



Article Info/Makale Bilgisi

✓Received/Geliş: 03.04.2024 ✓Accepted/Kabul: 09.09.2024

DOI:10.30794/pausbed.1464073

Research Article/Araştırma Makalesi

Baran, Z. ve Karaca, Ş. (2024). "Narcissism and Envy's Effect on Tourists' Sharing Selfie in Social Comparison Theory Approach", *Pamukkale University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, issue 65, pp. 339-349.

## NARCISSISM AND ENVY'S EFFECT ON TOURISTS' SHARING SELFIE IN SOCIAL COMPARISON THEORY APPROACH\*

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### Abstract

Tourism, as a social endeavor, has been significantly influenced by advancements in technology and communication tools, thereby facilitating interpersonal interactions as a social activity. The widespread integration of smart technologies and the continually evolving social media platforms have fundamentally altered the rapid dissemination of tourist experiences. Consequently, this research aims to examine the tendency to share selfies on social media platforms within the framework of social comparison theory. Data were collected from 533 participants through an online survey and were subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, and Path Analysis within the framework of Structural Equation Modeling. The analyses revealed that narcissism and envy positively impact tourists' tendencies to share selfies on social media platforms. Based on these findings, the study offers recommendations for developing effective strategies for tourism stakeholders.

**Keywords:** *Narcissism, Envy, Selfie, Social media, Social comparison theory.*

## SOSYAL KARŞILAŞTIRMA KURAMI BAĞLAMINDA NARSİSİZM VE İMRENMENİN TURİSTLERİN ÖZÇEKİM FOTOĞRAFLARINI PAYLAŞMALARINA ETKİSİ

### Öz

Turizm, toplumsal bir uğraş olarak, teknoloji ve iletişim araçlarındaki gelişmelerden önemli ölçüde etkilenecek kişilerarası etkileşimi kolaylaştıran sosyal bir faaliyet olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Akıllı teknolojilerin yaygın entegrasyonu ve sürekli evrilen sosyal medya platformları, turistik deneyimlerin hızlı bir şekilde yayılmasını temel bir şekilde değiştirmiştir. Bu nedenle, bu araştırma, sosyal karşılaştırma kuramı çerçevesinde özçekimler olarak bilinen selfie'lerin sosyal medya platformlarında paylaşılma eğilimini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada, 533 katılımcıdan çevrimiçi anket aracılığıyla veriler toplanmış ve veriler Açıklayıcı Faktör Analizi ile Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi kapsamında Doğrulayıcı Faktör Analizi ve Yol Analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Yapılan analizler sonucunda; narsisizm ve kıskançlık duygusunun turistlerin sosyal medya platformlarında selfie paylaşma eğilimlerini olumlu yönde etkilediği tespit edilmiştir. Bu sonuçlara dayanarak, çalışma turizm paydaşları için etkili stratejilerin geliştirilmesine ilişkin öneriler sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *Narsisizm, İmrenme, Özçekim, Sosyal medya, Sosyal karşılaştırma teorisi.*

\*This study is an updated and enhanced version of the paper originally presented as an oral presentation at the Latin America 4th International Conference on Scientific Research, held from November 3 to 6, 2022, in Mexico City.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

During specific stages of their lives, individuals have a tendency to engage in social and lifestyle comparisons with others (Locke & Nekich, 2000). It is argued that this comparison situation has certain effects on human emotions (Buunk et al., 2001). Research has demonstrated that individuals who experience feelings of threat and people experiencing uncertainty frequently engage in social comparison with others facing similar circumstances, as a means of coping with their situation. Personality traits such as neuroticism, depression, and narcissism, which are indicative of chronic uncertainty in one's self-concept, have been investigated in relation to social comparison activity. Individuals exhibiting these traits tend to engage in more frequent social comparisons and may experience more negative reactions to such comparisons (VanderZee et al., 1996). Furthermore, research has suggested that individuals with characteristics such as envy, anxiety, low self-esteem, and narcissism are probably to interact in social comparison behavior (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999), and their social comparison aspects are associated with negative emotions (Crocker et al., 1987; Buunk et al., 1990; Wheeler & Miyake, 1992; Ahrens & Alloy, 1997; Bogart & Helgeson, 2000).

The growing ubiquity of the internet and social media utilization has resulted in an upsurge in tourists' dissemination of their travel experiences via photographs, particularly (Jansson, 2018). Given the readily available internet access and the extensive adoption of social media platforms, a rising proportion of travelers can now promptly share their travel experiences as they embark on their trips (Lund et al., 2020). Furthermore, the ubiquitous nature of smartphones has removed the constraints of time and place for individuals to share their travel experiences (Baran, 2021), resulting in significant implications for tourists' travel behaviors and the tourism experiences they derive (Yu et al., 2018). According to studies on individuals' tendencies to share photos, one of the main reasons behind taking pictures is to capture and remember travel experiences (Chae, 2017), and there is a relationship between sharing photos with the social environment (Grewal et al., 2019; Taylor, 2020).

The importance of self-portraits (selfies) shared on social media for the tourism industry is steadily escalating on a daily basis, as they affect individuals' travel decision-making processes (Taylor, 2020). Selfies are reported to have a positive impact on tourism perception (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017) and are effective in influencing the holiday intentions of different tourists in the future (Wong et al., 2020). The research aims to examine how narcissism and envy impact tourists' tendency to share self-portraits, commonly known as selfies, on social media platforms, within the framework of social comparison theory. While previous studies conducted by Gong (2016), Baniqued (2019), Aylan (2020), O'Day & Heimberg (2021), and Kanwal & Isha (2022) have primarily focused on examining the association among personality traits, social media usage, and travel intentions, this current research aims to expand upon the extant scholarly discourse by delving into the ramifications of narcissism and envy on tourists' propensity to share selfies on social media. This research is particularly interested in examining this phenomenon within the framework of social comparison theory, no previous research has specifically explored this topic.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The widespread usage of social media among people can be attributed to the progress in technology, the increasing popularity of digital environments, and the widespread use of smart mobile devices (Baran, 2020). It has also become an integral part of life with its increasing use among the younger generation. Drawing upon the social comparison theory, it is posited that the augmented employment of social media channels as a result of technological advancements exerts an influence on the narcissistic and envious sentiments of tourists as they engage in the practice of sharing their selfies. Hypotheses developed within this scope are explained below in the form of headings.

### **2. 1. Narcissism and Selfie Sharing on Social Media**

Larsen (2008) defines photography as a logical progression of individuals' inclination to showcase themselves on modern digital platforms. Although taking pictures with personal mobile devices has become a common habit (Lo & McKercher, 2015) in the realm of tourism experiences, travel photography is considered to be a form of personal media (Wang et al., 2012). Selfie is a worldwide popular phenomenon and refers to the self-portrait taken by an individual using their portable smart devices (Oxford, 2013). Today, there is a striking increase in selfie-

taking and sharing behaviors. With the increasing popularity of selfies on visual-based social media platforms, research interest in exploring the relationship between individual personality traits and photo-sharing behavior is also increasing (Chae, 2017). It has been suggested that narcissism consists of heterogeneous personality components that symbolize both compatibility and incompatibility (Emmons, 1984; Watson et al., 1987; Raskin & Novacek, 1989; Wink, 1991). Narcissism is characterized by an exploitative tendency, which involves a desire to manipulate others for personal gain (Raskin & Hall, 1979), and is associated with negative personality traits such as distrust, depression, neuroticism, tension, and anxiety (Emmons, 1984). However, the success and leadership aspect of narcissism, which manifests as a sense of power over others, is associated with positive personality traits such as intimacy, social dominance, and extraversion (Emmons, 1987). Previous studies have consistently found that individuals with higher levels of narcissism are more likely to share selfies on social media (Kim et al., 2016; Weiser, 2015). The relationship between selfie-taking and social comparison is primarily explained by narcissism, with research demonstrating a positive association between narcissism and selfie-taking (Halpern et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2016). As a result, individuals who frequently take selfies tend to exhibit narcissistic traits, viewing themselves as distinctive and superior to others, and seeking attention and admiration from their peers. Narcissists may attempt to validate their sense of superiority by comparing themselves to others (APA, 2000). It has been suggested that there exists a reciprocal relationship between narcissism and selfie-taking, wherein narcissistic tendencies encourage greater frequency of selfie-taking, and conversely, engaging in selfie-taking contributes to the amplification of narcissistic traits over time (Halpern et al., 2016). In this direction, the relation hypothesis is formed:

H<sub>1</sub>: In the context of social comparison theory, the propensity of tourists to share selfie photos on social media is positively influenced by narcissism.

## **2. 2. Envy and Selfie Sharing on Social Media**

Individuals often engage in self-promotion to build and maintain self-esteem by seeking positive feedback and compliments from others (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Numerous tourists purposefully curate and adjust the images, especially selfies, they post on social media platforms to portray a specific image of themselves (Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013). Goffman (1959) coined the term “impression management” to describe this intentional self-presentation. The process of self-promotion involves creating envy in others to generate a positive image of oneself (Lyu, 2016). The mobile applications’ development that enable travelers to edit and improve their photos and modify their self-presentation has made it easier for them to engage in strategic self-promotion (Hancock & Toma, 2009). Social media users frequently employ strategic self-promotion techniques to create desired impressions and generate envy (Rui & Stefanone, 2013). Desired positive reactions from others encourage users to intentionally share their images, particularly those who seek to envy or be envied, which in turn leads to increased social media using (Kim & Lee, 2011). According to Rosenberg and Egbert’s (2011) findings, the desire for positive self-growth serves as a driving force for self-promotion behavior. As a result, there is an increase in social media usage. In this direction, the relation hypothesis is formed:

H<sub>2</sub>: In the context of social comparison theory, the inclination of tourists to share selfie photos on social media is positively influenced by envy.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this research is to investigate the association between narcissism, envy, and tourists’ inclination to share selfies. The data collection for this research took place from October to November in 2022. Social Sciences Ethics Committee provided ethical confirmation for the research from Sivas Cumhuriyet University.

### **3. 1. Population - Sample**

This study targets individuals aged 18 and above residing in Türkiye, encompassing a population whose demographic characteristics align with the research objectives. The sample size comprises 533 participants, selected via convenience sampling methodology from among users of social media platforms.

### 3. 2. Data Collection Instruments

A measurement tool consisting of 14 statements was used to collect data, with participants asked to evaluate their responses using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The study utilized the Narcissism, Envy, and Travel Selfie Scales, which were developed by Taylor (2020) and whose reliability and validity were tested by Baran and Karaca (2022). The measurement tool also includes six statements measuring participants’ demographic characteristics.

### 3. 3. Data Analysis

In this regard, first, the participants’ demographic characteristics were identified through frequency analysis performed using the SPSS. Firstly, Exploratory Factor Analysis was applied to the data with SPSS, and then Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Path Analysis were performed with AMOS.

## 4. FINDINGS

The statistical data related to the participants’ demographic features below in Table 1:

**Table 1: Demographic Features**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>61,5</b>	<b>Married</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>38,5</b>	<b>Single</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>18-25</b>	304	57	<b>Primary education</b>	13	2,4
<b>26-35</b>	94	17,6	<b>High school</b>	73	13,7
<b>36-45</b>	61	11,4	<b>Associate Degree</b>	81	15,2
<b>46-55</b>	48	9	<b>Bachelor’s Degree</b>	169	31,7
<b>56 years and older</b>	26	4,9	<b>Postgraduate Degree</b>	197	37
<b>Income</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Job</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>10.000 ₺ and below</b>	268	50,3	<b>Public sector</b>	94	17,6
<b>10.001-15.000 ₺</b>	55	10,3	<b>Private sector</b>	87	16,3
<b>15.001-20.000 ₺</b>	43	8,1	<b>Housewife</b>	19	3,6
<b>20.001- 30.000 ₺</b>	22	4,1	<b>Student</b>	281	52,7
<b>30.001-40.000 ₺</b>	31	5,8	<b>Unemployed</b>	23	4,3
<b>40.001-50.000 ₺</b>	38	7,1	<b>Other</b>	29	5,5
<b>50.000 ₺ and above</b>	76	14,3			
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>100</b>

According to Table 1, 61.5% are female and 38.5% are male, indicating a slight skew toward female representation. Regarding marital status, 28% are married, while 72% are single. Notably, 57% of participants fall within the 18-25 age bracket, indicating a substantial presence of young adults. Additionally, 50.3% have a monthly income of 10.000 ₺ or below. Furthermore, 37% of the participants are postgraduates, while 52.7% are students in the study.

### 4.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to group, classify, and transform scale items into underlying factors. To ensure the data set was suitable for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett’s

Test of Sphericity were first performed. For the data to be deemed appropriate for factor analysis, the KMO value should be at least 0.60, and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity should yield a significant “p” value (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

**Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis Results**

Scales				Eigenvalue	Variance (%)
<b>Narcissism</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	5,352	28,414
NA2	,863				
NA4	,847				
NA3	,812				
NA1	,755				
NA5	,686				
NA6	,666				
<b>Envy</b>				3,189	26,588
ENV3		,911			
ENV4		,891			
ENV2		,888			
ENV5		,881			
ENV1		,813			
<b>Selfie</b>				1,900	19,578
SEL3			,914		
SEL1			,902		
SEL2			,892		
KMO: ,861	Bartlett Test: 5643,165		p: ,000		

The Exploratory Factor Analysis revealed that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.861, indicating that the sample size is adequate for factor analysis. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity showed a significant p-value, confirming the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. Additionally, the variance explained by each dimension was as follows: Narcissism dimension explained 28.414% of the variance, Envy dimension explained 26.588%, and the Selfie dimension explained 19.578% of the variance.

**4.2. Validity and Reliability Findings**

The research model underwent factor analysis initially to assess the validity and reliability of its scale. The scale utilized was subjected to validity and reliability assessment through factor analysis, as presented in Table 3:

**Table 3: Validity and Reliability**

Factors	Cronbach Alpha	AVE	CR
<b>Narcissism</b>	,875	,601	,899
<b>Envy</b>	,933	,770	,943
<b>Selfie</b>	,930	,815	,930

Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was computed assessing the reliability of factors utilized in the research. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the reliability coefficient of the overall scale was 0.911. When the reliability coefficients of the dimensions of the scale in Table 3 are examined, it can be seen that the envy factor is 0.921, the narcissism factor is 0.878, and the self-esteem dimension is 0.896. These values indicate that the scale has a high level of reliability. In order to test the convergent validity of the scale, the average variance explained (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) values were examined. For convergent validity, the AVE value should be greater than or equal to 0.50 and the CR value should be greater than the AVE value (AVE≥0,50) for

all dimensions (Hair et al., 2010). According to Table 3, all factors demonstrate satisfactory construct validity, as evidenced by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpassing 0.5 and Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeding 0.7, with CR values consistently higher than the AVE values, the scale demonstrated robust validity and reliability.

#### 4.3. Normality Test

Normality test was conducted to determine whether the scales used in the study followed a normal distribution. This test aimed to determine if the data adhering to a normal distribution, and thus whether the assumptions of normality were met. The findings of this analysis are provided in Table 4, which presents the skewness and kurtosis values:

**Table 4. Skewness and Kurtosis**

Factors	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max
Narcissism	-,100	-,896	1,00	5,00
Envy	,457	-,928	1,00	5,00
Selfie	-,491	-1,112	1,00	5,00

In order for the data to follow a normal distribution, the skewness and kurtosis values should be between -2 and +2 (George & Mallery, 2010). When Table 4 was examined, it was seen that the obtained skewness and kurtosis values met the normality requirement.

#### 4.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Findings

Before proceeding with path analysis to assess the research model, confirming the structure of all factors within the model through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was imperative. The goodness-of-fit values derived from the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) conducted for the narcissism, envy, and self-esteem factors are presented in Table 5. The results of this analysis are outlined below in Table 5:

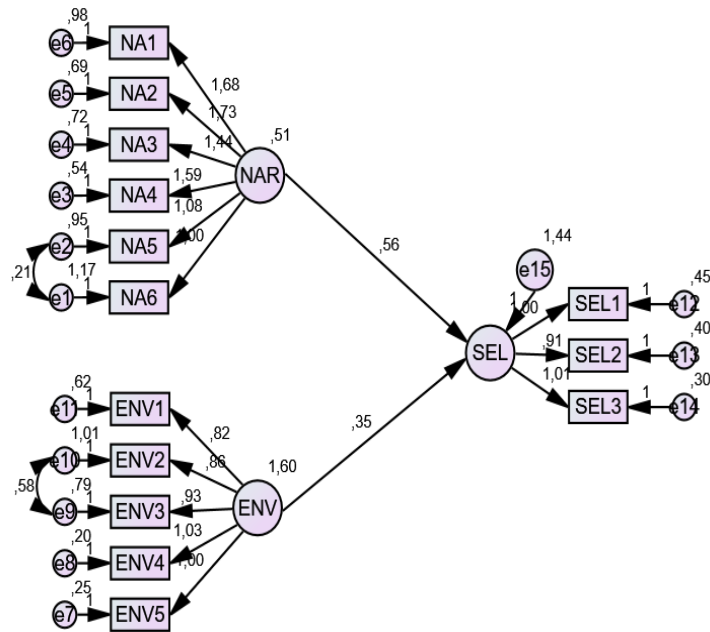
**Table 5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Goodness of Fit Values	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit	Scales		
			Narcissism	Envy	Selfie
$\chi^2 / sd$	$\chi^2 / sd \leq 3$	$\chi^2 / sd \leq 5$	3,542	3,954	-
GFI	$0.90 \leq GFI$	$0.85 \leq GFI$	,985	,991	1,000
CFI	$0.97 \leq CFI$	$0.95 \leq CFI$	,988	,996	1,000
TLI (NNFI)	$0.95 \leq TLI$	$0.90 \leq TLI$	,975	,988	
RMSEA	$RMSEA \leq 0.05$	$RMSEA \leq 0.08$	,069	,075	-

The results presented in Table 5 indicate that the good fit indices for all of the factors examined in the research demonstrate a robust fit between the collected data and the hypothesized model. Therefore, it can be induced that the model accurately represents the underlying associations between the variables.

#### 4.5. Path Analysis Findings

To evaluate the magnitude and significance of the associations between the variables in the research model, a path analysis was performed, as presented in Figure 1:



**Figure 1. Path Analysis**

The goodness of fit indices of the research model obtained from the path analysis are below in Table 6:

**Table 6. Goodness of Fit Values**

Fit Measures	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit	Research Model
X <sup>2</sup> /sd	≤3	≤5	<b>4,313</b>
GFI	≥0,90	≥0,85	<b>,924</b>
CFI	≥0,97	≥0,95	<b>,957</b>
TLI (NNFI)	≥0,95	≥0,90	<b>,946</b>
RMSEA	≤0,05	≤0,08	<b>,079</b>

Upon scrutinizing the research model, it becomes evident that all good fit indices indicate a satisfactory fit. Table 7 displays the parameter estimates of the structural model, which contribute to the determination of the good fit indices.

**Table 7. Structural Model**

Extrinsic Variable	Internal Variable	Standardized Regression Coefficient	Standard Deviations	p Value	Situation
Narcissism Selfie	,557	,297	,091	,000	Accept
Envy Selfie	,347	,328	,045	,000	Accept

According to the path analysis table, it was found that narcissism and envy have a positive effect on tourists' sharing of self-portrait photos on social media. Therefore, hypotheses H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> were accepted.

**5. RESULT**

The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of narcissism and envy on the phenomenon of tourists posting selfies on social media platforms. To achieve this, the research design involved utilizing structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypotheses. Before undertaking Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), it was essential to verify the normal distribution of the data. Additionally, reliability and validity analyses were

conducted to ensure the quality of the measurement scales employed in the research. The Cronbach's alpha values for the scales were found to be above 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. Furthermore, construct validity was confirmed through the application of the convergent validity method. The results revealed that all factor Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeded 0.7, while Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were above 0.5. Additionally, all CR values surpassed their corresponding AVE values, affirming acceptable convergent validity. Additionally, the research model was subjected to examination via path analysis to investigate the research hypotheses. The findings indicated that narcissism and envy had a positive impact on tourists' behavior of sharing selfies on social media, thus providing support for the acceptance of H1 and H2 hypotheses. Overall, the research adds to the current literature by highlighting the significance of individual factors in shaping tourists' behavior on social media and highlights the significance of examining the motivations behind the sharing of selfies on social media platforms. The findings obtained are consistent with studies in the literature. Halpern et al. (2016), Kim et al. (2016), and Taylor and Strutton (2016), as well as Taylor (2020), have indicated a positive relationship between narcissism and self-portraiture. Furthermore, Halpern et al. (2016), Kim et al. (2016), and Taylor and Strutton (2016), as well as Taylor (2020), have identified that both narcissism and envy increase the likelihood of travelers sharing selfies through both direct and mediating self-presentation mechanisms.

Research on the influence of narcissism and envy on tourists' sharing of selfie photos is relatively new and controversial. Some studies show that narcissistic personality traits can lead to the frequent sharing of selfie photos, driven by the need for self-presentation, self-confidence, and acceptance. On the other hand, tourists' reasons for taking and sharing selfies are varied, and envy can be among those reasons. Thus, taking and sharing selfies with tourists is not solely driven by narcissism and envy, but other factors may also be influential. Moreover, the influence of narcissism and envy on tourists' sharing of selfie photos can lead to various outcomes. For instance, sharing these photos can positively influence the tourism industry and enhance the appeal of a particular destination. However, the same photos shared on social media may not be an accurate reflection of reality, leading to tourists providing misleading information about the destination. Additionally, sharing of selfie photos by tourists can be seen as narcissistic behavior, leading to criticisms among social media users.

The key outcome of this research is the significant influence of narcissism and envy on tourists' sharing of selfies, indicating that these psychological traits play a pivotal role in motivating individuals to capture and disseminate selfies. The study's findings reveal that social comparison with friends indirectly increases both the frequency of selfie sharing on social media and the overall extent of social media usage. However, the study's sample predominantly consists of individuals aged 18-25, with approximately 57% of participants falling into this age bracket. This significant age skew means that the results may not be generalizable to other age groups. As a result, caution is advised when interpreting the findings, as they might not reflect broader demographic trends. Despite this limitation, the study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of selfie-sharing behavior on social media, emphasizing the role of social comparison. The research highlights how individuals with higher levels of narcissism and envy are more inclined to take and share selfies, a behavior further encouraged by social media platforms that promote self-presentation. The complex relationship between these psychological traits and selfie-sharing is influenced by various factors, including age, culture, and social norms. To build on these findings, future research should explore selfie-sharing behavior across different age groups and consider additional theoretical perspectives. Specifically, investigating how narcissism and envy impact selfie-sharing among tourists in various age brackets could offer new insights. Additionally, examining the cultural significance of selfie sharing and how other characteristics affect travel decisions in a tourist context are important areas for further study.

Selfie-sharing can have different meanings in different cultures. For example, while selfie sharing is more common in some cultures, taking or sharing selfies can create a negative image in some other cultures. Therefore, it may be important to investigate the differences in narcissism and envy levels and the selfie-sharing behavior of tourists in different cultures.

Tourists' travel decisions can also be influenced by characteristics such as selfie-sharing behavior. Therefore, it may be important to investigate the relationship between other characteristic features of tourists (e.g., risk-taking tendency, level of confidence) and selfie-sharing behavior in terms of their impact on travel decisions.



This research has indicated that sharing selfies increases social media usage. However, it may be necessary to conduct more comprehensive research on the correlation between tourists' social media usage and selfie-sharing behavior, as well as studies that examine the interplay of this relationship with other factors.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the influence of narcissism and envy on tourists' sharing of selfies on social media. According to the results, individuals with elevated levels of these psychological traits exhibit a greater tendency towards selfie-taking and sharing behavior, which is amplified by the presence of social media platforms. However, the relationship between these psychological traits and selfie-sharing is complex and influenced by various contextual factors. Thus, future research that considers other age groups, cultural differences, and other characteristic features of tourists can provide a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. In summary, this research adds to the increasing literature on the influence of psychological characteristics on tourists' conduct in the era of social media.

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#### **Beyan ve Açıklamalar (Disclosure Statements)**

1. The authors of this article confirm that their work complies with the principles of research and publication ethics (Bu çalışmanın yazarları, araştırma ve yayın etiği ilkelerine uyduklarını kabul etmektedirler).
2. No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors (Yazarlar tarafından herhangi bir çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir).
3. This article was screened for potential plagiarism using a plagiarism screening program (Bu çalışma, intihal tarama programı kullanılarak intihal taramasından geçirilmiştir).