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# Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinin Etik Duyarlılıklarına ve Mesleki Gelişimlerine Sosyal Medyanın Etkisi**

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**ÖZET:**
**Amaç:** Bu araştırma, hemşirelik öğrencilerinin mesleki gelişimleri için sosyal medyada kurdukları bağlantılarını belirlemek ve sosyal medyanın etik duyarlılıkları üzerine etkisini incelemek amacıyla yapılmıştır.
**Gereç ve Yöntem:** Tanımlayıcı ve kesitsel türdeki bu araştırma, 316 hemşirelik öğrencisi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri öğrencilerin sosyal medya kullanımlarına yönelik anket formu ve Ahlaki Duyarlılık Anketi (ADA) ile toplanmıştır. Araştırma verileri SPSS 22 programında değerlendirilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde, frekans dağılımı, aritmetik ortalama, Varyans analizi ve ikili gruplarda t testi kullanılmıştır.
**Bulgular:** Öğrencilerin, yaş ortalamaları 20.52 ± 1.7 olup, % 70.6'sı kız öğrencidir. Öğrencilerin ADA toplam puan ortalamaları 111.89 ± 36.78'dir. Sınıflar ve cinsiyetler arasında ADA ölçeğinin puanları yönünden istatistiksel fark yoktur (p<0.05). Öğrenciler günlük % 44'ü 4-5 saat, % 35'i 6 saatten fazla sosyal medyayı kullanıyor. Büyük oranda sosyal medya bilgilerine güvenmedikleri, inanmadıkları ve paylaşımlardan endişe duydukları bulunmuştur. Öğrencilerin %40'ı mesleki bilgilerini sosyal medya aracılığı ile geliştirmektedir.
**Sonuç:** Hemşirelik öğrencilerinin etik duyarlılığının orta düzeyde olduğu, sosyal medyayı çok kullandıklarını, içeriklerine güvenmedikleri, mesleki gelişim için sosyal medya kullandıklarını, öğrencilerin etik duyarlılıklarının sosyal medyadan etkilenmediği söylenebilir.
***Anahtar Kelimeler:*** *Etik duyarlılık, sosyal medya, mesleki gelişim, hemşirelik öğrencileri*

# The Effect of Social Media on Nursing Students' Ethical Sensitivity and Professional Development

**ABSTRACT:**
**Purpose:** This study was conducted to determine the connections that nursing students established for their professional development on social media and investigate the effect of social media on their ethical sensitivity.
**Material and Methods:** This descriptive and cross-sectional study was conducted on 316 nursing students. Data of the study were collected using a questionnaire form about students' social media use and the Moral Sensitivity Questionnaire (MSQ). The data were analyzed using SPSS 20 software package. Frequency distribution, arithmetic mean, Variance analysis, and t-test groups of two were employed in data analysis.
**Results:** The mean age of the students was 20.52 ± 1.7 and 70.6% of them were female. The mean total MSQ score of the students was 111.89 ± 36.78. There was no statistically significant difference between classes and genders in terms of MSQ scores (p<0.05). Students use social media for long hours. But, students did not trust and believe the information on social media and that they were concerned about the material shared. 40% of students were found to develop their professional knowledge through social media.
**Conclusion**: It can be said that the ethical sensitivity of the nursing students was at a moderate level, they frequently used the social media, they did not trust the social media content, they utilized social media for their professional development, and that the ethical sensitivity of the students was not affected by the social media.
***Keywords:*** *Ethical sensitivity, social media, professional development, nursing students*

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**INTRODUCTION**

Today, giving ethically safe care is an indispensable element of the nursing profession. Devotion to ethical criteria is considered to be one of the professional qualities for nurses (Leuter et al., 2012). Ethics in nursing is important in developing a moral perspective on ethical issues encountered especially in nursing practices, protecting patient rights, and ensuring patient safety (Gül et al., 2013; Yeom, Ahn, Kim, 2017). Nurses often encounter ethical problems in working environments. They make use of their personal and professional values and professional ethical principles for the solution of these ethical issues (Sarı et al.,2018). Nurses' ability to recognize and distinguish ethical issues, and cope with them are associated with their ethical decision-making levels and ethical sensitivity (Cerit, 2010; Ertuğ et al., 2014). Ethical sensitivity, which is defined as the ability to recognize an ethical case, helps understand patients or healthy individuals during the provision of care to them and ensures that patients benefit from the care (Park et al., 2012). An ethically sensitive person forms an ethically defensible judgment. The high ethical sensitivity of nurses will directly affect the quality of nursing care given to patients as well as contributing to professionalization (Cerit, 2010; Cerit and Dinç, 2013). Studies on the ethical sensitivities of nurses report that the ethical decision making and ethical sensitivity of nurses was not at the desired level but at a moderate level, and that the nurses' ethical sensitivity increased as the year of schooling and working year increased (Öztürk et al., 2009; Cerit, 2010; Başak, Uzun, Arslan,2010; Dikmen, 2013; Cerit and Dinç, 2013; Ertuğ et al., 2014). Similar results were found in studies with student nurses. Improving ethical awareness and sensitivity in nursing students' education and practice is highly important for the execution of their profession after graduation (Erdil and Korkmaz, 2009; Borhani, Abbaszadeh, Mohsenpour, 2013; Akbaş et al.,2014; Baykara, Demir, Yaman,2015; Sarı et al., 2018).

Ethical sensitivity of nursing students can be improved during their education is stated. The education of nursing students, should enable them to recognize ethical problems and to develop the right decision-making skills in ethical issues while enabling their professional development (Yeom, Ahn, Kim, 2017; Lee, Huang, Huang, 2017; Sarı et al., 2018). At the same time, ethical sensitivity is stated to develop students' methods of providing care and care decisions (Borhani, Abbaszadeh, Mohsenpour, 2013; Gül et al., 2013; Akbaş et al.,2014). Apart from the training process, there are many factors that may have an impact on students' ethical sensitivity such as personal qualities/character, family education, social environment, religion, culture, and media (Burkhard and Nathanial, 2013). Today, social media is thought to be one of the factors that affect the ethical sensitivity. In recent years, as a result of the development and spread of information technologies and communication networks, people share information instantly and carry out their social interactions through the Internet. Social media is increasingly becoming a habit that responds to the social demands of a wide range of cultures. (Vural and Bat, 2010; Solmaz et al., 2013; Button, Harrington, Belan, 2014). Social media creates a virtual environment that allows a wide variety of different users from various fields and areas such as entertainment, education, economics, health, trade, politics to come together and share digital material (Acun et al., 2017; Egüz and Kesten, 2018; Terzi et al., 2019). People can freely share their thoughts on social media, discuss these ideas, and put forward new ideas. With this regard, social media can be the medium of expression of personal ideas (Skiba, 2007; Farrelly, 2014; Acun et al., 2017). With these features, social media has become a powerful tool that can affect personal and social values (Otrar and Argın, 2014; Alharbi, Kuhn, Morphet, 2020).

In a study, it was found that university students used social media more in order to find information and get in contact with political groups (Acun et al., 2017). In studies investigating the use of social media in nursing education, students reported positive views. They stated that facebook improved their learning habits, learning strategies, increased their participation in the course, and facilitated asking questions (Watson, Cooke, Walker, 2016); doing homework, sharing resources, getting peer advice and instructor support helped their learning (Ferguson et al., 2016; Terzi et al., 2019; Alharbi, Kuhn, Morphet, 2020) and they learned about

nursing, healthcare, and personal development through the interaction with their peers and instructors on Twitter (Jones et al., 2016). On the other hand, midwifery students stated that while the birth videos on Youtube allowed the professional use of social media, it was also worrying about sexual harassment and exploitation of women (Uppal et al., 2016). Similarly, students stated in a study that "employers could collect information about them from Facebook, so they had to be cautious about social media use". They called attention to the negative side of social media by expressing concerns about privacy and professionalism (Ferguson et al., 2016). In a virtual internet environment, people can interact by constantly sharing regardless of time and place (Terzi et al., 2019). This leads to the rapid dissemination of information and ideas among people who are constantly interacting. Sharing with false identities can cause disinformation to spread quickly. It is likely that personal information can be shared without the consent of individuals. For this reason, unauthorized sharing of information can create ethical problems due to privacy violation and the lack of responsibility (George and Dellasega, 2011; Schmitt, Sims-Giddens, Booth, 2012; Tuominen, Stolt, Salminen, 2014; Green, Wyllie, Jackson, 2014; Nemeth et al., 2016). Ethical sensitivity, which has an important place in nursing profession and education, can be affected by social media which allows intensive interaction in virtual environment and which has a widespread network (Uppal et al., 2016; Ferguson et al., 2016). Social media can positively / negatively influence students' professional development. However, a review of the related literature has indicated that there is no study investigating the effect of social media on the ethical sensitivities of nursing students. This study was carried out to determine the relationships that nursing students have on social media for their ethical sensitivity and investigate the effect of media on their ethical sensitivities.

## MATERIAL and METHODS

### Purpose and Type of the Study

This study was cross-sectional and descriptive. This study was carried out to determine the relationships that nursing students have on social media for their ethical sensitivity and investigate the effect of media on their ethical sensitivities.

**Research questions:**

1. What is the level of nursing students' ethical sensitivity?
2. What do students share on social media?
3. Do students use social media for their professional development?
4. Does social media have an effect on the level of nursing students' ethical sensitivity?

### Sampling and participant

In the study, the entire universe was targeted. The study was completed with 316 of the 410 students enrolled in the nursing department who voluntarily participated in the study and answered all the questions. Participation rate was 77.45%.

### Data Collection Tools

For collecting data, a questionnaire form designed based on the related literature (George and Dellasega, 2011; Schmitt, Sims-Giddens, Booth, 2012; Tuominen, Stolt, Salminen, 2014; Green, Wyllie, Jackson, 2014), and the Moral Sensitivity Questionnaire (MSQ) were used. The questionnaire form included 20 items questioning the socio-demographic characteristics of the students and their social media use (the frequency of using social media, purpose of use, etc.) and 10 items questioning social media use for social and professional purposes (e.g. communicating with instructors about the courses, communicating with nursing associations, sharing problems related to nursing, etc.).

**Moral Sensitivity Questionnaire (MSQ):** The scale was developed by Lutzen in 1994 and adapted to Turkish by Tosun in 2005. The scale consists of 30 items and 6 subscales. It is a 7-point Likert type scale, where "1 point" means strong agreement with a high sensitivity and "7 points" show strong disagreement with a low sensitivity. The total score that can be obtained from the scale varies between 30 and 210. A high score is considered low ethical sensitivity, whereas a low score indicates high ethical sensitivity. Tosun (2005) reported a Cronbach alpha value of

0.84 (Dikmen, 2013; Ertuğ et al., 2014; Tosun, 2018). In our study, Cronbach's Alpha value of the MSQ scale was found to be 0.96.

**Data Collection:** After the purpose of the study was explained to the students, the questionnaire forms were distributed to the students collectively. It took 10-15 minutes for each student to fill out the questionnaire form.

### Statistical Analysis

The IBM SPSS 22.0 (Chicago, IL, USA) software package was used to analyze the data and descriptive statistical methods (number, percentage, mean, standard deviation) were utilized. The data were evaluated with frequency distribution, arithmetic mean, t-test, and Variance analysis and p <0.05 was accepted as statistically significant.

### Ethical Approval

This study was approved by the Scientific Research Ethics Committee of Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University (Approval number: 15-KAEK-130). In addition, the institutional permission of the Health Sciences Faculty and the verbal consents of the students were obtained. The research has followed the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. No funding was received for the study.

## RESULTS

In our study, the mean age of the students was 20.52 ± 1.7 years and 70.6% of the students were female. 24.4% of the participants were first-year students, 25.9% second-year, 26.6% third-year, and 23.1% were fourth-year students. The mean total MSQ score used to determine the ethical sensitivities of the nursing students was 111.89 ± 36.78. The mean MSQ total scores for the first, second, third, and fourth-year students were 120.27±41.33, 111.07±34.18, 107.07±38.60, and 109.53±31.26, respectively. There was no statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of mean MSQ scores (p = 0.123; Table 1). When the mean MSQ scores were compared by gender, the mean score of the female students was found to be 111.04 ±38.44 and the mean score of the male students was 111.93±32.2. No significant difference was found between genders (p = 0.497; Table 1). While there was no difference in terms of family income, the place of residence, and the place where the student lives with his/her family, there was a difference according to the type of the family (p<0.05;Table 1).

**Table 1.** Demographic Features (n=316)

| | | n (%) | MSQ Mean±SD | TEST | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total MSQ for all the students** | | 316 (100) | 111.89±36.78 | | |
| Class | Class 1 | 77 (24.4) | 120.27±41.33 | F=1.943 | 0.123 |
| | Class 2 | 82 (25.9) | 111.07±34.18 | | |
| | Class 3 | 84 (26.6) | 107.07±38.60 | | |
| | Class 4 | 73 (23.1) | 109.53±36.78 | | |
| Gender | Female | 223 (70.6 ) | 111.04±38.44 | t=0.681 | 0.497 |
| | Male | 93 (29.4) | 113.93±32.57 | | |
| Family type | Core family | 248 (78.5) | 110.66 ±35.56 | F=4.625 | **.010*** |
| | Extended family | 58 (18.4) | 111.22 ±37.58 | | |
| | Fragmented family | 10 (3.1) | 146.30 ±48.55 | | |
| Family Income | High | 35 (11.1) | 119.85±36.63 | F=1.794 | .168 |
| | Middle | 239 (75.6) | 112.11±36.97 | | |
| | Low | 42 (13.3) | 104.02±35.09 | | |
| Accommodation status | Student Dormitory | 167 (52.8) | 107.28±36.27 | F=2.188 | .070 |
| | Family | 78 (24.7) | 112.61±34.40 | | |
| | Friends | 56 (17.7) | 121.25±37.32 | | |
| | Alone | 7 (2.3) | 132.28±46.72 | | |
| | Relatives | 8 (2.5) | 117.75±46.78 | | |
| Living with his family | County | 133 (42.1) | 111.52±40.25 | F=0.029 | .971 |
| | City | 127 (40.2) | 112.50±31.02 | | |
| | Village/town | 56 (17.7) | 111.39±40.70 | | |

*F: One-way ANOVA* *t; TEST* **p<0.05* *MSQ: Moral Sensitivity Questionnaire*

The rate of social media use in our study was 96%. It was found that 44% of the students used social media daily for four to five hours, 35% used it for more than 6 hours daily, Only 6.5% believed the social media content, 3.9% trusted social media information, and that 24.4% were not concerned about information sharing. In addition, it was determined that 69.4% of the students used social media to get in contact with their friends, 45.2% for sharing messages with friends, and 35.4% for sharing photos/videos. It was found that 58.2% of the students gave short responses to social media comments, 12% gave no response at all, and that 39% explained their ideas honestly. No significant difference was found between the status of the students' social media use and their total scores from MSQ scale (p> 0.05; Table 2).

**Table 2.** Students' Social Media Use and MSQ Mean Scores (n=316)

| Views on social media use | | n | % | MSQ Mean±SD | Test |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Following social media | Yes | 303 | 95.9 | 112.48±36.13 | t=1.385 |
| | Partly | 13 | 4.1 | 98.07±49.45 | p=0.167 |
| Average duration of daily social media use | 1-3 hours | 64 | 21.1 | 113.57±36.65 | F=0.112 |
| | 4-5 hours | 133 | 43.9 | 111.38±36.38 | p=0.894 |
| | 6 hours+ | 106 | 35.0 | 113.21±35.82 | |
| Finding the content on social media credible | Yes | 20 | 6.5 | 115.25±37.57 | F=0.149 |
| | No | 78 | 25.2 | 112.70±39.75 | p=0.862 |
| | Partly | 212 | 68.3 | 111.15±34.73 | |
| Trusting social media content | Yes | 12 | 3.9 | 107.33±38.63 | F=0.110 |
| | No | 98 | 31.6 | 112.51±36.55 | p=0.896 |
| | Partly | 200 | 64.5 | 111.80±36.13 | |
| Worrying about social media shares | Yes | 66 | 21.4 | 107.42±35.90 | F=1.633 |
| | No | 75 | 24.4 | 118.08±35.92 | p=0.197 |
| | Partly | 167 | 54.2 | 111.52±35.61 | |
| Contacting people newly met on social media on the net | Yes | 107 | 35.3 | 112.79±37.01 | T=0.281 |
| | No | 196 | 64.7 | 111.58±35.33 | P=0.779 |
| Writing comments about social media content | Yes | 240 | 79.2 | 113.40±37.11 | T=1.318 |
| | No | 65 | 20.8 | 106.71±30.42 | P=0.189 |
| Comments made to social media content* | Short responses | 146 | 53.3 | 112.22±36.83 | F=2.171 |
| | No response | 30 | 11 | 115.10±31.23 | P=0.711 |
| | Express my ideas honestly | 98 | 35.7 | 113.98±40.16 | |
| Getting in touch with friends | No | 16 | 5.1 | 106.00±16.28 | F=0.356 |
| | Partly | 79 | 25.5 | 113.78±35.61 | p=0.701 |
| | Yes | 215 | 69.4 | 111.04±37.62 | |
| For sharing messages with my friends | No | 44 | 14.2 | 108.65±33.84 | F=0.166 |
| | Partly | 126 | 40.6 | 112.22±35.56 | p=0.851 |
| | Yes | 140 | 45.2 | 111.70±37.84 | |
| For sharing videos/photos/pictures | No | 73 | 23.7 | 10.95±30.76 | F=2.668 |
| | Partly | 126 | 40.9 | 108.61±35.95 | p=0.071 |
| | Yes | 109 | 35.4 | 117.88±39.67 | |

**Multiple options were chosen* *F: One-way ANOVA test* *MSQ: Moral Sensitivity Questionnaire*

This study investigated professional development oriented social media use of nursing students. It was found that 41.9% of the students communicated with their instructors and 61.9% of them got in contact with their classmates about the courses by using social media, 39.7% of them made use of social media to improve their professional knowledge, and that 23.2% did not use it for professional purposes. It was also determined that through social media, 30.3% of the students communicated with nursing associations, 29.7% of them shared problems related to nursing and that 64.9% of them followed nursing-related institutions. It was determined that 11% of the nursing students shared things from the class/clinical environment on social media. There was no difference between the MSQ scores of the students who used social media for their professional purposes and those who did not use it for this purpose (p>0.05; Table 3).

**Table 3.** MSQ Mean Scores According to Students' Social Media Use for Professional Development (n=316)

| | | n | % | MSQ Mean±SD | Test |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communicating with instructors about the courses | No | 80 | 25.8 | 110.66±34.52 | F=0.311 p=0.733 |
| | Partly | 100 | 32.2 | 109.71±32.72 | |
| | Yes | 130 | 42 | 113.35±39.94 | |
| Communicating with classmate friends about the courses | No | 27 | 8.7 | 112.33±27.61 | F=0.080 p=0.923 |
| | Partly | 91 | 29.4 | 112.59±33.72 | |
| | Yes | 192 | 61.9 | 110.48±36.28 | |
| Developing professional knowledge | No | 72 | 23.2 | 113.12±30.70 | F=0.319 p=0.727 |
| | Partly | 115 | 37.1 | 109.35±33.64 | |
| | Yes | 123 | 39.7 | 112.51±41.49 | |
| Getting in contact with the students of other universities | No | 120 | 38.8 | 109.38±34.19 | F=0.408 p=0.665 |
| | Partly | 104 | 33.5 | 113.77±31.64 | |
| | Yes | 86 | 27.7 | 111.63±43.85 | |
| Getting in contact with nursing students of other universities | No | 111 | 35.8 | 108.58±33.50 | F=0.553 p=0.576 |
| | Partly | 103 | 33.2 | 112.91±33.99 | |
| | Yes | 96 | 31 | 113.30±41.54 | |
| Getting in touch with nursing associations | No | 83 | 26.8 | 109.97±34.73 | F=0.111 p=0.895 |
| | Partly | 133 | 42.9 | 111.69±34.39 | |
| | Yes | 94 | 30.3 | 112.51±40.36 | |
| Establishing links related to nursing | No | 77 | 24.8 | 110.97±33.01 | F=0.449 P=0.638 |
| | Partly | 126 | 40.6 | 109.59±39.04 | |
| | Yes | 107 | 34.6 | 114.07±40.97 | |
| Sharing nursing-related problems | No | 80 | 25.8 | 108.58±32.28 | F=0.442 p=0.643 |
| | Partly | 138 | 44.5 | 111.61±34.99 | |
| | Yes | 92 | 29.7 | 113.80±41.35 | |
| Following nursing profession-related institutions on social media | No | 42 | 13.6 | 110.19±33.77 | F=0.987 p=0.374 |
| | Partly | 66 | 21.4 | 117.54±31.12 | |
| | Yes | 200 | 65 | 110.57±38.06 | |
| Sharing content from classroom/clinical environment on social media | No | 220 | 71.2 | 109.24±37.19 | F=2.040 p=0.132 |
| | Partly | 55 | 17.8 | 120.25±29.37 | |
| | Yes | 34 | 11 | 112.23±39.55 | |

*F: One-way ANOVA* *MSQ: Moral Sensitivity Questionnaire*

## DISCUSSION

The current study was conducted to evaluate the impact of social media on nursing students' ethical sensitivities and their professional development. The higher the MSQ score is, the lower the ethical sensitivity is and the lower the MSQ score is, the higher the ethical sensitivity is. Accordingly, we can say that the ethical sensitivity of nursing students was at a medium level. In their study, Baykara, Demir, Yaman (2015) and Akca et al., (2017) found that the ethical sensitivity of nursing students was at a medium level (Baykara, Demir, Yaman, 2015; Akça et al., 2017). Ethical sensitivity is important for future nurse candidates, and students' sensitivities should be supported during their education. In our study, no difference was found between students' ethical sensitivities according to their classes, but the sensitivity of the upper classes was relatively higher (Table 1). In order for nursing students to solve the ethical problems that they face, it is important that they recognize, distinguish, and make appropriate decisions about the ethical problems encountered. In the literature, it has been stated that ethical sensitivity and ethical decision making could be increased by education (Robichaux, 2012; Kim, Knag, Ahn, 2012; Park et al., 2012; Borhani, Abbaszadeh, Mohsenpour, 2013; Dikmen, 2013; Ertuğ et al., 2014; Baykara, Demir, Yaman, 2015; Sarı et al., 2018). With increasing years of education, the number of ethical problems increases in parallel with the number of patients that the students meet in the clinical setting and the amount of care experience they have. It is an expected outcome of education that students are more ethically sensitive and they recognize ethical problems. However, students may not be able to recognize ethical problems themselves and may need guidance in this regard (Yeom, Ahn, Kim, 2017; Lee, Huang, Huang, 2017).

The examination of the ethical sensitivities of the female and male students indicated that there was no difference between their mean scores (Table 1). The female and male students at this school have been educated in the same school, at the same department, and with the same teaching methods. As a result, it is thought that their professional ideas and perspectives may have been integrated into each other, and therefore, create no difference between them. It may be said that there is no difference in their ethical sensitivities due to having the same interactions. It is very important that instructors should help students develop ethical sensitivity so that they can be aware of the ethical problems (Baykara, Demir, Yaman, 2015; Sarı et al., 2018). The ethical sensitivity that grows up at school will be strengthened more along the working life professional.

It would not be wrong to say that nursing students use social media for long hours and their interaction with social media has become a habit (Table 2). Today this constant use makes up a different and new dimension of socialization among young people. Studies report that people use social media for long hours and it has a widespread use (Skiba, 2007; Vural and Bat, 2010; Solmaz et al., 2013; Hamm et al., 2013; Otrar and Argın, 2014; Green, Wyllie, Jackson, 2014; Tuominen, Stolt, Salminen, 2014; Duke et al., 2017; Terzi et al., 2019; Mersin, et al., 2020). Although students use social media too often, they do not totally find social media contents credible and trusted, and they are concerned about sharing information on social media. Students often use social media to communicate and share information with their friends and familiar groups. The information on social media is open to question because most users do not use their real identities when communicating on social media with others across the world, the information on social media is usually inaccurate and misleading, and people sharing content on social media are not held responsible for what they share (Solmaz et al., 2013; Hamm et al., 2013; Otrar and Argın, 2014; Green, Wyllie, Jackson, 2014).

The nursing students in the study reported that they used social media to contribute to their professional development and education. They mostly communicated with their peers and their instructors through social media. We think the reason why the social media interactions of the students in this study with the nursing students in other universities were limited was that they did not trust those students because they did not know them. We can say that as a result of the fact that students do not trust social media and that they do not get in contact with people they do not know, their professional ethical sensitivity was not affected so much, and therefore this did not create any difference in their ethical sensitivities. The students were found to follow nursing organizations and nursing associations through social media. The students' sharing the problems related to nursing on social media shows their professional sensitivity and requirement for professional development. Tuominen, Stolt, Salminen (2014) stated that social media provides group learning, develops social skills related to nursing, and develops communication skills between students and instructors (Tuominen, Stolt, Salminen, 2014). Studies also report that the use of social media for educational purposes and its contribution to the provision of resources in health education is growing and that students can experience different learning experiences from social media (Schmitt, Sims-Giddens, Booth, 2012; Hamm et al., 2013; Green, Wyllie, Jackson, 2014; Paterson et al., 2015; Nemeth et al., 2016; Watson, Cooke, Walker, 2016; Ferguson et al., 2016; Duke et al., 2017; Terzi et al., 2019; Alharbi, Kuhn, Morphet, 2020).

Professional interaction through social media is becoming inevitable today. Students who are future nurses can create professional associations with their colleagues on social media. It will be helpful for students to use social media for their professional development. Studies conducted so far support this view (Watson, Cooke, Walker, 2016; Ferguson et al., 2016; Duke et al., 2017; Terzi et al., 2019; Alharbi, Kuhn, Morphet, 2020). Instructors can direct students to reliable vocational training websites. Thus, students can have professional interaction in reliable environments more comfortably and can support their professional development and education in a positive way. In our study, 18% of the nursing students reported that they shared content on social media from class / clinical environment

partially, while 11% did it wholly (Table 3). Restricting social media sharing is not possible today. Nowadays, people are increasingly sharing content on social media from every medium. The opportunities offered by social media on the internet provide mutual and constant interaction between people, regardless of time and place (Green, Wyllie, Jackson, 2014; Mersin, et al., 2020). This situation involves the dangers of rapid dissemination of information on social media, rapid sharing among networks, the violation of privacy, and copying of ideas and information. In this respect, unethical and inappropriate networking may be dangerous and alarming and may cause ethical violations and ethical problems (George and Dellasega, 2011; Schmitt, Sims-Giddens, Booth, 2012; Tuominen, Stolt, Salminen, 2014; Nemeth et al., 2016; Uppal et al., 2016; Ferguson et al., 2016). Some nursing associations have prepared publications on the ethical use of social media. They have identified the principles of social media use of nurses and students in these publications (New Zealand Nurses Organization, 2012; The Nurses Association of New Brunswick. 2012; Canadian Nurses Association, 2012). In our study, although students' sharing from the class / clinical environment is not considered as malicious, it can be said that it would be beneficial to draw their attention to this issue and to inform them in order to create ethical sensitivity about these shares. Quality and reliable social media content is needed for all healthcare teams, trainers and students and this should be supported (Paterson et al., 2015). Ethical sensitivity should be established in social media sharing. In a virtual internet environment, people can share personal information, photos and videos with multiple uses. Students should be informed about personal rights and patient rights.

## CONCLUSION

In our study, the ethical sensitivity of nursing students was found to be at a medium level. There was no difference in the ethical sensitivity of the students in terms of gender and classes. Students were found to not trust social media content and were concerned about sharing. They shared content only with people they know. They were determined to use social media for their professional development and education. It can be said that the use of social media can be increased with reliable professional knowledge and ethical sensitivity. In future studies, it can be suggested that students' social media sharing should be investigated in depth in terms of ethical and unethical aspects by conducting qualitative and quantitative studies.

## Conflict of Interest

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