

## **Analysis Of The Relationship Between Self-Esteem And Levels Of Narcissism Through Selfies Of Instagram Users**

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**ABSTRACT** *When the concept of a narcissistic personality is analyzed, it is defined as an individual who admires his or her own physical and psychological characteristics and likes her/himself excessively. We separate ourselves from others and form a private sphere for ourselves through the notion of 'self' which develops in the process of communication. All of the thoughts and senses related to one's self are included in the notion of self. Self-esteem is defined as an individual who considers him/herself worthy, effective and successful. According to Goffman's theory of self-presentation, strangers get to know each other by conducting particular information about themselves mutually, and acquire certain impressions about each other. Within the scope of this article, the question of "Is social media one of the methods to express narcissism?" shall be asked when the idea of self and narcissism are discussed - using a frame of social network usage habits. The results of a scale of online narcissism and self-esteem and their relationship to content shall also be examined. The aim is to reveal the connection between selfies, self-esteem and narcissistic characteristics of the social media user's Instagram profiles in Turkey and to examine the relationship between self-esteem and narcissism levels of Instagram users from social media as a social presentation space where the person presents her or himself. The SPSS package program is used in the data analysis to determine the relationship between narcissism and self-esteem, as is "Pearson Correlation" analysis. At the end of the study, a positive intermediate level relationship was found in the scores between the narcissism and self-esteem of the Instagram users who share selfies. The study concludes that high self-esteem has brought an increase in narcissism, and this increase has been revealed as a self-presentation through selfie.*

**Keywords** : *Instagram, Selfie, Social Media, Self-esteem, Self-Presentation, Narcissism, Erving Goffman*

## **Instagram Kullanıcılarının Selfie Çekimleri İle Benlik Saygısı Ve Narsisizm Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi**

**ÖZ** *Narsistik kişilik kavramı incelendiğinde, bireyin kendi bedensel ve psikolojik özelliklerine aşırı derecede hayran olması ve bireyin kendini aşırı derecede beğenmesi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. İletişim süreci içinde gelişen benlik (kendilik), kavramı ile kendimizi bizim dışımızda kalanlardan ayırır, kendimize özel bir alan oluştururuz. Kişinin kendisiyle ilgili bütün düşünce ve duyguları benlik kavramı içindedir. Benlik saygısı ise, bireyin kendini, değerli, etkin ve başarılı hissetmesi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Goffman'ın benlik sunumu*

*teorisine göre, birbirini tanımayan kişiler birbirlerine birtakım bilgiler ileterek tanışır ve birbirleri hakkında belli izlenimler edinirler. Bu yazı çerçevesinde benlik ve narsizim tanımlanırken 'narsizimin yeni dışa vurumlarından biri sosyal medya mıdır? Sorusu online narsizim ve benlik saygısı ölçeği uygulamalarının sonuçları ile sosyal ağ kullanım alışkanlıkları kapsamın da tarşılacak ve ilgili içerikle bağlantısı sorgulanmaya çalışılacaktır. Bu çalışma ile Türkiye'de instagram kullanan sosyal medya kullanıcılarının, selfie çekimleri ile benlik saygıları ve narsistik özellikleri arasındaki bağın ortaya konması hedeflenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın ortaya konulma amacı kişinin kendini sunduğu bir sosyal sunum ortamı olarak sosyal medya mecralarından instagram kullanıcılarının benlik saygısı ve narsisizm düzeyi arasındaki ilişkin incelenmesidir. Verilerin çözümlenmesinde SPSS paket programı kullanılmış, narsisizm ile benlik saygısı arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek için "Pearson Korelasyon" analizi uygulanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonunda, selfie paylaşımında bulunan instagram kullanıcılarının narsisizm skorları ve benlik saygıları arasında olumlu yönde orta düzeyde bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Yüksek benlik saygısı narsizmde yükselmeyi beraberinde getirmiş ve bu yükselme selfie çekim ile kendini sunma olarak ortaya konmuştur.*

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Instagram, Selfie, Sosyal Medya, Benlik Saygısı, Benlik Sunumu, Narsizim, Erving Goffman

## INTRODUCTION

In the frame of virtual communication, a new virtual culture has been born by way of intrapersonal intimacy and forming common interests. Within this completely different communication form, a virtual communication atmosphere has brought about an intense interaction and sharing between people at the same time.

For instance, while traditional photograph albums are being thrown into cold storage, networks such as Instagram, where users publish photographs in public, have started to become popular. Thanks to the rapid development of technology, it is not possible to say "I exist" within the new sharing networks. For example, there is no need to communicate with others face to face, or to use double-way stable message exchange of intrapersonal communication, in order to be liked, approved or accepted. Rather, a message flow directed at the content shared, with feedback, is possible online. As a result, a different world of satisfaction has created a communication system of 'approval of self' beyond the buttons.

*'I can describe myself in 140 words, if I want, I can show all of my moments and present it to the approval of others. Photographs are liked. Then I am pretty, others like me, I need to publish more photos and to be approved again, to be accepted.'*

Experiential variables of self consist of communicative elements such as emotional intelligence, psychological needs, social likeability and behavior of self-acceptance. People

have different capacities of interpretation during an incident, and for this reason, each person has different levels of understanding. To be able to fully understand, one should acquire information first. Information is acquired externally and is based on observation. In a fulfilling social relationship, the possibility of self-approval is revealed. Beside the possibility of approval of self, it should be considered that there is the possibility of non-approval, however. Erving Goffman (1959, 1967) states that social relations are a process where the "self" is presented to others for acceptance or to decline. The individual knows "who" s/he is and believes "it". Therefore, the individual should play the role for what is best for this notion of self (Burger, 2004). The question is, is it better for the self to seek this kind of approval and take the risk of understanding that we are not the person who we think we are, or is it better to avoid situations where there is the possibility of non-approval? The answer of this question depends on how much approval you want to get and, in the risk of becoming known to everyone, all social relations are approvals (Burgoon and Ruffner, 1974).

Interactions made via social networks on how much approval you get from society have now been included in the frame of academic discussion (i.e. selfie photographs' effect on the development of 'Self') and the question of 'Is social media one of the new expressions of narcissism' is discussed in the light of the research made and in scope of the social network usage with a scale of online narcissism and self-esteem. Using this framework, the subject is to be examined conceptually via the concepts of self and self-presentation, self and body relation, and social networks as a space for presentation and narcissism using selfies.

### **Self-Concept, Self-esteem, Ideal self, Self Image and Strategic Self Presentation**

The concept of self consists of an individual's conscious perceptions about him/herself. What a person knows about her/himself is gained through other's reflections and the evaluations regarding themselves. Self-concept is our perception or image of our abilities and our uniqueness. At first, one's self-concept is very general and changeable. As we grow older however, these self-perceptions become much more organized, detailed, and specific (Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2013). We separate ourselves from those outside and create our own spaces via self-concept. We try hard to protect and develop the space we formed and locate it in the social interaction. This effort is described as "the fight of being 'I'". All the thought and emotions of an individual about him/herself is included in the self-concept. Carl Rogers (1959) believed that there were three different parts of self-concept:

**Self-image** or how you see yourself. It is important to realize that self-image does not necessarily coincide with reality. People might have an inflated self-image and believe that they are better at things than they really are. Conversely, people are also prone to having negative self-images and perceive or exaggerate flaws or weaknesses. **Self-esteem** is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. A number of different factors can impact self-esteem, including how we compare ourselves to others and how others respond to us. When people respond positively to our behavior, we are more likely to develop positive self-esteem. When we compare ourselves to others and find ourselves lacking, it can have a negative impact on our self-esteem. **Ideal self** or how you wish you

could be. In many cases, the way we see ourselves and how we would like to see ourselves do not quite match up.

A sense of self mainly consists of the information and evaluations taken from outer circles. In the formation of self, the characteristics which others reflect on individuals and information which the person gains from the observations about him/herself is vital. The person considers and expresses what is said about them as the parts of her/himself and tries to behave accordingly (Ertürk 2006).

People need social relations to see their place and status in the society. Through a fulfilling social relationship, the possibility of self-approval is revealed. Beside the possibility of approval of self, it should be considered that there is the possibility of non-approval however. In a social relationship, we can explain information about ourselves on some scale however, we risk our self-image in communication; to approve our image about ourselves, we need to take this risk. Erving Goffman explains that social relations are processes to be presented to others for the acceptance or decline of “self”. The individual knows “who” s/he is and believes “this”. The individual must play the best role according to this self-concept (Burger, 2004).

According to Goffman<sup>1</sup>, when the individual is with others, others start to seek information about her or him and process the gained information. They are interested in such subjects as the individual’s socio-economic status, self-concept about her or him, his or her attitude towards themselves, competence, reliability etc. Goffman asserts that the individual who is aware that an impression about themselves is being formed tries to control their impressions via self-presentation and this control is usually done by affecting the definition of the situation. According to Goffman, the interaction process is defined as the presentation of self and he associates daily life to a theatre play: people play roles, follows the script, adopts their performances to the applause of the audience and change their actions behind the curtains. How others perceive themselves is very important for people and they adopt certain identities in order to create an appropriate image liked by others (Goffman, 1967).

Goffman also refers to physical space when he asserts his theatrical opinion (Goffman, 1975). Actors try to create an impression on others with the purpose of reaching social, psychological and material results on the “stage” of life. He believes that individuals can control their own impressions and realize the roles, norms and behaviors expected from them through these interactions. These roles are called “impression management” when they become behavior and in this sense, it is that the actor who induces her or his information and thoughts about her or himself of others. During this inducement, the individual presents her/himself in an ideal style. That is to say that, when the person presents themselves to

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<sup>1</sup> Goffman (1959) wrote his piece “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life”, which is one of the first books directly related to the impression management. Goffman’s Works underlied the basis of impression management theory and research. Goffman claimed that it is would be appropriate to focus on the social behavior to understand the basic instincts and personal characteristics of individuals, analyzed how individuals manages the impressions to control others’ behaviors towards themselves and defined impression management as behaviors aimed at impressing others’ perception about one’s own. (Hughes, 2000: 185-205; Xin, 1997: 335-355).

others, they are inclined to make their performance to be something more valued, desired and respected officially by society rather than her/his own actual behavior. Moreover, the individual hides the activities, facts and instincts that does not comply with her/his ideal image (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997: 9-30; Demir, 2002: 11).

According to Goffman's theory of self-presentation, people who do not know each other conduct a set of information to each other and acquire certain impressions about each other. Based on those impressions, they test the accuracy of the assumptions they make about the person when they interact. With this action, the difference between face-to-face communication and mediational communication (social networks) is the rate of social information being exchanged (Walther, 2007). The motivation of the person serves as an acquisitional self-presentation in that s/he is aware of the social acquisition s/he will acquire through certain behavior. Yet within protective self-presentation, the person tries to avoid social exclusion through certain actions (Arkin and Shepperd, 1990). Self-presentation is thus a kind of impression management, which is the management of others' impressions of a social unit such as people or organizations (Leary, 1993). Self-presentation is either done consciously or unconsciously and it is quite necessary for the smooth functioning of social interactions (Leary, 1996).

Goffman further suggests that forming social likeability and getting social approval is the core element of the basic development and continuity of the individual. Whether the difference between one's self-image (how s/he considers him/herself) or the image s/he idealizes (how s/he wants to considers him/herself and be considered by others) is big or not is a determinant in self-presentation (Araz, 1998: 8). The individual tries to give meaning to their environment through mental images and maps and forms and changes these images in the direction of information gained from outside. For this reason, it is said that the individual creates the reality in which they live, and forms themselves and their physical image based on their sphere. Individuals gather information and look at certain measurements when forming personal values, emotions and thoughts about themselves. They compare themselves with others in terms of skills, ideas and attitudes. Therefore self-concept is formed through social comparison, which means that individuals only acquire information about their personality and physicality by looking at the outer world. Festinger<sup>2</sup> has defined the process of gathering information through looking at others as an evaluation which enables people to reach a conclusions as "social comparison. Individuals make social comparisons when they face someone for aims of a clear or hidden rivalry. Another social comparison is when they watch and compare others' behaviors, thoughts and looks to their own. Although the person may settle on solely watching, s/he looks outside in order to gain

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<sup>2</sup>Early theoretical studies on social comparison was asserted by Festinger (1954). Festinger acts on the assumption that people have the instinct of evaluating their opinions and talents, and they compare others' opinion and talents to theirs (Bilgin, 2007: 110). According to this theory, people are naturally born inclined to evaluate themselves and their characteristics (ideas, talents and developments etc.). When it is not possible to reach an objective or gain information about this evaluation, they tend to compare themselves with others "similar to themselves". It is more preferable for someone to compare themselves to other similar to themselves than those who are different, because it is more reasonable and informative (Pelled, Eisenhardt & Xin, 1999: 5).

information about self (Burgoon & Ruffner, 1974). Physicality perception, related to the self-perception, therefore develops not only on one's own body but also the people in the social world and their looks, attitudes and reactions.

### **From Self to Selfie –Social Networks as a Presentation Media-**

**From the time when Robery Cornelius took the first selfie in 1839 to 2012 when the Curiosity robot sent the first selfie from Mars, thanks to the invention of digital photographing in 1973 and the integration of the camera to mobile phones in 2000, it has become much easier for a person to take his or her own picture. Since the word 'selfie' was first used in 2002, it has evolved into a method for a person to gather detailed information for self-approval. The word 'selfie' is derived from the word 'Self' and is explained by Oxford University's department in charge of dictionaries as one's sharing of his/her own photograph with all the world on social media.**

Selfie is a word derived from self-portrait and has become an unavoidable trait of social networks. On social media, people voluntarily present their lives for the approval of others via the photos they share. *Researchers put forward that selfies are taken to remember a happy moment (% 35), eternalize an entertaining moment (%34), document a nice dress (% 15), when the hair is thought pretty (% 14), because they feel confident (%13)* (Difficuly, 2014).

Modern computer-mediated communication tools, such as social networking sites, have seamlessly combined email, instant messaging, website creation, blogging, and multimedia content sharing (Livingstone, 2008). The use of Selfie has become widespread on Facebook and Twitter, thanks to its use especially on Instagram. It is possible for the person to present themselves visually, without words, through selfie sharing. People try to get online friends by taking and sharing their photos, and reach a sense of satisfaction by being liked and meeting approval even if it is short term. Research shows that the likes and comments under the photos of people affect the way they perceive themselves.

With the inspiration and popularity of photograph sharing sites, taking photos and sharing them via smart phones, and digital cameras which have the internet access, to the public has gained speed. To make it easier for the users to take photos themselves, mobile phone companies have developed new tools and this situation has created its own need in the market.

Selfies have become a new way to gather detailed information necessary for the self-approval. We mentioned earlier that the general result of any satisfactory social relation feeds a basic need. Sharing one's own photos and being liked has become a form of indication of love and approval. As Goffman(1982) suggests, when people give information about themselves, they care about the approval of the others and act accordingly. Through the selfie, a more convenient media for the self-presentation is created.

**The selfie is the inclination towards self-presentation through one's own photograph. Because the perception and thoughts of others about people directly affects the self-esteem, selfie practice can be described as "a social comparison tool as a function to form a**

**different perception space for people to present themselves to others". Other people than one's self are outer references. For the development of self, approval, acceptance and belonging is necessary. All these contents have a meaning in virtual world: Likes by other people.**

What corresponds "likes" on social networks is followers. The person may be inclined to constantly share on social media to spread a positive opinion about themselves. Thus the individual tests their self-perception by comparing themselves to others after forming a virtual reality. Information conducted through social networks do not carry the properties of face-to-face or non-verbal communication and the person aims to reach the impression of being approved by expecting an approval such as 'like' from the other party. The Selfie may transform into a false way of increasing self-esteem however, and the need for approval may form a habit for an excessive desire to be accepted through selfie practice and the excessive need for approval may become a life style.

Of course, some may think, 'Why is it a problem for a person to save and share photos with her/his family and friend? Technology is making our lives easier?' Nonetheless, it is also possible to say that every new technology is being fast-consumed and this always results in harmful usage. Publications in psychiatry and psychology journals have started to discuss whether to use the word of '*selfitis*' next to the words such as voyeur, exhibitionist. The meaning of this word includes: that a person regularly takes her or his own pictures and shares them online which harms the mental health. It is also being discussed whether sharing of selfies online is turning into a pleasure-giving obsession. It has been asserted that the continuous repetition of this action in different places and circles is connected to a need of approval, especially to meet the need of gaining self-esteem. Some explanations regarding that selfie is a mental disorder on the official website of Psychology Society of America<sup>3</sup>. However, on the latest DSM-5 Diagnosis Measures Reference Manual released in May 2013, published by Psychiatry Union of America, taking selfies is not included among psychiatric disorders.

Apart from an increasing body of research that indicates the harm involved in the excessive amount of selfie-taking, there is also research on how social media changes our emotions and behaviors. Narcissism, internet addiction and a changing perception of self are among the most common research subjects. The Best Computer Science Schools ("Selfie Syndrome..." 2014) discusses the Selfie Syndrome under the title of "How Social Media Makes Us Narcissistic" in an article about the negative effects of social media. Meanwhile, the University of California and University of Michigan suggest that the new disorder of the modern world is called Selfie Syndrome. In the study, it is said that taking selfies makes a person narcissistic, and the other effects of taking selfies are listed as depression, attention deficiency, voyeurism, addiction and hypochondria.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the content of information of these websites asserting the existence of the notion of Selfitis, as a result of the research made by the American Society of Psychologist, taking and sharing selfies online is a mental disorder. Selfitis is asserted to be defined as 'requiring attention through sharing selfies on social media, in the direction of obsessive compulsive desires ("American Psychiatric Association..." 2014)

There are some situations where looking at the mirror too much is also considered a symptom of a mental health disorder. Spending most of the time in front of the mirror and seeking an imaginative deficiency is the first symptom of a significant disorder. Dysmorphophobic disorder<sup>4</sup> is when a person excessively cares about every detail of her or his physical appearance, and works in various ways. The person is vulnerable to the kind of impression s/he gives to others about her/himself (Birtchnell, 1988; Ertürk (Özdemir), 1990). Just like examining her/himself in the mirror, the selfie forms a space for the approval of self through the presentation to others, of one's own photograph, as a space for a new struggle. While the time consumed on social network increases, so does the vulnerability about what kind of an impression is given about oneself to others. It is asserted through research that when people compare their selfies to others', their self-images are distorted, and they compare themselves to their acquaintances, and consequently their emotional status is harmed.

## **The Concept of Narcissism and Selfie**

In order to establish a connection between narcissism and selfie, it is necessary to review the concept of narcissism and see how it is diagnosed. Narcissism<sup>5</sup> is a character trait which holds an exaggerated reflection of the value and the power a person has. People who have this trait live in a dream world where they think of themselves as the most famous, talented and successful. Narcissists are arrogant and egoist, as they consider themselves as the most excellent person. They hope for special attention from other people. Paradoxically, these people feel unconfident, and their self-esteem is quite low. They always expect from others to be liked and cannot cope with being criticized. In any hardship or a distress, a narcissistic person either attacks anxiously or steps back, because narcissistic people may not be able to handle the failure and defeat. They avoid taking risks when it is possible to be defeated (Traci, 2001).

According to Rozenblatt (2002: 51-53); narcissism positively affects the person in terms of effective handling with networks and expectations, however. Pathological narcissism is like a

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<sup>4</sup> Publicly known as “mirror disorder”, defined as one's constant business with the unreal deficiency on the body, “bodily dismorphophobic disorder” patients are isolated from daily life. Dysmorphophobia was first defined by Marselli in 1886 as “the personal sense of ugliness and physical deficiency which may be realized by others, although the look is between normal limits” (Birtchnell, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> Narcissism began in Greek mythology with the self-love of a handsome semi-god, Narcissus and it gave its name to the daffodil flower (narcissus). Narcissus is the son of Cephissus and Nymph Liriope. Though he is very handsome, he has been divested of the emotion of love. Nymph Echo falls in love with Narcissus yet his arrogance leads Echo to death in grief. Another Nymph rejected by Narcissus prays to Nemesis to punish Narcissus's emotionless heart. Nemesis responds this prayer by making Narcissus see his reflection on a river and fall in love with himself. So big Narcissus's love for himself is that he is ruined when he does not see himself and one day he wants to kiss his reflection on the water and falls down into it and dies. According to other beliefs, Narcissus has so much pain for his self-love that he commits suicide and the flower narcissus blooms in the spot to which his blood spills. Another myth is that he drowns to death while he tries to hug his reflection to fulfill his longing for his twin sister Eustathius, who is very similar to himself (Kalaycıoğlu, 2010).



personality organization set up to protect against the person's psychological existence from threatening powers.

The concept of narcissism was suggested by Freud<sup>6</sup>, but was also taken into consideration by later researchers of psychoanalytic approaches. Works of Kohut (1977) and Kernberg (1975) played an important role in the comprehension and development of clinical narcissism. Basic deficiencies mentioned are low self-esteem, depression, profound and ignored unworthiness and a sense of rejection and the defensive and compensatory structures suggest a response clinically revealed and a hunger for reassurance (Özakkaş; 2006: 29-30). Kohut asserted that narcissism is a part of the normal development process, however (Erten; 2008: 3). Those who have narcissistic inclinations start to reveal their narcissistic behavior more readily when they see that they are rewarded for their grandiose and egoist behaviors (Lubgt, 2002: 132-133).

With the third print of The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – DSM III published by the American Psychiatric Society in 1980, Pathological Narcissism first appeared as a personality disorder. The definition in question was revised, supporting Kernberg's "Grandiose Self" perspective via DSM-III-R in 1987 and was reshaped as in DSM-IV (1994). DSM-IV defines Narcissistic Personality Disorder as a constant pattern which begins in early adulthood and reveals itself indifferent to circumstances and where there is the feeling of superiority and a need for appreciation and inability for empathy (Köroğlu & Bayraktar; 2007:92). DSM-V, published after the approval of American Psychiatric Society in 2013, defines Narcissistic Personality Disorder as a common pattern which begins in early adulthood and reveals itself indifferent to circumstances and continues with the grandiose (in imagination or behavior), the need for appreciation and lack of empathy (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)<sup>7</sup>.

Those who have narcissistic personality disorder like themselves excessively in a physical and mental sense, always expect appreciation, attention and approval, and believe that they will get special attention everywhere and they deserve a superior place. The most beautiful, handsome, successful and bright person is or will be her/him. Among such profound narcissistic expectations, disappointments and offence may often occur. Self-esteem of the person feeds on the attention, appreciation and approval coming from others. Those people

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<sup>6</sup> Freud first used the narcissism concept as a footnote in his article "Three Essays On The Theory of Sexuality" published in 1910. His first significant work about narcissism is the article called "On Narcissism: An Introduction" published in 1914 (Rapier; 2005: 22).

<sup>7</sup> At least five of the below symptoms must be diagnosed at the same time.

1. They are strived with the fantasies of eternal success, power, intelligence, beauty or a supreme love.
2. They believe they are "special" and unique and only superior or special people (or organizations) can understand them.
3. They want to be really liked.
4. They believe they deserve (believing that being specially treated and to be able to do whatever that is wanted)
5. They use other people for their own good (they make use of others to reach their own goals)
6. They cannot empathize: They do not want to understand the emotions and needs of others.
7. They often envy others or believe they others envy themselves.
8. They disrespect others, they behave arrogantly.

cannot stand any criticism and constantly seek appreciation (Kohut, 1977). For this reason, looks are significant for them. Their self-esteem immediately drops when their expectations of positive acceptance as “the basic deficiency in the self-structure”. Offense, distress and depression may occur. They seek new spaces where they are to be approved, see and show themselves in order to exalt themselves. The presentation of selves in different social networks is useful for their self-esteem to go higher, and fulfills their narcissism.

As they hunt for excellence, beauty and eternal love, so to do they need to display and share themselves many times in daily life in order to be approved for their excellence. They consider themselves special and unique, and that only very intelligent and superior people can understand them and they will only interact with and befriend those people. That they have many online followers consolidates this thought and there is a positive relation between the number of likes they attain on social media sites and self-esteem. They usually envy the success, deeds, values or general existence of others while they expect to be liked by others and think that others envy them. When they do not receive the expected attention, appreciation or admiration they may be shocked, experience disappointment and unhappiness. Forest and Wood (2012) show that people who have social anxiety and low self-esteem share more annoying things and thus they get fewer “likes” on Facebook whereas people with high self-esteem share more positive things and get more positive feedback. According to the extended agency model of narcissism (Campbell & Foster, 2007) they focus on what benefits them personally, with little regard for how their actions may benefit (or harm) others. Buffardi and Campbell (2008), in their pioneering study, proposed that SNS (social networking sites) provides excellent platforms for narcissistic self-regulation, because SNS allows almost full control over self-presentation and has the ability to maintain large social network bases of superficial relationships, which narcissists would be especially drawn towards. As expected, narcissists had more Facebook friends and wall-posts, and had profile pictures that are rated by others to be more physically attractive and more self-promoting than the profile pictures of non-narcissists.

Some research also puts forward that there are parallels between narcissism and the frequency of Facebook use and number of friends. Those people are so attention-seeking that they can easily accept the friendship requests of strangers. For attention, they constantly update their profiles, display what they eat and drink and share selfies. Behaviors directed at self-advertising have been proved to display a positive correlation with the grandiose and exhibitionist component of narcissism. This research shows the higher a person’s grandiose and exhibitionism traits, the more s/he updates her/his profile status and shares photos, tags her/himself and changes profile pictures (Carpenter, 2012).

In the field of psychiatry, it is argued that except in special conditions, a person constantly takes selfies to record her or his every moment is a narcissistic fulfillment tool. The Selfie is increasing, and materializes in the expectation of approval and appreciation from others and has become a communication form in itself, including a self-perception and awareness. Taking selfies and sharing them with others is a tool to become popular, that we use to show others that we are more known, popular or different. The feeling of “The more followers I have, the better I am” in social media may lead the fulfillment of narcissism. The increase in

the number of followers and the approval of self through social media is becoming a tool for narcissistic fulfillment, corresponding to the rate of our self-presentation via selfies.

## **PURPOSE AND METHOD**

Through social networks, people can present themselves as they want, transfer a self-image to others, and make references by indirectly sharing something instead of facing their emotions such as anger, anxiety and sadness. The effort to show oneself as more beautiful and happy than what they may be in reality indirectly affects the process of gaining self-awareness. The inclination to show oneself always as good, and not wanting to demonstrate bad traits in combination with the need for appreciation, leads to a happy, pretty and successful presentation of self in the new sphere, which is a like a reflection of mirror. If the user cannot reach the aimed popularity after the self-presentation however, s/he can face a narcissistic injury and this situation can lead to depressive symptoms.

### **Purpose**

In this article, perception of body and narcissism are defined prior to the discussion of the question "Is social media one of the new expressions of narcissism?" in terms of the study realized about online narcissism using body perception and self-esteem scales.

Based on the assumption that "*Social networks are one of the new spaces of 'self-presentation' in the interpersonal communication*", the aim of this study is to reveal the relation between selfies and narcissistic characteristics of social media users using Instagram in Turkey. Although every "selfier" is not a narcissist, and every narcissist does not take selfies, the purpose of this study is to analyze the relation between self-esteem and narcissism in Instagram users.

### **Method**

This research was carried out by online questioning techniques and survey method.

### ***Participants***

In this study we used five Instagram users as co-researchers. In addition, we reached 50 "followers" of each user, for a total of total 250 followers. We will summarize the criteria sought for each sample, chosen among each user's followers as: the age gap of the Instagram users should be between 20 and 40, their profile should be public, and at least 60% of the posts published should be selfies and there should be some bodily presentation.

Ninety-eight people replied to the message "Would you like to participate in a study on Instagram usage" and were selected as the core sample group of the research. Upon the positive reply of those people, their e-mail addresses were obtained and the online measurement tool (narcissism scale and self-esteem scale) was e-mailed to them. 72 people sent a positive feedback. Thus, the narcissism scale was applied to 72 Instagram users where selfies consisted of 60% of their photos posted.

### ***Data Gathering Tool***

In the research, we used the **Narcissistic Personality Inventory** and the **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale**, and collected the demographic information where the sample's general information was gathered. Explanations regarding the scales are below:

**Narcissistic Personality Inventory:** Developed by Ames et al. (2006), the scale consists of 16 questions, and it was used as a data collection tool. Survey's (NPI) Turkish translation was made by Atay (2009) and its lingual, cultural equivalence was provided, as were its necessary reliability and validity works (Cronbach's Alpha value 0,652) accomplished. As it is in the English version of the survey, the questions in the Turkish versions were divided into 6 factors: "exhibitionism", "superiority", "authority", "asserting right", "self-sufficiency" and "exploitation". Scores to be taken from the narcissism survey are 0-2 for authority, 0-3 for exhibitionism, 0-3 for exploitation, 0-2 for asserting right, 0-3 for self-sufficiency, 0-3 for superiority, 0-16 for total narcissism. As the score gets higher, narcissism level gets higher as well.

**Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale:** There are ten items on the sub-scale of self-esteem in the measurement developed by Rosenberg (1965) to measure self-esteem. If the total score gained is high, it refers to high self-esteem. Validity reliability testing was made in Turkey by Çuhadaroğlu (1986), and validity coefficient was found as  $r=71$ . Using the test-retest reliability method, the reliability coefficient was found as  $r=75$  (90). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a self-report scale consisting of 63 multiple choice questions. The scale consists of twelve sub-categories. The first ten items of the scales were used to measure self-esteem for the purpose of the research. Items 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 question positive self-evaluation and include scorings between 0 and 3; items 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 question negative self-evaluation and include scorings between 0 and 3. Total score gap is between 0 and 30. Scores between 15-25 shows that the self-esteem is sufficient and those below 15 shows low self-esteem.

### ***Analysis of Process and Data***

To form the basic theoretical structure regarding the subject, the content was built on Goffman's theory of self-presentation and the concepts of self-esteem, narcissism were defined, while the concept of the selfie was discussed as a new self-presentation space from a theoretical basis. The study data was collected via e-mail through the technique of online questioning and according to the model explained in the sample, 72 people formed the sample of the study. The online survey results that were gathered were subjected to statistical processing. In the data analysis, the SPSS package program and parametrical test method were used. In order to determine the direction and the relationship between the defining statistics between narcissism and self-esteem, the analysis of "Pearson Correlation" was used to reveal the causal relationship between narcissism and self-esteem and selfie sharing, while regression analysis was applied. Accordingly, the relationship between selfie sharing and narcissism/self-esteem were co-discussed. The results of earlier research were also discussed with these data and the necessary literature in mind.

## FINDINGS

In this chapter, we will discuss the findings. In Table 1, when the defining statistical findings showing the narcissism and self-esteem were examined, narcissism (mean=9.544±1,954), self-esteem (mean=65.622±0,780) were determined. In Table 2, as a result of the correlation analysis, a positive correlation between self-esteem and narcissism were determined.

Scales	n	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION
<i>Narcissism</i>	72	9.544	1.954
<i>Self-esteem</i>	72	65.622	0.780

**Table 1.** Defining statistical finding

		<i>Self-esteem</i>
<i>Narcissism</i>	Pearson Correlation	<b>.357</b>
	P	<b>.037*</b>

**Table 2.** Correlation between narcissism and self-esteem

The higher the narcissism scores of the sample group who publish their selfies on Instagram, the higher their self-esteem. People who have narcissistic personality traits were found to have excessive self-confidence and reveal it through social appreciation as selfies. Individuals whose narcissistic traits are high verify the correlation between the two scales. Self-esteem appears high in the measurement and is defined as the individual who is pleased with her/himself and feels worthy. This situation demonstrates itself through selfie sharing as well. Moreover, at the end of the study, there appears to be a positive relation between narcissism and self-esteem as shown by the parallelism of the scale features.

The intermediate positive relation between the scores of narcissism and self-esteem of the Instagram users who share their selfies, puts forward the idea that high self-esteem brings high narcissistic traits and this increase is made as a self-presentation via selfies.

Fifty-seven of the seventy two participants were female, that is the majority of the participants. Even though gender difference is not considered as a variable in the study, that 80% of the participants are woman is significant. In terms of the age average between 20 and 40, there was a significant difference in selfie sharing as well.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Self-esteem is the composition of emotional, mental and indirectly physical components. Feeling worthy, skill development, knowledge and talents, success, being appreciated in society, being accepted, being the one who is liked and accepted and loved and bodily traits are the factors affecting the formation and development of the self-esteem. These concepts are closely related to narcissism.

In real life, we focus on not only our bodily reality, but also our perception regarding how we present ourselves, by comparing our looks and our idealized image in our head. To strengthen this perception, we examine ourselves in front of the mirror, ask about our looks to others and try to strengthen our self-esteem in parallel with the body perception component. Information about oneself is necessary for the individual in every aspect of daily life. Yet the individual is indecisive in many points about her or his personality traits. Because s/he does not evaluate her or his personality, s/he has to take the valid existing standards as the basis. When the comparison standards are found, the individual is able to evaluate her or himself consistently and develop her or himself accordingly. The individual who compares her or himself with a group acts according to the references, and tries hard to close the gap between her/himself and the group. Harmony reached in the group makes the orientation of the group easier, and in the cases where the validity cannot be tested objectively, it makes the individual feel confident about her or his thoughts. The individual may use the social comparison as a tool to satisfy the self, by comparing the apparent or worse individual. (Burgoon & Ruffner, 1974; Burger, as cited in Ertürk, 2013).

The concept of narcissism does not always include a pathological content, yet it is mentioned that it can be related to a high self-esteem or a good mood. Under the appropriate conditions, narcissism may allow the person to enjoy activities, be proud of success, or experience shame and anger because of mistakes and deficiencies. Narcissism is characterized by a highly inflated, positive but ultimately unrealistic self-concept, a lack of interest in forming strong interpersonal relationships, and an engagement in self-regulatory strategies to affirm positive self-views. Narcissists are exhibitionistic, attention-seeking, and are acutely concerned about their physical appearances. They are also often skilled with dealing with new social settings and with starting new relationships, though they mostly seek relationships which can enhance their status and positive self-views (Campbell & Foster, 2007; Vazire et al., 2008).

Whether narcissists feel worthy depends on their ability to present their superiorities to others and gain their admiration. They are less interested about being loved and cared for than others. For this reason narcissists, in order to prevent their self-esteem to be ruined due to performance failure, work hard to prove that their failures are actually a coincidence (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002: 832). The fact that they lack the ability to empathize overlaps with the fact that they use others to develop themselves. Narcissists are dominant in personal interactions because they consider themselves superior to others.

In the study where Rhodewalt, Tragakis et al. (2006: 590) analyze the effect of how narcissism sabotages the behavior of the person, reasonable findings were found. Narcissists use self-arrangement strategies to create and acquire the self-esteem they desire. Thus they gain social feedback which flatters them and increases their self-worth.

However, narcissists sometimes behave self-destructively. This behavior lets them protect their desired yet vulnerable self-images. Narcissists manipulate social feedback to create and keep their self-image not depending on their actual successes. It has been found that when narcissists are interested in the amount of the feedback rather than correctness, they may sabotage themselves. Some researchers have focused on the question of what kind of

similarities and differences between the people whose self-esteem is already really high, and those who score high in narcissistic scales. Indeed, they differentiate between instrumental, which are mostly vocational and talent-related, and relationship traits. Those whose self-esteem are high define themselves above average in terms of both instrumental and relational traits, while those whose narcissism scores are high consider themselves high only in terms of instrumental traits.

In this article, the selfie's effect on self-presentation is discussed in terms of what kind of an impression a person creates on others as an instrument of forming body perception. Although the American Psychology Society states that a selfie is a mental disorder, it is not included as a psychiatric disorder in the DSM-5 Diagnosis Scales Reference Manual published in May, 2013. Yet again, it can be said that a person has many followers and the positive relation between the expectation of appreciation and the number of likes and self-esteem can be considered as a narcissistic self-presentation.

With this study, an intermediately positive relation was found between the scores of narcissism and self-esteem of the Instagram users who share selfies. High self-esteem brought about an increase in narcissism and this increase was revealed as a self-presentation through selfie. The more time women spend on Facebook and the more they compare their selfies to others', the more their body images are distorted. They compare themselves to acquaintances rather than celebrities and therefore their mood is affected negatively (Yıldırım, 2014). To strengthen the self-esteem in the direction of body-image and perception, the selfie serves our own perceptions about how we present ourselves, rather than our own self body-reality.

When other similar studies in the field are analyzed, we can see that this inclination to mutual increase is reflected in some studies. For instance, Park, Kee and Valenzuela (2009:731) put forward the user's inclination to show off through social media, by managing their profiles and showing themselves as they want to be seen. In a recent study named "Impression Management In Social Media: Selfie" Soncu and Tam (2015) examined how a person manages his/her impression in social media. Taking Turkish users as a sample, the study was carried out with 10 participants selected with purposeful sampling method in accordance with Bozeman and Kocmar's Cybernetic Impression Management. The data mentioned here consisted of selfies (12.180 Share, 4057 Selfie -%33.30-) shared on Instagram. The most important conclusion reached with the study is that individuals manage their impressions through planning and sharing selfies in social media.

Selfies and personality: Who posts self-portrait photographs? The present study is one of the first to investigate the emerging and rapidly increasing social phenomenon of posting selfie photographs to various online social networking sites. Their study provides empirical support that women engage in selfie-posting behavior significantly more often than men do, and that extroversion and social exhibitionism, but not self-esteem, predict online selfie-posting behavior in two large samples of men and women (Sorokowska et al., 2016: 119). Another study examined the association of narcissism and self-esteem with the posting of self-photographs ("selfies") on a popular photo sharing social networking site (i.e., Instagram). The hypothesized relationship between narcissism and self-esteem with the

posting of selfies independent of theme were not significant. However, there was a significant relation between some dimensions of narcissism and specific categories of selfies (e.g., vulnerable narcissism with physical appearance selfies). The limitations of the present study, particularly in terms of sampling and other issues that may influence online presentations, as well as the implications for future research on social media photographic displays are discussed (Barry et al., 2015).

**The Selfie is a new form of self-expression in this digital age. In this post, the researchers discussed how selfies reveal the personality of their owners and how people judge others' personality based on selfies.** They examined the difference between personality expression in selfies and other types of photos, and its possible relationship with impression management of social media users (Qiu et al., 2015). The study also extended the limited literature on Facebook usage sampling Asians, demonstrating narcissistic self-presentation in Singapore culture, which is generally more collectivistic than individualistic. Although Singapore is highly westernized, results of the study may not be generalizable to cultures beyond developed Asian nations. Nevertheless, to make generalizations across cultures, empirical evidence from diverse samples is needed and this study presents a step forward (Gao et al., 2015).

With this article, the self and narcissism were defined, online narcissism and self-esteem were measured, with social media being seen as one of the new spaces for narcissism. Due to the hardships of sampling however, and thus lower numbers of participants, this study should be considered as a pre-research for later works. According to the research findings, taking selfies and self-presentation brings an increase in narcissism. Self-concept and presentation, self and body relation, selfie shots and social networks as presentation spaces, and the concept of narcissism were examined.

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**SCALES**

**SHORT MEASURE OF NARCISSISM**

(Referanses: Ames, Daniel R., Rose, Paul, and Anderson, Cameron P. (2006). The NPI-16 as a short measure of narcissism *Journal of Research in Personality*, 40:440-450)

In each of the following pairs of attitudes, choose the one that you MOST AGREE with. Mark your answer by writing EITHER A or B in the space provided. If you do not identify with either statement, select the one which is least objectionable or remote. In other words, read each pair of statements and then choose the one that is closer to your own feelings. Only mark ONE ANSWER for each attitude pair.

-----	1.	A B	I really like to be the center of attention It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention
-----	2.	A B	I am no better or no worse than most people I think I am a special person
-----	3.	A B	Everybody likes to hear my stories Sometimes I tell good stories
-----	4.	A B	I usually get the respect that I deserve I insist upon getting the respect that is due me
-----	5.	A B	I don't mind following orders I like having authority over people
-----	6.	A B	I am going to be a great person I hope I am going to be successful
-----	7.	A B	People sometimes believe what I tell them I can make anybody believe anything I want them to
-----	8.	A B	I expect a great deal from other people I like to do things for other people
-----	9.	A B	I like to be the center of attention I prefer to blend in with the crowd
-----	10.	A B	am much like everybody else I am an extraordinary person
-----	11.	A B	I always know what I am doing Sometimes I am not sure of what I am doing
-----	12.	A B	I don't like it when I find myself manipulating people I find it easy to manipulate people
-----	13.	A B	Being an authority doesn't mean that much to me People always seem to recognize my authority
-----	14.	A B	I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed
-----	15.	A B	I try not to be a show off I am apt to show off if I get the chance
-----	16.	A B	I am more capable than other people There is a lot that I can learn from other people

## ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

(Reference: Rosenberg, M. (1965). Society and the adolescent self-image. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.)

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. On the whole,I am satisfied with myself.  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
2. At times I think I am no good at all.  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
6. I certainly feel useless at times. Self Report Measures for Love and Compassion Research: Self-Esteem  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
- 10.I take a positive attitude toward myself.  
Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Scoring: Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. Give "Strongly Disagree" 1 point, "Disagree" 2 points, "Agree" 3 points, and "Strongly Agree" 4 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

