

SOCIAL MEDIA USE OF OLDER PEOPLE LIVING IN NURSING HOMES AND THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON SUCCESSFUL AGING

HUZUREVİNDE KALAN YAŞLILARDA SOSYAL MEDYA KULLANIMI VE SOSYAL DESTEĞİN BAŞARILI YAŞLANMA ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ

Nuray TURAN¹, Yeliz ÇULHA², Sevinç YILDIRIM³

¹ Istanbul University, Faculty of Nursing, Istanbul, Türkiye

² Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Istanbul, Türkiye

³ Darulaceze Presidency Nursing Home, Istanbul, Türkiye

ABSTRACT

Aim: This study was planned to determine the effect of social media use and social support on successful aging in older people staying in nursing homes.

Methods: The population of this descriptive and correlational study consisted of individuals aged 65 and over living in a nursing home in Istanbul, and the sample consisted of 168 elderly individuals. Data were collected using the Older Individual Information Form, the Social Media Usage Scale, the Multi-Dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale, and the Successful Aging Scale.

Results: It was determined that the time spent using the internet and social media in elderly individuals during the day was 3.46±3.20 hours and 2.14±2.20 hours, respectively. The mean scores of the individuals on Social Media Use, Multi-Dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale, and Successful Aging Scales were 2.59±2.25, 52.74±16.99, and 63.57±1.71, respectively. It was determined that there was a positive significant relationship between the Social Media Use Continuity subscale mean scores and the Successful Aging Scale total score averages and Healthy Aging and Coping with Problems subscale mean scores between the Social Media Use Competency subscale, mean scores, and the Successful Aging Scale total score averages and Coping with Problems subscale mean scores.

Conclusion: It was determined that the social media use of the elderly individuals was moderate, the perceptions of social support and successful aging were high, and as the social media use of the elderly individuals increased, their social support levels also increased, and this had a positive effect on successful aging.

Keywords: Nursing Home, Older People, Social Media Use, Social Support, Successful Aging.

ÖZET

Amaç: Bu çalışma, huzurevinde kalan yaşlı bireylerde sosyal medya kullanımı ve sosyal desteğin başarılı yaşlanma üzerine etkisini belirlemek amacıyla planlandı.

Gereç ve Yöntem: Tanımlayıcı ve ilişki arayıcı türdeki bu çalışmanın evrenini, İstanbul'da bir huzurevinde yaşamını sürdüren 65 yaş ve üzeri bireyler, örneklemini ise 168 yaşlı birey oluşturdu. Veriler, Yaşlı Birey Bilgi Formu, Sosyal Medya Kullanımı Ölçeği, Çok Boyutlu Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeği ve Başarılı Yaşlanma Ölçeği kullanılarak toplandı.

Bulgular: Yaşlı bireylerin gün içerisinde internet kullanma ve sosyal medyaya ayrılan sürelerin sırasıyla 3.46±3.20 saat ve 2.14±2.20 saat olduğu belirlendi. Bireylerin, Sosyal Medya Kullanımı, Çok Boyutlu Algılanan Sosyal Destek ve Başarılı Yaşlanma Ölçekleri puan ortalamaları sırasıyla 2.59±2.25, 52.74±16.99 ve 63.57±1.71 bulundu. Sosyal Medya Kullanımı Süreklilik alt ölçeği puan ortalamaları ile Başarılı Yaşlanma Ölçeği toplam puan ortalaması ve Sağlıklı Yaşlanma ve Sorunlarla Mücadele Etme alt ölçek puan ortalamaları arasında, Sosyal Medya Kullanımı Yetkinlik alt ölçeği puan ortalamaları ile Başarılı Yaşlanma Ölçeği toplam puan ortalamaları ve Sorunlarla Mücadele Etme alt ölçek puan ortalamaları arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu saptandı.

Sonuç: Yaşlı bireylerin sosyal medya kullanımlarının orta düzeyde, sosyal destek ve başarılı yaşlanma algılarının ise yüksek düzeyde olduğu, yaşlı bireylerin sosyal medya kullanımları arttıkça, sosyal destek düzeylerinin de arttığı ve bunun da başarılı yaşlanma üzerinde olumlu etkisinin olduğu belirlendi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Başarılı Yaşlanma, Huzurevi, Sosyal Medya Kullanımı, Sosyal Destek, Yaşlı Bireyler

Sorumlu Yazar / Corresponding Author: Sevinç YILDIRIM, Nurse, PhD, Darulaceze Presidency Nursing Home, Istanbul, Türkiye. **E-mail:** sevinc-yldrm@hotmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

The increase in depression and loneliness, along with aging and the decrease in social support, are among the problems that directly affect the quality of life of older people (Artan and Selin Irmak, 2018; Bilgili, 2020; Tekedere and Arpaci, 2016).

With the advancing age, individuals need products and services to increase their independence in fulfilling their daily activities and enrich their social lives by enabling them to communicate with others. Technological products used for this purpose are seen as indispensable elements of daily life, but with the use of social media, which has become widespread in recent years, individuals can communicate with other people and follow the posts made by individuals or institutions they are in contact with. Social media environments can play an important role, especially in terms of meeting with family members and loved people, socializing, improving their fields of occupation, and as a result, a happier old age for older people living in nursing homes and care centers (Ozvrmaz, 2018; Aydiner Boylu and Gunay, 2018; Tengku et al., 2019).

Nurses, who aim to protect and improve the individual's health in every period of life, target to protect the quality of life of the individual in old age and to lead a healthier and more active life both physically and mentally. Concordantly, the concept of healthy aging, which mainly focuses on physical and mental health, has gained importance as successful aging in recent years (Hazer and Atesoglu, 2019). Multifarious factors such as social, mental, and physiological factors, health, and activity affect accomplished aging (Wu and Chiou, 2020). Nurses play a significant role in revealing the needs of individuals and fulfilling the necessary practices for a successful aging process by evaluating the social support resources that will advocate the independence of older people and make it easier for them to cope with their emotional problems, strengthen their quality of life, and contribute to a withstanding aging process (Ozsungur, 2019). In this context, the investigation was planned to determine the influence of using social media and social support on successful aging in older people living in nursing homes.

Answers to the following questions were sought in the research:

1. What are the levels of social media use, social support, and successful aging of older people staying in nursing homes?
2. Is there a relationship between social media use, social support, and successful aging levels of older people staying in nursing homes?
3. Do the individual characteristics of older people staying in nursing homes affect social media use, social support, and successful aging?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

It was planned as a descriptive, correlational study to determine the effect of social media use and social support on the successful aging of older people living in nursing homes.

Study Population

The population of the study consisted of individuals aged 65 and over, who lived in a nursing home in Istanbul between January and June 2021, and who agreed to participate in that academic work after being confirmed about the purpose, content, and method of the study. For the number of samples, by using the sample size formula of the known population ($N=516$), a minimum number of 160 older people was found to be sufficient, and the examination was carried out with 168 older people. The inclusion criteria are comprised of being an individual 65 years or older and living in a nursing home, having a personal smartphone and using the Internet, and having no specific problems that would prevent communication.

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected through the Information Form for the Older Individual, the Social Media Usage Scale, the Multi-Dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale, and the Successful Aging Scale.

Information Form for the Older Individual: This form consisted of questions covering the individual characteristics of older people.

Social Media Usage Scale (SMUS): It was developed by Deniz and Tutgun Ünal (2019) to reveal the social media usage of contradictory generations and their values in heterogeneous dimensions. The scale, composed of 8 items in total, is a Likert-type scale and consists of two

subscales (Continuity and Competence). A high total score on the scale indicates that the individual is more engaged with social media and is competent in using it. In the study where they tested the validity and reliability features of the scale, Deniz and Tutgun Ünal (2019) found that Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.82 and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.79 in this study.

Multi-Dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale (MDPSSS): It subjectively determines the adequacy of social support from three different sources. The scale developed by Zimet et al. (1988) was first adapted to Turkish society by Eker and Arkar (1995a) and was revised by Eker, Arkar, and Yaldiz (2001). It is a 7-point Likert-type mount and consists of 12 items. On the scale, each of which incorporates four items, three sub-scales consist of questions about the source of support: family, friend, and significant other. The lowest and highest scores that could be obtained from the scale are 12 and 60, respectively. A high total score obtained indicates high perceived social support. In the study, they tested the validity and reliability features of the scale. It was found that Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.89 (Eker et al., 2001), and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.83 in this study.

Successful Aging Scale (SAS): This scale, which was developed by Reker (2009) in 2009 to evaluate successful aging behaviors of older people, was adapted to Turkish society by Hazer and Ozsungur (2017). The 7-point Likert-type scale consisting of 10 questions has two subscales, which are healthy lifestyle and coping with problems. A minimum of 10 and a maximum of 70 points can be obtained from the scale. As the score obtained increases, the successful aging status of individuals also increases. In the study where they tested the validity and reliability features of the scale, Hazer and Ozsungur (2017) determined that Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.85, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.82 in this study.

Ethical Issues

Ethics committee approval (18.10.2021/137282) from Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa, Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee and permission from the institution where the research would be conducted (01.04.2021/730.10-E.2025) were taken before the research. Before the data were collected, verbal and written consent was obtained from the older people.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows 21.0 was used to evaluate the data. In the evaluation of parametric variables; arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and minimum maximum values, in the evaluation of non-parametric variables; Frequency and percentage, t-test for comparing the means of two groups, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were used for comparing the means of more than two groups. The significance value was accepted as $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

The findings regarding the individual characteristics of older people are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Individual Characteristics of Elderly Individuals

Individual Characteristics	n	%
Age (Mean±SD) (Min.-Max.)	70.60±5.52(65-90)	
Gender		
Female	56	33.3
Male	112	66.7
Marital status		
Married	168	100
Single	-	-
Education status		
Literate	8	4.8
Primary school graduate	76	45.2
Secondary school graduate	52	31
High school graduate	24	14.3
College graduate and above	8	4.8
Income status		
Income less than expenses	64	38.1
Income equals expense	88	52.4
Income more than expenses	16	9.5

Health insurance		
Yes	76	45.2
No	92	54.8
Meeting status with family		
Face to face	12	7.1
On the phone	20	11.9
Both face-to-face and on the phone	72	42.9
No	64	38.1
Meeting status with relatives		
Face to face	28	16.7
On the phone	28	16.7
Both face-to-face and on the phone	48	28.6
No	64	38.1
Meeting status with friends		
Face to face	12	7.1
On the phone	28	16.7
Both face-to-face and on the phone	92	54.8
No	36	21.4
The status of knowing how to use the Internet		
Yes	152	90.5
No	16	9.5
Internet usage time per day		
	3.46±3.20 (0-15)	
The status of knowing what can be done in social media environments		
Yes	116	69
No	52	31
Time spent on social media during the day		
	2.14±2.20 (0-8)	
Opinions on social media		
I would like to learn to use social media	68	40.5
I think social media use is a waste of time	37	22
I think the use of social media is unnecessary work	51	30.4
Other	12	7.1

When Table 2 was examined, it was seen that the mean score of the Social Media Usage Scale of the older people was 2.59 ± 2.25 and that the subscale mean scores were found to be 2.91 ± 1.19 for Continuity and 2.26 ± 1.63 for Competence. It was actuated that the MDPSSS total scale mean score was 52.74 ± 16.99 , and that subscale mean scores were 14.62 ± 7.55 in the Family subscale, 19.12 ± 5.61 in the Friend subscale, and 19.00 ± 6.16 in the Significant Other subscale. It was seen that the SAS total scale score was 63.57 ± 1.71 and that the subscale mean scores were 19.38 ± 2.81 in the Healthy Lifestyle Subscale and 44.19 ± 5.32 in the Coping with Problems subscale.

Table 2. Distribution of Scores on the Social Media Usage Scale, Multi-Dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale, and Successful Aging Scale of the

Scales		Min.-Max.	Mean ±SD
Social Media Usage Scale	Continuity	1-5	2.91 ±1.19
	Competence	1-5	2.26 ±1.63
	Total score	1-4.75	2.59 ±2.25
Multi-Dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale	Family	4-28	14.62±7.55
	Friend	4-28	19.12±5.61
	Significant other	4-28	19.00±6.16
	Total score	13-84	52.74±16.99
Successful Aging Scale	Healthy lifestyle	5-21	19.38±2.81
	Coping with problems	22-49	44.19±5.32
	Total score	27-70	63.57±1.71

Max.: Maximum; Min.:Minimum, SD:Standard Deviation

Table 3: The Relationship Between Social Media Use, Multidimensional Perceived Social Support, and Successful Aging of Individuals Living in Nursing Homes

Social Media Usage Scale	Multi-Dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale				Successful Aging Scale		
	Family	Friend	Significant other	Total score	Healthy lifestyle	Coping with problems	Total score
	r;p	r;p	r;p	r;p	r;p	r;p	r;p
Continuity	0.189; 0.014	0.170;0.028	0.018;0.817	0.146;0.058	0.225; 0.003	0.453; <0.001	0.395; <0.001
Competence	-0.037;0.634	-0.026;0.740	-0.157;0.049	-0.080;0.301	0.071;0.357	0.245; 0.001	0.195; 0.011
Total score	0.074;0.344	0.071;0.363	-0.080;0.304	0.027;0.728	0.155;0.045	0.371; <0.001	0.313; <0.001

Spearman correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between two non-normally distributed quantitative data.

*r: Pearson Correlation Analysis, *p<0.05*

When Table 3 was examined, it was determined that there was a positive and significant relationship between the mean scores of the Continuity of Social Media Use subscale of the elderly and the mean scores of the Social Support Levels and Family subscales ($p<0.05$). Using the Social Media Continuity subscale mean scores and Successful Aging Scale total score averages and Healthy Aging and Coping with Problems subscale mean scores, Using Social Media Competency subscale mean scores, Successful Aging Scale total score averages, and Coping with Problems subscale scores It was persuaded that there was a momentous positive correlation between the mean scores ($p<0.001$).

It was observed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the total scores mean of the Multi-Dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale and subscale mean scores of the older people and the SAS total scale mean scores and subscales ($p<0.001$) (Table 4).

Table 4. The Relationship Between Multidimensional Perceived Social Support and Successful Aging of Individuals Living in Nursing Homes

Multi-Dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale	Successful Aging Scale		
	Healthy lifestyle	Coping with problems	Total score
	r;p	r;p	r;p
Family	0.181; 0.019	0.240; 0.002	0.231; 0.003
Friend	0.328; <0.001	0.426; 0.001	0.414; <0.001
Significant other	0.313; <0.001	0.368; <0.001	0.368; <0.001
Total score	0.302; <0.001	0.381; <0.001	0.373; <0.001

**Spearman correlation coefficient was used to analyze the relationship between two non-normally distributed quantitative data.*

*r: Pearson Correlation Analysis, *p<0.05*

It was scrutinized that there were statistically numerous differences between the education levels of the older people included in the examination, their SAS total scale mean scores, and their SMUS total scale mean scores ($p<0.001$). A statistically significant relationship was determined between the MDPSSSS total scale to mean scores and the SAS total scale mean scores according to the variables of income status, communicating with family and relatives, and MDPSSSS total scale mean scores according to the variable of meeting with friends ($p<0.001$) (Table 5).

A statistically significant correlation was found only between the SMUS total scale mean scores according to the status of knowing how to use the internet of older people, between the SMUS total scale mean scores, and the SAS total scale mean scores according to the knowledge of the activities to be carried out in social media environments, and between the SAS total scale mean scores, MDPSSSS total scale mean scores and the SMUS total scale mean scores according to the views on social media ($p<0.001$).

Table 5. Distribution of Individual Characteristics Affecting Social Media Use, Social Support, and Successful Aging Levels of Older Individuals Living in Nursing Homes

Individual Characteristics	Social Media Usage	Multi-Dimensional	Successful Aging
	Scale Mean \pm SD	Perceived Social Support Scale Mean \pm SD	Scale Mean \pm SD
Gender			
Female	2.35 \pm 1.26	50.36 \pm 15.59	64.86 \pm 5.60
Male	2.71 \pm 1.13	53.93 \pm 17.59	62.93 \pm 8.52
F; p	0.132;0.065	0.560;0.200	5.815;0.127
Education status			
Literate	2.13 \pm 1.07	52.00 \pm 4.28	55.00 \pm 8.55
Primary school graduate	2.51 \pm 1.25	52.16 \pm 20.03	64.74 \pm 4.92
Secondary school graduate	2.27 \pm 0.72	52.62 \pm 14.03	61.23 \pm 10.70
High school graduate	2.96 \pm 1.22	57.33 \pm 10.99	66.00 \pm 4.17
College graduate and above	4.75 \pm 0.20	46.00 \pm 24.59	69.00 \pm 1.07
F; p	10.600;<0.001	0.776;0.542	6.436;<0.001
Income status			
Income more than expenses	2.76 \pm 1.20	47.00 \pm 22.32	61.63 \pm 10.34
Income less than expenses	2.42 \pm 1.15	57.22 \pm 11.30	65.14 \pm 5.45
Income equals expense	2.81 \pm 1.23	50.75 \pm 10.67	62.75 \pm 2.96
F; p	1.851;0.160	7.429;0.001	4.091;0.018
Meeting status with family			
Face to face	2.75 \pm 0.74	72.00 \pm 8.86	60.00 \pm 1.21
On the phone	2.63 \pm 0.52	56.40 \pm 1.75	64.60 \pm 4.66
Both face-to-face and on the phone	2.69 \pm 1.29	57.17 \pm 14.87	67.22 \pm 2.39
No	2.42 \pm 1.27	43.00 \pm 17.03	59.81 \pm 10.59
F; p	0.693;0.557	18.541;<0.001	14.134;<0.001
Meeting status with relatives			
Face to face	2.21 \pm 0.67	65.14 \pm 8.28	62.86 \pm 2.52
On the phone	3.05 \pm 0.90	56.71 \pm 14.45	64.71 \pm 4.95
Both face-to-face and on the phone	2.66 \pm 1.23	59.75 \pm 8.53	67.17 \pm 2.97
No	2.49 \pm 1.37	40.31 \pm 17.94	60.69 \pm 10.89
F; p	2.65;0.051	29.789;<0.001	7.548;<0.001
Meeting status with friends			
Face to face	2.75 \pm 0.74	72.00 \pm 8.86	60.00 \pm 2.23
On the phone	3.20 \pm 1.12	40.71 \pm 19.94	61.86 \pm 14.87
Both face-to-face and on the phone	2.49 \pm 1.22	56.35 \pm 9.95	64.74 \pm 4.97
No	2.29 \pm 1.13	46.44 \pm 21.68	63.11 \pm 6.17
F; p	3.659;0.014	16.414;<0.001	2.108;0.101
The status of knowing how to use the Internet			
Yes	2.62 \pm 1.17	52.79 \pm 16.30	64.11 \pm 7.60
No	2.31 \pm 1.30	52.25 \pm 23.19	58.50 \pm 7.10
F; p	2.593;0.332	3.210;0.904	0.351;0.005

The status of knowing what can be done in social media environments

Yes	2.94±1.22	52.14±16.68	65.45±4.05
No	1.79±0.55	54.08±17.74	59.38±11.48
F; p	72.023;<0.001	0.189;0.496	34.680;<0.001

Opinions on social media

I would like to learn to use social media	3.05±1.15	56.18±17.07	66.00±3.59
I think social media use is a waste of time	2.64±1.24	44.19±21.16	61.16±12.73
I think the use of social media is unnecessary work	1.87±0.93	52.57±12.84	61.12±6.28
Other	2.83±0.59	60.33±2.99	67.67±3.45
F; p	11.825;<0.001	5.223;0.002	6.986;<0.001

Independent sample t-test and ANOVA test were used to compare the scales between demographic characteristics of the older individuals
F: Fisher Exact Test, *p<0.05

DISCUSSION

It was perceived that the social media usage subscales remained within the moderate range. This finding of the study is similar to the studies conducted by Goker et al. (2020) and Kalinkara and Sari (2019), they examined the use of social media in older people, and it can be stated that the level of social media usage was high in individuals living in nursing homes just as other individuals in different periods of their lives, that they wanted to pass time on social media despite the environment they lived in, and that they were competent in carrying out various daily activities in the social media environment.

It was determined that the perceived social support of older people was high. When the social support subscales were examined, it was seen that the social support provided by the family was at a medium level, and the social support provided by a friend and a significant other was at a high level. This finding of the study was seen to be similar to the results of the studies carried out by Softa et al. (2016), Kabadayi (2019), and Unsar et al. (2016), in which they recognized the perceived social support of older people. The social support provided to older people by their family members, relatives, and friends positively affects both their physical and psychological health and supports them to have a successful aging process.

It was determined that the older people living in nursing homes had a high perception of successful aging. It was seen that the mean scores obtained from the subscale of Healthy Lifestyle, which amounts to questions to determine healthy lifestyle behaviors, and Coping with Problems, which consists of questions about their status of trying to overcome a problem and determining productivity, were at a high level. The fact that the Successful Aging Scale means the average was close to the maximum score in the current work indicates that the elderly individuals living in rest homes hold on to life, cope with problems, and care about healthy lifestyle habits, despite being in an environment far from their families and loved ones.

It shows that the social support the family provides increases with the increase in social media usage of older people living in nursing homes. In the literature, it is stated that social media is effective in increasing interpersonal interactions and providing social support to elderly individuals (Chen and Schulz, 2016).

It shows that as the level of older people using social media and engaging in diversified activities escalates, their level of successful aging increases. The use of social media by older people enables them to communicate with the social environment, maintain communication with the social environment, and meet with family, friends, or relatives whom they cannot meet face-to-face (Fuss et al., 2019; Şahin and Yıldırım, 2019; Wu and Chiou, 2020). In this sense, it suggested that the use of social media by older people in various activities had a positive effect on the aging process.

A positive and significant relationship was found between the Multi-Dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale and its subscales and the SAS total scale and subscales. It shows that the existence of an individual's social support system has a significant impact on the successful aging process.

It was gained that there were significant differences between the SMUS total scale mean score and the SAS total scale mean score according to the educational status of the older people. Studies have shown that as the education level of older people increases, their social media usage and successful aging levels increase (Ozsungur, 2019; Macdonald and Hulus, 2021). It was determined that there was a significant relationship between the MDPSSS and SAS total scale mean scores according to the variables of income, the status of interview with family and relatives, and between MDPSSS total scale mean scores according to the variable of meeting with friends. Furthermore, in Kutmeç Yilmaz's (2020) study, it was found that individuals whose income was equal to their expenses had higher levels of successful aging than those whose income was less than their expenses, and in the study conducted by Softa et al. (2016), it was determined that as the economic level heightened, social support systems also increased. In the literature, it is stated that the increase in income level positively affects successful aging by increasing social opportunities, subjective well-being, and life satisfaction (Whitley et al., 2018).

It was seen that the SMUS total scale scores of the older people who knew how to use the Internet were higher than those who did not. In like manner, a significant correlation was found between the SMUS total scale and the SAS total scale scores of the older people according to their knowledge of the activities to be performed in social media environments. According to the views on social media, it was determined that the older people who wanted to learn how to use social media had higher SMUS total scale, MDPSSS total scale, and SAS total scale mean scores. In the studies conducted, it is stated that the use of social media, which is one of the platforms offered by the internet and which provides the opportunity to communicate with other people, has a positive effect on the components of successful aging, such as perceived social support, self-esteem, well-being, and optimism of the elderly (Aydiner Boylu and Günay, 2018; Şahin and Yıldırım, 2019).

CONCLUSION

It was observed that the social media usage of the older people living in the nursing home was at a moderate level, and perceived social support and successful aging were at a high level. It was determined that as individuals' use of social media increased, social support levels also increased, and this had a positive effect on successful aging. Social media usage opportunities should be created and supported for older people to increase perceived social support and, as a result, have a happier old age.

Limitations of the Study

The results cannot be generalized as the research was conducted only with older people living in a nursing home.

Author Contributions

Plan, design: NT, YÇ, SY; **Material, methods and data collection:** YÇ, SY; **Data analysis and comments:** NT, YÇ, SY; **Writing and corrections:** NT

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this study.

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