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Social Media Jealousy and Life Satisfaction in Romantic Relationships: Mediation Role of Communication Skills

Celos en redes sociales y satisfacción en relaciones románticas: papel mediador de las habilidades comunicativas

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Abstract. *Objective.* The main aim of this study is to examine the mediation role of communication skills in the relationship between social media jealousy and life satisfaction in individuals with romantic relationships. *Method.* The sample group of the study consisted of a total of 445 individuals who have a romantic relationship, 228 females and 217 males aged from 18 to 31 in the period of emerging adulthood. The mean age of participants in the study was 23.49 ($SD = 3.29$). In order to gather data Social Media Jealousy Scale, Life Satisfaction Scale and Communication Skills Scale. *Results.* According to the findings of the study, social media jealousy negatively predicted life satisfaction. The main focus and other important finding of the study was that communication skills mediated the relationship between social media jealousy and life satisfaction. This study emphasises the mediating role of communication skills between social media jealousy and life satisfaction in individuals with romantic relationships and suggests that developing and strengthening communication skills. This study points to an important area in terms of understanding and improving the effects of social media interactions on emotional experience and life satisfaction.

Keywords. Social media, social media jealousy, life satisfaction, communication skills, social comparison theory, romantic relationships

Resumen. *Objetivo.* El objetivo principal de este estudio es examinar el papel mediador de las habilidades comunicativas en relación con los celos en las redes sociales y la satisfacción vital en individuos con relaciones románticas. *Método.* El grupo de muestra del estudio consistió en un total de 445 individuos que mantienen una relación romántica, 228 mujeres y 217 hombres con edades comprendidas entre los 18 y los 31. La edad media de los participantes en el estudio era de 23.49 años ($DT = 3.29$). Para la recolección de datos, se utilizaron la Escala de Celos en las Redes Sociales, la Escala de Satisfacción Vital y la Escala de Habilidades Comunicativas. *Resultados.* Según los resultados del estudio, los celos de las redes sociales predijeron negativamente la satisfacción vital. El principal hallazgo fue que las habilidades comunicativas mediaron la relación entre los celos en los medios sociales y la satisfacción vital. Este estudio subraya el papel mediador de las habilidades de comunicación entre los celos de los medios sociales y la satisfacción vital en individuos con relaciones románticas y recomienda el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de las habilidades de comunicación. Este estudio apunta a un área importante en términos de comprensión y mejora de los efectos de las interacciones de los medios sociales en la experiencia emocional y la satisfacción vital.

Palabras clave. Redes sociales, celos en las redes sociales, satisfacción vital, habilidades de comunicación, teoría de la comparación social, relaciones románticas



Introduction

Positive psychology is an approach that focuses on individuals understanding their lives, discovering their strengths, and having positive experiences. Researchers have shown interest in this field in recent years, as it differs from traditional psychology by focusing on well-being and happiness (Yıldız & Bayte-mir, 2016). The main goal is to maximize individuals' potential, build positive relationships, and encourage a meaningful life. This approach associates life satisfaction with not only avoiding stress and distress, but also with meaning, achievement, and personal growth (Lopez et al., 2018). It plays a role in enhancing positive experiences and personal development, ultimately increasing individuals' life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999; Pavot & Diener, 2008). Life Satisfaction (LS) can be defined as the overall quality of life, peace, and satisfaction one obtains from life. It is linked with emotional, social, and psychological well-being, as well as the process of realizing own values and finding meaning in life (Proctor et al., 2017).

Romantic relationships are an important factor affecting individuals' LS. Research shows that a healthy and supportive romantic relationship increases an individual's overall LS (Heidemann et al., 2014). Such close relationships provide individuals with a sense of security and commitment by including emotional support, understanding and sharing (Wieselquist et al., 1999). In addition, positive interactions in romantic relationships can help individuals fulfil their emotional needs (Taormina & Gao, 2013), and thus increase LS (Diener et al., 2002). However, problems or deficiencies in romantic relationships can negatively affect individuals' LS (Guzmán-González et al., 2016). Therefore, focusing on factors such as healthy communication, mutual respect and understanding in romantic relationships can be an important step towards strengthening individuals' LS.

Association between social media jealousy (SMJ) and life satisfaction (LS)

Jealousy is a psychological state where individuals experience negative emotions towards the achieve-

ments, relationships, or possessions of others. This feeling of jealousy often stems from a sense of lacking in comparison, and it can impact an individual's self-esteem, sense of security, and relationships, and is often seen in competitive environments or in pursuit of personal goals (Guerrero & Andersen, 2013). In the digital age, this jealousy has translated to social media, giving rise to the term of social media jealousy (SMJ) (Emond et al., 2023). Social media platforms, with their constant and instant access to others' lives, can trigger feelings of jealousy (Fox & Moreland, 2015). SMJ highlights the disparity between reality and the virtual world, creating a competitive environment based on visual and content sharing (Chua & Chang, 2016; Emond et al., 2023). This jealousy can negatively affect individuals' well-being as they constantly compare themselves to others and their curated online lives (Meier & Schäfer, 2018). Research on SMJ is crucial in understanding the emotional impact of digital social interactions on individuals' mental health (Emond et al., 2023; Gupta & Sharma, 2021; Tandon et al., 2021).

SMJ can cause various problems, especially in romantic relationships (Bevan, 2017). Since partners tend to compare the content shared on their partners' social media profiles, this can increase feelings of insecurity and jealousy (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2016). Furthermore, comparisons made over social media can overshadow the true value of a real-life relationship and create a competitive dynamic between partners (Frampton & Fox, 2018). Not being liked or appreciated by others online can negatively affect one's self-esteem, and these emotional difficulties can also affect romantic relationships (Kim et al., 2009). Furthermore, misleading images on social media can create expectations that are incompatible with reality, which can lead to disappointment between partners (Galician, 2004). Thus, SMJ can cause problems in romantic relationships such as communication deficits, trust issues, and emotional distancing.

While studies examining the relationship between SMJ and LS have addressed the relationship between various psychological and social interactions

between these two factors, it is suggested that social media use can trigger feelings of jealousy by increasing individuals' comparisons with others (Appel et al., 2016). Since social media platforms generally focus on content that reflects individuals' lives in a positive way, such comparisons between other users can cause individuals to feel inadequate or unhappy. This situation can negatively affect LS and reduce the overall happiness level of individuals (Miller et al., 2016). On the other hand, some studies indicate that if social media is used correctly and the interactions on these platforms are directed in a positive direction, positive effects on LS are also possible (Kross et al., 2021; Seabrook et al., 2016). Well-organised and supportive social media interactions can strengthen individuals' social ties (High & Buehler, 2019), and allow them to share positive experiences, which can increase LS (Kim & Shen, 2020; Raza et al., 2020). However, although it is underlined that balance is important at this point, it has been stated that excessive use of social media (Yao & Cao, 2017) or an environment where constant comparisons are made can bring negative emotional effects (Fox & Moreland, 2015). Therefore, it is thought that social media users' conscious management of these platforms and focusing on positive social interactions play an important role in achieving this balance.

Social Comparison Theory (SCT) can be used as an appropriate approach to examine the relationship between SMJ and LS and emphasises that individuals constantly compare themselves with others in social environments and that these comparisons have an impact on their emotional state (Gerber, 2020). Individuals usually evaluate their position in the social world by comparing themselves with others of similar age, gender, status or achievement level. While these comparisons can create a positive self-perception, they can also lead to negative emotional reactions such as emotional stress and jealousy by creating the perception that others are superior or successful (Suls et al., 2002; Wilcox & Laird, 2000). Social media platforms can cause individuals to make these comparisons in a wider online

environment, and users can make comparisons with themselves by constantly observing the lifestyles, relationships and achievements of others through the content shared on social media (Vogel et al., 2014). This situation makes the phenomenon of SMJ more apparent. Individuals can become inclined to compare themselves with others on these platforms where they are frequently exposed to idealised and filtered content (Casares Jr. & Binkley, 2022; Sherlock & Wagstaff, 2019). SCT can provide an important framework for understanding individuals' emotional well-being through SMJ and explain various psychological and social dynamics in this context.

The concepts of SMJ and LS are of great importance in understanding the psychological and emotional well-being of individuals in societies. The widespread use of social media platforms can trigger feelings of jealousy by creating an environment of constant comparison between individuals (Appel et al., 2016; Fox & Moreland, 2015), and this jealousy can cause individuals to compare their own lives with their idealised lives on social media and this can lead to negative effects on LS (Abdellatif, 2022; Halpern et al., 2017; Nguyen & Cheng, 2023). As a matter of fact, it is thought that SMJ can decrease the general happiness level of individuals, and this can have a negative effect on their psychological health. Therefore, understanding the relationship between these two variables can be considered as a critical step for individuals to develop healthy interactions in digital environments, to manage social media use consciously and to adopt appropriate strategies to increase their LS. It can also contribute to the development of effective intervention and guidance programmes to understand the psychosocial effects of social media and to support individuals' emotional well-being.

Mediating relationship between communication skills (CS), social media jealousy (SMJ) and life satisfaction (LS)

Communication skills (CS) is a concept that expresses the individual's capacity to express his/her

thoughts effectively through verbal and non-verbal communication, to understand others and to interact socially, which continues to be important and sought after in every field. These skills include various elements such as language skills, body language, empathy, effective listening, interpretation and choosing an appropriate communication style (Korkut-Owen & Bugay, 2014; Kovan, 2017). Effective use of CS enables the individual to be successful in personal and professional relationships and to create a positive impact in social interactions (Kovan, 2018). These skills are also an important element for developing the ability to communicate effectively in work environments, education and other social contexts (Kovan, 2017; National Research Council, 2012). In addition, CS enable individuals to express their thoughts, feelings and information effectively, to understand others and to interact effectively in social contexts. These skills support building trust in interpersonal relationships, facilitating conflict management and increasing co-operation skills (Bambacas & Patrickson, 2008; Kovan, 2017; 2018). Moreover, the effective use of CS in business and professional settings strengthens leadership ability, improves internal communication (Quirke, 2017), and enriches the establishment and maintenance of unity and solidarity in social settings (Balay, 2004). CS play a critical role in the success of individuals in education, business and social life and have a fundamental importance in terms of ensuring successful communication in social interactions and professional relationships.

CS are so important element that forms the basis of healthy interactions in romantic relationships. While effective communication between two partners contributes to the strengthening of the emotional bond and the sustainability of the relationship, effective communication skills enable partners to understand their emotional needs, express their feelings clearly and resolve conflicts in a healthy way (Davis & Oathout, 1987; Kovan et al., 2021; Sungur, 2021). At the same time, effective communication can help to increase trust between partners and deepen the emotional bond (Jorgensen-Wells

et al., 2021). For example, through open communication, expectations are clarified, common goals are set and solutions are found together, which can strengthen the relationship. On the other hand, lack of communication or misunderstandings can lead to conflicts and distancing in romantic relationships (Guerrero et al., 2017). In other words, communication problems can reduce the quality of the relationship by causing problems such as emotional distancing, mistrust, lack of understanding and so on. Therefore, developing effective CS in romantic relationships can help establish a healthy relationship dynamic and strengthen the emotional bond between partners. Skills such as openness, empathy, effective listening and emotional expression play an important role in creating a positive communication environment in romantic relationships (Kozlowski, 2013; Wachs & Cordova, 2007). In this context, effective communication between partners forms the basis of a healthy, strong and sustainable romantic relationship.

Since SCT provides a framework that suggests that individuals tend to compare themselves with others and that these comparisons affect their emotional states, SMJ is thought to be related to SCT. Because individuals can tend to constantly compare themselves with others' lives through social media, and since these channels generally offer an environment where idealised and filtered content is shared, they can lead other users to compare themselves with their own lives (Casares Jr & Binkley, 2022; Sherlock & Wagstaff, 2019). This can also affect their CS. SMJ creates a negative competitive environment between individuals, which can lead to negative interactions in communication (Sullivan, 2021; Van Ouytsel et al., 2019). Jealousy can weaken individuals' ability to empathise and show understanding by bringing negative feelings towards others' success or happiness (Protasi, 2017). At the same time, the way in which feelings of jealousy are expressed can lead to difficulties in openness and healthy expression in communication (Guerrero & Andersen, 2013). Jealousy in communication can create a negative interaction cycle between individuals who tend to compare through so-

cial media. In this context, SCT provides an important framework for understanding the complex relationship between SMJ and CS. CS have an important role in the context of this theory. Individuals can direct the processes of comparing themselves to others by using their CS (Ruble, 1983), and this can have an impact on their emotional experiences (Epstude & Mussweiler, 2009). For example, effective communication can contribute to more positive and constructive social comparisons by reflecting an individual's ability to establish a healthy dialogue with others. In this context, good CS can increase life satisfaction by helping to reduce jealousy (Leahy, 2018) or negative emotional reactions due to social comparisons (Choi & Kim, 2021). CS can also influence how individuals are perceived in their social environment, which can have an impact on the outcomes of social comparisons. Individuals with effective and healthy CS can engage in more positive social interactions and relationships, which can increase LS (Kovan, 2017). Moreover, effective communication allows individuals to express their emotional needs and others to respond to these needs with understanding (Rahmanova & Ekşi, 2023), which can lead to the formation of healthy social relationships that increase LS (Junk & Hoffmann, 2023). Thus, within the SCT framework, the relationship between CS and LS plays a critical role in regulating the individual's interactions with his/her environment.

Studies examining the relationship between SMJ and CS offer important perspectives on how digital communication environments shape interactions between individuals. In this context, studies show that social media use, especially on platforms where comparison and competition elements are intense (Appel et al., 2016; Fox & Moreland, 2015), increases feelings of jealousy among individuals (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2016). In this context, SMJ can negatively affect CS by triggering negative emotional reactions among individuals (Emond et al., 2023). Moreover, studies on the effects of SMJ on CS indicate that SMJ can challenge individuals' empathic understanding, emotional control and effective conflict management (Utz, 2022; Van Ouytsel et al., 2019). Social media platforms can create expectations that are far

from reality because they offer an environment where filtered and idealised content is shared (Casares Jr. & Binkley, 2022). This situation can affect the communication between individuals, leading to a decrease in emotional understanding and reflected in the way jealousy is expressed. Therefore, understanding the relationship between SMJ and CS is considered to constitute an important research area for the development of healthy and effective communication strategies in the digital age. On the other hand, studies also show that individuals with effective CS generally have healthier and more satisfying social relationships (Bradley et al., 2011). Effective CS can increase individuals' emotional understanding, create an empathic communication environment and strengthen the ability to resolve conflicts in a healthy way (Sungur, 2021). These factors can positively affect individuals' overall happiness levels by increasing their LS. In addition, studies on the relationship between CS and LS reveal that individuals' being more successful and satisfying in their professional and personal lives is related to effective CS (Davila et al., 2017; Kovan, 2017; Williamson et al., 2013). Individuals with effective CS can increase their ability to co-operate in professional and social areas and engage in more positive interactions in general. These situations increase individuals' LS and also support their personal and professional success (Gopalan & Pattusamy, 2020). In this context, the relationship between CS and LS has created an important relationship in order to ensure that individuals lead a healthier, happier and more satisfying life by strengthening their social connections.

It is of great importance to understand the effects of today's digital age and to examine relationship dynamics. SMJ can cause trust and communication problems between partners, which can affect the health of the relationship (Kozłowski, 2013). LS affects relationship quality by reflecting the general happiness level of individuals in romantic relationships (Gustavson et al., 2016), and CS determine the understanding and harmony between partners (Fowers, 2001; Orte-

se & Tor-Anyiin, 2008). With the increasing use of social media, it is considered necessary to understand how interactions on digital platforms affect romantic relationships. In this context, relationship counselling and training programmes can help partners to set healthy boundaries in social media use and improve CS. In addition, the development of strategies to increase interpersonal trust and support programmes for partners focusing on increasing LS can contribute to the maintenance of healthy and satisfying romantic relationships. Based on all these explanations and suggestions, the research questions for the purpose of the study are formulated below:

RQ₁. Does romantic partners' SMJ predict their LS levels?

RQ₂. Do CS levels of romantic partners have a mediating role between SMJ and LS?

The reason for using the mediation analysis in this study is to understand how CS can function as a tool in the relationship between SMJ and LS of individuals in romantic relationships. In other words, the mediating role of CS aims to explain the relationship between SMJ and LS in more detail. Firstly, given the increasing prevalence and impact of SMJ, it is important to understand the negative effects of this jealousy on LS in romantic relationships. CS can be a tool to cope with these negative effects. Individuals with good CS can discuss, empathise and find solutions to social media-induced jealousy with their partners in a more open and healthy way (Tandon et al., 2021). Therefore, CS can function as an effective tool in managing the effects of SMJ on LS.

Method

Design and Participants

The sample of the study consisted of individuals between the ages of 18-31, which is defined as the emerging adulthood period (Arnett, 2007). The reason for the selection of the sample is the prediction that individuals in this age group tend to use social media more actively and their processes towards romantic relationships can be more effective.

In addition, purposive sampling method was preferred in the study. Because of better understanding the purpose of the study and the research questions, and the findings contribute to a more in-depth understanding of a specific topic and/or sample for the purpose of analysis (Etikan et al., 2016). Individuals were reached through 10 university students living in Eskişehir province in Turkey and studying at three different universities in there. This data collection method was particularly effective in reaching the young adult population.

While 228 (51.2%) of the participants were female and 217 (48.8%) were male, the mean age of the participants was 23.49 ($SD = 3.29$). While the majority were undergraduate's (57%), and associate's (20%) degree graduates, it was observed that the number of participants with 2-3 hours of active social media use per day (52%) was higher than the other categories. In this study, the fact that married individuals were also included in the sample provides a wider perspective and diversity in terms of relationship type. While 49% of the participants were in a dating relationship, 30% declared that they were married. Focusing on the relationship duration variable, it was observed that 36% of the participants were in a relationship between 0-1 year, and 24% of the participants were in a relationship between 4-5 years. The related socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in detail in Table 1.

Measures

Social Media Jealousy Scale

This scale, developed by Aydın and Uzun (2021) to determine SMJ in romantic relationships, consists of 21 items, three dimensions and 5-point Likert type (1 = completely appropriate to 5 = not appropriate at all). The high scores obtained from the scale mean that individuals have high levels of SMJ towards their partners in romantic relationships. The cronbach α internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .92. In this study, the cronbach α reliability coefficient of the scale was found

Table 1. Demographics

Variables		N	%
Gender	Female	228	51.2
	Male	217	48.8
Education level	High school	23	5.2
	Associate degree	91	20.4
	Undergraduate	254	57.1
	Postgraduate	77	17.3
Daily SM usage	Less than 2 hours	60	13.5
	2-3 hours	231	51.9
	4-5 hours	96	21.6
	6 hours and more	58	13
Relationship type	Dating	219	49.2
	Engagement	93	20.9
	Married	133	29.9
Relationship duration	0-1 year	162	36.4
	2-3 years	101	22.7
	4-5 years	108	24.3
	6 years and more	74	16.6

to be .75, while the sub-dimensions were found to be .87 for restrictive and controlling attitude, .88 for sceptical and observant attitude, and .72 for respect and trust in social media space.

Life Satisfaction Scale

In the study, the scale adapted by Dağlı and Baysal (2016) was used to determine the LS levels of individuals. The cronbach α internal consistency coefficient of this scale consisting of five items, one dimension and 5-point Likert type (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = totally agree) was found to be .88 and the test-retest reliability was found to be .97. In this study, the cronbach α reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .94.

Communication Skills Scale

The scale developed by Korkut-Owen and Bugay (2014) to measure individuals' CS consisted

of 25 items, four sub-dimensions and 5-point Likert type (1 = never to 5=always). The internal consistency coefficient of the original scale was found to be .88 and the reliability of the repetition of the test was .81. In this study, the cronbach α reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .82 and calculated as .64 for communication principles and basic skills, .77 for self-expression, .75 for effective listening and non-verbal communication, and .86 for willingness to communicate sub-dimension.

Procedures

Ethics Committee approval was obtained for the study with the date 2020-21, 25/05/2021 and the decision number 015, and data collection was carried out during 03-05.2022. Participation and consent forms were reported to the participants in written form online before the scales were administered.

Data Analysis

Before proceeding to the analysis process, it was checked whether the data were normally distributed. At this stage, the skewness and kurtosis values of the variables were examined and it was seen that they were in the range of +2 to -2. These values are considered among the criteria of normality assumption (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The relationships between the variables were also analysed with Pearson correlation coefficient. Process Macro (v4.3) of Hayes (2018) was used for mediation analysis of the relationship between CS, SMJ and LS. During this analysis, it was tested according to the confidence intervals (CIs) obtained with the bootstrap technique and the mediation analysis (model 4) was used. It allows testing the mediating relationship with bootstrap confidence intervals (CIs) for indirect effect, was used to test whether CS, the mediating variable, influences the strength of the relationship between the independent variable, SMJ, and the dependent variable, LS. With the bootstrapping process, the number of samples were increased to 5000 and CIs were created with the bootstrap value. The absence of a zero between the CIs revealed that the tested model was significance ($p < .05$).

Results

When the data in Table 2 are analysed, it is seen that there are moderate and negative relationships between SMJ and LS, SMJ and CS, and moderate and positive relationships between LS and CS.

The mediating role of communication skills (CS)

In the study, the effect and mediating role of CS on LS were tested with Process Macro. The three-stage analysis technique proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was applied and the direct effect of SMJ on LS was tested for the first stage in the mediation analysis. As a result of the analysis, it was found that SMJ predicted LS negatively ($\beta = -.02, p < .01$), and this effect was significant. In the model, it was determined that SMJ explained 27% of LS.

In the second stage of the mediation analysis, the direct effect of SMJ on CS and CS on LS was tested. As a result of this analysis, it was found that SMJ predicted CS negatively ($\beta = -.46, p < .01$), and CS predicted LS positively ($\beta = .32, p < .01$). In this model, SMJ explained 14% of CS and CS explained 31% of LS.

After the first two conditions of the mediation analysis were met, the final stage was started. At this stage, the relationships between all variables were tested simultaneously in the model and the standardised values of the final model are shown in Figure 1.

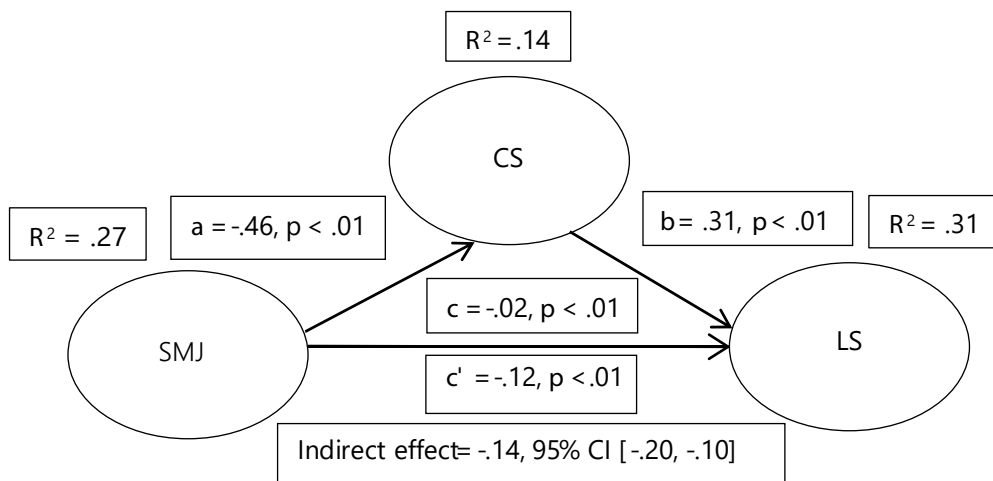
When compared with the standardised values of the model tested in the first stage of the mediation analysis, it was observed that the value indicating the relationship between SMJ and LS decreased from $\beta = -.02$ to $\beta = -.12$. The fact that these values are statistically significant indicates that CS has a mediating relationship between SMJ and LS.

Table 2. Descriptives and Correlations (N = 445)

Variables	SMJ	LS	CS
Social Media Jealousy	-		
Life Satisfaction	-.12**	-	
Communication skills	-.09**	.55**	-
<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>	55.86±9.80	17.95±4.78	106.26±8.74

** $p < .01$

Figure 1. The mediating effect of communication skills (CS) on the association between social media jealousy (SMJ) and life satisfaction (LS) ($N = 445$)



Bootstrap analysis

Bootstrap analysis was applied to test the significance of the mediating role of CS between SMJ and LS, and the coefficients and confidence intervals for the direct and indirect effects of the analysis are given in Table 3.

It was found that the indirect effect of SMJ on LS was significant, and therefore, CS mediated the relationship between SMJ and LS ($\beta = -.14$, 95% CI $[-.20, -.10]$). In addition, the standardized bootstrap lower and upper confidence interval values obtained with the percentile method did not include the zero value.

Table 3. Standardised Bootstrap Analysis

Paths	Coefficients	95% CIs
Direct		
SMJ → LS	-.27	(-.44, -.09)
SMJ → CS	-.17	(-.07, -.27)
CS → LS	.57	(.82, .32)
Indirect		
SMJ → CS → LS	-.14	(-.20, -.10)

Discussion

This study aimed to examine in more detail the relationship between SMJ and LS levels of individuals in romantic relationships. Furthermore, understanding whether CS play a mediating role in this relationship emerged as a key goal to better understand partners' romantic relationship experiences and satisfaction levels.

The primary aim of the study was to examine how SMJ among individuals in romantic relationships predicts their LS. The finding also showed that SMJies increasingly affect individuals' LS negatively, especially in romantic relationships. This means that as their level of SMJ increases, their SMJ also decreases. In this case, SMJies between partners in romantic relationships can be related to lack of trust (Kozłowski, 2013), sense of control (Aydın & Uzun, 2021), and perceiving the relationship as a threat (Tandon et al., 2021). Thus, the occurrence of such situations can also reduce individuals' overall LS (Kovan et al., 2021), as these feelings of jealousy can emerge as a source of tension in the relationship and negatively affect individuals' emotional well-being (Emond et al., 2023; Gupta & Sharma, 2021; Tandon et al., 2021). This finding is consistent with similar studies in the literature. Previous research

has shown that feelings of jealousy in romantic relationships generally reduce relationship satisfaction (Andersen et al., 1995; Elphinston & Noller, 2011; Elphinston et al., 2013), and have a negative impact on individuals' LS (Kim et al., 2009; Meier & Schäfer, 2018). There is also research on the impact of social media on relationship dynamics and how interactions on these platforms can trigger feelings of jealousy (Appel et al., 2016; Frampton & Fox, 2018). In this context, the current study evaluates the effects of SMJies on LS within romantic relationships in the context of the wider literature, highlighting the potential effects of social media use on relational health. When this finding is considered in terms of SCT, depending on the perspective that the comparisons of the individual affect their personal evaluations (Gerber, 2020), the fact that SMJ predicts LS in romantic relationships can result from the comparisons that individuals make with their partners and their environment through social media (Emond et al., 2023). Social media provides individuals with the opportunity to observe and evaluate other romantic relationships, which can trigger feelings of jealousy (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011; Utz et al., 2015). Jealousy can arise as a result of social comparisons and it is thought that these feelings can negatively affect LS.

Another important finding of this study showed that CS of individuals in romantic relationships mediated the relationship between SMJ and LS. Based on this finding, it can be said that CS can strengthen the emotional connection between individuals (Vazhappilly & Reyes, 2018), as well as alleviate the effects of SMJ (Frampton & Fox, 2018; Nongpong & Charoensukmongkol, 2016), and increase LS (Kovan, 2017; Kovan et al., 2021). The role of CS in romantic relationships is critical in the process of understanding and expressing the emotional needs of partners and strengthening mutual understanding (Kovan et al., 2021; Sungur, 2021). In this context, healthy CS can positively affect individuals' LS by reducing the negative effects caused by SMJ. This finding is also supported by similar studies in the literature. Research has shown that CS increase satisfaction in romantic relationships and strengthen positive interaction between partners

(Bradley et al., 2011; Vazquez et al., 2023). In addition, there are also studies suggesting that CS can increase the capacity to cope with relationship stressors such as SMJ (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011), and thus increase LS (Eğeci & Gençöz, 2006). In this context, emphasizing the contribution of CS in romantic relationships to the relationship between SMJ and LS with the current study is considered to be important in terms of developing interventions such as couple and family counselling, and relationship support programmes. Strengthening CS can contribute to partners to have a healthier relationship by reducing the effects of conflicts in romantic relationships.

When the findings are analysed in terms of CS and CS scale, communication principles and basic skills dimension of the CS scale plays an important role in determining the CS of the individual and addresses the basic principles and skills in the interaction between individuals (Korkut-Owen & Bugay, 2014). For example, considering individuals in romantic relationships, skills such as accepting one's partner as they are, listening without prejudice, and speaking in a calm tone of voice support healthy communication in the relationship (Sungur, 2021). At the same time, respecting the partner's wishes and not forcing them can strengthen mutual understanding in communication (Gottman et al., 1995). Maintaining boundaries of intimacy and comfort in communication in the relationship can make a positive contribution to the emotional well-being of the partner. On the other hand, understanding each other correctly and expressing understanding deepens communication by increasing mutual understanding (Reis, 2001). These CS can increase LS in romantic relationships and provide a healthier and more satisfying relationship experience. In the self-expression dimension, depending on the importance of evaluating the individual's emotional and intellectual expression skills, these skills support effective communication in the relationship when considered through individuals in romantic relationships (Fowers, 2001). For example, the ability to express one's thoughts in a comprehensible way makes the communication with the partner clear and open, which can increase mu-

tual understanding. At the same time, the ability to ask questions while listening to the other individual is considered important to eliminate possible disagreements in communication and to develop a deeper understanding (Cüceloğlu, 2000). The ability to express emotions freely can contribute to strengthening the emotional bond. Verbal expression of thoughts and feelings in romantic relationships can increase LS by creating a common meaning and a shared language. In the dimension of active listening and non-verbal communication, CS are considered from a broader perspective, when considered in terms of individuals in romantic relationships, these skills can enrich the communication in the relationship and provide a deeper understanding (Sungur, 2021). For example, paying attention to the compatibility of body language with what is said can increase sincerity in communication and strengthen emotional meaning. To enhance mutual understanding, it is important to be able to listen to someone and focus not only on how they respond, but also on what they mean (Itzchakov et al., 2022). Considering the correspondence between the content of conversations and non-verbal communication can help to recognise subtleties in communication and build richer communication (Kuhn et al., 2018). Also, the ability to understand emotional expressions beyond what is said allows for a deeper understanding of the partner's emotional world (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 2001). These skills can positively affect LS by improving the quality of communication in romantic relationships. The willingness to communicate dimension assesses the individual's willingness to interact with other individuals in this process (Korkut-Owen & Bugay, 2014), and when considered in the context of romantic relationships, these skills can contribute to strengthening the emotional bond in the relationship and deepening communication (Burlison, 2003; Fowers, 2001). For example, the ability to express emotions through words and body language can facilitate an emotional connection with the partner. The ability to show close attention and initiate conversations with ease can increase the connectedness in the relationship and strengthen mutual sharing (İmamoğlu, 2021).

Also, taking time for others' emotional expressions and giving sincere compliments can create a positive atmosphere in the relationship by making the partner feel valued (Chapman, 2009). These skills can offer a deeper, meaningful and satisfying communication experience in romantic relationships. When this finding is considered from the perspective of SCT, which provides an important perspective to understand how social comparisons can affect these dynamics, we can understand that CS are a critical factor determining the quality of relationships between individuals. In fact, social media use can increase the frequency of comparisons in romantic relationships (Coyne et al., 2017), and CS can be a direct reflection of these comparisons (Satici et al., 2023). Good CS can reduce SMJ between partners (Leahy, 2018), which in turn can positively affect LS (Yam, 2023). In other words, individuals with effective CS can perceive their partners more positively on social media and make healthier comparisons, which can reduce the negative emotional experiences that lead to SMJ, and thus have a positive effect on LS.

This study explained the complexity of the relationship between CS, SMJ and LS in more detail and offered a new perspective to the field. With its focus on the mediating role, it has made important contributions to the literature and addresses the effects on relationship dynamics in more detail. The potential of CS to reduce feelings of jealousy in romantic relationships offers a new perspective for future research to understand partners' communication strategies and their effects on relationship dynamics in more depth.

In this study also has some limitations. Firstly, since data are based on subjective evaluations, there is a potential for variability in participants' responses to the scale items depending on changes in their emotional states. In addition, the fact that the sample group of the study was selected from a limited geographical area can cause limitations in making generalisations. Considering these limitations, future studies can address this relationship more comprehensively by using or comparing larger and more diverse sample groups and the generalisation capacity of the findings can be increased.

Future studies can include large sample groups spanning different age groups, cultures and relationship types, and can focus on more detail to understand the influence of these factors on outcomes. Longitudinal studies assessing changes in social media use over time and the long-term effects of these changes on romantic relationships can also be done. In this way, the body of knowledge on understanding relationship dynamics and developing strategies to intervene in these dynamics can be further expanded and provide more findings for both the literature and the field of practice. It is also considered important to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to understand the effects of digital communication tools on romantic relationships more comprehensively. Indeed, a better understanding of the psychosocial factors underlying SMJ, especially the role of variables such as emotional intelligence, self-esteem, relationship type on these dynamics, and so on can be areas to focus on in future research. On the other hand, improving CS and LS and further examining couple and family intervention strategies can contribute to the development of effective strategies to combat SMJ in romantic relationships. The findings of this study suggest that CS of individuals in romantic relationships mediate the relationship between SMJ and LS. In this context, the mediating role of CS in explaining the context between SMJ and LS deepens the understanding of the complexity of romantic relationships. On the other hand, when evaluated within the SCT framework, this mediating role of CS emphasises the effects of individuals' making comparisons with other romantic relationships on social media and their emotional experiences in this process. All these findings emphasise the importance of CS in romantic relationships and suggest that improving these skills can positively affect the relationship between SMJ and LS. As a result of the findings, this study contributes to the literature in this field and provides directions for future research for a more comprehensive examination of CS and a deeper understanding of social media interactions in ro-

matic relationships. In this context, strengthening CS can be considered as a factor that increases LS in romantic relationships and can be a focal point in the development of interventions in this field.

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