



The Relationship Between Digital Literacy and Purpose of Social Network Usage: A Research on University Students

Mehmet Taşdemir^{1*}

Mustafa Fedai Çavuş²

¹Research Assistant, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences,
Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, Osmaniye, Türkiye

²Professor Doctor, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences,
Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, Osmaniye, Türkiye

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Abstract

The primary aim of this study is to determine the levels of digital literacy among university students and to examine the relationship between these levels and their purposes for using social networking sites within the framework of demographic variables. 344 university students volunteered to take part in this research. The Personal Information Form, the Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) and the Scale of Purposes for Using Social Networking Sites (SMUPS) were used as data collection tools. The independent variables are gender, grade level, daily social media usage time, previous education in digital or information technologies, and GPA. Data analysis involved the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests, the independent samples t-test, ANOVA, correlation, and multiple linear regression analyses. The analyses revealed a significant and positive relationship between the level of digital literacy and the purpose of using social networking sites. Consequently, it was concluded that enhancing digital literacy levels would contribute to a more conscious and purpose-driven use of social networking sites.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Social Networking Sites, Social Media, Digital Technologies

1. Introduction

Technological advancements in the early twenty-first century have substantially transformed how individuals access and make use of information. This transformation constitutes one of the fundamental elements of the information society (Bozkurt et al., 2021). The information society is defined as a structure in which individual and social communication has attained an international dimension through digital technologies (Ünal, 2009). In the information society, individuals' level of competence and awareness regarding digital technologies has become an indispensable element of

professional and social life. In this context, the concept of digital literacy is growing in importance with each passing day (Knobel, 2008).

Digital literacy was first addressed in the work titled 'Digital Literacy' by Paul Gilster. Gilster (1997) described digital literacy as the capability to interpret and make use of information encountered in varying formats through computer and internet-based platforms. The concept of digital literacy has acquired different definitions over time. Eshet-Alkalai (2004) described digital literacy as a multidimensional construct comprising visual, reproduction, branching, information, and socio-emotional competencies. Bawden (2008) characterized digital literacy as an overarching construct that integrates the abilities to access, evaluate, synthesize, and communicate information within digital environments. Ng (2012) proposed a three-dimensional model of digital literacy encompassing technical, cognitive, and socio-emotional components. The technical dimension covers the use of tools, the cognitive dimension covers critical thinking and information evaluation, and the socio-emotional dimension covers ethical and safe behaviour in the digital environment." Across disciplines, these definitions collectively underscore the significance of digital literacy. Digital literacy is particularly evident in terms of the digital skills that support university students' academic success. University students' ability to use digital technologies correctly directly impacts not only their academic success but also their career prospects after graduation (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Ng, 2012). Students make intensive use of digital technologies throughout their university education (Selwyn, 2016). Digital literacy plays a decisive role in students' access to academic resources, their evaluation of information, and their content creation processes during this period (Gilster, 1997). A study conducted on British university students found that whilst students use digital technologies for extended periods, there are variations in their ability to use them effectively (Helsper & Eynon, 2010). Based on this finding, it is concluded that for the effective use of digital technologies, it is not merely a matter of using them, but also of possessing digital literacy skills. Social networking sites, or social networks as they are also known, are defined as online platforms that enable individuals to connect with others, share content and form various online communities by creating public or semi-public profiles (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). With the global adoption of various social media platforms, social networks have become new spaces for communication, access to information, and cultural production. According to We Are Social, social media platforms—used actively by two out of every three people worldwide—have become an integral part of daily life, particularly among the 18–30 age group, with an average daily usage of two to three hours. The number of active users varies across social media platforms. YouTube leads by a wide margin in terms of the number of active users worldwide. YouTube is followed in turn by WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook (We Are Social, 2026). Research conducted on university students in Türkiye has found that social media usage is highly prevalent (Ayaz & Barış, 2024; Baz, 2018; Ökten, 2023; Özgür Güler, Veysikarani & Keskin, 2019; Radmard, Soysal, Kutluca & Türk, 2020). Furthermore, according to data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), over 97% of individuals aged 16–24 are active internet users, and it is observed that almost the entire group accesses social media on a daily basis (TÜİK, 2025). The intensive use of social networks within this age group raises the question of the extent to which social media platforms are used in a conscious and purposeful manner. In this regard, the role of digital literacy in determining the purposes of social network use is of great importance. It has been observed that studies focusing on the relationship between university students' levels of digital literacy and their purposes for using social networks remain limited. In particular, this research is significant in terms of the relationship between these two variables and other factors such as gender, year group, daily social media usage time, overall grade point average, and prior education in digital technology or information technology. Upon examining studies conducted on digital literacy and the purpose of social media use, three key gaps in the literature stand out. Firstly, existing studies treat these two variables as independent of one another. Consequently, the relationship between them has not been examined within a comprehensive framework. Secondly, no research has been identified that uses university students studying at faculties of economics and administrative sciences in Türkiye as a sample and examines digital literacy and the purposes of social media use together. Thirdly, research in this area is under-represented in universities across Anatolia. It is believed that this situation leads to limited scientific productivity and prevents academic competitiveness from reaching the desired level.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by filling the identified gaps. The primary objective of this study is to determine university students' levels of digital literacy and to examine the relationship between these levels and their purposes for using social networking sites, within the framework of demographic variables. The study was guided by the hypotheses presented below:

H1: There is a statistically significant and positive correlation between students' levels of digital literacy and their purposes for using social networking sites.

H2: Students' purposes for using social networking sites differ statistically significantly according to demographic variables (gender, year group, daily social media usage time, prior training in digital technology, and overall grade point average).

H3: Students' levels of digital literacy show statistically significant differences according to demographic variables (gender, year group, daily social media usage time, prior training in digital technology, and overall grade point average).

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

In line with the research objective, a correlational survey design—one of the quantitative research designs—was employed. The correlational survey model is a research model aimed at describing a past or present situation as it is (Karasar, 2024). It is used to determine whether there is a co-variation between two or more variables and, if so, to identify the direction and degree of the relationship between them (Büyüköztürk et al., 2021; Creswell, 2012). The variables in the study were examined in their natural environment without any intervention. Furthermore, findings at the sample level have been interpreted to describe trends generalisable to the population level.

2.2 Participants

The population of the study consists of 1,843 undergraduate students enrolled at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Osmaniye Korkut Ata University during the 2025–2026 academic year (Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, 2025). Three primary justifications underpin the selection of this population. Firstly, students studying at this faculty are expected to hold managerial, analytical and decision-making positions in both the private sector and public institutions in the future. Secondly, it comprises a heterogeneous student body distributed across multiple departments. This situation facilitates comparative analyses. Thirdly, the majority of studies conducted in Türkiye in the field of digital literacy focus on students in faculties of education or prospective teachers in the science and mathematics fields (Ocak & Karakuş, 2018; Türkben & Satılmış, 2022; Yılmaz, 2021; Yılmaz & Çakır, 2022). Consequently, studies focusing on students in the social sciences remain limited. The research aims to directly address this gap.

Given the impracticality of accessing the entire population, a sampling approach was adopted to obtain a representative subset. The sample of the research consists of undergraduate students studying at this faculty. The primary reason for selecting this faculty was that this student group has been insufficiently represented in digital literacy research conducted in Türkiye. Simple random sampling, which is a basic probability sampling method in which each individual in the population has an equal and independent probability of being selected, was utilized (Babbie, 2020). While determining the sample size, the Yamane (1967) formula, which is widely accepted in the social sciences, was employed. The Yamane formula is a method used to calculate the minimum required sample size by accepting a specified margin of error for the study (Yamane, 1967). The minimum required sample size was calculated as 329 participants. The sample consisted of 344 participants, a size considered adequate to ensure the reliability of the findings.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Study Sample

Variables	Group	N	%
Gender	Female	210	61.0
	Male	134	39.0
Grade Levels	1st grade	101	29.4
	2nd grade	125	36.3
	3rd grade	75	21.8
	4th grade	43	12.5
Daily social network usage time	0 - 1 hour	36	10.5
	1 - 2 hour	88	25.6
	2 - 4 hour	105	30.5
	over 4 hours	115	33.4
Educational background in the field of digital technology or information technology	Yes	145	42.2
	No	199	57.8
GPA (Grade Point Average)	2.00 and under	82	23.8
	2.01 - 2.50	104	30.2
	2.51 - 3.00	101	29.4
	3.01 - 3.50	44	12.8
	3.51 - 4.00	13	3.8
Total		344	100.0

According to Table 1, 61.0% (n=210) of the participants were female, while 39.0% (n=134) were male. Looking at the participants' year groups, 29.4% (n=101) were in Year 1, 36.3% (n=125) in Year 2, 21.8% (n=75) in Year 3 and 12.5% (n=43) in Year 4. When daily internet usage time was examined, 1.7% of participants (n=6) spent 0–30 minutes online, 2.6% (n=9) spent 30 minutes to 1 hour, 13.7% (n=47) spent 1–2 hours, 29.4% (n=101) spent 2–4 hours, and 52.6% (n=181) spent 4 hours or more online. When looking at daily social media usage time, 1.5% of participants (n=5) spend 0–30 minutes, 9.0% (n=31) spend 30 minutes to 1 hour, 25.6% (n=88) spend 1–2 hours, 30.5% (n=105) spend 2–4 hours, and 33.4% (n=115) spend 4 hours or more on social media. When examining participants' educational background in digital technology or IT, 42.2% (n=145) had received training, whilst 57.8% (n=199) had not. Based on overall grade point averages, 23.8% of participants (n=82) had a grade of 2.00 or below, 30.2% (n=104) had a grade of 2.01–2.50, 29.4% (n=101) had a grade of 2.51–3.00, 12.8% (n=44) had a GPA of 3.01–3.50, and 3.8% (n=13) had a GPA of 3.51–4.00.

2.3 Data Collection Tools and Process

As a data collection tool, the Demographic Information Form, developed by the author to determine the demographic characteristics of the students participating in the study, the Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) developed by Üstündağ and colleagues (2017) and tested for reliability and validity, and the Social Media Usage Purpose Scale (SMUPS) developed by Karal and Kokoç (2010) were used. Research data were collected via Google Forms. The scales were administered to students in classrooms on a voluntary basis by the researcher in person. The demographic questions aimed at determining the participants' personal and social characteristics. The Digital Literacy Scale has a unifactorial structure and consists of 10 items. No items within the scale require reverse scoring. The scale uses a 5-point Likert-type rating scale. Üstündağ and colleagues (2017) found the scale's overall Cronbach's Alpha value to be 0.860. As a result of using the scale in this study, the overall Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be 0.895. Possible scores on this scale range from 10 to 50, with higher scores reflecting greater digital literacy. The Social Networking Sites Usage Purpose Scale comprises 14 items organized under three factors. The scale does not include any reverse-coded items. Karal and Kokoç (2010) found the overall Cronbach's Alpha value for the scale to be 0.830, 0.808 for the 'social interaction and communication-oriented use' factor, 0.742 for the 'recognition and being recognised-oriented use' factor, and 0.661 for the 'educational-oriented use' factor. As a result of using the scale in the study, the

overall Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be 0.904, 0.821 for the "use for social interaction and communication" factor, 0.782 for the "use for recognition and being recognised" factor, and 0.702 for the "use for educational purposes" factor. A minimum of 14 (14×1) and a maximum of 70 (14×5) points can be scored on this scale.

2.4 Data Analysis

SPSS 26.0 was utilized for the statistical analysis of the data. Normality assumptions for the scores derived from both scales were examined through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. It is accepted that a p-value of $<.05$ from these tests is appropriate for determining whether the scale exhibits a normal distribution (Büyüköztürk, 2020). Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality test outcomes, it was found that the scores from the Digital Literacy Scale and the Purpose of Social Media Use Scale did not follow a normal distribution. However, as the skewness and kurtosis values of the scales used in the study fell between -1.5 and $+1.5$, they were deemed to be suitable for a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2020). Two-group variables were analyzed via independent samples t-test, and variables with three or more categories were examined through one-way ANOVA. To ensure the analyses could be interpreted correctly, descriptive statistics for all demographic variables were included in the study. In addition, Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis was employed to identify the linear relationship between two continuous variables exhibiting a normal distribution and to determine and interpret the extent of the relationship, with the aim of establishing the link between university students' digital literacy levels and their purpose of using social networking sites (Büyüköztürk, 2020; Kilmen, 2020).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on Scale Results

Variables	N	Min	Max	$\bar{X}$	sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
SMUPS	344	14	70	3.24	.714	.194	.416
<i>Social Media and Engagement</i>	344	8	40	3.37	.699	.026	.384
<i>Recognition and Being Recognised</i>	344	2	10	2.72	1.066	.229	-.530
<i>For Educational Purposes</i>	344	4	20	3.19	.864	-.119	-.010
DLS	344	10	50	3.49	.692	-.222	.716

Table 2 presents the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis values obtained from both scales.

3. Findings

3.1 Findings Regarding University Students' Digital Literacy and Purpose of Social Networking Site Use

Table 3. Results of the Independent Samples t-Test on the Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) by Gender

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	df	t	p
Female	210	3.37	0.61	342	-4.300	0.000*
Male	134	3.69	0.75			

Gender-based t-test findings for the Digital Literacy Scale are displayed in table 3. A significant difference was found in Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) scores between female ($\bar{x}=3.37$; $sd=0.61$) and male ($\bar{x}=3.69$; $sd=0.75$) participants ($t(342)=-4.300$; $p<0.000$). Based on the mean scores, it was concluded that male students' digital literacy levels were higher than those of female students.

Table 4. Results of the Independent Samples t-Test on the Social Media Usage Purpose Scale (SMUPS) by Gender

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	df	t	p
Female	210	3.22	0.68	342	-0.827	0.409
Male	134	3.28	0.76			

Gender-based t-test findings for the Social Media Usage Purpose Scale are reported in table 4. SMUPS scores did not differ significantly between female ($\bar{x}$ =3.22; sd=0.68) and male ($\bar{x}$ =3.28; sd=0.76) participants ($t(342)=-0.827$; $p=0.409$).

Table 5. ANOVA Results for Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) Scores by Grade Level

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Difference
Between Groups	0.980	3	0.327	0.679	0.565	-
Within Groups	163.508	340	0.481			
Total	164.489	343				

Grade level-based ANOVA results for the Digital Literacy Scale are reported in table 5. An examination of the findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) scores between grade levels ($F(3,340)=0.679$; $p=0.565$).

Table 6. ANOVA Results for Social Media Usage Purpose Scale (SMUPS) by Grade Level

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Difference
Between Groups	2.139	3	0.713	1.400	0.243	-
Within Groups	173.105	340	0.509			
Total	175.243	343				

Grade level-based ANOVA results for the Social Media Usage Purpose Scale are reported in table 6. Analysis of the findings revealed no significant difference in SMUPS scores between year groups ($F(3,340) = 1.400$; $p = 0.243$).

Table 7. ANOVA Results for Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) Scores Based on Daily Social Media Usage Time

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Difference
Between Groups	2.708	3	0.903	1.897	0.130	-
Within Groups	161.780	340	0.476			
Total	164.489	343				

Table 7 displays the ANOVA findings for Digital Literacy Scale scores across daily social media usage time. The analysis revealed no significant variation in Digital Literacy Scale scores ($F(3,340)=1.897$; $p=0.130$).

Table 8. One-Way ANOVA Findings for SMUPS Scores by Daily Social Media Usage Duration

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Difference
Between Groups	8.175	3	2.725	5.546	0.001*	1-4, 2-4
Within Groups	167.069	340	0.491			
Total	175.243	343				

1: 0-1 hour 2: 1-2 hour 3: 2-4 hour 4: over 4 hours

Table 8 displays the ANOVA findings for Social Media Usage Purpose Scale scores across daily social media usage time groups. The overall SMUPS score differed significantly by daily social media usage time ($F(3,340)=5.546$; $p=.001$). The results of the Tukey test revealed that this difference was observed between the 0–1 hour and over 4 hours groups, and between the 1–2 hour and over 4 hours groups.

Table 9. Results of an Independent Samples t-Test on Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) Scores According to Educational Background in the Field of Digital Technology or Information Technology

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	df	t	p
Yes	145	3.64	0.72	342	3.310	0.001*
No	199	3.39	0.64			

The t-test findings for Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) scores are reported in Table 9, based on whether students had previously received training in digital technology or information technology. An analysis of the findings revealed a significant difference ($t(342) = 3.310$; $p=0.001$). The mean digital literacy score of students who had previously received training in any of these fields ($\bar{x}=3.64$; $sd=0.72$) is higher than that of students who had not received such training ($\bar{x}=3.39$; $sd=0.64$).

Table 10. Results of an Independent Samples t-Test on Social Media Usage Purpose Scale (SMUPS) Scores According to Educational Background in the Field of Digital Technology or Information Technology

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	df	t	p
Yes	145	3.33	0.68	342	1.980	0.048*
No	199	3.18	0.73			

Table 10 displays the independent samples t-test findings for Social Media Usage Purpose Scale scores by prior digital technology or information technology training. The overall SMUPS score differed significantly across groups ($t(342)=1.980$; $p=0.048$). Students with prior training recorded higher scores ($\bar{x}=3.33$; $sd=0.68$) compared to those without training ($\bar{x}=3.18$; $sd=0.73$).

Table 11. ANOVA Results for Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) Scores by GPA

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Difference
Between Groups	3.494	4	0.874	1.839	0.121	-
Within Groups	160.994	339	0.475			
Total	164.489	343				

The variance analysis results for Digital Literacy Scale scores by overall GPA are reported in Table 11. Upon examining the findings, no statistically significant difference was found in Digital Literacy Scale (DLS) scores based on overall grade point average ($F(4,339)=1.839$; $p=.121$).

Table 12. ANOVA Results for Social Media Usage Purpose Scale (SMUPS) Scores by GPA

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Difference
Between Groups	2.971	4	0.743	1.461	0.214	-
Within Groups	172.273	339	0.508			
Total	175.243	343				

Table 12 displays the ANOVA findings for Social Media Usage Purpose Scale scores across student grade point average groups. Upon examining the findings, no significant difference was found in the SMUPS total score based on the overall grade point average ($F(4,339)=1.461$; $p=0.214$).

3.2 Findings Regarding the Relationship Between Digital Literacy and Social Media Usage Purpose

Table 13. Correlation Between Digital Literacy and Social Media Usage Purpose

		Digital Literacy
Social Media Usage Purpose	Pearson Correlation	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	344
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

Table 13 presents the correlation between digital literacy and the purpose of social media use. A positive and moderate correlation emerged between the Digital Literacy Scale and the Social Media Usage Purpose Scale ($r=0.498$; $p<0.01$). This indicates that as students' levels of digital literacy increase, so too do their purposes for using social media. Overall, university students' digital literacy levels and their social media usage purposes were found to be significantly and positively associated.

Table 14. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
Constant	1.936	0.162		11.949	0.000
Social Media and Engagement	0.323	0.084	0.326	3.858	0.000
Recognition and Being Recognised	0.067	0.042	0.103	1.598	0.111
For Educational Purposes	0.092	0.069	0.114	1.326	0.186
$R=0.499$ $R^2=0.249$ $F=37.640$ $p=0.000$					
Dependent Variable: Digital Literacy					

Table 14 displays the multiple linear regression findings examining the predictors of digital literacy levels. The regression model proved statistically significant. Accordingly, the independent variables in the regression model account for 24.9% of the total variance in digital literacy. It is observed that the scores for the social media and interaction variable significantly predict digital literacy scores ($\beta=.326$; $t=3.858$; $p<.000$). In contrast, the scores for the recognition and being recognised ($\beta=0.103$; $t=1.598$; $p<0.111$) and educational purposes ($\beta=0.114$; $t=1.326$; $p<0.186$) variables do not significantly predict digital literacy scores.

4. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Recent literature has indicated that social networking sites are widely used among university students due to their high level of interaction and engagement (Yolcu & Çiftçi, 2023; Topal et al., 2024; Çapuk, 2025; Fatima et al., 2025). Students use these platforms not only for entertainment purposes, but also for various functions such as communication, academic information sharing, following current developments, and expanding their social networks (Badr et al., 2024; Sivakumar et al., 2023; Astleitner & Schlick, 2025; Handayani et al., 2024; Gökbulut, 2025). Recent studies have also supported that individuals with higher levels of digital literacy tend to use social networking platforms more consciously and effectively (Koçyiğit et al., 2024; Öcal & Öcal, 2026; Özbilen & Dilber, 2025).

In the correlation analysis conducted, a positive and, according to Cohen's (1988) criteria, moderately significant relationship was determined between the DLS and the SMUPS. Accordingly, the analysis demonstrated that as digital literacy levels increase, students use social networking sites for more conscious and functional purposes. Therefore, digital literacy goes beyond basic usage skills and includes the ability to use technology for functional purposes (Eshet-Alkalai, 2004; Gilster, 1997; Ng, 2012).

Male students scored significantly higher on the Digital Literacy Scale than their female counterparts. This difference might stem from male students' orientation toward technical fields such as software and data analysis. No gender-based differences emerged in the total SMUPS score. This

situation indicates that the purposes of social network use are shaped along similar needs, independent of gender. Both findings align with the relevant literature (İlhan & Ekmekçi, 2024; Özdemir Süzer & Altın, 2023; Özlü et al., 2018; Saray et al., 2025; Uslu & Hamarat, 2016; Yılmazsoy & Kahraman, 2019).

In the analysis conducted by grade level, it was concluded that neither DLS nor SMUPS scores showed a significant difference. This finding suggests that digital literacy and the purpose of using social networking sites are shaped at earlier ages, independent of grade level. Related studies in the literature also support this finding (Chowdhury & Begum, 2025; Demirdiş, 2026; Jian, 2025).

Significant differences were detected across the SMUPS based on daily social media usage duration. As a result of the post-hoc analyses, it was concluded that this difference was between the groups with 0-1 hour and over 4 hours, and between 1-2 hours and over 4 hours. It can be argued that students who spend more time on platforms use social media for more functional purposes. In contrast, no significant difference was detected in DLS scores. This finding can be explained by two reasons: daily social media usage duration alone is not a determinant of digital literacy, and intensive social media use transforms into routine behavioral patterns over time, thereby reducing critical inquiry. Current literature also contains results that overlap with this finding (Aydınlar et al., 2024; Gültekin & Özel, 2024; Smith & Storrs, 2023).

The DLS and SMUPS scores of students who had previously received education in digital technology or informatics were found to be significantly higher compared to those who had not received such education. This finding demonstrates that education received in the digital field supports both digital literacy levels and the conscious use of social media. This finding shows parallelism with studies in the literature (Aydınlar et al., 2024; Basri, 2024; Raji & Dommett, 2024).

Cumulative GPA did not yield significant differences in either DLS or SMUPS scores. This situation indicates that students' academic achievement levels do not have a direct decisive impact on their digital literacy levels and their purposes for using social networking sites. Recent studies in the literature have also shown results supporting this finding (Farias-Gaytan et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2025; Yuan et al., 2025).

The H₁ hypothesis, which is the primary hypothesis of the research, was supported by the research data and accepted. The H₂ hypothesis was partially supported, as it was non-significant in terms of the variables of gender, grade level, and cumulative grade point average. The H₃ hypothesis was partially supported because it was found non-significant in terms of cumulative grade point average, daily social media usage duration, and grade level variables.

This research is an original study that takes undergraduate students of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences in Turkey as a sample and examines the DLS and SMUPS variables together. This study targets three underexplored issues in the literature: the lack of handling DLS and SMUPS variables together, the insufficiency of empirical data specific to students of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, and the limitations of findings regarding Anatolian universities.

The study was carried out under a number of constraints that warrant consideration. The sample only covers undergraduate students at Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. This situation restricts the generalization of the findings to different universities, faculties, and geographical regions. Participant responses were collected via Likert-format measurement instruments. Anonymity was ensured during data collection, and participants were informed that no correct or incorrect responses existed, thereby minimizing social desirability bias. Only certain demographic variables were examined; different variables such as income level, place of residence, parental education level, and the number of digital devices owned remained outside the scope. The research reflects data belonging to a single time period of the 2025-2026 academic year. Considering the rapid changes in digital technology, the findings should be evaluated within the context of this period.

Various recommendations have been developed within the scope of the research findings and limitations. Digital literacy and media literacy courses should be added to the compulsory curriculum in universities. In these courses, not only superficial information but also in-depth competence acquisition should be provided. For female students, who showed lower digital literacy scores

compared to male students, support programs should be planned by the psychological counseling and guidance units of universities, especially during the initial periods when the adaptation process is intense. Digital literacy education should be defined as a core competence for all students, independent of academic achievement levels; students with low digital literacy scores should be identified and supported through individual support programs. University administrations should consider the findings of this research when developing digital literacy strategies, create action plans, and include digital literacy among the core competencies in undergraduate and graduate programs. Comparative studies covering different universities and faculties should be conducted; a digital literacy research network should be established among Anatolian universities. Since this research has a quantitative structure, qualitative and mixed-method research should be carried out to understand the relationship between DLS and SMUPS in depth. Future studies should examine the effects on digital literacy more comprehensively by adding contextual variables such as income level and place of residence. With 10 items and a unidimensional structure, the Digital Literacy Scale applied in this research; the development of scales with sub-factors that will better reflect the multi-dimensional structure of digital literacy will contribute to the literature.

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