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# Beyond the Screen: An In-Depth Examination of Social Media Habits Among University Students

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the level of social media addiction among university students. The research was conducted during the spring semester of the 2022-2023 academic year with 386 students from both public and private/foundation universities. In this descriptive research, the "Social Media Addiction Scale" developed by Tutgun-Ünal and Deniz (2015) and the "Personal Information Form" developed by the researcher were utilized. Participants voluntarily joined the study, and data was collected online. Data was analyzed using the SPSS software, employing statistical methods (frequency, t-test, and ANOVA) appropriate for the research objectives. The findings suggest that students generally exhibit a low level of addiction to social media (slightly addicted), but demonstrate a moderate level of addiction in terms of engagement and mood regulation dimensions. The study found that gender does not affect social media addiction, but age and type of university do influence addiction levels. Notably, students from private or foundational universities showed higher addiction levels compared to those from public universities. Moreover, an increase in time spent on social media correlates with an increase in addiction level. These findings contribute to a better understanding of university students' social media usage habits.

Keywords:

Social media, social media addiction, university student

## 1. Introduction

The advancement and proliferation of technology, coupled with increased internet speed and mobilization, have led to smart devices becoming an integral part of our daily lives. This has not only made many aspects of our lives more convenient but has also altered the way we socialize and entertain ourselves through social media platforms. The ubiquity of smart devices and universal internet access has rendered these platforms indispensable and, in some cases, addictive to people across different socio-economic statuses. Although technology facilitates many aspects of our daily routines, its indiscriminate use can lead to various negative consequences.

Rapid digitization has seen an uptick in social media usage both nationally and internationally (Ersöz & Kahraman, 2020; Singh et al., 2020). Social media can be defined as a digital platform where individuals or groups share information, photographs, videos, opinions, or immediate emotions with one another or with a broader audience, facilitating mutual communication (Akkus, Afacan, & Ozbek, 2018). Kemp (2020) reported that almost half (49%; 3.8 billion) of the world's population are active social media users, and this number is growing. According to the Digital 2023: Global Overview Report, 5.44 billion people (68.0%) are mobile phone users, 5.16 billion (64.4%) are internet users, and 4.76 billion (59.4%) are active social media users globally. On average, individuals aged 16-64 spend 7.2 hours per week on social media platforms. Furthermore, as of 2022, individuals aged 16-64 spend an average of 6 hours and 37 minutes daily on the internet. They primarily use the internet for accessing information (57.8%), communicating with friends and family (53.7%), following

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news and events (50.9%), and watching videos, movies, and television shows (49.7%). Lastly, they frequently visit websites and utilize applications for chatting and messaging (94.8%), social networking platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok) (94.6%), search engines or web portals, shopping, and auctions (76.0%) (Data Reportal, 2023).

According to the Household Information Technology (IT) Usage Survey conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK, 2022), 82.7% of individuals in Turkey now regularly use the internet, with 82.0% utilizing some form of social media. Especially among the younger population, there is an increasing trend towards harnessing internet and social media platforms, which offer immediate access and broad-scale communication, for both academic and various other purposes. These technological tools have transcended their roles as mere sources of information and have become essential for diverse purposes like social interaction, gaming, and entertainment (Singh & Barmola, 2015).

Recent years have witnessed a significant surge in social media site usage among youth (Çimke & Cerit, 2021). Today's youth have easy access to online social media through computers, smartphones, and tablets (Garett, Lord, & Young, 2016). The platforms are utilized for various reasons, such as maintaining relationships, accessing information, and entertainment (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Lin & Lu, 2011). This has incorporated social media into the daily fabric of many individuals' lives (Haand & Shuwang, 2020). This novel mode of interpersonal interaction has rapidly proliferated, and concerns have emerged about its detrimental impact on young people's mental health (Ivie et al., 2020). Concerns about the adverse effects of social media on the mental health of youth have increased due to its potential to diminish face-to-face interpersonal interactions, induce addiction-like behaviors, online bullying, amplify social pressures through increased social comparisons, and escalate exposure to suicide narratives on social media (Vidal et al., 2020). The increasing time spent on social media, necessitating individuals to incessantly update their status and track posts from their peers, is amplifying their dependency on these platforms (Yıldırım & Kışioğlu, 2018).

Excessive or addictive social media usage is characterized by an overwhelming preoccupation with social media, an uncontrollable urge to log in or use it, and a substantial expenditure of time and effort on it. This behavior can negatively impact various significant areas of an individual's life (Hilliard, 2019). Considering the strategies for addressing social media addiction, it can be argued that it has evolved from a contemporary challenge to a clinical condition. Globally, individuals are demonstrating an extraordinary affinity for social media platforms, spending significant amounts of time, affecting millions adversely, thus showcasing its profound influence on the general populace (Evgin & Sümen, 2021). Overindulgence in social media platforms can pave the way for developing an addiction, emerging as one of the gravest challenges in today's world. Social media addiction can be described as a psychological condition adversely influencing numerous facets of daily life, such as professional transitions, emotional regulation, relapses, and conflicts. This condition progresses through cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes (Tutgun-Unal, 2015).

Social media addiction is perceived as a variant of internet addiction, manifested by excessive dependence and an inclination to overuse social media platforms (Starcevic, 2013). Those afflicted often harbor profound anxieties about their usage and possess an uncontrollable desire to access and use these platforms (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014). Such individuals, finding themselves involuntarily on these platforms, tend to increase the frequency of their checks (Karadağ & Akçınar, 2019). The integration of social media platforms into our daily routines, their normalization, and their almost indispensable status complicate individuals' ability to discern whether they have become addicted to social media (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014). In this context, it is thought that examining the social media addictions of university students will improve our perspective in this area. The primary goal of this study is to examine the level of social media addiction among university students according to various factors. In line with this objective, answers to the following questions have been sought:

- What is the level of social media addiction among university students?
- Does the social media addiction of university students differ based on gender, age, type of university attended (public or private/foundation), academic year, the year the university was founded, family income level, and the amount of time spent on social media within a 24-hour period?

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research Model

This study aims to examine the social media addiction of university students in light of various factors and to determine the current situation. Therefore, it has been shaped using the comparative survey model, which is among the general survey models. According to Karasar (2023), general survey models are employed to determine the current situation of a large number of elements in a broad universe without attempting to change them. The comparative survey model, on the other hand, aims to reveal whether there are any differences between groups formed based on designated variables in relation to another variable.

### 2.2. Research Sample

The sample of this study comprises 386 students who were studying at both public and private/foundation universities in Turkey during the spring term of the 2022-2023 academic year. Stratified sampling was used to determine the sample. Stratified sampling is a sampling method that guarantees the inclusion of specific subgroups in the universe. In this process, the general universe is first divided into two or more strata, or subgroups. These strata can be based on a single criterion or multiple criteria (Balci, 2013). The type of university the students attended was taken into consideration when determining the participants of the study.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information of the Participants

	Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	186	48.2
	Male	200	51.8
Class Level / Grade Level	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	80	20.7
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	131	33.9
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	93	24.1
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	82	21.2
Age	17 years old	19	4.9
	18 years old	44	11.4
	19 years old	90	23.3
	20 years old	76	19.7
	21 years old	107	27.7
	22 years old	50	13.0
University Attended	State University	333	86.3
	Private/Foundation University	53	13.7
Year of Establishment of the University Attended	2006 and After/Later	130	33.7
	Before 2006	256	66.3
Family Income Level	Below 1 Minimum Wage	39	10.1
	2 Minimum Wages	90	23.3
	3 Minimum Wages	141	36.5
	4 Minimum Wages	66	17.1
	5 Minimum Wages	24	6.2
	6 Minimum Wages and Above	26	6.7
Duration of Social Media Use in 24 Hours	0-1 hour	25	6.48
	1-2 hours	67	17.36
	2-3 hours	124	32.12
	3-4 hours	115	29.79
	4 hours and above	55	14.25
	Total	386	100.0

Table 1 contains demographic data from a study on social media addiction. Various variables, such as gender, academic year, age, university of attendance, the founding year of the university, family income level, and duration of social media use in 24 hours, display the frequency and percentage distribution of the students. 48.2% of participants are female and 51.8% are male, for a total of 386 students. Regarding their academic year, 20.7% are in their first year, 33.9% in the second, 24.1% in the third, and 21.2% in their fourth year. By age, the youngest participants account for 4.9% at 17 years old, and the oldest account for 13% at 22 years old, with the majority, 27.7%, being 21 years old. Most participants (86.3%) study at public universities, while 13.7% study

at private institutions. 33.7% of students attend universities founded after 2006, and 66.3% before 2006. The distribution based on the participants' family income level is indicated in terms of the minimum wage. 36.5% earn three times the minimum wage, while 6.2% earn five times the minimum wage. Lastly, when considering the amount of time spent on social media within 24 hours, 32.12% use it for 2-3 hours, while 6.48% use it for 0-1 hour. These demographic data provide insights into the distribution of students across various variables, and analyzing them can help understand the relationship between these variables and social media addiction.

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedure

*Personal Information Form:* A personal information form, developed by the researcher, was used in the study to determine the demographic characteristics of the university students (gender, age, type, and founding year of the university they are studying at; academic year; social media platforms; technological devices; objectives for using the internet); and their social media usage habits (time spent on social media within a 24-hour period).

*Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS):* In this study, the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), which was developed by Tutgun-Ünal and Deniz (2015) and underwent validity and reliability tests, was used. This instrument consists of 41 items and four factors (engagement, mood modification, relapse, and conflict) rated using a 5-point Likert scale ("Always", "Often", "Sometimes", "Rarely", "Never"). These four factors explain 59% of the total variance. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale is .967. The highest possible score on the SMAS is 205, with the lowest being 41. Each subscale can also be assessed separately. Items 1-12 of the instrument relate to the "Engagement" factor, measuring how mentally occupied an individual is by social media. Items 13-17 pertain to the "Mood Modification" factor, gauging the emotional impact of social media. Items 18-22 tackle the "Relapse" factor, attempting to ascertain how much control an individual has over their social media use. Finally, items 23-41 measure the "Conflict" factor, determining to what extent social media causes problems in an individual's life.

### 2.4. Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, following an earthquake in Turkey during the 2022-2023 academic spring term, which caused massive destruction across 11 provinces, universities shifted to remote learning. Consequently, data were gathered on an online platform, adhering to the principle of voluntary participation. Participants were informed about the study via an online form, and their consent was obtained. During the pilot tests, it was observed that the form (Personel Information Form and Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS)) took an average of 10-15 minutes to complete. Taking into consideration the minimum and maximum scores that can be obtained from the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), the scores were divided into five ranges to classify addiction levels as "No Addiction," "Low Addiction," "Moderate Addiction," "High Addiction," and "Very High Addiction" (Tutgun-Ünal & Deniz, 2015). Similarly, for sub-scales, scores were divided into five based on their minimum and maximum values to determine addiction levels. Therefore, during the analysis of this study, addiction levels were used as specified in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Evaluation of the Social Media Addiction Scale and its Subscales

Addiction Level	SMAS (Total)	Occupancy	Mood Regulation	Repetition	Effort
No Addiction	41-73	12-21	5-8	5-8	19-33
Low Dependency	74-106	22-31	9-12	9-12	34-48
Moderate Dependency	107-139	32-41	13-16	13-16	49-63
High Dependency	140-142	42-51	17-20	17-20	64-78
Very High Dependency	173-205	52-60	21-25	21-25	79-95

SPSS 27 statistical software was used for data analysis. Appropriate methods for the research objective, such as frequency, t-test, and variance analysis, were employed.

Before proceeding with the data analysis, tests for normality were performed, and the results are provided in the table below.

**Table 3.** Normality Distribution in APA Table Format

	N	X	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis	p
Total	386	100.37	103.00	-.26	-.28	.00

Table 3 presents the skewness and kurtosis values for the university students' scores on the social media addiction scale. According to Büyüköztürk (2007), when the mode, median, and mean have similar values, it indicates a normal data distribution. The median (103.37) and mean (100.37) scores on the social media addiction scale are notably close. Hence, the assumption of normality is met. Büyüköztürk (2007) also mentioned that for a dataset to display a normal distribution, its skewness and kurtosis values should fall between +1 and -1. In light of this finding, the data analysis proceeded, choosing statistical methods suitable for a normal distribution.

**2.5. Ethical**

In this study, all rules were complied with within the scope of the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive". In this study, all rules were complied with within the scope of the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive". In addition, for this study, Kırşehir Ahi Evran University Social Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee committee approval was obtained.

**3. Findings**

In this section, the results obtained from the analysis of the research data are shared.

Data on social media platforms used by university students is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Social Media Platforms Used by University Students

Social Media Platforms	<i>f</i>	%
Instagram	337	87.3
Twitter	255	66.1
Facebook	139	36.0
TikTok	83	21.5
Other (LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest, etc.)	110	28.5

When examining the data in Table 4 related to the social media platforms used by university students, it is observed that 337 (87.3%) of the university students use Instagram, 225 (66.1%) use Twitter, 139 (36.0%) use Facebook, 83 (21.5%) use TikTok, and 110 (28.5%) use others (LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest, etc.).

The data concerning the technological devices used by university students is presented in the table below.

**Table 5.** Technological Devices Used by University Students

Technological Devices	<i>f</i>	%
Desktop Computer	130	33.7
Laptop	258	66.8
Smartphone	349	90.4
Tablet	110	28.5
Other	56	14.5

Upon evaluating the technological devices in Table 5, it is revealed that 130 (33.7%) of the university students use a desktop computer, 258 (66.8%) use a laptop, 349 (90.4%) use a smartphone, 110 (28.5%) use a tablet, and 56 (14.5%) use other devices.

The purposes of internet usage by university students are displayed in the following table.

**Table 6.** Purposes of Internet Usage by University Students

Purposes of Internet Usage	<i>f</i>	%
Entertainment	279	72.28
Communication	300	77.72
Messaging	255	66.06
Monitoring Posts/Tracking Updates	192	49.74
Accessing Information	110	28.50
Listening to Music	167	43.26
Utilizing Free Time/Leisure Time Engagement	177	45.85
Getting to Know People Better	30	7.77
Others	15	3.89

Upon examining Table 6, it's observed that 276 (72.28%) of the students use the internet for entertainment, 300 (77.72%) for communication, 255 (66.06%) for messaging, 192 (49.72%) for tracking posts, 110 (28.50%) for accessing information, 167 (43.26%) for listening to music, 177 (45.85%) for leisure, 30 (7.77%) to get to know people better, and 15 (3.89%) for other purposes.

This section discusses analyses based on the general and sub-scales of the social media addiction scale to determine the social media addiction levels of university students. The findings from the analysis are provided in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Levels of Social Media Addiction

Scale / Subscale	n	X	ss
Engagement	386	34.16	8.85
Emotion Regulation	386	13.24	4.36
Repetition	386	12.75	4.75
Conflict	386	42.44	12.91
Social Media Addiction	386	102.612	25.52

An analysis of the average scores in Table 7 reveals that the total score obtained from the social media addiction scale is 102.61. Considering the potential score range of the scale, which is a minimum of 41 and a maximum of 205, the results suggest that university students have a low level of addiction to social media. The engagement sub-scale of the measure comprises 12 items. The average score analysis for this sub-dimension, based on the potential minimum and maximum scores of 12 and 60, respectively, indicates an average score of 34.16. This score suggests a moderate level of addiction among students in relation to the engagement aspect of social media. The mood regulation sub-scale contains five items. The average score of students on this sub-scale, assessed based on the potential minimum and maximum scores of 5 and 25, respectively, is 13.24. This score implies a moderate level of addiction among students in the mood regulation dimension. The repetition sub-scale has five items. Evaluating the average score obtained by students on this sub-scale, considering the lowest possible score of 5 and the highest of 25, results in an average of 12.75. This score points towards a low level of addiction in the repetition dimension. The conflict sub-scale consists of 19 items. The average score from this sub-scale, evaluated within the potential range of 19 to 95, is 42.44. This suggests a low level of social media addiction in the conflict dimension.

To determine whether the social media addiction levels of university students vary according to gender, scores obtained from the social media addiction scale and its sub-scales were analyzed using an independent sample t-test. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 8. Through this analysis, it has become possible to ascertain whether gender has an influence on social media addiction levels.

**Table 8.** Results of the t-test on the Variation of Social Media Addiction Based on Gender

Scale / Subscale	Gender	n	X	sd	t	df	p
Engagement	Male	186	33,56	9,02	-1.26	384	.20
	Female	200	34,72	8,68			
Emotion Regulation	Male	186	13,09	4,30	-.62	384	.53
	Female	200	13,38	4,42			
Repetition	Male	186	12,89	4,85	.55	384	.57
	Female	200	12,63	4,67			
Conflict	Male	186	40,81	12,48	.85	384	.39
	Female	200	39,64	13,23			
Social Media Addiction	Male	186	100,37	25,58	-.01	384	.99
	Female	200	100,38	25,46			

A detailed analysis of Table 8 demonstrates that there is no significant gender-based difference in the levels of social media addiction among university students ( $p > 0.05$ ). Similarly, an examination of the sub-scales also indicates that there's no significant variation based on gender. These findings suggest that students' social media use and addiction levels are uniformly distributed, regardless of their gender.

To determine whether university students' levels of social media addiction differ based on their age, the gathered data were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of this analysis are

presented in Table 9. This study aims to determine if there's a significant variation in students' addiction levels based on age.

**Table 9.** ANOVA Results on the Variation of Social Media Addiction Based on Age

Scale / Subscale	Age	n	X̄	ss	F	p	Difference
Repetition	17 years old	19	12.49	5.52	2.39	.03	21>18 20>18 20>19
	18 years old	44	11.25	5.28			
	19 years old	90	12.06	4.98			
	20 years old	76	13.79	4.90			
	21 years old	107	13.35	4.31			
	22 years old	50	12.57	3.78			
	Total	386	12.75	4.75			
Conflict	17 years old	19	37.37	13.76	3.52	.00	20>18 21>18 21>19 22>18 22>19
	18 years old	44	35.00	13.42			
	19 years old	90	38.00	12.71			
	20 years old	76	41.61	11.59			
	21 years old	107	42.46	13.05			
	22 years old	50	42.87	12.23			
	Total	386	40.21	12.87			
Social Media Addiction	17 years old	19	97.17	27.84	2.69	.02	20>18 21>18 21>19 22>18
	18 years old	44	91.68	29.07			
	19 years old	90	96.04	27.08			
	20 years old	76	103.14	23.42			
	21 years old	107	105.30	23.86			
	22 years old	50	102.30	22.32			
	Total	386	100.37	25.48			

Upon examining Table 9, it is discerned that there's a significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the repetition and conflict sub-scales, as well as in the overall social media addiction scale, based on age among university students. Post-hoc analysis using the LSD (Least Significant Difference) test was conducted to determine between which age groups this variation exists. According to the LSD analysis, as age increases, there's an elevated addiction observed in the repetition and conflict sub-scales and the overall social media addiction scale.

To determine if university students' levels of social media addiction vary depending on the university they attend, scores obtained from the social media addiction scale and its sub-scales were analyzed using the independent samples t-test. Results from this analysis are presented in Table 10. Through this analysis, the potential impact of the university on social media addiction levels can be understood.

**Table 10.** t-test Results on the Variation of Social Media Addiction Based on the Type of University

Scale / Subscale	University	n	X̄	sd	t	df	p
Engagement	State	333	33.59	8.61	-3.23	384	.00
	Private/Foundation University	53	37.77	9.58			
Emotion Regulation	State	333	12.91	4.32	-3.72	384	.00
	Private/Foundation University	53	15.28	4.06			
Repetition	State	333	12.38	4.67	-3.97	384	.00
	Private/Foundation University	53	15.12	4.60			
Conflict	State	333	39.26	12.75	-3.68	384	.00
	Private/Foundation University	53	46.16	12.15			
Social Media Addiction	State	333	98.15	24.99	-4.39	384	.00
	Private/Foundation University	53	114.34	24.28			

Reviewing Table 10, it is identified that there's a significant variation ( $p < 0.01$ ) in all sub-dimensions and in the overall social media addiction scale based on the university of study. It appears that students studying at

private or foundation universities are more addicted to social media compared to those studying at state universities.

To ascertain whether university students' social media addiction levels vary based on their year of study, the collected data was examined using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings from this analysis are presented in Table 11. This analysis aids in determining if there's a notable difference in students' addiction levels based on their year of study.

**Table 11.** ANOVA Results on the Variation of Social Media Addiction Based on Year of Study

Scale / Subscale	Class Level	n	X̄	sd	F	p	Difference
Repetition	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	80	12.36	4.54	3.76	.01	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade > 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	131	12.58	4.67			
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	93	14.11	5.00			
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	82	11.87	4.54			
	Total	386	12.75	4.75			
Conflict	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	80	40.11	11.39	2.84	.03	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade > 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	131	42.25	13.42			
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	93	40.25	12.13			
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	82	36.99	13.70			
	Total	386	40.21	12.87			

Upon examining Table 11, it has been determined that university students' social media addiction varies significantly by grade level ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the sub-scales of repetition and conflict. According to this result, LSD analysis has been conducted to identify which groups the differentiation occurs between. Accordingly, students studying in the third grade have higher social media addiction levels in the repetition sub-scale compared to other groups. Furthermore, students studying in the second grade have higher social media addiction in the conflict sub-scale compared to fourth-grade students.

To determine whether university students' social media addictions vary according to the establishment year of the university attended, the scores obtained from the social media addiction scale and sub-scales were analyzed through an independent group t-test. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 12. This analysis makes it possible to determine whether gender has an effect on social media addiction.

**Table 12.** Differentiation of Social Media Addiction According to the Year of Establishment of the University Attended Based on t-test Results

Scale / Subscale	Year of Establishment of the University Attended	n	X̄	sd	t	df	p
Engagement	2006 and After/Later	127	33.61	9.88	-.855	384	.39
	Before 2006	259	34.43	8.31			
Emotion Regulation	2006 and After/Later	127	13.08	4.75	-.509	384	.61
	Before 2006	259	13.32	4.16			
Repetition	2006 and After/Later	127	12.04	4.88	-2.073	384	.03
	Before 2006	259	13.10	4.65			
Conflict	2006 and After/Later	127	38.23	13.00	-2.121	384	.03
	Before 2006	259	41.17	12.73			
Social Media Addiction	2006 and After/Later	127	96.97	27.07	-1.842	384	.06
	Before 2006	259	102.04	24.55			

Table 12 reveals that university students' social media addiction significantly differs ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the repetition and conflict sub-dimensions according to the establishment year of the university attended. According to this result, students attending universities established before 2006 have higher addiction levels in the repetition and conflict sub-dimensions.

To determine whether university students' social media addictions vary according to family income level, the obtained data were examined through a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 13. This analysis assists in determining whether there is a significant difference in students' social media addiction levels according to their ages.



**Table 13.** Differentiation of Social Media Addiction According to Family Income Level Based on ANOVA Results

Scale / Subscale	Family Income Level	n	X̄	sd	F	p	Difference
Repetition	Below 1 Min. Wage	39	10.29	5.15	5.03	.00	
	2 Min. Wages	90	11.88	5.00			3>1
	3 Min. Wages	141	13.37	3.90			3>2
	4 Min. Wages	66	14.31	4.80			4>1
	5 Min. Wages	24	12.39	4.14			4>2
	6 Min. Wages, and Above	26	12.61	5.95			6>1
	Total	386	12.76	4.75			
Conflict	Below 1 Min. Wage	39	33.78	15.02	6.15	.00	3>1
	2 Min. Wages	90	36.85	11.76			3>2
	3 Min. Wages	141	42.56	11.66			4>1
	4 Min. Wages	66	44.30	11.62			4>2
	5 Min. Wages	24	40.66	13.95			4>6
	6 Min. Wages, and Above	26	38.00	15.49			5>1
	Total	386	40.21	12.88			
Social Media Addiction	Below 1 Min. Wage	39	89.03	32.50	3.71	.00	3>1
	2 Min. Wages	90	95.73	25.27			3>2
	3 Min. Wages	141	103.24	20.99			4>1
	4 Min. Wages	66	107.21	22.58			4>2
	5 Min. Wages	24	102.04	27.18			5>1
	6 Min. Wages, and Above	26	99.38	34.72			
	Total	386	100.40	25.52			

Table 13 shows that university students' social media addiction varies significantly by family income level ( $p < 0.01$ ) in repetition and conflict sub-scales and the social media addiction scale. According to this result, LSD analysis was conducted to identify between which groups the differentiation occurs. According to the LSD analysis, addiction in repetition and conflict sub-scales and the social media addiction scale increase as family income level increases. Additionally, although addiction increases with rising income levels, it has been determined that those with four minimum wages' income are higher than those with six minimum wages' income in the conflict dimension.

To determine whether university students' social media addictions vary according to the time spent on social media within 24 hours, the obtained data were examined through a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 14. This analysis assists in determining whether there is a significant difference in students' social media addiction levels according to their ages.

**Table 14.** ANOVA Results Regarding the Differentiation of Social Media Addiction Based on Time Spent on Social Media Within 24 Hours

Scale / Subscale	24 Hours Total Duration on Social Media	n	X̄	sd	F	p	Difference
Engagement	0-1 hour	25	23.39	9.35	20.51	.00	1-2>0-1
	1-2 hours	67	30.18	7.55			2-3>0-1
	2-3 hours	124	35.02	7.55			3-4>0-1
	3-4 hours	115	35.90	8.54			4+> 0-1
	4 hours and above	55	38.31	8.27			2-3>1-2
							3-4>1-2
	Total	386	34.15	8.86			4+>1-2
				4+>2-3			
Emotion Regulation	0-1 hour	25	9.25	4.37	15.32	.00	1-2>0-1
	1-2 hours	67	11.15	3.85			2-3>0-1
	2-3 hours	124	13.34	3.88			3-4>0-1
	3-4 hours	115	14.30	3.89			4+> 0-1
	4 hours and above	55	15.09	4.89			2-3>1-2
							3-4>1-2
	Total	386	13.23	4.36			4+>1-2
				4+>2-3			
				4+>3-4			
Repetition	0-1 hour	25	9.56	3.77	4.22	.00	1-2>0-1

	1-2 hours	67	12.09	4.51			2-3>0-1
	2-3 hours	124	13.27	4.24			3-4>0-1
	3-4 hours	115	13.40	5.20			4+> 0-1
	4 hours and above	55	12.50	5.04			
	Total	386	12.75	4.76			
Conflict	0-1 hour	25	28.57	9.82			1-2>0-1
	1-2 hours	67	36.27	11.68			2-3>0-1
	2-3 hours	124	41.74	11.59			3-4>0-1
	3-4 hours	115	42.37	12.79	8.96	.00	4+> 0-1
	4 hours and above	55	42.13	14.87			2-3>1-2
	Total	386	40.18	12.88			3-4>1-2 4+>1-2
Social Media Addiction	0-1 hour	25	70.78	24.05			1-2>0-1
	1-2 hours	67	89.71	22.41			2-3>0-1
	2-3 hours	124	103.39	21.16			3-4>0-1
	3-4 hours	115	105.98	25.13	16.87	.00	4+> 0-1
	4 hours and above	55	108.05	26.78			2-3>1-2
	Total	386	100.32	25.50			3-4>1-2 4+>1-2

Upon examining Table 14, it's determined that university students' social media addiction significantly varies ( $p<0.01$ ) across all subscales and the overall social media addiction scale based on their daily social media usage durations. To identify the groups where this variation occurs, an LSD analysis was conducted. According to the LSD analysis, it's established that as a student's social media usage duration increases, there's a rise in addiction levels in the engagement, mood regulation, relapse, and conflict subscales, as well as in the overall social media addiction scale.

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

The study primarily identified university students' levels of social media addiction. When the collected data was evaluated, it revealed that university students are slightly addicted to social media. Based on the analysis of the subdimensions of Social Media Addiction, participants were found to be "moderately addicted" in terms of engagement and mood regulation and "slightly addicted" in terms of relapse and conflict. The general low level of social media addiction among university students indicates their conscious use of social media. However, moderate addiction in the engagement and mood regulation dimensions suggests that social media is mainly used to satisfy emotional needs and pass time. These findings are consistent with Turgut-Ünal's (2021) study, indicating a regulated and measured use of social media. This suggests students use social media not just for entertainment but also for information and social interaction.

The gender-specific analysis revealed no significant difference in social media addiction based on gender. Studies by Çömlekçi and Başol (2019), Deniz and Gürültü (2018), Koçak and Tıraş (2021), and Doğrusever (2021) support the current study's findings. However, Çiftçi (2018), Baz (2018), Hawi and Samaha (2018), and Güleriyüz et al. (2020) found that male students exhibited higher levels of social media addiction than their female counterparts. A review of the average scores from university student responses showed similarities across all subscales and the general scale. Research results indicate that social media addiction is not gender-related. This reflects that social media usage is widespread among individuals, regardless of gender, suggesting a decline in gender-based differences in the contexts of education and social interaction.

For age-related differentiation in social media addiction, variations were observed in the relapse and conflict subscales, as well as in the general social media addiction scale. Comparing between groups, students aged 20 and 21 have higher rates of social media relapse compared to those aged 18 and 19; students aged 20, 21, and 22 have more conflicts related to social media than those aged 18 and 19. Social media addiction levels are higher in the 20, 21, and 22-year-old age groups compared to the 18- and 19-year-old age groups. There's a noticeable trend that, as age progresses, the levels of addiction, particularly in the relapse and conflict dimensions, increase. Age seems to have a distinct impact on social media addiction. This increased addiction among the 20-22 age group indicates the dominant role of social media in their daily lives. Contrarily, Şeker (2018) and Polat (2018) identified that as students grow older, their addiction levels decrease compared to other groups. Özgür Güler, Veysikarani, and Keskin (2019) found no variation in social media addiction based

on age. These findings suggest the impact of social media on lifestyle and social interactions might change with age, with certain age groups being more prone to it.

In an analysis based on the class levels of the participants, it was determined that there were differences between groups in the sub-dimensions of repetition and conflict. To pinpoint which groups were different, it was identified that students in the third grade had higher levels of social media addiction in the repetition sub-dimension compared to first, second, and third-grade students. On the conflict sub-dimension, second-grade students displayed a higher social media addiction compared to fourth-grade students. Coşar Akbaş and Gedik (2018) identified that there was no significant difference in terms of social media addiction based on class level. This variability in the sub-dimensions of repetition and conflict according to class level indicates that different stages of university education may influence social media usage differently. This suggests that the grade level at which students are educated may reflect social and academic pressures that can influence social media addiction.

In the analysis conducted concerning the type of university at which the students were studying, it was identified that there was a differentiation in all sub-dimensions of social media addiction and in the social media addiction scale. Research findings suggest that students studying at private or foundation universities are more addicted to social media than those studying at public universities. The result that students in private or foundation universities are more addicted than those in public universities reveals the influence of university type on social media usage habits. This may indicate that the social structures and student profiles of private or foundational universities could be determinative factors in social media usage.

When considering the historical trajectory of universities in Turkey, it becomes apparent that 2006 marked a distinct transformation in the inauguration of higher educational institutions. This alteration was driven by the policy of instituting a university in each province, culminating in the inception of numerous universities. Consequently, to analyze the variable of establishment year, institutions inaugurated in 2006 and thereafter have been juxtaposed with those founded prior to 2006. To determine whether the social media addiction of university students varies based on the foundation year of the university they study at, it was discerned that there was a differentiation in the repetition and conflict sub-dimensions of social media addiction. According to this result, students studying at universities established before 2006 have higher social media addictions in the repetition and conflict sub-dimensions. Identifying higher social media addiction in universities established before 2006 suggests that the histories and institutional cultures of universities may influence students' social media habits. This points to the possibility that older universities might have a student culture and interaction pattern that supports more social media use. Neither of these variables has been utilized in any prior research, making this study pioneering in its exploration.

Regarding the analysis conducted based on the income level of the family, it was found that there was a differentiation in the sub-dimensions of repetition, conflict, and the social media addiction scale. According to the results of the analysis aiming to determine between which groups the differentiation exists, it was determined that as the family's income level increases, the social media addiction in the repetition and conflict sub-dimensions also increases. Gürültü (2016) and Coşar Akbaş and Gedik (2021) obtained similar results in their studies with high school students and teacher candidates, respectively. This result is also consistent with the findings based on the universities students attend. Furthermore, in the conflict dimension, although addiction increases with increasing family income level, it was identified that those with an income of 4 minimum wages had a higher addiction than those with 6 minimum wages. The finding that family income level increases social media addiction provides a significant observation regarding the impact of economic status on social media usage. This suggests that a higher income level might lead to increased access and, consequently, elevated levels of social media addiction.

The analysis conducted to determine the differentiation in social media addiction among university students according to the time spent on social media within 24 hours has revealed differences in the subdimensions of preoccupation, mood regulation, relapse, and conflict with the scale of social media addiction. When all subdimensions and the results of the social media addiction scale were examined, the participants showed an increase in addiction in all subdimensions and in the social media addiction scale as their time spent on social media increased. The least addictive person was determined among those who used it the least. The research results demonstrate a direct relationship between social media usage and addiction. Özdemir (2019) has

determined in his research that social media addiction increased as the time allocated to social media and the usage time increased. Similarly, Balcı and Gülcü (2013), Türkdoğan (2019), Kırık et al. (2015), Becan (2018), and Koçak and Tıraş (2021) have obtained similar results. This indicates that the effect of intensive social media use on individuals is not merely a waste of time but also encourages psychological and social addiction. The increase in students' preoccupation levels as social media usage time increases indicates that social media has begun to take on a more central role in students' daily lives. This illustrates how integrated social media has become into students' daily routines, social interactions, and even emotional needs. The connection between increased social media usage and mood regulation may indicate that students are meeting their emotional needs or seeking emotional relief through social media. This might suggest that students are turning to social media to alleviate stress, anxiety, or other emotional reactions. An increase in repetition with increased social media usage time could be an indication that individuals' social media usage habits are becoming automated. This suggests that social media usage has become a routine or habit, and breaking this routine may cause a sense of deficiency or discomfort in individuals. The increase in the level of conflict as social media usage time increases shows that social media usage is beginning to conflict with other areas of students' lives (academic, social, and personal). This indicates that excessive social media usage might begin to create incongruity with individuals' other life priorities. The determination that the least addicted are among those who use social media the least shows that the risk of addiction may decrease if social media is used properly and balanced. This result emphasizes the importance of social media education and awareness.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Education and Awareness Programs: Universities can organize education about social media addiction and its potential effects on students. These programs should provide students with information and strategies on how to use social media in a balanced and healthy way.
- Digital Detox: Students may be encouraged to undertake digital detoxes for specific periods. This could offer an experience that demonstrates to students that they can continue their lives without social media.
- Time Management Workshops: Social media usage may hinder students' ability to manage their time effectively. Time management workshops can offer students strategies for maintaining balance in both their academic and social lives.
- Mentorship and Counseling: Mentors or counselors who are informed about social media addiction symptoms could be assigned to students. They can guide students regarding social media usage and make appropriate referrals if excessive usage is detected.
- Applications and Software: Students can be recommended applications that track their social media usage time and provide warnings if certain limits are exceeded. Such apps can provide real-time feedback to increase students' awareness.
- Academic Research: Encouragement for more research on social media addiction in universities. This can help us gain deeper insights into the subject and develop effective measures.
- Social Activities and Clubs: Increasing the number of social activities and clubs on university campuses that encourage students to engage in social interactions away from computer and phone screens could be beneficial.
- Psychological Support: Psychological support must be provided to students experiencing social media addiction. Universities should offer counseling and therapy services on this subject.

In conclusion, a multifaceted and comprehensive approach is required for the prevention and management of social media addiction. These suggestions can assist university students in achieving healthy and balanced social media usage.

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