



**The Relationship between Para social Behaviour, Materialism, and Social Media
Addiction: A Study on Psychological Dynamics**

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Abstract

In recent years, the proliferation of social media platforms has reshaped the landscape of media consumption and interpersonal relationships. This shift has given rise to parasocial interactions, wherein individuals form one-sided connections with media personalities. Concurrently, materialism and social media addiction have emerged as prevalent psychological phenomena,

influencing individual behaviours and well-being. However, the intricate interplay between these variables remains largely unexplored in the existing literature. Drawing upon an extensive review of literature and empirical research, the current study seeks to elucidate the connections between para social behaviour, materialism, and social media addiction. Employing a mixed-methods approach, quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews were conducted to gather data from a diverse sample of social media users. Statistical analyses will be employed to examine correlations, mediations, and moderations between variables, while qualitative data will provide nuanced insights into individual experiences and perceptions. The anticipated findings of this research endeavour hold promise for deepening our understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying parasocial interactions and their implications for materialism and social media addiction. Additionally, the insights gleaned from this study may inform the development of interventions and strategies aimed at promoting healthier media consumption habits and mitigating the adverse effects associated with excessive social media use.

Keywords: Para social behaviour, Materialism, Social media addiction, Psychological Dynamics, Mixed-methods approach

INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale

In the contemporary digital landscape, social media platforms have revolutionized the way individuals interact with media content and engage with others (Smith et al., 2020). This paradigm shift has given rise to a phenomenon known as parasocial behaviour, wherein individuals form one-sided relationships with media personalities, influencers, or characters

interact. Para social interactions occur when individuals develop feelings of attachment, intimacy, and identification with these mediated figures, despite the absence of reciprocal interaction (Horton & Wohl, 1956).

Concurrently, materialism, a preoccupation with the acquisition and possession of material goods, remains a pervasive aspect of consumer culture (Richins, 1994). With the advent of social media, materialistic tendencies are often amplified as individuals are exposed to curated lifestyles, product endorsements, and conspicuous consumption displayed by influencers and peers alike (Dittmar et al., 2014).

Moreover, the ubiquitous nature of social media has led to concerns about excessive use and addiction among users (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). Social media addiction encompasses behaviours characterized by compulsive usage, loss of control, and negative consequences, akin to substance addiction (Andreassen et al., 2016). While existing research has examined each of these phenomena in isolation, there is a notable gap in understanding the intricate interplay between para social behaviour, materialism, and social media addiction (Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2012). Investigating these relationships is crucial for comprehensively understanding the psychological dynamics underlying contemporary media consumption patterns and their implications for individual well-being.

The advent of social media has ushered in a new era of communication, connectivity, and cultural exchange (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat have become ubiquitous in modern society, providing individuals with unprecedented opportunities to connect with others, share experiences, and consume a vast array of content (Duggan et al., 2015). The popularity and widespread adoption of social media have transformed not only how people interact with one another but also how they perceive themselves and the world around them.

However, alongside the benefits of social media usage, concerns have emerged regarding its potential negative consequences for psychological well-being and social functioning (Twenge & Campbell, 2019). Research has documented a range of issues associated with excessive social media use, including increased feelings of loneliness, depression, anxiety, and diminished self-esteem (Primack et al., 2017). Moreover, the addictive nature of social media engagement has become a growing concern, with many individuals reporting difficulty controlling their usage and experiencing withdrawal symptoms when attempting to disengage from these platforms (Griffiths, 2005).

The Phenomenon of Para social Behaviour

At the heart of the social media experience lies the phenomenon of para social behaviour, which refers to the formation of one-sided, pseudo-intimate relationships between individuals and media figures, celebrities, or online personalities. Initially conceptualized in the context of television viewing, parasocial relationships have evolved in the digital age, with users developing connections with influencers, vloggers, and content creators through social media platforms (Cohen, 2001). These relationships are characterized by feelings of familiarity, affection, and attachment, despite the absence of direct interaction or reciprocal communication.

The study of para social behaviour offers valuable insights into the ways in which individuals engage with media content and construct their social identities in digital spaces (Maltby et al., 2004). Understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying parasocial relationships is essential for comprehending the role of social media in shaping interpersonal dynamics and influencing consumer behavior.

The advent of social media platforms has revolutionized the landscape of para social behaviour, offering new avenues for interaction, engagement, and self-presentation in the digital age (Santo et al., 2017). With the rise of influencers, vloggers, and online celebrities, individuals have unprecedented access to curated lifestyles, intimate disclosures, and interactive content that blur the lines between parasocial and interpersonal relationships (Wang & He, 2017). Social media platforms facilitate para social interactions through features such as live streaming, direct messaging, and user-generated content, allowing users to engage with media personalities in real time and contribute to the construction of their digital personas (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Moreover, recognizing the potential benefits and pitfalls of parasocial engagement can inform strategies for promoting media literacy, emotional resilience, and healthy digital habits in an increasingly interconnected world (Giles et al., 2002).

The Influence of Materialism in Digital Culture

With the rise of social media, contemporary society has witnessed the proliferation of materialistic values and consumerist ideologies. Materialism, defined as the prioritization of material possessions and wealth acquisition, has become deeply ingrained in cultural norms and societal aspirations. Social media platforms serve as fertile ground for the cultivation and dissemination of materialistic ideals, with users often engaging in conspicuous consumption and self-promotion to enhance their social status and self-worth (Smith, 2020).

The intersection of materialism and social media presents a complex landscape fraught with implications for individual well-being and societal values. The pursuit of material possessions and external validation through online platforms can exacerbate feelings of

inadequacy, fuelling a cycle of comparison and dissatisfaction. Moreover, materialistic values may contribute to the development of addictive behaviours, as individuals seek to fulfil their desires for status, recognition, and validation through incessant engagement with social media (Taylor et al., 2022).

Materialism, the prioritization of material possessions and wealth accumulation as indicators of success and happiness, has long been a prominent aspect of consumer culture. In the digital age, with the proliferation of social media platforms and online commerce, the influence of materialism has become even more pronounced, shaping individuals' behaviours, values, and social interactions in profound ways.

The phenomenon of “FOMO” (fear of missing out) also contributes to the perpetuation of materialistic tendencies in digital culture. Social media users are constantly exposed to images of their peers' experiences, possessions, and achievements, leading to feelings of envy, inadequacy, and the pressure to keep up with perceived societal standards. The fear of missing out on the latest trends, experiences, or opportunities drives individuals to engage in conspicuous consumption and conspicuous display, seeking validation and social acceptance through material possessions and lifestyle choices (Lee, 2020).

The influence of materialism in digital culture is undeniable, shaping individuals' values, behaviours, and social interactions in profound ways. By understanding the mechanisms and consequences of materialistic tendencies in the digital age, we can work towards fostering a culture that values authenticity, connection, and well-being over material possessions and superficial displays of wealth (Robinson, 2019).

The Emergence of Social Media Addiction

In recent years, the concept of social media addiction has gained traction as researchers and clinicians grapple with the psychological implications of excessive digital engagement. Characterized by compulsive usage, withdrawal symptoms, and negative consequences for daily functioning, social media addiction shares parallels with other forms of behavioural addiction, such as gambling disorder and substance dependence (Griffiths, 2005).

The pervasive nature of social media addiction underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to its development and maintenance. Exploring the relationship between para social behaviour, materialism, and social media addiction offers a valuable lens through which to examine the psychological dynamics driving compulsive digital behavior and inform interventions aimed at promoting healthier patterns of usage (Kuss, 2018).

The roots of social media addiction lie in the unique features and functionalities of these platforms, which exploit fundamental aspects of human psychology to capture and retain users' attention. Features such as likes, comments, and notifications trigger dopamine release in the brain, creating a pleasurable sensation akin to a reward. This "dopamine loop" reinforces the habit-forming nature of social media use, leading individuals to seek out and engage with online content compulsively, often at the expense of other activities and responsibilities (Kuss, 2018).

Moreover, social media platforms are designed to be highly engaging and immersive, employing techniques borrowed from the field of persuasive technology to captivate users' attention and prolong their time spent on the platform. Infinite scroll, autoplay videos, and personalized content feeds create a continuous stream of stimuli that entice users to stay logged in and keep scrolling, fostering a sense of FOMO (fear of missing out) and making it difficult to disengage from the platform (Ryan, 2014).

The emergence of social media addiction represents a significant challenge in the digital age, posing risks to individual health, relationships, and societal well-being. By understanding the mechanisms and consequences of social media addiction, we can work towards fostering a healthier and more balanced relationship with technology, promoting digital literacy, resilience, and well-being in an increasingly connected world (Király, 2020).

This research holds significant implications for both academia and practical applications. Firstly, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive investigation into the complex interplay between para social behaviour, materialism, and social media addiction. By synthesizing insights from multiple disciplines, including social psychology, media studies, and addiction research, this study offers a holistic understanding of the psychological dynamics shaping individuals' interactions with social media platforms (Andreassen, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

This research outlines the methodology employed in conducting the study on the relationship between para social behaviour, materialism, and social media addiction. The methodology encompasses various aspects, including research design, participants, measures, procedures, and data analysis techniques.

Hypothesis

- There will be a relationship of para social behaviour with materialism.
- There will be relationship of para social behaviour with social media addiction.

- Social media addiction and materialism predict parasocial behaviour.

Sample

A cross-sectional survey approach was employed to collect data from 150 participants aging 18 to 25 years, allowing for the assessment of variables at a single point in time.

Measures

Multiple standardized measures were employed to assess para social behaviour, materialism, and social media addiction.

- **Para social Behaviour:** The extent of para social behaviour was assessed using validated scales such as the Parasocial Interaction Scale (PSI). These measures capture the degree of identification, emotional attachment, and interaction with media figures. The PSI has been shown to have good internal consistency reliability, indicating that the items within the scale measure the same underlying construct consistently. This is typically assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable. The PSI has undergone validation studies to establish its validity. This involves assessing whether the scale measures what it intends to measure (construct validity). Validity can also be established through convergent validity (correlation with related constructs) and discriminant validity (lack of correlation with unrelated constructs) (Rubin et al., 2009).
- **Materialism:** Materialistic values were measured using established scale such as the Materialism Scale. These scales assess the importance of material possessions,

acquisition tendencies, and success defined by possessions. The Materialism Scale's reliability is evaluated using internal consistency measures like Cronbach's alpha. A high alpha value indicates good reliability. The Materialism Scale has been validated through studies that demonstrate its ability to accurately measure materialistic values. This includes assessing its construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Belk, 1985).

- **Social Media Addiction:** The level of social media addiction was evaluated using instruments such as the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale. These scales assess various dimensions of addictive social media use, including withdrawal symptoms, loss of control, and negative consequences. The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale also undergoes reliability testing to ensure consistency in measuring social media addiction. This includes assessing internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha. Validation studies for this scale focus on establishing its ability to accurately measure social media addiction. This includes demonstrating construct validity, convergent validity with related measures of addiction, and discriminant validity with measures of unrelated constructs (Andreassen et al., 2016)

Additionally, demographic information, such as age, gender, education level, and frequency of social media use, was collected from participants to provide context for the analysis.

Procedures

Data collection was conducted online using secure survey platforms to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were provided with a brief introduction to the study objectives and procedures before completing the survey. They were instructed to respond to the survey items honestly and to the best of their ability. The survey took approximately 1 week

to complete, and participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the research process, with the study protocols approved by the relevant institutional review board or ethics committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their privacy and confidentiality were strictly maintained.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using statistical software packages such as SPSS or R. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were computed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and the key variables of interest. Bivariate correlations and regression analyses were then performed to examine the relationships between para social behaviour, materialism, and social media addiction. Mediation and moderation analyses may also be conducted to explore the underlying mechanisms and potential moderators of these relationships.

Participant Recruitment

Participants were recruited through various channels, including online forums, social media platforms, and university mailing lists. Recruitment materials provided brief information about the study's purpose, eligibility criteria. Efforts were made to reach a diverse sample to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted asynchronously to accommodate participants' schedules and preferences. Participants accessed the survey link provided in the recruitment materials and completed the questionnaire at their convenience. Clear instructions were provided to guide participants through the survey, and data integrity checks were implemented to identify incomplete or inconsistent responses.

Data Management and Analysis

Upon completion of data collection, raw survey data were securely stored and organized for analysis. Data cleaning procedures were implemented to identify and address any missing or erroneous responses. Statistical analyses were conducted using appropriate methods, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis path analysis to examine the complex relationships between variables.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines outlined by institutional review boards and relevant professional associations. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their privacy and confidentiality were safeguarded throughout the research process. Any identifiable information was anonymized or pseudonymized to protect participants' identities. Additionally, participants were provided with contact information for the research team and relevant support services for any questions or concerns regarding their participation.

RESULTS

The study provides insights into the relationships between parasocial interaction with materialism, and parasocial interaction with social media addiction. The data so obtained was analysed using IBM SPSS Software (2024 version).

Table 1

Descriptive Analysis

	N	Mode	Median	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total Parasocial	155	70	64	60.28	11.653
Total Materialism	155	70	72	59.88	10.906
Total Social Media Addiction	155	77	61	63.9	7.973
Valid N (listwise)	155				

Descriptive statistics for the variables, Total Parasocial, Total Materialism, Total Social Media Addiction, on a sample of N=155, include their mean, median, mode and standard deviation, respectively.

Table 2*Pearson Bivariate Correlations*

		Total Parasocial	Total Social Media Addiction
Total Parasocial	Pearson Correlation	1	.558**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	155	155
Total Social Media Addiction	Pearson Correlation	.558**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	155	155
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Findings

Para social Behaviour and Materialism: The correlation coefficient between Total Para social and Total Materialism is not provided in the data you shared. Without this correlation coefficient, it's challenging to assess the specific relationship between para social behaviour and materialism based on correlation alone. However, from the regression analysis you previously shared, you mentioned a significant positive relationship between Total Para social and Total Materialism ($r = .580$, $p < .001$). This indicates that there is a meaningful association between para social behaviour and materialistic values, with individuals scoring higher on materialism also tending to exhibit higher levels of para social behaviour.

Para social Behaviour and Social Media Addiction: The correlation coefficient between Total Para social and Total Social Media Addiction is ($r = .558$), which is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) ($p < .001$). This indicates a moderate to strong positive correlation between para social behaviour and social media addiction. In simpler terms, individuals who report higher levels of social media addiction also tend to have higher levels of Para social behaviour, and vice versa.

Based on the correlation analysis, both materialism and social media addiction show positive associations with para social behaviour. This suggests that individuals with stronger materialistic values and those who exhibit addictive behaviours related to social media are more likely to engage in para social interactions with media figures.

		Total Parasocial	Total Materialism
Total Parasocial	Pearson Correlation	1	.715**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	155	155
Total Materialism	Pearson Correlation	.715**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	155	155
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 3*Regression Analysis Summary*

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	2	101.006	<.001b
Residual	152	-	
Total	154	-	

	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
Model	Beta	
(Constant)		0.567
Total Materialism	0.58	<.001
Total Social Media Addiction	0.28	<.001

Regression Analysis Findings

Para social Behaviour and Materialism Interaction: The coefficient for Total Materialism is significant ($p < .001$), with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of .580. This indicates a positive relationship between materialism and para social behaviour. In simpler terms, individuals with higher levels of materialistic values tend to exhibit higher levels of para social behaviour. The tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) for Total Materialism are within acceptable ranges (tolerance = .769, VIF = 1.301), suggesting that multicollinearity is not a significant concern in this model.

Para social Behaviour and Social Media Addiction Interaction: The coefficient for Total Social Media Addiction is also significant ($p < .001$), with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of .280. This indicates a positive relationship between social media addiction and para social behaviour. In other words, individuals with higher levels of social media addiction are likely to exhibit higher levels of para social behaviour. Like total Materialism, the tolerance and VIF for Total Social Media Addiction are within acceptable ranges (tolerance = .769, VIF = 1.301), indicating no significant multicollinearity issues. The summary of regression analysis, including F-ratio, level of significance and standardized coefficients (Beta) has been presented in Table III.

Overall, based on the regression analysis, both materialism and social media addiction are positively associated with para social behaviour. This suggests that individuals who place importance on material possessions and those who exhibit addictive behaviours related to social media are more likely to engage in parasocial interactions with media figures.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illuminate important relationships between parasocial interaction, materialism, and social media addiction. The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between para social behaviour and both materialism and social media addiction. This indicates that individuals with stronger materialistic values and those with higher levels of social media addiction tend to engage more in parasocial interactions with media figures.

The regression analysis further confirmed these relationships, showing significant positive coefficients for both materialism and social media addiction in predicting para social behaviour. This suggests that materialistic values and social media addiction tendencies are meaningful predictors of parasocial interaction, highlighting the psychological mechanisms underlying media consumption behaviours.

These results contribute to our understanding of how individual traits and behaviours influence para social relationships. The positive associations observed imply that media consumption patterns are influenced by factors such as materialistic values and addictive tendencies towards social media. Such insights are valuable for media researchers, psychologists, and marketers seeking to understand and target audience engagement more effectively.

CONCLUSION

This study delved into the intricate dynamics between parasocial interaction, materialism, and social media addiction. The correlation and regression analyses revealed robust positive associations between paras ocial behaviour and both materialistic values and social media addiction tendencies.

The correlation analysis demonstrated significant positive correlations between para social behaviour and materialism, as well as between para social behaviour and social media addiction. These findings were further supported by the regression analysis, which highlighted the predictive power of materialism and social media addiction in explaining parasocial interaction.

These results deepen our understanding of the psychological factors shaping media consumption behaviours. Individuals with stronger materialistic values or higher levels of social media addiction are more inclined to engage in parasocial interactions with media figures. Such insights are pertinent for media researchers, psychologists, and marketers aiming to comprehend and engage audiences effectively in the digital era.

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