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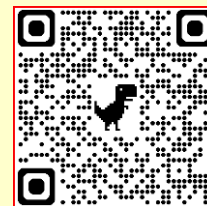
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Is social approval the underlying cause of university students' social media addiction? Student profile from the teacher's perspective

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to analyse the factors affecting students' social media addiction and sauce acceptance, and to analyse the reasons why students use mobile devices in the eyes of teachers. In this context, 830 university students studying at different universities and 155 faculty members participated in our research. In the study, the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) was used for the social media addiction levels of the students, and the Social Approval Need Scale (SANS) was used to determine the social approval needs of the participants. In addition, the scale of teachers' beliefs about students' purposes of using mobile tools (STB-UMDS) was also used in the study. All scale results were evaluated according to gender, region of residence, number of individuals in the family, and mother and father education level. According to the results, students' SMAS results were not affected by any independent variable ($p > 0.05$). SANS total scores ($p = .030$) and making a positive impression (MPI) ($p = .008$) scores increased as the father's education level increased. Male teachers were more likely than female teachers to think that students use mobile devices inappropriately. Accordingly, STB-UMDS total scores ($p = .002$) were higher in male teachers. They also thought that this situation affected students' academic ($p = .013$) and social development ($p < .001$). The majority of male teachers thought that students use social media for social acceptance (31.1%). As a result, no significant difference was found between the social media addictions of university students. However, it was determined that students need more social approval as the parental education level increases. In addition, according to the teachers, it was determined that one of the purposes of students using social media is social approval. When considered in this context, more studies are needed to examine the ways in which students use social connections.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is now recognized in the academic setting as having a significant impact on students' conduct and mental health (Ponnusamy et al. 2020). Knowing the causes of university students' addiction to social media has become essential as digital platforms permeate everyday life more and more [1]. Developing techniques to lessen the adverse impacts of this addiction requires a thorough understanding of the causes of the addiction [2]. Excessive usage of social media has been linked to the drive for social acceptability, which is typified by the need to be acknowledged and accepted by peers. This phenomena raises the possibility that the digital environment is encouraging behaviors related to addiction, as noted by instructors who have witnessed its effects on students' social and academic interactions [3]. In conclusion, analyzing the connection between social media addiction and social approval from an educational standpoint might shed light on the psychological processes that underlie this contemporary issue [4]. The development of educational initiatives and interventions targeted at encouraging university students to adopt better digital habits can be guided by this data, improving their general well-being and academic achievement.

The search for social approval, characterised by the desire for acceptance and recognition by peers, is hypothesised to be an important motivator for excessive social media use [5]. Educators who witness first-hand the effects of social media on students' interaction patterns, academic performance [6], [7] and overall well-being [8] offer invaluable insights into how these digital interactions shape the student psyche. These findings imply that social media affects students' mental health in addition to their academic performance, frequently making conditions like anxiety and depression worse [9]. In addition, the widespread usage of social media can cause sleep disturbances and a decrease in physical exercise, both of which have an adverse effect on students' general health and academic achievement [10]. This research aims to uncover the extent to which approval seeking on social media platforms is related to addictive behaviours among university students as perceived by their teachers.

When the literature was examined, it was found that there are many studies on the causes of students' social media addiction [11], [12], [13]. Some studies have argued that the desire for social approval is one of the reasons leading to internet addiction. However, it has been determined that the number of studies on how this situation is in the eyes of teachers is limited. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to examine the role of social approval in the development of social media addiction among university students from the perspective of teachers. By examining teachers' perceptions of their students' social media use, this study aims to reveal the underlying psychological factors and the impact of such behaviors on academic and social outcomes. In this context, the following hypotheses were adopted in our research:

H1a: There is a positive correlation between the need for social approval and the level of social media addiction among university students as perceived by teachers.

H1b: Teachers will report negative effects on academic performance and social skills among students with high social media addiction, suggesting that excessive social media use resulting from the need for social approval hinders academic engagement and the development of real-life social competencies.

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

The sample of this study consisted of 830 associate, undergraduate, and graduate students aged between 17-21 years and 155 faculty members aged between 25-60 years from various faculties. This study included students who were enrolled in associate, undergraduate, or graduate programs at the time of the research, who actively used at least one social media platform, and who volunteered to provide information about their social media usage habits and their effects on their academic and social lives, and volunteer faculty members who worked as full-time or part-time faculty members and had at least one year of university-level teaching experience. Students who did not use any social media platform and teachers with less than 1 year of university teaching experience were not included in the study.

This study was conducted with a sample size of 830 students and 155 teachers. Power analysis was conducted using G*Power software with a 95% confidence interval and 80% power. The results of the analysis showed that a sufficient sample size was reached to examine students' social media addictions and social approval seeking and teachers' views on students' mobile device usage purposes.

In this study, voluntary consent forms were signed by the participants before the study and voluntary participants were included in the study. This study was conducted according to the principles set out in the Declaration of Helsinki.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS)

SMAS was used to determine the social media addiction of the participating students. A 5-point Likert scale with a total of 41 items was used. The scale was developed by Tutgun-Unal and Deniz. High scores obtained from this scale mean that internet addiction is high. Cronbach alpha value of the scale was determined as 0.967. The test-retest reliability was 0.84 [14].

Social Approval Needs Scale (SANS)

SANS is a scale used to measure individuals' need for social approval and was developed by Karaşar and Ögütülmüş. The scale consists of a total of 25 items and has 3 sub-dimensions: the first sub-dimension is sensitivity to others' judgments, the second sub-dimension is social withdrawal (SW) and the third sub-dimension is making a favorable impression (MPI). Scores that can be obtained from the scale vary between 25-125. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was determined as .90. The internal consistency coefficients of the three factors that make up the scale were found to be .83, .80, and .80, respectively [15].

Scale of Teachers' Beliefs on the Effect of the Use of Mobile Devices on Students (STB-UMDS)

STB-UMDS was used to determine teachers' beliefs about students' use of mobile devices. This scale was developed by Diker-Coşkun and Kızılkaya-Cumaoglu. The scale consists of two sub-dimensions: academic development and social development. The reliability coefficient of the whole scale was calculated as .91, the academic development reliability coefficient as .85, and the social development reliability coefficient as .85.

2.3. Statistical Analysis

In this study, SPSS package program 22 was used for statistical analyses. In the study, normality analyses of the SMAS, SANS, and STB-UMDS results and sub-dimensions scores were performed according to the Kolmogorov Smirnov test, and parametric tests

were used in the study since $p > 0.05$. Therefore, the Independent Sample T-test was used for the evaluations between genders. ANOVA test was used for the comparisons made according to place of upbringing, number of people living in the family, father's educational status, and mother's educational status. Effect sizes were determined according to Cohen's d formula for T-test. For the

ANOVA test, they were determined according to the eta square (η^2) formula. The significance level was taken as 0.05.

3. RESULTS

Buraya bir geçiş paragrafı eklenmeli.....

Table 1. Investigation of participants' social media addiction in terms of different variables

Variables	Group	N	M±S.D.	t/F	E.S.	p
Gender	Male	60	92.45±31.52	t=-1.058	d=-0.148	.291
	Female	334	96.40±25.68			
Place of Growing Up	Village	200	93.43±25.26	F=1.789	$\eta^2=0.009$.168
	City	121	99.12±29.06			
	District	73	96.78±25.93			
Number of people in the family	1	16	99.00±32.54	F=0.110	$\eta^2=0.001$.979
	2	42	96.02±24.83			
	3	91	95.92±23.85			
	4	119	94.76±25.43			
	5 and 5+	126	96.20±29.66			
Father's Education Status	High School	69	99.43±25.62	F=1.534	$\eta^2=0.008$.217
	Pre-Licence	178	96.67±27.14			
	University	147	93.03±26.40			
Mother's Education Status	High School	38	98.76±29.25	F=0.373	$\eta^2=0.002$.689
	Pre-Licence	199	96.24±27.59			
	University	157	94.88±25.43			

Table 1 presents an analysis of the participants' social media addictions in terms of different variables. Accordingly, it was determined that the participants' gender, place of growing up, number of people in the family, father's education level and mother's education level had no effect on internet addiction ($p < 0.05$).

Table 2. Comparison of participants' social approval scores and sub-dimensions according to different

Variables	Group	N	SANS M±S.D.	SJO M±S.D.	SW M±S.D.	MPI M±S.D.	P
Gender	Male	53	83.81±15.27	27.77±6.43	27.47±5.18	28.56±5.59	PSANS=.847 PSJO=.434 PSW=.298 PMPI=.199
	Female	383	84.21±13.07	28.43±5.68	28.19±4.66	27.58±5.15	
Place of Growing Up	Village	112	82.57±11.53	27.73±5.06	27.43±4.39	27.40±4.98	PSANS=.272 PSJO=.375 PSW=.157 PMPI=.693
	City	171	84.23±13.02	28.43±5.46	28.12±4.59	27.67±5.03	
	District	153	84.24±14.81	28.72±6.54	28.56±5.07	27.95±5.55	
Number of people in the family	1	18	83.55±10.67	28.44±4.38	28.72±4.02	26.38±4.52	PSANS=.494 PSJO=.730 PSW=.306 PMPI=.452
	2	46	82.02±11.14	28.08±4.89	27.10±3.73	26.82±4.74	
	3	107	83.06±12.18	27.90±5.51	27.66±4.79	27.49±4.58	
	4	136	85.50±15.93	28.90±6.53	28.59±5.24	28.00±6.20	
	5 and 5+	129	84.51±12.27	28.23±5.61	28.22±4.47	28.06±4.75	
Father's Education Status	High School	83	83.13±14.16	28.46±5.98	27.67±4.87	26.98±5.72	PSANS=.030*

	Pre-Licence	198	82.81±13.45	27.90±5.67	27.71±4.83	27.19±5.25	P _{SJO} =.299 P _{SW} =.058 P _{MPI} =.008*
	University	155	86.43±12.50	28.86±5.77	28.83±4.44	28.74±4.69	
Mother's Education Status	High School	59	81.01±14.73	27.89±6.35	26.77±4.92	26.33±5.66	P _{SANS} =.048* P _{SJO} =.603 P _{SW} =.026* P _{MPI} =.021*
	Pre-Licence	168	83.50±13.34	28.17±5.41	27.93±4.87	27.39±5.36	
	University	209	85.58±12.79	28.63±5.89	28.61±4.48	28.33±4.85	
SANS: Social Approval Needs Scale, SJO: Sensitivity to the Judgement of Others, SW: Social Withdrawal, MPI: Making a Positive Impression							

In table 2, participants' social approval total scores and sub-dimensions are analyzed in terms of different variables. Accordingly, as the father's education level increased, SANS [F(2, 433)=3.549, η²=0.016, p=.030] and MPI sub-dimension [F(2, 433)=4.916, η²=0.022, p=.008] increased significantly. However, there was no significant difference in SJO and SW sub-dimensions (p>0.05). SANS [F(2, 433)=3.057, η²=0.014, p=.048], SW [F(2, 433)=3.696, η²=0.017, p=.026], and MPI [F(2, 433)=3.907, η²=0.018, p=.021] values increased significantly as maternal education level increased. However, there was no significant difference in the SJO subscale (p>0.05).

Table 3. Comparison of teachers' beliefs about the effect of students' mobile device use according to gender

Parameters	Gender	N	M±S.D.	t	Cohen's d	p
Total Score	Male	74	45.04±11.61	3.192	0.513	.002*
	Female	81	39.82±8.61			
Academic Development	Male	74	29.85±8.33	2.524	0.406	.013*
	Female	81	26.93±5.92			
Social Development	Male	74	15.18±4.26	3.666	0.590	<.001**
	Female	81	12.88±3.53			

Table 3 shows the comparison of teachers' beliefs about the effect of students' mobile device use according to gender. Accordingly, male teachers think that students do not use mobile devices for their intended purpose more than female teachers (t=3.192, d=0.513, p=.002). However, they also thought that academic development (t=2.524, d=0.406, p=.013) and social development (t=3.066, d=0.590, p<.001) were affected in the same way. Compared to male teachers, a greater proportion of students were found to use social media to gain social approval (Figure 1).

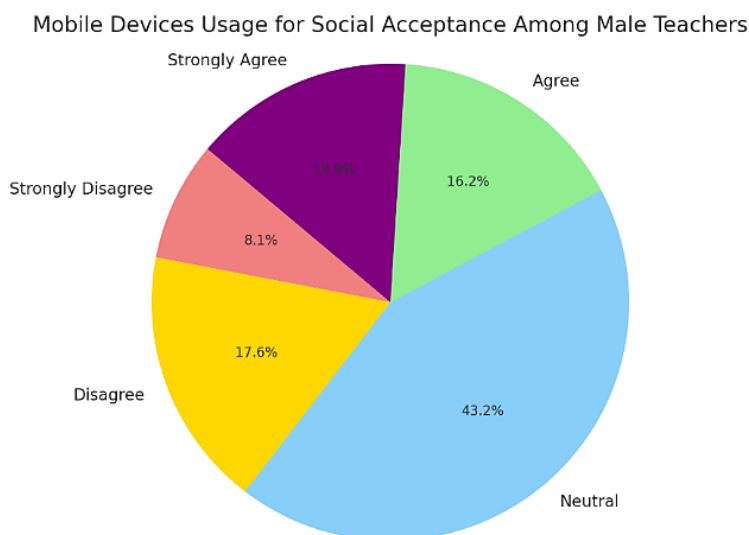


Figure 1. Proportion of responses to the question "Students have to use mobile devices in order to be "socially accepted" according to male teachers

4. DISCUSSION

This study started to investigate the factors affecting university students' social media addiction and need for social approval, as well as teachers' perceptions of mobile device use. With a sample size of 830 students and 155 faculty members, the study utilized scales such

as the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), the Need for Social Approval Scale (SANS), and the Teachers' Beliefs about Students' Intended Use of Mobile Devices Scale (STB-UMDS). The analysis revealed that, contrary to initial hypotheses, levels of social media addiction among students as determined by the SMAS was not consistently influenced by a number of independent variables such

as gender, geographical location, family size, etc. However, it was found that as the educational level of families increased, their need for social approval also increased. This suggests a widespread engagement with social media that crosses traditional demographic boundaries and is deeply integrated into the fabric of student life.

As expected, the findings showed that there was no significant difference in students' social media addiction levels between various demographic groups such as gender, place of residence, and family size, as determined by the SMAS. This result is different from some other studies that hypothesize a relationship between social media addiction and demographic characteristics [16]. This implies that students have a universal tendency to use social media, which may be a reflection of the ubiquitous nature of social media in today's social interactions and information consumption. Evidence shows that gender is a significant factor in internet addiction [17]. This is more the case for men, who are more likely to play internet games. We should not forget that parental attitude is also an important factor in this situation [18]. When analyzed in this context, in the study conducted by Zhang et al. gender, being an only child or twins, father's education level, father's alcohol or cigarette use were associated with children's social media addiction. As a result, it was concluded that demographic characteristics, family environment and psychosocial factors were associated with social media addiction [16]. Mahamid et al. argued that social media addiction also has a geopolitical presence. He argued that high stress in Palestinian youth also results in social media addiction, and that males are more likely to be addicted to social media than females. He reported that addiction decreases as the education level of students increases [18]. Different empirical studies have identified factors such as age, personality traits and socio-economic status as important determinants of social media use intensity and addictive tendencies [19]. Younger individuals, particularly adolescents, have been found to be more prone to develop compulsive social media habits, a phenomenon hypothesized to stem from the developmental quest for social identity and peer approval [20]. Furthermore, socio-economic variables, including education level and income, were examined, revealing a nuanced pattern in which lower socio-economic status was linked to increased social media use, potentially as a compensatory mechanism for real-world social constraints [21]. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of social media addiction and highlight the need for a holistic approach in both research and intervention strategies.

Social approval needs (SAN) stem from people's fundamental desire to be accepted and belong within a community, out of the need for at least virtual friendship, sympathy, and support. In modern contexts, SAN is influenced by a variety of factors, including family upbringing, cultural norms, and individual personality traits [22]. The family environment, particularly parental attitudes and educational levels, can shape an individual's self-concept according to societal standards by instilling the importance of social approval from an early age [23]. Moreover, personality factors such as extraversion and agreeableness may predispose individuals to seek and value social approval more highly, as their sense of self is more closely intertwined with the perceptions of others. Together, these elements form a multifaceted framework for understanding the myriad reasons behind why people seek social approval. Interestingly, the study found a significant relationship between the father's level of education and participants' social approval needs, including the desire to make a favorable impression (MPI). As the father's education level increased, SANS total and MPI scores also increased. It was the same with the mothers. Differently, the level of social withdrawal (SW) also increased as the level of maternal

education increased. This may suggest that higher socio-economic status or more intellectually stimulating environments create a greater awareness or value of social approval. These findings are consistent with the theory that social dynamics and self-worth perceptions can be significantly influenced by familial and socio-economic background. The tendency to seek approval (virtual support) from peers and authority figures can be interpreted as a reflection of the conditioning experienced within the family unit where educational achievements are prioritized [24]. This suggests that there is a relationship between the emphasis on academic achievement in the household and the development of personal characteristics in line with social expectations and approval.

Male teachers expressed concern about pupils using mobile devices inappropriately, citing detrimental effects on their social and intellectual development. Male educators may take a more conservative view of the use of technology in the classroom, which could be reflected in the gender gap in perceptions of discipline and technology [25]. The majority of male educators' perception that social media is primarily used by students to get social approval highlights how important these platforms are thought to be in forming students' identities and social relationships. In a study conducted by Ikbal and Bhatti, the opinions of 22 faculty members were taken in order to determine the purposes of smartphone use by students in higher education. The faculty members reported that they saw the use of smartphones as an effective tool for communicating with students. However, many of the respondents had some concerns about this. In this context, they thought that smartphones could be a source of distraction, time-wasting, technostress, and emotional disconnection. They reported that lack of training and support, and lack of technical knowledge and background were some of the reasons for the barriers to the use of smartphones in higher education [26]. This situation supports the concerns identified in the results of our research. Most of these studies argued that training should be provided for the appropriate use of social media and smartphone use.

One of the important limitations of this research is the sample size and diversity. In this context, research conducted with more comprehensive and heterogeneous groups will yield more important results in terms of generalisability. In this study, internet addiction levels were determined subjectively by the scale method. Deeper analyses can be made by using objective measurement methods.

eper analyses can be made by using objective measurement methods.

5. CONCLUSION

These findings illuminate some critical aspects of student behavior and educators' perspectives in the digital age. The universal nature of social media addiction suggests that interventions should not only focus on high-risk groups but also address the broader student population. Educational programs may benefit from including digital literacy, digital etiquette, network communication culture, and awareness topics to encourage healthier relationships with social media. The impact of parental education on social approval highlights the importance of engaging families in educational dialogues about social media use. Initiatives could include parent education programs seminars, training for teaching staff addressing the nuances of digital socialization, and psychological training for university students. Finally, teachers' gendered perceptions of misuse of mobile devices call for professional development that equips educators with strategies to understand and bridge these perceptions, potentially including gender-sensitive approaches to technology use in classrooms.

The development of online communication skills between teachers and students can enable the transmission of knowledge and the acquisition of cultural acquisitions. This will increase the cooperation between learners and students. It can also be used for adaptation and integration in the field of digital education.

This research provides important conclusions about the potential effects of social media addiction on students, the role of social acceptance in this mechanism of action, and its negative effects on higher education institutions. By taking these results into account, all stakeholders can optimize students and educational processes from the negative effects of the digitalized world. Therefore, it is important to analyze larger sample groups in future studies. In this context, longitudinal studies are needed to analyze the effects of social media addiction on student behavior in more depth. Studies examining the effects of social media awareness training on students' addictions may remove barriers to appropriate social media use. In addition, studies examining the effect of cultural differences on the purposes and status of social media use will provide more analytical results.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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