

Social Media Addiction

Subjects: Social Issues

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Social media addiction is a kind of psycho-social issues in the context of the increasing use of social media. What can be effective in reducing social media addiction, which causes social and economic problems, is an important issue today. It was determined that satisfaction with life had a mediation role in the effect of self-esteem and education level on social media addiction. Self-esteem and education level improved satisfaction with life, and increased satisfaction with life resulted in less social media addiction. These results demonstrate the importance of implementing specific practices based on self-esteem and education, especially for vulnerable groups, to minimize the problems that may arise with the excessive use of digital apps and social media.

Keywords: social media addiction ; self-esteem ; satisfaction with life

1. Introduction

Through social media, individuals present their content such as emotions, thoughts, pictures, photographs, and music to other people's likes or follow others' accounts ^{[1][2][3][4]}. Thus, mutual interaction leads to the rapid spread of social media in the world. According to the latest data, Turkey is located in the top five most active countries in the world in social media usage. While the second in Europe in social media usage, Turkey ranks first in the Middle East. According to the latest data of 2020, 54 million people are users of social media in Turkey. In addition to using social media for an average of 7.5 h a day, the age group with the most use was between 25–34 in 2019 ^{[5][6]}.

Addiction is an overwhelming desire for a person or an object and harms individuals spiritually, physically, or psychologically. Although the first thing that comes to mind with the concept of addiction is substance addiction, many types of behavioral addiction, such as the internet, gambling, sex, gaming, and social media addictions, can harm people ^{[7][8]}. Behaviors performed in an uncontrolled manner, excessive social media usage, or any substance have a risk of addiction for the individual. In addition, since it does not have a visible effect on the body, especially like chemical addictions, there may be a delay, which can harm the individual, in the awareness of social media addiction ^{[9][10]}.

Social media addiction is different from other addictions because social media is used in individuals' daily lives. For this reason, the treatment plan in social media addiction should be directed to the control of the person from social media networks, not to remove or prevent access to the individual ^{[11][12]}. This situation is one of the factors that create difficulties in treatment. Some conditions, such as fear of missing out (FoMO), make people more vulnerable to anxiety induced by online peer neglect, leading to social media addiction ^[12]. Dalvi-Esfahani et al. ^[13] found empathic concern and perspective-taking significantly and negatively predicted social media addiction. In addition, social media addiction is seen as less harmful than other addictions for both the individual and the family, and the low level of consciousness makes treatment difficult. Therefore, it is vital to have significant awareness of the individual's social media usage, understand the negative effects of social media use, control the time spent on social media for time management, and engage in social activities to stay away from the internet ^[10].

As addiction develops, psychiatric issues such as social relationships and communication skills, sleep-related eating disorders, social isolation, aggression, and impaired social development emerge ^{[11][9][14][15][16]}. Individuals who actively use social media tend to show themselves and their living conditions better than they are. This situation negatively affects the satisfaction with the life of social media users by causing them to feel weaker and inadequate ^{[17][18]}. While uncontrolled use of social media causes social and psychological problems in individuals, it can also be used to escape psychological issues such as loneliness, stress, anxiety, negative self-perception, and depression ^{[19][20]}. Research shows that social media addiction affects self-esteem, whereas some studies explain that low self-esteem also causes social media addiction ^{[21][22][23]}. The current literature indicates a relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem, and both variables have significant and negative effects on each other. Some studies show that people, especially adolescents, tend to use social media to avoid problems that bother them ^{[24][25]}. According to the related literature, the following hypotheses were established:

Hypothesis 1 (H1).

Self-esteem (i) and education level (ii) have a negative effect on social media addiction.

Hypothesis 2 (H2).

There is a negative association between satisfaction with life and social media addiction.

2. Mediating Role of Satisfaction with Life in the Effect of Self-Esteem and Education on Social Media Addiction

The effect of self-esteem and education level on social media addiction was examined. It is revealed that satisfaction with life had a mediator role in the effect of self-esteem and education level on social media addiction. The partial mediating effect of satisfaction with life in the effect of self-esteem on social media addiction and a full mediating effect of satisfaction with life in the effect of education level on social media addiction were determined. According to these data, satisfaction with life improves as self-esteem increases. While satisfaction with life improves as self-esteem increases, the rise in satisfaction with life had a negative and significant effect on social media addiction. Accordingly, increased self-esteem negatively affected social media addiction through the satisfaction with life mediation variable. However, since the direct effect between self-esteem and social media addiction continues, satisfaction with life was partially mediated.

Furthermore, satisfaction with life had a full mediation effect on the impact of education level on social media addiction. Since the total and direct effect, between education level and social media addiction was not significant, and there was a significant indirect effect through the mediating variable and satisfaction with life, a full mediation was determined.

When the current literature was examined, studies showed a significant negative relationship between social media use and self-esteem, in support of the research findings [26][27][28][29][30][31][32][33]. It was seen that the data obtained from these studies support the results of our research. Studies by Şahin and Kumcak [30] and Thadani and Cheung [23] similarly emphasize that self-esteem had a significant negative relationship with social media addiction. In contrast, some studies did not find a significant relationship between the use of social media and self-esteem. For example, in the Greenberg [34] study, there was no important association between the forms of addiction and self-esteem. Similarly, some reports had not established a significant association between negative internet usage and self-esteem [35]. These results indicate that the association between social media addiction and self-esteem remains subject to detailed research.

There was a direct and significant relationship between satisfaction with life and social media addiction. A study conducted by Balcı and Koçak [31] found that as individuals' satisfaction with life increases, their social media addiction decreases significantly. According to a survey conducted by Longstreet and Brooks [36], there was a significant negative relationship between satisfaction with life and social media addiction. Likewise, studies with findings indicate that satisfaction with life negatively affects social media use [18][26][28][37]. According to another study conducted on Facebook users, similar data were obtained indicating that social media addiction decreases as satisfaction with life increases [38][39]. According to other studies, no significant relationships were found between social media use and satisfaction with life [40][41].

Similar studies trying to examine the mediation effect of self-esteem in the impact of satisfaction with life on social media addiction were examined. It was understood that there were no similar studies in the national literature, but there were few studies in the international literature. According to a survey conducted by Chasanah et al. [25], it was concluded that self-esteem had a mediating role between satisfaction with life and social media addiction and that there was a significant positive relationship between satisfaction with life and self-esteem. In other studies, it was found that self-esteem had a mediating role between social media addiction and satisfaction with life [42][43].

According to the findings obtained from the research, it was seen that the group with the highest social media addiction in terms of marital status and gender was women and singles. It was observed that married individuals had higher satisfaction with life than single individuals, and satisfaction with life increased as the education level increased. Research conducted by Hawi and Samaha [44] showed that women's social media addiction level was higher than men's. Similarly, according to studies, women's social media usage and addiction levels were higher than men's [29][40][41][45], also studies found that social media addiction levels do not vary in terms of gender [46][47]. Studies also found that men's social media addiction and usage rates were greater than women's [27]. Likewise, in a number of research undertaken by Güler [48] and Özdaş [49], married individuals have higher satisfaction with life than single individuals, supporting our analysis. In a study by Kaya [50], it was found that, as the level of education rises, satisfaction with life increases, and the rate of social media usage among women was higher than that of men. Research by Kirişoğlu showed a significant effect of marital status and education on satisfaction with life. It was determined that married people, women, in older age, and college graduates were more satisfied with life and married, men, in older age, and educated had more self-esteem [51]. Consistent with the

results of our study, it was determined in the literature that the age variable has a positive association with self-esteem and satisfaction with life. In contrast, it has a negative correlation with the internet and social media addiction [51][52][53][54][55][56][57]. However, in the literature, it was seen that the use of the internet and social media by the elderly to spend time, socialize, shop, and find old friends have been increasing [58][59].

When the literature was examined, the national and international studies that examine three variables simultaneously were quite inadequate; for this reason, this study was thought to contain originality in terms of its results. Before starting the study, a research question was asked: how does self-esteem, education level, satisfaction with life, and demographic variables associate with social media addiction? Therefore, with the present study, we wanted to examine the role of self-esteem and education level in the effect on social media addiction and whether satisfaction with life has a mediating effect in this role.

With the widespread use of digital technologies and the internet in all areas, social media is now used by all segments of society, reaching levels that will make it addictive. The internet and social media, which can be accessed from anywhere, disrupt our daily behavior by causing home, workplace, school, and private life to become intertwined. Due to the benefits of digital technologies and the internet, it is no longer possible not to use them. However, technology addiction and social media addiction have become essential problems with the increasing use of smartphones. Therefore, online digital technologies should be used in a more balanced and responsible manner.

Since social media addiction is a behavioral addiction, it will be possible to reduce social media addiction by changing behaviors. Therefore, we included self-esteem and education, which can change human behavior in our model, and examined their relationship to social media addiction. We understood that self-esteem and education increase individuals' satisfaction with life levels and increasing satisfaction with life in individuals reduces social media addiction. We found a positive correlation between age and self-esteem and satisfaction with life and a negative correlation between age and social media addiction in the study. It was determined that the satisfaction with life and self-esteem levels of married people and social media addictions of singles and women were high. According to demographic comparisons, young people, singles, and women were at higher risk for social media addiction.

It was understood that self-esteem and education are crucial in reducing social media addiction. Furthermore, self-esteem and education are phenomena that increase individuals' responsibilities regarding their families, social circles, and careers. Therefore, in the fight against technology addiction and social media addiction, which are increasingly disrupting the daily lives of individuals and threatening the future of their society, policies, and practices that will strengthen the self-esteem and education in individuals to take responsibility should be encouraged.

3. Conclusions and Some Implications

Social media applications are increasing the number of users day by day by bringing many problems. One of the most important of these problems is addiction. Social media addiction is as dangerous for human health as many other addictions. This situation may result from various social, physical health, and psychological problems of individuals. Ultimately, this process leads to an increase or decrease in the satisfaction with the life of individuals.

As a result, self-esteem and education had an indirect effect via satisfaction with life on social media addiction, and satisfaction with life negatively affected individuals' social media addiction. Considering that satisfaction with life is a whole of positive feelings and thoughts about the individual's life, it was found that this satisfaction decreases social media use and addiction. At the same time, it was concluded that self-esteem had a negative effect on individuals' social media addiction. Ultimately, our study found that self-esteem and education had a significant effect on social media addiction through the satisfaction with life mediation variable.

It was understood that social media addiction, which may result in physical, mental, and social health, was influenced by personality traits such as self-esteem, education, and satisfaction with life. For this reason, controlled and responsible social media use is essential for both individual and public health. Furthermore, considering the gender, single, and age variable, the increase in self-esteem in women, single and young, had a more positive effect on their life satisfaction and had a negative effect on their social media addiction. Therefore, the empowerment of these disadvantaged groups through self-esteem and education should be considered significant for the future health of Turkish society.

Some policies must be implemented; awareness-raising training activities should be carried out for social media users. Much more comprehensive research is needed on self-esteem. Activities should be organized to reduce the time spent on social media by increasing education, cultural, artistic, and sports activities for young people. Empowering individuals by revealing their self-efficacy and skills and evolving their attitudes towards themselves in a positive way will increase their

self-esteem. Therefore, increased self-esteem is critical for providing individual and group mental health leading to satisfaction with life and reducing social media addiction. For this purpose, it is necessary to conduct studies that provide micro and macro perspectives. Furthermore, educational, informative, directive, and empowering policies and activities must be carried out in different segments of society.

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