

DOES SOCIAL MEDIA USE INFLUENCE LIFE SATISFACTION? EVIDENCE FROM A NATIONWIDE SURVEY IN TÜRKİYE*

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This study complies with research and publication ethics.

Abstract

The impact of media on individuals has been debated throughout the history of communication, and these effects have been examined in three distinct periods: Strong, limited, and re-strong. However, the evolution of digital media applications, along with the elimination of time and space constraints in accessing information, has led to an increase in the speed and intensity with which these applications permeate individual lives, taking the issue of media influence to a new level. In particular, the increase in the use of social media applications and the lifestyles exhibited through these applications have brought into question the impact on individuals' life satisfaction. A review of the literature revealed that no definitive consensus has been reached on whether there is a relationship between social media use and life satisfaction. Therefore, it was determined that the relationship between these two variables remains open to further research, and therefore, it has been explored. The research is considered important because it is a current study conducted on a large-scale Türkiye sample. In this context, a study was conducted on individuals living in 26 provinces from 12 regions representative of Türkiye according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) "Türkiye Statistical Regional Units Classification" Level 1. Data were collected from a total of 1010 individuals in the study, which was conducted using a survey technique. The collected data were subjected to Factor Analysis, Independent Samples T-Test, ANOVA and Regression Analysis using SPSS. The analysis results reveal that social media use variables have a low lifetime explanation; they emerge from multifaceted life factors and demonstrate that media effects are contextual in nature to such an extent that they cannot be explained by deterministic approaches.

Keywords: digital communication, social media, life satisfaction, *YouTube*, *Instagram*.

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SOSYAL MEDYA KULLANIMI YAŐAM MEMNUNİYETİNİ ETKİLER Mİ? TÜRKİYE GENELİNİ KAPSAYAN BİR ARAŐTIRMA*

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Bu çalışma araştırma ve yayın etiğine uygun olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Öz

Medyanın bireyler üzerindeki etkisi iletişim tarihi boyunca tartışılmış, bu etkiler güçlü, sınırlı ve tekrar güçlü olmak üzere üç dönemde incelenmiştir. Ancak dijital medya uygulamalarının gelişimiyle enformasyona erişimdeki zaman ve mekân bağlamının ortadan kalkması, bu uygulamaların bireylerin yaşamına nüfuz etme hızı ve yoğunluğunun da artmasına yol açmış ve medya etkisi meselesini yeni bir boyuta taşımıştır. Özellikle sosyal medya uygulamalarını kullanım oranlarındaki artış ve bu uygulamalardan sergilenen yaşam tarzları bireylerin yaşam memnuniyetleri üzerindeki etki meselesini tartışmaya açmıştır. Alan yazını incelendiğinde sosyal medya kullanımı ve yaşam memnuniyeti arasında ilişki olup olmadığı noktasında kesin bir uzlaşmaya varılamadığı görülmüştür. Bu nedenle bu iki değişken arasındaki ilişkiye ilişkin net bir sonuca ulaşamadığı ve hala araştırmaya açık bir alan olduğu düşünülmüş ve bu amaçla sorgulamaya açılmıştır. Araştırmanın büyük ölçekli Türkiye örneklemini üzerinden yapılmış güncel bir araştırma olması nedeniyle önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu kapsamda Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu'nun (TÜİK) "Türkiye İstatistik Bölge Birimleri Sınıflandırması" Düzey 1'den Türkiye'yi temsil etme kabiliyetine sahip 12 bölgeden 26 ilde yaşayan bireyler üzerinde araştırma yapılmıştır. Anket tekniği kullanılarak yapılan araştırmada toplamda 1010 kişiden veri toplanmıştır. Toplanan veriler SPSS programı kullanılarak, Faktör Analizi, Bağımsız Örneklem T Testi, Tek Yönlü Varyans Analizi (ANOVA) ve Regresyon Analizi'ne tabi tutulmuştur. Analiz sonuçları, sosyal medya kullanım değişkenlerinin yaşam memnuniyetini açıklama düzeyinin düşük olduğunu ortaya koymakta; yaşam memnuniyetinin çok boyutlu faktörlerle ilişkili olduğunu ve medya etkilerinin determinist yaklaşımlarla açıklanamayacak ölçüde bağlamsal bir nitelik taşıdığını göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: dijital iletişim, sosyal medya, yaşam memnuniyeti, *YouTube*, *Instagram*.

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Introduction

The rapid transformation in digital media technologies has also impacted individuals' daily lives, reshaping many social systems from how they communicate with each other to their daily routines. The Web 2.0 internet infrastructure, the primary driver of this transformation, has been integrated into social systems, particularly shifting communication flow from dialogue to monologue, creating an interactive and participatory structure. This transformation is not only a technical and technological innovation but also encompasses a socio-cultural change for individuals as social beings, redefining their position in relation to media. The fact that users on social media platforms have become both producers and consumers of information has made these platforms one of the dominant socialization environments of digital societies.

As Postman (2006, p. 62) pointed out in his 1992 conceptualization of "technopoly," technology in today's societies has become much more than just a tool; it has become an influential stakeholder in shaping culture. In this context, social media platforms can be described as environments where individuals acquire and display new identities, maintain friendships, interact with their environment, socialize, and ultimately become involved in each other's lives, constantly observing and comparing them. Platforms like *Instagram* and *YouTube*, which are dominated by visual culture and have high interaction rates, stand out as channels with the potential to influence individuals' perceptions of lifestyle, satisfaction, and expectations.

The widespread use of social media by individuals has opened up a significant area of debate regarding the impact of these platforms on life satisfaction and fulfillment levels. While the literature suggests that social media can increase life satisfaction by providing social support, a sense of belonging, ease of communication, a participatory culture, and freedom, it also argues that it can create situations that lead to feelings of inadequacy and dissatisfaction in individuals, particularly through idealized representations of life, perfect lives, beauty standards, and excessive and luxurious consumption, thus pushing them towards social comparison. However, existing studies indicate a lack of consensus on the type and nature of the relationship between social media use and life satisfaction. Furthermore, the fact that most of the research examined focuses on limited samples, such as specific age groups, genders, or university students, reduces the generalizability of the findings.

Based on the evaluations, it was concluded that the research on the impact of social media use on life satisfaction should be re-evaluated using various demographic variables and conducted on larger-scale societal samples. Furthermore, the fact that social media usage rates and time spent on these platforms in our country are above global averages makes addressing the issue in a national context even more meaningful. Despite this, it is noteworthy that empirical studies conducted with large participant groups representing the whole of Türkiye are limited.

The main objective of this study is to reveal the impact of social media use on life satisfaction among individuals living in Türkiye. The study aims to provide an empirical contribution to the controversial findings in the literature by analyzing the paradox between *Instagram* and *YouTube* usage times and life satisfaction within the framework of demographic variables. Given that the research is conducted using a large sample capable of representing Türkiye, it is expected to provide a holistic perspective on the existing theoretical and empirical discussions regarding the relationship between social media and life satisfaction.

Literature Overview

With the proliferation of social media platforms and the increased time spent on them, individuals' desires and expectations, routine life cycles, social relationships, socialization styles, and evaluations of all these processes have become more intense and impulsive in the digital environment. Individuals who can stay in constant communication through social networks developed with Web 2.0 technologies make increasingly subjective evaluations and comparisons about people, events, and situations, making social media not just a communication tool, but the central hub of digital socialization.

Web 2.0 technology, the basis of digital socialization, has made interactive communication possible and carried this interaction to an unlimited and uninterrupted point. Compared to its predecessors, Web 2.0 symbolized fast and interactive communication and encouraged continuous creation. According to Sharma (2008), Web 2.0 is defined as the creation of content by a human or virtual user and the development phase of this content. In this context, the most important feature of Web 2.0 is that it gives every internet user the right to create and participate in content and makes the web a dynamic and proactive environment. In this respect, Göka (2017, pp. 156-157) points out that Web 2.0 has turned individuals into "journalists, editors, publishers, experts, critics and more" and has become central to people's daily activities with the technology and user-friendly platforms it brings with it. Web 2.0 tools, which transform individuals from viewers to users and support the understanding of participatory culture in this context, continue to increase this participation by renewing and diversifying today. Among these tools, social media platforms are the most critical development reflecting the "technological character of the age."

Fuchs (2020, p. 18) discussed how individuals socialize on social media platforms and interpreted social media as the objectification of individuals' social relationships. Göka (2017, p. 129) noted that young people, especially, now meet their need to establish social relationships and socialize through virtual environments and stated that new sociabilities are formed in these environments. Today's societies and the social media platforms where the digital individuals of these societies exhibit their "new sociabilities" appear as social platforms where individuals are frequently "online" in their daily life flows, in

popular terms, and where different dimensions of the need, especially leisure time, can be met.

In this context, examining current social media usage rates in our country is crucial to understanding the extent to which social media influences individuals' routine life cycles, relationship patterns, and socialization processes. Quantitative data such as social media usage rates, usage durations, most used applications, the number of active social media accounts on these applications, user density, and the ratio of users to the population support the scope of the digital socialization phenomenon addressed in this research with concrete data, contributing to a more understandable and analyzable understanding of the subject.

With the proliferation of social media channels, there has been a rapid increase in usage rates and time spent on these platforms over the years. Following *Meltwater's Digital 2024 Report*, 67% of Türkiye's population uses social media. In the report, where the number of active social media accounts in Türkiye is announced as 303 million, it is seen that individuals in Türkiye spend 2 hours and 37 minutes daily on social media platforms. Again, per the *Digital 2024 Global Report* prepared by *We Are Social* after large-scale research, individuals in Türkiye spend 6 hours and 57 minutes on the Internet daily while spending 2 hours and 44 minutes on social media applications. According to *DataReportal's Digital 2024: Türkiye* report, there are 57.50 million real social media users in Türkiye, 66.8 percent of Türkiye's population. Concerning the reports, it is possible to say that the duration of social media use and the number of users in Türkiye are relatively high compared to the population and tend to increase yearly.

When we look at the research on the most used social media platforms in Türkiye, we see that the statistics are concentrated on *Instagram* and *YouTube*. Founded in 2005, *YouTube* is a video display platform that allows users to watch, upload, and comment on videos. *YouTube* (2025), which is used for information, inspiration, and entertainment, is used and visited by millions of people every day with its features such as publishing/watching videos, live streaming (*YouTube Live*), listening to podcasts, publishing/watching short videos (short) and listening to music (*YouTube Music*). Founded in 2010, *Instagram* (2025) has become the favorite social media platform in Türkiye with its features such as connecting with friends and other users through messages, photos, and videos (direct message), creating content based on interests and discovering content creators (post, story), browsing the latest trends (discovery), following people or influencers one admires, and creating fun and short videos (reels). According to the results of the Household Information Technology (IT) Usage Survey conducted by TURKSTAT in 2024, *Instagram* was first among the most used social media platforms in Türkiye with 71.3%. *YouTube* ranked second with 65.4%. *DataReportal's* data for January 2024 shows that *YouTube* had 57.50 million users in Türkiye in early 2024, while *Instagram* had

57.10 million users. When the data are analyzed, individuals living in Türkiye may spend most of their time on Instagram and *YouTube* among social media platforms.

In communication and new media literature, the effects of social media use on individuals are mostly discussed through the concepts of psychological well-being and life satisfaction. Life satisfaction refers to the overall level of contentment an individual reaches as a result of cognitively evaluating their own life circumstances and is considered one of the fundamental indicators of subjective well-being. The fact that social media environments increase individuals' social comparison processes, transform social support mechanisms, and make self-presentations more visible has made the potential effects of these platforms on life satisfaction a subject of research.

It is noteworthy that the findings regarding the relationship between social media use and life satisfaction in the literature are not homogeneous.

As a result of the studies conducted by Sigeze (2020, p. 136) and Gölcü et al. (2019, p. 184) on university students, it was determined that there was no significant correlation between social media use and life satisfaction and satisfaction. Again, as a result of the study conducted by Kalafat Çat et al. (2021, p. 185) among social media users living in Türkiye, no meaningful correlation was found between the duration of social media use and life satisfaction levels of individuals. Akkaş and Turan (2024, p. 245) conducted a systematic review of forty-three articles and concluded that there is no dominant and strong correlation between social network use and life satisfaction. Doyaroğlu and Noyan (2023) and Hawi and Samaha (2016, p. 576) found that using social networking sites has no direct effect on life satisfaction in their research on university students. Again, Raza et al. (2020, p. 141) studied university students and discovered that social benefits from social media increased young people's life satisfaction. At the same time, excessive socialization caused a decrease in students' life satisfaction, but it was found that social media did not directly affect life satisfaction.

In their study, Longstreet and Brooks (2017, pp. 75-76) emphasized that a decrease in life satisfaction increases the use of social media and consequently leads to addiction, and found a relationship between the deprivations felt during life and internet and social media addiction. The indications of the study point to an enhancement in internet use and addiction to social media, especially when the individual leads a stressful life deprived of happiness. Balcı and Kaya (2021, p. 64) focused on the efficacy of social media's social support on young people's life satisfaction. They found that social media's emotional and social support increased young people's life satisfaction (p. 64). Karaca (2021, p. 220) conducted a study on social media users over seventeen and found a relationship between the participants' life satisfaction and the "social interaction, information, leisure time utilization, economic benefit motivations" provided by social media. Gaia et al. (2020, p. 111) found that the

use of social networking sites in older people (65+) and pre-elderly (56-64) has an affirmative efficacy on their life satisfaction.

When these findings are considered together, it becomes clear that the effect of social media use on life satisfaction is not one-sided and generalizable. One of the important reasons for the conflicting results obtained in the literature is that most studies have been conducted on specific age groups or limited samples. This makes it difficult to evaluate the social media-life satisfaction relationship on a societal scale. Therefore, large-scale research encompassing individuals with diverse demographic characteristics is needed. This study aims to overcome this limitation in the literature and contribute to the empirical discussions on the subject by examining the effect of social media use on life satisfaction through a broad sample of participants representing the entire country of Türkiye.

Aim and Methodology

Aim of the research

This study aims to reveal the influence of social media use on the life satisfaction of individuals living in Türkiye.

Hypotheses of the research

H1: Participants with university education have higher life satisfaction than participants with primary and secondary school education.

H2: Male respondents have lower life satisfaction than female respondents

H3: Participants' age affects their life satisfaction

H4: Participants' monthly income affects their life satisfaction

H5: Participants' duration of *Instagram* use affects their life satisfaction

H6: Participants' duration of *YouTube* use affect their life satisfaction.

Research methodology

A quantitative research method was used. The quantitative research design is the survey design, one of the non-experimental designs. The survey design is used in research in which a large group of participants' opinions, thoughts, attitudes, and interests regarding an event or subject are determined (Şekercioğlu, 2022, p. 22). The reason for choosing the survey design is that the research sample consists of a large group of participants, and it is aimed at determining the participants' attitudes toward the research topic. In additi-

on, the survey design was chosen in this study due to the sample size and the situation analysis.

Data were obtained from the participants using the questionnaire technique- the survey consisted of two moieties. The first moiety implies demographic data like gender, age, education level, monthly income, and questions about *Instagram* and *YouTube* usage. The second moiety used the 'Contentment With Life Scale' developed by Akin and Yalınz (2015). The scale consists of 5 judgment sentences, and the participants were asked to answer their agreement with these sentences on a 7-point Likert scale. The questionnaire form was applied via telephone. The data obtained within the scope of the questionnaire were evaluated with 'Factor Analysis', 'Independent Sample T-Test', 'One-Way Analysis of Variance', and 'Regression Analysis' using the *SPSS 25.0* program.

Universe and sample of the research

The universe of this research is formed of individuals living in Türkiye. The research sample consists of 1010 people selected from 12 regions and 26 provinces that can represent Türkiye in Level 1 of the Turkish Statistical Institute's (TURKSTAT) Classification of Statistical Regional Units of Türkiye. The sample was selected by a simple random method.

Ethical compliance of the research

Regarding the Contentment With Life Scale developed by Akin and Yalınz (2015) used in the questionnaire form, the author was contacted by e-mail, and the necessary permissions were obtained for using the scale. For the entire questionnaire, the ethical approval of the research was acquired with the decree numbered 02 taken at the Sakarya University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee meeting dated 03.05.2023 and numbered 57.

Limitations of the study

The research was limited to *Instagram* and *YouTube*, social media platforms.

Findings of the Study

The data on the demographic distinctives of the participants are analyzed and given below.

Table 1. Distribution of participants by province

Province	N	%
Adana	41	4,1
Ağrı	16	1,6
Ankara	61	6,0
Antalya	39	3,9
Aydın	46	4,6
Balıkesir	24	2,4
Bursa	55	5,4
Diyarbakır	47	4,7
Erzurum	18	1,8
Gaziantep	37	3,7
Hatay	43	4,3
İstanbul	172	17,0
İzmir	40	4,0
Kastamonu	15	1,5
Kayseri	45	4,5
Kocaeli	35	3,5
Konya	25	2,5
Malatya	23	2,3
Manisa	34	3,4
Mardin	29	2,9
Samsun	48	4,8
Tekirdağ	19	1,9
Trabzon	35	3,5
Van	27	2,7
Zonguldak	16	1,6
Kırıkkale	20	2,0
Total	1010	100

When the distribution of the participants according to province is analyzed Adana (4.1%), Ağrı (1.6%), Ankara (6%), Antalya (3.9%), Aydın (4.6%), Balıkesir (2.4%), Bursa (5.4%), Diyarbakır (4.7%), Erzurum (1.8%), Gaziantep (3.7%), Hatay (4.3%), İstanbul (17%), İzmir (4%), Kastamonu (1.5%), Kayseri (4.5%), Kocaeli (3.5%), Konya (2.5%), Malatya (2.3%), Manisa (3.4%), Mardin (2.9%), Samsun (4.8%), Tekirdağ (1.9%), Trabzon (3.5%), Van (2.7%), Zonguldak (1.6%) and Kırıkkale (2%).

Table 2. Distribution of participants by region

Province	N	%
İstanbul	172	17,0
West Marmara	43	4,3
Aegean	120	11,9
East Marmara	90	8,9
Western Anatolia	87	8,6
Mediterranean	123	12,2
Central Anatolia	65	6,4
Western Black Sea	78	7,7
Eastern Black Sea	35	3,5
Northeast Anatolia	34	3,4
Middle East Anatolia	97	9,6
Southeast Anatolia	66	6,5
Total	1010	100

When the distribution of the participants according to regions is analyzed, 17% of the participants were from İstanbul, 4.3% from the Western Marmara Region, 11.9% from the Aegean Region, 8.9% from the Eastern Marmara Region, 8.6% from the Western Anatolia Region, 12.2% from the Mediterranean Region, and 6% from the Mediterranean Region, 4% from the Central Anatolia Region, 7.7% from the Western Black Sea Region, 3.5% from the Eastern Black Sea Region, 3.4% from the Northeastern Anatolia Region, 9.6% from the Central Eastern Anatolia Region and 6.5% from the Southeastern Anatolia Region.

Table 3. Distribution of participants by gender

Gender	N	%
Woman	505	50,0
Male	505	50,0
Total	1010	100

Table 3 shows that 50% of the participants were women and 50% were male.

Table 4. Distribution of participants by age

Age	N	%
18-24 Years	132	13,1
25-34 Years	413	40,9
35-44 Years	264	26,1
45-54 Years	103	10,2
55 Years and Over	98	9,7
Total	1010	100

Of the respondents, 13.1% were between the ages of 18-24, 40.9% were between the ages of 25-34, 26.1% were amongst the ages of 35-44, 10.2% were among the ages of 45-54, and 9.7% were 55 and over. The youngest of the participants is 18, and the oldest is 65. The average age of the participants was 35.37 years.

Table 5. Dispersion of participants according to their educational background

Education Status	N	%
Reader-Writer	8	0,8
Primary School	140	13,9
Middle School	120	11,9
High School	333	33,0
University	310	30,7
Postgraduate	99	9,8
Total	1010	100

Table 5 displays the dispersion of participants by their educational level. Accordingly, 0.8% of the participants were literate, 13.9% were primary school graduates, 11.9% were secondary school graduates, 33% were high school graduates, 30.7% were university graduates, and 9.8% were postgraduate graduates.

Table 6. Distribution of participants according to their use of Instagram/YouTube

Social Media	Use Status	N	%
Instagram	Yes	859	85,0
	No	151	15,0
	Total	1010	100
YouTube	Yes	826	81,8
	No	184	18,2
	Total	1010	100

While 85% of the respondents use *Instagram*, 15% do not. Similarly, 81.8% of the participants use *YouTube*, while 18.2% do not use *YouTube*.

Table 7. Influencer following rates on Instagram/YouTube

Influencer	N	%
I Do Not Follow Any Influencers	591	46,2
I Follow Influencer	688	53,8
Total	1279	100

While 53.8% of the respondents follow at least one influencer on *Instagram/YouTube*, almost half (46.2%) do not follow any influencer despite using *Instagram/YouTube*.

Factor analysis and reliability

Before the reliability analysis, it was checked whether there were any reverse items in the scale, and it was found that the third and fourth items of the scale were reversed. These items were coded as 1-strictly agree/7-strictly disagree. Afterward, Cronbach's α coefficients were calculated to determine the reliability levels of the scale and recorded in *Table 8*.

Table 8. Reliability statistics of the scale

Scale Names	Cronbach α coefficient	Number of Articles
Contentment with Life Scale	0,692	5

Cronbach's α coefficient for the Contentment With Life Scale was determined as 0.692. Since Cronbach's α coefficient values above 0.60 are considered reliable, it is possible to say that the scale is reliable.

Distribution of data

A normality test was performed to determine whether the Contentment With Life Scale has a normal dispersion, and the results were recorded in *Table 9*.

Table 9. Normality test results of contentment with life scale

Factor/Sub Dimension	N	\bar{x}	Skewness	kurtosis	Kolmogorov Smirnov (Sig)	Shapiro-Wilk (sig)
Contentment with Life Scale	1010	4,40	-0,31	-0,61	0,00	0,00

Since the skewness and kurtosis rate of the variables in the normality analysis were within the range of ± 2 , it was accepted that the data displayed a normal dispersion.

Hypothesis testing

The t-test findings of the participants' attitudes towards life satisfaction according to their gender are given in *Table 10*.

Table 10. T-test outcome according to gender regarding contentment with life scale

Factor	Gender	N	\bar{x}	SS	T	P
Contentment With Life Scale	Male	505	4,24	1,28	-3,870	0,00

As an outcome of the independent sample t-test, it was found that there was a statistically significant relationship among life satisfaction and the gender of the participants ($p < 0.05$). The mean life satisfaction rate of male was lower than that of women.

The ANOVA test findings of the participants' attitudes towards the Contentment With Life Scale according to age are given in *Table 11*.

Table 11. ANOVA test findings regarding contentment with life scale by age

Factor	Age	N	\bar{x}	SS	F	P	Difference
Contentment With Life Scale	18-24	132	4,58	1,23	1,126	0,34	---
	25-34	413	4,37	1,19			
	35-44	264	4,39	1,29			
	45-54	103	4,31	1,25			
	55 +	98	4,29	1,22			

According to the results of the ANOVA test, it was defined that there was no statistically significant relationship amongst the age of the participants and their life satisfaction ($p > 0.05$).

The ANOVA test findings of the participants' attitudes toward life satisfaction according to their educational status are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. ANOVA test outcome regarding contentment with life scale according to education level

Factor	Education Status	N	\bar{x}	SS	F	P	Difference
Contentment with Life Scale	I am literate but do not have a diploma	8	3,80	1,43	2,273	0,04	5>2 5>3
	Primary School	140	4,29	1,23			
	Middle School	120	4,17	1,20			
	High School	333	4,36	1,21			
	University	310	4,54	1,18			
	Postgraduate	99	4,45	1,46			

Considering the ANOVA test result, a statistically significant relationship was established amongst the participants' life satisfaction and educational status ($p < 0.05$). By this relationship, the life satisfaction scores of the participants with university education status were higher than those with primary and secondary school education status.

The t-test findings of the participants' attitudes toward life satisfaction according to their Instagram usage status are given in Table 13.

Table 13. T-test findings according to Instagram usage status regarding contentment with life scale

Factor	Instagram Usage Status	N	\bar{x}	SS	T	P
Contentment With Life Scale	Yes	859	4,38	1,22	-0,357	0,72
	No	151	4,42	1,31		

The outcome of the independent sample t-test specified that there was no statistically significant correlation amongst the participants' *Instagram* usage status and their life satisfaction ($p>0.05$).

The t-test findings of the participants' attitudes toward life satisfaction according to their *YouTube* usage status are given in Table 14.

Table 14. T-test findings on contentment with life scale according to YouTube usage status

Factor	YouTube Usage Status	N	\bar{x}	SS	T	P
Contentment with Life Scale	Yes	826	4,40	1,22	0,550	0,58
	No	184	4,34	1,28		

In accordance with the independent sample t-test outcome, no statistically significant relationship existed between the participants' *YouTube* usage status and life satisfaction ($p>0.05$).

Regression analysis

H3 For the hypothesis, the Contentment With Life Scale is the dependent variable, and the age of the participants is the independent variable. The results of the regression analysis conducted to examine the effect of the age variable on participants' life satisfaction are given in Table 15.

Table 15. Regression analysis results for H3 hypothesis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
Fixed	4.574	0,125		36,498	0,000
Age	-0,005	0,003	-0,048	-1,514	0,130
R = 0.048, R2 = 0.002, Sig. = 0.130					

Per the ANOVA test outcome, the age variable did not affect the participants' life satisfaction. Therefore, the model is insignificant, and the hypothesis H3 is rejected ($p > 0.05$).

H4 For the hypothesis, the Contentment With Life Scale is the dependent variable, and the monthly income of the participants is the independent variable. The results of the regression analysis conducted to examine the effect of monthly income on participants' life satisfaction are given in Table 16.

Table 16. Regression analysis results for H4 hypothesis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
Fixed	4,301	0,050		85,355	0,000
Monthly Income	3,187E-6	0,000	0,090	2,870	0,004
R = 0.090, R2 = 0.008, Sig. = 0.004					

According to the ANOVA test result, the model is significant, and hypothesis H4 is accepted ($p < 0.05$). According to the regression analysis results to predict the relationship, the monthly income variable has a major, weak, and positive effect on the participants' attitudes regarding life satisfaction. The R2 value, expressed as the model's explanatory power, was calculated as 0.008. This value shows that 0.8% of life satisfaction attitudes are explained by monthly income.

H5 For the hypothesis, the Contentment with Life Scale is the dependent variable, and the participants' Instagram use duration is the independent variable. The outcome of the regression analysis conducted to investigate the influence of participants' Instagram usage time on life satisfaction is given in Table 17.

Table 17. Regression analysis results for H5 hypothesis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
Fixed	4,392	0,055		79,896	0,000
Time spent on <i>Instagram</i>	0,000	0,019	0,001	0,023	0,982
R = 0.001, R ² = 0.000, Sig. = 0,982					

Regarding the outcome of the ANOVA test, the participants' *Instagram* use duration did not affect their life satisfaction. Therefore, the model is insignificant, and hypothesis *H5* is rejected ($p > 0.05$).

H6 For the hypothesis, the Contentment with Life Scale is the dependent variable, and the duration of *YouTube* use is the independent variable. The outcome of the regression analysis conducted to investigate the influence of *YouTube* usage time on participants' life satisfaction is given in Table 18.

Table 18. Regression analysis results for H6 hypothesis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
Fixed	4.412	0,055		79,635	0,000
Time spent on <i>YouTube</i>	-0,012	0,025	-0,015	-0,484	0,628
R = 0.015, R ² = 0.000, Sig. = 0,628					

According to the ANOVA test result, the duration of *YouTube* usage did not affect the participants' life satisfaction. Therefore, the model is insignificant, and the hypothesis *H6* is rejected ($p > 0.05$).

Discussion

In today's world, where the effects of social media on individuals are intensely felt, there is a widespread societal perception that these platforms negatively impact and continue to deteriorate. It is frequently argued that the luxurious, privileged, and marginalized lifestyles prevalent on social media trigger social comparison processes among individuals, leading to a growing indifference towards their own living conditions. In this way, as presented within Postman's framework of media criticism, media content can be considered a powerful tool that directs perceptions. Similarly, according to Fuchs' (2020) approach, social media is not only used as a communication tool but also shapes lifestyles. However, the findings of this research reveal that this widespread acceptance is not always valid.

According to the research results, the lack of a significant impact of *Instagram* and *YouTube* use on individuals' life satisfaction indicates that the influence of social media on individuals is transforming. This situation can be explained by the increasing awareness of the reality of social media content. Indeed, it is known that users, especially those with high follower counts, exhibit idealized life presentations by displaying "showcase performances" as described by Goffman (2014). In fact, Güler's (2021) study, which examined university students' perception of ideal life on social media, highlighted the finding that posts made by influencers, in particular, have advertising purposes. Today, individuals' awareness that these presentations are fictional, selected, and often produced for commercial purposes weakens the effect of social comparison and thus limits its potential negative effects on life satisfaction.

The findings regarding demographic variables are also partially consistent with the literature. While the study determined that male participants had lower life satisfaction compared to female participants, no significant relationship was found between age and life satisfaction. However, the finding that life satisfaction increases with higher education levels parallels studies supporting the role of socio-economic and cognitive resources on individual well-being. Furthermore, the fact that both *Instagram* and *YouTube* usage were found to be unrelated to life satisfaction reveals that social media use alone is not a determining variable.

Studies by Sigeze (2020) and Gölcü et al. (2019) have shown that social media use does not have a significant effect on individuals' life satisfaction. Similarly, in the research by Kalafat Çat et al. (2021), no significant relationship was found between the duration of social media use and life satisfaction. The finding of this research that "social media use does not have a significant effect on individuals' life satisfaction" directly coincides with the aforementioned studies.

Other studies in the literature support these findings. Research conducted on university students by Doyaroğlu and Noyan (2023); Guven (2019); and Hawi and Samaha (2016) reveals that the use of social networking sites does not have a direct effect on life satisfaction. This supports the thesis that social media use alone is not a variable that determines life satisfaction. Similarly, the review study by Akkaş and Turan (2024) shows that there is no strong and consistent relationship between social media use and life satisfaction. In this context, the findings of the present research show that, contrary to popular belief, the effects of social media are often not direct and that the effects on individuals cannot be limited to one-dimensional explanations. This result is also consistent with a framework in which individuals actively interpret media content, rather than approaches that treat media effects as a passive process.

However, there are also different results on this subject in the literature. Longstreet and Brooks (2017) state that social media use increases in individuals with low life satisfaction and that this can turn into addictive behavior

over time. This finding raises the question of whether social media use is a cause or an effect, and suggests that the causality in the relationship may be bidirectional. Similarly, Hawi and Samaha (2016) and Raza et al. (2020) show that social media use may produce different results not by directly affecting life satisfaction, but through indirect variables such as perceived social benefit, purpose of use, or level of excessive use. This suggests that the lack of a significant relationship in this study may be related to mediating variables such as usage pattern or individual differences.

On the other hand, there are also studies pointing to the positive effects of social media. Balcı and Kaya (2021) stated that perceived social support on social media can increase life satisfaction, while Karaca (2021) revealed that motivations for social media use are related to life satisfaction. The results of the studies show that the impact of social media is not only determined by the extent of an individual's exposure, but also by what they expect from social media and how they benefit from it. From this perspective, the lack of a correlation between social media use and quality of life can be interpreted as women's social media use being more passive or based on neutral experiences.

Literature review reveals differing results among age groups. The study by Gaia et al. (2020) shows that social media use may play a role in increasing life satisfaction, especially in older age groups. In contrast, the lack of a significant relationship between age and life satisfaction in the present study indicates that the effects of social media may vary depending on age, but this effect is not always decisive.

Furthermore, it is observed that a large portion of the studies examined in the literature focus on 'young people or university students' as samples. This research, encompassing a wide age range (18-65 years) with a total of 1010 participants, is considered to make a significant contribution to the literature by demonstrating that the relationship between social media and life satisfaction is not limited to young people and offers more generalizable results for broader segments of society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the impact of social media use on life satisfaction in a Turkish sample, and the findings concluded that, contrary to popular belief, social media use does not have a direct determining effect on life satisfaction. Furthermore;

- In the analysis of life satisfaction by gender, it was found that men's life satisfaction was lower than women's.
- In the analysis of life satisfaction by age, it was found that there was no relationship between the age of the participants and their life satisfaction.

- In the analysis of life satisfaction by educational status, it was found that participants with a university education had higher life satisfaction than those with primary and secondary school education.
- In the analysis of life satisfaction by *Instagram* usage, it was found that there was no relationship between the participants' *Instagram* usage and their life satisfaction.
- In the analysis of life satisfaction by *YouTube* usage, it was found that there was no relationship between the participants' *YouTube* usage and their life satisfaction.

The fact that *Instagram* and *YouTube* use, in particular, did not significantly affect life satisfaction suggests that individuals have begun to evaluate social media content more critically and consciously. This result aligns with studies in the literature that explain the effects of social media mostly through indirect mechanisms. Indeed, some research shows that social media use can only be effective through mediating variables such as perceived social support, purpose of use, or excessive use. In this context, the findings of the present study indicate that the impact of social media on individuals is related more to how individuals interpret this content than to exposure to it.

The study also revealed that life satisfaction differed according to gender and education level; however, it did not show a significant difference based on age or use of specific social media platforms. These results indicate that individual well-being cannot be explained solely by digital media use; socio-demographic and structural factors may be more decisive.

The findings at this point become more meaningful when considered alongside theoretical approaches to the nature of social media content. Increased awareness of the idealized and fictionalized nature of lifestyles presented on social media allows individuals to critically examine this content. This weakens the impact of social comparison processes, potentially limiting the negative effects of social media on life satisfaction. Therefore, this study demonstrates that individuals are not passive recipients in digital environments, but rather active subjects who interpret content.

Based on the findings, it is considered necessary to evaluate variables such as the purpose of use, type of content, level of digital literacy, and individual social media awareness, rather than just the duration of use, when assessing the impact of social media on individuals' life satisfaction. In this context, it is recommended to expand digital media literacy training that supports individuals in critically evaluating social media content.

Future academic studies examining the effects of different social media platforms (e.g., short video-based applications or interaction-focused networks) on life satisfaction individually could make significant contributions. Furthermore, comparative research among countries with high social me-

dia usage would be beneficial in revealing the role of cultural context on life satisfaction. Additionally, supporting quantitative findings with qualitative research would allow for a deeper understanding of individuals' social media experiences.

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