


An Investigation of Doomscrolling, Dispositional Hope and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Among Adults

Yetişkinlerde Doomscrolling, Umut ve Travma Sonrası Stres Bozukluğu Arasındaki İlişkiler

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Abstract

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a prevalent condition among adults. Given the comorbidity of post-traumatic stress disorder with numerous psychological and physical conditions, it is imperative to ascertain the underlying risk and protective factors. This study examined the relationships between post-traumatic stress disorder and doomscrolling (a risk factor) and dispositional hope (a protective factor). The study participants consisted of 419 adults, 299 female (% 71.4) and 120 male (% 28.6). The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 60. The Personal Information Form, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist for DSM-5, Dispositional Hope Scale, and Doomscrolling Scale were used as data collection tools in the study. Firstly, it was found that female showed more post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms than male. The study also found that post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms differed significantly in terms of daily internet and social media usage duration. Finally, it was found that doomscrolling positively predicted post-traumatic stress disorder; dispositional hope was found to predict post-traumatic stress disorder negatively. These findings help clarify the role of dispositional hope and doomscrolling in the development of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Keywords: doomscrolling, post-traumatic stress disorder, dispositional hope, adulthood

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Öz

Travma sonrası stres bozukluğu yetişkinlerde yaygın şekilde karşılaşılmaktadır. Travma sonrası stres bozukluğu, birçok psikolojik ve fiziksel problemle komorbiditeye sahip olduğu için risk ve koruyucu faktörlerin belirlenmesi önemlidir. Bu çalışmada travma sonrası stres bozukluğuyla doomsScrolling (risk faktörü) ve sürekli umut (koruyucu faktör) arasındaki ilişkiler incelenmiştir. Araştırmamızın katılımcıları 299 kadın (% 71.4) ve 120 erkek (%28.6) olmak üzere toplam 419 yetişkinden oluşmaktadır. Katılımcıların yaşları 18 ile 60 arasında değişmektedir. Araştırmada veri toplama araçları olarak Kişisel Bilgi Formu, DSM-5 için Travma Sonrası Stres Bozukluğu Kontrol Listesi, Sürekli Umut Ölçeği ve DoomsScrolling Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada ilk olarak kadınların erkeklere göre daha fazla travma sonrası stres bozukluğu semptomları gösterdiği bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Araştırmada ayrıca günlük internet ve sosyal medya kullanım süresi açısından travma sonrası stres bozukluğu semptomlarının anlamlı düzeyde farklılaştığı bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Araştırmada son olarak doomsScrolling'in travma sonrası stres bozukluğunu pozitif yönde yordadığı; sürekli umutun ise travma sonrası stres bozukluğunu negatif yönde yordadığı bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu bulgular, travma sonrası stres bozukluğunun ortaya çıkma sürecinde sürekli umut ile doomsScrolling'in rolünün açıklığa kavuşturulmasına yardımcı olmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: doomsScrolling, travma sonrası stres bozukluğu, sürekli umut, yetişkinlik dönemi

Geniş Özet

Giriş

Travma sonrası stres bozukluğu (TSSB) dünya nüfusunun yaklaşık %3.9'unu etkileyen bir ruh sağlığı problemidir (Koenen vd., 2017). TSSB, örseleyici olaylara maruz kalma, tanık olma, sevilen birinin başına travmatik bir olayın geldiğini öğrenme gibi olaylarla karşılaşma sonucunda tetiklenebilmektedir (de Vries ve Olff, 2009). TSSB etkili şekilde tedavi edilmediğinde çok sayıda psikolojik ve fiziksel probleme yol açabilmektedir. Örneğin, araştırmacılar TSSB'nin depresyon, anksiyete, uyku problemleri, alkol ve uyuşturucu kullanımı, somatik şikayetler ve intihar düşünceleri gibi psikolojik problemlerle bağlantısını ortaya koymuştur (Fusco vd., 2021; Kergi vd., 2012; Wang vd., 2005). Bunun yanı sıra TSSB'nin kardiyovasküler hastalık ve metabolik rahatsızlıklar gibi fiziksel problemlerle ilişkisi de çok sayıda çalışmada ortaya konulmuştur (Edmondson ve Cohen, 2013; Ryder vd., 2018). Her travmatik olaya maruz kalan veya tanık olanın TSSB geliştirmediği düşünüldüğünde TSSB'nin başlangıcı, semptomların şiddeti ve kronik hale gelmesine karşı risk ve koruyucu faktörlerin varlığı düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışma kapsamında risk faktörü olarak doomsScrolling, koruyucu faktör olarak ise sürekli umut ele alınmıştır.

Umut, bireylere zorlayıcı yaşam olaylarıyla başa çıkma gücü veren bir psikolojik kaynaktır. Umutla ilgili kavramsallaştırmalar göstermektedir ki umut, bireyin travmatik olaylarla başa çıkabileceği inancını arttırmakta ve bu olaylarla başa çıkmak için çeşitli yollar arayışı içinde tutmaktadır. Nitekim, depresyon yaşayan bireylerde sürekli umut ile TSSB arasındaki ilişkinin incelendiği bir çalışmada sürekli umut ile TSSB arasında negatif yönde ilişki elde edilmiştir (Eren ve Akoğlu, 2024).). Bir meta analiz çalışmasında ise bireylerin umut düzeylerinin artmasının daha düşük TSSB semptomlarıyla ilişkili olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır (Gallagher vd., 2020). Umud, psikolojik uyumu (Deniz vd.,

2023) ve psikolojik dayanıklılığını (Satıcı, 2016) arttırarak bireylerin travma sonrası büyümesini destekleyebilmektedir. Nitekim, Laslo-Roth ve çalışma arkadaşları (2020) çalışmalarında umudun bireylerde travma sonrası büyümeyi desteklediğini sonucuna ulaşmışlardır. Sonuç olarak umut, TSSB'ye karşı koruyucu role sahiptir.

TSSB'de koruyucu faktörler olduğu gibi risk faktörleri de bulunmaktadır. Bu risk faktörlerinden biri doomscrollingdir. Doomscrolling, nispeten yeni bir siber psikoloji kavramıdır. Doomscrolling, çevrimiçi ortamlarda olumsuz haberlerin kompulsif bir şekilde takip edilmesidir (Rodrigues, 2023). Doomscrolling davranışı ilk başlarda bireyin kendisini koruma ve olumsuzluklara karşı önlem alma amaçlı başlasa da ilerleyen zamanlarda bireyin psikolojik sağlığını bozacak şekilde kompulsif hale gelebilmektedir (Sharma vd., 2022). Doomscrolling ile ilgili yapılan sınırlı sayıdaki araştırma doomscrollingın psikolojik problemlerle bağlantılı olabileceğini ortaya koymuştur. Örneğin, Satıcı ve diğerleri (2023) doomscrollingın daha yüksek psikolojik sıkıntı ve sosyal medya bağımlılığı ile ilişkisini ortaya koymuştur. Doomscrollingın, gündemi kaçırma korkusu, yaygın anksiyete bozukluğu, gelecek kaygısı gibi psikolojik problemlerle ilişkili olduğu da araştırmacılar tarafından belirlenmiştir (Kartol vd., 2023; Sharma vd., 2022). Doomscrollingın travma ile bağlantılı olabileceğine dair çalışma bulguları da bulunmaktadır. Örneğin, Taskin ve diğerleri (2024) sosyal medya kullanıcılarında doomscrolling ile ikincil travmatik stres arasındaki bağlantıyı incelemişlerdir. Araştırmada doomscrollingın sosyal medya kullanıcıları için ikincil travmatik stresi negatif yönde yordadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu sonuç doomscrollingın bireylerde TSSB ile ilişkili olabileceğini göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte doomscrolling ile TSSB arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen araştırma bulunmamaktadır. Uzun süreler çevrimiçi ortamlarda zaman geçirilen bir çağda, internet ve sosyal medyada olumsuz haberlerin yaygınlığı da göz önünde bulundurulduğunda doomscrolling TSSB açısından üzerinde durulması gereken bir problemdir. Bundan dolayı bu araştırmada doomscrolling ile TSSB arasındaki ilişki incelenmiştir.

TSSB, psikolojik problemlerle komorbiditesi ve toplumdaki yaygınlık oranları düşünüldüğünde bir toplum ruh sağlığı problemidir. Bundan dolayı TSSB'nin önlenmesi ve tedavi edilmesi için yapılacak müdahale programları açısından koruyucu ve risk faktörlerinin belirlenmesi son derece önemlidir. Bundan dolayı bu araştırmada "Sürekli umut, doomscrolling ve TSSB arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesi." temel amacı doğrultusunda aşağıdaki hipotezler test edilmiştir:

H1: TSSB, cinsiyete göre anlamlı düzeyde farklılaşmaktadır.

H2:TSSB, internet ve sosyal medya kullanım sürelerine göre anlamlı düzeyde farklılaşmaktadır.

H3:Sürekli umut, doomscrolling ve TSSB arasında anlamlı düzeyde ilişkiler bulunmaktadır.

Yöntem

Araştırmanın örneklemini Türkiye'de 6 Şubat 2023 Kahramanmaraş depremini yaşayan yetişkinler oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın örneklemini yaşları 18-60 arasında değişen 419 yetişkin oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmada veri toplama araçları olarak Kişisel Bilgi Formu, DSM-5 için Travma Sonrası Stres Bozukluğu Kontrol Listesi, Sürekli Umud Ölçeği ve Doomscrolling Ölçeği kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmada TSSB'nin cinsiyet, günlük internet kullanım süresi ve günlük sosyal medya kullanım süresine göre farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığını belirlemek amacıyla bağımsız örneklem için t testi ve ANOVA gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ayrıca değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri belirlemek amacıyla korelasyon analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Son olarak sürekli umut ve doomscrolling'in TSSB'yi yordayıp yordamadığını belirlemek amacıyla çoklu regresyon analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Bulgular

Araştırmada, deprem yaşantısı olan yetişkinlerin TSSB düzeylerinin cinsiyete göre anlamlı düzeyde farklılaştığı bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır ($t = 4.175$; $p < .05$). Erkeklerin TSSB düzeyleri kadınların TSSB düzeylerine göre anlamlı düzeyde düşük bulunmuştur. Araştırmada deprem yaşantısı olan yetişkinlerin TSSB düzeylerinin internet kullanım sürelerine göre anlamlı düzeyde farklılaştığı bulgusuna da ulaşılmıştır ($F = 2.615$, $p < .05$). İnternet kullanım süreleri arttıkça TSSB düzeyleri de artmaktadır. Fark yönünü tespit etmek için yapılan LSD testi sonucuna göre, 5. düzey internet kullananların TSSB düzeyleri, 1. ve 3. düzeye göre anlamlı düzeyde yüksek bulunmuştur. Araştırmada ayrıca deprem yaşantısı olan yetişkinlerin TSSB düzeylerinin sosyal medya kullanım süreleri düzeyine göre anlamlı düzeyde farklılaştığı bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır ($F = 3.266$, $p < .05$). Sosyal medya kullanım süreleri arttıkça TSSB düzeyleri de artmaktadır. Fark yönünü tespit etmek için yapılan LSD testi sonucuna göre, günlük 4 saat ve üzeri sosyal medya kullananların TSSB düzeyleri, 0-1 saat ve 1-2 saat arası kullananlara göre; 3-4 saat arası kullananların ise 0-1 saat arası kullananlara göre anlamlı olarak daha yüksek bulunmuştur.

Araştırmada, TSSB'nin sürekli umut ile ($r = -.17$) negatif yönde, doomscrolling ile ($r = .38$) pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir. Son olarak sürekli umut ve doomscrolling'in TSSB'yi anlamlı düzeyde yordadığı belirlenmiştir ($F_{((2;416))} = 38.534$; $p < .01$). Sürekli umut ve doomscrolling, TSSB'nin toplam varyansının yaklaşık %16'sını açıklamıştır.

Tartışma

Bu araştırmada, kadınlarda TSSB semptomlarının erkeklere göre daha yüksek görülmesinin biyolojik ve psikososyal nedenleri olabilir. Öncelikle kadınlar peritratmatik sıkıntıyı (travma sırasında veya travmadan kısa bir süre sonra yaşanan stres, olumsuz duygular, yaşam tehdidi, bedensel uyarılma) erkeklerden daha yüksek düzeyde hissetmektedir (Olf, 2017). Kadınları TSSB'ye karşı daha kırılgan hale getiren faktörler arasında kadınların cinsel istismar gibi TSSB'ye yol açma riski yüksek olan travmatik olaylara maruz kalma olasılıklarının yüksek olması ve kadınların erkeklere göre travmatik olaylara daha erken yaşta maruz kalmaları gösterilebilir (Wilker vd., 2021). Bir başka açıklama ise travmatik olaylarla karşılaştıklarında kadın ve erkeklerin farklı başa çıkma mekanizmaları kullanmasıdır. Kadınların zorlayıcı yaşam olayları karşısında daha çok duygu odaklı başa çıkma mekanizmalarını kullanması kadınları TSSB belirtileri göstermesi açısından risk grubuna sokabilmektedir (Gavranidou ve Rosner, 2003). Son olarak çok sayıda araştırma kadın ve erkeklerdeki TSSB belirtileri arasındaki farklılığı açıklamada hormonların rolünü vurgulamıştır (Li & Graham,

2017; Gogos vd., 2019). Sonuç olarak kadınlarda TSSB'nin daha şiddetli ortaya çıkmasının biyolojik, psikolojik ve sosyal faktörlerin etkileşiminden kaynaklandığı söylenebilir.

Araştırmanın ikinci bulgusu yetişkinlerin internet ve sosyal medya kullanım sürelerine göre TSSB düzeylerinin anlamlı düzeyde farklılaşmasıdır. Araştırmamızın bu bulgusu internet ve sosyal medya kullanımının TSSB ile ilişkisini inceleyen önceki araştırma bulgularıyla tutarlıdır. Örneğin, Evren ve çalışma arkadaşları (2019) üniversite öğrencileriyle yaptıkları çalışmada internet bağımlılığı ile TSBB arasında pozitif ilişki elde etmişlerdir. Farklı yaş gruplarında yapılan araştırmalarda da internet ve sosyal medya bağımlılığının TSSB semptomlarıyla pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğu bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır (Çakıcı vd., 2020; Mansour & Muamar, 2021; Yang vd., 2022). İnternet bağımlılığının belirtileri arasında interneti gün içinde sıklıkla kullanma (Kutlu vd., 2016) da olduğu düşünüldüğünde hem bu araştırmanın bulgusu hem de önceki araştırmaların bulguları internet kullanım süresinin TSSB açısından risk faktörü olduğunu göstermektedir.

Araştırmanın üçüncü hipotezi kapsamında sürekli umudun TSSB ile negatif yönde ilişkili olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Ayrıca sürekli umudun TSSB'yi negatif yönde yordadığı sonucuna da ulaşılmıştır. Bu sonuç, sürekli umut düzeyi yüksek olan bireylerin TSSB belirtilerini daha az yaşadıklarını göstermektedir. Ampirik kanıtlar umudun daha az psikolojik problemle bağlantılı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır (Hedayati & Khazaei, 2014; Muyan vd., 2016). Umut, zorlayıcı yaşam olayları sonrasında bireylerin psikolojik sağlamlığını, işlevselliğini ve iyileşmeyi destekleyerek TSSB belirtilerini düşürebilmektedir (Long, 2022). Araştırmamızın bu bulgusu umut ile TSSB arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen araştırma bulgularıyla örtüşmektedir. Örneğin, Gallagher ve çalışma arkadaşları (2020) umut ile TSSB arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen 20 araştırmayı kullanarak yaptıkları meta analiz çalışmasında, umut ve TSSB arasındaki ilişkinin orta düzeyde (ağırlıklı ortalama etki büyüklükleri – .34) ve negatif olduğu sonucuna ulaşmışlardır.

Araştırmada son olarak doomscrollingın TSSB'yi pozitif yönde yordadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu sonuç, doomscrolling düzeyi yüksek olan bireylerin TSSB belirtilerini daha fazla yaşayacağını göstermektedir. Bir başka ifadeyle doomscrolling TSSB açısından risk faktörüdür. Genç yetişkinlerle yapılan bir araştırmada COVID-19 döneminde pandemiyle ilgili sosyal medyaya günlük maruz kalma ile TSSB semptomları arasında bir ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir (Price vd., 2022). Alanyazında doomscrollingın TSSB ile ilişkisini inceleyen sınırlı araştırma olsa da çeşitli psikolojik problemlerle bağlantısını araştıran çalışmalar mevcuttur. Nitekim, Taskin ve diğerleri (2024) yetişkinler üzerinde yaptıkları araştırmada doomscrolling ile ikincil travmatik stres arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemişlerdir. Araştırmada doomscrollingın ikincil travmatik stresle pozitif yönde ilişkisi ortaya koyulmuştur.

Introduction

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that affecting approximately 3.9% of the global population (Koenen et al., 2017). PTSD can be triggered as a result of exposure to traumatic events, witnessing such events, or learning that a traumatic event has occurred to a loved one (de Vries & Olff, 2009). A study conducted with 68,894 adults

from 24 countries concluded that more than 70% of adults had experienced a traumatic event at least once in their lifetime (Benjet et al., 2016). The symptoms of PTSD include recurring and distressing memories and dreams about the traumatic event; dissociation reactions; avoidance of stimuli (thoughts, feelings, memories, people, objects, places) related to the traumatic event; alienation from others; and inability to experience positive emotions (DSM-5). When not treated effectively, PTSD can lead to many psychological and physical problems. For example, research has demonstrated a correlation between PTSD and a range of psychological issues, including depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, substance use disorders, somatic complaints, and suicidal ideation (Fusco et al., 2021; Kergi et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2005). Furthermore, numerous studies have demonstrated the association between PTSD and physical health issues such as cardiovascular disease and metabolic disorders (Edmondson & Cohen, 2013; Ryder et al., 2018). Not all individuals exposed to a traumatic event develop PTSD. The onset, severity, and chronicity of PTSD are influenced by a number of risk and protective factors. This study investigated catastrophe shifting as a potential risk factor for the development of PTSD and persistent hope as a potential protective factor.

Hope can be conceptualized as a psychological resource that gives individuals the strength to cope with challenging life events. In their model, Snyder and colleagues (1991) conceptualize hope as a cognitive process comprising two key elements: agency thinking (goal-oriented energy) and alternative paths (planning paths to reach goals). Subsequently, Snyder (2002) proposed a triadic conceptualization of hope, comprising goals, alternative paths, and agency thinking. Although there are different types of goals, goals are generally classified as positive and negative. Positive goals consist of (a) achieving for the first time (gaining a profession), (b) maintaining the current goal result (continuing the profession gained), (c) increasing what has already been started (getting promoted in the profession). Negative goals consist of (a) preventing it from ever occurring (preventing being laid off), (b) preventing it from occurring to delay it (desiring to experience being laid off after a long time). Alternative paths involve the individual thinking of alternative ways to reach their goals. Individuals with high levels of hope successfully solve challenging life events or produce alternative ways to reach their goals. The last concept in Snyder's (2002) hope model, agency, refers to individuals' perceived competence to implement the ways determined to reach the goal. Individuals with high levels of hope are motivated to transform alternative ways into behavior in the face of challenging life events. According to Snyder's model, individuals with high levels of hope are determined to achieve their goals and are motivated to implement various ways to achieve their goals. In another conceptualization, hope is conceptualized as individuals having positive expectations for the future (Alarcon et al., 2013).

Hope increases individuals' belief that they can cope with traumatic events. Indeed, in a study examining the relationship between trait hope and PTSD in individuals who experienced an earthquake, a negative relationship was found between trait hope and post-traumatic stress disorder (Eren and Akoğlu, 2024). A meta-analysis study concluded that individuals with higher hope levels had lower PTSD symptoms (Gallagher et al., 2020). Hope can support individuals' post-traumatic growth by increasing psychological adjustment (Deniz et al., 2023) and psychological resilience

(Satıcı, 2016). Indeed, Laslo-Roth and colleagues (2020) revealed in their study that hope supports post-traumatic growth in individuals. As a result, hope has a protective role against post-traumatic stress disorder.

There are protective factors as well as risk factors in post-traumatic stress disorder. Doomscrolling is one of these risk factors. Doomscrolling is a relatively new concept in cyberpsychology. Doomscrolling is the compulsive following of negative news in online environments (Rodrigues, 2023). Doomscrolling can be defined as the act of scrolling through negative online content in a way that causes the individual to experience negative emotions. In a study on COVID-19, doomscrolling was defined as “increased negative affect after following media related to the pandemic” (Price et al., 2022). In this study, doomscrolling was examined as the compulsive following of negative content in online environments that causes the individual to experience anxiety and fear. Although doomscrolling behavior initially begins with people trying to protect themselves and take precautions against negativities, it can become compulsive over time, harming people’s psychological health (Sharma et al., 2022).

Negative news tends to garner more attention than positive news on the Internet and social media (Shabahang et al., 2023). Negativity bias may explain this phenomenon. Indeed, Sharma et al. (2022) found a positive correlation between negativity bias and doomscrolling behavior. According to negativity bias, individuals are more likely to attend to negative information (Park, 2016). This cognitive bias arises from a self-protective tendency, where individuals seek information to mitigate potential threats. Negativity bias also entails a motivation to seek information about ambiguous stimuli (Vaish, 2008). Consequently, individuals may exhibit a heightened focus on negative news. While this tendency stems from a self-protective impulse, prolonged and frequent engagement in such behavior, known as doomscrolling, can lead to adverse psychological consequences.

Limited research has suggested a link between doomscrolling and psychological distress. For instance, Satıcı et al. (2023) found a correlation between doomscrolling and elevated levels of psychological distress and social media addiction. Additionally, studies have demonstrated associations between doomscrolling and psychological issues such as fear of missing out, generalized anxiety disorder, and future anxiety (Kartol et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2022). Some research has even suggested a potential link between doomscrolling and secondary traumatic stress (Taskin et al., 2024), which may indicate a connection to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, there is no research examining the relationship between doomscrolling and PTSD. Given the increasing prevalence of negative news and the significant amount of time individuals spend online, addressing the potential impact of doomscrolling on PTSD is crucial. Therefore, this study examined the relationship between doomscrolling and PTSD.

PTSD is a community mental health problem when its comorbidity with psychological disorders and prevalence rates in society are considered. Therefore, determining protective and risk factors is extremely important for intervention programs to be carried out for the prevention and treatment of PTSD. Hope may serve as a protective factor against psychological disorders by enhancing

individuals' psychological resilience. Doomscrolling is associated with psychological disorders and is therefore a risk factor for PTSD. Despite this, it is seen that the relationship between continuous hope, doomscrolling, and PTSD has not been examined. Therefore, in this study, the following hypotheses were tested in line with the main purpose of "determining the relationship between continuous hope, doomscrolling and PTSD":

H₁: PTSD, differs significantly by gender.

H₂: PTSD, differs significantly by Internet and social media usage time.

H₃: There are significant relationships between constant hope, doomscrolling, and PTSD.

Method

This section includes information on the research model, participants, measures, procedure and data analysis.

Research Model

The research model was designed in accordance with the correlational model, which is a research model that attempts to determine the existence, direction, and intensity of the relationship between two or more variables (Creswell, 2011).

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of adults who were exposed to the 6 February 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquake in Turkey. The age range of the participants was 18 to 60 years, with a mean age of 25.63 (SD = 8.04). Data were obtained from Google Forms. 419 adults participated in this study.

Measures

In this study, the Personal Information Form, PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5), Dispositional Hope Scale, and Doomscrolling Scale were administered.

Personal Information Form

The Personal Information Form includes information about age, gender, daily internet usage time, and daily social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc.) usage.

PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5)

The scale consists of four dimensions that match the PTSD symptom clusters in DSM-5. These dimensions are: re-experiencing, avoidance, negative alterations, and hyperarousal. The scale has 20 items and a 5-point Likert type (0 = None; 4 = Extreme). The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Boysan and colleagues (2017). The goodness of fit indices obtained in the confirmatory factor analysis to determine the scale's validity was within acceptable limits.

The scale's reliability was determined by composite reliability and test-retest intra-correlation. The analysis findings show that the scale's validity and reliability are within acceptable limits. For this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist for DSM-5 was determined as .95.

Dispositional Hope Scale

The scale was developed to measure the persistent hope level of individuals. The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Tarhan and Bacanlı (2015). Although the scale consists of 12 items, 4 items are filler items. The scale is an 8-point Likert-type (1 = definitely false; 8 = definitely true). As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis conducted within the scope of the validity of the scale, it was determined that the goodness of fit index values were within acceptable limits. The criterion Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was obtained as .84. For this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the Continuous Hope Scale was determined as .85. These findings show that the scale is valid and reliable.

Doomscrolling Scale

The scale was developed to measure individuals' doomscrolling levels. The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was carried out by Satici and colleagues (2023). The scale can be used in 15-item and 4-item forms. The scale is a 7-point (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) Likert-type scale. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis performed for construct validity, the goodness of fit index values were found to be within acceptable limits. In the Turkish adaptation study, doomscrolling was found to be significantly and positively correlated with the big five personality traits, social media addiction, fear of missing out, and social media addiction. The Cronbach alpha coefficient calculated for the reliability of the scale was sufficient. In this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the Doomscrolling Scale was determined as .95.

Data Analysis and Procedure

The data in the study was obtained via Google Forms. The "Informed Consent Form" is first included in Google Forms. In the data analysis process of the study, it was examined whether the data showed a normal distribution. First, skewness and kurtosis values were examined for normality values. It was observed that these values were between +1.5 and - 1.5. It was seen that the data met the normality assumptions. Then, it was examined whether the data showed a homogeneous distribution. It was observed that the Levene test significance value was $p>0.05$. Therefore, it is understood that the data showed a homogeneous distribution. Parametric tests were used for the analyses in this direction.

IBM SPSS 25 was used for descriptive, reliability, correlation and regression analyses of the data in the study. To determine whether post-traumatic stress disorder differed according to gender, daily internet usage time and daily social media usage time, t-test and ANOVA were performed for independent samples. In addition, correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationships

between the variables. Finally, regression analysis was conducted to determine whether trait hope and doomscrolling predicted post-traumatic stress disorder.

Results

In this study, firstly, a t-test for independent samples was conducted to examine whether post-traumatic stress disorder differed significantly according to gender. The analysis findings are given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Differences in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Levels According to Gender of Participants*

Gender	<i>n</i>	\bar{X}	<i>Ss</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Female	299	3.10	.86	417	4.175	.000
Male	120	2.72	.87			

According to Table 1, the levels of post-traumatic stress disorder in adults who experienced an earthquake differ significantly according to gender ($t = 4.175$; $p < .05$). The levels of post-traumatic stress disorder in men were found to be significantly lower than the levels of post-traumatic stress disorder in women. ANOVA was performed to determine whether post-traumatic stress disorder differed significantly according to the duration of internet use. The analysis findings are given in Table 2.

Table 2. *Differences in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Levels According To Internet Usage Duration*

Internet	<i>n</i>	\bar{X}	<i>Ss</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Difference Direction
1. (0-1 hour)	15	2.64	.96	2.615	.035	1 < 5; 3 < 5
2. (1-2 hours)	53	2.89	.95			
3. (2-3 hours)	118	2.88	.81			
4. (3-4 hours)	90	2.99	.86			
5. (4 hours and above)	143	3.16	.89			

According to Table 2, the levels of post-traumatic stress disorder in adults who experienced an earthquake differ significantly according to the duration of internet use ($F = 2.615$, $p < .05$). As the duration of internet use increases, the levels of post-traumatic stress disorder also increase. According to the LSD test results conducted to determine the direction of the difference, the levels of post-traumatic stress disorder in those who used the internet for 4 hours and more were found to be significantly higher than those who used the internet for 0-1 hour and 2-3 hours. ANOVA was performed to determine whether post-traumatic stress disorder differed significantly according to the duration of social media use. The analysis findings are given in Table 3.

Table 3. *Differences Between Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Levels According To Social Media Usage Duration*

Internet usage time	n	\bar{X}	Ss	F	p	Difference Direction
1. (0-1 hour)	69	2.77	.84	3.266	.012	1< 5; 2<5; 1<4
2. (1-2 hours)	112	2.90	.86			
3. (2-3 hours)	92	2.98	.86			
4. (3-4 hours)	84	3.11	.88			
5. (4 hours and above)	62	3.25	.91			

According to Table 3, the levels of post-traumatic stress disorder in adults who experienced an earthquake differ significantly according to the duration of social media use ($F = 3.266$, $p < .05$). As the duration of social media use increases, the levels of post-traumatic stress disorder also increase. According to the LSD test results conducted to determine the direction of the difference, the levels of post-traumatic stress disorder in those who use the internet for 4 hours or more per day were significantly higher than those who used it for 0-1 hour and 1-2 hours, and in those who used it for 3-4 hours, it was significantly higher than those who used it for 0-1 hour. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics and correlation values of the variables.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables*

Variable	1	2	3
1. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	–		
2. Dispositional Hope	-.17**	–	
3. Doomscrolling	.38**	-.20**	–
Mean	2.99	5.44	2.58
Standart deviation	.88	1.30	1.46
Minimum	1.00	1.38	1.00
Maksimum	4.75	8.00	7.00
Skewness	-.176	-.412	.872
Kurtosis	-.553	-.003	-.170

When Table 4 is examined, a significant negative relationship was found between post-traumatic stress disorder and hope ($r = -.17$), and a significant positive relationship was found between doomscrolling ($r = .38$). In addition, a significant negative relationship was found between doomscrolling and dispositional hope ($r = -.20$). The findings of the multiple regression analysis are given in Table 5.

Table 5. *Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Prediction of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*

Predictor Variable	B	Standard Error	β	t	p	Partial r
Constant	2.774	.200	–	13.856	.00	
Dispositional Hope	-.064	.031	-.095	-2.059	.00	-.100
Doomscrolling	.219	.028	.365	7.952	.00	.363

$R = .395$, $R^2 = .16$, $F = 38.534$, $Sd = 2;416$, $p = .000$

When the multiple regression results are examined in Table 5, it is determined that the model is significant. Hope and doomscrolling levels significantly predict post-traumatic stress disorder

($F(2;416) = 38.534$; $p < .01$). Hope and doomscrewing, which are predictor variables, explained approximately 16% of the total variance of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Discussion

In this study, it was first found that PTSD symptoms were higher in women than in men. Therefore, the first hypothesis of our study was confirmed. Previous research findings support this finding. For example, Irish et al. (2011) concluded that post-traumatic stress symptoms were higher in women than in men at 6 weeks and 6 months after a motor vehicle accident in individuals who experienced trauma due to a motor vehicle accident. Similarly, Tolin and Foa (2008) concluded in their meta-analysis that women were at a higher risk of meeting PTSD criteria than men.

Researchers argue that women are two to three times more likely to develop PTSD than men. The lifetime prevalence of PTSD in women is approximately 10-12%, while it is 5-6% in men (Olf, 2017). In a large sample study, 1075 out of 5220 participants (20.6%) met the criteria for PTSD, and the prevalence of PTSD in women (25.6%) was approximately twice as high as in men (13.2%) (Ditlevsen & Elklit, 2012). In addition to the higher prevalence of PTSD in women, PTSD symptoms are more severe than in men (Christiansen & Berke, 2020). Therefore, preventive studies to be conducted to prevent the emergence of PTSD in women exposed to traumatic events are extremely important. However, considering that women respond more positively to treatment than men (Christiansen & Berke, 2020; Gogos et al., 2019), it shows the importance of applying psychotherapies with treatment methods such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Biological and psychosocial factors may contribute to the higher prevalence of PTSD symptoms among women compared to men. First of all, women experience peritraumatic distress (stress, negative emotions, life threats, and physical arousal during or shortly after the trauma) at a higher level than men (Olf, 2017). Factors that make women more vulnerable to PTSD include the fact that women are more likely to be exposed to traumatic events that have a high risk of causing PTSD, such as sexual abuse, and that women are exposed to traumatic events at an earlier age than men (Wilker et al., 2021). Another explanation is that women and men use different coping mechanisms when faced with traumatic events. The fact that women use more emotion-focused coping mechanisms in the face of challenging life events may put women at risk for PTSD symptoms (Gavranidou & Rosner, 2003). Numerous studies have emphasized the role of hormones in explaining the differences between PTSD symptoms in men and women (Li & Graham, 2017; Gogos et al., 2019). We believe that the reason for the higher prevalence of PTSD in women is due to personal and environmental factors such as hormones, brain structure, genetic factors, use of different coping mechanisms, types of trauma experienced, and gender roles. For example, societies where women are subject to social pressure and gender discrimination can be shown as environmental risk factors that increase PTSD symptoms in women. Genetic factors that increase susceptibility to stress in women can be shown as the reason for the higher prevalence of PTSD symptoms in women.

The second finding of the study is that PTSD levels differ significantly according to the duration of internet and social media use in adults. In the study, the post-traumatic stress disorder levels of those who use the Internet for 4 hours or more per day were found to be higher than those who use it for 0-1 hour and 2-3 hours. In addition, the post-traumatic stress disorder levels of those who use social media for 4 hours or more per day were found to be significantly higher than those who use it for 0-1 hour and 1-2 hours, and those who use it for 3-4 hours were found to be significantly higher than those who use it for 0-1 hour. This finding of our study shows that individuals who use the internet and social media for a long time have a high risk of experiencing PTSD. This finding of our study is consistent with the findings of previous studies examining the relationship between internet and social media use and PTSD. For example, Evren and colleagues (2019) found a positive relationship between internet addiction and PTSD in their study of university students. Studies conducted on different age groups have also found that internet and social media addiction is positively associated with PTSD symptoms (Çakıcı et al., 2020; Mansour & Muamar, 2021; Yang et al., 2022). Considering that frequent use of the internet during the day (Kutlu et al., 2016) is among the symptoms of internet addiction, both the findings of this study and the findings of previous studies show that the duration of internet and social media use is a risk factor for PTSD. This may be due to users drawing more attention to negative content on the internet, which may lead to secondary trauma. Indeed, Kavak et al. (2023) concluded that internet and social media use may lead to secondary trauma. Today, repeated exposure to traumatic events on the internet and social media may lead to the emergence of PTSD in users and may increase the severity of PTSD (Comstock & Platania, 2017). It can also be said that spending too much time on the internet reduces life satisfaction and well-being (Evli & Şimşek, 2022) and may lead to various psychological problems (Taş, 2018; Taş & İme, 2019), leaving users vulnerable to the emergence of PTSD. As a result of these findings, we believe that as the duration of internet and social media use increases, they are exposed to more negative content, causing secondary trauma and increasing the level of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Within the scope of the third hypothesis of the study, it was concluded that dispositional hope is negatively related to PTSD. It was also concluded that dispositional hope negatively predicts PTSD. This result shows that individuals with high trait hope levels will experience fewer PTSD symptoms. Empirical evidence suggests that hope is linked to fewer psychological disorders (Hedayati & Khazaei, 2014; Muyan et al., 2016). Hope can reduce PTSD symptoms by supporting individuals' psychological resilience, and functionality (Long, 2022). This finding of our study is consistent with the findings of research examining the relationship between hope and PTSD. For example, Gallagher and colleagues (2020) conducted a meta-analysis using 20 studies examining the relationship between hope and PTSD and concluded that the relationship between hope and PTSD was moderate (weighted average effect sizes – .34) and negative. Qiong and colleagues (2019) concluded that hope was negatively associated with PTSD symptoms in mothers and fathers in their study on parents whose children had died. Similarly, a study conducted with university students found that hope reduced post-traumatic stress symptoms in university students (Liu et al., 2017). Many recent studies have also concluded that increasing hope levels in different age

groups reduces PTSD in individuals (Sparks et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2017). In addition, researchers have examined the relationship between hope and PTSD, as well as the links between hope and post-traumatic growth. Researchers have shown that hope supports post-traumatic growth in individuals (Di Corrado et al., 2022; Laslo-Roth et al., 2020). As a result, many studies have shown that hope is negatively associated with post-traumatic stress disorder, parallel to the findings of our study. In the context of these findings, we believe that hopeful individuals' characteristics of generating solutions and taking action help individuals to reduce the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Finally, the study concluded that doomscrolling is positively and significantly associated with PTSD. It was also concluded that doomscrolling positively predicts PTSD. This result shows that individuals with high levels of doomscrolling may experience more PTSD symptoms. In other words, doomscrolling is a risk factor for PTSD. In a study conducted with young adults, it was determined that there was a relationship between daily exposure to social media related to the pandemic during the COVID-19 period and PTSD symptoms (Price et al., 2022). Although there is limited research in the literature examining the relationship between doomscrolling and PTSD, there are studies investigating its connection with various psychological problems. Taskin et al. (2024) examined the relationship between doomscrolling and secondary traumatic stress in their study on adults. The study revealed a positive relationship between doomscrolling and secondary traumatic stress. In the same study, it was determined that doomscrolling reduces individuals' conscious awareness and mental well-being. Similarly, in another study, doomscrolling was found to be positively associated with psychological problems such as social media addiction, fear of missing out, and psychological distress (Satıcı et al., 2023). In addition, researchers have shown that doomscrolling harms psychological health (Dyar et al., 2024; Kaya & Griffiths, 2024; Sharma et al., 2022). As a result, studies show that doomscrolling may be a risk factor in terms of triggering psychological problems in individuals. The reason for this may be that doomscrolling initially meets the need for information seeking regarding uncertainty but later leads to a cycle of information seeking feeling negative emotions information seeking. In the context of these findings, even if individuals are not exposed to trauma, they may be negatively affected by traumatic events because they constantly watch, follow and become addicted to bad events. In addition, it is thought that people who have been exposed to trauma may be negatively affected by watching and following bad events in the same way as people who have been exposed to trauma and may develop post-traumatic stress disorder as a result.

Ethical Approval: This research was carried out with permission received from Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee with decision number 257 dated 14/08/2024.

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