

The Association Between Social Media Addiction, Eating Attitudes, and Life Satisfaction in Adolescents

Aliye Özenoğlu^{1,*}

¹ Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, 55139, Samsun, Türkiye

Abstract

In today's increasingly digitalized world, social media have become indispensable to daily life, providing easy access to vast information. However, concerns arise about uncontrolled and unconscious use of social media, especially among younger generations. Social media, which adolescents turn to meet their various psychosocial needs, such as emotions, thoughts, and experiences, are believed to influence their food choices, nutritional habits, exercise routines, sleep patterns, and, ultimately, their overall health. Specifically, nutritional habits of teenagers are affected by a broad range of psychosocial and environmental factors. Since adolescence attributes an increased importance to physical appearance, the ideal body image portrayed on social media enhances teenagers' vulnerability to body dissatisfaction. It makes them prone to developing eating disorders. Available research indicates that social media addiction is associated with an increase in eating disorders and a decrease in life satisfaction, which, in turn, can result in deteriorating social relationships, social withdrawal, and an inability to take adequate responsibility for one's health and nutrition, thus further perpetuating social media addiction. In this context, educational interventions aimed at families', children's, and adolescents' awareness about conscious social media use could be crucial steps to improve public health and safeguard the well-being of future generations.

Keywords: Adolescents, Social Media Addiction, Eating Attitudes, Life Satisfaction.

Review Article / Received: 25 September 2024, Accepted: 13 November 2024, Published Online: 30 November 2024.

1. Introduction

Social interaction is an inherent need of human nature. Throughout history, different methods have been used to fulfill this necessity. The advent of the internet and the new digital era gave rise to social media, where communication has undergone significant changes. Initially used to obtain information, the internet has evolved into a platform employed for various purposes, leading to a continuous increase in the number of users. According to a recent estimate by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), the percentage of households with internet access in 2023 amounted to 95.5%, while internet usage among individuals aged 16-74 increased from 85.0% in 2022 to 87.1% in 2023. The same report demonstrated that the rate of internet usage in 2023 was 90.9% for males and 83.3% for females (TÜİK, 2023). Today, the internet and social media, as products of rapidly advancing communication technologies, have become an indispensable part of our daily lives. The increased use

of social media applications—including but not limited to TikTok, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Netflix, and Instagram—has led to a rise in social media addiction, especially among adolescents (Aktan, 2018). For obvious reasons, this situation has raised concerns in various segments of society, particularly among parents.

As a critical period characterized by rapid biopsychosocial changes, adolescence is crucial for the development of healthy lifestyle behaviors. Striving to adapt to these rapid changes, adolescents frequently share their emotions, thoughts, and experiences with other users through social media platforms. While, when used appropriately, social media can provide various benefits, their improper use can lead to numerous negative consequences. Among scholars, there is a broad consensus that social media, which adolescents turn to in order to meet various psychosocial needs, exert a strong impact on their food choices, nutritional habits, exercise routines, sleep patterns, and ultimately, their overall health (Pedrouzo & Krynski, 2023; Boniel-Nissim et al., 2023).

* Corresponding Author: Aliye Özenoğlu
Email: aozenoglu@yahoo.com
<https://doi.org/10.56479/ijgr-41>



Concurrently, adolescents are considered to be a vulnerable group that is prone to developing problematic social media use or social media addiction. Specifically, available evidence suggests that internet addiction in adolescents can lead to reduced exercise levels, problems in interpersonal relationships, disruptions in nutritional and sleep patterns, various psychological imbalances, as well as various health issues (Korkmaz et al., 2023; Özmen & Kocakaya, 2024).

Reflecting the realities of the new digital era, the list of previously known behavioral addictions was complemented by Internet addiction (IA) and social media addiction (SMA). Both IA and SMA exhibit characteristics of common symptoms associated with substance addiction (e.g., salivation, mood changes, desensitization, withdrawal symptoms, conflict, and relapse) after a period of absence from the internet or social media (Derevensky et al., 2019). With the rapid increase in internet usage, IA and SMA rates have dramatically increased worldwide. Already in 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2015) identified IA as a significant public health issue affecting a large number of people. Adolescence is broadly understood as a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, during which new attitudes and behaviors are formed, particularly in health and nutrition. This life phase is characterized by rapid physical, psychological, metabolic, and social changes (Heslin & McNulty, 2023). Since growth and development continue during this period, a crucial aspect is meeting energy and nutrient requirements (Carroll et al., 2024; Neri et al., 2024). Psychosocial and environmental factors play a critical role in adolescents' food choices (Davison et al., 2023; Smith et al., 2023; Erkul and Özenoğlu, 2023). Another important aspect is that, during adolescence, the ideal body image promoted by social media heightens the importance of physical appearance. This emphasis makes adolescents vulnerable to body dissatisfaction and teenagers, who are already trying to adapt to various changes, may develop body image disturbances. These disturbances can compel teenagers to restrict food intake or engage in excessive exercise to control their bodies. Overall, the portrayal of the perfect body on social media creates a fertile ground for the development of eating disorders in vulnerable individuals (Jarman et al., 2023; Mahon & Hevey, 2023).

From a broader perspective, depicting women as thin and attractive, and men as muscular in the media can generate in individuals negative perceptions of their own bodies and cause changes in eating attitudes

and food choices (Gül & Yılmaz Akyüz, 2019). Affected by fashion trends, vulnerable individuals engage in diets and exercise to appear slimmer, and even make what are termed aesthetic adjustments to their bodies to improve their appearance. Users regularly exposed to ideal bodies on social media are more affected by these trends and may begin to dislike or feel dissatisfied with their own bodies. Conversely, social media content that focuses on recipes, healthy eating, and healthy living can lead to stress and unhealthy eating behaviors in sensitive individuals. It is well known that, in today's stressful living conditions, the interest in food, particularly hedonistic eating for pleasure, has increased as a result of social media posts. Via advertising on television and social media, food businesses have made food more desirable and consumable (Kılıçlar et al., 2021). This phenomenon can be explained through neuromarketing, which affects people's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards food, ultimately affecting their nutritional status and health.

Life satisfaction is generally defined as an individual's evaluation of their life based on a set of criteria (Diener & Lucas, 1999; Pavot & Diener, 1993). Young individuals with higher life satisfaction are generally expected to have healthier interpersonal relationships and mental well-being (Türkel & Dilmaç, 2019). Obviously, the challenges that young people have to cope with throughout their lives can negatively affect mental health and, in turn, lead to a decrease in life satisfaction. Adolescence is a central period of life when the conflicts caused by these challenges are experienced most intensely. The rapid cycles of psychosocial, hormonal, and metabolic functions characteristic of adolescence make it difficult for young people to effectively adapt to their environment and changes and can negatively impact their life satisfaction. A low level of life satisfaction can create a vicious cycle, leading to increased social withdrawal, loneliness, mental health issues, deterioration in self-care and nutritional habits, all of which cause health issues.

Overall, previous research identified many factors predicting high life satisfaction among younger cohorts. For instance, in a study on university students, Akcan et al. (2023) found that students with good financial status, moderate academic success, strong friendships, mothers with primary education, literate fathers, those living in dormitories, those residing in districts, and those participating in social activities reported having higher life satisfaction scores (Akcan, Karakut, & Bucak, 2023). Furthermore, another study

that explored the relationship between depression, anxiety, stress, emotional appetite, and life satisfaction among university students revealed that changes in students' emotional states affected both their life satisfaction and emotional appetite, with lower life satisfaction and emotional appetite observed during negative emotional states (Hamurcu & Arslan, 2022). In another relevant study, focused on the effects of social media addiction on the life satisfaction of Generation Z, Bayramoğlu and Gültekin (2023) found that the most frequently used social media applications were WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube, and it was reported that increased time spent on social media was strongly associated with decreased life satisfaction.

Importantly, previous research documented that the relationship between social media use, eating attitudes, and life satisfaction is reciprocal. However, available evidence regarding these associations in adolescents, who are at a heightened risk of social media addiction, remains scarce. To fill this gap in the literature, in the present study, we conduct a comprehensive overview of existing research on the relationship between social media addiction (SMA), eating attitudes, and life satisfaction in adolescents. In this review, relevant articles were systematically obtained from various academic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The searches were conducted relevant keywords such as "social media addiction," "eating attitudes," and "life satisfaction." Articles were selected based on their relevance to adolescent populations and the focus on social media's psychosocial effects. The selected studies were then analyzed to identify patterns, inconsistencies, and gaps within the literature so as to lay down the foundation for the development of the conceptual framework of this study.

2. Social Media Addiction and Theoretical Framework

Addiction is generally defined as an individual's overwhelming and uncontrollable desire for a person or object, leading to a state of dependency on that person or object (Karakuş et al., 2021). Along with substance addictions as in the case of smoking, alcohol, and caffeine, there are also behavioral addictions like internet and social media addiction. Behavioral addiction can be described as engaging in a particular behavior more frequently and regularly than normal, which leads to adverse psychological, social, and physical consequences for the individual. Beyond causing addiction, the addictive substances can also

cause changes in the brain, particularly in the reward system and executive function areas (Kaya et al., 2019). Accordingly, frequent manifestations of substance abuse include psychiatric problems such as intoxication, dementia, withdrawal delirium, psychotic disorders, mood disorders, sleep disorders, anxiety disorders, and sexual dysfunction (Güleç, 2015).

Today, the internet has become a basic necessity for people, akin to basic human needs for food, shelter, or communication. The increasing accessibility and affordability of the internet, combined with the pleasure derived from time spent online, have contributed to a rise in the amount of time people usually spend surfing online. However, available evidence suggests that uncontrolled increases in internet use can lead to negative consequences such as internet addiction, reluctance to engage in physical activities, procrastination, avoidance of social environments, and, eventually, isolation to the point of becoming asocial (Anlı, 2018; Büyükgebiz Koca & Tunca, 2020).

Social media are broadly understood as internet-based channels allowing users to interact either synchronously or asynchronously, where users derive value from the content they create and from interactions with others (Carr & Hayes, 2015). While social media have many positive effects that facilitate daily life, their uncontrolled and unconscious use can negatively affect users' physical and mental health (Sümen & Evgin, 2021), including the development of such issues as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and sleep disorders. In addition, social media addiction was reported to be associated with paranoid thoughts, phobic anxiety, anger, and aggression (Bilgin, 2018).

Most adolescents use social media applications, either passively or actively, on a daily basis. Uncontrolled and unconscious use of social media can lead to disruptions in teenagers' lifestyle habits and result in academic failure. In addition, such usage can cause mental health issues like anxiety, depression, anxiety disorders, and body image disturbances due to problems in interacting with their social environment (Yiğitcan, 2021). For instance, Günay (2017) found that university students spend on average 3±1.9 hours per day on social media; furthermore, the authors also reported that the students who had poor adaptation to university life spent more time on social media and struggled to maintain a balance between real life and social media. Similarly, in another study on the relationship between social media addiction (SMA) and communication skills among Education Faculty students, İliş and Gülbahçe (2019) found a significant

negative relationship between SMA and communication skills.

With regard to the factors making individuals more prone to the development of SMA, in a study on the effects of various variables on social media addiction among university students Demir and Kumcağız (2019) found that SMA did not differ by gender (see also TÜİK, 2023 for a similar conclusion); however, students with higher academic success were found to have lower levels of SMA. Moreover, the students who spent more time on social media had higher addiction levels. The aforementioned study also revealed that the students who reported being harmed by social media had significantly higher levels of SMA than those who did not report any harm.

Similarly to people with substance use disorders, individuals addicted to social media recognize the harm that excessive social media use causes to their personal relationships, lifestyle habits, physical and mental health, and academic performance. However, despite this awareness, they continue to engage in such behaviors. This highlights the need for more effective interventions capable of preventing the development of addiction and addressing the disruptions in various areas of life caused by social media addiction.

To date, several theories—including Social Cognitive Theory, Cognitive Dissonance Theory, and Social Comparison Theory—have been proposed that explain the relationship between social media addiction, eating attitudes, and life satisfaction. These theories can contribute to understanding the psychosocial impacts of social media on adolescents and help to explain the negative effects of social media addiction on eating attitudes and life satisfaction.

To start with, Social Cognitive Theory posits that individuals learn behaviors through observation (Bandura, 2001). Individuals with social media addiction may adopt behaviors they observe in the content they frequently encounter on social media platforms that idealize the consumption of unhealthy foods. Adolescents, in particular, may be inclined to model the unhealthy eating behaviors of social media influencers and celebrities, integrating these behaviors into their own lives. This provides a robust framework for explaining how social media addiction reinforces unhealthy eating attitudes.

Furthermore, Cognitive Dissonance Theory also holds a significant place in the theoretical framework of this study. According to this theory, individuals experience internal discomfort when they engage in behaviors conflicting with their beliefs or values, which

leads them to change either their beliefs or behaviors to alleviate this discomfort (Festinger, 1957). Accordingly, individuals who are continuously exposed to ideal body images on social media are expected to alter their eating habits to resolve this dissonance. Considering social media as an “environmental stressor” allows for a deeper understanding of its impact on adolescents’ psychological well-being and eating attitudes.

Finally, another essential theoretical basis to explain the relationship between social media addiction and life satisfaction is Social Comparison Theory. This theory posits that individuals evaluate themselves through a comparison with others—a process that can significantly affect individuals’ self-esteem and life satisfaction (Festinger, 1954). Social media exposes individuals to idealized lifestyles and body images, potentially leading to negative comparisons. Adolescents, in particular, may feel inadequate when comparing their own lives to the seemingly perfect lives displayed on social media platforms, which may lead to a decrease in their life satisfaction.

3. Social Media Addiction and Eating Attitudes

There is a broad scholarly consensus that healthy lifestyle habits are acquired during childhood and adolescence. The habits formed during this period are key determinants of future health. However, adolescence is particularly risky in terms of the development of unhealthy nutrition-related attitudes and behaviors, as, during this stage, the influence of the social environment and peer pressure is more prominent. Increased independence from the family and the growing habit of eating out with peers can lead to changes in food choices, frequently resulting in a shift from healthy eating habits. The consumption of processed foods that are high in fat, sugar, and calories but low in vitamins, minerals, and fiber may increase the risk of obesity and related diseases.

Among the key factors that affect eating attitudes are gender, age, and body mass index (BMI), along with various biological, developmental, cultural, environmental, psychological, and familial factors. Due to the pressure to achieve the ideal body image promoted by the media, unhealthy and restrictive dieting practices are more commonly observed during adolescence. In a study investigating factors influencing eating attitudes among university students (Kadioğlu & Ergün, 2015), female students were found to have significantly higher Eating Attitudes Test (EAT)

scores as compared to male students. The percentage of students with EAT scores above 30 was 7.1% in the 18-19 age group, 10.9% in the 20-21 age group, and 17.6% in the 22-24 age group (Kadioğlu & Ergün, 2015). In addition, the risk of eating disorders was found to be twice as high in overweight/obese students as compared to those of normal weight, while it was 2.9 times lower in underweight students as compared to those of normal weight (Kadioğlu & Ergün, 2015).

Furthermore, in a study on the relationship between social media addiction and healthy eating attitudes among university students, Gürsoy and Atmaca (2021) established that, with an increase of social media addiction increased, healthy eating attitudes deteriorated. Likewise, investigating the impact of social media use on eating attitudes and nutritional habits in women, Yıldırım (2022) found that 81.3% of participants had high levels of social media addiction (SMA), with younger individuals showing higher SMA scores. The authors also documented that, with an increase of severity of eating disorders, social media addiction also aggravated. Overall, numerous previous studies documented that the increase in social media usage duration and frequency is proportional to the rise in addiction levels, which is associated with negative eating attitudes and depression (e.g., Topaktaş & Çetin, 2023; Balcı & Baloğlu, 2018).

Furthermore, the persuasive marketing of unhealthy foods on social media was reported to have a strong impact on triggering children's desire for instant energy intake (Powell & Pring, 2024). In a systematic review on the physiological and social mechanisms underlying social media's impact on the nutrition of children and adolescents, Sina et al. (2022) found that social media are associated with skipping breakfast, increased consumption of unhealthy snacks and sugary drinks, and lower consumption of fruits and vegetables in all age groups. The aforementioned review also showed that, as compared to healthy digital food images, exposure to unhealthy foods resulted in increased brain responses related to reward and attention in children and adolescents.

Food has both sensory and physiological effects on humans. The human brain filters the chemical flavors found in foods, taking into account some while archiving others for a later evaluation. Subsequently, information related to the appearance, texture, smell, taste, sound, and color of foods is transmitted to the brain through sensory receptors for further processing. In this way, the brain determines which foods will be consumed, as well as when, where, and in what quantities (Özenoğlu, 2017).

While the energy content of macronutrients plays a role in homeostatic satiety, it is not a decisive factor in sensory-specific satiety, which ultimately determines the variety and quantity of foods consumed (Cankül & Uslu, 2020; Tokat & Yılmaz, 2023). This knowledge provides valuable insights for producers' development and marketing efforts based on consumer preferences. With the advent of social media use, neuromarketing, which bridges neuroscience and consumer behavior, has come to exert a strong impact on food choices, eating attitudes, and the corresponding behaviors (Gedik, 2020). For instance, using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), Koenigs and Tranel (2008) examined brain responses when the study participants were unaware of the brand they were consuming, followed by measuring their brain activity when they were informed about the brands. The results revealed that when the drinks were consumed without knowledge of the brand, higher activation was observed in the brain's ventromedial prefrontal cortex (reward centers), whereas when the brand names were known, higher activation occurred in the hippocampus and dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, i.e. areas associated with memory and emotion. This finding, referred to as the Pepsi Paradox (Koenigs & Tranel, 2008), indicates that consumer preferences are influenced more by memories and emotions related to the brand than by the actual taste of the product (Bakardjieva & Kimmel, 2017). Although this paradox was not confirmed in subsequent studies (Van Doorn & Miloyan, 2018), increasing research in the field of nutritional psychiatry confirms that emotions and past experiences play a crucial role in food choices (Özenoğlu, 2020).

Neuroimaging studies can provide insights into how much consumers like and engage with an advertisement, which can help create well-designed new products. This can play a key role in developing effective advertising strategies for food businesses (Gedik, 2020). Moreover, exposure to food images on social media can stimulate digestive secretions via the autonomic nervous system, preparing individuals to consume the depicted food. However, repeated exposure to such experiences is likely to contribute to unhealthy eating habits and the development of obesity.

As demonstrated in several previous studies, social media addiction may affect not only food preferences, but also eating attitudes and behaviors, generating a broad spectrum of eating disorders from anorexia to obesity. According to Social Cognitive Theory, individuals learn through observation, and social media offer idealized models, especially for young

people, that may lead them to imitate behaviors such as unhealthy food consumption. This can trigger individuals with social media addiction to adopt unhealthy eating habits. Furthermore, from the perspective of Cognitive Dissonance Theory, individuals exposed to certain elements on social media may eventually experience discomfort or a shift in perspective regarding previously learned notions of unhealthy eating behaviors. This continuous exposure can eventually result in reduced life satisfaction, as individuals either struggle with or re-evaluate these conflicting beliefs.

4. Social Media Addiction and Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is generally defined as individual's satisfaction with their present, past, and anticipated future, coupled with their desire to improve their life (Diener et al., 1999). To date, numerous previous studies documented a strong negative relationship between social media use and life satisfaction. Accordingly, with an increase of life satisfaction, social media use decreases (Cavga, 2019; Yalçın Çınar & Mutlu, 2019; Türkel & Dilmaç, 2019).

In a study conducted to determine the effect of perceived social support, an important tool for social support, particularly for adolescents, on life satisfaction, Balcı and Kaya (2021) found that perceived social support has a significant and positive effect on life satisfaction.

Another relevant concept to discuss here is the fear of missing out (FoMO), which is known to be related to an individual's inability to meet their psychological needs, which in turn influences their participation in social media. In an investigation on the relationship between internet addiction, self-esteem, life satisfaction, and FoMO among university students, Sağar and Özçelik (2022) found internet addiction to be positively associated with FoMO, decreased attention and hyperactivity, and neurotic personality traits, while being negatively associated with life satisfaction, self-esteem, and a sense of responsibility. Another relevant study found that emotion regulation and life satisfaction were significant predictors of social media addiction (Sağar & Özçelik, 2022).

Furthermore, in a study examining the relationship between social media use disorder (SMUD) and life satisfaction, Doyaroğlu and Noyan (2023) identified that an increase in the number of social media applications browsed and the time spent on social media was strongly associated with higher SMUD

scores. Interestingly, males in this study had higher SMUD scores compared to females. Furthermore, the analysis of the relationship between life satisfaction and SMUD scores revealed that an increase in SMUD scores was significantly associated with a decrease in life satisfaction scores. Moreover, the conflict sub-dimension of SMUD was found to be a significant negative predictor of life satisfaction.

In another pertinent study on the relationship between hedonic smartphone addiction, stress, and life satisfaction, Vujic & Szabo (2022) found that female gender, hedonic smartphone use, and perceived life stress were strong predictors of smartphone addiction. Similarly, Öncü and Erel's (2024) investigation of the factors associated with internet addiction (IA) and social media addiction (SMA) among medical students showed that high life satisfaction, engaging in physical activity at least twice a week, and using the internet for communication purposes were independent protective factors against internet addiction.

Among adolescents, seeking social support is a significant motivation for social media use, with perceived social support being a key factor influencing life satisfaction. For individuals with social media addiction, the constant observation of others' lives, as posited by the Social Comparison Theory, can generate the feelings of inadequacy due to comparisons with others, which, in turn, may diminish life satisfaction. In addition, social media's impact can be examined through Cognitive Dissonance Theory. If the influence aligns with the expectations set by social media, it may lead to negative changes in eating attitudes or even contribute to eating disorders; conversely, if individuals resist this dissonance, a decline in life satisfaction can nevertheless be observed. Other relevant factors include high levels of life stress, difficulty coping with stress, irregular physical activity, and unhealthy eating habits all of which negatively impact both physical and mental health and can ultimately reduce life satisfaction. Accordingly, while healthy lifestyle habits are positively linked to life satisfaction, internet and social media addiction have a strong link both an unhealthy lifestyle and lower life satisfaction.

5. Eating Attitudes and Life Satisfaction

Adolescence is a critical life stage during which significant changes in eating behaviors and food preferences occur. Without proper guidance, adolescents may develop poor eating habits and face an increased risk of eating disorders. Several previous

studies demonstrated that university students exhibit high levels of restrictive eating behaviors (Tang et al., 2020; Young et al., 2021). Similarly, there is evidence to suggest that restrictive eating can predict the severity of eating disorders and is an important factor in their development (Laessle & Hilterscheid, 2019). Individuals engaged in restrictive eating tend to reduce their energy intake to maintain or lose weight. This leads them to prefer low-calorie foods, such as vegetables and fruits, while restricting the consumption of higher-calorie foods like grains, tubers, and various types of meat. Consequently, excessive restrictive eating may lead to inadequate energy intake. Conversely, individuals who practice restrictive eating are known to be frequently more prone to episodes of overeating. This phenomenon, known as the disinhibition effect, can result in symptoms of eating disorders such as bulimia nervosa and binge eating, as well as obesity (Wood et al., 2020; Bayrak et al., 2020). Restrictive eating, which is frequently accompanied by prolonged dieting and overeating, can elicit strong negative emotions such as stress, depression, and anxiety, all of which adversely affect both physical and psychosocial health (Joseph et al., 2018).

Overall, social norms that equate thinness with beauty play a critical role during adolescence, a period when body image becomes increasingly important. Aesthetic ideals imposed by social media can make adolescents, who are particularly vulnerable to external influences, more susceptible to body dissatisfaction, which may, in turn, lead to unhealthy dieting practices. For instance, in a Chinese study on the relationship between restrictive eating, body image, and dietary intake among university students, Yong et al. (2021) observed the prevalence of high-level restrictive eating in 52.8% study participants. Furthermore, the authors

also found that the students who were dissatisfied with their bodies or overestimated their body weight exhibited a greater tendency toward restrictive eating ($p < 0.05$). In addition, those with a high tendency for restrictive eating were more likely to frequently consume fruits and eggs, while they were less likely to consume meat, sugar-sweetened beverages, and fast food. Additionally, high levels of restrictive eating were identified as a risk factor for reduced dietary diversity.

6. The Impact of Social Media on Nutritional Deficiencies

As discussed in previous sections, the addictive use of social media can trigger a process that negatively affects individuals' eating attitudes and life satisfaction, ultimately leading to nutritional deficiencies. Figure 1, presented as a conceptual aid, synthesizes existing knowledge to highlight potential pathways among these constructs. Rather than proposing a novel theoretical model, the diagram organizes and visualizes the relationships between social media addiction, eating attitudes, life satisfaction, and nutritional deficiencies. Within this framework, social media addiction may lead individuals to engage in social comparison, pursue idealized body standards, and adopt unhealthy eating habits, all of which contribute to nutritional deficiencies.

The relationships depicted in Figure 1 are drawn from the existing literature and are presented as a conceptual framework to visualize potential pathways. Social media addiction can negatively impact individuals' eating attitudes and life satisfaction, both of which are critical mediators in the development of nutritional deficiencies. Specifically, social media addiction may lead to unhealthy eating behaviors by

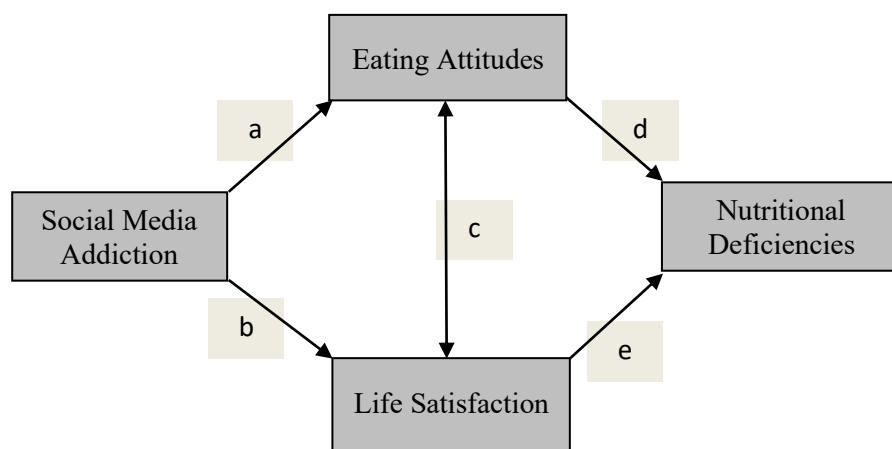


Figure 1. The Impact of Social Media on Nutritional Deficiencies

fostering negative eating attitudes, such as skipping meals or restrictive dieting. Similarly, social comparisons can diminish life satisfaction, where individuals feel inadequate when exposed to idealized lives on social media. Furthermore, a bidirectional relationship exists between life satisfaction and eating attitudes: decreased life satisfaction may worsen eating behaviors, while poor eating attitudes may further lower life satisfaction. Over time, these disruptions in eating patterns and emotional well-being can make individuals more susceptible to nutritional deficiencies. Social media addiction fosters social comparisons and unrealistic body image goals, leading to negative eating attitudes and diminished life satisfaction. These factors, in turn, may increase the risk of developing unhealthy eating habits and nutritional deficiencies.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

While eating is an activity that engages all our senses, the degree of pleasure derived from it is subjective and varies across different individuals. The dishes we watch being prepared, the plates we see, restaurants that stand out with their designs and concepts, the aromas of foods we enjoy, and various other elements evoke different emotions in each of us. Triggering the act of eating, these sensory stimuli lead individuals on a journey to explore new tastes, flavors, and foods. Through these sensory cues, food images frequently encountered on social media may increase the desire for consumption and contribute to the development of obesity. Conversely, messages related to the ideal body image on social media may act as triggers for eating disorders, particularly in vulnerable individuals.

Having become an integral part of modern life, social media are now widely used across all age groups and cultures. Of note, however, while conscious use of social media can positively contribute to life, uncontrolled and excessive use, especially among children and adolescents, can give rise to significant psychosocial and health issues. Previous research convincingly demonstrates that social media addiction increases susceptibility to eating disorders and is associated with declines in life satisfaction. This, in turn, leads to deterioration in social relationships, withdrawal, and a lack of responsibility towards nutrition and health, ultimately driving individuals back into social media addiction. In this context, raising awareness through educational programs, campaigns, and policies aimed at promoting conscious social media use among families, children, and


adolescents could be crucial steps for safeguarding the health of society and future generations.

Most importantly, in order to mitigate the negative effects of social media addiction, it is crucial to organize educational programs and awareness campaigns aimed at promoting responsible social media use across all age groups, especially among children and adolescents. Policymakers and healthcare professionals may also find it beneficial to take relevant steps to protect public health by considering the impact of social media on eating behaviors and life satisfaction. Such initiatives to enhance digital media literacy would be particularly helpful for individuals in terms of a more critical re-evaluation of social media content and maintaining healthy eating habits.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares that they have no financial or non-financial competing interests.

Author's Contributions

A. Özenoğlu ( [0000-0003-3101-7342](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3101-7342)): *Definition, Conceptualization, Literature collection, Critical review, Review methodology, Writing, and Editing.*

References

- Akcan, K., Karakut, Ş., & Bucak, F. K. (2023). Sağlık Meslek Yüksekokulu Öğrencilerinin Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığının Yalnızlık ve Depresyon ile İlişkisi. *Genel Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*, 5(2), 178-189.
- Aktan, E. (2018). Üniversite öğrencilerinin sosyal medya bağımlılık düzeylerinin çeşitli değişkenlere göre incelenmesi. *Erciyes İletişim Dergisi*, 5(4), 405-421.
- Anlı, G. (2018). İnternet Bağımlılığı: Sosyal ve Duygusal Yalnızlık. *Uluslararası Bilimsel Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 3(2), 389-397. <https://doi.org/10.21733/ibad.414862>
- Bakardjieva, E., & Kimmel, A. J. (2017). Neuromarketing research practices: Attitudes, ethics, and behavioral intentions. *Ethics & Behavior*, 27(3), 179-200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508422.2016.1162719>
- Balcı, Ş., & Baloğlu, E. (2018). Sosyal medya bağımlılığı ile depresyon arasındaki ilişki: Üniversite gençliği üzerine bir saha araştırması. *Galatasaray Üniversitesi İletişim Dergisi*, 29, 209-234.
- Balcı, Ş., & Kaya, E. (2021). Sosyal Medyada Algılanan Sosyal Desteğin, Yaşam Doyumu Üzerindeki Etkinliği: Üniversite Gençliği Araştırması. *Akdeniz Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 36, 47-71. <https://doi.org/10.31123/akil.988521>
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual review of psychology*, 52(1), 1-26.
- Bayrak, E., Serter, R., Işıklı, S. (2020). Duygusal, Dışsal Ve Kısıtlayıcı Yeme Bozukluklarının Metabolik Sendrom Gelişimi Üzerine Etkisi. *Ankara Eğt. Arş. Hast. Derg.*, 53(1): 36-43
- Bayramoğlu, G., & Gültekin, F. (2023). Z Kuşağının Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığının Yaşam Doyumu Üzerine Etkisi. *Turkuaz*

- Uluslararası Sosyo-Ekonomik Stratejik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 5(1), 27-53.
- Bilgin, M. (2018). Ergenlerde Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı ve Psikolojik Bozukluklar Arasındaki İlişki. *The Journal of International Scientific Researches*, 3(3), 237-247. <https://doi.org/10.23834/isrjournal.452045>
- Boniell-Nissim, M., Tynjälä, J., Gobiņa, I., Furstova, J., van den Eijnden, R. J., Marino, C., Klanšček, H. J., Klavina-Makrecka, S., Villeruša, A., & Lahti, H. (2023). Adolescent use of social media and associations with sleep patterns across 18 European and North American countries. *Sleep Health*, 9(3), 314-321.
- Büyükgebiz Koca, E., & Tunca, M.Z. (2020). İnternet ve Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığının Öğrenciler Üzerindeki Etkilerine Dair Bir Araştırma. *Alanya Akademik Bakış*, 4(1), 77-103.
- Cankül D. & Uslu N. (2020). Nörogastronomi ve Duyusal Algılama. *Turizm ve İşletmecilik Dergisi*, 1 (1), 64-74
- Carr, C. T., ve Hayes, R. A. (2015). Social media: Defining, developing, and divining. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 23(1), 46-65.
- Carroll, C., Booth, A., & Cuevas, D. C. (2024). What matters to adolescents with obesity, and their caregivers, when considering bariatric surgery or weight loss devices? A qualitative evidence synthesis. *Obesity Reviews*, 25(2), e13654.
- Cavga, Z. (2019). *Lise öğrencilerinin aile yaşam doyumu, psikolojik dayanıklılığı ve sosyal medya kullanım bozukluğu arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi*. [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, İstanbul.
- Davison, J., Bunting, B., & Stewart-Knox, B. (2023). The mediating effect of food choice upon associations between adolescent health-related quality of life and physical activity, social media use and abstinence from alcohol. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 21(1), 46.
- Demir, Y., & Kumcağız, H. (2019). Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığının Farklı Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi. *Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Journal*, 9(52), 23-42.
- Derevensky, J. L., Hayman, V., & Lynette, G. (2019). Behavioral addictions: Excessive gambling, gaming, internet, and smartphone use among children and adolescents. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 66(6), 1163-1182. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2019.08.008>
- Diener, E., & Lucas, R. E. (1999). Personality and subjective well-being. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology* (pp. 213-229). Russell Sage Foundation.
- Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. E. & Smith, H. L. (1999). Subjective Well-Being: Three Decades of Progress. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(2), 276-302.
- Doyaroğlu, Ş., & Noyan, C. O. (2023). Sosyal Medya Kullanımı Ve Yaşam Doyum Düzeyi Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi. *Current Addiction Research*, 7(2), 5-17. <https://doi.org/10.32739/car.2023.7.2.217>
- Erkul, C., & Ozenoglu, A. (2023). Psychosocial Stressors Affecting Food Choices. *International Journal of Gastronomy Research*, 2(2), 62-69. <https://doi.org/10.56479/ipeak.2023.12191>
- Festinger, L. (1954). A Theory of Social Comparison Processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117- 140.
- Festinger, L. (1957). A theory of cognitive dissonance. Stanford University Press.
- Gedik, Y. (2020). Nöropazarlama Ve Nöropazarlama Araçları: Teorik Bir Çerçeve. *Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 11(2), 251 - 267.
- Gül, A., & Yılmaz Akyüz, E. (2019). Sosyal Medya Kullanımı: Yeme Bozukluğu Nedeni Olabilir Mi?. *Sağlık Profesyonelleri Araştırma Dergisi*, 1(1), 28-32.
- Güleç, G., Köşger, F., & Eşsizoglu, A. (2015). DSM-5'te alkol ve madde kullanım bozuklukları. *Psikiyatride Güncel Yaklaşımlar*, 7(4), 448-460.
- Günay, M. (2017). *Sağlıkla İlgili Fakültelerde Eğitim Görenlerin Sosyal Medya Bağımlılık Düzeyi* [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. Trakya Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Edirne.
- Gürsoy Coşkun, G., & Atmaca Demir, B. (2021). Lisans Öğrencilerinin Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı ile Sağlıklı Beslenmeye İlişkin Tutumlarının Değerlendirilmesi - İstanbul'da Bir Üniversite Örneği. *Fenerbahçe Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*, 1(3), 195-205.
- Hamurcu, P., & Arslan, M. (2022). The Relationship Between Mood, Life Satisfaction and Emotional Appetite: A Study on University Students. *Gevher Nesibe Journal Of Medical And Health Sciences*, 7(17), 119-130. <https://doi.org/10.46648/gnj.367>
- Heslin, A. M., & McNulty, B. (2023). Adolescent nutrition and health: Characteristics, risk factors and opportunities of an overlooked life stage. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 82(2), 142-156.
- İliş, A., & Gülbahçe, A. (2019). Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı İle İletişim Becerileri Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişkinin İncelenmesi. *Ekev Akademi Dergisi*, 78, 45-60.
- Jarman, H. K., Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, M., McLean, S. A., Rodgers, R. F., Slater, A., Gordon, C. S., & Paxton, S. J. (2023). Who's most at risk of poor body image? Identifying subgroups of adolescent social media users over the course of a year. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 147, 107823.
- Joseph P.V., Davidson H.R., Boulineaux C.M., Fourie N.H., Franks A.T., Abey S.K., & Henderson W.A. (2018). Eating Behavior, Stress, and Adiposity: Discordance Between Perception and Physiology. *Biol. Res. Nurs.* 20, 531-540. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1099800418779460>.
- Kadioğlu, M., & Ergün, A. (2015). Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Yeme Tutumu, Öz-Etkililik ve Etkileyen Faktörler. *Clinical and Experimental Health Sciences*, 5(2), 96-104. <https://doi.org/10.5455/musbed.20150309011008>
- Karakuş, B. N., Özdengül, F., Solak Görmüş, Z. I., & Şen, A. (2021). Bağımlılık Fizyopatolojisi. *KTO Karatay Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*, 2(3): 158-166
- Kaya, E., Akpınar, D., & Akpınar, H. (2019). Bağımlılığın patofizyolojisi. *Muğla Sıtkı Kocaman Üniversitesi Tıp Dergisi*, 6(3), 166-170.
- Kılıçlar, A., Bozkurt, İ., Sarıkaya, G. S., & Şahin, A. (2021). Sosyal Medyanın X ve Z Kuşağı Üzerindeki Yemek Yeme Davranışına Etkisi. *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 9(1), 531-552.
- Koenigs, M. & Tranel, T. (2008). Prefrontal cortex damage abolishes brand-cued changes in cola preference. *Social Cognitive & Affective Neuroscience*, 3, 1-6
- Korkmaz, Z., Çiçek, İlhan, Yıldırım, M., & Ünsal, F. (2023). Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı ve Uyku Kalitesi Arasındaki İlişki: Sanal Dünyanın Ergenler Üzerindeki Etkisi. *Yaşadıkça Eğitim*, 37(3), 844-856. <https://doi.org/10.33308/26674874.2023373654>
- Laessle, R., & Hilterscheid, E. (2019). Stress-Induced Release of Eating-Related Hormones in Young Women Classified as Restrained and Unrestrained Eaters. *Neuropsychobiology*, 78, 27-30. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000498866>.
- Linh, T.T., Giang, N.T.H., & Khanh Ha, T.T. (2021). When are children satisfied with life? An initiative qualitative study

- from Vietnamese children sample. *Sci Prog.* 104(4), 368504211067655.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00368504211067655>.
- Mahon, C., & Hevey, D. (2023). Pilot trial of a self-compassion intervention to address adolescents' social media-related body image concerns. *Clinical child psychology and psychiatry*, 28(1), 307-322.
- Neri, L. d. C. L., Guglielmetti, M., Fiorini, S., Quintiero, F., Tagliabue, A., & Ferraris, C. (2024). Nutritional counseling in childhood and adolescence: a systematic review. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 11, 1270048.
- Öncü, S., & Erel, Ö. (2024). Tıp Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin İnternet ve Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı. *TED*, 23(70):49-60.
- Özenoğlu, A. (2020). Beslenme Psikiyatrisi. In Özenoğlu, A. (Ed). *Beslenme ve diyetetiğin psikososyal boyutu*. Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2. Basım. Ankara.
- Özmen, S., & Kocakaya, K. (2024). Sağlık Yönetimi Öğrencilerinde Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığının Karanlık Kişilik Özellikleri Üzerine Etkisi. *İğdir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* (35), 146-159.
<https://doi.org/10.54600/igdirsosbilder.1314855>
- Pavot, W., & Diener, E. (1993). Review of the Satisfaction With Life Scale. *Psychological Assessment*, 5(2), 164-172. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.5.2.164>
- Pedrouzo, S. B., & Krynski, L. (2023). Hyperconnected: children and adolescents on social media. The TikTok phenomenon. *Archivos Argentinos de Pediatría*, e202202674-e202202674.
- Powell, J., & Pring, T. (2024). The impact of social media influencers on health outcomes: Systematic review. *Soc Sci Med.* 340, 116472.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2023.116472>.
- Sağar, M. E., & Özçelik, T. (2022). Ergenlerde Duygu Düzenleme Ve Yaşam Doyumunun Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı Üzerindeki Yordayıcı Rolü. *Kırıkkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 12(2), 493-511.
- Sina, E., Boakye, D., Christianson, L., Ahrens, W., & Hebestreit, A. (2022). Social Media and Children's and Adolescents' Diets: A Systematic Review of the Underlying Social and Physiological Mechanisms. *Adv Nutr.* 13(3):913-937.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/advances/nmac018>.
- Smith, A. C., Ahuvia, I., Ito, S., & Schleider, J. L. (2023). Project Body Neutrality: Piloting a digital single-session intervention for adolescent body image and depression. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 56(8), 1554-1569.
- Sümen, A., & Evgin, D. (2021). Social Media Addiction in High School Students: A Cross-Sectional Study Examining Its Relationship with Sleep Quality and Psychological Problems. *Child Ind Res* 14, 2265-2283.
- Tang C., Cooper M., Wang S., Song J., & He J. (2020). The relationship between body weight and dietary restraint is explained by body dissatisfaction and body image inflexibility among young adults in China. *Eat. Weight Disord.* (Suppl. 2):3. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40519-020-01032-0>.
- Tokat, P., & Yılmaz, I. (2022). Neurogastronomy: Factors Affecting the Taste Perception of Food. *International Journal of Gastronomy Research*, 2(1), 1-10.
<https://doi.org/10.56479/ayed.2022.10261>
- Topaktaş, B., & Çetin, M. (2023). Ebelik ve Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinde Sosyal Medya Bağımlılık Düzeylerinin Beslenme Alışkanlıkları Üzerine Etkisi. *Hitit Med J.*, 5(1): 19-24. <https://doi.org/10.52827/hititmedj.1161788>
- TÜİK (2023). *Hanehalkı bilişim teknolojileri (BT) kullanım araştırması*.
[https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Hanehalki-Bilisim-Teknolojileri-\(BT\)-Kullanim-Arastirmasi-2023-49407](https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Hanehalki-Bilisim-Teknolojileri-(BT)-Kullanim-Arastirmasi-2023-49407)
- Türkel, Z., & Dilmaç, B. (2019). Ergenlerde Sosyal Medya Kullanımı, Yalnızlık Ve Yaşam Doyumu Arasındaki Yordayıcı İlişkiler. Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Ereğli Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 1(1), 57-70.
- Van Doorn, G., & Miloyan, B. (2018). The Pepsi Paradox: A review. *Food Quality and Preference*, 65, 194-197.
- Vujić, A, & Szabo, A. (2022). Hedonic use, stress, and life satisfaction as predictors of smartphone addiction. *Addict Behav Rep.* 15, 100411.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.abrep.2022.100411>.
- Wood, K.L., Barrack, M.T., Gray, V.B., Cotter, J.A., Van Loan, M.D., Rauh, M.J., McGowan, R., & Nichols, J.F. (2020). Cognitive dietary restraint score is associated with lower energy, carbohydrate, fat, and grain intake among female adolescent endurance runners. *Eat. Behav.* 40:101460.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eatbeh.2020.101460>.
- World Health Organization. (2015). *Public health implications of excessive use of the internet, computers, smartphones and similar electronic devices: meeting report*. Main Meeting Hall, Foundation for Promotion of Cancer Research, National Cancer Research Centre, Tokyo, Japan, 27-29 August 2014. World Health Organization.
<https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/184264>
- Yalçın Çınar, Ç., & Mutlu, E. (2019). İnternet Bağımlılığının Benlik Saygısı, Dikkat, Gelişmeleri Kaçırma Korkusu, Yaşam Doyumu ve Kişilik Özellikleri ile İlişkisi. *Bağımlılık Dergisi*, 20(3), 133-142.
- Yiğitcan, A. (2021). *İnternet bağımlılığı, beden imajı ve yeme bozukluğu arasındaki ilişki*. [Unpublished master's thesis]. İstanbul Gelişim University.
- Yıldırım, Z. (2022). *Kadınlarda Sosyal Medya Kullanımının Yeme Tutumu Ve Davranışı Üzerine Etkisi*. [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. Necmettin Erbakan University.
- Yong C, Liu H, Yang Q, Luo J, Ouyang Y, Sun M, Xi Y, Xiang C, Lin Q. (2021). The Relationship between Restrained Eating, Body Image, and Dietary Intake among University Students in China: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Nutrients*, 13(3), 990.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13030990>.
- Yong, C., Liu, H., Yang, Q., Luo, J., Ouyang, Y., Sun, M., Xi, Y., Xiang, C., & Lin, Q. (2021). The Relationship between Restrained Eating, Body Image, and Dietary Intake among University Students in China: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Nutrients*, 13(3):990. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13030990>.