platformlarından kaynaklanan içerikler üzerinden ölçmek amaçlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda, Ferraro'nun (1995) geliştirdiği ölçekten esinlenilerek sosyal medya

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bağlamına uyarlanan yeni bir ölçek hazırlanmıştır. Ölçek başlangıçta 10 maddeden oluşmuş, ancak yapılan analizler sonucunda bir madde çıkarılarak 9 maddeye indirgenmiştir. Keşfedici Faktör Analizi sonucunda SPSS önerileri doğrultusunda ölçeğin tek boyutlu yapıda çalıştığı görülmüştür. Araştırma kapsamında toplam 423 katılımcıya çevrimiçi ortamda üç ay boyunca anket uygulanmış, elde edilen verinin normal dağılım göstermesi üzerine t-testi ve ANOVA analizleri gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bulgular, büyük ölçüde literatürdeki sonuçlarla örtüşmektedir. Örneğin, kadınlar ve yaşlı bireylerin suç korkusu düzeyleri, erkek ve genç katılımcılara kıyasla daha yüksek bulunmuştur. Sonuç olarak, "Sosyal Medya ve Suç Korkusu Ölçeği" adı verilen bu ölçeğin geçerli ve uygulanabilir olduğu görülmüş ve böylece literatürde sosyal medya platformları ve içeriklerinin suç korkusunu ölçmeye yönelik doğrudan bir ölçeğin eksikliğine katkı sağlanacağı düşünülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Suç, Suç Korkusu, Suç Korkusu Ölçeği, Dolaylı Mağduriyet, Sosyal Medya

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of social media in the recent past has widened the scope of conversation on fear of crimes. Unlike traditional media where information could possibly be disseminated rather slowly, social media is characterized by raw information that flows continuously. Such characteristics can increase an individual's fear of being victimized by means of either specialized or cut down visuals. (Yegen, 2018). Especially the chilling of a local occurrence to a global one, proves how much these platforms single handedly alter the concept of safety, and resentment towards crimes. This thing sheds light towards the establishment of scales that specifically target the perceived threat to security and victimization.

The objective of this research is to make a noteworthy contribution to the lack of literature by creating Social Media and Fear of Crime Scale (SMFCS) which assesses the impact of social media in fears regarding crime. There are pre-existing instruments of measuring risks like that of Ferraro, from 1995 who has defined and evaluated fear of crime in social contexts. Nonetheless, instruments that specifically assess the risk factors posed by social media are few. This study makes a technological contribution by adopting the underlying idea of Ferraro into a digital setting and offers a fresh tool for comprehending the intersection of social engagement with crime. The central argument of this research is that social media is not merely a tool for information dissemination but also a significant driver of emotional and cognitive responses related to crime. Through an exploratory factor analysis conducted with a comprehensive sample of 423 participants, the reliability and validity of the newly developed scale have been demonstrated. Moreover, analyses examining demographic differences, such as gender, age, and marital status, provide detailed insights into how social media content interacts with individual vulnerabilities to shape fear of crime.

Within this framework, the primary research question of the study is:

- How does social media contents shape individuals' fear of crime, and how does this fear vary across different demographic groups?

In addition to the main research question, the study seeks to address the following sub-questions:

- How do crime-related visuals and news disseminate on social media influence individuals' perception of fear of crime?
- How does the fear of crime stemming from social media differ based on demographic factors such as gender, age, and marital status?
- What role does the indirect victimization effect created by social media content play in the spread of fear of crime?

The study begins by reviewing the theoretical foundations of fear of crime and the influence of media. It then presents a detailed methodology outlining the scale development process. The findings section includes fundamental statistical analyses, while the discussion section evaluates these results within the context of the existing literature. Finally, the conclusion provides policy and practice recommendations for managing the societal impact of social media on perceptions of security.

1. Fear of Crime and the Impact of Media

Studies on fear of crime began in the 1960s with the aim of reducing crime rates and understanding its causes (Skogan, 1978). Initially it was started by government institutions, these studies quickly gained prominence in academia, becoming popular in the fields of criminology, sociology, psychology, and law (Furstenberg, 2000). Identifying individuals' fear of crime levels and understanding which types of crimes they fear being victimized by have been utilized as significant tools for reducing crime rates.

As fear of crime is a complex phenomenon (Solak, 2015, p. 17), it is challenging to reach a consensus on a single definition. One widely accepted definition in the literature is as follows: "an individual's negative emotional response to crime or symbols associated with crime" (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987, p.72). In other words, people may experience negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, anger, or worry when confronted with criminal incidents or situations with potential for crime. These emotional responses can be triggered when individuals perceive themselves to be in danger.

Fear of crime among individuals is not solely linked to direct experiences with crime but can also develop in response to symbols associated with crime (e.g., a dark alley, an abandoned building, specific neighborhoods). These negative emotional responses are influenced by personal and social factors, such as individuals past experiences, exposure to media content, or their immediate environment.

Studies on fear of crime often focus on specific groups, employing various measurements conducted through scientific methods, primarily via surveys. These studies statistically analyze individuals' fear of crime scores and identify which groups within society experience higher levels of fear. Beyond statistical approaches, qualitative research also aims to uncover the social reasons underlying these fears.

In the literature, groups considered physically and emotionally disadvantaged in defending themselves are examined under the "vulnerability model." These groups are categorized as women, the elderly, subcultural groups, the homeless, and individuals with disabilities (Killias, 1990; Pain, 2000; Warr, 2000). General findings indicate that these groups tend to experience greater fear of crime. For example, there is consistent evidence that women exhibit higher fear of crime scores compared to men. Similarly, numerous studies have shown that elderly individuals have a greater fear of victimization than younger people (Chiricos, Hogan, & Gertz, 1997; Kul, 2012; Otis, 2007; Doran and Burgess, 2012).

The theory that explains the widespread prevalence of fear of crime in society is the indirect victimization model. There is a consensus that indirect victimization plays a pivotal role in the societal dissemination of fear of crime (Box, Hale, & Andrews, 1988; Hale, 1996; Katz, Webb, & Armstrong, 2006; Näsi, Tanskanen, Kivivuori, Haara, & Reunanen, 2021: 20; Callanan, 2012). According to the indirect victimization model, individuals can empathize with victims they learn about through various sources and subsequently develop a fear of crime. Traditional and social media play a significant role in this process. News about victimization is rapidly disseminated through the media, leaving an impact on society. For instance, an increase in reports of car thefts in a neighborhood may instill fear in residents about the possibility of their cars being stolen. Media

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content can influence not only local areas but also broader regions, thereby heightening fear of crime scores.

News and content featured in traditional and social media can permeate individuals' fear of crime. Compared to social media, traditional media often imposes restrictions or censors its content. News is subjected to various editorial controls before being broadcast, including the removal of certain images and the shortening of the broadcast duration when necessary (Courtauld, 2014). In other words, traditional media employs a gatekeeping mechanism.

Social media, however, has no such control mechanisms. Its content is thus typically uncensored, likely to be distressing, and posted without confirmation of its legitimacy. This unbridled conveyance of information facilitates news to spread rapidly in society and hence highlights social media's pivotal role in the dissemination of fear of crime on a large scale (Yegen, 2018).

Whereas traditional media have long been known as a strong factor in crime perception, the emergence of social media brings new dimensions to the dynamic. Besides accelerating the dissemination of crime news, social media platforms also alter how individuals process and emotionally interact with crime news. To better identify these effects, researchers can combine theoretical frameworks from media studies with criminological knowledge of fear of crime. Particularly, cultivation, media framing theory and frame analysis offer useful measures through which to understand the influence of online material on attitudes related to fear.

One of the most important media theories in this context is cultivation theory, as it was developed by Gerbner and Gross (1976). It would contend that repeated, ongoing exposure to media content, especially violent or threatening content, would lead people to embrace a distorted view of reality and perceive the world as more dangerous than it really is. The phenomenon is one of felt risk of victimization that is increasingly less a function of individual experience but rather of cumulative exposure to the media (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 175–176).

With respect to this study, cultivation theory is particularly relevant to the extent of how crime content on social media can increase people's subjective vulnerability. Participants who are consistently exposed to theft, assault, or murder postings even in the absence of personal experience can internalize a heightened state of fear. These are especially the vulnerable groups such as women and the elderly, who, in our study, demonstrate higher scores in fear.

Another significant perspective is media framing theory, articulated by Entman (1993), which examines how media construct meaning through selective presentation. Framing refers to the process of emphasizing certain aspects of an issue while omitting others, thereby influencing how audiences interpret events. In the context of crime, media frames often highlight emotional and sensational elements—such as violent images or urgent headlines—that may increase fear and anxiety (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

The other aspect is presented by Goffman as a frame analysis. Erving Goffman's (1974) frame analysis argues that individuals rely on certain mental schemata, or frames, to interpret their everyday experiences. These frames provide a structure for understanding events, guiding which aspects are emphasized and which are downplayed. As a result, the same incident can acquire different meanings in society depending on the frame through which it is presented.

Goffman's framing approach has become a significant theoretical tool for examining media content. This is because media not only reports on crime-related events but also frames them in particular ways that shape public perceptions (Şan and Altun, 2023). As in television or newspapers, crime-related content on social media is often presented through dramatic visuals, sensational headlines, or emotionally charged expressions. Such framing does not merely raise awareness; it also reinforces fear, anxiety, and perceptions of threat, thereby producing strong emotional responses.

The *Social Media and Fear of Crime Scale* developed in this study also aims to capture how crime-related content framed on social media shapes individuals' fear levels. In particular, the lack of editorial oversight on social media exposes users to uncensored and often unverified content. Goffman's frame analysis is thus useful for explaining the interpretative processes through which individuals make sense of these contents and how such framing intensifies fear of crime. In this way, the theoretical foundations of the scale are supported by the framing perspective within media studies.

1.1. Overview of Social Media Usage in Türkiye

This chapter provides general statistics to understand social media usage in Türkiye. According to data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), internet usage in Türkiye reached 88.8% as of 2024. A gender-based analysis shows that 92.2% of men and 85.4% of women actively use the internet (TUIK, 2024).

As of 2024, the number of social media users in Türkiye has reached 57.50 million, with an average daily usage time of 2 hours and 44 minutes (We Are Social, 2024). When examining social media usage by gender and age groups, it is evident that men prefer social media more than women. The age group with the highest social media usage is 25-34 years old, followed by 18-24, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and those aged 65 and above (We Are Social, 2024). In other words, there is a negative correlation between age and social media usage, as age increases, social media usage decreases.

According to the "We Are Social 2024" Turkey report, the most preferred social media platforms in the country are YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and X (Twitter) (We Are Social, 2024; Anadolu Agency, 2024; Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, 2024; TUIK, 2024). These data indicate that social media is highly popular in Türkiye.

The widespread use of social media inevitably impacts individuals' fear of crime. For instance, the dissemination of news content on social media with uncensored images and videos, often without verification of accuracy, can have negative effects on individuals. Regarding fear of crime, this can accelerate the spread of indirect victimization within society. To illustrate, events such as terror attacks may lead individuals to avoid crowded areas and retreat to their homes, highlighting the tangible effects of social media on fear-related behaviors.

2. Methodology

The need for a scale to examine the effects of digital environments on individuals' vulnerability to crime has become evident. Therefore, this study aims to address a significant gap in the literature by adapting scales traditionally used in the field of fear of crime to the context of social media. In this regard, Ferraro's (1995) scale, commonly used to measure fear of crime, was adapted to reflect social media content. A 10-item scale was developed and administered to participants through a survey. EFA was conducted on the resulting dataset.

Data for the current study was obtained using both the purposive and quota sampling methods. In this process, purposive sampling ensures that information from people who use social media take into consideration. This has been a crucial aim of this research related to the fear of crime among the social media users, whose group was targeted only in order to derive insights having contextual perspective with specific orientation. According to Patton (2002), a purposive sample facilitates for the researcher the data collection from participants who are in the best place to answer the research questions. It has been the facilitative process in gathering thick and meaningful data through focusing on the target audience of study.

Besides quota sampling ensured the male respondents equaled the number of women so that their voices were equally captured regarding the issues being investigated by the research. Quota sampling is the distribution of characteristics or variables that make sure that any study has

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appropriate comparisons and, ultimately improves comparability in the results found (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Since combining these two methods also helped identify the target group better, further diversified the data obtained. The purposes of sampling by itself have permitted that the study shall focus on just that sort of people, and quota sampling will enhance this validity for this study by warranting equal representation between genders.

However, the limitations of these methods include that participants were only those who had access to the internet, which limits the generalizability of the findings. However, these limitations do align with the nature of the study in understanding a specific target group.

The Social Media and Fear of Crime Scale was developed by reaching active social media users online through the use of Google Forms. Ethical approval for the study was obtained on 4 September 2024, prior to the data collection process. Responses were collated between 15 September 2024 and 15 December 2024, with a total of 423 participants responding to the survey. Since the respondents targeted were users of social media, online tools were used in reaching them for the study. Ensuring an equal representation of male and female participants was prioritized, and both purposive and quota sampling methods were applied.

Participants were informed that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential. All responses were collected voluntarily, and participants were allowed to withdraw at any time. Data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes, in accordance with ethical and data protection standards.

Additionally, the survey was conducted using the Google Forms platform, which helped protect both the digital and physical anonymity of participants. In face-to-face studies, physical presence and direct interaction with the researcher can increase participant stress, especially in studies involving emotional or sensitive topics. Concerns about being identified or observed while answering may influence participants' responses. In contrast, responding to the questionnaire online allowed participants to remain fully anonymous and answer at their own pace, without external pressure. This setting increased the likelihood of honest, thoughtful responses and contributed to the overall quality and authenticity of the data collected.

423 participants were sampled to understand the social comparison experiences among people who use social media. In social sciences, sample size is decided not to represent the whole population but at a size which can answer the research questions and provide statistical power. As put by Cohen (1988), correlational and group comparison studies in social sciences require a sample size between 200 and 400 to increase the reliability of the analyses and to find meaningful differences. Besides that, this kind of sample size is considered appropriate when the research does not need to represent a population, but rather the phenomenon itself being studied (Bryman, 2016). Thus, 423 respondents will be an adequate sample size in realizing the objectives of the study.

In this study, the population of 57 million social media users was considered, and an appropriate sample size was determined based on a specific confidence level. Statistically, at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, the minimum required sample size from such a population is 385 individuals (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). This study has a sample size of 423 participants, thus not only meeting but also surpassing this threshold; therefore, it is a sound basis for the study in terms of statistical power and reliability. A sample size larger than 385 enhances the confidence interval and generalizability of data.

Following the construction of the dataset, several procedures were performed for analysis. This was a new scale study, and therefore, it was necessary to perform a reliability analysis followed by an exploratory factor analysis and tests for normality distribution. Once the data presented normal distribution, the research went on to perform a parametric test.

2.1. Reliability Analysis

Before proceeding to parametric or non-parametric tests, it is essential to address certain critical steps, one of which is reliability analysis. Reliability analysis is crucial for evaluating a measurement tool, as it provides insights into the degree of consistency among the items included in the scale (Ünver, 2020, p. 901). In measurements, reliability is expressed through the "reliability coefficient," which is calculated based on correlation and typically ranges between 0 and +1. The closer the value is to +1, the higher the reliability.

One of the most commonly used methods to calculate the reliability coefficient is Cronbach's Alpha, which is applied through the SPSS (Can, 2020, p. 394). This coefficient helps researchers determine the internal consistency of the scale, ensuring that the items reliably measure the intended construct.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	n
0,95	0,951	9

To examine the impact of social media content on individuals' fear of crime, an initial 10-item scale was developed. When a reliability analysis was conducted for the scale, including all 10 items, the Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be 0.939, indicating a very high level of internal consistency. However, it was observed that removing the item "When I see incidents of harassment/sexual assault on social media, I fear the likelihood of being sexually harassed/assaulted" would increase the Alpha value to 0.950.

Although the harassment-related item was excluded to maintain the statistical robustness and unidimensional structure of the scale, its thematic and gendered significance was not overlooked. Female respondents reported higher levels of fear in relation to this item, as shown in the gender-based crosstab analysis. However, the item demonstrated inconsistent factor loadings, which may be due to its distinct emotional and social sensitivity. It is acknowledged that fear of sexual harassment reflects a unique subset of fear of crime, often shaped by gender-specific experiences (Pain, 2000; Otis, 2007). Future research may consider developing a complementary subscale focused specifically on gendered or sexualized victimization to capture this dimension in more detail.

Additionally, while this item may have held salience for female participants, it might have been perceived as less relevant or even ambiguous by male participants. Given that the item was addressed to all participants and the gender distribution in the sample was nearly balanced, inconsistent responses from male participants may have contributed to a reduction in internal consistency. Since the present study aimed to develop a psychometrically sound scale, structural integrity and item cohesion were prioritized. In future applications of this scale, researchers may choose to retain and test this item using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in software such as AMOS. However, within the scope of this exploratory scale development study, removing the item was deemed the most appropriate methodological decision.

Despite the significance of the question, it was initially retained in the scale. However, during the factor analysis phase, this item was identified as causing inconsistency within the sub-dimensions. Consequently, it was decided to exclude the question from the scale.

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Following this adjustment, the reliability analysis was re-examined for the revised 9-item scale. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the updated scale remained very close to +1, indicating excellent reliability and confirming that the scale was robust enough to proceed to subsequent analytical stages.

2.2. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical technique that assists researchers in handling large data sets. This method assists researchers in analyzing data in a more convenient way. Factor analysis facilitates the identification of new structures between variables, and variables can be gathered under sub-dimensions and common factors can be determined (Halter, 2014; Mayers, 2013; Güçlü, 2020: 242).

To decide the suitability of the scale for factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and total variance scores were considered. The KMO test compares the correlation values obtained with partial correlation values and provides a score from 0 to 1 (Kaiser, 1970). The closer the KMO value to 1, the better suited the data set is for factor analysis.

This initial step ensures that the dataset meets the necessary criteria for conducting factor analysis and aids in determining the appropriateness of determining sub-dimensions from the scale.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,915
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4090,314
	df	45
	Sig.	,000

The initial factor analysis of the SMFCS was conducted on the 10-item scale to determine potential sub-dimensions. The KMO value was very close to +1, indicating that the data set was highly appropriate for factor analysis. The outcome confirmed the appropriateness of the data for identifying underlying structures and sub-dimensions in the scale.

<i>Component</i>	<i>Initial Eigenvalues</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of Variance</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>
1	6,667	66,674	66,674
2	1,026	10,259	76,933
3	,748	7,481	84,414

It was observed that the factor might potentially be explored on two sub-dimensions, which accounted for 76.9% of the total variance. But like the findings of the reliability analysis, the item "When I see incidents of harassment/sexual assault on social media, I fear the likelihood of being sexually harassed/assaulted" came under one dimension, whereas the remaining 9 items came under another sub-dimension.

Since this item was creating issues both in the factor and reliability analysis, it was deleted from the scale. This action ensured that the remaining items comprised a harmonious and consistent framework to examine.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett's Test - 2		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,920
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3891,115
	df	36
	Sig.	,000

When the new factor analysis was conducted using the new 9-item scale, KMO value was again very close to +1, confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Based on this finding, the dimensions were further explored to explore for the structures underlying the scale.

Table 5: Factor Analysis - 2			
Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6,480	71,999	71,999
2	,760	8,442	80,442

In this case, it was recommended that the scale be analyzed as a unidimensional structure. The revised scale accounted for 71.9% of the total variance, which is consistent with the thresholds suggested in the literature (Taherdoost, Sahibuddin, & Jalaliyoon, 2020). This result supports the scale's validity as a unidimensional tool for measuring the intended construct.

2.3. Normality

For parametric tests such as t-tests and ANOVA to be applied and to ensure the reliability of the analysis results, the assumption of normality must be met (Güçlü, 2020, p. 268). Certain metrics need to be examined to determine whether a dataset exhibits a normal distribution. Among these, the skewness and kurtosis values are critical indicators. Skewness and kurtosis values within specific ranges indicate that the dataset is normally distributed.

Although different sources suggest varying thresholds, a commonly accepted range for good normality is between ± 1.5 . Additionally, skewness and kurtosis values falling within the broader range of ± 3 are considered sufficient to indicate normal distribution (Groeneveld & Meeden, 1984; George & Mallery, 2010). By evaluating these values, researchers can confirm whether the dataset meets the normality assumption, enabling the application of parametric statistical methods.

Table 6: Factor's Skewness and Kurtosis							
	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Ss</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
SMFCS	423	1	5	2,96	1,19	,061	-.048

When the skewness and kurtosis values for the SMFCS were examined, they were found to align with the thresholds established in the literature. This indicates that the dataset exhibits a normal distribution. Consequently, it was deemed appropriate to use parametric tests for hypothesis analysis, ensuring reliable and valid results.

3. Findings

This section presents the findings of the study and the analyses of the hypotheses. Initially, the demographic characteristics of the participants in the dataset will be described. Following this, the results of the parametric tests conducted for hypothesis analysis will be shared.

3.1. Demographic Data

<i>Grup</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Female	219	%51,8
Male	204	%48,2
Total	423	100

A total of 423 participants were included in the study. Ensuring an approximately equal gender distribution was prioritized. The sample consisted of 51% female participants and 48% male participants, maintaining a balanced representation between genders.

<i>Grup</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
18-24	89	21
25-32	110	26
33-39	98	23,2
40-50	94	22,2
51-60	21	5
61+	11	2,6
Total	423	100

When examining the age groups of the participants, the majority were found to fall within the young and middle-aged categories. The largest group consisted of individuals aged 25–32, reflecting the dominance of this demographic in the sample. As age increased, the number of participants decreased, with the 61+ age group representing the least populated category among the participants. This trend indicates a declining engagement with the study as age progresses.

<i>Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Single	222	52,5
Married	201	47,5
Total	423	100

When examining the marital status of the participants, the distribution appears relatively balanced. However, the majority group consists of single individuals, accounting for 52.5% of the total sample. This indicates a slight predominance of single participants compared to other marital status categories.

Table 10: Participants' Education Status		
<i>Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
High School Graduate	158	37,4
University Graduate	180	42,6
Postgraduate Graduate	85	20,1
Total	423	100,0

When examining the educational backgrounds of the participants, it is evident that the majority are high school and university graduates. The minority group consists of participants with postgraduate education, including those with master's and doctoral degrees. This distribution highlights the predominance of individuals with secondary and undergraduate education levels in the sample.

Table 11: Participants' Income Status		
<i>Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
17.000-29.000	141	33,3
30.000-39.000	76	18
40.000-49.000	92	21,7
50.000-59.000	73	17,3
60.000+	41	9,7
Total	423	100

The minimum wage at the time the surveys were conducted was taken as a baseline, with the lowest income category starting at 17,000. The majority of participants fell within the income bracket of 17,000 to 29,000, indicating this as the most represented group in the sample. This reflects the economic profile of most respondents relative to the prevailing minimum wage during the study period.

Table 12: Participants' Social Media Preference		
<i>Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Facebook	53	12,5

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Instagram	101	23,9
X(Twitter)	130	30,7
YouTube	88	20,8
TikTok	51	12,1
Total	423	100

Participants were also asked about their preferred social media platform. The majority indicated a preference for X (Twitter), followed by Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok in descending order of popularity. This distribution highlights the dominance of X as the most preferred platform among the study's participants.

Table 13: Participants' Time Spent on Social Media

<i>Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1-2 Saat	143	33,8
2-3 Saat	153	36,2
3-4 Saat	83	19,6
4+	44	10,4
Total	423	100,0

Participants reported spending 2–3 hours per day on social media platforms as the most common usage pattern. Another significant portion of participants stated they spend 1–2 hours daily on social media.

3.2. Analysis of the Social Media and Fear of Crime Scale (SMFCS)

Given that the dataset exhibited a normal distribution, parametric tests were applied to analyze the SMFCS. To test the hypotheses, t-tests and ANOVA were conducted on the demographic variables.

For the gender-based analysis of SMFCS, t-test was performed. The null hypothesis (H_0) was tested to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in fear of crime levels between male and female participants.

Table 14: Comparison of Fear of Crime Scores Based on SMFCS by Gender

<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>cohen d</i>
Female	219	3,13	1,16	3,105	421	,002	0,3
Male	204	2,77	1,21				

The analysis results indicated that women exhibit higher levels of fear of crime originating from social media content compared to men. The difference between male and female participants was

found to be statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted.

- H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in SMFCS between men and women.
- H_a : There is a statistically significant difference in SMFCS between men and women.

To better understand the magnitude of the observed difference, the effect size was calculated. One of the commonly used methods for this purpose is Cohen’s d , which classifies effect sizes as follows (Cohen, 1988):

- Small effect: $d < 0.2$
- Medium effect: $d = 0.5$
- Large effect: $d > 0.8$

Based on the calculations, the effect size value can be interpreted to determine whether the observed gender difference is weak, moderate, or strong in magnitude, providing further context for the results. The Cohen’s d test revealed an effect size of 0.3, indicating a moderate effect of social media content on the gender-based difference in fear of crime.

Consistent with findings from earlier studies, women were found to experience higher levels of fear of crime compared to men, a trend frequently observed in fear of crime research (Maxfield, 1987: 278; Warr, 2000). This pattern has been consistently highlighted in studies conducted across various geographies and time periods.

The originality of this research lies in the focus on how social media content influences people’s fear of crime. As explained through the t -test analysis, this research is supported by previous literature in the sense that women show higher levels of fear than men. Inclusion of social media as a factor adds a new dimension to the discussion where the role of social media will be to increase existing gender differences in fear of crime.

Marital Status Analysis

T -test analysis was conducted to understand how individuals’ marital status influences their susceptibility to social media content and levels of fear of crime. This analysis aimed to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in fear of crime between single and married individuals based on their exposure to SMFCS.

The null hypothesis (H_0) and alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this analysis are as follows:

- H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in SMFCS between single and married individuals.
- H_a : There is a statistically significant difference in SMFCS between single and married individuals.

Table 15: Comparison of Fear of Crime Scores Based on SMFCS by Marital Status							
<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>cohen d</i>
Single	222	2,80	1,12	-2,879	421	,004	0,2
Married	201	3,13	1,24				

As shown in the table, the number of married and single participants is nearly equal. However, when comparing the means, it is evident that married individuals report higher levels of fear of crime stemming from social media content. This difference between the two groups was found to be

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statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted.

- H_a : There is a statistically significant difference in SMFCS between single and married individuals.

The Cohen's d test yielded a value of 0.2, indicating a small effect size for the difference between the two groups.

The higher fear of crime scores among married individuals, compared to singles, may be explained by the concept of indirect victimization. Married individuals, particularly those with children, often experience fear of crime not only for themselves but also for their family members (Demirbaş, 2023). For instance, parents may worry about their children's safety as much as their own.

This heightened concern for the safety of family members likely contributes to the higher fear of crime scores among married participants, making them more susceptible to the effects of social media content compared to their single counterparts.

Age-Based Hypothesis

To examine the effects of social media content on individuals' fear of crime across different age groups, ANOVA test was conducted. This test aimed to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in SMFCS scores based on age groups. The null hypothesis (H_0) and alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this analysis are as follows:

- H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores among different age groups.
- H_a : There is a statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores among different age groups.

<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
18-24	89	2,78	1,11	2,45	0,33
25-32	110	2,81	1,24		
33-39	98	3,23	1,10		
40-50	94	2,90	1,17		
51-60	21	3,29	1,52		
61+	11	3,36	1,28		

The results indicate that younger individuals are less influenced by social media content in terms of fear of crime compared to older age groups. Among these, the 40–50 age group stands out as an exception, showing different patterns of fear of crime. The group with the highest level of fear is individuals aged 60 and above, while the group with the lowest fear is the younger individuals. However, the differences observed between the age groups were found to be not statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted.

- H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores among different age groups.

This finding suggests that while there are observable trends in fear of crime across age groups, these differences are not strong enough to be deemed statistically meaningful.

The findings align with the existing literature, which consistently shows that elderly individuals, classified as part of the "vulnerable groups" in fear of crime studies, exhibit higher levels of fear compared to younger individuals. Their vulnerability in terms of the inability to easily defend themselves, the length of time it may take them to recover from a physical attack, and the possibility of isolation while recovering all create a heightened fear of victimization for the elderly compared to other age groups (LaGrange et al., 1992; Beaulieu et al., 2007). In looking specifically at the content of social media, it can be seen that it increases fear of crime more for elderly individuals than for younger age groups. This would suggest that the role of social media content in heightening fear of crime is coherent with those from more 'traditional' studies of fear of crime. Greater vulnerability among the elderly due to increased frailty makes them most susceptible to emotive effects brought on by relevant social media content about crime.

Education-Level Hypothesis

ANOVA test was conducted to examine the impact of participants' educational levels on their scores in the SMFCS. This analysis aimed to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in fear of crime levels based on participants' education.

The null hypothesis (H_0) and alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this analysis are as follows:

- H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores among participants with different educational levels.
- H_a : There is a statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores among participants with different educational levels.

Table 16: Comparison of Fear of Crime Scores Based on SMFCS by Educational Level

<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
High School Graduate	158	2,98	1,25	,704	,495
University Graduate	180	2,89	1,20		
Postgraduate	85	3,07	1,05		

The results indicate that the scores for the three educational groups are relatively similar, with no significant differences. However, the group with postgraduate education demonstrated slightly higher levels of fear of crime compared to others. Despite this observation, the differences among the groups were found to be not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted.

- H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores based on participants' educational levels.

The general findings in the literature suggest a negative correlation between educational level and fear of crime. As education levels increase, individuals are believed to acquire greater economic and cultural resources, which help them better understand crime environments and avoid exposure to such risks (Clemente & Kleiman, 1977, p. 523).

However, the results of this study diverge from this trend. Participants with higher education levels reported greater fear of crime related to social media content. This could be attributed to the heightened awareness and critical thinking skills of highly educated individuals, which may lead

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them to perceive risks more acutely when exposed to crime-related content on social media. This finding highlights the complex relationship between education, media exposure, and fear of crime.

Income-Level Hypothesis

ANOVA test was conducted to examine the impact of participants' income levels on their scores in the SMFCS. The analysis aimed to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in fear of crime levels based on participants' income.

The null hypothesis (H_0) and alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this analysis are as follows:

- H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores among participants with different income levels.
- H_a : There is a statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores among participants with different income levels.

<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>ss</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
17.000-29.000	141	2,83	1,23	1,20	,309
30.000-39.000	76	3,18	1,30		
40.000-49.000	92	3,00	1,14		
50.000-59.000	73	2,99	1,07		
60.000+	41	2,85	1,15		

The results indicate that individuals with an income of 30,000–39,000 exhibit the highest fear of crime, while those in the lowest income group report the least fear of crime. Despite these observations, the differences in fear of crime among income groups were found to be not statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted:

- H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores among participants based on income levels.

The general findings in the literature suggest a negative relationship between income level and fear of crime. As income increases, individuals tend to experience less fear of crime. This is attributed to several factors, such as higher-income individuals' ability to reside in safer neighborhoods, away from areas prone to crime, and their capacity to invest in security measures, such as surveillance systems and private services. These factors not only physically isolate individuals from crime-prone environments but also provide a sense of psychological security, reducing their fear of victimization (Skogan, 1978).

When examining the impact of social media content on individuals' fear of crime, a similar pattern can be observed. Excluding the lowest income group, which exhibits the lowest fear of crime, the study shows that as income levels increase, fear of crime scores decrease. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a negative relationship between income level and fear of crime related to social media content. This finding suggests that individuals with higher incomes may be less affected by social media content in terms of fear of crime, likely due to their increased ability to mitigate risks and access safer living conditions.

Social Media Usage Duration Hypothesis

ANOVA test was conducted to analyze the relationship between the time individuals spend on social media daily and their SMFCS. This test aimed to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in fear of crime based on the duration of daily social media usage.

The null hypothesis (H_0) and alternative hypothesis (H_a) for this analysis are as follows:

- H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores based on the amount of time individuals spend on social media daily.
- H_a : There is a statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores based on the amount of time individuals spend on social media daily.

Table 18: Comparison of Fear of Crime Scores Based on SMFCS by Daily Social Media Usage Duration

Group	n	x	ss	f	p
1-2 Saat	143	2,86	1,136	2,93	,033
2-3 Saat	153	3,10	1,263		
3-4 Saat	83	3,07	1,156		
4+	44	2,57	1,149		

The results show that individuals who spend 2–3 hours daily on social media report the highest levels of fear of crime influenced by social media content. In contrast, those who spend 4 or more hours on social media exhibit the lowest fear of crime. When examining the significance of the differences among the groups, it was found that the differences were statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Thus, alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted.

- H_a : There is a statistically significant difference in SMFCS scores based on the amount of time individuals spend on social media daily.

Although moderate users (around 2–3 or 3–4 hours a day) show slightly higher averages, this pattern does not increase steadily as usage rises. It simply suggests that a certain level of exposure may be enough to trigger crime-related perceptions, and spending more time does not necessarily raise fear further.

3.3. Evaluation of the Scale

The Social Media and Fear of Crime Scale, developed to measure the effects of social media platforms on individuals' fear of crime, underwent an additional overall mean evaluation. This analysis aimed to assess the fear of crime scores reported by participants, providing a comprehensive understanding of how social media content influences their perceptions of crime-related risks. The general evaluation offers insights into the effectiveness of the scale in capturing fear of crime across different demographic groups and usage patterns, contributing to its validity and reliability as a measurement tool. Additionally, this assessment highlights the broader trends and implications of social media content in shaping societal perceptions of safety and security.

Table 19: Descriptive Statistics of Fear of Crime Scores Based on SMFCS

	<i>n</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	<i>sum</i>	<i>mean</i>		<i>std. deviation</i>
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
SMFCS	423	1	5	1252	2,96	,058	1,197

According to the participants in this study, the overall mean score of the Social Media and Fear of Crime Scale (SMFCS) is 2.96. Based on a 5-point Likert scale, this average corresponds to the "neutral" level, indicating that participants generally experience a moderate level of fear related to social media content. In other words, most participants neither fear nor feel unaffected by the crime-related content they encounter on social media.

3.4. Excluded Analyses

One item in the scale was excluded because SPSS recommended its removal during both the reliability and factor analyses. To further evaluate this excluded item, a crosstab analysis by gender was conducted. This analysis aims to explore any gender-based differences in responses to the excluded item and provide additional insights into its relevance and impact on participants' fear of crime.

Table 20: Comparison of Fear of Harassment/Sexual Assault on Social Media by Gender

	When I see incidents of harassment/sexual assault on social media, I fear the likelihood of being sexually harassed/assaulted				
	not afraid at all	not afraid	Neutral	afraid	very afraid
Female	10	25	31	79	74
Male	118	46	21	16	3

A gender-based evaluation was conducted to assess the impact of social media content on individuals' fear of crime through harassment incidents. According to this evaluation, it was observed that women are significantly affected by harassment incidents shared on social media. Female participants' fear of crime due to such content has increased significantly.

CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

This research aimed to provide both a theoretical and practical perspective on the impact of the use of social media platforms and contents on the fear of crime in individuals in Türkiye. The findings pointed out some important aspects concerning the prevalence of using social media and the way this time spent on these platforms shape individuals' fear of crime. Above all, the rapid dissemination of uncensored news and images of crimes on social media has significantly undermined the perceived sense of security. The argument goes that social networking sites provide means not only to communicate and to share information, but also very strong conduits through which fear and anxiety spread.

It demonstrated that the results have more fear of crime from the content of social media among women compared to males, which supports the theory in the literature of vulnerable groups and shows that the media would increase the concerns about the physical and psychological safety of women. It was further reported that elderly subjects experience higher levels of fear of crime than their younger counterparts, which is magnified by the indirect victimization influence of social networking sites. These findings therefore indicate the probability that vulnerable groups may be more susceptible to the inimical influences of social media content.

The effects of social media platforms on fear of crime vary with demographic factors such as gender, age, and marital status. It has been observed that married individuals are more affected by social media content due to concerns about their family members. This situation reveals that individuals experience fear of crime not only by considering their own safety but also the safety of those in their immediate environment.

Another important finding of the study is that individuals with higher levels of education feel more fear of crime stemming from social media contents. This result suggests that education can help individuals develop a more conscious approach to environmental threats, but this level of awareness can sometimes cause more anxiety. It is evaluated that this finding makes an important contribution to the different perception of social media content according to the level of education.

Situating these findings within Goffman's frame analysis helps clarify how social media intensifies fear. Platform features (graphic images, episodic narration, sensational headlines, and real-time comment streams) operate as framing devices that organize attention around vulnerability and harm, turning distant incidents into frame-consistent personal risk judgments (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993). In this context, the higher SMFCS scores among women and older adults, and among married participants whose risk appraisals extend to family members through indirect-victimization cues circulating online, are consistent with the framing mechanism. The pattern observed for more educated users can also be interpreted through framing, insofar as greater exposure and cognitive elaboration may heighten sensitivity to risk-salient frames rather than reduce it. Methodologically, the unidimensional structure and high reliability of the SMFCS indicate that heterogeneous frame elements accumulate into a general fear construct, in line with cultivation dynamics. In practice, these results point to interventions that focus on how crime is framed (adding contextual cues, de-amplifying graphic imagery, and creating friction for unverified content) together with media-literacy efforts that make framing processes visible to users.

As a result, this study attempted to understand the effects of social media content on individuals' fear of crime and attempted to develop a scale for this purpose. The findings suggest that policy makers and social media platform administrators should more carefully evaluate the effects of content published on platforms. Future research can expand this study by examining the effects of social media on fear of crime in different socio-cultural contexts. In addition, the effects of content control mechanisms implemented on social media platforms to reduce individuals' fear of crime should be investigated in detail. In this context, multidimensional approaches are needed to better understand the long-term effects of social media use on the perception of security in society.

While the current study focuses on Turkish social media users, the findings may resonate with broader trends in digital media consumption and fear perception. However, it is important to note that socio-cultural differences, media landscapes, and legal frameworks vary significantly across countries. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings should be approached with caution. Future studies may consider adapting and validating the SMFCS in different cultural settings to enhance its external validity and cross-cultural applicability.

Genişletilmiş Özet

Suç korkusu, toplumda huzurun sağlanmasının önündeki en büyük engellerden biridir. Bir toplumda suç korkusunun yaygın olması, toplumsal barış ve güven ortamının tesisini zorlaştırmaktadır. Suç korkusu, bireyleri toplumdan uzaklaşmaya ve kaçınma davranışları sergilemeye yöneltmektedir. Bu durum, toplumsal bağların zayıflamasına ve bireyselleşmenin ön plana çıkmasına yol açmaktadır. Buna bağlı olarak, toplumun kendi kendini denetleme mekanizmaları zayıflamakta; sapma ve suç davranışları artış göstermektedir. Başka bir ifadeyle, insanlar suça maruz kalmamak için sosyal mesafeler yaratırken, farkında olmadan suç için yeni fırsatlar üretmektedir. Bireyler suçtan kaçınmaya çalışırken, kendilerini daha ciddi risklerle karşı karşıya bırakabilmektedir. Böylece, kendini besleyen bir döngü ortaya çıkmakta; suç korkusunun yaygınlığı toplumsal açıdan çözülmesi gereken önemli bir sorun haline gelmektedir.

Suç korkusuna ilişkin araştırmalar ilk olarak suç oranlarının yüksek olduğu şehirlerde başlamıştır. 1960'lı yıllarda ABD'de artan suç oranlarını anlamak ve bununla mücadele etmek amacıyla devlet kurumları öncülüğünde yürütülen çalışmalar başarılı olunca, kısa sürede akademik alanda da araştırma konusu haline gelmiştir. Bu süreçte kriminoloji, sosyoloji, psikoloji ve hukuk gibi farklı disiplinler suç korkusu olgusuna yönelmiş ve günümüzde disiplinlerarası bir çalışma alanı oluşmuştur.

Suç korkusu araştırmaları hem nitel hem nicel yöntemlerle veri toplanarak yürütülmektedir. Bireylerde suç korkusunun nedenlerini anlamaya yönelik araştırmalarda ise genellikle nitel yöntemler tercih edilmektedir. Katılımcılarla yapılan mülakatlar ve sondajlama teknikleri sayesinde sosyal problemlerin tespiti ve anlaşılması mümkün olmaktadır. Nicel yöntemlere dayalı çalışmalarda ise bireylerin suç korkusu düzeylerini ölçmeye yarayan sayısal veriler elde edilmektedir. Örneğin, kadın ve erkeklerin suç korkusu skorları arasındaki farklılıklar bu yöntemle ortaya konulabilmektedir.

Suç korkusunu ölçmek için farklı ölçekler geliştirilmiştir. Bu ölçekler, farklı coğrafyalardaki bireylere uygulanarak toplumların suç korkusu düzeylerini belirlemeye yardımcı olmaktadır. Genellikle günlük yaşama dair sorular içeren bu ölçekler, bireyin evdeyken hırsızlığa maruz kalma ihtimali ya da karanlık bir sokakta yürürken duyulan korku gibi durumları ölçmeyi hedeflemektedir.

Sosyal medyanın yaygınlaşmasıyla birlikte bu platformlarda geçirilen süre de artmaktadır. Araştırmamızda katılımcıların yaklaşık %70'i günde üç saate yakın zamanlarını sosyal medyada geçirdiklerini belirtmiştir. Bireyler, sosyal medya platformlarında hem görsel hem yazılı içeriklere doğrudan maruz kalmaktadır. Geleneksel medyadan farklı olarak, sosyal medya herhangi bir editöryal süzgeçten geçmediği için kullanıcılar sansürlü ve doğruluğu kesinleşmemiş içeriklere kolayca ulaşmaktadır. Çeşitli suçlara maruz kalan kişilerin haberleri hızla yayılabilmekte ve bireyler bu içeriklerle karşılaşmaktadır. Bu durum, sosyal medyanın hayatın önemli bir parçası haline gelmesiyle birlikte, suç korkusu ölçeklerinin sosyal medya bağlamına uyarlanması ihtiyacını doğurmuştur. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışmada Ferraro'nun (1995) geliştirdiği suç korkusu ölçeği temel alınarak sosyal medya bağlamında yeniden yorumlanmış ve *Sosyal Medya ve Suç Korkusu Ölçeği* geliştirilmiştir.

Bu ölçeğin geliştirilmesi sürecinde çevrimiçi ortamda farklı demografik özelliklere sahip 423 katılımcıya ulaşılmıştır. Veri toplama sürecinde hem amaca yönelik hem de kota örneklem yöntemleri kullanılmış, bu sayede katılımcılara hızlı biçimde erişim sağlanmıştır. Ayrıca kadın ve erkek katılımcıların oranlarının birbirine yakın olmasına dikkat edilmiştir. Böylece kadın ve erkeklerin sosyal medya içeriklerinden nasıl etkilendiklerinin karşılaştırılması mümkün olmuştur.

Araştırmada çeşitli hipotezler test edilmiş, elde edilen bulgular literatürle karşılaştırılmış ve büyük ölçüde literatürle uyumlu sonuçlar elde edilmiştir. Örneğin, kadınların suç korkusu düzeylerinin erkeklere kıyasla daha yüksek olduğu ve bu farkın istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olduğu

görülmüştür. Benzer şekilde, evli bireylerin bekârlara göre daha fazla suç mağduru olma korkusu taşıdığı, özellikle çocuk sahibi olanların daha yüksek düzeyde korku bildirdiği anlaşılmıştır (Demirbaş, 2023).

Bir diğer önemli bulgu ise yaş ile suç korkusu arasındaki doğru orantılı ilişkinin sosyal medya bağlamında da gözlenmesidir. Yaş arttıkça bireylerin sosyal medya içeriklerinden kaynaklı suç korkularının da arttığı saptanmıştır. Literatürde kırılgan gruplardan biri olarak görülen yaşlı bireylerdeki yüksek suç korkusu bu araştırmada da doğrulanmıştır.

Ölçeğin genel değerlendirmesinde, beşli likert ölçeğinde ortalama değer üçe yakın olduğu görülmektedir. Bu durum her ne kadar nötr bir noktaya işaret etse de eğlence ve iletişim amacıyla kullanılan sosyal medya platformlarının içerik bakımından bireyler üzerinde olumsuz etkiler yaratabileceğini göstermektedir. Örneğin, cinsel taciz ile ilgili soruya verilen yanıtlar (analize doğrudan dahil edilmemekle birlikte) kadın katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğunun “çok korkarım” ve “korkarım” seçeneklerini işaretlediğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu bulgu, sosyal medyadaki içeriklerin günlük yaşamda olduğu gibi bireyleri önemli ölçüde etkilediğini göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla, sosyal medyanın bireylerde suç korkusunun yayılmasında belirleyici bir rol oynadığı sonucuna varılabilir.

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APPENDIX: SCALE QUESTIONS

Table 21: Descriptive Statistics of Scale and Questions					
Scale Questions	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
I fear the possibility of being kidnapped when I see kidnapping news on social media.	423	1	5	2,87	1,392
I fear the possibility of being scammed when I see fraud news on social media	423	1	5	3,55	1,341
I fear the possibility of being sexually harassed/assaulted when I see harassment/assault incidents on social media. (This question was removed from the scale during the factor analysis stage and was evaluated separately from the scale)	423	1	5	2,82	1,517
I fear the possibility of being threatened when I see threatening content on social media.	423	1	5	3,18	1,338
I fear the possibility of being murdered when I see murder news on social media.	423	1	5	3,61	1,365
I fear the possibility of being a victim of a shooting when I see shooting incidents on social media.	423	1	5	3,60	1,322
I fear the possibility of having my belongings stolen when I see theft/robbery news on social media.	423	1	5	3,65	1,273

I fear the possibility of being attacked because of my religious beliefs when I see attacks on religious beliefs on social media.	423	1	5	2,99	1,470
I fear the possibility of being attacked because of my race when I see racism-related news on social media.	423	1	5	2,92	1,482
I fear the possibility of being a victim of a terrorist attack when I see terrorism-related news on social media.	423	1	5	3,52	1,402

 SUITDER <small>SÜT İNSAN VE TOPLUM BİLİMLERİ DERGİSİ</small> <small>SÜT İNSAN VE TOPLUM BİLİMLERİ DERGİSİ</small>	
Makale Bilgileri:	
Etik Kurul Kararı:	<i>Etik Kurul Onayı Alınmıştır.</i>
Katılımcı Rızası:	<i>Katılımcıların Onayları Alınmıştır.</i>
Mali Destek:	<i>Çalışma için herhangi bir kurum ve projeden mali destek alınmamıştır.</i>
Çıkar Çatışması:	<i>Çalışmada kişiler ve kurumlar arası çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.</i>
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