



## Analysis Of Mediating Roles Of Personal Relative Deprivation and Trait Anxiety Factors in The Relationship Between Social Media Addiction and Materialist Personality Type

*Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı ve Materyalist Kişilik Tipi İlişkisinde, Kişisel Göreli Yoksunluk ve Sürekli Kaygı Faktörlerinin Aracılık Rollerinin Analizi*

Doğan AYDOĞAN<sup>1</sup> 

**ABSTRACT:** In the study, the relationship between social media addiction, personal relative deprivation perception, trait anxiety and materialistic personality type was examined. The significant role of the anxiety factor indicates that the materialistic personality type develops in accordance with the terror management theory; the meaningless role of this factor will support that belonging and social acceptance-exclusion concepts are determinative in the relationship between social media use and materialistic personality. As a result of the analyzes (N=309), it is determined that the trait anxiety factor did not play a mediating role in the relationship between social media addiction and materialistic personality type, while the personal relative deprivation perception played a full mediator role. When the correlation of the materialistic personality type with the statements related to belongings was examined, it was determined that the materialist personality type did not create a significant correlation with the perception of social loneliness, but with the perception of unhappiness in romantic relationships. Therefore, it has been accepted that the effect of social media addiction on the materialistic personality type develops entirely through the perception of personal relative deprivation and in relation to the dissatisfaction experienced in romantic relationships.

**Key Words:** Social Media Addiction, Personal Relative Deprivation, Trait Anxiety, Materialistic Personality

<sup>1</sup> Assoc. Prof. Dr., Karabuk University, Faculty of Business, Department of Public Relations and Publicity  
e-mail: doganaydogan@karabuk.edu.tr ORCID: 0000-0002-6808-9107

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**Öz:** Araştırmada sosyal medya bağımlılığı, kişisel görelî yoksunluk algısı, sürekli kaygı faktörü ve materyalist kişilik ilişkisi incelenmiştir. Sosyal medya bağımlılığı, materyalist kişilik tipi ilişkisinde kaygı faktörünün aracılık rolünün varlığı, materyalist kişilik tipinin benlik saygısını açıklamaya yönelik, terör yönetimi teorisi çerçevesinde geliştiğini; kaygı faktörünün aracı rolünün yokluğu materyalist kişilik tipinin aidiyet ve sosyal kabul arzusu eşliğinde geliştiğini işaret edecektir. Anket yöntemi ile toplanan verilerle gerçekleştirilen analizler sonucunda (N=309), sosyal medya bağımlılığı ile materyalist kişilik tipi arasındaki ilişkide sürekli kaygı faktörünün aracılık rolü oynamadığı, kişisel görelî yoksunluk algısının ise tam aracılık etkisi bulunduğu tespit edilmiştir. Materyalist kişilik tipi ile anket formunda yer alan aidiyete yönelik ifadeler arası korelasyon incelendiğinde, materyalist kişilik tipinin sosyal yalnızlık algısı ile değil, romantik ilişkilerdeki mutluluk dinamiği ile ilişkili olduğu görülmektedir. Dolayısı ile sosyal medya bağımlılığı, materyalist kişilik tipi ilişkisinin tamamen kişisel görelî yoksunluk algısı üzerinden işlediği ve bu sürecin cinsel rekabet ve kabule dayalı bir motivasyondan kaynaklandığı edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı, Kişisel Görelî Yoksunluk, Sürekli Kaygı, Materyalist Kişilik Tipi

## INTRODUCTION

Human interactions are built on the potentials of transportation and communication tools, so the dynamics that determine social life are shaped on this basis (Wagner, 2003, p. 69). In this context, social media platforms, which have become a part of daily interactions, significantly affect daily life. One of the important effects of social media platforms is that they expand the social comparison circle. Social comparison refers to the evaluation of one's self based on comparisons with others (Myers, 2012, p. 38). Therefore, social media platforms, which expand the social comparison scale by expanding the circle of interaction, produce a significant impact on the self. At this point, the distinction between the concepts of poverty and relative poverty gains importance. Poverty is a concept defined in classical economics and sociology according to the ability to meet biological and basic needs (Aksan, 2012). However, the concept of poverty, which deals with human within the framework of biological needs, is far from meeting the human integrity. Human is a sociological, psychological and biological whole; therefore, the concept of need cannot be limited to a biological framework. Relative poverty, on the other hand, is a socio-psychological phenomenon based on social comparison, which arises from comparing oneself with the groups to which one belongs or wants to be. The desire to belong to groups or the threat of exclusion is a phenomenon that has not only material, but also spiritual and symbolic aspects (Silver, 1994). In the context of study, materialistic personality tendency can be considered as a defense mechanism against the relative deprivation experienced in the context of social comparison extended by social media addiction. It has been determined that there is a significant relationship between social media addiction, personal relative deprivation and materialistic personality type (Aydoğan, 2021). The aim of this study is to examine the mediating role of the anxiety factor in the relationship between social media addiction, personal relative deprivation perception and materialistic personality type.

The concept of anxiety has an important place in the theories about self-esteem. The socio-meter theory, which considers self-esteem as an indicator of group belonging, brings the concept of belonging to the foreground (Allen, Gray, Baumeister, & Leary, 2022; Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Terror management theory, which sees self-esteem as a means of calming anxiety against a chaotic life, prioritizes the concept of anxiety instead of the concept of belonging (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1997). Depending on these perspectives, materialistic personality tendencies are also considered as a search for belonging or a buffer against deprivation and anxiety (Kasser & Sheldon, 2000; Zhou & Gao, 2008). Therefore, examining the mediating role of the anxiety factor in the relationship between the perception of personal relative deprivation and the materialistic personality type allows an important inference as to whether the materialistic behavior tendency is due to anxiety or the threat of belonging and social exclusion. This inference has an important place in drawing the framework of the effect of social media addiction on the self.

### 1. Social Media Addiction

Unlike communication technologies based on web technology; social media based on Web 2.0 technologies are more prone to articulate and shape social interactions due to its open structure to user interactions. In the process of widespread use of social media, social media addiction has become a commonly used phrase, but addiction notion must be used carefully. In addition, the older generations have always criticized the youngs, so in the 60s and 70s, the young people were accused of being television addicts (Twenge, 2013). It is also necessary to keep in mind that many separate activities of the pre-internet world are meeting on mobile devices due to the convergence process. Many elements such as games, news, communication, music, movies, banking, online

education have come together on mobile devices. Although users' social media addiction is explained by the time they spend on social media, not the purpose of use (Çömlekçi & Başol, 2019), the fact that people spend more time on mobile devices and social media cannot be directly called addiction.

Addiction is a biopsychosocial phenomenon. In order for a behavior to be called addiction, the effect of the addictive behavior on the behavior of the person and the effect of the withdrawal state on the mood must be evident. In order to increase the satisfaction from the behavior, it is necessary to increase the intensity of the behavior and to give physical and psychological reactions in case of deprivation. The addictive behavior should produce a conflict that will prevent the person from fulfilling his goals in his daily life, and the behavior should be repeated with short-term contact after the behavior is abandoned (Griffiths, 2005). Many studies have been conducted to explain social media addiction; many of these studies provide correlational reports but cannot report cause relations (Andreassen et al., 2016).

In terms of terror management theory, it can be expected that people with low self-esteem will avoid daily life and turn to social media, since behaviors that cause anxiety will be avoided. On the other hand, if social media addiction increases anxiety by creating pressure on self-esteem, then people with low self-esteem can be expected to avoid using social media. On the contrary, since people with high self-esteem and narcissistic tendencies will benefit from social media in a way that will caress their selves, it can be expected that their addiction level will increase. Andreassen, Pallasen and Griffith (Andreassen, Pallesen, & Griffiths, 2017) could not reach an inclusive model in their studies in which they examined the relationship between social media addiction, demographic factors, narcissistic personality and self-esteem. Demographic factors (age and gender) and narcissistic personality correlated with social media addiction at a low level of effect, self-esteem was found to be the factor that created the largest effect size ( $\beta = -.25$ ). However, the inability to establish a causal relationship makes it difficult to interpret this relation.

Hawi and Samaha (2017), in their study investigating the relationship between social media addiction, self-esteem and life satisfaction, reported a negative correlation between social media addiction and other variables, and a positive correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction. In path analysis, they found that social media addiction predicted self-esteem at the level of  $-.23$ , and self-esteem predicted life satisfaction at the level of  $.57$ . Social media use increases self-focus while reducing empathetic tendencies (Twenge, 2013). However, self-focus can also occur in the form of narcissistic sublimation or in the form of a perception of inadequacy towards the self so the relationship between self-esteem and social media addiction should be examined in a way to explain causality.

As a result of an experimental study conducted on the effects of social media addiction on self-esteem and negative self-evaluation; there were significant positive differences in the self-esteem, sleep quality and mental health of the experimental group whose social media use was restricted. In the study, social media addiction was only explained to the control group, and it was interactively controlled to reduce the use of the experimental group (Hou, Xiong, Jiang, Song, & Wang, 2019). However, although the control group and the experimental group both reduced the duration of social media use, positive results were only seen in the experimental group. Therefore, it can be thought that the results of the experiment are related to group interaction rather than the use of social media. The Hawthorne effect seems to have determined the outcome of the experiment rather than the use of social media.

Durodani, Innocenti, and Guazzini (2020), in their meta-analysis on studies examining the relationship between social media addiction and well-being; found a significant correlation 20-30% between social media addiction and negatively framed well-being and 0-12% correlation between positive framed well-being and social media addiction. Therefore, it is seen that the use of social media can also contribute to well-being processes. However, this situation can be interpreted that those who are disadvantaged and have low self-esteem in daily life have a negative experience on social media and those who are advantageous and have high self-esteem have a positive experience. For this reason, the use of social media may take the positions in daily life to more extreme points and deepen the distance between individuals. In this context, it is necessary to consider the use of social media as a behavior that is motivated by predispositions in daily life. For example, Nicolescu (2016) in

his study on the use of Facebook in the small town of Grano, Italy, states that in Grano, where everyone knows each other, people do not need online communication much and because everyone knows each other, they share small content that is added to daily life, not exaggerated posts. In contrast, field researches conducted in Brazil, China, and Italy show results that are more diverse and focus on social conflict; studies dealing with the interaction between economic, cultural and social capital; demonstrates that social media generates a significant desire for social mobility. Social media opens up the possibilities of self-presentation and access to information which were previously in the hands of the elites to the lower classes, and a tendency to present themselves occurs in the lower classes. While it is seen that young people in Brazil and China combine their desire for class mobility with the use of social media by taking advantage of online education, the necessity of presenting themselves in Italy has created an intense pressure on the lower class youth. On the other hand, various field researches show that elites reduce their communication with the lower classes in daily life and produce ways to humiliate appearances of poverty or to emphasize differences in taste in social media (D. Miller et al., 2018). As a result, social media can be considered as a field of struggle where the distinctions in daily life reproduce themselves. The fact that this struggle is shaped through impression management makes the competition and distinctions made over consumption more obvious. The struggle based on taste and impression management may pave the way for conspicuous consumption and materialistic personality type.

## **2. Social Comparison, Personal Relative Deprivation and Anxiety**

The value is determined by a scale; the expansion of scale makes value smaller relatively. The concept of relativity, which points to relationality, creates an interacting context for fields like consumption, materialism, economics, sociology, social psychology and psychology. Facts such as consumption and materialism creates situations that rational human acceptance has difficulty explaining. Therefore, paradigms based on rationality need to review their conceptual gaps by explaining concepts such as materialism and consumption. For example, capitalism and modernity have not been able to eradicate either poverty or relative poverty, despite all the material abundance they have created. In many societies, the phenomenon of poverty and conspicuous consumption are found side by side. Such contradictions indicate that wealth and poverty are not a simple opposition, but a multidimensional dynamic field.

Poverty was conceptualized by classical economics against the pre-modern society. Giddens (1998, p. 103) defines risk environments of the pre-modern as natural events such as disease, climate, flood; invasion of marauding armies and exclusion from the religious sphere. If the concept of religion is excluded, the other two risk environments indicate the inability to meet the basic needs for shelter and continuation of life. Widely used Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is also shaped on this basis. Today, the efforts to reorganize Maslow's hierarchical proposal or the contradictions produced by the model on consumption are due to the fact that Maslow's paradigm puts biological needs before social and psychological needs in accordance with the perspective of early modernity. Many examples can be given, but in the simplest terms, people may take dangerous actions in order to be included in certain groups, search for social acceptance takes precedence over the necessities of life instinct (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Therefore, while the concept of poverty appears as a concept related to the biological position against nature; but the concept of relative deprivation refers to a socio-psychological context arising from the relationship with others. In addition, due to the structural wealth created by modernity, having access to food or shelter will not mean that one is not poor. Therefore, although not as much as relative poverty, the concept of poverty is also shaped depending on sociological norms.

While poverty is the lack of minimum means to sustain one's life, relative poverty is the inability to provide the minimum conditions suitable for social norms (Karakas, 2010). Accordingly, the exclusion of a person from social life for economic reasons is social exclusion. Therefore, since economic exclusion will bring social and psychological exclusion, it is natural for people to act with social acceptance motivation. But the concept of social norms is reductionist. According to this economic definition, everyone who lives in accordance with social norms must gain social acceptance and lose their motivation towards material elements. However, people do not act according to the standards of the society, but according to the standards of the stratum they think they are in or want to be (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). Standards for spending are shaped by comparison with people who are similar in dignity (Veblen, 2015, pp. 83–84). Therefore, the comparison that a person makes with the group he/she belongs to and the groups he/she wants to belong to is the determining factor in terms of poverty and

wealth perception. At this point, the relationship between the concepts of desire and comparison is important in the context of social media use. As Lacan states in his psychoanalytic theory, desire is a mechanism produced against deficiency, its main motivation is not being satisfied, it dies when satisfied (Fink, 2016, p. 90). The social psychology literature, on the other hand, calls the phenomenon of the neutrality of possessions due to habituation, the level of adaptation. What triggers the desire for luxury and consumption is the dissatisfaction resulting from upward comparison (Myers, 2012, p. 600).

What's new about social media use is that it takes upward comparison behavior a wider distance. Simmel, in his implications for modern sociology, expresses one of the paradigmatic distinctions between the city and the village as the widening of social geometry through urbanization and money, widening the distance of desire (Simmel, 1971; Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2014, pp. 158–188). In this context, modern life based on urbanization produces a new social life where more things are desired and become commonplace very quickly. The contribution of the social media phenomenon at this point is that it detaches the concept of social geometry from its spatial context. The digital sociability experienced through social media maximizes the scale at which upward comparison can be made. In addition to this situation, since users use social media in a way that feeds their self-esteem or narcissistic tendencies, self-presentations produced in social media occur at higher standards than physical reality. Message receivers, on the other hand, tend to perceive the message as real, as they cannot detect tricks and nuances (Chou & Edge, 2012). Considering the stated facts, social media would be expected to deepen a sense of relative deprivation, which is realized by comparison, at least for those who live below certain standards.

Orth and Robins (Orth & Robins, 2014), state that, due to the cultures focus on self-presentation, a self-esteem increase can be expected socially over time. However, as previously stated in the example of Italy, self-presentation creates a psychological pressure on the poor people. In addition, since self-esteem assessment is shaped in relation to others, making more self-presentations all together can only produce a zero-sum game.

In a study conducted by Krasnova et al.(2013) , the central concept in the use of social media by young people was identified as jealousy and anxiety related to jealousy. Travel, leisure activities, social interaction and happiness were identified as the most envy-inducing content on social media by participants. Researchers stated that self-presentation and seeking social promotion and the responses to it produce a reciprocal spiral as a result.

Anxiety is a pressure that should produce behavior. However, at this point, very different preferences can be produced; terror management theory hypothesizes that anxiety-producing behavior should be abandoned(Pyszczynski, Solomon, Greenberg, Arndt, & Schimel, 2004). Therefore, individuals who experience the anxiety created by social media will be expected to use social media less. The socio-meter theory, on the other hand, points to self-esteem as a risk indicator for belonging (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Therefore, it hypothesizes that a behavior will be developed to tolerate the risk perception towards belonging. Therefore, examining the mediating role of the anxiety factor in the relationship between social media addiction and materialistic personality type will reveal whether materialistic behavior is related to the theory of terror management or to the belongingness indicated by the socio-meter theory.

### **3. Materialistic Personality Type**

The materialistic personality type can be defined as the conditioning of happiness and life goals to material possessions. The distinction here can be summarized as structuring life not according to social norms and values, but according to material interests. The problem that emerges at this point is not the transformation in the personalities of individuals. Sustainable civilization, fair sharing, erosion of social relations and, in the last stage, capitalism based on utilitarian reason appear as concepts developing around this central problem (Macionis, 2015, pp. 584–596; Myers, 2012, pp. 595–606). In the final stage, the problem is the displacement of tools and goals. Instead of the economy being included in the social, social is dissolved in the economy; the social itself turns into a surplus as the economy which is a field for meeting human needs, is reified (Baudrillard, 2006).

When the comparative income status and happiness indices of the countries are examined, it is seen that financial gains increase happiness up to a point, but the level of happiness remains constant after a certain point. While meeting basic needs increases happiness, the relationship between material goods and happiness

disappears after this point (Myers, 2012, p. 600). Since industrial production provides an increase in material goods, all material goods become commonplace rapidly and do not make any sense. Therefore, the numerical increase of objects leads to an inflation in the value of objects. However, many studies show that quality of life, happiness and mental resilience depend on being included in social networks, a peaceful environment of unrequited relationships, and focusing on non-material purposes (Durkheim, 2023; Hari, 2019; Myers, 2012, p. 606; Zhou & Gao, 2008).

If there is no significant desire or motivation to avoid pain, it can be expected that people will push their material pursuits into the background after a certain standard of living. However, in practice, the opposite situation arises; poverty produces acceptable predispositions to poverty, while wealth produces predispositions to wealth. Social inequalities create their own predispositions and thought patterns on their interlocutors (Bourdieu, 2015, p. 58; Myers, 2012, p. 319).

According to Marxist literature, commodity fetishism is the reason why materialism has become meaning on its own. The value of things emerges at the moment of exchange, as capitalism transforms use value into exchange value (Williamson, 2000, p. 43). Therefore, money, as a concept in the center of exchange values, turns into a fetish object in itself. When money, as the representative of power and other values, is placed at the center of all relations, everything else is positioned against this central concept (Han, 2015).

Marxist literature uses the concept of ideology and false consciousness to explain the distorted nature of modern capitalism. Contradictions and needs based on infrastructure relations are transferred to the social sphere through ideology, and thus ideology secures and reproduces production relations (Althusser, 2010, p. 140). According to Adorno (2009, pp. 48–107), communication tools are conditioned by the capital owners; people who make money by selling their labor at work are surrounded by a culture industry that promises entertainment and happiness in their leisure time and is conditioned by advertising. Therefore, leisure and consumption is shaped as an extension of labor time and production. The main problem here is that people are led to fake solutions directed by the culture industry to meet their needs, instead of the solutions to the real problems they feel. Power is about connotation; so the power that can determine the connotation also becomes dominant discourse and authority (Barthes, 1998; Fairclough & Graham, 2013). Advertisements and popular texts fill objects with connotation by transferring meaning between unrelated categories through signs. Therefore, those who can direct the communication tools also direct the connotations of things. However, in the meantime consumers instead of perceiving the world as the owners and non-owners of the tools of production; perceives as having or be deprived of connotation-laden objects. Thus, these texts cause false consciousness by drawing the position towards the objects of consumption into the field of perception, instead of competition based on position against the tools of production (Williamson, 2000, pp. 176–185).

However, the desire for money and luxury is a phenomenon that existed before modern capitalism. Gain, money and desire have an important place in sacred texts and social norms (Hirschman, 2013). Therefore, it may be a limited attempt to explain the materialism and consumption-oriented personality structure with the false consciousness produced by the communication tools.

While Weber (1999) explains the materialistic life with the dominance of the Protestant value set, Durkheim (2023) explains the deprivation of social norms as the inability to set a direction and limit to pleasure and desires. According to Simmel, the cause of materialism is urbanization (Simmel, 2017). In the city, people become parts of exchange processes. In the relations within the city, the question of “who” disappears and the question of “what is his/her function” rises (Macdonis, 2015, p. 581). Therefore, the city produces more distant human relations. In this process, people who want to gain self-respect through the awareness of other people turn to new and different desires and ostentation to show that they occupy a certain social position. According to Simmel (2017), the underlying reason for materialism and ostentation in the city is the search for self-respect.

Norbert Elias (2016, pp. 10–32), explains the stress of the aristocrats and nobles against the rising bourgeoisie with the development of capitalism in Europe in a broad framework. The desire for more exist in pre-modern; what is new in capitalism is its expression in Money (Elias, 2016, pp. 64–65). Therefore, it is necessary to look

for the momentum created by modern capitalism for the materialist personality in the social mobility it produces. Production or consumption has an important place in social identity (Macionis, 2015, p. 412). The fact that class societies allow for social mobility also generates the demand for an identity and social position through consumption. Capitalist social mobility creates possible and necessary competition between social categories. Accordingly, Veblen(2015) states that luxury consumption stems from a quest to show power and that people are guided by the strata they belong to and the dominant strata in the society. Simmel, on the other hand, draws attention to a dynamic of inclusion and separation based on the contradiction of the concept of fashion. Individuals want to be included in social groups and to differentiate within groups through fashion (Simmel, 1957). At this point, it is necessary to open the concept of group, because people don't want to belong to every group; they even consciously stay away from certain groups. In other words, the search for belonging is only for certain and important groups. Douglas and Isherwood (1999, pp. 87–106) draw attention not to objects, but to the information system in which they are involved. The importance of goods is in their meaning, and this is something that cannot be produced alone, but mutually; all goods are part of the social network. According to this definition, goods are the marking system used by individuals and groups who want to show their performance and mark social categories. These signs create a bridge between group members and barricades for those outside the group. Strong groups are included in strategic information networks; poverty is isolation. Thus, while those from below want to cross these boundaries in order to be included in safe social zones, powerful groups produce rational ways to keep border abusers out. What people call luxury is based on producing a symbol that subgroups cannot imitate (G. Miller, 2018). The upper groups protect the group boundaries against the lower ones by means of these barricades, which are called luxuries. Since pre-modern accumulation and competition were based on groups, strong groups prevent relative deprivation with intra-group distribution mechanisms; In modern society, power, accumulation, status and honor are individualized because there are no strong groups (Douglas & Isherwood, 1999, pp. 54–55). Motivation for material gain rises in modern society, as group affiliation, honor and status are more dependent on economic performance than on ancestry and blood ties. The search for belonging to groups is meaningful if it serves the pursuit of honor and status, groups that do not serve this are avoided<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, as social interaction and mobility increase, depending on competition; desire increases in those from lower categories, and anxiety in those from upper categories. Those in the higher position raise the standards of luxury by raising consumption standards to keep the distance. Those from below have to comply with these standards or produce images of protest against them (Fiske, 2010, pp. 1–26).

Unlike sociometer or hierometer theory, terror management theory proposes that culture provides a support against existential anxiety. Therefore, adapting to cultural values calms anxiety. In a capitalist culture, since the cultural field is defined through the ownership of material goods; possession of material goods serves as a cultural confirmation and calms anxiety. In a study based on this paradigm conducted by Kasser and Sheldon (2000); one group of students wrote an article about death and the other group wrote a neutral article. As a result, the rate of ownership and greed of the group that wrote an article about death was significantly higher than the other group.

Zhou and Gao (2008) produce a relationship between anxiety and belonging. According to them, both perceived social support and money are ways of coping with pain. People who receive social support worry less, get sick less often, get better faster and are more successful. Money is a secondary buffering mechanism. It suppresses the lack of social support or distrust towards social support, facilitates receiving social support, makes it possible to keep a distance from other members of the society, thus reducing the possibility of harming the individual from other members. In summary, money is an element that provides an important psycho-social support to people by reducing the absence of social support and the need to seek social support. According to this point of view, concept of belonging is primer. Money is a mediating variable in individual and group interaction.

Perspectives about materialism are defined as tools, goals, and coping strategies. Money is a tool point of view defines materialism as a mediator for belonging and happiness; money is a goal point of view defines

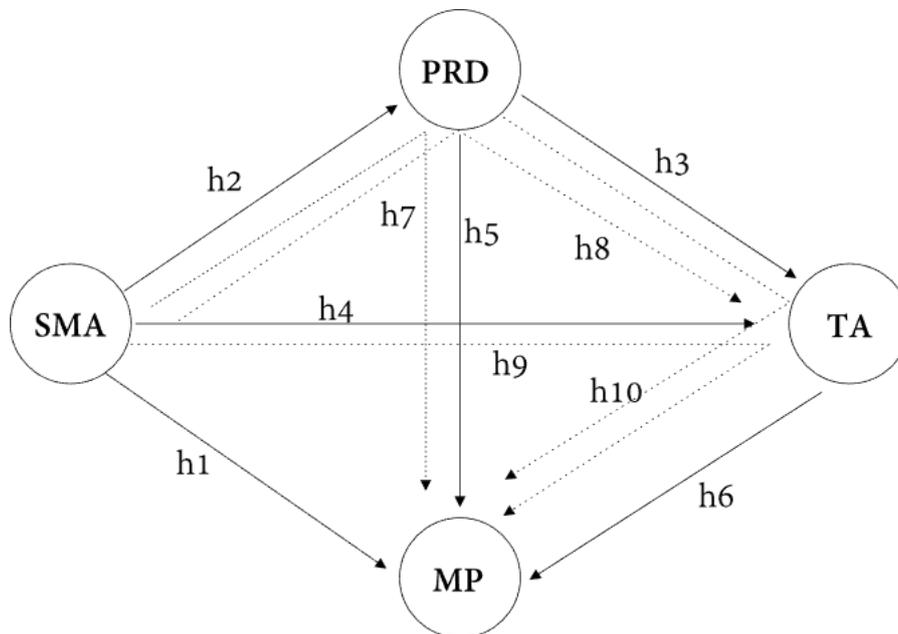
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<sup>2</sup> Hierometer theory considers the belonging variable of socio-meter theory as a mediating variable of the process of navigating through status hierarchies (Mahadevan, Gregg, Sedikides, & De Waal-Andrews, 2016).

ownership as an extended self and the money is a coping strategy perspective sees money as a tool to combat uncertainty, death and anxiety (Richins & Dawson, 1992; Zhou & Gao, 2008). The aim of examining the role of the anxiety factor in the relationship between relative deprivation and materialistic personality type is to understand whether social media promotes materialistic personality type as a tool for belonging or as a strategy for avoiding anxiety. Accordingly, the hypotheses established are stated below and shown in Figure-1.

- H1 – Social media addiction has a positive and significant effect on the materialistic personality type.
- H2 – Social media addiction has a significant and positive effect on personal relative deprivation perception.
- H3 – Personal relative deprivation perception has a significant and positive effect on trait anxiety.
- H4 – Social media addiction has a significant and positive effect on trait anxiety.
- H5 – Personal relative deprivation perception has a significant and positive effect on materialistic personality type.
- H6 – Trait anxiety has a significant and positive effect on the materialistic personality type.
- H7 – Personal relative deprivation perception has a mediating effect between social media addiction and materialistic personality type.
- H8 – Personal relative deprivation perception has a mediating effect between social media addiction and trait anxiety.
- H9 – Trait anxiety has a mediating effect between social media addiction and materialistic personality type.
- H10 – Trait anxiety has a mediating effect between personal relative deprivation perception and materialistic personality type.

**Figure 1: Study hypotheses. SMA: social media addiction; PRD: personal relative deprivation; TA: trait anxiety; MP: materialistic personality**



#### 4. Methodology

Data for the research is collected with the permission of Karabuk University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee; dated 18.04.2023, numbered E-78977401-050.02.04-237896.

Within the scope of the study, the mediation effect of personal relative deprivation perception and trait anxiety factors between social media addiction and materialistic personality type was examined. The study data

were collected through a questionnaire form. The prepared survey form was delivered to Karabuk University students and employees as an e-survey and feedback was received from 413 participants. Convenience sampling method was applied in sample selection. After the visual control and then the control question were examined and the erroneous or missing forms were eliminated, 309 forms were accepted as healthy and the analyzes were carried out on this data set. 195 women and 114 men, aged between 18 and 66, but most of them in their 20s, participated in the study (*Age mean:26, median:23, min:18, max:66, sd: 8,8*).

Within the scope of the study, 6-item Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) (Andreassen et al., 2016), 6-item Personal Relative Deprivation Scale (PRDS) (Callan, Shead, & Olson, 2011), 20-item Trait Anxiety Inventory (TAI) (Spielberger, 1972) and 18-item Materialistic Personality Scale (MPS) (Richins & Dawson, 1992) were used. Adaptation to Turkish, validity and reliability studies of scales made by; Demirci (2019) for Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale; Yılmaz (2019) for Personal Relative Deprivation Scale; Öner and LeCompte (1983) for Trait Anxiety Inventory and Purutçuoğlu (2008) for Materialistic Personality Scale. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used for scale reliability, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to test the construction validity of the scales. The scale's goodness of fit values and reliability coefficients are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Scale validity and reliability test results**

|              | <b>X<sup>2</sup>/df</b> | <b>GFI</b> | <b>NFI</b> | <b>CFI</b> | <b>TLI</b> | <b>RMSEA</b> | <b>Cronbach Alfa</b> |
|--------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|----------------------|
| <b>BSMAS</b> | 1,34                    | 0,99       | ,97        | ,99        | ,98        | ,03          | ,77                  |
| <b>PRDS</b>  | 1,00                    | 1,00       | 1,00       | 1,00       | 1,00       | ,00          | ,75                  |
| <b>TAI</b>   | 1,85                    | ,98        | ,91        | ,92        | ,91        | ,05          | ,88                  |
| <b>MPS</b>   | 2,36                    | ,99        | ,92        | ,95        | ,93        | ,06          | ,82                  |

It is seen that the goodness of fit values for the scales are acceptable and their reliability is ensured. In the confirmatory factor analysis, the statements with a factor load below .40 (Brown, 2015) were excluded from the scales; In this context, 3 statements were removed from the personal relative deprivation scale and 8 statements from the materialistic personality scale. Trait anxiety inventory consists of straight and reverse coded statements, after subtracting the sum of the reverse statements from the sum of the straight statements a constant value 35 is added and scores between 20 and 80 achieved. It is accepted that the person's trait anxiety increases as the score between 20 and 80 increases. The normality distribution of the scales was checked by looking at the skewness and kurtosis values, since the values were between -1 and +1, it was accepted that the data were normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012) and hypothesis tests were conducted. Social media addiction scale, personal relative deprivation scale, trait anxiety inventory and materialistic personality scales in order; skewness (0,116; 0,742; 0,258; -0,180), kurtosis values (-0,595; -0,169; -0,221; -0,126).

#### **4.1. Ethics Committee Permission**

Data for research is collected with the permission of Karabuk University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee; dated 18.04.2023, numbered E-78977401-050.02.04-237896.

#### **5. Results**

Correlation between scales was checked. In the correlation test, two more expressions in the questionnaire were used. These two statements were used for sense of belonging. Participants coded their sociality perception (alone-social) and emotinal relationship happiness (unhappy-happy) between 1 to 5. The reason for this is to observe the relationship between the variables of the concept of belonging, which is equally important in the self-esteem literature, in contrast to the anxiety factor, which is the subject of the research. Correlation test results are shown in Table-2.

**Table 2: Correlation test results**

|                                                                               |           | How Do You Feel About Your Emotional Relationship Situation? (Unhappy-Happy) | BSMAS   | PRDS    | TAI     | MPS     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| How Do You Feel Socially? (Alone – Social)                                    | Pearson r | ,400**                                                                       | -,147** | -,270** | -,390** | -,057   |
|                                                                               | P         | ,000                                                                         | ,010    | ,000    | ,000    | ,319    |
| How Do You Feel About Your Emotional Relationship Situation? (Unhappy- Happy) | Pearson r |                                                                              | -,311** | -,353** | -,487** | -,225** |
|                                                                               | P         |                                                                              | ,000    | ,000    | ,000    | ,000    |
| BSMAS                                                                         | Pearson r |                                                                              |         | ,476**  | ,506**  | ,332**  |
|                                                                               | P         |                                                                              |         | ,000    | ,000    | ,000    |
| PRDS                                                                          | Pearson r |                                                                              |         |         | ,550**  | ,437**  |
|                                                                               | P         |                                                                              |         |         | ,000    | ,000    |
| TAI                                                                           | Pearson r |                                                                              |         |         |         | ,358**  |
|                                                                               | P         |                                                                              |         |         |         | ,000    |

N=309, \*,<.05, \*\*,<.01 \*\*\*<.001

After the correlation test, the research hypotheses were tested through the latent variable structural model. Analysis results are shown in table-2 and figure-2. According to the analysis results, H1( $\beta=0.332$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), H2 ( $\beta=0.476$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), H3 ( $\beta=0.400$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), H4 ( $\beta=0.506$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ), H5 ( $\beta = 0.361$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ) and H6 ( $\beta=0.126$ ,  $p < 0.046$ ) hypotheses were accepted. The bootstrap method was used for the mediation hypotheses. According to the bootstrap results, H7 and H8 hypotheses were accepted, H9 and H10 hypotheses were rejected. According to Bootstrap test results, personal relative deprivation has a full mediation effect between social media addiction and materialistic personality (H7), ( $\beta=0.212$ ,  $p < 0.000$ , %95 CI (0.097,0.212)). There is a partial mediation effect of personal relative deprivation between social media addiction and trait anxiety (H8), ( $\beta=0.190$ ,  $p < 0.000$ , CI (0.129, 0.256)).

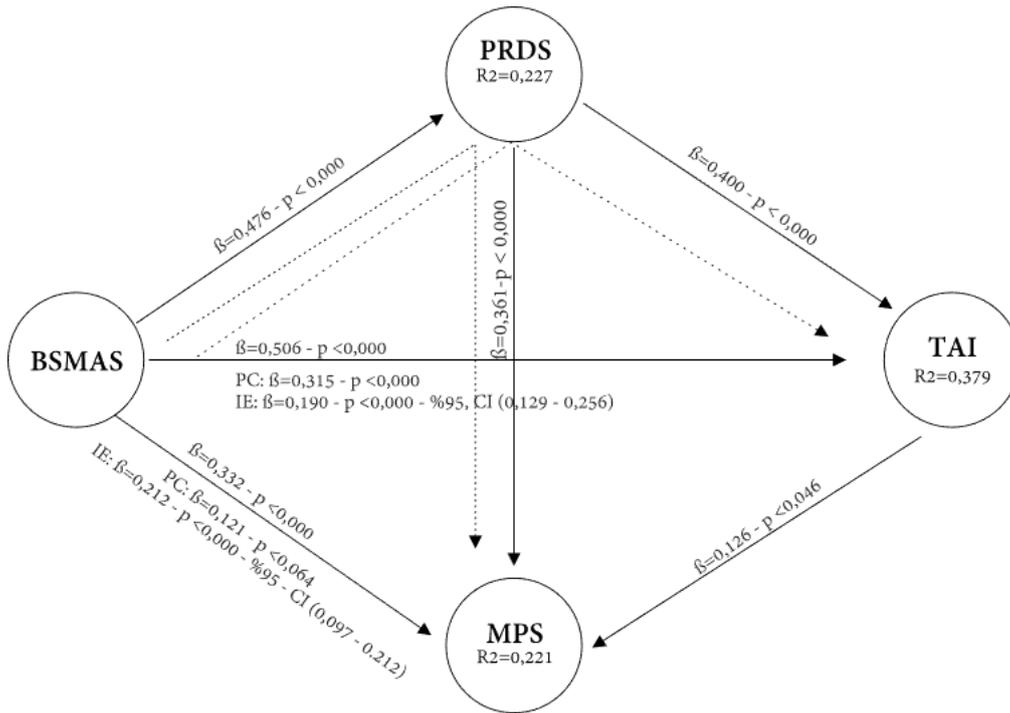
**Table 3: Path analysis results**

| Prediction Variables |                 | Result Variables |      |                                      |      |                                     |      |
|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|------|--------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|------|
|                      |                 | PRDS             |      | TAI                                  |      | MPS                                 |      |
|                      |                 | $\beta$          | SE   | $\beta$                              | SE   | $\beta$                             | SE   |
| BSMAS                | Total Effect    | 0,476***         | ,042 | 0,506***                             | ,039 | 0,332***                            | ,053 |
|                      | Direct Effect   |                  | ,042 | 0,315***                             | ,051 | 0,121                               | ,065 |
|                      | Indirect Effect |                  |      | $\beta=0,190$ ***, CI (0,129, 0,256) |      | $\beta=0,212$ ***, CI (0,097,0,212) |      |
| R <sup>2</sup>       |                 | 0,227            |      | 0,379                                |      | 0,221                               |      |
| PRDS                 | Total Effect    |                  |      | 0,400***                             | ,059 | 0,361***                            | ,053 |
|                      | Direct Effect   |                  |      |                                      | ,059 | 0,315                               | ,056 |
|                      | Indirect Effect |                  |      |                                      |      | 0,050                               |      |
| R <sup>2</sup>       |                 |                  |      | 0,379                                |      | 0,221                               |      |

|                |                 |  |  |  |  |        |      |
|----------------|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--------|------|
| TAI            | Total Effect    |  |  |  |  | 0,126* | ,063 |
|                | Direct Effect   |  |  |  |  |        | ,063 |
|                | Indirect Effect |  |  |  |  |        |      |
| R <sup>2</sup> |                 |  |  |  |  | 0,221  |      |

N=309, \*<.05, \*\*<.01, \*\*\*<.001

Figure 2: Path analysis results for hypotheses: β ; total effect; PC; path coefficient; IE; indirect effect



In addition, studies on social media addiction, gender and materialistic personality type produce different results. Since social media is a relationship-based platform, it can be expected that women's social media usage and addiction levels will be significantly higher than men's. Studies have produced different results on gender; In some studies, no significant difference was found in the gender category (Buran Köse & Doğan, 2019; Hawi & Samaha, 2017), while a significant difference was found in different studies, although the effect level was low (Andreassen et al., 2017). In another study examining the relationship between social media and anxiety, the use of social media in the relationship between anxiety and life satisfaction; It is seen that women produce significantly more positive scores than men (Krasnova et al., 2013). Considering money as a stress management technique against the lack of social support, Zhou and Gao (2008), state that men are expected to be significantly more materialistic than women, as men are culturally conditioned to be more self-sufficient. In this context, t-test was performed to examine the difference between gender, and the results are shown in Table-4. According to test results, the gender category only makes a significant difference in the variables of social media addiction and trait anxiety. Accordingly, women's social media addiction and trait anxiety levels are significantly higher than men.

**Table 4: Independent groups t-test for genders**

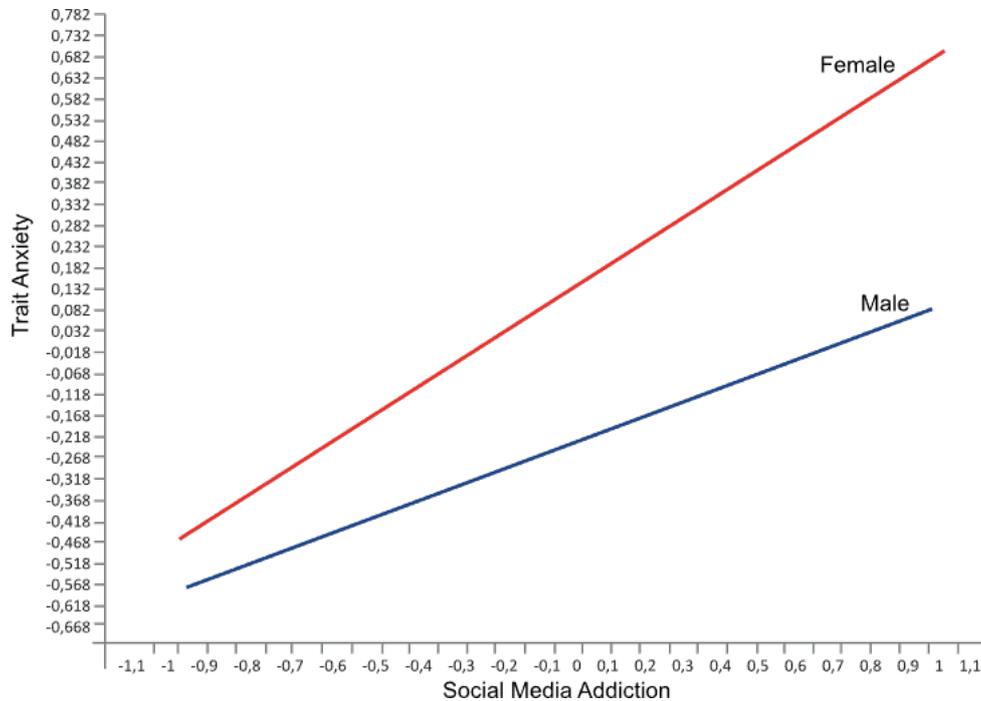
|              | Groups | N   | $\bar{x}$ | Ss    | sd  | t     | p    |
|--------------|--------|-----|-----------|-------|-----|-------|------|
| <b>BSMAS</b> | Male   | 114 | 2,568     | 0,90  | 307 | 2,549 | ,011 |
|              | Female | 195 | 2,850     | 0,96  |     |       |      |
| <b>PRDS</b>  | Male   | 114 | 2,096     | 0,97  | 307 | 0,876 | ,382 |
|              | Female | 195 | 2,207     | 1,14  |     |       |      |
| <b>TAI</b>   | Male   | 114 | 42,756    | 9,61  | 307 | 4,204 | ,000 |
|              | Female | 195 | 47,917    | 10,88 |     |       |      |
| <b>MPS</b>   | Male   | 114 | 3,111     | 0,78  | 307 | 0,037 | ,971 |
|              | Female | 195 | 3,107     | 0,85  |     |       |      |

The moderator effect of the gender variable between social media addiction and trait anxiety variables was tested, and the results are shown in table-5 and figure-3.

**Table 5: The moderator role of gender in the relationship between social media addiction and trait anxiety**

|                       | Path Coefficient | Standard Error | T statistics |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Gender -> TAI         | -0,360           | 0,099          | 3614***      |
| BSMAS -> TAI          | 0,565            | 0,048          | 11783***     |
| Gender x BSMAS -> TAI | -0,239           | 0,090          | 264800**     |

**Figure 3: Gender x social media addiction**



## 6. Discussion

According to the results of the analysis, social media addiction and personal relative deprivation have a significant effect on trait anxiety, but the anxiety factor has no or very weak relationship with the materialistic personality type, either directly or through mediation. Therefore, the relationship between social media addiction and anxiety, and the relationship between personal relative deprivation perception and anxiety should be additionally investigated. Depression, participation to protest sub-cultures, latent or observed violence tendency may be the topics that should be examined at this point.

The effect of social media addiction on the materialistic personality type is realized through the full mediating role of personal relative deprivation perception. Therefore, the effect of social media use and addiction on materialistic personality type is entirely due to social comparison; It is seen that the role of social media use here is due to deepening the perception of relative deprivation by widening the comparison scale.

The effect of the trait anxiety factor on the materialistic personality type was found to be very small. Trait anxiety variable has no mediating effect on materialistic personality type through social media addiction and personal relative deprivation variables. It is seen that the materialistic personality type is largely affected by the perception of personal relative deprivation. Therefore, it can be said that a motivation based on comparing oneself with others, not the anxiety factor, is effective in the relationship between social media use and materialistic personality type. However, according to the correlation results seen in Table 2; perception of social loneliness establishes a significant relationship with social media addiction and personal relative deprivation perception but it has a not significant relationship with materialistic personality type. Materialistic personality type has a significant relation with the perception of happiness in emotional relationships. Therefore, the relationship between social media addiction and materialistic personality type; it can be thought that it is related to sexual competition and romantic belonging seeking rather than a search for a social belonging. At this point, while the perception of social loneliness has a relationship with the perception of personal relative deprivation, if it is not related to the materialistic personality type, what kind of behavior and motivations it produces appears as a new research topic.

As mentioned before, the relationship between gender and social media addiction does not produce stable results (Andreassen et al., 2017; Buran Köse & Doğan, 2019; Hawi & Samaha, 2017; Krasnova et al., 2013). In the study sample, it is seen that women produce higher scores than men in social media addiction and trait anxiety factors, and there is no significant difference between the groups between personal relative deprivation and materialistic personality type. Although women produce significantly higher results in social media addiction; there is no significant difference in personal relative deprivation and materialistic personality type scores. The reason for this is that the effect of social media addiction on the materialistic personality type is entirely due to the perception of personal relative deprivation. Therefore, it is seen that the main and direct effect of social media addiction is on the trait anxiety factor, and a part of this effect is mediated by the perception of personal relative deprivation [ $\beta=0.190^{***}$ , CI (0.129, 0.256)]. It is seen that there is a positive correlation between social media addiction and trait anxiety. At this point, a question arises; Women with a high scores social media addiction and trait anxiety can be expected to exhibit a more materialistic personality, or men who are more culturally conditioned to self-sufficiency can be expected to exhibit a more materialistic disposition (Zhou & Gao, 2008). However, gender category does not produce a significant difference at personal relative deprivation perception and materialistic personality type. Therefore, it can be thought that men and women read texts from social media differently. Although the social media addiction scores are low, the fact that men do not produce a significant difference with women in terms of personal relative deprivation perception and materialistic personality suggests that men read these messages with a more material framework, while women produce the anxiety factor instead of a materialistic behavior.

There is a significant relationship between social media addiction and trait anxiety. However, the perception of loneliness and the perception of emotional unhappiness also create a similar correlation with the trait anxiety factor. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse separately how much of the perception of trait anxiety is due to social media addiction and how much of it is due to dissatisfaction in social and emotional life.

This study examines the relationship between social media addiction and materialist personality type as a result of pressure or motivation towards self-esteem. Individuals can produce exaggerated self-presentations on social media in order to care themselves and demand social status. This behavior can produce comparison and anxiety in message recipients. In this context, the study examines the relationship between social media addiction and materialistic personality type with two variables that are thought to play a mediating role. The mediating effect of the personal relative deprivation variable between social media addiction and materialistic personality type indicates materialistic behavior as a result of social comparison with concept of belonging as a desire for social acceptance or a behavior to avoid rejection. In this context, the personal relative deprivation variable links social media addiction and the materialist personality type relationship with the concept of belonging in the context of sociometer theory. The mediating effect of the trait anxiety factor between social media addiction and materialistic personality type positions materialistic behavior as a motivation produced by anxiety based on not being able to comply with cultural standards in line with terror management theory. In the analyses, it was determined that the anxiety variable did not produce a significant effect on the relationship between social media addiction and materialistic personality type. Depending on this result, the cultural standards-based perspective of Terror management theory in the relationship between social media addiction and materialist personality type has been rejected. On the other hand, it appears that the personal relative deprivation variable produces a full mediating effect in the relationship between social media addiction and materialistic personality type. Based on this result, it has been accepted that the relationship between social media addiction and materialist personality type developed within the framework of sociometer theory, which emphasizes belonging. However, when the correlation between the satisfaction level of the participants with their social life and emotional relationships and the materialist personality type is examined, it is seen that emotional life satisfaction creates a significant relationship with the materialist personality type, while social life satisfaction does not. These results suggest that the relationship between social media addiction and materialist personality type is formed due to the phenomenon of belonging, but is especially shaped by sexual competition, acceptance and belonging. For this reason, it is thought that the relationship between materialist personality type and social media addiction should be discussed in conjunction with the concepts of social and romantic belonging.

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