



RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

# Psychosocial Interaction between Social Media, Personal Care, and Communication

## Sosyal Medya ile Kişisel Bakım ve İletişim Arasındaki Psikososyal Etkileşim

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### Abstract:

This study investigates the psychosocial relationship between social media engagement, personal care routines, and social communication practices. Using a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, data were collected online from 400 participants aged 18 and over in Turkey. An original scale comprising three dimensions-personal care routines, appearance satisfaction, and social communication effects-demonstrated strong reliability and construct validity. The findings indicate that social media significantly influences both grooming frequency and satisfaction with appearance. While 68.2% of women reported being affected by social media content, the rate among men was 38.3%. Women engaged more frequently in personal care practices, whereas men reported higher levels of social anxiety related to skin concerns. Higher educational attainment was associated with lower susceptibility to social media influence, suggesting a protective role of media literacy. Occupational identity and income level further shaped perceptions of appearance, with teachers and beauty-sector professionals reporting more regular self-care routines. The results are consistent with theories of self-presentation, social comparison, social learning, and bodily capital. Overall, the study demonstrates that social media reshapes body image, self-presentation strategies, and confidence in social communication, while the emergence of appearance-related anxiety among men points to shifting gender norms in digital culture.

**Keywords:** Social media, Personal care, Gender, Social communication, Self-presentation, Body image.

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**Öz:**

Bu araştırma, bireylerin sosyal medya etkileşimi, kişisel bakım alışkanlıkları ve sosyal iletişim pratikleri arasındaki psikososyal ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Türkiye genelinde 18 yaş ve üzeri 400 katılımcıyla gerçekleştirilen çalışmada betimsel tarama modeli kullanılmış, veriler çevrim içi anket yöntemiyle toplanmıştır. Araştırmada geliştirilen özgün ölçek üç alt boyuttan oluşmaktadır: kişisel bakım rutinleri, görünüm memnuniyeti ve sosyal iletişim etkileri. Ölçeğin güvenilirlik katsayısı ( $\alpha = .82$ ) ve KMO değeri (.88) yüksek bulunmuştur. Bulgular, sosyal medya içeriklerinin bireylerin kişisel bakım sıklığı ve görünüm memnuniyeti üzerinde anlamlı etkiler yarattığını göstermiştir. Kadın katılımcıların %68,2'si sosyal medya içeriklerinden etkilendiğini belirtirken, erkeklerde bu oran %38,3'tür. Kadınların daha sık bakım uyguladığı, erkeklerin ise cilt sorunlarına bağlı olarak sosyal kaygı yaşadığı saptanmıştır. Eğitim düzeyinin artmasıyla sosyal medya etkileniminin azaldığı, lisansüstü grubun medya okuryazarlığı sayesinde eleştirel bir tutum geliştirdiği belirlenmiştir. Mesleki kimlik ve gelir düzeyi de görünüm algısını şekillendirmekte; özellikle öğretmenler ve güzellik sektörü çalışanlarında düzenli bakım oranı yüksek seyretmektedir. Sonuçlar, Goffman'ın benlik sunumu, Festinger'in sosyal karşılaştırma, Bandura'nın sosyal öğrenme ve Bourdieu'nün bedensel sermaye kuramlarıyla tutarlılık göstermektedir. Sosyal medya, bireylerin beden algısını, benlik sunum stratejilerini ve sosyal iletişimdeki özgüvenini yeniden biçimlendirmektedir. Çalışma, görünüm kaygısının erkeklerde de yükseldiğini ortaya koyarak toplumsal cinsiyet normlarının dijital ortamda dönüşümüne işaret etmektedir. Araştırma, sosyal medya kültürünün bakım davranışlarını, beden memnuniyetini ve iletişim biçimlerini Türkiye bağlamında çok boyutlu olarak ele almasıyla literatüre özgün bir katkı sunmaktadır. Ayrıca medya okuryazarlığı programlarının geliştirilmesi ve çeşitlilik temsiline dayalı dijital politika önerileriyle uygulamaya dönük sonuçlar üretmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal medya, Kişisel bakım, Toplumsal cinsiyet, Sosyal iletişim, Benlik sunumu, Beden imajı.

**Introduction**

In the contemporary period, digital and social media shape not only individuals' access to information but also their health-related decisions, social interactions, and everyday self-care practices (Yılmaz & Sezgin, 2023). By continuously reproducing appearance-related norms, social media platforms intensify appearance-oriented cultures, encouraging individuals to evaluate themselves through social comparison and to align their grooming behaviors with mediated ideals (Aydemir, 2024; Festinger, 1954; Perloff, 2014; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015).

Personal care extends beyond hygiene and serves as a key mechanism through which individuals construct social identity and manage self-presentation. Within Goffman's (1959) framework, outward appearance operates as a strategic resource on the "front stage" of social life, facilitating social acceptance and status attainment. Grooming practices, particularly for women, are closely intertwined with gendered expectations, while the body itself becomes a site for the accumulation of both symbolic and social capital in contemporary societies (Bartky, 1990; Bourdieu, 1984; Wolf, 1991).

Grounded in Goffman's theory of self-presentation (1959) and Festinger's social comparison theory (1954), this study examines how digital media environments shape individuals' personal care practices, perceptions of appearance, and processes of self-construction. Social comparison theory posits that individuals evaluate themselves by comparing themselves with others (Festinger, 1954), a process that is particularly intensified in social media contexts. Idealized body images circulating on digital platforms continuously reproduce appearance norms, amplifying social appearance anxiety and operating as a pressure mechanism that encourages engagement in personal care behaviors. Empirical research with Instagram users supports this dynamic, demonstrating that exposure to idealized online selves undermines subjective well-being and increases body dissatisfaction and grooming-related anxiety, particularly among young women (Fardouly et al., 2015; Güler et al., 2022).

Recent research conducted in Turkey reveals comparable patterns. Studies indicate that influencer-generated content on social media and online shopping platforms significantly increases consumer interest in cosmetic and personal care products, while prevailing appearance norms substantially shape university students' grooming habits and purchasing behaviors (Karakuş, 2022; Samırkaş Komşu et al., 2024; Genç & Kayalar, 2024). Moreover, idealized beauty images disseminated through social media and advertising are emphasized as encouraging female consumers to associate being "well-groomed" with social approval, thereby reinforcing the media's regulatory role in shaping cosmetic preferences (Yılmaz, 2025). Such representations are also reported to influence women's social roles and self-esteem, as well as to reframe concepts such as naturalness and ethical production (Yılmaz & Yıldırım, 2025). In addition, a significant relationship has been identified between social appearance anxiety and social media literacy, suggesting that physical appearance plays a decisive role in social communication, particularly among young individuals (Özer & Güzel, 2023).

Studies indicate that higher levels of education foster more critical engagement with social media content, thereby strengthening individual resistance mechanisms (Saeed et al., 2023). Among young adults, digital media use is significantly associated with appearance-based self-worth, while social media influencers guide personal care and cosmetic consumption by promoting conformity to aesthetic norms (Şengönül & Aydın, 2021; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Moreover, the effects of social media on body image anxiety and grooming behaviors among young individuals have been well documented (Tiggemann & Slater, 2014).

Although studies examining the relationship between social media and appearance perception in Turkey remain limited, existing findings demonstrate significant associations between social media addiction and social appearance anxiety (Özer & Güzel, 2023). Social media use has been linked to increased appearance-related

anxiety across different attachment styles (Aydoğan, 2024) and to heightened concerns about physical appearance among adolescents, alongside perceived social support (Çakıcı, 2021; Abat, 2024). Moreover, the influence of social media influencers on cosmetic brand preferences among individuals aged 18–25 has been reported to be notably high (68.4%) (Sönmez & Taşkıran, 2019), and recently developed measurement tools have advanced the field (Kayan, 2025). Similarly, international research indicates that exposure to idealized images on social media negatively affects appearance anxiety and self-worth, particularly among adolescent girls, and reduces body satisfaction (Meier & Gray, 2014; Perloff, 2014).

Taken together, these findings suggest that social media exerts a multidimensional influence on personal care practices, appearance satisfaction, and social communication. Accordingly, this study investigates the relationship between social media interactions and personal care practices at both theoretical and empirical levels, with particular attention to appearance satisfaction, self-presentation, and self-expression across demographic variables such as gender, age, and education.

### Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study addresses the following research questions: How does susceptibility to social media influencers vary across demographic characteristics? Does exposure to social media content affect individuals' grooming frequency and appearance satisfaction? How is appearance satisfaction associated with self-expression and self-confidence in social communication?

Based on these questions, the study tests the following hypotheses:

- H1:** Women attach greater importance to personal grooming than men.
- H2:** Greater influence of social media influencers is associated with higher grooming frequency.
- H3:** Greater engagement in personal care is associated with higher self-confidence in social communication.
- H4:** Lower appearance satisfaction is associated with reduced comfort in social environments.
- H5:** Younger individuals experience stronger social communication effects of skin-related concerns.
- H6:** Susceptibility to social media content varies significantly by education level.

### Methodology

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. The population comprised individuals aged 18 and over residing in Türkiye, and the sample comprised 400 participants selected using convenience sampling. Age, gender, and education level were included as control variables.

**Table 1.** The impact of dermatological concerns on social interaction by gender

| Variable         | Category | High Impact (%) | Statistical Test             |
|------------------|----------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Gender           | Male     | 25.0            | $\chi^2(2) = 7.32, p = .026$ |
|                  | Female   | 16.1            |                              |
| Impact Mechanism | Anxiety  | 68.0            | $r_s = 0.61, p < .001$       |

Note.  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square test;  $r_s$  = Spearman's rank correlation coefficient.

Data were collected online via Google Forms after obtaining informed consent. The questionnaire included demographic items and statements measuring personal care habits and perceptions of social communication, rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The researchers' original scale was used. Content validity was established through expert review (CVI = 0.92). Construct validity was assessed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (KMO = 0.88; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity,  $p < .001$ ), yielding a three-factor structure- Personal Care Routines (10 items), Appearance Satisfaction (7 items), and Social Communication Effects (10 items)-which explained 68.4% of the total variance. Internal consistency was satisfactory (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .82$ ).

Data were analyzed using SPSS 25.0. As the data did not meet the assumptions of normality, nonparametric tests (Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis) were employed. Relationships among variables were examined using Spearman's rank-order correlation, while categorical associations were tested using the Chi-square test. Statistical significance was set at  $p < .05$ .

Ethical approval was obtained from the Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (April 25, 2025; Decision No: 01-68). Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and data were collected anonymously for scientific purposes only.

### Results

This section delineates the empirical findings of the study, structured around three primary thematic axes: (1) the impact of dermatological concerns on social interaction, (2) the influence of social media trends on grooming behaviors, and (3) the interplay between professional identity and appearance perception. The subsequent subsections are organized by the statistical analyses' outputs and their corresponding thematic distributions.

#### The Impact of Dermatological Concerns on Social Interaction

The research findings indicate that participants experienced varying degrees of impact from skin-related concerns on social communication. Specifically, 35.5% of participants reported a moderate impact, 16.8% a high impact, and 47.8% stated that dermatological concerns had no effect on their social interactions (see Table 2). This distribution suggests that social sensitivity to skin issues varies significantly among individuals. The role of physical appearance in social interaction was evaluated within the framework of Goffman's theory of self-presentation, suggesting that "front-stage" management is closely linked to skin condition

**Table 2.** General distribution of the impact of skin concerns on social interaction (N = 400)

| Impact Level    | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) | Cumulative Percentage |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| No impact       | 191           | 47.8           | 47.8                  |
| Moderate impact | 142           | 35.5           | 83.3                  |
| High impact     | 67            | 16.8           | 100.0                 |
| Total           | 400           | 100.0          |                       |

Analysis based on the gender variable revealed that male participants experienced social communication anxiety arising from skin concerns more intensely than females. While 25.0% of male participants reported that skin problems had a high impact on their social communication, this rate was 16.1% among female participants. The Chi-square test confirmed that this difference was statistically significant ( $\chi^2(2) = 7.32, p = .026$ ). Although Hypothesis H1 originally posited that women would attribute greater importance to grooming practices, these findings suggest that men may experience higher levels of social anxiety related to visible skin issues, potentially due to differing social expectations or coping mechanisms.

Regarding age groups, differences in the social impact of dermatological concerns were examined using a nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test, given the ordinal structure of the dependent variable. The results indicated a statistically significant difference across age groups ( $H(3) = 12.41, p = .006$ ). In the 18-25 age group, 18.7% of participants reported a high impact on communication, whereas this rate declined to 11.4% in the 36-45 age group. These findings support Hypothesis H5, which posits that younger age groups are more susceptible to the social repercussions of appearance-related concerns (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** High impact of skin concerns by age group ("High Impact" Response Rate)

| Age Group    | High Impact (%) | Standard Error ( $\pm$ ) |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 18-25        | 18.7            | $\pm 2.9$                |
| 26-35        | 18.7            | $\pm 4.0$                |
| 36-45        | 11.4            | $\pm 3.4$                |
| 46 and above | 16.0            | $\pm 5.2$                |

Note. Values represent the standard error (SE).

Similarly, the impact of skin concerns varied significantly across occupational groups. The rate of high-impact responses was 22.7% among self-employed individuals, compared with only 10.0% among those working in the beauty industry. The Chi-square analysis confirmed that this difference was statistically significant ( $\chi^2(6) = 15.44, p = .017$ ). This finding indicates that professional identity and familiarity with appearance management practices are determinants of social sensitivity, supporting Hypothesis H4. Finally, a strong positive correlation was identified between the severity of participants' skin concerns and their levels of social anxiety. Spearman's rank correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant association ( $r_s = 0.61, p < .001$ ), indicating that as perceived skin-related problems intensify, social communication anxiety increases. This result demonstrates that physical appearance exerts a substantial influence on self-confidence in interpersonal communication, providing

empirical support for Hypothesis H3, which links appearance-related perceptions with social self-assurance.

### The Impact of Social Media Trends on Personal Grooming Practices

The study's findings indicate that social media content significantly influences individuals' personal grooming practices. Overall, 53.1% of the participants reported being affected by social media trends to some extent. Among these respondents, 36.3% stated that they were "moderately" influenced, while 16.8% indicated a "high" level of influence. In contrast, 23.8% of the participants reported that social media had no effect on their grooming behaviors. This distribution demonstrates that the impact of social media content is widespread but not homogeneous across individuals. These findings provide empirical support for Hypothesis H2, which posits that exposure to social media increases the frequency of personal grooming practices (see Table 4).

**Table 4.** Distribution of participants according to levels of influence from social media content

| Level of Influence | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) | Cumulative (%) |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| No influence       | 95            | 23.8           | 23.8           |
| Low influence      | 93            | 23.3           | 47.1           |
| Moderate influence | 145           | 36.3           | 83.4           |
| High influence     | 67            | 16.8           | 100.0          |

Chi-square analyses, stratified by gender, revealed that the influence of social media content was significantly stronger among female participants. While 68.2% of women reported being influenced at least at a “moderate” level, this proportion was 38.3% among men. Notably, the percentage of women who reported being “highly

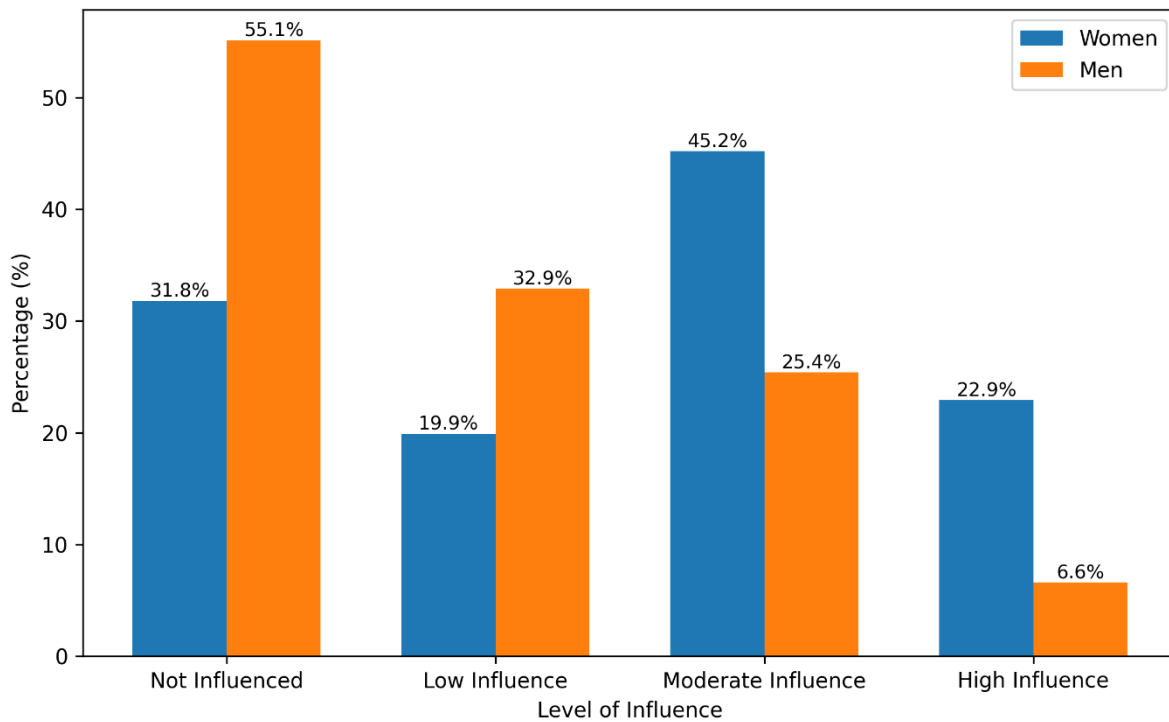
influenced” (22.9%) was approximately 3.5 times that of men (6.6%). This difference was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 21.34, p < .001$ ). These results support Hypothesis H1, which examines the role of gender in social media influence (see Table 5).

**Table 5.** Levels of social media influence by gender

| Level of Influence | Women (n = 292) | Men (n = 108) | p-value |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------|
| No influence       | 31.8%           | 55.1%         |         |
| Low influence      | 19.9%           | 32.9%         |         |
| Moderate influence | 45.2%           | 25.4%         |         |
| High influence     | 22.9%           | 6.6%          | < .001  |

Figure 1 presents a comparative illustration of women’s and men’s levels of influence from social media content, based on percentage distributions across the response categories (“no,” “low,” “moderate,” and “high influence”). The data show that the proportions of

“moderate” and “high influence” responses are notably higher among women. This pattern further indicates that women are more strongly affected by social media trends than men (Figure 1), providing additional support for Hypothesis H1.



**Figure 1.** Levels of social media influence by gender

Source: Compiled by the authors based on calculated indices.

In addition, a positive relationship was identified between exposure to social media content and the frequency of product replacement behaviors. Spearman’s rank correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant association ( $r_s = 0.47, p < .001$ ), indicating that social media influences not only aesthetic perceptions but also consumption-related behaviors. When evaluated within the framework of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), this finding suggests that individuals model grooming behaviors through observational learning on social media and subsequently translate these observations into action. Accordingly, individuals appear to be receptive to trend-

driven changes in their grooming routines. These results provide both statistical and theoretical support for Hypothesis H2.

Conversely, participants who reported not being influenced by social media content were predominantly those with higher levels of education, suggesting that media literacy and critical awareness may function as buffering mechanisms in shaping grooming behaviors. The results of the Kruskal–Wallis test indicated a statistically significant difference in social media influence by educational level ( $\chi^2(3) = 12.87, p = .005$ ).

In particular, participants with postgraduate education were more likely to report being “not influenced” by social media content. This finding is consistent with Kayan’s (2025) results from the Social Media Awareness Scale, which identified a negative correlation between educational attainment and the impact of social media on perceived appearance. Accordingly, the present findings support Hypothesis H6, which examines the effect of education level on susceptibility to social media influence.

### The Interplay of Professional Identity, Income, and Appearance Perception

The research findings demonstrate meaningful associations between individuals’ professional identities and their perceptions of physical appearance.

For many participants, appearance is not merely an aesthetic preference but also a medium of professional and social representation. This association is particularly pronounced among teachers, for whom physical appearance plays a significant role in the construction of professional image and authority. Within this group, 91% of participants identified oral hygiene as important, and 88% emphasized appropriate attire as important for professional communication. Among teachers with a monthly income of 30,000 TRY or more, the rate of regular grooming behavior was 82%, whereas it declined to 47% among those earning below 20,000 TRY. These findings support Hypothesis H4, which examines the relationship between professional identity and perceptions of appearance (see Table 6).

**Table 6.** Primary functions of appearance and regular grooming behaviors by occupational group

| Occupational Group | Sample (n) | Primary Function of Appearance                   | Salient Areas of Concern                          | Income–Grooming Relationship                  |
|--------------------|------------|--|---|---|
| Teachers           | 104        | Authority and trust-building; professional image | Oral hygiene (91%), appropriate clothing (88%)    | ≥30k TRY: 82% regular grooming; <20k TRY: 47% |
| Beauty Industry    | 24         | Indicator of professional competence             | Skin imperfections (100%), trend conformity (93%) | Income-independent: 98% regular grooming      |
| Students           | 91         | Career investment: future employability          | Body shape concerns (51%), skin problems (38%)    | <10k TRY: 74% regular grooming                |
| Homemakers         | 25         | Social acceptance and protection from exclusion  | Weight (68%), signs of aging                      | ≥30k TRY: 65%; <10k TRY: 21%                  |
| Other Occupations  | 157        | Variable (occupational diversity)                | No dominant concern identified                    | Comparable to the sample average              |

These findings can be interpreted within the framework of Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory. Social media content, particularly influencer and expert representations, may shape personal grooming behaviors through observational learning, leading to modifications in individuals’ care routines. Nevertheless, the finding that 47.1% of participants reported being either not influenced or only minimally influenced highlights the role of individual resistance factors, such as media literacy and aesthetic autonomy.

Similarly, among individuals employed in the beauty industry, appearance is perceived as a direct indicator of professional competence. In this group, all participants (100%) experiencing skin-related concerns reported seeking dermatological treatment, and 98% maintained regular grooming routines. This pattern can be interpreted through Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of bodily capital, wherein appearance is directly linked to both economic and symbolic success within the field.

Among students, physical appearance is conceptualized as a preparatory tool for future professional success. In this group, 74% of low-income participants reported engaging in regular grooming practices. This finding is also consistent with Beck’s (1992) “risk society” thesis, suggesting that young individuals develop strategies to produce a “marketable body” in response to uncertainty about future employment prospects.

For homemakers, appearance was primarily positioned as a defensive strategy against social exclusion and peer pressure. Concerns about aging, weight, and body shape were particularly salient in this group. As monthly income increased, regular grooming behaviors also rose significantly: 65% of individuals in the ≥30,000 TRY income group reported regular grooming, compared with 21% among those earning below 10,000 TRY.

Overall, the findings indicate a direct relationship between appearance satisfaction and comfort levels in social interaction and communication styles. Physical appearance functions as a “social access pass,” particularly for individuals in public-facing roles. When evaluated through Goffman’s (1959) theory of self-presentation and Bourdieu’s (1984) theory of capital, these results demonstrate that appearance operates not merely as an individual aesthetic choice but also as a form of class-based and professional capital. Consequently, the determining role of professional identity in shaping perceptions of appearance provides empirical support for Hypothesis H4: satisfaction with appearance significantly influences individuals’ capacity for self-expression in social contexts (see Table 5).

### Discussion

This study demonstrates that social media significantly influences individuals’ personal grooming practices, appearance satisfaction, and social communication behaviors. The findings align with theories of self-

presentation, social comparison, social learning, and bodily capital (Goffman, 1959; Festinger, 1954; Bandura, 1977; Bourdieu, 1984), indicating that physical appearance has become a central element in the construction of self-worth and social interaction within digital contexts.

Consistent with previous research linking body image to social anxiety (Güney, Aktan, & Yardımcı, 2020), the results confirm that these dynamics are salient in the Turkish context as well. Women’s greater emphasis on personal grooming (68.2%) reflects the continued regulatory role of gender norms and cultural expectations surrounding the female body (Bartky, 1990; Öztürk, 2025). Appearance thus remains a key mechanism through which women negotiate social acceptance.

At the same time, the finding that 25% of male participants reported social anxiety related to skin problems suggests a shift in traditional gender boundaries. Digitally circulated ideals of flawless, muscular male bodies increasingly challenge conventional norms of masculinity, generating new forms of appearance-related pressure on men (Özyeğin, 2015; Sancar, 2014). This supports earlier work indicating that digital culture reshapes hegemonic masculinity and reorients men’s self-presentation and social-approval strategies toward appearance (Courtenay, 2000; Connell, 2005; Subaşı Harmancı & Okray, 2021).

The study also shows that social media influences not only consumption preferences but also the frequency of grooming routines. Over half of the participants (53.1%)

reported being affected by social media trends, with stronger effects among women and younger individuals, consistent with prior findings on influencer-driven grooming behaviors (Sönmez & Taşkıran, 2019). The decline in social media influence with increasing education level ( $\chi^2 = 12.87, p = 0.005$ ) further suggests that media literacy may function as a protective factor against appearance-based pressure.

From a professional and socioeconomic perspective, high sensitivity to appearance among teachers, particularly regarding oral hygiene (91%), underscores the cultural importance of professional image. The increase in grooming behaviors with higher income levels (82%) further supports Bourdieu’s (1984) conceptualization of appearance as bodily capital intertwined with economic resources.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by demonstrating how predominantly Western theoretical frameworks operate within a culturally specific context such as Turkey. The influence of religious and familial norms on women’s grooming practices (Kandiyoti, 2016; Sancar, 2014) and the digital reconfiguration of masculinity constitute distinctive contributions. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation. Future research employing longitudinal and qualitative approaches could further explore how concepts such as honor, reputation, and social status intersect with personal grooming practices. Hypothesis testing results are summarized in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Hypothesis–findings alignment

| Hypothesis                   | Result   | Support Status      | Additional Explanation   |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| H1: Gender differences       | Higher social media influence and grooming frequency among women; higher skin-related social anxiety among men | Partially supported | Male anxiety higher than expected ( $\chi^2 = 7.32, p = 0.026$ ) |
| H2: Social media influence   | Positive correlation ( $r_s = 0.47, p < 0.001$ ); 53.1% influence rate   | Supported           | The “Highly influenced” rate is 3.5 times higher among women     |
| H3: Grooming–self-confidence | Strong positive correlation ( $r_s = 0.61, p < 0.001$ )  | Supported           | Inversely related to anxiety levels                              |
| H4: Professional identity    | 91% oral hygiene concern among teachers; 98% grooming rate in the beauty sector                                | Supported           | Significant association with income level ( $p = 0.017$ )        |
| H5: Age effect               | “Highly influenced” rate 18.7% (18–25); 11.4% (36–45)  | Supported           | ANOVA $F = 4.18, p = 0.006$                                      |
| H6: Education level          | Higher “not influenced” responses among postgraduate participants  | Supported           | Associated with media literacy ( $\chi^2 = 12.87, p = 0.005$ )   |

**Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations**

This study investigated the transformation of self-presentation and body perception in the digital age at both theoretical and empirical levels, demonstrating the multidimensional influence of social media on personal grooming practices, appearance satisfaction, and social interaction. The findings reveal that appearance-related concerns—traditionally associated with women—have also increased substantially among men. Notably, 25% of male participants reported that skin-related problems

“highly affected” their social communication, compared to 16.1% of women, indicating the transformative role of digital media in reshaping gender norms and supporting theoretical perspectives linking masculinity with health-related behaviors (Courtenay, 2000).

Overall, the results are consistent with theories of self-presentation, social comparison, social learning, and bodily capital (Goffman, 1959; Festinger, 1954; Bandura, 1977; Bourdieu, 1984). While women’s stronger emphasis on grooming reflects the continued influence of gender roles, rising appearance-related anxiety among men

suggests that digital culture is actively reconstructing dominant masculinity norms. The decline in social media influence among those with higher educational attainment further indicates that media literacy fosters critical awareness, whereas the prevalence of grooming routines among teachers and beauty-sector professionals underscores the role of appearance as a form of social and symbolic capital.

In light of these findings, strengthening media literacy programs and integrating content on social media and body perception into secondary education curricula are strongly recommended. Increasing awareness of photo manipulation, filters, and algorithm-driven content flows may help young individuals critically evaluate idealized body representations (UNESCO, 2021). In parallel, social media platforms could reduce the impact of homogenized beauty standards by promoting body diversity and enhancing the visibility of varied body types, age groups, and cultural representations within their recommendation systems.

At the institutional level, reinforcing psychosocial support mechanisms is particularly important for individuals employed in the beauty sector, who may experience intensified body-image pressure and occupational burnout. Group counseling and similar interventions could strengthen psychological resilience when aligned with existing psychosocial risk assessment frameworks. Additionally, local support initiatives that improve access to personal care products and basic health services for lower-income groups may mitigate the negative effects of economic constraints on appearance satisfaction and social participation.

The study's cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation of the findings. Further limitations include reliance on self-reported data and convenience sampling, which may restrict generalizability. Future research should employ longitudinal and mixed-method designs, as well as comparative analyses across age groups, to deepen understanding of the complex relationships between social media use, body perception, and personal grooming practices.

#### Declarations

#### Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate

This study was approved by the Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Social and Humanities Ethics Committee on 25 April 2025 (Session No: 07, Decision No: 01-68). Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

#### Consent for Publication

Not applicable.

#### Availability of Data and Materials

Not applicable.

#### Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Not applicable.

#### Author Contributions

All stages of the study, including research design, data analysis, and manuscript preparation, were conducted by a single author (DY).

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