

# The Relationship Between Social Media Addiction and Narcissism on Social Media: A Comparison Between Generations Y and Z\*

Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı ile Sosyal Medyada Narsisizm Arasındaki İlişki: Y ve Z Kuşakları Arasında Bir Karşılaştırma

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## ABSTRACT

One of the most effective outcomes of social media addiction and narcissistic tendencies is the failure observed in interpersonal relationships. From this perspective, social media addiction and narcissism are not only individual issues but also sociological problems. In this vein, our research aims to examine the levels of social media addiction and narcissistic traits on social media among individuals belonging to Generation Y and Generation Z according to sociodemographic variables, and to identify differences between the two generations. A total of 682 individuals participated in the study, including 328 from Generation Y and 354 from Generation Z, selected through purposive sampling methods, specifically criterion sampling. Participants were administered a sociodemographic information form, the Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form, and the Narcissism on Social Media Scale. According to the results of the study, the level of social media addiction and narcissism on social media is significantly higher in Generation Z. There is a moderate positive relationship between social media addiction and narcissism on social media, with narcissism on social media explaining 22,3% of the variance in social media addiction. The findings of the study are discussed in line with the relevant literature, and suggestions for research and practice are offered.

**Keywords:** Generation Y, Generation Z, Narcissism, Narcissism on Social Media, Social Media Addiction.

## ÖZ

Sosyal medya bağımlılığı ve narsistik eğilimlerin en etkin sonuçlarından biri kişilerarası ilişkilerde görülen başarısızlıktır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında sosyal medya bağımlılığı ve narsisizm sadece bireysel bir sorun değil aynı zamanda sosyolojik bir sorundur. Bu minvalde araştırma amacımız Y ve Z kuşağına mensup kişilerin sosyal medya bağımlılık düzeylerini ve sosyal medyada narsisizm özelliklerini sosyodemografik değişkenlere göre incelemek ve her iki kuşak arasındaki farklılaşmaları tespit edebilmektir. Araştırmaya amaçlı örneklem yöntemlerinden ölçüt örneklem yöntemi ile seçilen Y kuşağından 328 birey ile Z kuşağından 354 birey olmak üzere toplam 682 birey katılmıştır. Katılımcılara sosyodemografik bilgi formu, Sosyal Medya Bağımlılık Ölçeği Yetişkin Formu ve Sosyal Medyada Narsisizm ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre sosyal medya bağımlılığı ve sosyal medyada narsisizm düzeyi Z kuşağında anlamlı olarak yüksektir. Sosyal medya bağımlılığı ile sosyal medyada narsisizm arasında orta düzeyde pozitif ilişki bulunmaktadır ve sosyal medyada narsisizm sosyal medya bağımlılığı varyansının % 22,3'ünü açıklamaktadır. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgular ilgili literatür doğrultusunda tartışılarak araştırma ve uygulamaya yönelik önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Y Kuşağı, Z Kuşağı, Narsisizm, Sosyal Medyada Narsisizm, Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı.

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## Introduction

Social media, extensively used by individuals, activists, government agencies, commercial entities, civil society, and communication organizations, has become an inseparable part of life today (Shirky, 2011: 1). Social media is a web-based form of human communication that allows for sharing and discussion without the constraints of time and space (Vural & Bat, 2010: 3351). Initially targeting the younger generation, social media has evolved over time into an environment that encompasses all age groups. Today, it is possible to see members of every generation sharing their feelings and thoughts on social media platforms through photographs, videos, and other means (Harmanci, 2020: 211).

According to Mannheim (1950; 1952), who has conducted studies on the concept of generations, generations are defined as groups of people born within certain historical periods, thus sharing a certain historical era and cultural texture, and adopting common values and behavioral patterns unique to the era they lived in. It is not necessary for individuals within a generation to interact with each other. Following societal change, the transformation of generations, adopting different values, has led to changes in lifestyles, with social media being one of the sources of this change. The characteristics of a generation affect the technology proficiency, usage frequency, and purposes of its members. The fact that social media networks are used by every generation has guided research on social media to examine the characteristics of generations and the differences between them (Harmanci, 2020: 202).

The technical and communicative features specific to social media tools offer members a variety of usage options. They may be used to create profiles, manage impressions, post photos, search for relationships, send friend requests, leave comments and update one's status, and "tag" others (Tong, Van Der Heide, Langwell & Walther, 2008: 532-533). Social media can also be preferred by individuals who want to socialise more or escape from society and become the person they want to

be by getting rid of their real identity through fake accounts (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009: 60).

Regardless of the purpose of using social media, the increasing amount of time spent on these virtual platforms can trigger various psychosocial issues, such as procrastination of real-life tasks, various negatives in personal and professional life, and identity confusion. One of the common problems due to the unconscious use of social media is addiction to the internet and internet-based applications.

The term "internet addiction" was first used in the literature by researcher K. S. Young. In her study with obsessive internet users, Young (1996: 237) noted that the behavior of internet usage closely resembled the symptoms of gambling addiction, thus coining the term "internet addiction." Following Young's work, it has been shown that not only the internet but also many internet-related applications (smartphone addiction, social media addiction, online gambling addiction, digital game addiction, etc.) can lead to addiction (Ögel, 2014: 195-201).

Griffiths (1996; 2005) argues that for an addiction to develop, the activity must have been previously experienced by the individual and found satisfying, viewing social media addiction from this perspective as a behavioral addiction.

Possible risks seen in internet and social media addiction include experiencing problems in work, family, school or social environment due to excessive use of the internet, missing or jeopardising opportunities, constantly lying to other people about the time spent on the internet, feeling restlessness and anger when internet access is restricted (Young, 1996). These factors collectively can negatively affect both the emotional state and social relationships of the individual (Savcı & Aysan, 2017).

Social media addiction represents a potential risk for users across all generations. However, numerous studies have indicated that Generation

Z, also known as digital natives, who have seamlessly integrated internet-based applications into their daily routines, utilize these technologies more intensively. Consequently, they are more susceptible to the addictive and negative effects due to this heavy usage (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). In addition to these findings concerning the younger generation, experimental research focusing on older generational categories has shown that smartphone usage among adults is on the rise. This increasing usage is becoming an obsession and is starting to pose a mental health challenge (Van Rooij & Schoenmakers, 2013; Pantic, 2014; Ryan, Chester, Reece & Xenos, 2014).

Following the recognition of the addictive potential of the internet and its applications in the literature, research has focused on identifying areas associated with these addictions, with one of the most intriguing aspects being the personality traits of individuals prone to addiction. When the relationship between addiction and personality traits is considered, it is observed that the exhibition opportunities offered by social media applications feed the grandiose sides of narcissistic individuals, those with more pronounced narcissistic tendencies use social media more pathologically compared to individuals with other personality traits, prefer content that praises themselves to meet their narcissistic needs, tend to use active rather than passive use due to their strong need to protect their inflated egos and attract the attention of others and for these reasons, are more prone to social media addiction (Taylor & Strutton 2016; Andreassen, Pallesen & Griffiths, 2017; Frederick & Zhang, 2019; Davenport, Bergman, Jacqueline & Matthew, 2014). In the study conducted by Mehdizadeh (2010), which examined the correlation between the frequency of social media usage and narcissism, it was determined that individuals who frequently access Facebook and spend a considerable amount of time on the platform exhibit narcissistic behaviors.

This study aims to investigate the level of social media addiction and the characteristics of narcissism on social media in the sociologically

distinct Generations Y and Z, and to identify the differences between the two generations.

### Definition of Narcissism

Havelock Ellis was the pioneering figure to identify narcissism as a personality trait in his 1898 study, linking it to its origins in Greek mythology. Subsequent to Ellis's work, the concepts of narcissism were further developed by Freud, Kernberg and Kohut. These developments have contributed to the evolution of narcissism as a key area of focus within modern clinical practice.

In his 1914 publication, *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, Freud addresses the subject of narcissism in two distinct phases: primary and secondary narcissism. Primary narcissism is a natural process that every child with ongoing psychosexual development goes through on the way to directing his/her self-centred love, in other words libido, towards objects. Once primary narcissism has been completed, the libido is directed towards the external world. At this juncture, should the individual encounter some form of adversity, he will disengage his libidinal investment in external objects and re-channel it towards his ego. This results in the emergence of secondary narcissism. Secondary narcissism is characterised by the manifestation of pathological behaviours, in contrast to primary narcissism, which is considered a natural aspect of psychosexual development (Freud, 2020: 9-11).

Kohut, on the other hand, sees narcissism as a 'disorder of the self' and thinks that it arises due to the inadequacies of parents, especially the mother, in giving care. In the process of growing up, the child discovers itself, its environment and thus the world. The family is the most important support and reference during the period of discovery. Children who are supported, loved and given positive feedback complete their healthy development. Children who do not receive sufficient parental support in understanding their periodic needs, who are rejected, neglected or abused, develop narcissistic characteristics as a result of the formation of a false self, which enables

them to endure the negativities they experience (Kohut, 2004: 12-17).

Kernberg, another name who contributed to the definition of narcissism with his studies, classified narcissism as normal childhood narcissism, normal adulthood narcissism and pathological narcissism. Typically, normal childhood narcissism represents a natural developmental process whereby the child learns to love and form positive emotional bonds with others. Pathological narcissism is a defence mechanism that represents a return to the self-esteem regulation mechanisms of childhood narcissism. Individuals with a proclivity towards pathological narcissism exhibit a range of characteristics, including self-centredness, a tendency towards constant self-talk, grandiose attitudes, a proclivity towards exhibitionism, a sense of superiority, indifference, excessive ambition and a reliance on others for admiration (Kernberg, 2004: 48-50).

Based on the accumulation in the literatüre, narcissism can be defined as a personality trait characterised by a tendency to exhibit excessive self-love and admiration, a perception of one's abilities as being of a high level, a tendency towards grandiosity and exaggeration (Öztürk & Uluşahin, 2018: 432-433). In the context of interpersonal relationships, narcissism can be defined as an inability to respond adequately due to a lack of sympathy, despite the expectation of approval and praise from others in the interaction (APA, 2014: 333). This ultimately leads to an inability to establish long-term relationships due to a tendency to exploit and use others (Davenport et al., 2014: 213).

The yearning to be loved, liked, and noticed exists in every individual and is regarded as emotions that bolster self-esteem and enhance the quality of life, making the presence of narcissistic traits a common observation. However, these traits cross into the realm of pathology when they begin to impair an individual's functionality (Geçtan, 2003: 90-95).

Classical studies investigating pathological narcissism initially discussed two types of narcissism: grandiose and vulnerable. In grandiose narcissism, traits such as feeling special and unique, believing oneself to be superior in all respects and deserving the best, seeking attention, needing admiration and approval, looking down on others, and jealousy are prominent. These individuals are extroverted, seek attention, and may resort to all kinds of excesses to attract attention to themselves (Miller & Campbell, 2011; Campbell & Foster, 2007: 146). At the core of vulnerable narcissism are the individual's exaggerated feelings and thoughts about their self. Hence, Gabbard (1989: 527) describes vulnerable narcissism as a state of quiet grandiosity. Individuals with a tendency towards vulnerable narcissism may appear modest to the outside world, showing extreme sensitivity in relationships and empathetic behaviors, but they are extremely sensitive to rejection due to their excessive sensitivity to their own selves and prefer to live within their shells to avoid getting hurt. In vulnerable narcissists, anger and aggression are replaced by shyness and reticence (Foster & Trimm, 2008: 1004). A common trait between both groups is their failure in interpersonal relationships.

In the literature, it is generally accepted that non-pathological narcissism is examined along two dimensions: grandiose and vulnerable. However, grandiose narcissism has been reconceptualized by Back et al. as narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry (Akdeniz, 2022: 226). Narcissistic admiration is a self-enhancement strategy that can be summarized with the slogan "Let others admire you!" It encompasses striving for uniqueness (emotional), indulging in grandiose fantasies (cognitive), and exhibiting charm (behavioral). This strategy not only boosts the individual's self-esteem but also makes them feel liked and special, thereby continuously reaffirming their grandiose self-image. On the other hand, narcissistic rivalry is an antagonistic self-protection strategy guided by the principle "Do not let others bring you down," involving striving for superiority (emotional), devaluing others (cognitive), and aggression (behavioral). This strategy triggers strong self-

regulation efforts to defend oneself against real or imagined attacks from others, thus preserving the grandiose self. Although these strategies are driven by different dynamics, at their core, they aim to sustain the self (Back, Küfner, Dufner, Gerlach, Rauthmann & Denissen, 2013: 1015-1016).

Although narcissism is a clinical case, it is also necessary to consider how it is influenced by the changing conditions of the modern world. "In contemporary societies, individualistic values such as materialism, excessive expectations, consumption driven by appearances and image, a proclivity for fame, diminished interpersonal relationships, and conformity are on the rise. Conversely, collectivist values such as contentment, success based on labor, altruism, solidarity, and sensitivity to social issues are declining" (Myers, 2015: 55; Zencirkiran, 2018: 66). In this regard, Myers (2015) states that the rise in narcissism tendency increases in parallel with the value transformations in the cultural structure. Similarly, Twenge and Campbell (2010: 68-69) attribute the increase in narcissism to the 'focus on self-admiration' that dominates contemporary culture. They posit that the forms of communication enabled by new media technologies foster narcissistic traits such as self-centredness, self-affirmation, and display.

The advent of new sociocultural structures and communication tools has led to a convergence between the study of narcissism in modern psychology and the examination of the practices of social media users. The prioritisation of individuals exhibiting narcissistic personality traits in studies examining content sharing on social media platforms (Ryan & Xenos 2011, 1658) lends support to the notion that there is a correlation between social media utilisation and narcissistic proclivities.

### **Social Media and Narcissism**

Social media can be defined as online applications that enable individuals to create their own profiles, produce and share content, and establish virtual communities through interactions with other users facilitated by Web 2.0 technology and the internet (Preeti, 2009; Tosun, 2010). Furthermore,

social media applications lack a tangible, physical reality. The virtual nature of social media affords users a certain degree of autonomy and control, which is reflected in the relatively free personal space that it offers. The intangible nature of social media platforms results in a diminished sense of control, thereby providing users with a relatively unrestricted personal space. This environment enables individuals to craft ideal personas, embellished with exaggerated accomplishments and even digitally perfected bodies, often through the sharing of photoshopped or filtered images to portray an enviable lifestyle. The focus on visibility, exhibition, and ostentation in social media is deemed highly effective in nurturing narcissistic traits. When the literature is analysed, it has been determined in various studies that narcissistic individuals have higher interaction capacity on social media, make more status updates and show themselves more with attractive photographs they use (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Wang, Jackson, Zhang & Su, 2012).

Another feature of social media platforms that encourages narcissism is the desire of today's people to be admired and enjoy the pleasure of fame instead of respectability (Lasch, 2006: 105). The use of social media allows individuals to present themselves as popular and influential figures, attain a level of celebrity that may not be attainable in their offline lives, and boost their number of friends/followers, which serves as a status indicator. The number of friends is a highly functional indicator, serving not only to enhance popularity but also to fuel the narcissistic tendencies that thrive on competition (Twenge & Campbell, 2010: 164-166).

A study was conducted to examine the relationship between the fundamental characteristics of narcissism, such as admiration and competition, and the phenomenon of selfies. The findings revealed that individuals with high levels of narcissism tend to prioritize the feedback and approval of others in virtual networks, and they are more inclined to follow other people's selfies (Lee & Sung, 2016). A comparable outcome was observed

in the study conducted by Yeniçeri Alemdar, İşbilen, Demirel and Günal Telli (2017). Additionally, the researchers indicated that university students who shared selfies exhibited a proclivity for positive feedback.

The findings of the studies in the literature indicate that social media applications gratify the desire for glorification among individuals. While this gratification fulfills the need of narcissistic individuals to be admired, it may also give rise to the development of narcissistic feelings in those who are more humble (Twenge, Miller & Campbell 2014: 227). Furthermore, research indicates that individuals with more pronounced narcissistic tendencies are more susceptible to social media addiction and demonstrate withdrawal symptoms when they are unable to access social media (Andreassen et al., 2017: 287).

The most significant common finding in studies concerning grandiose and vulnerable narcissism dimensions is that, despite having different motivational sources, the use of social media is prevalent in both groups. It has been shown that individuals with a dominant grandiose narcissism trait are more active on social media, make more positive self-related shares, care more about receiving likes, and value their number of followers. On the other hand, individuals with vulnerable narcissistic traits tend to be more reserved, especially regarding taking selfies, are more selective in their shares due to fear of criticism, and have fewer followers (Gnambs & Appel, 2017; McCain & Campbell, 2018: 308). The ability to adjust relationship boundaries on social media applications allows both narcissism groups to experience relationships not available in real life. While grandiose narcissists find the opportunity to engage in superficial communication with many people, vulnerable narcissists can continue living in their safe harbors by establishing relationships without facing others (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008: 1303). Casale and colleagues (2016: 320) state that vulnerable narcissists prefer to use social media to cope with negative emotions they experience. These characteristics cause both groups to spend

more time on social media (McCain & Campbell, 2018: 308) and can also increase the likelihood of social media addiction.

## Methodology

### Research Design

In this study, the correlational research design, a method within the scope of quantitative research techniques, was utilized. This research model aims to determine the existence and/or degree of correlation between two or more variables (Karasar, 2008: 77).

### The Purpose of the Research

The primary objective of this study is to examine the levels of social media addiction and narcissistic traits on social media among individuals belonging to Generations Y and Z, according to sociodemographic variables, and to identify the differences between the two generations. In line with the main objective of the study, the following questions are sought to be answered:

- ▶ Do the scores of narcissism on social media and social media addiction differ significantly by gender within Generations Y and Z?
- ▶ Do the scores of narcissism on social media and social media addiction differ significantly by income level within Generations Y and Z?
- ▶ Do the scores of narcissism on social media and social media addiction significantly differ between Generations Y and Z?
- ▶ Is there a significant relationship between scores of narcissism on social media and social media addiction?
- ▶ Does narcissism on social media significantly predict social media addiction?

Although there are studies in the literature regarding generations, social media addiction, and narcissism, there is no study investigating narcissism on social media, social media addiction, and generational trends together. Therefore, this

study, which examines the differences in social media addiction and tendencies of narcissism on social media among generations, is considered important in terms of its contribution to the new concept of narcissism on social media literature.

### Participants

The study group of the study comprised a total of 682 individuals who fit the age criteria of Generations Y and Z during the years 2020-2021, selected through purposive sampling methods, specifically the criterion sampling method. The study group included 328 individuals from Generation Y and 354 from Generation Z. The criteria for inclusion in the research were being born within the years defining Generations Y and Z and actively using at least one social media platform.

### Ethics Committee Permission of The Research

Permission for the study was granted by the KTO Karatay University Human Research Ethics Committee on February 25, 2021, with the number 2021.02.09.

### Data Collection Tools

#### Sociodemographic Information Form

This form, developed by the researchers, includes questions about participants' age, gender, education, and marital status.

#### Social Media Addiction Scale-Adult Form

Developed by Şahin and Yağcı (2017), the scale comprises 20 items structured on a five-point Likert scale, featuring two sub-dimensions: virtual tolerance and virtual communication. Higher scores on the scale signify an increased level of social media addiction. The scale's overall Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient is 0.94, with virtual tolerance at 0.92 and virtual communication at 0.91. The test-retest reliability coefficients were found to be 0.93 overall, with 0.91 for virtual tolerance and 0.90 for virtual communication. Given the findings from construct validity and internal consistency analyses, the

scale is considered a valid and reliable instrument for data collection.

#### Narcissism on Social Media Scale

Developed by Akdeniz, Budak, and Gültekin Ahçı (2022), this scale consists of 16 items arranged on a five-point Likert scale. It includes two sub-dimensions: narcissistic admiration and narcissistic rivalry. Higher scores indicate a higher level of narcissism on social media. The results of the exploratory factor analysis indicated that the standardized model fit of the 16 items and two-factor structure is good, and the proposed two-factor structure is validated ( $\chi^2/sd=3.8$ ; RMSEA: 0.062, SRMR: 0.051, NFI: 0.93, CFI: 0.95, GFI: 0.94). The explained variance values were 29.02% for the first dimension, 10.52% for the second dimension, and 39.54% for the total scale. According to the reliability analysis results, the overall Cronbach's alpha value for the scale is 0.84, with 0.80 for the narcissistic admiration and 0.76 for the narcissistic rivalry. Following construct validity and internal consistency analyses, the scale is evaluated as a valid and reliable data collection tool.

### Data Analysis Techniques

In the preliminary phase of analysis, data gathered from the Narcissism on Social Media, Social Media Addiction, and Personal Information Form were organized within a computerized framework, with 4 data points identified as outliers being excluded from the dataset. The evaluation was carried out using SPSS version 22.00. To assess the normality of the data distribution, histogram graphics were reviewed, and Skewness and Kurtosis metrics were calculated. The Skewness/Kurtosis values were found to be -.390/-.089 for Narcissistic Admiration, 1.06/1.35 for Narcissistic Rivalry, .130/-.528 for Virtual Tolerance, and .432/-.167 for Virtual Communication. Given these values, the data was deemed to meet the criteria for a normal distribution, allowing for the use of parametric tests in the analysis. Descriptive statistics provided insights into the distributions of social media narcissism and addiction among individuals from Generations Y and Z. An independent samples T-test was utilized to examine gender-based

disparities in social media narcissism and addiction across these generations, whereas a variance analysis was conducted to explore differences based on income levels. Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to investigate the relationship between narcissism and addiction on social media, and regression analysis was applied to assess the influence of narcissism on social media usage patterns.

## Findings

The study encompassed a total of 682 participants, with 328 from Generation Y (59,1% female, 40,9% male) and 354 from Generation Z (63.3 % female, 36.7 % male). Within Generation Y, the educational background distribution was as follows: 1.5 % had primary education, 1.5 % middle school, 8.8 % high school, 70.1 % undergraduate, and 18% postgraduate degrees. Regarding marital status, 50.3% were single and 49.7 % were married. The income levels were 15.2 % low, 77.7 % medium, and 7% high. Among Generation Z participants, the education levels were 0.3 % primary, 0.3 % middle school, 70.6 % high school, 28.2 % undergraduate, and 0.6 % postgraduate; 99.2 % were single, and 0.8 % were married. The income distribution was 24.8 % low, 71.4 % medium, and 3.6 % high.

The first research question aimed to find out the degree of differentiation of narcissism on social media and social media addiction scores among Generations Y and Z according to gender.

Upon reviewing the data presented in Table 1, it is observed that within Generation Y, the average scores for social media narcissism are 42.69 for women and 40.66 for men. To ascertain the statistical significance of this difference in means, a t-test was carried out, indicating that the

disparity is not statistically significant ( $p>.05$ ). In the context of Generation Z participants, the analysis reveals that the average scores for social media narcissism are 43.28 for women and 43.98 for men. A subsequent t-test to evaluate the significance of this difference between means also demonstrated that it is not statistically significant ( $p>.05$ ). Hence, it can be concluded that the differences in social media narcissism scores between men and women within both Generation Y and Z are not significant.

Further examination of Table 1 shows that the mean scores for social media addiction among Generation Y women are 50.65, compared to 49.83 for men. A t-test conducted to determine the significance of this difference between means revealed that the discrepancy is not statistically significant ( $p>.05$ ). Analysis of Generation Z participants' data shows that the mean scores for social media addiction are 54.72 for women and 53.64 for men. A t-test performed to assess the significance of this difference also found it to be not statistically significant ( $p>.05$ ). Therefore, it is evident that there is no significant difference based on gender in terms of social media addiction within both Generation Y and Z.

The second research question aimed to find out the degree of differentiation of narcissism on social media and social media addiction scores according to income Generations Y and Z.

Upon reviewing Table 2, it can be seen that within Generation Y, individuals categorizing their income level as low have an average narcissism score on social media of 41.96, while those describing their income as medium have an average score of 41.44, and those identifying their income as

**Table 1**

Comparison of Narcissism On Social Media and Social Media Addiction Scores by Gender in Generations Y and Z

|                            |              | Gender | n   | $\bar{X}$ | Ss    | t     | p   |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------|-----|-----------|-------|-------|-----|
| Narcissism on Social Media | Generation Y | Female | 194 | 42.69     | 9.89  | 1.68  | .09 |
|                            |              | Male   | 134 | 40.66     | 11.88 |       |     |
|                            | Generation Z | Female | 224 | 43.28     | 9.82  | -0.62 | .54 |
|                            |              | Male   | 130 | 43.98     | 11.29 |       |     |
| Social Media Addiction     | Generation Y | Female | 194 | 50.65     | 15.28 | .49   | .62 |
|                            |              | Male   | 134 | 49.83     | 14.24 |       |     |
|                            | Generation Z | Female | 224 | 54.72     | 15.60 | .64   | .52 |
|                            |              | Male   | 130 | 53.64     | 14.82 |       |     |



**Table 2**

Comparison of Narcissism on Social Media and Social Media Addiction Scores According to Income Status in Generations Y and Z

|                            |              | Income | n   | $\bar{X}$ | Ss    | F     | Difference      |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------|-----|-----------|-------|-------|-----------------|
| Narcissism on Social Media | Generation Y | Low    | 50  | 41.96     | 12.85 | 2.168 | -               |
|                            |              | Medium | 255 | 41.44     | 9.86  |       |                 |
|                            |              | High   | 23  | 46.30     | 14.56 |       |                 |
|                            | Generation Z | Low    | 88  | 40.55     | 10.01 | 7.08* | Low<medium<high |
|                            |              | Medium | 253 | 44.23     | 7.80  |       |                 |
|                            |              | High   | 13  | 50.15     | 10.37 |       |                 |
| Social Media Addiction     | Generation Y | Low    | 50  | 54.64     | 18.61 | 2.963 | -               |
|                            |              | Medium | 255 | 49.29     | 13.87 |       |                 |
|                            |              | High   | 23  | 52.26     | 14.92 |       |                 |
|                            | Generation Z | Low    | 88  | 55.45     | 15.65 | 0.392 | -               |
|                            |              | Medium | 253 | 54.02     | 15.44 |       |                 |
|                            |              | High   | 13  | 52.38     | 9.45  |       |                 |

high have an average score of 46.30. A variance analysis conducted to assess the significance of the differences between these averages found no significant difference.

Within Generation Z, individuals who define their income level as low have an average narcissism score on social media of 40.55, those categorizing their income as medium have 44.23, and those with high income levels have 50.15. A variance analysis performed to determine the significance of these differences revealed a significant difference. According to this analysis, individuals with high income levels have significantly different scores in social media narcissism compared to those with medium income levels. Similarly, those with medium income levels show a significant difference from those with low income levels in terms of social media narcissism within Generation Z.

When examining the social media addiction scores in Generation Y, as outlined in Table 2, individuals who define their income level as low

have an average score of 54.64, those defining it as medium have 49.29, and those with high income have scores of 52.26. A variance analysis was conducted to examine the significance of the differences between these averages, and no significant difference was found.

In Generation Z, individuals categorizing their income level as low have an average social media addiction score of 55.45, those defining it as medium have 54.02, and those with high income levels have 52.38. A variance analysis was performed to evaluate the significance of the differences between these averages, resulting in no significant difference being found.

The third question of the research aims to find the scores of narcissism on social media and social media addiction differentiation between Generations Y and Z.

Upon analyzing Table 3, it is noted that the average scores for social media narcissism in Generation Y stand at 41.86, while in Generation Z, the

**Table 3**

Comparison of Narcissism on Social Media and Social Media Addiction Scores Between Generations Y and Z

|                            |              | n   | $\bar{X}$ | Ss    | t     | p    |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----|-----------|-------|-------|------|
| Narcissism on Social Media | Generation Y | 328 | 41.86     | 10.77 | -2,07 | 0.03 |
|                            | Generation Z | 354 | 43.54     | 10.37 |       |      |
| Social Media Addiction     | Generation Y | 328 | 50.31     | 14.84 | -3.46 | .001 |
|                            | Generation Z | 354 | 54.32     | 15.30 |       |      |

average scores are 43.54. A t-test was conducted to assess the significance of the difference between these averages, and the difference was found to be significant ( $p < .05$ ). Looking at social media addiction in Table 3, the average scores in Generation Y are 50.31, compared to 54.32 in Generation Z. A t-test was performed to examine the significance of the difference between these averages, and the difference was determined to be significant ( $p < .05$ ). Accordingly, it can be stated that Generation Z exhibits significantly higher levels of social media narcissism and social media addiction compared to Generation Y.

The fourth question of the research aims to find out whether there is a significant relationship between scores narcissism on social media and social media addiction.

Upon examining Table 4, it is observed that there is a positive and moderate correlation social between narcissism on social media and social media addiction ( $r = 0.473$ ). Accordingly, as narcissism on social media increases, so does social media addiction.

To investigate the impact of social media narcissism on social media addiction, a regression analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 5.

According to the regression model applied, the level of narcissism on social media explains 22.3 % of the variance in social media addiction. An

increase of one unit in the social media narcissism score results in an increase of 0.679 points in the social media addiction score.

## Discussion

Social media applications offer different services to users, especially in terms of usage purposes. While the motivations for using social media vary from person to person, a common issue that arises is the potential for addiction. Moreover, an increase in narcissistic tendencies has been observed today, linked to the rise of individualistic values. One of the most effective outcomes of social media addiction and narcissistic tendencies for individuals is the failure observed in interpersonal relationships.

In this study, it is aimed to determine the levels of social media addiction and narcissism on social media among Generations Y and Z. In alignment with the aforementioned objective, the findings were derived from the statistical analyses conducted on the data gathered during the course of the research.

The first key finding concerning sociodemographic variables reveals that there is no significant difference in social media addiction scores between genders within Generations Y and Z. Research exploring the relationship between gender and social media addiction has yielded mixed results. The study by Tutgun-Ünal and Deniz (2020) observed no gender-based differences in social media usage among Baby Boomers,

**Table 4**

Results of Pearson's Correlation Analysis Examining the Relationship Between Narcissism on Social Media and Social Media Addiction

|                            | Social media addiction |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Narcissism on Social Media | .473**                 |

**Table 5**

Regression Analysis of the Prediction of Social Media Addiction by Narcissism on Social Media

|  | Model 1 | S.H.  | $\beta$ |
|--|---------|-------|---------|
|  | B       |       |         |
| Narcissism on social media                   | 23.379  | 2.135 | .473    |
| R  |         | .473  |         |
| R <sup>2</sup>                               |         | .224  |         |
| Adj.R <sup>2</sup>                           |         | .223  |         |
| Adj.R <sup>2</sup> ; Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> |         |       |         |

Generation X, and Generation Y, yet it noted that Generation Z males perceived themselves as more adept compared to females. Zimbardo and Coulombe (2017: 42-45) found that social media addiction was more prevalent among men, particularly young men, who were also more likely to struggle with pornography and gaming addictions. This contributed to greater social isolation and reduced functional capacity in real life. Conversely, Young's (1996: 237) research suggested that pathological internet use was more common among women. Another study focusing on Facebook users indicated that women devoted more time to this platform and engaged with it more actively (Thompson & Loughheed, 2012: 90). The absence of a gender difference in social media addiction in our study might be attributed to societal shifts towards gender equality, as well as equal access to technology across genders. Similarly, our study detected no significant gender-based differences in scores on the Narcissism on Social Media Scale for Generations Y and Z. While some research indicates that narcissistic personality traits are more pronounced in men than in women (Grijalva et al., 2015; Balci & Gargalik, 2020), other studies have reported an increase in narcissistic traits among women (Karataş & Taş, 2017). Societal gender stereotypes that portray women as compassionate, obedient, gentle, understanding, and devoted to meeting the needs of those in their lives, and portray men as strong, authoritative, tough, and disciplined, may influence the expression of narcissistic traits according to gender. However, many studies have found that men and women exhibit similar levels of narcissism (Campbell & Foster, 2007; Altun, 2015). The finding in our study that there is no differentiation in social media narcissism between genders in Generations Y and Z aligns with the literature.

In our study, an analysis of the scores obtained from the Social Media Addiction Scale across different income levels for both Generations Y and Z revealed no significant differences in social media addiction scores among the income brackets for either generation. However, when assessing the scores from the Narcissism on Social

Media Scale based on the participants' income status, it was discovered that, while no significant differences were noted among income groups within Generation Y, a noticeable variance in social media narcissism scores among different income groups was identified within Generation Z. This observation suggests that individuals in Generation Z with higher income levels tend to exhibit more pronounced narcissistic behaviors on social media compared to their lower-income counterparts. Considering that many individuals in Generation Z are not yet employed and live with their families, it is reasonable to infer that this outcome may be influenced by their families' income levels and parenting styles. A review of the literature reveals a correlation between high family income and narcissistic tendencies among students (Altun, 2015), narcissistic tendencies are not equally distributed within socioeconomic class and there is a relationship between narcissism and wealth (Piff, 2014).

Gardner and Davis (2014: 124) characterize Generation Z, which they refer to as the App Generation, by a distinct set of traits including an aversion to taking risks, a high potential for dependency, superficiality in relationships, and a marked narcissistic structure. They argue that the predominant influence in acquiring these traits for the App Generation is the "Helicopter Parenting" style. The term "helicopter parenting" describes parental behaviors that are overly focused on their children, offering excessive help beyond their needs, attempting to control their lives, and displaying intrusive and perfectionist attitudes, all aimed at facilitating their children's lives to prevent stress by exerting maximum effort, typically observed among higher socio-economic families of the younger generation (Yılmaz & Büyükcebeci, 2019: 707). The literature includes studies linking helicopter parenting with the development of inflated self-esteem in children (Ekşi, Barış & Demir, 2020), and a strong correlation between inflated self-esteem and narcissistic personality traits (De Hoogh, Den Hartog & Nevicka, 2013). The assessments within the literature suggesting that children of higher-income helicopter parents are more likely to nurture narcissistic traits align

with our study's finding that young individuals in Generation Z from higher-income levels demonstrate higher narcissistic structuring on social media.

According to the second finding of our study, there is a significant difference between Generations Y and Z in terms of both social media addiction and narcissism scores on social media. Specifically, Generation Z exhibits significantly higher average scores for social media addiction ( $p=0.01$ ) and narcissism on social media ( $p=0.03$ ) compared to Generation Y. The distinction between Generations Y and Z may be influenced by both the generational and developmental characteristics of individuals as well as the unique technical and communicative attributes of social media platforms. According to psychosocial theory, adolescence and young adulthood are periods of ongoing cognitive, emotional, and social development, with the formation of identity being a central issue and impulsivity/lack of control emerging as a dominant trait. Young adults resist being controlled and held accountable, often leading to conflicts with authority figures (Öztürk & Uluşahin, 2018: 984). This resistance may contribute to adolescents and young adults' increased use of social media. Andreassen (2015: 175) suggests that the absence of authority figures on social media platforms, the infinite freedom afforded by the keyboard, the ease with which individuals can craft their virtual identities, and the rapid gratification of impulsive desires make social media particularly appealing to Generation Z. Yen et al. (2008: 14) also note that individuals in Generation Z are more inclined to use social media to escape their responsibilities and psychosocial issues. While research on internet and application addiction in children and adolescents is more prevalent, studies indicate that adults can also develop addictions due to different needs. Ünlü (2018: 161) posits that factors such as increasing isolation with age, shifts in life philosophy, and changing expectations can heighten the propensity for internet application usage among Generations X and Y. In line with the literature, our research also found that social media addiction levels are significantly higher

in Generation Z, though statistical data show that social media usage rates are also high in Generation Y. The technical and communicative features of social media influence not only addiction but also narcissistic constructions. The ability of social media to allow individuals to create desired profiles and the lack of oversight provide an environment conducive to meeting narcissistic needs (Alarcón & Sarabia, 2012: 18). The individual-centered communication style of social media platforms appeals to Generation Z, which has a more pronounced perception of individuality compared to other generations. Generation Z values being liked, envied by others for the lives they lead, and are more generous in sharing their idealized lives without censorship (Tutgun-Ünal & Deniz, 2020: 1289). This is because, as a feature of their developmental stage, Generation Z is sensitive to acceptance and leadership within groups. The number of friends they have, the likes their shared images gather, and the feedback they receive are perceived as assessments of their personality. Thus, narcissistic-leaning shares on social media are more common among adolescents and young adults (Roberts, Edmonds & Grijalva, 2010: 97). Our study similarly found that the average narcissism score on social media is significantly higher in Generation Z.

Our research's contribution to the literature is underscored by our final finding: a positive, moderate relationship exists between social media addiction and narcissism on social media ( $r= 0.473$ ), with narcissism on social media explaining 22.3 % of the variance in social media addiction. The nature of social media applications, fostering shallow relationships, the ability to reach a large audience, and the creation of an idealized albeit fictitious identity, facilitates the transition of individuals with narcissistic traits into becoming addicted (Andreassen et al. 2017; Malik & Kahn, 2015: 260). Akdeniz (2022) in their study investigating the predictive role of personality traits and narcissism on social media addiction, found that participants' levels of narcissistic admiration and rivalry significantly predicted social media addiction when sociodemographic variables and

personality traits were controlled. Studies on how narcissistic individuals use social media indicate that these individuals share positive information and photos more frequently for a wider follower/friend base, update their status more often (Carpenter, 2012; Ong et al., 2011), engage more in taking selfies (Halpern, Valenzuela & Katz, 2016: 98), and participate more frequently in commenting on and liking others' photos (Sheldon, 2016: 70). Additionally, narcissists spend more time and are more active on social media due to their efforts to be visible, liked, followed (receiving more friend requests), focusing on their appearances, and editing their photos (Fox & Rooney, 2015: 163; Davenport, Bergman, Bergman & Fearrington, 2014: 214; Panek, Nardis & Konrath, 2013: 2004; McCain & Campbell, 2018: 314). Considering the existing data, our findings align with the literature, indicating that social media platforms create a suitable environment for meeting narcissistic needs, thereby triggering social media addiction as individuals with narcissistic tendencies spend more time on these virtual platforms.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study, which explores the levels of social media addiction and narcissism on social media among Generations Y and Z, are summarized as follows: Generation Z shows significantly higher average scores for both social media addiction and narcissism on social media compared to Generation Y. There is no distinction in scores for social media narcissism and addiction according to gender across both generations. In terms of income level within Generation Y, no differentiation among income groups in scores for social media narcissism and addiction was found. However, for Generation Z, while no difference in social media addiction scores according to income level was observed, a significant variation in social media narcissism scores among income groups was detected. This suggests that individuals in Generation Z with higher income levels have significantly higher average scores for social media narcissism compared to those with middle income, who in turn score higher than those with lower income. Beyond these observations, our study

contributes two significant insights to the existing body of literature: there is a moderate positive correlation between social media addiction and narcissism on social media, and narcissism on social media accounts for 22.3% of the variance in social media addiction.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed. The phenomenon of social media addiction is a prevalent issue affecting individuals across all age groups. The initial and most crucial step in addressing this problem is to cultivate an awareness of its existence. Thus, it is recommended that community-based educational programs on social media addiction be developed for all demographics. Additionally, a proactive approach could prove more effective. Organizing educational programs and seminars for parents about the internet and its applications may assist them in safeguarding their children against excessive screen time. Narcissistic traits have been identified as contributing to social media addiction. With this in mind, initiatives could be designed to raise the awareness of individuals exhibiting narcissistic tendencies and to facilitate their access to support from the appropriate persons or institutions, tailored to their needs. This study focused on individuals from Generations Y and Z in Konya. To improve the generalizability of the study's findings and to examine sociocultural and generational differences, future research could involve a wider array of participants from different generations and locations, employing the same measurement scales.

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## Genişletilmiş Özet

Sosyal medya araçlarının teknik ve iletişim yapısına özgü özellikler üyelerine birçok kullanım seçeneği sunmaktadır. Sosyal medyayı kullanım amacının ne olduğu fark etmeksizin bu sanal mecralarda geçirilen zamanın giderek artması nedeniyle yaşanan çeşitli sorunlardan biri internet ve internet tabanlı uygulamalara karşı bireyde gelişen bağımlılıktır.

İnternet ve uygulamalarının bağımlılık potansiyeli fark edildikten sonra araştırmalar internet bağımlılığı ile ilişkili alanları tespit etmeye odaklanmışlardır ki en çok merak edilen hususlardan biri bağımlılığa yatkın olan bireylerin kişilik özellikleridir.

Bu çalışmanın Y ve Z kuşağına mensup kişilerin sosyal medya bağımlılık düzeylerini ve sosyal medyada narsisizm özelliklerini sosyodemografik değişkenlere göre incelemek ve her iki kuşak arasındaki farklılaşmaları tespit etmektir. Çalışmanın temel amacı doğrultusunda şu sorulara yanıt aranarak teorik ve uygulama olarak literatüre katkı sağlanması hedeflenmiştir.

- Y ve Z kuşaklarında sosyal medyada narsisizm ve sosyal medya bağımlılığı puanları cinsiyete göre anlamlı düzeyde farklılaşmakta mıdır?

- Y ve Z kuşaklarında sosyal medyada narsisizm ve sosyal medya bağımlılığı puanları gelir düzeyine göre anlamlı düzeyde farklılaşmakta mıdır?

- Sosyal medya bağımlılığı ve sosyal medyada narsisizm puanları Y ve Z kuşakları arasında anlamlı düzeyde farklılaşmakta mıdır?

- Sosyal medyada narsisizm ve sosyal medya bağımlılığı puanları arasında anlamlı ilişki var mıdır?

- Sosyal medyada narsisizm, sosyal medya bağımlılığını anlamlı düzeyde yordamakta mıdır?

Çalışmada nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Araştırmancın örneklemi, amaçlı örneklem yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi ile 2020-2021 yılında yaşları Y ve Z kuşağıyla uyumlu olan toplam 682 birey oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma grubuna Y kuşağından 328; Z kuşağından ise 354 birey katılmıştır. Çalışmanın verileri sosyodemografik bilgi formu, "Sosyal Medya Bağımlılık Ölçeği-Yetişkin Formu" (Şahin & Yağcı, 2017) ve "Sosyal Medyada Narsisizm Ölçeği" (Akdeniz, Budak & Gültekin Ahçı, 2022) formlarının uygulanması ile toplanmıştır.

Araştırmancın sosyodemografik değişkenlere ilişkin elde edilen bulgulara bakıldığında cinsiyet açısından Y ve Z kuşaklarında sosyal medya bağımlılığı puanları ve sosyal medyada narsisizm puanları arasında anlamlı bir fark olmadığı bulunmuştur. Çalışmamızda cinsiyetler

arasında sosyal medya bağımlılığı açısından fark bulunmamasının nedeninin günümüzde toplumsal cinsiyet normlarının toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği yönünde değişmesinden ve her iki cinsiyetin teknolojik araçlara eşit koşullarda ulaşmasından kaynaklandığı düşünülmektedir. Narsisizmi cinsiyet değişkeni açısından inceleyen araştırmalara bakıldığında farklı sonuçlara ulaşıldığı görülmektedir. Bununla birlikte birçok çalışmada erkek ve kadınların benzer narsisizm düzeylerine sahip olduğu bulgusuna da ulaşılmıştır. Literatürdeki çalışmaların farklı bulgulara ulaşmasında bir başka ifadeyle narsistik özelliklerin cinsiyete göre farklılaşmasında toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargılarının kadını şefkatli, itaatkâr, uysal, anlayışlı, yaşamındaki kişilerin ihtiyaçlarını karşılayan vefalı niteliklerle erkeği ise güçlü, otoriter, sert, kurallı gibi niteliklerle tanımlaması etkili olabilir.

Y ve Z kuşağının sosyal medya bağımlılığı puanlarının gelir düzeylerine göre farklılaşmadığı görülürken Y kuşağında sosyal medyada narsisizm puanlarının gelir grupları arasında farklılaşmadığı Z kuşağında ise sosyal medyada narsisizm puanlarının gelir grupları arasında farklılaştığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu bulguya göre Z kuşağında yüksek gelire sahip olanların sosyal medyada sergiledikleri narsistik özelliklerin düşük gelire sahip olanlara göre daha yüksek olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Literatürde daha yüksek gelire sahip helikopter ebeveynlerin çocuklarının narsistik yanlarını daha fazla beslediğine ilişkin değerlendirmeler ile araştırmamızın Z kuşağında yüksek gelir düzeyine sahip gençlerin sosyal medyada narsistik yapılanmalarının daha yüksek olduğu bulgusunun uyumlu olduğunu söyleyebiliriz.

Araştırmancın ikinci bulgusuna göre sosyal medya bağımlılığı ve sosyal medyada narsisizm puan ortalamaları Y ve Z kuşağı arasında anlamlı düzeyde farklılaşmaktadır. Bu sonuca göre Z kuşağında sosyal medya bağımlılığı ortalama puanları ( $p= 0.01$ ) ve sosyal medyada narsisizm puan ortalamaları ( $p= 0.03$ ) Y kuşağına göre anlamlı düzeyde yüksektir. Z kuşağının internet ve bilişim teknolojilerin gündelik yaşamın

merkezinde olduğu bir dönemde dünyaya gelmeleri, dijital teknoloji ile büyüyen yaşamlarının ayrılmaz bir parçası haline getirmeleri, yeni medya platformlarını yoğun kullanmaları onları sosyal medya bağımlılığına daha yatkın olmalarına neden olabilmektedir. Ayrıca Z kuşağının ben merkezli olmaları sosyal medyada narsistik yanı ağır basan paylaşımları daha sık yapmalarını dolayısıyla sosyal medyada narsisizm eğilimlerinin yükselmesini etkilediği düşünülmektedir.

Araştırmamızın son bulgusu; sosyal medya bağımlılığı ile sosyal medyada narsisizm arasında pozitif yönde orta düzeyde ilişki ( $r=0.473$ ) bulunması ve sosyal medyada narsisizmin sosyal medya bağımlılığı varyansının % 22.3'ünü açıklamasıdır. Narsistik bireylerin sosyal medyayı ne şekilde kullandığıyla ilgili yapılan çeşitli çalışmaların sonuçları da göz önüne alındığında değerlendirildiğinde sosyal medya araçlarının narsistik ihtiyaçların karşılanabilmesi için uygun bir ortam yarattığını böylece narsistik eğilimi olan bireylerin bu sanal mecralarda geçirdiği zamanın artması ile sosyal medya bağımlılığının tetiklendiğini ifade edebiliriz.

Bu çalışmada sosyal medya bağımlılığına sebep olabilecek faktörlerden bir tanesinin narsistik özellikler olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu açıdan narsistikörüntüsü olan bireylerin farkındalıklarının artırılması ve yatkınlıkları açısından ilgili kişi veya kurumlardan yardım alabilmelerini sağlayacak bir dizi etkinlikler düzenlenebilir. Araştırma, Konya ilinde yaşayan Y ve Z kuşağına mensup bireylerle sınırlıdır. Çalışma sonucunun hem genellenebilirliği hem de sosyokültürel ve kuşak farklılaşmalarını görebilmek amacıyla aynı ölçekler kullanılarak farklı illerde yaşayan daha geniş kuşak üyeleri ile benzer çalışmalar gerçekleştirilebilir. Literatürde yeni olan sosyal medyada narsisizm kavramını farklı sosyopsikolojik değişkenlerle inceleyen gelecekteki araştırma sonuçları ile kavramın sistematik ve ayrıntılı hâle gelmesine katkı sağlanabilir.

## Yazar Bilgileri

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