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ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION, APPEARANCE ANXIETY AND BODY ESTEEM IN YOUNG ADULTS

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Abstract

Objectives: This study aimed to assess the relationship between levels of social media addiction and body image anxiety and body esteem among young adults aged 19-25 who use social media.

Materials and Methods: Methods In this descriptive study, young adults were administered a questionnaire including sociodemographic information, eating disorder risk questions, Social Media Addiction Scale (SMA), Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS), and Body Esteem Scale (BES).

Results: The mean daily time spent on social media by 385 young adults participating in the study was found to be 3.29±1.75 hours. The study revealed that 47.5% (n=183) of the participants only followed content, while 52.4% (n=202) shared images. It was found that 9.9% (n=38) of the young adults frequently shared selfies. Women had higher SAAS scores (40.27±15.91) compared to men (33.09±14.47) ($p<0.001$). A moderate positive significant correlation was found between daily social media usage time and SMAS ($r=0.422$, $p<0.001$) and between SAAS and SMAS ($r=0.427$, $p<0.001$).

Conclusion: The study revealed that gender differences did not affect social media addiction, but that social media addiction increased as daily social media use increased. Appearance anxiety increased as social media addiction scores rose, and women experienced higher appearance anxiety than men.

Keywords: Social media addiction, body image, body esteem, social appearance anxiety.

Introduction

The concept of 'social media', which has emerged as a result of rapid technological advances, has been rapidly adopted around the world, and due to the restrictions on social life imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, people have turned more to social media to meet their socialisation needs.[1] Young adults, the age group that uses social media the most, struggle to establish their individuality while seeking social approval. Social media, which can be considered a 'virtual society', is an environment where young people can be fully present, present themselves for evaluation, engage in social comparisons, and experience psychosocial effects based on the feedback they receive.[2]

While social media applications offer many benefits, such as communication, socialisation, entertainment, shopping, and professional practice, their inappropriate use can lead to addiction, which is one of their disadvantages. The widespread use of social media has led to the emergence of the concept of 'social media addiction', which is defined within the broader category of internet addiction.[3] Social media addiction is defined as the excessive use of social media, the neglect of responsibilities due to its use, and the inability to satisfy the urge to use it over time. The literature presents various studies that highlight the addictive effects of social media on individuals, its negative impact on body image perceptions, its influence on eating behaviours leading to eating disorders, and its negative impact on emotional states.[4,5]

Unlike traditional media, social media platforms allow users to act as both content creators and consumers. Users can share photos and videos while commenting on others' posts, allowing for two-way interaction and social comparison.[6] Through social media, which is particularly popular among young people, users are exposed to idealised images shaped by social and cultural values of celebrities, friends, peers, and even strangers.[7] While comparing their own bodies to these idealised representations on social media, users may also experience anxiety about negative evaluations.[6,8] Concerns about how one's appearance is perceived by others on social media can lead to stress and anxiety (social appearance anxiety), resulting in self-objectification, body dissatisfaction, depressive symptoms, and eating disorders.[5,9]

Exposure to thin-ideal body images among peers leads to body dissatisfaction.[10] Studies also show that using Facebook for more than four weeks negatively affects body image and contributes to eating disorders, while spending about twenty minutes a day on Facebook can lead to a negative mood.[2] On Instagram, a visually driven application focused on photo sharing, users use filters and photo editing tools to enhance their appearance, sharing only the most attractive and aesthetic images.[11] In a 2014 study of 393 adolescents conducted by Harrison and Hefner, participants' photos were professionally retouched before being rated. The study found that retouched images were perceived as more attractive, and both male and female participants who knew

their photos had been edited showed increased awareness of idealised body standards while experiencing decreased body esteem.[12]

Social media use, which has biological, psychological, and socio-cultural dimensions, is increasing its impact and shaping a new social profile that physicians face. In recent decades, the misuse of the internet has led to social comparison on social media. Accordingly, sharing excessive amounts of information online about the necessity of perfect body perception can trigger social appearance anxiety.[13] Consequently, there may be a positive correlation between social media addiction and social appearance anxiety. Unfortunately, most of the studies in the literature focus on adolescents' body image, self-esteem, and social media use and their relationships with each other. However, these concepts need to be discussed in all age groups. This study aims to determine the level of social media addiction among young adults (aged 19-25) and the relationship between their concerns about their physical appearance and body esteem.

Materials and Methods

This descriptive study was conducted between 15 October 2021 and 15 January 2022 among young adults aged 19-25. The study aimed to include at least 377 participants with a margin of error of 5% and a confidence interval of 95%. The survey was conducted face-to-face on university campuses and in city centres where young adults were predominantly present. Individuals who were not native Turkish speakers, could not read or understand Turkish, were under 19 or over 25 years old, or did not use social media were excluded from the study. Within the specified timeframe, a total of 400 participants were reached. After excluding incomplete surveys (n=8) containing more than 20% missing data in key variables, surveys indicating insufficient attention (n=4), and participants who did not meet the age eligibility criteria (n=3), 385 completed surveys were included in the study. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles set forth in the Helsinki Declaration and the International Good Clinical Practice guidelines. The patients included in the study provided informed consent. The study was approved by the T.C. Necmettin Erbakan University Non-Drug and Non-Medical Device Research Ethics Committee under number 2021/3432.

The survey used in the study consisted of five sections: 1- Sociodemographic Information Form, 2- Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form (SMAS-AF), 3- Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS), 4- Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA). 5. The Eating Disorder Scale (SCOFF). A pilot study was conducted with a group of university students to assess the clarity of the survey and to make necessary adjustments. Data from the pilot study were not included in the main study.

The Sociodemographic Information Form

The form containing information about the individual was prepared by the researchers based on a literature review. It included 19 items about age, gender, height, weight, education level, income status (when assessing income status, the minimum wage was considered as the net minimum wage in 2021, which was TL 2825.90), social media networks used, purposes of social media use, duration of social media use, reasons for not sharing pictures, and questions to determine the risk of depression and eating disorders.

Body Mass Index (BMI) was used to assess the participants' obesity. BMI is calculated as BMI=weight(kg)/height^2(m). Individuals with a BMI≤18.5 kg/m^2 are classified as underweight, those with a BMI between 18.6-24.9 kg/m^2 as normal weight, those with a BMI between 25.0-29.99 kg/m^2 as overweight, and those with a BMI ≥30.0 kg/m^2 as obese.

To determine participants' depression status, a primary care depression screening was administered using two questions to assess depressed mood and anhedonia. These questions were: "Have you felt inexplicably unhappy in the past two weeks?" and "Have you lost interest in activities you used to enjoy and were interested in in the past two weeks?" In the study, participants who answered 'yes' to both questions were considered to have ‘possible depression’.

The Eating Disorder Scale

The Eating Disorder Scale developed by Morgan et al. (1999) was used to assess the risk of eating disorders among participants. The scale is named SCOFF, based on the letters selected from its items. The Turkish validity and reliability study of this scale was conducted by Aydemir et al. (2015). After the Turkish form was created, the scale was named REZYY, based on the items obtained. The scale consists of 5 items, and participants are asked to answer "yes" or "no" to each item. One point is awarded for each 'yes' answer, with a total score of 5. Those with a score of 2 or more are considered to be in the risk group. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.740.[15]

Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS-AF)

The Social Media Addiction Scale Adult Form (SMAS-AF) is a scale developed by Sahin and Yagcı (2017) to measure the level of social media addiction in adults between the ages of 18 and 60. The SMAS-AF is a five-point Likert scale consisting of 20 items, with subdimensions of virtual tolerance and virtual communication. The virtual tolerance subdimension contains items 1-11, while the virtual communication subdimension contains items 12-20. The reverse-scored items are items 5 and 11. The score range for the scale is 20-100. As the score on the scale increases, so does the individual's perception of themselves as a 'social media addict'.

The Cronbach alpha value for the scale was found to be 0.940, with 0.920 for the virtual tolerance sub-dimension and 0.910 for the virtual communication sub-dimension.[16]

Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS)

The Social Appearance Anxiety Scale was developed by Hart et al. (2008), and its Turkish adaptation was made by Doğan (2010). The purpose of the scale is to measure individuals' social appearance anxiety, and it consists of 16 items. The first item is reverse-coded. The scale uses a five-point Likert-type format with ratings as follows: (1) 'not at all suitable', (2) 'not suitable', (3) 'somewhat suitable', (4) 'suitable', (5) 'completely suitable'. Higher scores on the scale indicate higher levels of appearance anxiety. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.930.[17]

Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA)

The scale developed by Cragun (2013) was adapted to Turkish, and its validity and reliability study was conducted by Arslan et al. (2020)[18]. The scale consists of 15 items and is scored using a five-point Likert scale with the following responses: Never (0), Rarely (1), Sometimes (2), Most of the time (3), Always (4). The scale has three sub-dimensions. Body Esteem (BE)-Weight (1-5) measures satisfaction with weight, BE-Appearance (6-11) reflects feelings about general appearance,

and BE-Attribution (12-15) shows what others think about the individual's body and appearance. The Cronbach alpha values were 0.940 for BE Weight, 0.920 for BE Appearance, and 0.810 for BE Attributes.

Statistical Analysis

The study used SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows 20.0 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarise the data. Numerical variables in binary groups were analysed using the Student's t-test, and those in multiple groups were analysed using the one-way ANOVA test. Relationships between parameters were examined using Pearson correlation analysis. The correlation coefficient (r) was interpreted as follows: 0.00-0.24 as weak, 0.25-0.49 as moderate, 0.50-0.74 as strong, and 0.75-1.00 as very strong. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Post-hoc power analyses were performed using G*Power 3.1.9.7 software to assess the adequacy of the study's sample size for statistical analyses. Power analyses were calculated separately for the basic statistical tests used in the study, and a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$ was used in all analyses. Independent samples t-test analyses: The Cohen's d effect size calculated for the difference in social appearance anxiety between gender

groups (Female: 40.27±15.91, Male: 33.09±14.47; p<0.001) was found to be 0.47 (moderate effect). With a sample size of n=385 (female n=259, male n=126), statistical power was calculated as 1-β=0.99. Pearson correlation analyses: For the correlation between daily social media usage time and social media addiction (r=0.422, p<0.001), statistical power was found to be 1-β>0.99 for a sample size of n=385. Similarly, for the correlation between daily social media usage and social appearance anxiety (r=0.291, p<0.001), the statistical power is 1-β=0.99. Power values above 0.95 for basic statistical analyses indicate that our study has a low risk of Type II error and that the sample size is adequate.

Results

A total of 385 completed surveys were analysed. The mean age of the participants was 22.14±1.79 years (min=19, max=25), and 32.7% (n=126) were male. According to BMI, 65.2% (n=251) were of normal weight, and 61.6% (n=237) were not at their desired ideal weight. The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

		Mean±SD	Min	Max
Age (years)		22.15±1.76	19	25
Height (cm)		169.28±9.48	143	202
Weight (kg)		64.94±15.18	39	132
Gender		**n**	**%**	
Male		126	32.7	
Female		259	67.3	
***BMI**	≤18.5 kg/m² (underweight)	46	11.9	
	18.6-24.9kg/m² (normal weight)	251	65.2	
	25.0-29.99kg/m² (overweight)	75	19.5	
	≥30.0kg/m² (obese)	13	3.4	
Monthly Income**				
Below Minimum Wage		230	59.7	
Above Minimum Wage		61	15.8	
Education Level				
High School Or Below		31	8.1	
Higher Education (College / University)		354	91.9	
Employment Status				
Employed		88	22.9	
Unemployed		297	77.1	
Desired Ideal Weight Status				
At Desired Weight		149	38.7	
Not At Desired Weight		236	61.3	
Those Not at Desired Ideal Weight				
Wants To Gain Weight		48	20.3	
Wants To Lose Weight		188	79.7	

*BMI=Body Mass Index

**94 individuals did not specify their income, and the net minimum wage for 2021, which was 2825.90 TL, was used as a reference.

It was found that 40.3% of young adults (n=155) showed signs of depression, and 32.2% (n=124) were at risk for eating disorders. The risk of eating disorders was higher in females than in males (p=0.001).

The mean scores and Cronbach alpha values of the scales used in the study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Scores of the Scales and Cronbach's Alpha Values

	Number of Items	Min-Max	Mean±SD	Cronbach's alpha
SMAS-AF	20	23-83	53.55±11.67	0.860
Virtual Tolerance	11	11-50	32.46±7.49	0.812
Virtual Communication	9	9-39	21.09±5.69	0.779
SAAS	16	16-80	37.92±15.8	0.961
BE-appearance	6	2-22	8.41±3.69	0.510
BE-weight	5	0-20	10.21±5.34	0.890
BE-attribution	4	0-16	8.58±3.08	0.745
BE-total	15	4-47	27.21±6.73	0.592

*SMAS-AF: Social Media Addiction Scale Adult Form

**SAAS: Social Appearance Anxiety Scale

***BE: Body Esteem

The mean duration of social media use among participants was 7.98 ± 3.20 years (min=1, max=17), and the mean daily social media use was 3.29 ± 1.75 hours (min=0.5, max=12). The three most commonly used social media platforms were WhatsApp (92.7%, n=357), Instagram (80.8%, n=311), and YouTube (61.3%, n=236). The frequency of participants who shared images on social media was 52.4% (n=202), while 47.5% (n=183) only followed others on social media. The most common purposes for using social media were entertainment (74.5%), following current events (46.8%), and communicating with friends (45.7%).

The social media addiction score was higher in those with suspected depression (56.63 ± 11.93) compared to those without depression (51.47 ± 11.05) (p<0.001). The SMAS-AF score was higher in those at risk for eating disorders than in those not at risk (p<0.001). Those who shared images on social media had higher scores in virtual tolerance (33.55 ± 7.29), virtual communication (22.21 ± 5.58) and social media addiction (55.77 ± 11.40) compared to those who only followed social media (virtual tolerance: 31.25 ± 7.53, virtual communication: 19.84 ± 5.56, social media addiction: 51.09 ± 11.51) (p=0.002; p<0.001; p<0.001 respectively) (Table 3).

The social appearance anxiety score for women (40.27 ± 15.91) was higher than for men (33.09 ± 14.47) (p<0.001). Those not at their desired weight had a higher social appearance anxiety score (40.45 ± 16.53) compared to those at their desired weight (33.88 ± 13.67) (p<0.001). According to BMI, those classified as

underweight had a higher BS-weight score (11.89 ± 5.62) compared to those with normal weight (7.72 ± 5.13) and those classified as obese (3.92 ± 3.30) (p<0.001) (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of Participants' Sociodemographic Characteristics and Social Media Usage Habits with SAAS, SAAS, and BESAA Scores

	SMAS	**SAAS**	**BE*-Appearance**	**BE*-Weight**	**BE*-Attribution**	**BE-total****
Gender						
Female	54.29±11.60	40.27±15.91	8.72±3.84	10.20±5.41	8.28±2.94	27.22±6.52
Male	52.03±11.73	33.09±14.47	7.77±3.30	10.22±5.21	9.19±3.28	21.19±7.17
p	0.075	**<0.001**	**0.018**	0.976	**0.006**	**0.976**
BMI (kg/m^2)***						
Underweight[a]	53.47±12.08	37.54±16.78	7.80±4.07	11.89±5.62	8.39±3.35	28.08±7.27
Normal weight	53.10±11.82	37.11±14.92	8.34±3.45	10.97±4.98	8.72±2.94	28.03±6.55
Overweight[c]	55.4±11.09	40.30±17.01	8.81±4.10	7.72±5.13	8.60±3.28	25.13±6.14
Obese[d]	51.84±10.88	41.23±21.17	9.69±4.30	3.92±3.30	6.53±3.01	20.15±5.30
p	0.472	0.400	0.288	**<0.001[ac]<0.001[ad]**	0.092	**<0.001[ad]0.004[bc]**
Desired Weight Status						
At Desired Weight	52.30±11.64	33.88±13.67	7.48±3.27	14.42±3.70	9.29±2.92	31.20±6.09
Not At Desired Weight	54.33±11.65	40.45±16.53	9.00±3.83	7.55±4.43	8.13±3.10	24.69±5.85
p	0.097	**<0.001**	**<0.001**	**<0.001**	**<0.001**	**<0.001**
Depression Status						
Depression Suspected	56.63 ±11.93	40.90±16.89	9.08±3.96	9.48±5.27	8.32±2.93	26.89±6.06
No Depression Suspected	51.47±11.05	35.92±14.72	7.96±3.44	10.70±5.34	8.76±3.17	27.42±7.15
p	**<0.001**	**0.003**	0.005	**0.028**	0.172	0.450
Eating Disorder Risk						
Risk-free	51.70±11.34	33.91±13.57	7.60±3.22	11.63±4.94	9.01±3.07	28.25±6.86
At Risk	57.44±11.45	46.37±16.85	10.12±4.05	7.21±4.91	7.67±2.91	25.02±5.91
p	**<0.001**	**<0.001**	**<0.001**	**<0.001**	**<0.001**	**<0.001**
Social Media Sharing Status						
Image Sharing	55.77±11.40	37.63±15.18	8.12±3.42	10.74±5.13	8.99±2.82	27.86±6.33
Only Following	51.09±11.51	38.24±16.50	8.73±3.96	9.61±5.52	8.14±3.29	26.49±7.09
p	**<0.001**	0.707**	0.113	**0.038**	**0.007**	**0.045**
Selfie Sharing Status						
Never[a]	51.11±11.73	39.68±16.44	8.90±4.24	9.26±5.12	7.85±3.35	26.01±6.54
Rarely[b]	53.24±11.23	36.79±15.52	8.19±3.49	10.48±5.39	8.83±2.98	27.51±6.83
Frequently/Always	62.57±10.11	39.81±15.37	8.39±3.15	11.26±5.43	9.15±2.49	28.81±6.24
p	**<0.001[ac];<0.001[bc]**	0.210***	0.249	0.060	**0.015[ab]**	**0.046**

* SAAS: Social Appearance Anxiety Scale. ** Independent sample t-test was used for comparisons between two groups, and One-way ANOVA was used for groups with three or more variables. ** BMI: Body Mass Index

There was a significant positive correlation between daily social media use time and SMAS and SAAS [**(**r=0.422, p<0.001); (r=0.291, p<0.001)]. A negative correlation was found between SGK and BSÖ (r=-0.129; p=0.011) (Table 4).

Table 4. Correlation analysis of SMAS, SAAS, and BESAA scores

		Social Media	Daily Social	SMAS*	SAAS**	BESAA *** total
Social Media Usage Duration (Years)	**r**	**1**				
	p					
Daily Social Media Usage Time (Hours)	**r**	0.079	**1**			
	p	0.124				
SMAS*	**r**	0.077	0.422**	**1**		
	p	0.133	**<0.001**			
SAAS**	**r**	-0.085	0.291**	0.427**	**1**	
	p	0.096	**<0.001**	**<0.001**		
BESAA***	**r**	0.038	0.046	-.005	-0.129*	**1**
	p	0.453	0.364	0.922	**0.011**	

*SMAS: Social Media Addiction Scale

** SAAS: Social Appearance Anxiety Scale

*** BESAA: Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults

Discussion

The evolution of social media is having a profound impact on people's cognitive processes and conceptual frameworks. The development and popularity of certain concepts on social media have led to a number of concerns among users, including an increasing preoccupation with physical appearance and perceived ideal body types. The new aesthetic standards that this concept has introduced have been a source of concern for many. So far, very few studies have been published on categorising and summarising the factors that lead to these concerns. This article aims to elucidate the role of social media in promoting addiction, appearance, and body image concerns from a health perspective. The effects of social media addiction on social appearance concerns and body image in young adults, whether variables related to social media use and some sociodemographic factors make a difference, and the relationship between body image and conditions such as depression and eating disorders were examined. This study, which is one of the few studies in the field due to its multidimensional examination of the effects of social media addiction on young adults, makes an important contribution to the literature.

According to a report conducted by digital media platforms HootSuite and We Are Social in January 2022, the number of social media users in Turkey is approximately 70 million, or 80.8% of the population. According to

the same report, the average daily social media usage time of an individual in Turkey is 2 hours and 59 minutes.[19] The average daily time spent on social media by the participants in this study was around 3.5 hours, which was higher than the national average. When looking at the purposes of social media use, the most common purposes were entertainment, keeping up with current events, and talking to friends. The top three most used social media networks were WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube. The results of this study do not fully overlap with the HootSuite report from January 2022, as it is limited to young adults, but similar results were found.[18]

Eating disorders are common in adolescence and young adulthood. Significantly, one in three young adults in this study was at risk for eating disorders, and those at risk also had high levels of social media addiction. Lifestyle, social environment, economic status, cultural factors, and the internalisation of idealised bodies presented by the media increase the risk of eating disorders.[19] In this study, women also had a higher risk of eating disorders, which may be due to women being more concerned with their appearance. In this study, more than half of the participants were of normal weight, but three out of five were dissatisfied with their weight, and four out of five wanted to lose weight. However, it can be interpreted that even those with a normal weight were at high risk of eating disorders due to the internalisation of the 'thin ideal' and misperceptions of their own bodies based on media portrayals of idealised thin bodies. In this study, participants with suspected depression had a higher risk of eating disorders. Similarly, a study of 318 university students found that students with depression had a higher risk of eating disorders.[20] Another study examining the relationship between depression and eating disorders found that depressed mood and low self-esteem increased eating disorder symptoms in young women.[21]

In this study, the level of social media addiction was found to be similar between women and men. Few studies report that social media addiction is similar between genders.[22] However, although more studies have found that men have higher levels of social media addiction[23], there are also studies with opposite findings.[24] Although the gender distribution in our sample was not homogeneous, the study was found to be highly robust. Furthermore, the literature indicates that women generally participate at higher rates in studies on topics such as social media use and body image. These inconsistencies may be due to methodological differences in measuring social media addiction, sample characteristics, differences in cultural contexts, age, and the significant increase in social media use during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The present study is one of the few studies to investigate the relationship between image sharing on social media and social media addiction. In a study by Safak and Kahraman (2019), it was found that the type of posts, such as news, text, and photos on social media, did not affect social media addiction.[26] However, the present study found that those who shared images on social media had higher levels of social media addiction than those who only followed others. This may be due to the compulsion to check comments and likes after sharing

images. In a study of students by Koc and colleagues, it was found that as the daily time spent on the internet, the frequency of checking social media apps, and the daily number of selfies taken and shared increased, so did social media addiction, and therefore, sharing selfies led to increased social media addiction.[27] When comparing the level of addiction with the frequency of selfie sharing, it was found that the group who shared selfies frequently or always had higher levels of social media addiction than those who rarely or never shared selfies. This may be related to the tendency to check other users' ratings after posting selfies.

Interestingly, desired weight status and daily social media usage time were not associated with body esteem, indicating that other psychosocial factors may play a more prominent role. Body esteem, which refers to an individual's self-evaluation of their body or appearance, is referred to in the literature as "body image". Body image is influenced by several components, including "perceptions" of the size and shape of one's body, "attitudes" about the ideal body, and "behaviours" such as overeating, controlled eating, and excessive exercise. In this study, women were found to have higher levels of social appearance anxiety. Although some studies report that men have higher levels of social appearance anxiety[27], other studies also show that women have higher levels of social appearance anxiety.[8] According to Frederick and Roberts' (1997) objectification theory, society and the media pressure women to have the 'perfect body'. Women who are constantly exposed to images of beautiful women evaluate their own appearance, and those who do not conform to general beauty norms experience anxiety about their appearance. This supports the results of the current study.

When the relationship between social appearance anxiety and BMI was examined, no significant difference was found, which is consistent with the literatüre.[28] However, individuals who were dissatisfied with their weight and wanted to lose weight, as well as those at risk for eating disorders, had higher levels of social appearance anxiety. This may be due to individuals misperceiving their body image and misjudging their BMI due to excessive exposure to the 'thin ideal' and body image distortion.

In depression, self-esteem decreases. Individuals feel inadequate and worthless, become more sensitive to negative comments from others, and experience anxiety by perceiving others as superior. In this study, participants suspected of having depression had higher levels of social appearance anxiety. Similar findings have been reported in the literatüre.[29]

The present study found a linear relationship between daily social media usage time and social appearance anxiety. This finding, which is consistent with the literature, may be due to increased exposure to more stimuli and opportunities for greater social comparison as time spent on social media increases, as well as increased reliance on social media.[13,17]

In addition to following others, social media platforms also offer the opportunity to be followed by others and to receive comments and likes on posts. This can lead to addiction for users who seek approval and validation,

as the constant need to upload photos, check comments, and monitor likes can increase and lead to frequent checking of the app.[30] Consistent with this, the present study found a positive linear relationship between social media addiction and social appearance anxiety in individuals. In other words, as individuals' social media addiction increased, so did their social appearance anxiety.

The sample in this study was selected from university campuses and city centres, which may have excluded rural areas and represented a population with a higher level of awareness. In addition, the use of 'filters' and 'Photoshop' by those sharing images and selfies on social media was not investigated, and its impact on social appearance anxiety may not have been fully assessed. The use of self-report data to assess addiction profiles introduces the potential for reporting bias, as individuals may underreport their social media use. This can be considered a limitation of the study, and it would be helpful for future research to take these factors into account. In future studies, the relationship between social media addiction and body perception of young adults should be evaluated in a larger sample, and the factors affecting it should be investigated with qualitative studies. The sample distribution was not homogeneous in terms of gender (67.3% female), and the use of voluntary participation may have led to selection bias. Although the post-hoc power analysis showed sufficient statistical power for gender comparisons, future studies with a balanced gender distribution would increase the generalizability of the results.

The BE-Appearance (α=0.510) and BE-total (α=0.592) of the BESAA fell below the ideal reliability level (≥0.70). However, it is known that Cronbach's alpha coefficient is sensitive to the number of items on the scale and naturally produces lower values on short scales. For short scales measuring heterogeneous constructs, alpha values in the range of 0.50-0.60 are considered acceptable if the scale's content validity and conceptual consistency are sufficient. Nevertheless, low reliability coefficients may have weakened inter-variable correlations and led to an underestimation of actual relationships. Therefore, findings related to the Body Esteem Scale should be interpreted with caution, and it is recommended that body esteem scales with higher reliability in the Turkish young adult population be used in future studies or that the cultural adaptation of the current scale be reviewed.

In conclusion, as young people's social media addiction increased, so did their social appearance anxiety. Women had higher social appearance anxiety, but unexpectedly, they also had higher body esteem. As expected, body esteem is inversely related to social appearance anxiety, and people with suspected depression have also been shown to have higher levels of social media addiction and social appearance anxiety.

The addictive nature of social media causes problems for young people, the age group that uses it most. One of the most prominent issues is the negative impact of social media on young adults' body image. Comparing themselves to so-called ideal body types on social media negatively affects their body perception, leads to body

dissatisfaction, and causes social appearance anxiety due to concerns about how their appearance will be judged by other users. Young people who are dissatisfied with their appearance may exhibit depressive symptoms, engage in excessive exercise and unhealthy dieting to improve their body image, and experience eating disorders. Assessing the factors that influence young adults' social media addiction and the impact of social media use on their body image will raise awareness of these issues, guide preventive action, and contribute to the development of healthier generations. Raising awareness of the relationship between young adults' media consumption habits and body satisfaction is the most important step in taking the necessary precautions.

Ethical Considerations: The study was approved by the T.C. Necmettin Erbakan University Non-Drug and Non-Medical Device Research Ethics Committee under number 2021/3432. Participants were given preliminary information about the study, and informed consent was obtained.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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