

The Effect On Happiness Of Social Media Usage In Married Couples

Mehtap KONYAR¹, Prof. Dr. Ercümen ERSANLI²

¹Merkez Şehit Kuşan Secondary School
Samsun, Turkey

²Ondokuz Mayıs University, Health Sciences Faculty, Social Work Department
Samsun, Turkey

¹mehtap_postalci@hotmail.com

²eersanli@gmail.com



Abstract – The aim of the research is to examine the effect of social media usage levels of married couples on happiness in their relationship. In the research, the effects of social media usage levels of married couples on their happiness in their relationships were analyzed in terms of demographic variables such as gender, age, length of marriage, number of children, educational status, spouse's educational status, spouse's employment status and spouse's employment status.

Dependent variables of the research; use of social media and happiness in the relationship, and independent variables are gender, age, length of marriage, number of children, education level and education level of the spouse. The population of the research consists of married individuals over the age of 18 living in Samsun, and the sample consists of 344 individuals, 188 females and 156 males, selected by random sampling method. The social media usage levels of the individuals participating in the research were determined by the "Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form", and the level of happiness in their relationships was determined by the "Happiness Scale in Relationships". Information including socio-demographic variables was obtained with the "Personal Information Form" developed by the researcher. SPSS 22.0 V. statistical program was used in all statistical calculations. The relationship between the participants' Happiness Scale in Relationships and Social Media Addiction total scores was determined by the Pearson correlation coefficient. The research findings were given as n(%), mean and standard deviation values, and the findings were considered significant at the p<.05 level.

According to the findings of the research, male participants are more addicted to social media than females. It is seen that married individuals between the ages of 18-24 are more addicted to social media than married individuals over the age of 35. It has been determined that individuals with the length of marriage with 10 years or less are more addicted to social media than individuals who have been married for 11 years or more. It has been determined that married individuals who are university graduates are more addicted to social media than married individuals who are primary and secondary school graduates. It has been determined that married individuals whose spouses are university graduates are more addicted to social media than married individuals whose spouses are primary and secondary school graduates. Those with the least commitment to social media are those who have 3 or more children. According to the results of the research, it has been determined that there is negatively, low-level statistically negative correlation between happiness in relationships and social media addiction levels.

Keywords – Marriage, Social Media, Happiness in Relationships, Social Media Addiction, Gender.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem Statement

The family is the smallest social institution that is the source of other institutions in society. The family is the first and most effective place where people are prepared for society and provides the continuation of the species. On the other hand, the family is a social institution where there are relationships based on love, sincerity and trust between parents and children, where sexual relations are regulated, and where economic activities are carried out according to the existing social order (Bayraktutan, 2005).

Families are established through marriages. Families formed by the realisation of marriages are seen as the building blocks of society, and the fact that the family has solid bases is an indicator of how to be wholesome family couples, children and the society in which the family is reposed will be (Güngör, 2007).

The platform brought together by web pages where people share audio elements, visuals, videos and ideas is called social media. The concept of social media is based on the condition that individuals interact with each other online. Concepts such as online dating sites, forums and blogs constitute social media. Although the interaction arising through these concepts may seem to reach a small number of people, in essence it provides the opportunity to reach a much larger audience (Vural and Bat, 2010).

The usage of internet and social media in our country is increasing constantly. According to the results of TÜİK 2021 Research in Household Information Technology Usage, the internet access proportion of households in 2021 was 92%. When the proportion of internet usage was analyzed by gender; it was observed that this proportion was 87.7% for males and 77.5% for females (TÜİK, 2021).

It is searched that social media steals most of the people's free time. For this reason, it is thought that social media reduces sharing in daily life to the lowest level and damages family communication. It may be assumed that individuals spend time with social media instead of artistic, sportive, social and cultural activities in their free time (Akarsu, 2019).

The searches pointed out that individuals spent more time on online platforms after the COVID-19 outbreak and that negative internet usage increased during the pandemic period (King et al., 2020).

Aktaş and Çopur (2018) stated in their research that as the time couples spend on social media increases, their stress levels increase in the same proportion. According to the survey of Üngüder (2017), which supports this research, the level of happiness that individuals feel in their relationships is affected by the time they spend with their spouses, in other words, the more time spent with the spouse, the more happiness in the relationship.

In as far as Kalaman and Çelik (2019), excessive usage of social media may cause couples to spend less time with each other than necessary, the satisfaction they feel in their relationships may decrease, and spouses may tend to cheat due to the uncertain and flexible structure on social media platforms.

Considering all this information and existing literature studies, it is observed that there may be a relationship between spouses' social media usage and happiness in their marriages. This research aims to examine the effect of social media usage on the happiness felt in relationship among married couples.

1.2. Purpose and Importance of the Research

The main purpose of the research is to analyze the effect of social media usage levels of married couples on happiness in their relationship.

With the technological development rapidly in our era, internet usage has also increased. Nowadays, individuals have gotten around accessing the internet quickly and easily through smart phones, which are widely used today. With the widespread use of smart phones, social media has gotten going to be used significantly in social life and has become an effective position in human affairs. Social media is a virtual platform where individuals communicate with each other over the internet. The research shows that the proportion of people the usage of the internet and social media has actually increased during the pandemic that broke out at the time of the research. The increase in the usage of social media and the transfer of communication to the virtual environment cause communication problems and communication gaps between people. The usage of social media also affects the bilateral relationships between males and females. Marriages, which have an important place in terms of bilateral relations, are also

affected by this situation. The research is essential in order to analyze the effect of married people's social media use on the happiness they have in their marriages.

The importance of this research is revealed by the fact that there is no previous survey examining the effect of social media usage on the happiness felt by married individuals.

1.3. Problem Statement

Is there a relationship between married individuals' social media usage and happiness in their relationships?

1.4. Sub-Problems of the Research

1. Is there a difference between married individuals' social media usage and the happiness in their relationships in terms of gender?

2. Is there a difference between married individuals' social media usage and the happiness in their relationships in terms of age?

3. Is there a difference between married individuals' social media use and the happiness in their relationships in terms of the number of children?

4. Is there a difference between married individuals' social media use and the happiness they in their relationships in terms of the length of marriage?

5. Is there a difference between married individuals' social media use and the happiness in their relationships in terms of educational level?

6. Is there a difference between married individuals' social media use and the happiness in their relationships in terms of the educational level of their spouses?

1.5. Limitations

1. The research is limited only to married individuals who participated in the research and who live in Samsun province.

2. Happiness scores are limited to the items in the scale.

II. METHOD

In this section, the research method, data collection agents, sample group, procedure and data analysis will be discussed.

2.1. Method of the Research

Since it was aimed to determine the current situation in the study, a relational survey model with descriptive features was used. Survey models are research approaches that aim to describe an existing situation in the past or present as it exists. The correlational survey model is a survey approach that aims to determine the existence of co-variance between two or more variables. In this survey model, it is tried to determine whether the variances vary together and if there is a change, how it occurs (Karasar, 2000).

2.2. Sample Group

The population of the research consists of married individuals over the age of 18 living in Samsun province and the sample consists of 344 individuals selected by random sampling method. A total of 188 females and 156 males married individuals determined by random sampling participated in the research. In the research, 54.7 percent of the participants were female, and 45.3 percent were male.

2.3. Data Collection Agents

In the research, the "Personal Information Form" developed by the researcher, the validity and reliability study conducted by Şahin and Yağcı (2017), the "Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form" and the validity and reliability study conducted by Tuturel-Kışlak (2002), and the "Happiness in Relationships Scale" were used as data collection agent.

2.3.1. Personal Information Form: In the personal information form, there are 7 questions including gender, age, and length of marriage, number of children, education level, and education level of the spouse.

2.3.2. Social Media Addiction Scale(SMAS) - Adult Form(AF): In order to measure the social media addiction levels of married couples, the "Social Media Addiction Scale" with a 5-point Likert consisting of 20 items was used (Şahin & Yağcı; 2017).

SMAS consists of 20 items and 2 sub-dimensions. Items 1-11 are included in virtual tolerance sub-dimensions and items 12-20 are included in virtual communication sub-dimensions. Items 5 and 11 in the scale are reverse coded.

The lowest score that may be obtained from the scale in total is 20, while the highest score that may be acquired is 100. The dependency levels were categorised as "no dependency", "low dependency", "moderate dependency", "high dependency" and "very high dependency" by dividing 5 the range obtained by using the lowest score and the highest score that may be obtained in total from the SMAS. The items in the SMAS were scaled as "not at all suitable for me-1, not suitable for me-2, neutral-3, suitable for me-4, very suitable for me-5". It is assumed that the more the total score obtained from the scale increases, the more the level of social media addiction increases. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient for the overall scale was found to be .94, .92 for virtual tolerance and .91 for virtual communication. The test-retest reliability coefficients of the scale were calculated as .93 for the overall scale, .91 for virtual tolerance and .90 for virtual communication. The analyses revealed that the SMAS-AF is a valid and reliable scale that can be used to determine the social media addiction levels of adult individuals (Şahin & Yağcı, 2017).

2.3.3. Happiness Scale in Relationships: In order to measure the level of happiness that married couples feel in their marital relationship, the "Happiness Scale in Relationship" (Kışlak, 2002), which is a 7-point scale with 6 items, was used. Happiness Scale in Relationships (HSR) is a 6-item scale that includes the general evaluation of close relationships and was developed by Fletcher et al. (1990). The items in the HSR aim to measure individuals' perceptions of love, general satisfaction, happiness, and constancy of the relationship, seriousness of problems and level of dependence/liability to the relationship. The items in the scale are scored on a 7-point scale ranging from 1, "I don't like it at all" to 7, "I like it a lot". The lowest score is 6 points and the highest score is 42 points. The internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .87. The reliability coefficient of the HSR is .90. The reliability coefficient was calculated using the test-retest method obtained from two applications ranging between two and seven weeks. 'TriangularLoveScales' was used in the criterion validity study. The validity coefficient of the HSR was found to be .82 (Tutarel-Kışlak, 2002: 37-43).

2.4. Process

First of all, a personal information form was designed by the researcher to collect data. In the process of preparing the personal information form, the necessary literature review was made. Google form was used online for data collection. The scales prepared using Google-form was distributed to married individuals in Samsun province and its districts. The participants were selected by random sampling method and married individuals were asked to fill in the scales voluntarily.

2.5. Analysing the Data

Reliability coefficients (cronbachalpha) were calculated in order to check the internal consistency of the responses of the individuals participating in the research (Table 1).

Table.1. Internal consistency coefficients of the participants' responses to the scale items

Scale	Internal consistency coefficients	Evaluation
<i>Happiness Scale in Relationships</i>	.854	Highly Reliable
<i>Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form</i>	.912	Highly Reliable
<i>Virtual Tolerance</i>	.854	Highly Reliable
<i>Virtual Communication</i>	.859	Highly Reliable

In the statistical evaluation of the data, the assumption of normality was first examined by Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests ($P > .05$). In the research, whether the total scores of the scale differed according to gender, virtual media use status was determined by Student t test, and whether the total scores of the scale differed according to age, education status, spouse's education status, length of marriage was determined by One-Way Analysis of Variance and Tukey's multiple comparison test. In addition, the relationship between the participants' total scores of Happiness in Relationships and Social Media Addiction scale

was determined by Pearson correlation coefficient. SPSS 22.0 V. statistical programme was used in all statistical calculations. The findings obtained as a result of the research were given as n (%), mean, standard deviation values and the findings were considered significant at $p < .05$ level.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

The distribution of married individuals over the age of 18 who voluntarily participated in the study in terms of demographic characteristics is shown in Table 2.

Table.2. Frequency and percentage distributions of demographic characteristics of the participants

Gender	n	%	Ages (years)	n	%
Female	188	54,7	18-24	7	2,0
Male	156	45,3	25-34	124	36,0
Total	344	100,0	35-44	163	47,4
			45 and over	50	14,5
			Total	344	100,0
Length of marriage (year)	n	%	Number of children	n	%
0-4	55	16,0	0 (no children)	38	11,0
5-10	108	31,4	1 child	95	27,6
11-20	139	40,4	2 children	160	46,5
21 and over	42	12,2	3 children and over	51	14,8
Total	344	100,0	Total	344	100,0
Educational level	n	%	Educational Level of Spouses	n	%
Primary School	17	4,9	Primary School	15	4,4
Secondary School	23	6,7	Secondary School	25	7,3
High School	55	16,0	High School	66	19,2
Bachelor's Degree	215	62,5	Bachelor's Degree	208	60,5
Master Degree	34	9,9	Master Degree	30	8,7
Total	344	100,0	Total	344	100,0

The percentage of 54.7 of the individuals who voluntarily participated in the research were females, the percentage of 94.2 were social media users, the percentage of 47.4 were in the 35-44 age range, the percentage of 40.4 were married for 11-20 years, the percentage of 62.5 were university graduates, the percentage of 60.5 were individuals whose spouses were university graduates, and the percentage of 46.5 were individuals with two children (Table 2).

Table.3. the Level of Happiness in Relationships and Social Media Addiction of Participants according to Gender

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Gender	N	\bar{x}	Ss	The p value
<i>Happiness Scale in Relationships</i>	Female	188	34,66	6,65	.111
	Male	156	35,76	5,94	
<i>Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form(SMAS-AF)</i>	Female	188	43,35	13,12	<.001
	Male	156	47,15	13,55	
<i>Virtual Tolerance</i>	Female	188	25,61	8,12	.214
	Male	156	26,68	7,77	
<i>Virtual Communication</i>	Female	188	17,74	5,89	<.001
	Male	156	20,47	6,91	

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In the research, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the gender of married individuals over the age of 18 and the total scores of the Happiness Scale in Relationships ($p=.111$), but there was a significant difference between their gender and the total scores of the Social Media Addiction Scale and the Virtual Communication sub-dimension scores of this scale ($p<.001$) (Table 3). Arithmetic averages show that male participants are more addicted to social media than female participants.

Table.4. the level of Happiness in Relationships and Social Media Addiction of Participants according to Ages

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Ages (years)	N	\bar{x}	Ss	The p value
<i>Happiness Scale in Relationships</i>	18-24	7	34,14	5,21	.136
	25-34	124	35,96	5,56	
	35-44	163	34,35	7,21	
	45 and over	50	35,94	5,04	
<i>Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form(SMAS-AF)</i>	18-24	7	57,14 a	9,79	.009
	25-34	124	47,02 ab	14,30	
	35-44	163	43,88 b	12,63	
	45 and over	50	42,46 b	13,01	
<i>Virtual Tolerance</i>	18-24	7	33,43 a	6,65	.016
	25-34	124	27,10 b	8,21	
	35-44	163	25,36 b	7,70	
	45 and over	50	24,96 b	7,77	
<i>Virtual Communication</i>	18-24	7	23,71 a	4,57	.021
	25-34	124	19,92 ab	7,08	
	35-44	163	18,52 b	5,86	
	45 and over	50	17,50 b	6,80	

It was found that there was no significant difference between the ages of married individuals over 18 and the total scores of the Happiness in Relationships Scale ($p=.136$), but there was a significant difference between their ages and the total scores of the Social Media Addiction Scale and the total sub-dimension scores of this scale ($p<.05$) (Table 4). It was determined that married individuals between the ages of 18-24 were more addicted to social media than married individuals over the age of 35.

Table.5. the Level of Happiness in Relationships and Social Media Addiction of the Participants according to the Length of Marriage

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Length of Marriage(year)	N	\bar{x}	Ss	The p value
<i>Happiness Scale in Relationships</i>	0-4	55	36,22	4,63	.565
	5-10	108	35,18	6,17	
	11-20	139	34,85	6,97	
	21 and over	42	34,74	6,69	
<i>Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form(SMAS-AF)</i>	0-4	55	49,75	13,42	<.001
	5-10	108	47,48	13,19	
	11-20	139	41,36	12,74	
	21 and over	42	45,07	13,46	
<i>Virtual Tolerance</i>	0-4	55	28,51	7,89	<.001
	5-10	108	27,47	8,07	
	11-20	139	24,01	7,47	
	21 and over	42	26,29	7,99	
<i>Virtual Communication</i>	0-4	55	21,24	6,52	<.001
	5-10	108	20,01	6,48	

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11-20	139	17,35	6,00
21 and over	42	18,79	6,98

In the research, it was recorded that there was no significant difference between the length of marriage of participants and their total scores of the Happiness Scale in Relationships ($p=.565$), but there was a significant difference between the length of marriage and Social Media Addiction and sub-dimension total scores ($P<.001$; Table 5). It was acquired that individuals with a marriage length of 10 years or less were more addicted to social media than individuals married for 11 years or more.

Table.6. the Level of Happiness in Relationships and Social Media Addiction of the Participants according to Educational Level

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Educational Level	N	\bar{x}	Ss	The p value
<i>Happiness Scale in Relationships</i>	Primary School	17	36,88	3,79	.130
	Secondary School	23	36,61	8,22	
	High School	55	36,02	6,16	
	Bachelor's Degree	215	34,47	6,58	
	Master Degree	34	36,29	4,00	
<i>Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form(SMAS-AF)</i>	Primary School	17	39,53	11,94	<.001
	Secondary School	23	35,83	11,52	
	High School	55	41,98	13,09	
	Bachelor's Degree	215	47,30	13,48	
	Master Degree	34	45,06	11,63	
<i>Virtual Tolerance</i>	Primary School	17	24,00	8,13	<.001
	Secondary School	23	21,04	6,10	
	High School	55	23,62	7,02	
	Bachelor's Degree	215	27,41	8,17	
	Master Degree	34	26,24	6,90	
<i>Virtual Communication</i>	Primary School	17	15,53	5,26	<.001
	Secondary School	23	14,78	6,35	
	High School	55	18,36	6,85	
	Bachelor's Degree	215	19,89	6,37	
	Master Degree	34	18,82	5,95	

In the research, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the educational level of the participants and the total scores of the Happiness Scale in Relationships ($p=.130$), but there was a significant difference between their educational level and Social Media Addiction and sub-dimension total scores ($p<.001$; Table 6). It was determined that married individuals with Bachelor's degree were more addicted to social media than married individuals with primary and secondary school degrees.

Table.7. the Level of Happiness in Relationships and Social Media Addiction of Participants according to Educational Level of Spouses

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Educational Level	N	\bar{x}	Ss	The p value
<i>Happiness Scale in Relationships</i>	Primary School	15	35,13	5,88	.989
	Secondary School	25	35,16	8,45	
	High School	66	35,55	6,74	
	Bachelor's Degree	208	35,06	6,02	
	Master Degree	30	34,97	6,39	
<i>Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form(SMAS-AF)</i>	Primary School	15	39,40	13,44	<.001
	Secondary School	25	36,64	10,32	
	High School	66	40,59	11,95	

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	Bachelor's Degree	208	47,95	13,65	
	Master Degree	30	44,87	11,22	
<i>Virtual Tolerance</i>	Primary School	15	23,33	7,00	<.001
	Secondary School	25	20,80	5,50	
	High School	66	23,67	7,28	
	Bachelor's Degree	208	27,75	8,19	
	Master Degree	30	25,70	6,61	
<i>Virtual Communication</i>	Primary School	15	16,07	7,06	<.001
	Secondary School	25	15,84	5,62	
	High School	66	16,92	5,85	
	Bachelor's Degree	208	20,20	6,59	
	Master Degree	30	19,17	5,60	

In the research, it was recorded that there was no significant difference between the educational level of the spouses of the participants and the total scores of the Happiness Scale in Relationships ($p=.989$), but there was a significant difference between the Social Media Addiction and the total scores of its sub-dimensions ($p<.001$; Table 7). It was determined that married individuals whose spouses with Bachelor's degree are more addicted to social media than married individuals whose spouses with primary and secondary school graduates.

Table.8. the Level of Happiness in Relationships and Social Media Addiction of Participants according to Number of Children

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Number of Children	N	\bar{x}	Ss	The p value
<i>Happiness Scale in Relationships</i>	0 No children	38	36,29	4,11	.656
	1 child	95	34,85	7,55	
	2 children	160	35,19	6,04	
	3 and over	51	34,76	6,35	
<i>Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form(SMAS-AF)</i>	0 No children	38	47,55	13,81	.040
	1 child	95	47,11	13,70	
	2 children	160	44,57	13,10	
	3 and over	51	41,04	12,97	
<i>Virtual Tolerance</i>	0 No children	38	27,87	8,50	.076
	1 child	95	27,17	8,06	
	2 children	160	25,61	7,75	
	3 and over	51	24,27	7,76	
<i>Virtual Communication</i>	0 No children	38	19,68	6,38	.038
	1 child	95	19,94	6,80	
	2 children	160	18,96	6,43	
	3 and over	51	16,76	5,89	

In the research, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the number of children the participants had and the total scores of the Happiness Scale in Relationships ($p=.656$), while there was a significant difference between Social Media Addiction and sub-dimension total scores ($p<.05$; Table 8). It was determined that those with the least social media addiction were individuals with 3 or more children.

Table.9. the Relationship between Participants' level of Happiness in Relationships and the level of the Social Media Addiction

	SMA(Social Media Addiction)	<i>Virtual Tolerance</i>	<i>Virtual Communication</i>
<i>Happiness in Relationships</i>	The r value	-.228	-.184
	The p value	<.001	<.001

In the research, it was determined that there was a weak negative correlation between the total scores of the participants' Happiness in Relationships Scale and Social Media Addiction and sub-dimension total scores ($p < .001$; Table 9). In the research, it was acquired that as the social media addiction of married individuals increased, their level of happiness in relationships decreased.

3.2. Discussion and Conclusion

The results obtained in this research, which was conducted to reveal the effect of social media usage on the happiness of married couples, were determined; the findings were compared and interpreted with similar studies done before.

In the research, it was deduced that there is negatively low level statistically a weak negative correlation between the levels of happiness in relationships and social media addiction. As a result of the research, it was inferred that as the duration of social media usage of married couples increases, the level of happiness in their relationships decreases. As the level of happiness that married individuals feel in their marital relationships decreases, their usage of social media increases; as a one consequence, married individuals become more addicted to social media.

As a conclusion of the research, it was found that excessive usage of social media is a factor that negatively affects marital happiness. According to Castells (2005), social media causes a decrease in communication within the family, a decrease in the social environment, depression and a feeling of loneliness among family members. More than half of the participants in Castells' study stated that using social media caused problems with their spouses. Among the issues experienced, it is seen that getting round to the family or spouse, increasing jealousy feelings and decreasing the interest in spouse's relationships, and this situation causes communication problems between couples and causes troubles come. It was observed that the finding obtained in the research was in parallel with the study conducted by Castells (2005). Likewise, according to Şad et al. (2016), if the duration of social media usage affects the duration and quality of the time the family spends together, the communication of spouses may weaken for this reason.

By the end of the research, it was cleared that there is negatively, low-level statistically significant weak correlation between the levels of happiness in relationships and social media addiction. It is thought that the feeling of loneliness, communication problems, jealousy and trust problems between the spouses increase as a result of the spouses spending too much time on social media in marital life, and as a result, the satisfaction and happiness felt in marriage are negatively affected. Based on the results of the research carried out by Kurt (2019), as the usage of social media increases, jealousy is experienced between couples, and the jealousy felt leads to negative emotional states such as anger, fear and unhappiness. As a consequence of the negative feelings suffered, disagreements arise between the couples and hence break-ups are observed.

The research titled "The Effects of Social Media on Divorce" undertaken by Şentürk Dızman (2019) is also in agreement with this research. In the Şentürk Dızman's (2019) study, social media deteriorates couple relationships due to the fact that it causes a decrease in the time spent together by the spouses and causes jealousy between the spouses and damages the feeling of confidence. The vast majority of social media users spend a long time on social media channels they are registered as soon as they use their digital devices such as phones and computers with internet connection. Spouses' spending time on social media rather than communicating with each other leads to a communication gap between couples. The communication gaps have minimised the sharing between the spouses and finally divorces have started. When the grounds for divorce are considered, it is apparent that social media is an effective role. In similar way, based on the study performed by Öztürk (2015), individuals who use social media excessively and uncontrollably experience communication conflicts in human relations, and these conflicts may result in insolvency.

Despite the majority of studies in the literature that support the results of this research, there are also studies that have reached different results from our research during the literature review. Gökdemir (2021) reached the conclusion that social media usage has a positive effect on couple relationship in his survey titled "The Effect of Social Media Usage on Couple Relationships". In addition to this article, another example is Hertlein's (2012) survey titled "Digital Dwelling Technology in Couple and Family Relationships". Both researches reported that social media had a positive effect on the processes of initiating and advancing relationships between couples. It was also found that the usage of social media strengthens the communication and closeness between couples because people who use social media effectively indicate that they have a relationship on the social media platform they use if they initiate a relationship, and they share posts related to the person they are with or showing that they are together.

In the research, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the total scores of the Happiness Scale in Relationships according to the gender variable of married individuals over the age of 18.

Similarly, in Hasgül-Koşmaz's (2020) survey, males use social media more than females and spend longer time on social media than females. It is thought that the reason for this situation may be that females take more responsibility in daily life than males in matters such as housework and child care and therefore have more limited free time. When the literature is reviewed, there are some findings supporting that the level of social media usage of males is higher than that of females.

In the research, it was inferred that the total scores of the Happiness Scale in Relationships did not change according to age differences. Nevertheless, this outcome does not coincide with the result of Tosyalı's (2010) research that people between the ages of 18-39 have a higher perception of happiness in relationships than people between the ages of 40-50.

In the research, it was obtained that married individuals between the ages of 18-24 are more addicted to social media than married individuals over the age of 35. It is suggested that the couples' having children and the number of their children increases their responsibilities, so the time they may spend on social media is thought to be more limited. In support of this finding, Gümüşsoy Uçak (2019) revealed in his survey that the level of social media usage of people between the ages of 20-30 is higher than of people over the age of 50.

In the research, it was inferred that the total scores of the Happiness Scale in Relationships did not change according to the length of marriage. Unlike this research, Tosyalı (2010) found that there was a significant relationship between the years of marriage and the happiness in the relationship and that the level of happiness decreased as the length of marriage increased. He stated that the reason for this situation may be the increase in stress in life due to economic and social reasons.

Consequently, it was found that individuals who have been married for 10 years or less are more connected to social media than individuals who have been married for 11 years or more. It is thought that this result may be due to the fact that the marriage length of individuals with a high age range is also longer. Akboğa and Gürkan (2019) revealed in their research that individuals in the 36-45 age range pay attention to their social media usage, taking into account the wishes and thoughts of their partners, and thus aim to avoid problems in their relationships.

In the research, it was obtained that married individuals with bachelor's degrees are more addicted to social media than married individuals with primary and secondary school degrees. Considering the proportion of participants in our research, it is obvious that the number of bachelor's degrees is higher. It is thought that the high number of bachelor's degrees may be effective in this conclusion. Although social media usage is the highest at individuals with bachelor's degree, this proportion decreases at individuals with master degree. Hasgül Koşmaz (2020) also revealed in her research that social media usage increases as the level of education increases. It was also found that individuals with a high level of education mostly use social media to obtain information about their interests.

In the research, it was reached that there was no significant difference between the total scores of the Happiness Scale in Relationships according to the educational status of the participants' spouses.

As a result of the research, it was found that married individuals whose spouses are bachelor's degrees are more addicted to social media than married individuals whose spouses are primary and secondary school graduates. It is thought that the high number of participants with bachelor's degree may be effective in this result and that the educational levels of the couples are close to each other.

In the research, it was deduced that there was no significant difference between the total scores of the Happiness Scale in Relationships according to the participants' having children. Similarly, Sancaktar (2016) showed that the number of children has no effect on marital satisfaction. In the research carried out by Tezer (2016), no relationship was found between marital satisfaction and the number of children. Taşköprü (2013) also found that couples without children had higher marital satisfaction than those with children.

In the results of the research, those with the least commitment to social media consisted of individuals with 3 or more children. It is thought that the reason for this situation may be due to the high number of responsibilities due to the high number of children and the fact that people with more children have less free time.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the results obtained from this research, which was designed to determine the relationship between the level of social media usage of married individuals and the level of happiness in their relationships, our suggestions for future research are as follows:

1. This research was applied with a sample of 344 individuals who volunteered to participate in the research among married males and females living in Samsun provincial centre and its districts, and a more comprehensive research may be conducted with a larger sample.

2. The independent variables considered in the research are gender, age, length of marriage, education level, spouse's education level and number of children. Researchers may conduct research with more or different variables.

3. Including family members other than spouses in the research sample and asking questions to these people who have the opportunity to observe spouses during the day to understand the effect of social media usage on couples will enable the research results to be examined in more realistic aspects.

4. For a happy family, it is very crucial that family members use the right channels of communication. Healthy communication is possible with real communication instead of virtual communication. For this reason, family members may be instructed by experts on the positive usage of the internet and social media.

5. It may be recommended that married couples should create opportunities for each other to stay away from the internet and social media completely and to spare time for each other in the remaining time from daily life activities, thus strengthening the communication between them.

6. Marriage and family counselling services for couples may be provided through state institutions to make them more easily accessible.

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