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Does Gender, Getting an Art Education, and Mental Health Explain The Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness?

Cinsiyet, Sanat Eğitimi Alma ve Ruh Sağlığı Görünümle İlişkili Sosyal Medya Bilincini Açıklar Mı?

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the appearance-related social media consciousness levels of university students in terms of gender, get art education, and psychological symptoms (depression, anxiety, stress) variables. This research was carried out with the correlational model, which is one of the quantitative research methods. The study group of the research consists of 295 university students, 229 female, and 66 male, studying at different higher education institutions in Turkey. The Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness Scale, Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21, and Personal Information Form were used in the research. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis and Hierarchical Regression Analysis methods were used in the analysis of the data. In the research, it was seen that gender (female), get art education (yes), and psychological symptoms (depression, anxiety, stress) had a significant explanatory value of 14.9% on the appearance-related social media consciousness. The findings obtained from the research were discussed within the framework of the literature and suggestions were made.

Article Information

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ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı, üniversite öğrencilerinin görünümle ilişkili sosyal medya bilinç düzeylerinin cinsiyet, sanat eğitimi alma ve psikolojik belirtiler (depresyon, kaygı, stres) değişkenleri açısından incelemektir. Bu araştırma, nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan ilişkisel model ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Türkiye'de farklı yükseköğretim kurumlarında öğrenim gören 229'u kadın, 66'sı erkek olmak üzere 295 üniversite öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada, "Görünümle İlişkili Sosyal Medya Bilinç Ölçeği", "Depresyon, Anksiyete, Stres Ölçeği-21" ve "Kişisel Bilgi Formu" kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde Pearson Moment Korelasyon Analizi ve Hiyerarşik Regresyon Analizi yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada cinsiyet (kadın), sanat eğitimi alma (evet) ve psikolojik belirtilerin (depresyon, kaygı, stres) görünümle ilişkili sosyal medya bilinç düzeylerindeki toplam puanın %14,9'unu anlamlı bir şekilde açıkladığı görülmüştür. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgular alan yazın çerçevesinde tartışılmış ve çeşitli önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, the impulses people have been effective in shaping their lives and behaviors. The perception of taste, which is one of these impulses; is associated with looking beautiful, gaining admiration, and ensuring their continuity. Being popular today is equated with being liked more. Hart, Leary, and Rejeski (1989) state that physical appearance has been important in social life since the beginning of humanity. Therefore, individuals give importance to their external appearance in their social lives and evaluate their physical appearance as bad or good (Kaplan, 2022). This system of thought, which is formed by the influence of popular culture, can be felt in social media tools and every part of society today. This situation causes individuals to pay more attention to their perceptions of their appearance and evaluate their photos on social media in this way (Öngören, Durdu, Dongaz, Bayar, & Bayar, 2021). The focus of this research is the appearance-related social media consciousness, which is a concept that focuses on how individuals' photo sharing on social media is perceived by others.

In recent years, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. The use of photo-based social media tools such as. In the research of the digital platform conducted by We Are Social (2022), it was seen that the Instagram platform is a frequently used social media platform, especially among adolescents and young adults. The increasing use of photo-based social media tools such as Instagram can also shape the sharing of individuals on these platforms (Scott, Boyle, Czerniawska, & Courtney, 2018). This situation can affect individuals' concerns and thoughts about how they are perceived by others when sharing their photos on social media platforms (Boursier, Gioia, & Griffiths, 2020). Because today, individuals can make an effort to make a more effective impression on other people and to look attractive with their photo sharing on social media (Öngören et al., 2021). Individuals who think that their sharing will not make a good impression on other people may experience anxiety (Vander Dussen, 2021). This situation is defined as appearance-related social media consciousness (Choukas-Bradley, Nesi, Widman, & Galla, 2020). The characteristics of social media and the social importance given to physical appearance lead to social media consciousness associated with an appearance in an integrated manner. Appearance-related social media consciousness is defined as individuals' consciousness of how their socially constructed body images will be perceived by others (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2020; Öngören et al., 2021). This concept can be considered as one of the forms of social appearance anxiety in life transferred to the social media environment. It is thought that the social media consciousness levels of individuals related to appearance can be explained by different psychological and social structures. In this context, it is thought that the variables of gender, get art education, and psychological symptoms can explain social media consciousness related to appearance.

In the study, it is thought that the social media consciousness levels of university students related to appearance can be explained by the gender variable. Studies show that gender has an important predictive role in favor of women in shaping social appearance and body perception (Demarest & Allen, 2000; Levinson et al., 2013). In this respect, it can be said that the state of anxiety experienced as a result of having negative perceptions and thoughts about the body may differ according to gender (Feingold & Mazzella, 1998). With the spread of social media, the reflection of body perception on photos in social media through shared photos can lead to the transfer of this problem to the social media environment (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). Therefore, it is thought that women who have negative body perceptions and thoughts about their photos while sharing photos on their social media accounts may have a higher

risk of social media anxiety related to appearance. In this context, it is predicted that the gender variable can significantly predict social media consciousness related to appearance.

According to Kant, the reason why the judgment of taste is a general understanding of taste is that the enjoyment of the beautiful is a necessary pleasure or taste, and therefore it is a common pleasure in all people. The common aesthetic feeling is a mere ideal norm; a judgment of taste is given by following this ideal norm and this ideal rule. Every judgment made without relying on personal inclinations is made by this rule and based on it (Tunali, 2011). In the traditional approach to aesthetic and usual perception, the distinction made between content and becoming separates the conceptual from the objective and thus distances the mind from the object. Of course, mental contents can have the status of scientific entities whose accuracy can be ascertained independently of their source, as well as made objects (Brown, 1999). The aesthetic experience that progresses as a result of interaction with the work of art is an effective process in understanding and analyzing the work of art. Aesthetic experience is the interaction of the organism with the environment (Määttänen, 2017). J. Dewey tends to include all thinking, understanding, cognition, and insight into the subject of experience, in short, the entire research process and the results that follow. Objects do not "enter" our consciousness all at once: they are hierarchized, categorized, and classified by questioning and thinking processes and acquire "meaning" only through the activity of thought (Johnson, 2000). The next learned or perceived things or situations are the results of previously experienced knowledge. For this reason, having a conscious aesthetic experience shows that the next experiences and tastes will turn into an aesthetic appreciation. Art education is of great importance in this sense. According to Efland (2004), apart from popular culture, people should learn visual arts through museums, galleries, libraries, and schools. By learning in this way, students will develop a conscious understanding of aesthetics. According to Wittgenstein, a person can experience emotions expressed with words such as "ah" and "wonderful" in the process of aesthetic judgment. But examining them psychologically does not mean examining them aesthetically. The accuracy and reality of aesthetic judgments can be determined. The meaning of the beautiful, pleasant expressions used here is the meaning of "correct". This requires a more scientific and rational situation (Tunali, 2011). It is explained by this statement that there are teachable rules about art. Before evaluating an object, it is necessary to know the rules that will lead to an aesthetic judgment about it. Knowing the rules develops and changes judgment and taste. For this reason, it is expected that individuals who receive art education should have a conscious understanding of taste.

The psychological state of individuals can be effective in shaping the behaviors in their lives (Burger, 2019). It is supported by research that individuals who experience negative mental health symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and stress are more likely to face negative life experiences (Essex et al., 2006; Joshi & Sharma, 2020). In particular, it is known that the psychological state of the individual is effective in the formation of body perception and the formation of thoughts on this subject (Gillen & Markey, 2015). Therefore, this situation shows that individuals who are in a risky position in terms of mental health may have negative perceptions about photo sharing on social media. Because the mental state of the individual has an important place in the aesthetic evaluation of personal photos shared on photo-based social media tools. Different studies in the literature show that psychological symptoms (depression, anxiety, and stress) have a significant explanatory value in terms of social appearance anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and anxiety in social media sharing (Çelik & Tolan, 2021; Levinson et al., 2013; Nonterah et al., 2015). Therefore, in this study, it is thought that the stress, anxiety, and depression levels of university students may be a significant explainer of social media consciousness levels related to appearance.

Cyberpsychology has become an important research area of psychology, with the internet and social media tools having an important position in the lives of individuals recently (Norman, 2017). It can be said that examining the causes and effects of individuals' behaviors in the internet environment can contribute to this field and contribute to the planning of prevention and treatment studies against possible risks. Therefore, in this study, it is thought that focusing on different predictors of social media consciousness (gender, getting an art education, and psychological symptoms) related to appearance, which is one of the subjects of cyberpsychology, may contribute to the literature and the field. In this context, the explanation of university students' social media consciousness levels related to an appearance by the variables of gender, getting an art education, and psychological symptoms were examined. In this context, the following hypotheses were tested within the scope of the research:

H₁: The social media consciousness levels of university students related to appearance show a significant difference according to the variables of gender and getting art education.

H₂: There is a positive and significant relationship between the stress, depression, and anxiety levels of university students and their social media consciousness levels related to appearance.

H₃: The social media consciousness levels of university students related to appearance are significantly predicted by the variables of gender (female), getting an art education (yes), and psychological symptoms.

METHOD

This research was carried out with the correlational model, which is one of the quantitative research methods. In this model, the relationships between two or more variables are discussed (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2018). This model was used in the study because the predictors of social media consciousness levels related to the appearance of university students were examined.

Study Group

The study group of the research consists of 295 university students, 229 female (77.6%) and 66 male (22.4%), studying at different higher education institutions in Turkey. In addition, 127 of the participants are studying in Fine Arts Education undergraduate programs, while 168 are studying in other undergraduate programs.

Ethical Statement

This study was completed by the Helsinki Declaration. In addition, the ethics committee permissions for the research were obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Necmettin Erbakan University (Date: 13/05/2022; Number: 2022/205).

Data Collection Tools

The Appearance-Related Social Media Consciousness Scale. To determine the social media consciousness levels of university students related to appearance, (Öngören et al., 2021), the measurement tool adapted to Turkish was used. The measurement tool consists of one dimension and 13 items. The measurement tool was prepared in a 7-point Likert type, and the increase in the score obtained from the scale shows that the individual has more negative evaluation perceptions and thoughts about photo sharing on social media. Measuring tool; It consists of items such as "When people take my picture, I think about how I will look if the pictures are shared on social media and", "I imagine what my body will

look like in a social media picture even when I am alone" and "I would feel bad if an unappealing photo of me was published on social media". In the exploratory factor analysis performed for the measurement tool, it was seen that the one-dimensional structure explained 68.13% of the total variance. In addition, in the concurrent scale validity analysis of the measurement tool, a moderately significant negative correlation was found with the level of body liking. In the reliability analysis of the measurement tool, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .93.

Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21). A measurement tool adapted to Turkish by Sarıçam (2018) was used to determine the depression, anxiety, and stress levels of university students. The measurement tool consists of three sub-dimensions (depression, anxiety, stress) and 21 items. The measurement tool was prepared in a 4-point Likert type, and an increase in the score obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale indicates that the levels of the individual in the relevant sub-dimensions increase. Measuring tool; It consists of items such as "I had difficulty unwinding", "I noticed that my mouth was dry" and "I realized that I could not experience any positive emotions". In the validity study of the measurement tool, it was observed that it had acceptable fit indices in the normal sample and excellent fit indices in the clinical sample. In the clinical sample, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient was found as α=0.87 for the depression subscale, α=0.85 for the anxiety subscale, and α=0.81 for the stress subscale. In the normal sample, the test-retest correlation coefficients were found to be r=0.68 for the depression subscale, r=0.66 for the anxiety subscale, and r=0.61 for the stress subscale.

Personal Information Form. In the research, information about gender and getting art education of university students was obtained with this form created by the researchers.

Data Collection

Before starting the data collection process, permission was obtained from the researchers who developed the measurement tools to be used in the research. Afterward, university students who accepted to participate in the research voluntarily were informed about the purpose of the research. Some of the data were collected through Google Forms, an online data collection tool, and some of them were collected through face-to-face interviews. In the study, the data were collected in a single session and it took about 10 minutes for a student to fill out the measurement tool. After the data were collected, people who wanted to learn the results of the scale they filled in were reminded that the results could be shared with them if they wanted. In this context, these people were contacted at the end of the research.

Data Analysis

Before starting the analysis of the data, the normality test of the scores obtained from the measurement tools was performed, and the kurtosis and skewness values were checked. The kurtosis and skewness values of all continuous variables in the study are between -1.96 and +1.96. The values of kurtosis and skewness of the variables between -1.96 and +1.96 indicate that the variables show a normal distribution (Can, 2019; Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2018). In the analysis of the data, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis was used to determine the relationships between the continuous variables of the research, and Hierarchical Regression Analysis was used to determine the predictive power of the independent variables to the dependent variable. Before the analysis, the normality of the variables was checked and outliers were examined. 3 observations with the Mahalanobis distance value were excluded from the analysis and as a result, 295 data were analyzed. In addition, multiple swelling, variance swelling

(VIF), and tolerance values between the variables were examined. The results showed that the values were at an appropriate level. When gender, one of the demographic variables, was included in the analysis, men were coded as 0 and women as 1, while individuals who were getting an art education were coded as 0, and individuals uneducated as 1.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Means and standard deviations, and correlations are shown in Table 1. Appearance-related social media consciousness was, as hypothesized, positive related to depression (r = .268, p < .001) and anxiety (r = .295, p < .001) and stress (r = .332, p < .001).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables.								
Variable	M	SD	1	2	3			
Appearance-related social media consciousness	45.16	16.71	-	-	-			
2. Depression	8.91	5.99	.268**	-	-			
3. Anxiety	7.70	5.23	.295**	.704**	-			
4. Stress	9.47	5.27	.332**	.764**	.775**			

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01

Regression Analysis

We next computed a multiple hierarchical regression analysis predicting appearance-related social media consciousness. The variables were entered into the model in four blocks: gender was entered first, followed by the state of getting an art education, depression, anxiety, and stress (see Table 2). Summary statistics for each variable in this equation are presented in Table 2. Gender, getting an art education, depression, anxiety, and stress accounted for 14.9 % of the variance in appearance-related social media consciousness, and the model was highly significant (p < .001). After the control variables, gender entered the equation first, accounting for 1.5 % of the variance in predicting appearance-related social media consciousness ($R^2 = 0.015$, p=.039). Then, get an art education entered on the second step accounting for an additional 2.7 % of the variance ($R^2 = 0.042$, p=.002). Finally, depression, anxiety, and stress variables were included in the model and contributed 10.7% to the model ($R^2 = 0.149$, p=.000).

Table 2. Results of hierarchical regression analyses predicting the level of appearance-related social media consciousness

Model 1	В	SHβ	β	t	p	Partial	Part
Constant	41.42	2.04	•	20.253	.000		
Gender	4.82	2.32	.121	2.078	.039	.121	.121
R=.121	R ² =.015		F ₍₁₋₂₉₃₎ =4.319			p=.039	
Model 2	В	SHβ	β	t	p	Partial	Part
Constant	43.37	2.13		20.363			
Gender	5.41	2.30	.135	2.353	.019	.136	.135
Getting Art Education	-5.59	1.93	166	-2.889	.004	167	165
R=.205	$R^2 = .042$		F ₍₂₋₂₉₂₎ =6.387		p=.002		
Model 3	В	SHβ	β	t	p	Partial	Part
Constant	33.82	2.56		13.197	.000		
Gender	4.89	2.20	.122	2.217	.027	.129	.120
Getting Art Education	-5.362	1.86	159	-2.869	.004	166	156
Depression	.216	.25	.077	.865	.388	.051	.047
Anxiety	.215	.28	.067	.751	.453	.044	.041
Stress	.656	.31	.207	2.088	.038	.122	.113
R=.386	R ² =.149		F ₍₅₋₂₈₉₎ =10.096			p=.000	

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01

DISCUSSION

Today, social media tools affect the lives and behaviors of individuals in a significant way. Research on social media behaviors of individuals has contributed to the formation of the field of cyberpsychology and this research will contribute to preventive and interventional services. In this study, the possible predictors of social media awareness about appearance, which is one of the original and new concepts of cyberpsychology, were examined.

In the study, gender, the first variable included in the model, significantly explained the social media awareness related to appearance in favor of women at a rate of 1.5%. This finding from the study is consistent with Choukas-Bradley et al. (2020), adolescents' social media awareness related to appearance is consistent with the results of the study. In the related study, the social media awareness levels of female adolescents' appearance were found to be significantly higher than male adolescents. In addition to this research, it is known that there are significant results in favor of women in different studies examining the relationship between the body image of individuals and gender in the literature (Fox & Vendemia, 2016; McLean, Paxton, Wertheim, & Masters, 2015). It is known that women can think more about their body perceptions, their photos on social media, and their appearance compared to men (Fox & Vendemia, 2016). In a study, it was seen that this difference has a biological basis and that women are more successful than men in perceiving and thinking about the state of beauty compared to men (Cazzato, Mele, & Urgesi, 2014). Therefore, it can be said that social media awareness related to appearance is predictive in favor of women and is compatible with the literature.

Secondly, the variable of getting an art education was included in the model. As a result, the variable of getting an art education made a significant contribution of 2.7% in explaining social media awareness related to appearance. Individuals' getting an art education can differentiate their perspectives on situations with art and aesthetic value. Particularly, getting an education related to the art may affect the artistic tastes and perceptions of the individual. In the research, it was seen that being getting an art education negatively affected social media anxiety related to appearance. Therefore, it has been seen that being interested in art does not have any worrying thoughts about sharing photos on social media, and even interacting with art has a protective role in this regard. It can be said that the research has a unique role in terms of its results in terms of dealing with the anxiety about photo sharing on social media in terms of the art variable. Because there is not enough research on variables be interested in the art such as painting, playing instruments, making sculpture, and theater. In a study that dealt with body image in terms of the variable of getting an art education, it was observed that the students who received art education had a significantly healthier thought about body image than other students (Ímamoğlu & Demirtaş, 2017).

Finally, depression, anxiety, and stress variables were included in the model and the explanatory status of psychological variables on social media awareness related to appearance was examined. As a result, psychological variables made a significant contribution of 10.7% to the model. The psychological state of the individual can affect body perception. Individuals in the risk group in terms of various psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and stress may have more negative perceptions and thoughts related to their bodies (Wang, Ren, & Zhou, 2020). This situation can lead to social appearance anxiety (Hart et al., 2008). Therefore, it can be said that individuals in the psychologically risky group may have more negative thoughts and perceptions when sharing photos on social media, and as a result, they may experience social media anxiety related to appearance (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2020). Different

studies in the literature support this finding (Nonterah et al., 2015). Choukas-Bradley et al. (2019), it was found that individuals with a high level of social media awareness related to appearance had higher levels of body dissatisfaction and depressive symptoms.

Conclusion

In this study, the appearance-related social media consciousness levels of university students were examined in terms of gender, getting art education, and psychological symptoms. In the research, it was seen that gender (female), getting art education (yes), and psychological symptoms (depression, anxiety, stress) had a significant explanatory value of 14.9% on the appearance-related social media consciousness. It is thought that the results obtained from the research can contribute to the field of cyberpsychology. It is known that the rate of young people using photo-based social media tools has become widespread in recent years. This situation has increased the importance of research on the social media behaviors of young people. Therefore, studies to be carried out in this field will contribute to mental health professionals and the literature. In addition, it can be considered an important finding in the research in terms of having a protective role in terms of social media anxiety related to appearance. It can be said that in the prevention-based studies to be carried out in this context, it can be said that the studies aimed at gaining artistic skills can be emphasized. In addition, it can be said that preventive mental health-based studies have an important role in terms of social media anxiety related to appearance, along with many psycho-social problems, in terms of the fact that psychological symptoms have an important explanatory rate in explaining the appearance-related social media consciousness.

Limitations and Recommendations

The research is limited in that it is carried out with 295 students studying at different universities in Turkey and that the measurement tools used within the scope of the research are evaluated within the framework of the qualifications. In addition, analyzes were carried out using only quantitative data in the research, and this revealed limited findings in terms of explaining students' social media awareness related to appearance. Therefore, incorporating mixed-method models and qualitative data into the process in different studies to be conducted will enable richer findings. In addition, in this study, gender, getting art education, and psychological symptoms variables were discussed as predictors of the appearance-related social media consciousness. Studies that focus on different explanatory factors of the appearance-related social media consciousness in different studies to be conducted will contribute to the literature on the subject.

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This study was conducted by all the authors working together and cooperatively. All of the authors substantially contributed to this work in each step of the study.

Conflict of Interest

It has been reported by the authors that there is no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Statement

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