

## An investigation of media usage purposes and social media addiction levels of faculty of sport sciences students

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the media usage purposes and social media addiction levels of students in Faculties of Sport Sciences. The study was conducted using a quantitative research design based on the descriptive survey model. An online questionnaire was administered to a total of 900 students (486 female, 414 male) enrolled in various Sport Sciences faculties. The data collection tools included a "Personal Information Form", the "Media Usage Purposes Scale" and the "Social Media Addiction Scale". Independent Samples T-Test was used to analyze the data. Group comparisons were made based on variables such as gender, department, year of study, type of social media platform used, and duration of use. According to the findings, there were no statistically significant differences in students' media usage purposes based on gender, class level, or type of social media platform ( $p>0.05$ ); however, male students in the Recreation department had significantly higher social media addiction scores compared to their female counterparts ( $p<0.05$ ). No other significant differences were found among the remaining departments and variables ( $p>0.05$ ). Although a slight increase in addiction scores was observed with longer social media use, this increase was not statistically significant. When compared with the existing literature, the findings are generally consistent with previous studies and indicate that social media addiction is shaped by individual and contextual factors. In conclusion, media usage among sport sciences students is highly prevalent; however, the level at which this usage turns into addiction appears to be limited. The study aims to provide recommendations that may help students manage their relationship with digital media in a more conscious and controlled manner.

**Keywords:** Media addiction, media use, social media

### *Spor bilimleri fakültesi öğrencilerinin medya kullanım amaçları ve sosyal medya bağımlılık durumlarının araştırılması*

#### Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi öğrencilerinin medya kullanım amaçları ile sosyal medya bağımlılık durumlarını incelemektir. Nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden betimsel tarama modelinin kullanıldığı çalışmada, spor bilimleri fakültelerinde öğrenim gören toplam 900 (486 kadın, 414 erkek) öğrenciye çevrim içi anket uygulanmıştır. Araştırmada "Kişisel Bilgi Formu" "Medya Kullanım Amaçları Ölçeği" ve "Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı Ölçeği" veri toplama araçları olarak kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen verilerde Bağımsız Örneklem T-Testi kullanılmıştır. Cinsiyet, bölüm, sınıf düzeyi, sosyal medya aracı ve kullanım süresi gibi değişkenler dikkate alınarak gruplar arası karşılaştırmalar yapılmıştır. Bulgulara göre, öğrencilerin medya kullanım amaçlarında cinsiyete, sınıf düzeyine ve sosyal medya araçlarına göre anlamlı farklılıklar bulunmamış ( $p>0,05$ ); ancak Rekreasyon bölümünde erkek öğrencilerin sosyal medya bağımlılık puanlarının kadınlara göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı düzeyde daha yüksek olduğu görülmüştür ( $p<0,05$ ). Bunun dışında diğer bölümler ve değişkenler açısından anlamlı farklar tespit edilmemiştir ( $p>0,05$ ). Sosyal medya kullanım süresi arttıkça bağımlılık puanlarında hafif artışlar gözlemlense de bu artışlar anlamlı bulunmamıştır. Sonuç olarak, spor bilimleri öğrencilerinin medya kullanımı oldukça yaygındır; ancak bu kullanımın bağımlılığa dönüşme düzeyi sınırlıdır. Araştırma, öğrencilerin dijital medya ile olan ilişkilerini daha bilinçli ve kontrollü şekilde yönetmelerine katkı sağlayacak öneriler sunmayı hedeflemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Medya bağımlılığı, medya kullanımı, sosyal medya

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## INTRODUCTION

Advancements in technology and digital communication tools have profoundly influenced individuals' daily routines, forms of socialization, and habits of accessing information (Özbey, 2022). Among the groups most affected by this transformation are athletes. For athletes, social media functions not merely as a means of communication but also as a multifaceted strategic platform for self-presentation, building connections with fans, personal branding, and making their performance more visible (Lebel & Danylchuk, 2012; Turgut & Mumcu, 2023).

Education and sport are two essential concepts not only for individuals in general but also for athletes in particular. A considerable number of student-athletes strive to maintain both their academic and athletic pursuits concurrently. The beginning of university life marks a transitional phase in which students encounter numerous new experiences, interact with diverse cultures, and undergo notable changes in their appearance and style preferences (Çeviker et al., 2016; Avunduk, 2021). In this context, due to evolving lifestyles and environmental influences, students—especially athletes—tend to place significant importance on how they are perceived by others. Many individuals wish to share the characteristics they find charismatic and seek approval through external validation. In fact, the desire to be admired can be a primary motivator for initiating sports participation. External affirmation provides individuals with enhanced self-confidence and courage (Akça & Lök, 2025).

With the advancement of technology, social media platforms have further reinforced these tendencies. Women are more likely to aspire to a slimmer, fitter physique, while men tend to desire a more muscular appearance. The ideal of a fit body has become a cultural value in itself, sometimes even taking precedence over personality traits, emotions, or worldview (Akça & Lök, 2025). Although athletes' social media usage patterns may vary individually, they are generally driven by motives such as communication, information-seeking, social support, self-expression, sharing achievements, and gaining fan support (Kassing & Sanderson, 2010). Prior studies have also noted that social media contributes to building athletic identity, enhancing motivation, and strengthening social interaction (He & Chen, 2024; Akça & Lök, 2025).

Consequently, athletes' engagement with social media is shaped by factors such as content creation, usage frequency, and the potential for developing social media addiction (Akarsu et al., 2024). These usage patterns influence athletes' media-related perceptions and interactions. For elite athletes in particular, social media can become a source of external

pressure that impacts their performance and career trajectory (Kayğusuz & Karagözoğlu, 2023; Adaş et al., 2025). Excessive and intensive social media usage may lead to negative consequences, including social media addiction—characterized by persistent and uncontrollable use that interferes with daily functioning (Şahin & Yağcı, 2017). Andreassen et al. (2012) describe this phenomenon as a new form of digital addiction in consumer-driven societies. Among athletes, such addiction can result in attention deficits, anxiety, concentration problems, sleep disturbances, and reduced performance (Kircaburun et al., 2018).

The constant pressure to maintain a visible athletic identity on social media may create a conflict between an athlete's real self and the identity portrayed online. When this is compounded by feelings of exclusion and inadequacy—often linked to social media addiction—it can negatively affect the athlete's psychological flexibility and resilience (Ünlü, 2018). Overall, high levels of social media addiction are associated with attention difficulties, lower academic productivity, and decreased psychological well-being. These adverse effects may be more pronounced among athletes, whose success depends on both mental and physical focus (Akça & Lök, 2025).

A review of the literature reveals that studies on athletes' use of social media have predominantly focused on marketing, brand value creation, and fan engagement (Akkaya & Zerenler, 2017; Okmeydan, 2018; Kamil et al., 2018; Demir et al., 2020; Üçüncüoğlu, 2021). However, research addressing the purposes of media use and the issue of social media addiction among athletes appears to be more limited (Koçak & Şimşek, 2023; Karagün & Tapşın, 2024). This indicates the need to examine athletes' interactions with digital media from a more in-depth and psychological perspective.

Accordingly, the present study aims to identify the purposes for which athletes use social media and other media platforms, and to examine their levels of social media addiction. Furthermore, it seeks to explore the relationship between their motivations for media use and their tendencies toward addiction. In doing so, the study intends to raise awareness that can help athletes manage their engagement with digital platforms in a more conscious and healthy manner.

## **METHOD**

### **Research group (population-sample)**

This study was designed as a quantitative research based on the descriptive survey model. The primary aim of the research is to examine the purposes of media use and the levels of social media addiction among athletes.

The study sample consisted of 900 students enrolled in Faculties of Sport Sciences during the 2024–2025 academic year. The participants were selected using the convenience sampling method and participated voluntarily. Of the participants, 52% were female and 48% were male, with ages ranging from 18 to 27.

### **Data collection tools**

A questionnaire composed of two sections was used to collect data. The first section included questions regarding the participants' demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, sports branch, year of study, and engagement in active sports). The second section aimed to assess participants' purposes for media use and their levels of social media addiction, for which two separate scales were utilized:

Media Usage Purposes Scale (MUPS): The “Social Media Usage Purposes” scale, originally developed by Solmaz et al. (2013) to investigate motivations behind the use of social networking sites, and later revised by Çömlekçi and Başol (2019), was used in this study. The scale consists of 11 items under a single dimension and employs a 5-point Likert scale. There are no reverse-coded items on the scale.

Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS): Developed by Günüş (2009) and validated by Çömlekçi and Başol (2019), this scale consists of 7 items designed to measure social media addiction. Each item is rated using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never; 5 = Always). The overall score is calculated by taking the mean of the items, with higher scores indicating higher levels of social media addiction.

### **Data collection/processing method**

Data were collected through an online questionnaire. The study was conducted based on voluntary participation following the approval of the ethics committee. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and all data were evaluated anonymously in accordance with confidentiality principles.

## Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0. To assess whether the data followed a normal distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were conducted. To determine differences between groups, the Independent Samples T-Test was applied. The significance level was set at  $p < 0.05$ . Additionally, effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's  $d$  and eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) values.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1. Comparison of sport sciences faculty students' media usage purposes and social media addiction levels according to their departments and gender**

Department	Sub-dimensions	Gender	n	Mean±Sd	t	p
Recreation	Media Usage Purposes	Female	45	3.82±0.68	0.599	0.550
		Male	84	3.74±0.70		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Female	45	1.73±0.60	-2.052	<b>0.025</b>
		Male	84	2.02±0.85		
Sports Management	Media Usage Purposes	Female	127	3.65±0.61	0.798	0.426
		Male	91	3.58±0.65		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Female	127	1.82±0.81	-0.042	0.966
		Male	91	1.83±0.84		
Coaching Education	Media Usage Purposes	Female	154	3.56±0.64	0.827	0.409
		Male	136	3.50±0.66		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Female	154	1.79±0.73	-0.470	0.639
		Male	136	1.83±0.81		
Physical Education and Sports Teaching	Media Usage Purposes	Female	160	3.61±0.65	0.366	0.714
		Male	103	3.58±0.67		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Female	160	1.76±0.66	-0.952	0.342
		Male	103	1.84±0.77		

Table 1 presents a comparison of Sport Sciences Faculty students' media usage purposes and social media addiction levels by academic department and gender. In the Recreation department, no statistically significant difference was found between female ( $M = 3.82 \pm 0.68$ ) and male students ( $M = 3.74 \pm 0.70$ ) in terms of media usage purposes ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, a significant difference was observed in social media addiction levels between female ( $M = 1.73 \pm 0.60$ ) and male students ( $M = 2.02 \pm 0.85$ ), with male students showing higher average scores ( $p < 0.05$ ). In the Sports Management department, there was no significant difference between female ( $M = 3.65 \pm 0.61$ ) and male students ( $M = 3.58 \pm 0.65$ ) regarding media usage purposes ( $p > 0.05$ ). Similarly, no significant difference was found in social media addiction levels between female ( $M = 1.82 \pm 0.81$ ) and male students ( $M = 1.83 \pm 0.84$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the Coaching Education department, female ( $M = 3.56 \pm 0.64$ ) and male students ( $M = 3.50 \pm 0.66$ ) did not significantly differ in terms of media usage purposes ( $p > 0.05$ ), nor in social media addiction levels (female:  $M = 1.79 \pm 0.73$ ; male:  $M = 1.83 \pm 0.81$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the Physical Education and Sports Teaching department, no significant differences were found between female ( $M = 3.61 \pm 0.65$ ) and male students ( $M = 3.58 \pm 0.67$ ) regarding media usage purposes

( $p>0.05$ ). Likewise, there was no statistically significant difference in social media addiction levels between female ( $M = 1.76 \pm 0.66$ ) and male students ( $M = 1.84 \pm 0.77$ ) ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Table 2. Comparison of sport sciences faculty students' media usage purposes and social media addiction levels by academic department and year of study**

Department	Sub-dimensions	Year of study	n	Mean $\pm$ Sd	t	p
Recreation	Media Usage Purposes	Second year and below	37	3.82 $\pm$ 0.76	0.535	0.646
		Third year and above	92	3.75 $\pm$ 0.67		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Second year and below	37	1.90 $\pm$ 0.68	0.180	0.898
		Third year and above	92	1.92 $\pm$ 0.82		
Sports Management	Media Usage Purposes	Second year and below	87	3.57 $\pm$ 0.59	-0.856	0.393
		Third year and above	131	3.65 $\pm$ 0.65		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Second year and below	87	1.89 $\pm$ 0.77	1.051	0.294
		Third year and above	131	1.77 $\pm$ 0.85		
Coaching Education	Media Usage Purposes	Second year and below	135	3.51 $\pm$ 0.65	-0.452	0.651
		Third year and above	155	3.55 $\pm$ 0.65		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Second year and below	135	1.71 $\pm$ 0.66	-1.192	0.056
		Third year and above	155	1.89 $\pm$ 0.84		
Physical Education and Sports Teaching	Media Usage Purposes	Second year and below	145	3.57 $\pm$ 0.67	-0.680	0.497
		Third year and above	118	3.63 $\pm$ 0.64		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Second year and below	145	1.75 $\pm$ 0.63	-1.018	0.321
		Third year and above	118	1.84 $\pm$ 0.79		

Table 2 presents a comparison of Sport Sciences Faculty students' media usage purposes and social media addiction levels based on their academic department and year of study. In the Recreation department, there was no statistically significant difference between first- and second-year students ( $M = 3.82 \pm 0.76$ ) and third- and fourth-year students ( $M = 3.75 \pm 0.67$ ) in terms of media usage purposes ( $p>0.05$ ). Similarly, no significant difference was found in social media addiction levels between first- and second-year students ( $M = 1.90 \pm 0.68$ ) and third- and fourth-year students ( $M = 1.92 \pm 0.82$ ) ( $p>0.05$ ). In the Sports Management department, no statistically significant difference was observed in media usage purposes between first- and second-year students ( $M = 3.57 \pm 0.59$ ) and third- and fourth-year students ( $M = 3.65 \pm 0.65$ ) ( $p>0.05$ ). Likewise, there was no significant difference in social media addiction levels between first- and second-year students ( $M = 1.89 \pm 0.77$ ) and third- and fourth-year students ( $M = 1.77 \pm 0.85$ ) ( $p>0.05$ ). In the Coaching Education department, media usage purposes did not differ significantly between first- and second-year students ( $M = 3.51 \pm 0.65$ ) and third- and fourth-year students ( $M = 3.55 \pm 0.65$ ) ( $p>0.05$ ). Although a difference was observed in social media addiction levels between first- and second-year students ( $M = 1.71 \pm 0.66$ ) and third- and fourth-year students ( $M = 1.89 \pm 0.84$ ), this difference was not statistically significant ( $p>0.05$ ). In the Physical Education and Sports Teaching department, there was no statistically significant difference in media usage purposes between first- and second-year students ( $M = 3.57 \pm 0.67$ ) and third- and fourth-year students ( $M = 3.63 \pm 0.64$ ) ( $p>0.05$ ). Similarly, no significant difference was found in social media addiction levels between first-

and second-year students ( $M = 1.75 \pm 0.63$ ) and third- and fourth-year students ( $M = 1.84 \pm 0.79$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 3. Comparison of sport sciences faculty students' media usage purposes and social media addiction levels by academic department and social media platforms**

Department	Sub-dimensions	Social media platforms	n	Mean $\pm$ Sd	t	p
Recreation	Media Usage Purposes	Instagram–Facebook	65	3.78 $\pm$ 0.70	0.074	0.941
		X–Others	64	3.77 $\pm$ 0.70		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Instagram–Facebook	65	2.03 $\pm$ 0.80	1.738	0.085
		X–Others	64	1.80 $\pm$ 0.74		
Sports Management	Media Usage Purposes	Instagram–Facebook	97	3.59 $\pm$ 0.58	-0.478	0.633
		X–Others	121	3.64 $\pm$ 0.66		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Instagram–Facebook	97	1.87 $\pm$ 0.80	0.801	0.424
		X–Others	121	1.78 $\pm$ 0.84		
Coaching Education	Media Usage Purposes	Instagram–Facebook	153	3.54 $\pm$ 0.65	0.268	0.789
		X–Others	137	3.52 $\pm$ 0.65		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Instagram–Facebook	153	1.77 $\pm$ 0.76	-0.804	0.422
		X–Others	137	1.84 $\pm$ 0.77		
Physical Education and Sports Teaching	Media Usage Purposes	Instagram–Facebook	133	3.57 $\pm$ 0.64	-0.704	0.482
		X–Others	130	3.63 $\pm$ 0.67		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	Instagram–Facebook	133	1.84 $\pm$ 0.73	1.220	0.224
		X–Others	130	1.74 $\pm$ 0.68		

Table 3 presents a comparison of Sport Sciences Faculty students' media usage purposes and social media addiction levels based on their academic departments and the social media platforms they use. In the Recreation department, there was no statistically significant difference in media usage purposes between students using Instagram–Facebook ( $M = 3.78 \pm 0.70$ ) and those using X and other platforms ( $M = 3.77 \pm 0.70$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). Although the average social media addiction score of Instagram–Facebook users ( $M = 2.03 \pm 0.80$ ) was higher than that of X and other platform users ( $M = 1.80 \pm 0.74$ ), the difference was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the Sports Management department, no significant difference was found in media usage purposes between Instagram–Facebook users ( $M = 3.59 \pm 0.58$ ) and users of X and other platforms ( $M = 3.64 \pm 0.66$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). Similarly, no significant difference was observed in social media addiction levels between Instagram–Facebook users ( $M = 1.87 \pm 0.80$ ) and users of X and other platforms ( $M = 1.78 \pm 0.84$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the Coaching Education department, no statistically significant difference was found in media usage purposes between Instagram–Facebook users ( $M = 3.54 \pm 0.65$ ) and users of X and other platforms ( $M = 3.52 \pm 0.65$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). Likewise, no significant difference was found in social media addiction levels between Instagram–Facebook users ( $M = 1.77 \pm 0.76$ ) and those using X and other platforms ( $M = 1.84 \pm 0.77$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the Physical Education and Sports Teaching department, there was no significant difference in media usage purposes between Instagram–Facebook users ( $M = 3.57 \pm 0.64$ ) and users of X and other platforms ( $M = 3.63 \pm 0.67$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). Although Instagram–Facebook users had a higher mean social media addiction score ( $M = 1.84 \pm 0.73$ )

compared to users of X and other platforms ( $M = 1.74 \pm 0.68$ ), this difference was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 4. Comparison of sport sciences faculty students' media usage purposes and social media addiction levels by academic department and social media usage duration**

Department	Sub-dimensions	Social media usage duration	n	Mean±Sd	t	p
Recreation	Media Usage Purposes	2 hours or less	49	3.89±0.65	1.588	0.115
		3 hours or more	80	3.70±0.71		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	2 hours or less	49	1.91±0.75	-0.034	0.973
		3 hours or more	80	1.92±0.80		
Sports Management	Media Usage Purposes	2 hours or less	114	3.59±0.59	-0.579	0.563
		3 hours or more	104	3.64±0.67		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	2 hours or less	114	1.78±0.75	-0.831	0.407
		3 hours or more	104	1.87±0.89		
Coaching Education	Media Usage Purposes	2 hours or less	134	3.56±0.62	0.725	0.469
		3 hours or more	156	3.50±0.67		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	2 hours or less	134	1.80±0.77	-0.109	0.913
		3 hours or more	156	1.81±0.77		
Physical Education and Sports Teaching	Media Usage Purposes	2 hours or less	138	3.58±0.69	-0.451	0.653
		3 hours or more	125	3.62±0.61		
	Social Media Addiction Levels	2 hours or less	138	1.86±0.74	1.676	0.095
		3 hours or more	125	1.72±0.66		

Table 4 presents a comparison of Sport Sciences Faculty students' media usage purposes and social media addiction levels based on their academic departments and social media usage duration. In the Recreation department, no statistically significant difference was found in media usage purposes between students who used social media for 2 hours or less ( $M = 3.89 \pm 0.65$ ) and those who used it for 3 hours or more ( $M = 3.70 \pm 0.71$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). Similarly, there was no significant difference in social media addiction levels between the same groups (2 hours or less:  $M = 1.91 \pm 0.75$ ; 3 hours or more:  $M = 1.92 \pm 0.80$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the Sports Management department, there was no significant difference in media usage purposes between students with 2 hours or less ( $M = 3.59 \pm 0.59$ ) and 3 hours or more ( $M = 3.64 \pm 0.67$ ) of daily social media use ( $p > 0.05$ ). Social media addiction levels also did not differ significantly between the two groups ( $M = 1.78 \pm 0.75$  vs.  $M = 1.87 \pm 0.89$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the Coaching Education department, no statistically significant difference was observed in media usage purposes between students who used social media for 2 hours or less ( $M = 3.56 \pm 0.62$ ) and those who used it for 3 hours or more ( $M = 3.50 \pm 0.67$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). Similarly, no significant difference was found in social media addiction levels between the two groups ( $M = 1.80 \pm 0.77$  vs.  $M = 1.81 \pm 0.77$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the Physical Education and Sports Teaching department, media usage purposes did not differ significantly between students who used social media for 2 hours or less ( $M = 3.58 \pm 0.69$ ) and those who used it for 3 hours or more ( $M = 3.62 \pm 0.61$ ) ( $p > 0.05$ ). Although the average addiction score was higher among students who used social media for 2 hours or less ( $M = 1.86$



$\pm 0.74$ ) compared to those who used it for 3 hours or more ( $M = 1.72 \pm 0.66$ ), the difference was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the comparison of media usage purposes and social media addiction levels of Sport Sciences Faculty students by academic department and gender, no statistically significant difference was found between female and male students in the Recreation department in terms of media usage purposes. However, a significant difference was observed in social media addiction levels, with male students reporting higher average addiction scores than female students. In the Sports Management department, no significant difference was found between female and male students in either media usage purposes or social media addiction levels. Similarly, in the Coaching Education department, there were no statistically significant differences between genders in both variables. The same results were observed in the Physical Education and Sports Teaching department, with no significant differences in media usage purposes or social media addiction levels between female and male students. When the findings are compared with the literature, Akyürek et al. (2020) reported that female students used social media more frequently than males and predominantly for social interaction, communication, and educational purposes. On the other hand, Göksel (2016) found statistically significant gender differences, indicating that male students differed from females in their patterns of social media use. Horozoğlu et al. (2023) suggested that female students tend to use social media more than males for purposes such as research, collaboration, and entertainment. Conversely, Tuğlu (2017) found no gender-based differences in the frequency of social media use among middle school students. Similarly, Aydın (2016) concluded that there was no significant gender difference in overall social media use behaviors.

In the comparison of media usage purposes and social media addiction levels of Sport Sciences Faculty students by academic department and year of study, no statistically significant difference was found between first- and second-year students and third- and fourth-year students in the Recreation department in terms of media usage purposes. Likewise, no significant difference was found between these two groups regarding social media addiction levels. In the Sports Management department, there was also no significant difference in media usage purposes or social media addiction levels between first- and second-year students and third- and fourth-year students. Similarly, in the Coaching Education department, no statistically significant difference was observed between the lower and upper year students in terms of media usage purposes. Although a difference was noted in social media addiction

levels between the two groups, this difference was not statistically significant. In the Physical Education and Sports Teaching department, no significant difference was found in media usage purposes or social media addiction levels between first- and second-year students and third- and fourth-year students. When compared to the literature, Tekgöz (2023) found a statistically significant relationship in descriptive statistical data regarding total scores for social media usage purposes based on students' academic level. On the other hand, Şişman-Eren (2014) reported that there were no significant differences in media usage purposes according to students' year of study.

In the comparison of media usage purposes and social media addiction levels of sport sciences faculty students based on their departments and the social media platforms they use, no statistically significant difference was found in the Recreation department between Instagram-Facebook users and those who use X and other social media platforms in terms of media usage purposes. Although the average social media addiction scores of Instagram-Facebook users were higher than those of users of X and other platforms, this difference was not statistically significant. Similarly, in the Sports Management department, there was no significant difference between the two groups regarding either media usage purposes or social media addiction levels. In the Coaching Education department, no significant differences were found between Instagram-Facebook users and users of X and other platforms for either variable. In the Physical Education and Sports Teaching department, although Instagram-Facebook users had higher average addiction scores than users of X and other platforms, this difference was not statistically significant, and no significant difference was found in media usage purposes either. When reviewed in the context of the literature, Saraç (2014) found that middle school students primarily used Facebook, followed by YouTube (18.4%). Bulut (2013) reported that in a study conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports among individuals aged 15–29, Facebook was the most preferred platform, followed by YouTube and Instagram. Similarly, in a study by Bostancı (2010), 272 students reported Facebook, 34 students reported YouTube, and 20 students reported Ekşi Sözlük as their most frequently used platforms. Additionally, Kim et al. (2011) observed that in studies focusing on social media usage, participants consistently reported very high levels of social media engagement.

In the comparison of media usage purposes and social media addiction levels of Sport Sciences Faculty students based on their departments and duration of social media use, no statistically significant difference was found in the Recreation department between students who used social media for 2 hours or less and those who used it for 3 hours or more in terms of

media usage purposes. Similarly, no significant difference was observed in social media addiction levels between these two groups. In the Sports Management department, there was also no significant difference between students who used social media for 2 hours or less and those who used it for 3 hours or more in terms of either media usage purposes or social media addiction levels. In the Coaching Education department, no statistically significant difference was observed between these groups regarding either variable. In the Physical Education and Sports Teaching department, although students who used social media for 2 hours or less had higher average scores in social media addiction than those who used it for 3 hours or more, the difference was not statistically significant, and no meaningful difference was found in media usage purposes. According to the literature, Diker and Uçar (2016) reported that 37% of participants used social media for 3 hours or less, 34.5% for 4–7 hours, 15% for 8–11 hours, and 13.4% for more than 12 hours. Tutgun-Ünal (2015) found that 10% of university students used social media for more than 7 hours per day and were classified as having a moderate level of addiction. In comparison, this rate was 6% in the present study. Tektaş (2014) reported that 17.6% of students used social media for about one hour, while 20.4% used it for 2–3 hours. In conclusion, although media usage is common among students in sport sciences, the level of addiction resulting from this usage is generally low. This study aims to contribute to students' ability to engage with digital media in a healthier and more conscious manner.

### **Recommendations**

Students ought to be empowered via media literacy initiatives which aim to cultivate a more critical perspective toward digital platforms. These programs should also enable them to recognize the potential pitfalls inherent in excessive or aimless social media engagement.

Universities could develop specific guidance and counseling services oriented towards digital well-being and social media management to aid students in establishing a balanced relationship with media tools.

### **Limitations and strengths**

This research offers valuable insights into the purposes of media consumption and the levels of social media addiction among students in sports science faculties; nevertheless, certain limitations are present. Firstly, the study relies exclusively on self-reported data gathered through online surveys, which may be susceptible to response bias and the effects of social desirability. In addition, the use of convenience sampling constrains the generalizability of the findings to all sports science students across Turkey. The cross-sectional nature of the research impedes the establishment of causal relationships between variables, such as media

consumption purposes and addiction levels. Furthermore, the study did not deeply examine psychological or contextual variables (e.g., personality traits, academic stress, or level of competitive sport) that might affect social media usage or addiction. Another limitation is the absence of qualitative data that could enrich the understanding of students' motivations and behavioral patterns in their media consumption.

Despite these constraints, the study also has significant strengths. The inclusion of a relatively large sample (n = 900) from various departments and academic years enhances the reliability of the results. The use of validated measurement tools, such as the Uses of Media Scale and the Social Media Addiction Scale, improves the internal consistency of the findings. Furthermore, comparative analyses performed across gender, academic level, social media platforms, and usage time provide a comprehensive understanding of patterns in social media use among sports science students. This research can contribute to future studies aimed at developing intervention strategies for healthy digital media use in academic and athletic environments.

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Tasarım Design	Yöntem ve araştırma desenini tasarlamak To design the method and research design.	Recep Nur UZUN Bade YAMAK
Literatür Tarama Literature Review	Çalışma için gerekli literatürü taramak Review the literature required for the study	Recep Nur UZUN Bade YAMAK Özge ORHAN AKAR
Veri Toplama ve İşleme Data Collecting and Processing	Verileri toplamak, düzenlemek ve raporlaştırmak Collecting, organizing and reporting data	Recep Nur UZUN Bade YAMAK
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