

# INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUTH'S SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE PURPOSES AND APPEARANCE-RELATED SOCIAL MEDIA CONSCIOUSNESS

Nesrin DUMAN

İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi, Türkiye  
nesrinduman@windowslive.com  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2751-8315>

Zeynep POLAT

İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi, Türkiye  
polatz20@29mayis.edu.tr  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1954-414X>

Beyza YILDIRIM

İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi, Türkiye  
yildirimb20@29mayis.edu.tr  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3727-012X>

<i>Atıf</i>	Duman, N., Polat Z., Yıldırım, B. (2025). "INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUTH'S SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE PURPOSES AND APPEARANCE-RELATED SOCIAL MEDIA CONSCIOUSNESS". İletişim Çalışmaları Dergisi, 11 (1), 47-66.
-------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Geliş tarihi / Received:** 04.08.2024

**Kabul tarihi / Accepted:** 02.01.2025

**DOI:** 10.17932/IAU.ICD.2015.006/icd\_v011i1003

## ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to examine the relationship between the social media consciousness of young people on looks and their reasons for utilizing social media. A total of 272 university students, including 224 women and 48 men, participated in the study. The "Demographic Information Form", the "Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness Scale", and the "Social Media Use Purposes Scale of University Students" were used to collect data. According to the findings of the study, among the social media platforms, participants mostly use Instagram (81.6%) and WhatsApp (70.6%). Furthermore, it was noted that the individuals' most

fixated body regions were their faces (32.4%) and bellies (37.1%). It is clear from looking at the aim of social media use that youngsters mostly utilize it for “obtaining information.” Furthermore, a substantial degree of negative body image perception was noted in the participants. Young people with a variable diet have a significantly higher negative body image. It is seen that participants who have more screen time use social media to obtain information more. Lastly, there is a significant correlational relationship between the reasons for using social media and appearance-related social media consciousness. This study is intended to be a resource for studies on individuals’ psychological well-being and conscious use of technology.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Physical Appearance, Body Perception, Social Media Consciousness.*

## **GENÇLERİN SOSYAL MEDYAYI KULLANIM AMAÇLARI İLE DIŞ GÖRÜNÜMLE İLİŞKİLİ SOSYAL MEDYA BİLİNCİ İLİŞKİSİNİN İNCELENMESİ**

### **ÖZ**

Çalışma gençlerin sosyal medya kullanım amaçları ile görünümle ilişkili sosyal medya bilinci arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi hedeflemiştir. Araştırmaya 224 kadın ve 48 erkek olmak üzere toplamda 272 üniversite öğrencisi katılmıştır. Veri toplamak amacıyla “*Demografik Bilgi Formu*”, “*Görünümle İlişkili Sosyal Medya Bilinç Ölçeği*” ve “*Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Sosyal Medyayı Kullanım Amaçlarını Belirleme Ölçeği*” kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucunda elde edilen bulgulara göre; katılımcılar sosyal medya platformlarından en çok Instagram (%81,6) ve WhatsApp (%70,6) kullanmaktadır. Bununla birlikte katılımcıların bedenlerinde en çok mesele ettikleri bölgelerin göbük (%37,1) ve yüz (%32,4) olduğu görülmüştür. Sosyal medya kullanım amacı incelendiğinde; gençlerin en çok “bilgi edinme” amaçlı sosyal medya kullandıkları anlaşılmıştır. Ayrıca, katılımcıların yüksek düzeyde negatif beden imajı algısına sahip oldukları görülmüştür. Değişken bir beslenme düzeni olan gençlerin anlamlı düzeyde daha yüksek negatif beden imajına sahip oldukları tespit edilmiştir. Sosyal medya ekran süresi fazla olan katılımcıların sosyal medyayı daha çok bilgi edinme amacıyla kullandıkları görülmektedir. Son olarak sosyal

medya kullanım amaçları ile görünümle ilişkili sosyal medya bilinci arasında anlamlı korelasyonel ilişki bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarına ve bilinçli teknoloji kullanımına yönelik çalışmalarına kaynak niteliğinde olması amaçlanmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Sosyal Medya, Dış Görünüş, Beden Algısı, Sosyal Medya Bilinci.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the moment humankind has been on earth, it has strived to provide interaction and communication in order to adapt to both the other beings around it and the changing physical environment. The outputs of this effort can be simple sticks, logs, or rocks, or a wide range that can include all of the digital devices used today. What causes the field of communication to expand so much is that humanity creates new communications due to the need to interact with others.

The internet used in today's digital communication devices has given rise to some platforms called social media. Social media are internet-based platforms where users present themselves and the content, they produce to both more general and more specialized groups as they wish to express themselves and shape people's perception of value through their interaction with others (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Social media attracts the attention of users due to the shares made on various social networking sites and is present in a large part of daily life.

According to the *We Are Social* (2024) report, the global total number of internet users worldwide reached 5.35 billion, and the number of social media users reached 5.04 billion in 2024. Looking specifically at Türkiye, according to the *DataReportal* (2024) report, the number of internet users reached 74.41 million, while the number of social media users was calculated as 57.50 million. Almost no one spends an hour without accessing the internet or checking social media, which is an indispensable part of daily life (Hayır and Karahisar, 2022).

There are many factors among the reasons for the intense tendency towards social platforms. The purposes of use of social media platforms provided by technology include areas such as communication, education, entertainment, commerce, or access to information (Geng, 2013). Other

factors that can be considered as reasons for use are the users' desire to reflect their own selves and personalities through social networks. Social media is mostly used by users as a tool where they choose to reflect the aspects, they like about themselves.

Nowadays, most of the young generation carries out their emotional and social development/regulation processes through their smartphones and internet connections (Dhanwal, 2023). According to a study (Vogel et al., 2014), long-term exposure to social media affects self-esteem in shorter periods of time. If it is prolonged, it may affect self-esteem. Self-esteem, on the other hand, is highly related to the fact that the sides of users that they present on the platforms are appreciated, approved, and admired, that is, to their emotional/social development processes. It shapes many other phenomena, including people's ideas, the way they live their lives, and their perceptions of themselves. These facts shape the goals individuals need in their lives.

Increased use of social media for these reasons may bring about many psychological and physiological risk factors, such as body dissatisfaction and negative body perception. Because variables such as seeing idealized body images, being in a group, the type of clothing worn, and gender distribution can increase body image anxiety (Lamarche, 2014). Schilder (1936)'s definition of body perception is the body image visualized in the mind (Schilder, 1936). Appearance and the evaluations made on these appearances on social platforms are remarkable data by individuals. Because the aforementioned evaluations help others develop a perception in their minds as to whether the person makes a good impression about himself or not. It is possible to say that the awareness that people develop about their appearance and this body perception that develops throughout their lives may vary according to culture and time. Under the sponsorship of *Psychology Today*, the first significant nationwide study on body image was carried out in 1972. The Body Parts Satisfaction Scale, which looked at people's discontent with 24 areas of their bodies, was used to measure body image (Frederick et al., 2014).

Considering these connections in the literature, it is seen that individuals can express themselves by leaving out unwanted aspects in the social environments they access through social networks and that they construct their identities through the relationships they establish (Değer and Sine

Nazlı, 2022). Excessive exposure to idealized bodies on media platforms leads to distortions in individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards their bodies. Especially in this period when young people strengthen their social relationships and gain a sense of responsibility, the idealization of thin and weak bodies by mass media increases the desire to have this body in girls and triggers a tendency towards a muscular body image in boys (Önal et al., 2019). In this context, it can be said that the purpose of individuals' use of social media plays an important role in their development of appearance-related awareness.

### THE STUDY'S OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the relationship between young people's social media usage motivations and appearance-related social media consciousness.

Quantitative studies typically use three types of research questions (RQs). In an experiment or group comparison, the researcher may compare groups on an independent variable to observe how it affects a dependent variable. In a survey project, the researcher can link one or more predictor factors to one or more outcome variables. RQs can be *descriptive questions* where the intent is to describe a single variable. Alternatively, RQs can state *relationship questions* among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023, p.175-6). Accordingly, the following questions were designed as the research questions according to the purpose of the research:

1. What are the social media platforms most used by youth?
  2. What are the purposes of youth using social media?
  3. What is the youth's appearance-related social media consciousness?
  4. Does appearance-related social media consciousness differ significantly according to socio-demographic variables?
  5. Is there a significant correlational relationship between youth's purposes for using social media and appearance-related social media consciousness?
- In light of these questions, two hypotheses are put forward:

$H_0$ : Youth's intentions for using social media and their awareness of appearance-related issues on social media do not significantly correlate.

$H_1$ : Youth's intentions for using social media and their awareness of appearance-related social media are significantly correlated.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

This study aims to explore the relationship between the reasons people use social media and the increased level of appearance-related social media consciousness. In this regard, the study will yield information to determine whether shifting social media usage patterns are associated with particular appearance perceptions. The use of social media, especially among young people, regarding the perception of appearance can negatively affect people's body image and lead to many psychological problems. The study may contribute to the creation of educational programs on issues such as depression, anxiety, self-esteem, and eating disorders, which are among these problems. The programs to be prepared may aim to develop a healthy body perception, critically evaluate social media content, and increase self-compassion skills. The study's findings are therefore crucial for comprehending the connection between the goals of using social media and appearance consciousness, as well as for informing future research that aims to improve people's perceptions of their own healthy appearance and responsible use of social media.

## **METHODS**

### **Model of the research**

The survey model, defined as "a research model that aims to detect a past or present situation as it exists" (Karasar, 2018, p.109), is the one used in this study. The inquiry used the "relational screening model," one of the screening models within the general screening category that aims to determine the existence and/or degree of change between two or more variables. In order to facilitate relationship analysis, this model is constructed as data pairs (Karasar, 2018, p.114).

### **Data collection tools**

The data for the research was collected using three forms: the "*Demographic Information Form*," the "*Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness Scale*," and the "*Social Media Use Purposes Scale of University Students*" in order to determine the attachment styles of the participants.

***Demographic Information Form:*** The researchers' form includes both closed-ended and open-ended questions about age, sex, the most popular social media platform, screen time, the body part about which the participant is most concerned, how satisfied they are with this area, and diet. The questions in the form and the satisfaction rating of body parts were

prepared by taking the survey form used in the study by Frederick et al., 2014, as an example.

***Social Media Use Purposes Scale of University Students (SMUP):*** The creators of this scale are Aras and Peker (2021). There are 17 items on the scale. The scale has a maximum score of 85 points and a lowest potential value of 17. The form is a Likert type, with five points: one for strongly disagreeing and five for completely agreeing. The scale has no reverse-coded items. The scale has four sub-dimensions (communication, social interaction, need for entertainment, and get information). Questions numbered 1-2 and 3 evaluate “communication,” questions numbered 4-5-6-7 and 8 evaluate “social interaction,” questions numbered 9-10-11-12 and 13 evaluate “need for entertainment,” and questions 14-15-16 and 17 are aimed at evaluating “get information.” It can be seen that in this study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale ( $\alpha=.87$ ), the Communicating subscale ( $\alpha=.76$ ), the Social Interaction subscale ( $\alpha=.88$ ), the Obtaining Information subscale ( $\alpha=.76$ ), and the Need for Entertainment subscale ( $\alpha=.81$ ).

***Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness Scale (ARSMC):*** Öngören et al. established this scale (2021). There are thirteen items on the scale. The scale has a lowest possible score of 13 and a maximum score of 91 points. The form is a Likert type with seven points, ranging from 1 to 5 (1 Never... 5 Always). The scale has no reverse-coded items. A high score on the scale denotes a person’s strong unfavorable impression of their body. In this study, the scale’s Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was determined as.92 ( $\alpha=.92$ ), whilst the scale’s overall Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as.93 (Alpha =.93). A Cronbach Alpha of 0.6–0.7 is generally considered to be an adequate level of reliability.

### **Ethics of the study**

Research started after obtaining ethical approval from the İstanbul 29 Mayıs University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee on the date of 02.01.2024, under reference number 2024/01.

### **Analysis**

The information gathered from the forms and scales was digitalized and entered into the SPSS-22 Windows program for analysis of the study

findings. It was initially assessed whether the relevant data set showed a normal distribution before beginning data analysis. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) acknowledge that a distribution is considered normal if its skewness and kurtosis values fall within  $\pm 1.50$ . Given that the study's scales and subscales' kurtosis and skewness values fall within this range, the data set can be regarded as having a normal distribution. (See Table 3.). Parametric techniques were thus determined to be appropriate for analysis. The Pearson correlation analysis and the Independent Sample T-test were applied. In terms of interpretation, significance values of  $p < .05$  and  $p < .001$  were selected.

### **Sampling**

During the spring semester of the 2023–2024 academic calendar, this research was carried out. The cluster sampling methodology was employed to determine the sampling strategy, giving every member of the research population an equal chance of being chosen. By computing a 95% confidence interval and a 6% margin of error in the unknown universe, 272 participants made up the sample size. Table 1 displays the frequency analysis results that display the participant demographic data.

**Table 1.** *Frequency Analysis Results*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Labels</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Age	18-24	249	91,5
	25-34	23	8,5
Sex	Female	224	82,4
	Male	48	17,6
Average screen time spent on phone	1-2 hours	19	7
	3-4 hours	123	45,2
	5 hours or more	130	47,8
Level of Satisfaction with the Troubled Area in the Body	I am not satisfied at all	23	8,5
	I am not satisfied	87	32,0
	I'm undecided	66	24,3
	I'm a little satisfied	73	26,8
Diet	I'm satisfied	23	8,5
	Healthy	43	15,8
	Unhealthy	41	15,1
	Variable diet	188	69,1
	<i>Total</i>	272	100



## RESULTS

In this section, descriptive, comparative and correlation analysis results for the "Social Media Use Purposes Scale of University Students" and the "Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness Scale" will be presented respectively.

### Descriptive statistics

#### Analysis of multiple-choice questions (MCQs)

The study involved 272 individuals in total, 224 of whom were female and 48 of whom were male. Answers from multiple choice questions obtained from this sample group are presented in table below. (See Table 2).

*Table 2. Multiple-choice analysis*

	<b>Multiple choices</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Social Media Platforms used most	Twitter	116	42,6
	Instagram	222	<b>81,6</b>
	YouTube	135	49,6
	WhatsApp	192	<b>70,6</b>
	Tik Tok	31	11,4
	Snapchat	49	18,0
	Telegram	2	0,7
	Redditt	1	0,4
	Pinterest	1	0,4
	Body area preyed on most	Body Size	44
Back		59	21,7
Face		88	<b>32,4</b>
Arms		29	10,7
Hands		15	5,5
Belly		101	<b>37,1</b>
Legs		80	29,4
Hip		48	17,6
Nose		7	2,6
No		7	2,6
	Other (feet, ear, cheeks etc)	16	5,9

### Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis results for the "ARSMC" and "SMUP" and their subscales are displayed in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *Descriptive Statistics for scales and subscales*

Scales&Subscales	n	Min	Max	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Skew.	Kurt.
* SMUP Total	272	23,00	84,00	53,50	11,43	,036	-,138
<i>Communication</i>	272	3,00	15,00	8,92	3,32	,180	-,785
<i>Social interaction</i>	272	5,00	25,00	12,45	4,97	,437	-,415
<i>Need f entertainment</i>	272	5,00	25,00	15,58	4,13	-,277	-,269
<i>Get information</i>	272	8,00	20,00	<b>16,54</b>	2,73	-,992	1,052
** ARSMC Total	272	13,00	91,00	46,50	17,29	,257	-,562
<i>N</i>	272						

\* SMUP: Social Media Use Purposes

\*\*ARSMC: Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness

When the sub-dimensions of the “SMUP” were examined, it was seen that the participants mostly used social media for the purpose of getting information (16.54±2.73). It was determined that the least dominant sub-dimension was communication (8.92±3.32). These findings demonstrate how frequently users utilize social media for informational purposes.

An average score of 46.50±17.29 was obtained from the “ARSMC”. Scoring above 40 on this scale means that negative body image perception is high. Negative body image occurs when a person develops the feeling that they do not have the physical appearance that meets their expectations. As such, it was observed that the participants had high negative body image perceptions.

### **Comparative analysis**

In this section, Independent sample T-test analyses were conducted for sex and age variables, and One-Way Anova analyses were conducted for diet and screen time variables, respectively.

### **Independent sample T-test**

The difference between social media usage purposes and appearance-related social media consciousness scores according to sex was examined with an independent sample t-test. (See Table 4)

**Table 4.** T-test analysis results according to sex

Scales&subscales	Female		Male		t(270)	p
	$\bar{X}$	Sd	$\bar{X}$	Sd		
* SMUP Total	53,19	11,32	54,97	11,97	-,982	,443
Communication	8,76	3,31	9,66	3,34	-1,704	,650
Social interaction	12,32	5,05	13,06	4,60	-,937	,478
Need f entertainment	15,46	4,10	16,16	4,26	-1,068	,454
Get information	16,63	2,65	16,08	3,07	1,277	,157
** ARSMC Total	47,53	17,44	41,10	15,65	2,358	,363

\* SMUP: Social Media Use Purposes

\*\*ARSMC: Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness

The findings of the t-test analysis indicate that there is no significant difference in SMUP based on sex,  $t(270) = -.982$   $p > .05$ . In SMUP scale's sub-dimensions of communication ( $t(270) = -1.704$ ,  $p > .05$ ); social interaction ( $t(270) = -.937$ ,  $p > .05$ ); need for entertainment ( $t(270) = 1.068$ ,  $p > .05$ ); getting information ( $t(270) = 1.277$ ,  $p > .05$ ), similar results were observed. On the other hand, ARSMC results do not also show any significant difference according to sex,  $t(270) = 2.358$   $p > .05$ .

The difference between SMUP and ARSMC scores by age was examined with an independent sample t-test. The results are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5.** T-test analysis results according to age groups

Scales&subscales	18-24 years		25-34 years		t(270)	p
	$\bar{X}$	Sd	$\bar{X}$	Sd		
* SMUP Total	53,68	11,49	51,60	10,88	,831	,512
Communication	8,95	3,35	8,56	3,10	,543	,447
Social interaction	12,61	4,98	10,73	4,63	1,733	,373
Need for entertainment	15,60	4,19	15,39	3,52	,238	,283
Get information	16,50	2,70	16,91	3,04	-,682	,419
** ARSMC Total	49,97	17,44	40,13	14,43	1,825	,371

\* SMUP: Social Media Use Purposes

\*\*ARSMC: Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference in SMUP based on age groups,  $t(270) = .831$ ,  $p > .05$ . In SMUP scale's sub-dimensions of communication ( $t(270) = .543$ ,  $p > .05$ ); social interaction ( $t(270) = 1.733$ ,  $p > .05$ ); need for entertainment ( $t(270) = .238$ ,  $p > .05$ ); getting information ( $t(270) = .682$ ,  $p > .05$ ), similar results were obtained. And also, the ARSMC data do not indicate a significant difference across age groups,  $t(270) = 1.825$ ,  $p > .05$ .

### **One-Way ANOVA**

An ANOVA one-way analysis of variance was used to compare the total score averages of the social media usage objectives scale based on diet and the social media consciousness scale based on appearance. Table 6 presents the findings.

**Table 6.** *Anova analysis results according to diet*

<i>Scales&amp;subscales</i>	<u>Healthy</u>		<u>Unhealthy</u>		<u>Variable</u>		<u>F(2,269)</u>
	<u>Eating</u>		<u>Eating</u>		<u>Diet</u>		
	$\bar{X}$	Sd	$\bar{X}$	Sd	$\bar{X}$	Sd	
** SMUP Total	53,44	13,19	54,80	11,36	53,23	11,05	,314
<i>Communication</i>	09,93	03,58	9,51	3,49	08,56	03,18	3,748
<i>Social interaction</i>	12,34	05,44	12,70	4,99	12,42	04,88	,067
<i>Need f entertainment</i>	15,02	04,30	16,21	4,01	15,57	04,12	,879
<i>Get information</i>	16,13	02,76	16,36	2,61	16,67	02,75	,756
***ARSMC Total	40,60	15,83	45,63	16,50	47,89	17,56	2,208*

\*p<.05

\*\* SMUP: Social Media Use Purposes

\*\*\*ARSMC: Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness

In the ANOVA analysis results, SMUP score does not differ significantly according to diet,  $F(2, 269) = .314, p = .370$ .

On the other hand, ARSMC score varies significantly according to the diet,  $F(2,269)=2,208, p = .042$ . To investigate which groups this differentiation occurred in and the direction of the differentiation, Scheffe analysis, one of the follow-up (post-hoc) tests, was carried out.

According to Post-hoc Scheffe results. There is a significant differentiation between healthy diet and varied diet groups,  $p=.047, p<.05$ . Social media consciousness related to appearance is significantly high in people with variable diets. Between the other subgroups, there are no significant differences.

The difference between the total score averages of the SMUP and ARSMC according to phone screen time was examined by one-way ANOVA analysis of variance. (See Table 7).

**Table 7.** Anova analysis results according to screen time

Scales & Subscales	1-2 hours		3-4 hours		5 hours or more		F(2,269)
	$\bar{X}$	Sd	$\bar{X}$	Sd	$\bar{X}$	Sd	
***SMUP Total	41,42	12,43	52,86	10,83	55,87	10,71	14,987
<i>Communication</i>	7,47	3,97	8,91	3,28	9,14	3,24	2,110
<i>Social interaction</i>	8,89	4,70	12,08	4,60	13,32	5,10	7,543
<i>Need f entertainment</i>	11,42	3,02	15,47	3,93	16,30	4,11	12,669
<i>Get information</i>	13,63	3,86	16,39	2,74	17,10	2,22	15,043**
****ARSMC Total	33,57	14,22	45,59	16,69	49,03	17,44	7,183*

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.001 Brown-Forsythe

\*\*\*SMUP: Social Media Use Purposes

\*\*\*\*ARSMC: Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness

In SMUP subscales, only ‘Get information’ sub-dimension shows a significant difference according to the phone screen time, Brown-Forsythe  $F(2,269)=15,043$ ,  $p=.000$ . Brown-Forsythe analysis of variance was employed, since the group variances were not homogeneous.

Similarly, ARSMC scale shows a significant difference according to phone screen time,  $F(2,269) = 7,183$ ,  $p=.001$ . To examine which groups this differentiation occurred in and the direction of the differentiation, Scheffe and Tamhane T2 analyses were performed, which are follow-up (post-hoc) tests. According to analyses results:

According to the post-hoc Tamhane’s T2 analysis, there is a significant difference in the scores obtained from the ‘Get information’ sub-dimension between the group with 1–2 hours of screen time and the group with 3–4 hours of screen time ( $p = .020$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Social media use for information acquisition is higher in groups with 3–4 hours of screen time. Similarly, there is a significant difference in the scores obtained from the ‘Get information’ sub-dimension between the group with 1–2 hours of screen time and the group with 5 or more hours of screen time ( $p = .003$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Social media use for information acquisition is higher in groups with 5 or more hours of screen time.

There is a significant difference in ARSMC scores between the group with 1–2 hours of screen time and the group with 3–4 hours of screen time ( $p = .017$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Negative body image perception is higher in groups with 3–4 hours of screen time. Similarly, there is a significant difference in ARSMC scores between the group with 1–2 hours of screen time and the

group with 5 or more hours of screen time ( $p = .001, p < .05$ ). Negative body image perception is higher in groups with 5 or more hours of screen time.

### **Correlation analysis**

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the correlational relationship between SMUP and ARSMC. The correlation results of the two scales used in the study are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8.** *Correlation analysis*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
<sup>1</sup> SMUP***a	-					
<sup>2</sup> Communication	.715**	-				
<sup>3</sup> Social interaction	.858**	.602**	-			
<sup>4</sup> Need f information	.789**	.313**	.534**	-		
<sup>5</sup> Get information	.558**	.208**	.230**	.437**	-	
<sup>6</sup> ARSMC****b	.381**	.138*	.375**	.278**	.324**	-

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , <sup>a</sup> $N = 272$ , <sup>b</sup> $N = 272$

\*\*\*SMUP: Social Media Use Purposes

\*\*\*\*ARSMC: Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness

Accordingly, a significant, positive, and moderate correlational relationship was found between SMUP and ARSMC total scores,  $r(270) = .381, p < 0.01$ . Similarly, there is a significant and positive correlational relationship between all sub-dimensions of SMUP and ARSMC, respectively  $r(270) = .138, p < 0.05$ ;  $r(270) = .375, p < 0.01$ ;  $r(270) = .378, p < 0.01$ ;  $r(270) = .324, p < 0.01$ .

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

In this section, the research findings are evaluated in line with the research questions. When the research findings were examined, no sex-related differences were found in the results of appearance-related social media awareness or social media usage purposes. In studies examining body perception in terms of sex, it has been observed that there are similar situations for both genders (Aydın and Vural, 2018). The fact that body image has become an important factor on social media platforms for both genders in recent years and that being thin for women and muscular for men is perceived as the ideal body basically shows that there are similar distorted evaluations for both genders. This can be considered an indication that social media platforms are used similarly by both men and women today.

The fact that this situation is still controlled by the media today and continues to increase due to voluntary sharing by social media users may have an increasing effect on eating disorders that can be diversified, such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa.

As a result of multiple analyses, it was seen that the parts of the participants' bodies that they were most worried about were the face and belly areas. This result is consistent data considering the idealized body image in today's age. Especially on social media platforms, the 'ideal of being thin' is developed through women, and women strive for unrealistic beauty standards (Mills et al., 2018). The perception of being thin, especially presented to women through the media, can collectively cause society to accept the thin female body as normal. Dolls, which are a means of entertainment for girls at a young age, can be considered one of the first images that women are exposed to, in which slim bodies and beautiful faces are idealized. Every woman's individual mental makeup is likely to change when she sees an image designed according to standards set from childhood. The fact that the same mental structure continues to exist in adulthood, controlled by the media, and causes collective manipulation not only in the minds of women but also in the minds of men, explains why women want to turn into 'Barbie dolls'. In addition to women's efforts to be thin, men also find thin women more attractive (Kelch-Oliver & Ancis, 2011). According to another multiple analysis result of this study, the most used social media platform is thought to be Instagram (81.6%). According to the findings of the We Are Social (2020) report, it was determined that the Instagram application ranked second among the social media accounts with the highest frequency of use. This shows that, even after 4 years, the visual-based social media platform is one of the most preferred applications. As a result, the users' desire to both show themselves and be informed about the lives of others continues to increase the popularity of this platform.

It was noted that the majority of participants obtained their information through social media. What is meant by the purpose of information acquisition is the desire of individuals to have information about what other people wear, where they go, or, in short, what their own lives are like. The high frequency of the desire to obtain information shows that people attach importance to not being unaware of their social environment and what is

happening in the world. This situation is used in the literature to express FoMO (Fear of Missing Out), which is the fear of not being able to keep track of what is happening in other people's lives (Tanhan et al., 2022). In these cases, people can turn to social media sites such as Instagram and Twitter, where instant sharing can be managed, or active communication platforms such as WhatsApp to help them manage their anxiety levels. The study's data on the most popular social media platforms appear consistent with this view. There are many reasons why individuals may desire to obtain information and fear being left behind. A sense of curiosity may be one of these reasons. The sense of curiosity is an important determining factor in the behaviors that have existed with humanity. The unbalanced increase in the sense of curiosity and the uncontrollability of this emotion also bring to mind a hysterical social structure. Hysteria is a neurotic mental disorder characterized by psychic and motor disorders, especially in which emotional reactions go out of control and cause impairment in the individual's functionality (Akarsu, 2010). The connection between excessive emotional reactivity, difficulty controlling it, and hysteria may manifest itself in a social context as a sense of curiosity about the lives of others. Not using social media consciously can cause both FoMO and hysterical behavior to worsen in the future.

According to the correlation analysis, there is a positive and moderately significant correlational relationship between the social media usage purposes scale and the appearance-related social consciousness scale. The ways in which social media is used by individuals can affect their sensitivity to social norms and perceptions regarding appearance. It can be said that this finding is an expected result, especially considering the role that social media plays in the spread of aesthetic standards and individuals' efforts to adapt to these standards.

Another important finding obtained from the correlation analysis is the moderate, positive, and significant correlational relationship between the information acquisition sub-dimension and the appearance-related consciousness scale. As the way of obtaining information on Instagram increases, users' awareness of their appearance on these channels becomes negative. The concept of obtaining information can refer to many meanings when it comes to social media. People can get information about current affairs via Twitter, as well as keep up to date with their daily com-



munication information about their social circle via WhatsApp. When it comes to Instagram, obtaining information is possible by following the published photos. The content of the shared images can sometimes consist of posts in which people show only themselves, that is, their clothing or bodies, apart from their daily lives. At this point, it should not be forgotten that every image shared by people may not reflect reality. Many people, especially influencers, can make changes in the photographs in which their bodies appear in order to obtain a look that conforms to idealized body patterns. This may result in deterioration of the perception of people who use Instagram intensively regarding their own appearance while gaining information about body perception. There are two studies in the literature that support these findings. Compared to landscape pictures consisting of control images on Instagram, an increase in body dissatisfaction and body mass was observed in female participants exposed to influencer images seen as models (McComb and Mills, 2021). In another study conducted with men, a significant decrease was observed in the body satisfaction of participants who saw images of people with their bare bodies under the theme of fitness, compared to participants who saw images with their bodies covered in fashion (Tiggemann and Anderberg, 2020).

A social media awareness scale related to appearance has been found to have significantly higher social media awareness in people with a variable diet, depending on their diet. In modern societies, staying young, being fit, and having ideal body forms spread through media such as television programs and advertisements, and individuals are exposed to attitudes that are assumed to be ideal about the body (Hacıoğlu, 2017). This situation can be interpreted as a cycle of constantly starting a diet to get the body into the idealized shape and then quitting when it is realized that the body expected by the media and full motivation is not achieved. Continuous restriction of eating habits negatively affects individuals' body perception and directs people to unhealthy diet practices, which are claimed to provide a temporary and quick solution to reach the idealized body instead of healthy eating habits (Tuğay, 2019). As a result, constant dieting and irregular dieting have negative effects on people's body perception and create a group of people who are never satisfied with their bodies. When the reasons that may cause changing eating habits are evaluated from another perspective, it can be said that the media constantly changes the body images that people adopt with new ones over time. The ideal body perception that changes

over time or according to culture will also cause a constant difference in people's eating habits.

To conclude, it is thought that this study could be a good starting point for future research on the connection between body image and social media use and will contribute to the literature for new research on how body perception may differ through changing cultural structures.

## **REFERENCES**

Akarsu, P. (2010). *Sürrealizm ve rüya*. Yüksek lisans tezi. İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi.

Aras, E., & Peker, A. (2021). Üniversite öğrencilerinin sosyal medyayı kullanım amaçlarını belirleme ölçeğinin geliştirilmesi. *Iğdır Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, (25), 656-73.

Aydın, M., & Vural, G. Z. (2018). Üniversite öğrencilerinin beden imgelelerinin yaşam niteliklerine etkisi. *Eğitim Kuram ve Uygulama Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 4(3), 111-21.

Carr, C. T., & Hayes, R. A. (2015). Social media: Defining, developing, and divining. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 23(1), 46–65.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (6th ed.). California: SAGE Publications.

DataReportal. (2024). Digital 2024: *Turkey* [Report]. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-turkey>.

Değer, B. E., & Sine Nazlı, R. (2022). Sosyal medyada influencer etkisi bağlamında benlik sunumu. *Uşak Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 15(2), 25-45.

Dhanwal, S. (2023). Purpose and extent of use of social media by students. *Computer*, 67(83.70), 2–83.

Frederick, D., Bohrnstedt, G. W., Hatfield, E., & Berscheid, E. (2014). Factor structure and validity of the Body Parts Satisfaction Scale: Results from the 1972 Psychology Today survey. *Psihologijske Teme*, 23(2), 223–242.

Geng, G. (2013). Investigating the use of text messages in mobile learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 14(1), 77–87.

Hacıoğlu, M. (2017). Üniversite öğrencilerinin beden imgesi hoşnutluğu ve iletişim becerilerinin incelenmesi. *Gaziantep Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 2(2), 1-16.

Hayır, C., & Karahisar, T. (2022). Dijital medya çağında sosyal röntgençilik: Instagram örneği. *İnönü Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi (İNİF E-Dergi)*, 7(1), 260-277.

Karasar, N. (2018). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri: Kavramlar, ilkeler ve teknikler* (32. baskı). Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.

Kelch-Oliver, K., & Ancis, J. R. (2011). Black women's body image: An analysis of culture-specific influences. *Women & Therapy*, 34(4), 345–358.

Lamarche, L., Gammage, K. L., Kerr, G., Faulkner, G., & Klentrou, P. (2014). Examining psychobiological responses to an anticipatory body image threat in women. *Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research*, 19: 127–143. Crossref.

McComb, S. E., & Mills, J. S. (2021). Young women's body image following upwards comparison to Instagram models: The role of physical appearance perfectionism and cognitive emotion regulation. *Body Image*, 38: 49–62.

Mills, J. S., Musto, S., Williams, L., & Tiggemann, M. (2018). “Selfie” harm: Effects on mood and body image in young women. *Body image*, 27, 86-92.

Schilder, P. (1936). The image and appearance of the human body: Studies in the constructive energies of the psyche. Psyche monographs, no. 4. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 83(2), 227-8.

Önal, S., Özer, B. K., Sağır, M., Sağır, S., Özdemir, A., Acar, S., & Yavuz, C. M. (2019). Üniversite öğrencilerinde beden algısı ve beden kitle endeksi arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi. *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 59(1), 543-58.

Öngören, B., Durdu, Z., Dongaz, Ö. İ., Bayar, B., & Bayar, K. (2021). Görünümle ilişkili sosyal medya bilinç ölçeğinin Türkçe uyarlaması: Geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması. *Karya Journal of Health Science*, 2(2), 33-8.

Tanhan, F., Özok, H. İ., & Tayız, V. (2022). Gelişmeleri kaçırma korkusu (FoMO): Güncel bir derleme. *Psikiyatride Güncel Yaklaşımlar*, 14(1), 74-85.

Tiggemann, M., & Anderberg, I. (2020). Muscles and bare chests on Instagram: The effect of influencers' fashion and fitspiration images on men's body image. *Body Image*, 35, 237-244

Tuğay, E. (2019). Üniversite öğrencilerinin yaşam kalitesi beden algısı ve beslenme durumunun saptanması. Yüksek lisans tezi. İstanbul: Biruni Üniversitesi.

Vogel, E. A., Rose, J. P., Roberts, L. R., & Eckles, K. (2014). Social comparison, social media, and self-esteem. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 3(4), 206-222.

We Are Social. (2020). *Digital 2020 global report*. We Are Social. <https://wearesocial.com/uk/blog/2020/01/digital-2020-3-8-billion-people-use-social-media/>

We Are Social. (2024). *Digital 2024 global report*. We Are Social. <https://omgiletisim.com/we-are-social-dijital-2024-global-raporu-yayinlandi/>