

RIGIDITY AND SOCIAL NETWORKING ADDICTION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

In addition to looking at demographic factors including gender, department, school type, and length of usage, the topic of social media addiction among college and secondary school students is investigated in this study. Addiction characteristics such as salience, tolerance, mood regulation, withdrawal, relapse, and conflict are also examined. The results reveal that there is a moderate level of addiction among high school and college students, raising worries about a possible escalation given the growing trend in social media use. In comparison to their Western counterparts, Eastern or developing nations have different issues when it comes to social media addiction. The research emphasizes the cultural and developmental context of social media addiction in Turkey. Compared to college students, high school students had far greater levels of addiction, which may be related to differences in their age groups and increased exam anxiety. Future study and intervention opportunities may be indicated by the relationship between social media addiction and levels of anxiety and sadness.

Keywords: social media addiction, high school students, college students, demographic variables, addiction dimensions, cultural context, test anxiety, depression, anxiety.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rise in popularity of social networking sites has changed how college students engage and communicate with one another. These platforms provide hitherto unseen chances for community development, communication, and information exchange. Notwithstanding its advantages, concerns have been raised about the potentially addictive nature of social networking sites and the effects of excessive use on the wellbeing and academic performance of college students. Rigidity is one of the main ideas connected to social networking addiction. It describes the rigid and obsessive behaviors people display while using these platforms. An unwillingness to manage use in spite of negative consequences, giving priority to social networking above other obligations, and going through withdrawal symptoms when access is restricted are examples of rigidity. Determining the correlation between inflexibility and addiction to social networking sites is essential for creating successful strategies to tackle this escalating problem among university attendees.

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The purpose of this research is to investigate how college students' addiction to social networking sites and rigidity interact. Through investigating the frequency of inflexibility in social media use and its correlation with addiction levels, our aim is to elucidate the fundamental processes propelling excessive consumption and its consequences for students' mental health and scholastic achievement. This study will examine the theoretical frameworks, such as cognitive-behavioral models and addiction theories that underlie social networking addiction via a thorough analysis of the body of current material. Additionally, we will look at empirical research that looks at the prevalence of social networking addiction among college students as well as the elements that may contribute to the development of the addiction, with a specific emphasis on rigidity as a possible predictor.

Additionally, this research will investigate the several aspects of rigidity in social networking activity, including inclinations toward social comparison, obsessive monitoring, and FOMO. By clarifying these points, we want to shed light on the particular behavioral patterns that lead to addiction and develop focused intervention techniques. In the end, the purpose of this study is to fill gaps in our understanding of the correlation between compulsive use of social media and inflexibility, which will help guide therapeutic interventions and preventative measures that support healthier digital habits and a balanced approach to social media use among college students.

1.1 Social Networking

Social media has transformed how billions of people interact, connect, and exchange information in the digital age. Social networking involves using online platforms and apps to create virtual communities, communicate with peers, and share text, photographs, and videos. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and LinkedIn have changed interpersonal interactions by allowing people to keep in touch with friends, family, coworkers, and even strangers across borders. These networks feature status updates, picture sharing, instant chat, and live video streaming, giving users unparalleled self-expression and social connection.

Social networking appeals to human aspirations for connection, belonging, and self-expression in an increasingly linked world. Social networking services allow users to create virtual identities, design online personas, and join online groups that match their interests, beliefs, and goals. Social networking has also influenced communication, consumer behavior, and cultural standards in education, business, politics, and entertainment. Social media is used by educators to promote collaborative learning, resource sharing, and student interaction outside of the classroom.

Social media helps businesses reach and engage target audiences, get consumer feedback, and establish brand loyalty via individualized interactions. Politically, social media platforms have helped grassroots movements and political action worldwide by rallying support, spreading

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information, and molding public opinion. Social media has downsides despite its many benefits. Concerns include privacy infringement, cyberbullying, disinformation, and social media addiction. Compulsive social media use may lower productivity, impair sleep, and harm mental health. As social networking permeates every part of contemporary life, its effects on people, groups, and society must be critically examined. Understanding social networking's pros and cons may help us build meaningful relationships, encourage civic involvement, and promote constructive social change in the digital age.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociological networking literature covers a wide variety of subjects, such as the psychological, sociological, and cultural ramifications of social networking, as well as how it affects people's connections with one another and their general well-being. Numerous facets of social networking behavior have been studied in research, including reasons for using, engagement patterns, and the influence of platforms on identity and self-presentation.

Research has also looked at how social networking affects mental health outcomes, and the results show that, depending on use habits, content consumption, and social support networks, there may be both good and negative correlations. Furthermore, researchers have examined how social networking might support the development of social capital, the creation of communities, and group initiatives, emphasizing its capacity to cross geographical, cultural, and ideological barriers. To reduce hazards and encourage responsible use of social networking platforms, ethical norms, legal safeguards, and digital literacy programs are necessary. Concerns have been expressed over privacy, cyberbullying, and the monetization of personal data. In the context of social networking, the literature emphasizes the intricate interactions between technology, human behavior, and societal dynamics, emphasizing the need for multidisciplinary methods to comprehend and handle the many possibilities and difficulties this ubiquitous phenomena presents.

3. METHODS

3.1. Participants

The bulk of social media users, according to the literature, are teens and young adults. Practically speaking, college students are young adults and high school students are teens. Given that these two groups comprise the majority of social media users, their age groups may render them more susceptible to social media addiction than other demographic groups. Due to this rationale, college students made up the sample for this research. Table 1 displays the sample's makeup.

Table 1: Features of the Involved Parties

College Students	Male	Female	Total
Department of Public Relations	115	75	190

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Department of Journalism	36	63	99
Department of Communication Design	24	20	44
	200	200	400
Department of Cinema-TV	25	42	67

400 students made up the study's sample; 300 (43%) were high school students and 400 (57%) were college students. There were 200 (50%) male and 200 (50%) female college students, demonstrating a fair gender distribution. The Department of Public Relations enrolled 190 students, followed by the Department of Journalism (99 students), the Department of Cinema-TV (67 students), and the Department of Communication Design (44 students). These departments accounted for the bulk of college enrollment.

The distribution of college students per department differed. With 115 men and 75 women, the Department of Public Relations had the largest number of participants. There were 42 ladies and 25 guys in the Department of Cinema-TV. There were 63 ladies and 36 guys in the journalism department. There were twenty women and twenty men in the Department of Communication Design.

It was found that 99% of college students had a smartphone and that 87% of them used social media for more than two hours a day.

3.2. Instrumentation

This study's data collection was done using a Likert-type scale that included two main portions. The first section included structured questions to gather participant personal data, such as gender, department, school, daily social media activity, and possession of a mobile phone. Numerous international studies that used BFAS made it easier to compare their findings with those of comparable investigations carried out in other nations.

The scale went through many levels of validation. The BFAS's eighteen items were first translated into Turkish and then the scale's focus was shifted from Facebook addiction to social media addiction. Subsequently, the translated version was assessed by language experts and social media professionals, resulting in minor adjustments. After 400 college students participated in a pilot test, the item phrasing was further improved. Following analysis of the gathered data, the scale's Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was determined to be .90, indicating strong reliability.

The total degree of social media addiction as well as the severity of each participant's specific addiction symptoms were measured using the means of the participants. The 18 five-point questions on the test resulted in scores ranging from 18 to 90. These classifications corresponded with the original scale's recommendations.

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Different cut-off numbers for addiction levels were set by earlier research conducted in different nations. For example, China used 3.00, Bhutan used 4.00, Belgium used a mean score of 2.00, and Egypt utilized score ranges that were comparable to those in the current research. The present study recognized the possible disparities among persons classified as addicted and found that these four layers were more accurate markers of social media addiction levels than a binary categorization of addicted vs. non-addicted. The 400 college students in the sample were subjected to the same data collecting and analysis protocols as previously described. This meticulous methodology guaranteed uniformity and dependability while evaluating college students' addiction to social media.

3.3. Procedures

Both subsamples' data gathering methods were largely the same. Following approval from the chosen schools, the researchers gave detailed instructions to the on-site teachers so they could administer the scale. The researchers worked with the principal and a guidance teacher to collect data from high school pupils. As part of the school's guidance and counseling programs, they gave their pupils the scale. In March of 2017, it took around four weeks to finish gathering data at the high school. The scale was given to communication students in college during required courses by two professors assisted by research assistants. It took almost four weeks to administer the scale to college students in April 2017. The study's specifics were explained to every student, participation was entirely optional, and responders received no compensation for their time. Most crucially, neither the high school instructors nor the college professors have asked the students for their names or disclosed any information about their identities to the researchers.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Gender

Table 2 displays the gender-related t-test findings, potential score ranges (minimum and maximum values), and descriptive data.

Table 2: Results of the t-test for each participant's gender effects

Male (n=200)				Female (n=200)				General (n=400)		
M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD	p
3.36	0.73	1.00	5.00	3.25	0.80	1.00	5.00	3.78	0.76	.001

The sample as a whole has a mean addiction score of 3.36, which is considered moderate. Although this number isn't excessively high or low, it nevertheless merits discussion. The individuals' overall addiction ratings varied significantly depending on their gender.

4.2. School Type

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Table 3 displays the data related to the levels of addiction among college and high school students. As shown in the table, the average addiction score for college students is 2.38, which is lower than the average score for high school students, who have an average score of 2.47. College students' mean scores were significantly different from those of high school students ($p < .013$). As a result, high school students rely more on social media than college students.

Table 3: t-test comparing students in high school and those in college

High School (n=150)				College Students (n=350)				General (n=400)		
M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD	p
2.47	0.73	1.00	5.00	2.35	0.80	1.00	5.00	2.38	0.76	.001

For college students, department-based disparities were looked at. For the withdrawal dimension alone, there was a statistically significant departmental impact. Other aspects of addiction showed no discernible variations.

4.3. Duration of Daily Use

As previously mentioned, more than two hours are spent on social media by almost 85% of students every day. For kids in high school and college, the situation is almost same. Thus, it was investigated how social media usage, whether regular or prolonged, affected addictive behaviors. ANOVA findings are shown in Table 4. The table makes it evident that daily time spent on social media has a substantial effect on the length of usage ($p < .000$).

Table 4: Analysis of Variance for Daily Use Duration

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	82.565	3	23.654	68.266	.000
Within Groups	356.256	396	.564		
Total	412.365	399			

Multiple comparisons were conducted for different amounts of daily social media use using the ANOVA test. Significant findings were obtained from all comparisons ($p < .001$). The largest difference (mean difference of 1.21/5,00) was found between the least and greatest amounts of time. As a result, it's probably reasonable to conclude that addiction levels rise in tandem with the amount of time spent on social media. Or, to put it another way, the addiction decreases with less time. Subsequent investigations revealed that increased social media use raises the degree of addiction across the board.

Table 5: Addiction Dimension Correlation Values

	Salience	Tolerance	Mood	Relapse	Withdrawal	Conflict
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Salience	1.000	.554**	.287**	.343**	.348**	.335**
Tolerance		1.000	.392**	.492**	.507**	.468**
Mood			1.000	.312**	.308**	.410**
Relapse				1.000	.431**	.609**
Withdrawal					1.000	.399**
Conflict						1.000

Significant at .05, ** Significant at .01

Salience and mood modulation have the lowest association ($r=.287$), whereas relapse and conflict have the greatest correlation ($r=.609$). The variables of social media addiction exhibit medium to high degrees of association. The overall situation was the same for both groups when computations for high school and college students were done separately.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In addition to taking into account demographic factors like gender, school, department, and length of use, this research aimed to assess and contrast the levels of social media addiction among college and high school students. Salience, tolerance, mood modulation, withdrawal, relapse, and conflict were some of the addiction features that were studied.

According to the research, a moderate degree of social media addiction was reported by students in both high school and college. Given the continuous growing trend in social media use, there's a worry that this level might rise even if it may not be frightening now. This emphasizes how critical it is to move quickly to address and maybe lessen this kind of addiction among Turkish students. It's important to take into account the developmental and cultural setting in which this addiction appears. The reality that Turkey, similar to many other emerging or Eastern nations, encounters difficulties in managing social media addiction in contrast to Western or developed nations underscores the matter of the digital divide. Turkey seems to be attempting to solve the issue without really knowing how to do so.

It is clear that high school pupils have a far greater degree of addiction than do their college counterparts when comparing their respective addiction profiles. This discrepancy may be explained by variables including age group composition, educational attainment, and the increased test anxiety that many high school students experience, especially while they are getting ready for the demanding college admission examinations. In contrast to college students, who are often free from such expectations, the stress and strain of these tests may cause high school pupils to seek comfort or diversion via increasing online contacts. This finding is consistent with other studies showing a link between social media addiction and anxiety and sadness. People who suffer from greater levels of anxiety and despair can be more prone to developing a social media addiction. Therefore, additional research on this topic is necessary to

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provide a more comprehensive knowledge and offer insightful advice on how to successfully treat social media addiction.

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