

## The Mediating Role of Social Media Usage Habits in the Relationship Between FoMO and Nomophobia

### FoMO ile Nomofobi Arasındaki İlişkide Sosyal Medya Kullanım Alışkanlıklarının Aracı Rolü

Sinan OKUR\*  Özlem ACAR-BULUT\*\*  Seval ERDEN-ÇINAR\*\*\* 

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examines the mediating role of social media usage habits in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia. 457 people were recruited to participate in the study. While 177 of them were male, the remaining 280 participants were female, and the participants' age ranged between 18 and 70. The average age of the participants was calculated as 30.81. The research hypotheses were tested by hierarchical regression analysis. In addition, the significance of the mediator variable was examined via Bootstrapping analysis. First, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between variables, and it was found that there was a positive significant relationship between variables. The subsequent hierarchical regression analysis determined that social media usage habits played a partial mediating role in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia. All findings were discussed in the light of similar research studies in the existing literature, and several suggestions were provided in the end.

**Keywords:** FoMO, nomophobia, social media usage habits, mediation analysis.

**ÖZ:** Bu çalışmada, FoMO ile nomofobi arasındaki ilişkide sosyal medya kullanım alışkanlıklarının aracı rolünün incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, yaşları 18 ile 70 arasında değişen 177'si erkek ve 280'i kadın olmak üzere toplam 457 kişiden oluşmaktadır. Katılımcıların yaş ortalaması ise 30.81 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Araştırmanın hipotezleri hiyerarşik regresyon analizi ile test edilmiştir. Ayrıca aracı değişkenin anlamlılığı günümüzde daha çağdaş bir yaklaşım olarak kabul gören Bootstrapping yöntemi ile hesaplanmıştır. Veri analizinde ilk olarak değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek amacıyla Pearson momentler çarpımı korelasyon analizi yapılmış ve değişkenler arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişkiler olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Sonrasında yapılan hiyerarşik regresyon analizinde sosyal medya kullanım alışkanlıkları değişkeninin FoMO ile nomofobi arasındaki ilişkide kısmi aracı rol oynadığı belirlenmiştir. Alanyazında FoMO ile nomofobi arasındaki ilişkide sosyal medya kullanım alışkanlıkları değişkeninin aracı rolünün incelendiği herhangi bir çalışma olmaması, bu araştırmanın önemini ortaya koymaktadır. Elde edilen tüm bu bulgular benzer çalışmalar ve alanyazın ışığında tartışılmış, tüm okuyuculara bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** FoMO, nomofobi, sosyal medya kullanım alışkanlıkları, aracılık analizi.

\* *Corresponding Author:* Lecturer, National Defense University, Turkish Air Force Academy, Istanbul, Turkey, [sokur@hho.msu.edu.tr](mailto:sokur@hho.msu.edu.tr), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3439-5907>

\*\* Psychological Counselor, Ministry of Education, Istanbul, Turkey, [ozlemacarpdr@gmail.com](mailto:ozlemacarpdr@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4720-3705>

\*\*\* Prof. Dr., Marmara University, Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Istanbul, Turkey, [seval.erden@marmara.edu.tr](mailto:seval.erden@marmara.edu.tr), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4512-1274>

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With the advancements in technology, people can now easily access information whenever and however they want. They can also communicate with their peers through video calls and share various posts on social networks. While fulfilling their daily routines through mobile devices, individuals may develop negative feelings such as nomophobia and FoMO when such devices are not accessible.

The term nomophobia (originated from NO Mobile PHOBIA) is defined as the experience of the involuntary fear of the individual in case of not being able to access and communicate with the mobile phone (Yıldırım & Correia, 2015). Nomophobia is evaluated both in the behavioral addiction group and in the phobia group. While it is in the sub-category of internet addiction in the behavioral addiction group, it is also in the specific phobia sub-category in the phobia group (Günlü & Uz-Baş, 2020). Using the phone regularly and spending time on the phone for a long time, carrying the phone charger constantly, having an angry mood when the smartphone needs to be turned off, and checking the notifications on the phone constantly are reported as the symptoms of nomophobia under the subtitle of specific phobias in the literature (Bragazzi & del Puente, 2014; Kaplan-Akıllı & Gezgin, 2016).

Nomophobia is seen as a digital age problem that vastly affects society. Nomophobia, which has a high incidence and degree in society, brings some problems along. (Büyükçolpan, 2019; Dixit et al., 2010; King et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2015). The existing literature reports that staying away from the smartphone causes an increase in stress symptoms and temper in individuals (Polat, 2017); it also increases interpersonal sensitivity psychopathological symptoms such as obsessive-compulsive symptoms (Gonçalves et al., 2020). Besides, it is reported that nomophobia is related to social phobia (Apak & Yaman, 2019), loneliness (Karakuyu, 2019), depression (Büyükçolpan, 2019), happiness level (Güllüce et al., 2019), academic achievement (Erdem et al., 2016) and life satisfaction (Büyükalim, 2020).

Nomophobia, which is becoming even more common with the increase in smartphone usage (Polat, 2017), shows itself as a symptom of disturbance due to limited smartphone usage (Ma & Liu, 2018). Also, nomophobic individuals feel the need to have their phone next to them as they sleep, and the first thing they do in the mornings is to check their phones (Kaplan-Akıllı & Gezgin, 2016). Individuals' constant desire to check their phones eventually leads to the emergence of addictive behaviors at some point. Accordingly, it was stated that nomophobia is fueled by smartphone addiction and social media addiction (Gezgin, Şahin, & Yıldırım, 2017). Nomophobic individuals prefer to constantly stay online not to miss any updates on social media. While staying away from their smartphones prevents individuals from being aware of the updates in any social environment, this situation causes anxiety and leads to the emergence of FoMO.

FoMO, which is a condition that especially emerges among the younger generation partly because of the widespread smartphone usage, is one of the new types of internet addiction (Tomczyk & Selmanagic-Lizde, 2018). This concept is defined as the fear of being absent from the good, interesting, and exciting experiences that other people have had, not being able to keep up with the updates and missing what is happening (Przybylski et al., 2013). Individuals who fear missing out on things happening in the social environments constantly want to stay in touch with others and be informed about what others are doing. When evaluated in this context, FoMO is

generally accepted as a maladaptive psychological state (Wang et al., 2019). In the studies, while FoMO is positively associated with neuroticism, anxiety, depression, loneliness, and stress (Baker et al., 2016; Beyens et al., 2016; Dossey, 2014; Rozgonjuk et al., 2020a); it is negatively correlated with self-discipline (Rozgonjuk et al., 2020b), life satisfaction (Przybylski et al., 2013); self-esteem, well-being (Buglass et al., 2017) quality of life (Elhai et al., 2018).

FoMO plays an important role in addressing social media engagement (Przybylski et al., 2013) and increasing the use of social networks (Buglass et al., 2017) due to the widespread use of the Internet and smartphones. As individuals develop higher degrees of FoMO, their social media intensity (Roberts & David, 2019) and social media fatigue levels also increase (Bright & Logan, 2018). In the emergence of this situation, the desire of the individual to follow the social networks even more as a result of the anxiety about missing out on updates is effective. Individuals that do not want to miss out on updates in the social environments constantly use their smartphones and this condition plays an important role in shaping their social media habits.

Social media makes up a large part of the internet usage habits of individuals (Obee, 2012). Social media are social networks that enable users to communicate online, create and share content or make various comments (Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011). One of the most important factors that cause social media to be effective is individuals' feeling of dependency on it (Hetz et al., 2015). This feeling is fueled by the need for belonging at different levels in individuals of all ages (Beyens et al., 2016). It can be said that the use of social media, which is becoming widespread, varies among individuals and shapes the social media usage habits in line with each individual's own needs. Social media is frequently used for activities such as entertainment and relaxation (Küçükali, 2016), doing research (Başoğlu & Yanar, 2017), communication and professional cooperation (Biçer, 2014), getting information (Koçer, 2012), and looking at photos and sending messages (Başoğlu & Yanar, 2017). Although the use of social networks benefits individuals in many ways, their excessive use can negatively affect individuals' self-esteem (Buglass et al., 2017; Uzun et al., 2016) and life satisfaction (Balcı & Koçak, 2017), and it increases their addiction levels as well (Aydan, 2018; Güteryüz et al., 2020). Curiosity towards the lives of others is also effective in the addiction level of social media usage. Curiosity about what is happening in the lives of others and the desire to know what is happening can lead to the emergence of feelings of missing out, including feelings of anxiety and disturbance (Hetz et al., 2015). Individuals who want to follow every development exhibit the behavior of constantly checking their social media accounts via smartphones because they feel worried when they are deprived of following others.

In the light of this information, it can be argued that FoMO can affect nomophobia through individuals' social media usage habits. The fact that individuals use social media more may cause them to start following other individuals and comparing their own lives with those they follow. It is considered that this situation may cause individuals to be more nomophobic and thus, it fuels FoMO. The existing literature fails to provide no account of FoMO, nomophobia and social media usage habits together. This happens to be the core of the present study and the main starting point for the researchers. It is believed that this study can vastly contribute to the field of psychological counseling and guidance. In this model, which is tested based on this

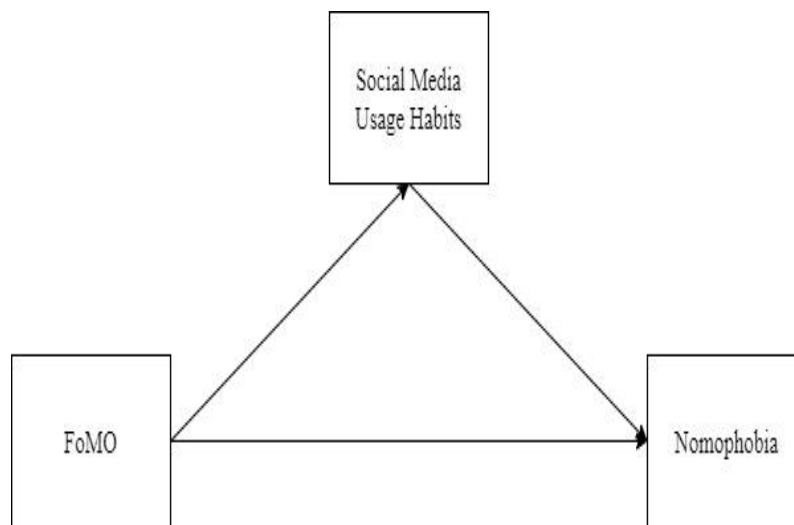
rationale, the mediating role of social media usage habits in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia is examined, and the following hypotheses are developed to serve the purpose of the present research.

### Hypotheses

The model tested in line with the purpose of the research is presented in Figure 1:

Figure 1

*Proposed Conceptual Model Regarding the Mediating Role of Social Media Usage Habits in the Relationship between FoMO and Nomophobia*



In order to test the model shown in Figure 1, the following hypotheses have been determined:

*H1:* There is a statistically significant relationship between the FoMO variable and both nomophobia and social media usage habits variable.

*H2:* FoMO significantly predicts the variable of nomophobia.

*H3:* FoMO significantly predicts social media usage habits and social media usage habits variable significantly predicts nomophobia.

*H4:* Social media usage habits variable has a mediating role in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia.

## Method

### Research Model

This descriptive study is based on the relational screening model that examines the mediator role of social media usage habits in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia. This model is used in order to determine the predictive values of the relationship between variables (Büyüköztürk, 2016). The independent variable of the study is FoMO, the dependent variable is nomophobia, and the mediator variable is social media usage habits.

## **Participants of the Research**

The number of participants in this research was 457, 177 male (38.7%) and 280 female (61.3%). While the participants were aged between 18 and 70, the average age of the participants was calculated as 30.81. Regarding the perceived economic status of the participants, 44 (9.6%) stated that their financial situation was bad, 369 (80.8%) moderate, and the other 44 (9.6%) stated that their financial situation was good. The study was carried out with people of different vocational groups. The data of the study were collected in the first half of 2021 using the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is the most convenient method for the researcher in terms of time, economy, and workforce (Büyüköztürk, 2016). However, it should not be forgotten that it is difficult to represent the universe in this method. No fee was paid to the participants recruited for this study.

## **Data Collection Tools**

### ***Personal Information Form***

The “Personal Information Form” developed by the researchers to determine the demographic features of the sample and describe the study group better contained information about the gender, age, and perceived socioeconomic status.

### ***Fear of Missing Out Scale in Social Environments (FoMO)***

The FoMO scale developed by Przybylski et al. (2013) was adapted to Turkish culture by Gökler et al. (2016). This 4-point Likert-type scale consisted of 10 items, and it was one-dimensional. High scores from the scale indicated that the fear of missing out on updates was high. Confirmatory factor analysis results showed that the scale was sufficient in fit indices. In terms of reliability, Cronbach alpha internal consistency value of the scale was reported as .81 (Gökler et al., 2016). In another study in the literature, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was determined as .83 (Tanrikulu, 2018), while this value was calculated as .84 in the present study.

### ***Nomophobia Scale***

The nomophobia scale was developed by Yıldırım and Correia (2015) to determine individuals’ fear of staying away from their smartphones and was adapted to Turkish by Yıldırım et al. (2015). The scale, which had 20 items in total, included four sub-dimensions: “inability to access information”, “giving up comfort”, “inability to communicate” and “losing online connection”. High scores in this 7-point Likert-type scale indicated that the level of nomophobia was high. As a result of the factor analysis of the scale, the construct validity was provided and the internal consistency coefficient in Yıldırım et al.’s (2015) study was reported to be .92. In the present study, the reliability coefficient was calculated as .95.

### ***Scale of Social Media Usage Habits***

This scale was developed by Avcı (2016) to determine the social media usage habits of individuals. The scale, which had 21 items in total, was scored as 4-point grading. After conducting the factor analysis, 63.1% of the total variance was explained and five sub-dimensions were revealed. These sub-dimensions were named respectively as “narcissism”, “relationship”, “trust and education”, “sociality and political factors”



and “news, information and need” factors. After the construct validity of the scale was provided, the value that was reached in the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency analysis conducted for its reliability was .92. The internal consistency value calculated in this research was .91.

### **Data Collection Process**

For the purpose of measuring the variables in the research, the owners of the scale were contacted, and the necessary permissions were obtained. The data of the study were collected via Google Form in the first half of 2021 using the appropriate sampling method. At the beginning of the form, the participants were informed about the study, volunteering, and confidentiality. After that, the research data were collected and transferred to the computer environment after receiving the participants’ approval.

### **Data Analysis**

In order to perform statistical analysis, the preliminary preparation of the data was carried out first. In this context, the data were evaluated on the frequency table, and it was checked whether there was any erroneous or incomplete coding. Any erroneous or incomplete coding was not encountered in this review. Afterward, the outliers were analyzed by calculating Mahalanobis distance values, and 39 measurements were extracted from the data set according to the .001 significance level (Büyüköztürk, 2016). A data set included the responses of 457 participants. The assumptions of normality and linearity of the variables and whether they had multiple connectivity problems were examined through the created data set. The values of Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients, which were examined over the total scores of the variables, were found to be in the range of  $\pm 1$ , except that the null hypothesis was rejected (Kolmogorov Smirnov  $p \geq .05$ ). In the light of all these results, it could be argued that the data showed normal distribution (Çokluk et al., 2014). Lastly, VIF and tolerance values regarding multicollinearity were examined. In the literature, the fact that VIF value was greater than 3 or the tolerance value was lower than .30 indicated that there was a multiple connection problem (Büyüköztürk, 2016). In this context, it was determined that both the VIF value and the tolerance value did not pose any risk for the multicollinearity problem. After all the preliminary preparations were made, data analysis was conducted, and the significance value was accepted as  $p < .05$ .

In this study, hierarchical regression analysis, one of the multiple linear regression analysis methods, is used to examine the mediator role of social media usage habits in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia. Regression analysis is an analysis method in which there is a relationship between two or more variables and one variable affects the other variable or variables (Can, 2014). Multiple regression analysis is a statistical analysis showing the effect of more than one independent variable on a dependent variable (Heppner et al., 2008). Finally, hierarchical regression analysis, which is the method to be used in this study, is explained as the sequential addition of independent variables to the analysis by the researcher while examining the effect on the dependent variable (Büyüköztürk, 2016). In this context, mediator variable analysis is carried out as Baron and Kenny (1986) suggested. Four hypotheses are expected to be met in this mediator variable analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986). These are explained as (1) existence of a significant relationship and effect between the independent variable and the mediator variable, (2) existence of a significant relationship and effect between

the independent variable and the dependent variable, (3) existence of a significant relationship between the mediator variable and the dependent variable when the independent variable is controlled, and (4) existence of an insignificant relationship or a decreasing significance of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable when the mediator variable is added to the model (partial mediation).

In this study, after the mediator variable analysis was conducted in line with the hypotheses of Baron and Kenny (1986), bootstrapping analysis was used to test the significance of the mediator variable. The reason for using this analysis was that it was considered a more contemporary approach in the literature than the Sobel test (Zhao et al., 2010) and was thought to give healthier results (Hayes & Preacher, 2014; Rucker et al., 2011). This analysis is reported to be an efficient statistical method that is used when testing the effect of mediating variables and determines the significance level of the indirect effect (Gürbüz, 2019). In this study, confidence intervals were calculated in 5000 sub-samples in the bootstrapping analysis performed to test the significance of the mediating variable. In this analysis, the lack of a zero value between the lower and upper limit of the confidence interval values indicates significance (Hayes & Preacher, 2014).

### Ethical Procedures

Ethics committee approval of the study was obtained from Marmara University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee on 26.02.2021 (Board Approval No: #2100081674/2021-2-8).

### Results

In this study, initially, descriptive statistics of all variables were calculated and correlation coefficients of variables with each other were examined. The results obtained through statistical calculations were given in Table 1:

Table 1

*Average, Standard Deviation and Correlation Values of the Research Variables*

	Mean	<i>sd</i>	(1)	(2)
FoMO (1)	75.19	26.71		
Nomophobia (2)	19.21	5.15	.52*	
Social Media Usage Habits (3)	38.17	10.70	.50*	.39*

\* $p \leq .01$

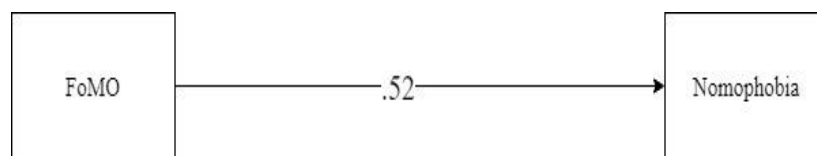
According to Table 1, the mean scale score of the FoMO variable was found to be 75.19 and its standard deviation as 26.71, while the mean scale score of the nomophobia variable was calculated as 19.21 and its standard deviation as 5.15. The average score of the social media usage habits variable was 38.17 and the standard deviation score was 10.70. Looking at the relationship between the variables, it was found that the FoMO variable had moderately significant relationships both with nomophobia ( $r=.52$ ) and with social media usage habits ( $r=.50$ ) in a positive direction

( $p \leq .01$ ). These results were reported as high-level in the literature (Leech et al., 2008). It was also determined that there was a moderately significant positive correlation ( $r = .39$ ) between nomophobia and social media usage habits ( $p \leq .01$ ). This finding was described as mid-level by Leech et al. (2008). Pearson product-moment correlation analysis results showed that the first hypothesis of the research was confirmed ( $H1$ ).

In order to test the second hypothesis of the study, the extent to which the independent variable FoMO predicted the dependent variable nomophobia, was determined by simple regression analysis and the obtained predictive model was presented in Figure 2:

Figure 2

*The Model Regarding the Prediction of the FoMO Variable on the Nomophobia Variable*

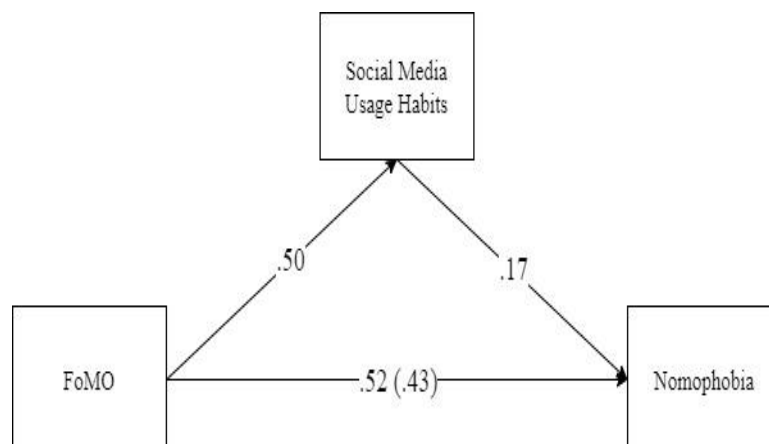


According to the obtained findings, the FoMO variable was a significant positive predictor of nomophobia. According to this regression model, FoMO predicted nomophobia variable at the level of 27% ( $r^2 = .27$ ;  $F_{(1,455)} = 165.61$ ;  $p \leq .01$ ). This result indicated that the second hypothesis of the research was also confirmed ( $H2$ ).

Lastly, the third and fourth hypotheses of the study were analyzed. Initially, it was tested whether the FoMO variable predicted social media usage habits, then whether the social media usage habits variable predicted nomophobia, and through the established model, the mediating role of social media usage habits in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia was examined. The predictive model that was generated after the mediation analysis for the third and fourth hypotheses of the research was given in Figure 3.

Figure 3

*The Mediating Role of Social Media Usage Habits in the Relationship Between FoMO and Nomophobia*





In line with the previous findings, it was seen that the FoMO variable significantly predicted social media usage habits ( $a=.50$ ;  $p\leq.000$ ) and social media usage habits significantly predicted nomophobia ( $b=.17$ ;  $p\leq.000$ ). This finding showed that the third hypothesis of the research was confirmed ( $H3$ ). Apart from this, as seen in Figure 3, the coefficient of FoMO variable's predicting nomophobia was .52. When the social media usage habits variable was added to this model, the coefficient of the FoMO variable's predicting nomophobia decreased by .09 and became .43 ( $c'=.09$ ;  $p<.01$ ). This finding showed that social media usage habits played a partial mediating role in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia in the model tested. With this result, fourth and the last hypothesis of the study was confirmed ( $H4$ ), the hypotheses of Baron and Kenny (1986) were confirmed, and the model established in the study was statistically verified.

In the model established, the significance of the partial mediating role played by social media usage habits between FoMO and nomophobia was tested with bootstrapping analysis. In this analysis, confidence intervals were calculated over 5000 sub-samples, and it was decided by looking whether there is a zero (0) value between the lower and upper limits at 95% confidence interval. The results obtained in this context showed that social media usage habits had a significant partial mediating role between FoMO and nomophobia (95% CI [.04, .15]) The direct and indirect effect results reached within this analysis were given in Table 2:

Table 2

*Bootstrapping Analysis Results Regarding Direct and Indirect Effects*

Tested Path		$\beta$	SE	%95 CI				
				Lower	Upper			
Direct Effects								
FoMO	→	SMUH	.50*	.13	.77	1.30		
SMUH	→	Nomophobia	.17*	.12	.04	.67		
FoMO	→	Nomophobia	.52*	.26	.55	2.69		
Indirect Effects								
FoMO	→	SMUH	→	Nomophobia	.09*	.03	.04	.15

\*  $p\leq .01$ ; Note. SMUH: Social media usage habits.

### Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

This study has been conducted to determine the mediating role of social media usage habits in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia. In order to achieve this aim, a model has been established regarding the mediating role of the social media usage habits variable in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia. In this model, it has been determined that FoMO directly affects the nomophobia levels of adult individuals, and social media usage habits have a partial mediator effect in this relationship. In addition, bilateral relationships between variables have been examined within the study, and it has been found that FoMO, nomophobia and social media usage habits are positively correlated with each other.

According to the findings obtained from the study, high-level significant positive relationships are found between FoMO and nomophobia. As individuals' fear of missing out on updates increases, the fear they feel when they are away from their smartphones also increases. This finding is parallel to the results of the previous studies in the literature (Yılmaz & Bekaroğlu, 2021). In a study conducted by Shiva et al. (2020), a high-level positive relationship is reported between FoMO and nomophobia. In a study conducted by Yaman and Kavuncu (2019) on university students, it is concluded that FoMO and nomophobia are positively associated and as individuals' FoMO levels increase, their nomophobia levels also increase. Similarly, Yıldız et al. (2020) report in their study on the relationships between netlessphobia, nomophobia, and fear of missing out on young athletes, that nomophobia is significantly associated with the fear of missing the updates. According to Gezgin et al. (2018), FoMO is a strong predictor of nomophobia. According to Yıldız-Durak (2018), adolescents may worry about the accessibility of their smartphones because they are afraid of missing social media updates and posts. It is argued that individuals who use their smartphones to stay connected to social media have higher levels of nomophobia (Sırakaya, 2018). Individuals see their smartphones as a part of themselves and use their smartphones not only for communication but, most importantly, to not stay behind social media (Polat, 2017). Based on all this information in the literature and the research results, it can be argued that individuals prefer to stay connected and need to constantly check their phones to not miss the developments in social media. Individuals who are unaware of what others on social media are doing whenever away from their phones may experience negative emotions. For this reason, being separated from their phones or losing the connection prevents them from being aware of updates in any social environment, which can cause concern and anxiety in the individual. This situation clearly reveals the connection between FoMO and nomophobia.

According to the findings obtained from the study, highly significant positive relationships have been found between FoMO and nomophobia. As the FoMO levels of individuals increase, their social media usage habits are affected and FoMO may fuel the social media usage of individuals. The use of social media is seen as an attractive option for individuals who fear missing out on updates in social environments (Przybylski et al., 2013). For those who maintain communication in daily life through social networks, losing the connection or missing out on updates can cause anxiety in individuals. This causes more intensive usage of social networking sites (Gezgin et al., 2018). People with high levels of FoMO may pay more attention to the moods of other people that they have positive social interactions with (Dou et al., 2021) and may show a higher need for approval. This leads to more use of social media among these people (Alt & Boniel-Nissim, 2018). Hamutoğlu et al. (2020) conclude that social media addiction is effective on FoMO in their research, where they examine the relationships between social media addiction, FoMO, and personality traits. Due to the intense use of the Internet and smartphones, FoMO also plays an important role in explaining social media engagement (Przybylski et al., 2013). In addition, it causes the use of social networks to increase (Buglass et al., 2017). As individuals' FoMO levels increase, social media intensity (Roberts & David, 2019) and social media fatigue levels increase (Bright & Logan, 2018). FoMO fortifies the dependency on social media. Individuals constantly feel lonely and constantly share something in order to complement the love

and affection they cannot get from their social environment (Dossey, 2014). In the emergence of these, the desire of the individual to follow the social networks even more as a result of the anxiety about missing out on updates is effective. Being out of these updates may cause concern and anxiety in the individual who wants to follow and check the news, posts, messages, or any situation in social environments that attracts one's attention. To get rid of this concern, individuals constantly want to be online on social media through smartphones. This situation explains the reason for one's existence on social media and plays an important role in shaping social media usage habits.

The findings reported in the present study also show a high level of correlation between nomophobia and social media usage habits. While individuals' social media usage habits are sometimes a cause, sometimes they can be a result. It can be said that these two variables that trigger each other are in mutual interaction. That is, they are in a cyclical relationship. The fear that individuals experience when they are away from their phones affects their social media usage habits, and social media usage habits cause individuals to be unable to stay away from their phones. This research finding is similar to the results of other studies in the literature. In a study conducted by Yaman and Kavuncu (2019), it is concluded that the use of social media by university students is effective on their nomophobia levels and predicts nomophobia. While Gezgin, Hamutoglu, et al. (2017) reports that the nomophobia levels of social network users are at average levels, they conclude that social network users frequently check their smartphones and the duration of mobile internet use is quite long. As a result, social media use and social media addiction also affect nomophobia and as individuals' use of social media increase, their levels of nomophobia also increase.

Because nomophobic individuals worry when they are away from their phones, they always try to keep their phones on and in their reach (Sirakaya, 2018). Also, nomophobic individuals feel the need to have their phone next to them as they sleep, and the first thing they do in the mornings is to check their phones (Kaplan-Akıllı & Gezgin, 2016). Individuals' desire to constantly check their phones eventually leads up to emergence of addictive behaviors at some point (Hetz et al., 2015). Nomophobia is fueled by smartphone addiction and social media addiction (Gezgin, Hamutoglu, et al., 2017). Accordingly, there are strong positive relationships between nomophobia and social media addiction (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Yıldız-Durak, 2018). There are various social media usage habits and each individual uses social media according to their needs. People can use social media to communicate with a large audience, introduce themselves and their lives, or follow others in their homes. Curiosity towards the lives of others is also effective in the addiction level of social media usage (Hetz et al., 2015). Any update happening in the social environment may become important for the individual. When the individual is stripped of following these updates, it is thought that one will begin feeling the lack of it. The individual who wants to get rid of this anxiety constantly check social media accounts through the smartphone.

The most significant finding of the present study is that the social media usage habits variable has a significant partial mediating role between FoMO and nomophobia. In the literature, no study reporting on the mediating role of social media usage habits in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia is found. The results obtained from this study show that FoMO has a significant effect on nomophobia, while the effect on nomophobia is reduced when the social media usage habits variable is included in the

model. Although the findings show that FoMO levels are a variable that affects nomophobia, ignoring other variables that affect nomophobia may be a mistake. In this context, for example, social media usage habits can be considered as an important variable on nomophobia because social media use constitutes a large part of individuals' internet usage habits (Obee, 2012). One of the most important factors that cause social media to be effective is individuals' feeling of dependency on it (Hetz et al., 2015). This feeling is fueled by the need to belong at different levels in individuals of all ages (Beyens et al., 2016). In a generation characterized by a constant desire to stay connected, social media allows users to constantly monitor their social networks for any update (David et al., 2017; Roberts & Pirog, 2013; Roberts et al., 2014). Curiosity towards the lives of others is also effective in the addiction level of social media usage (Hetz et al., 2015). Individuals get to witness others' lives and constantly watch them. Curiosity about what is happening in the lives of others and the desire to know what is happening can lead to the emergence of feelings of missing out, including feelings of anxiety and disturbance (Hetz et al., 2015). Any update happening in the social environment may become important for the individual. When the individual is stripped of following these updates, one may feel the lack of it. The individual who wants to get rid of this anxiety feels the need to constantly check social media accounts through the smartphone. After a while, individuals who continuously monitor social networks will eventually reveal the behavior of following the developments in such platforms. Individual who is afraid of missing out on social media posts, conversations, or news will constantly control their smartphone. Therefore, while updates in social environments shape the social media usage habits of individuals who are afraid of missing out and cause an increase in nomophobia, these habits cause an increase in nomophobia in all cases, regardless of the habit of using social media. It can be said that the necessary precautions should be taken for individuals of all ages.

Some limitations should be taken into account when examining the findings of this study. First of all, during the data collection period, life was restricted in many areas due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which might have affected individuals' social media and smartphone usage habits. This situation can also be considered a limitation in terms of research results. Apart from this, gathering research data online can be considered another limitation. Lastly, since each scale measures different properties, the findings obtained from this study are limited to the qualities measured by the measurement tools.

Suggestions can be made in line with the results obtained from the research. Firstly, there may be an increase in the rate of mobile device usage of individuals in this period as stressful life events occur, and a large part of society is under lockdown at home. Since this change in the lifestyle will cause individuals to spend their time in environments such as social media and online platforms, at this point, individuals can improve their self-control and develop control mechanisms for themselves (Bright & Logan, 2018; Dossey, 2014) and they can apply social media detox or digital platform detox when necessary. As a result of the benefits of the digital age, these negative situations such as FoMO and nomophobia may lead to the emergence of different problems in individuals after a while (Buglass et al., 2017; Büyükakim, 2020; Karakuyu, 2019). In individuals who fear missing out on the news in social environments and being separated from their smartphones, different problems such as fast eating, skipping meals, and sleep problems may arise (Yılmaz et al., 2018). While individuals should

make the necessary effort and care for an orderly life, it may be suggested that individuals who fail to achieve this should receive the necessary mental health assistance despite the possibility of a mental health deterioration. Apart from this, considering the limited number of studies in the literature on FoMO and nomophobia, different studies can be conducted to examine the relationships between FoMO and nomophobia and such different variables. Considering that other variables may also play a role in the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia, new models can be tested based on the observations made. Apart from this, regulatory variables such as gender, age, and interpersonal relationships can be included in the model, and the effect of demographic variables on the relationship between FoMO and nomophobia can be discussed. For future research, it may be suggested to repeat the model in a different sample group, expand the research by adding new variables, re-do the research after the Covid-19 pandemic era, or reach various findings using other analyzes.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

### **Availability of Data and Material**

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are not publicly available but are available from the corresponding author at the editor's request.

### **Code Availability**

Not applicable.

### **Authors Contributions**

All authors contributed to the study understanding and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were done by all authors. All authors have read and approved the final version of the article.

### **Ethics Approval**

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

### **Consent to Participate**

Informed consent was obtained from all the individual participants that were included in the study.

### **Consent for Publication**

Three measures were used in this manuscript with the permission of measures' owners.

**Author Bios:**

Sinan Okur works as a Lecturer at the National Defense University Turkish Air Force Academy. He is also a PhD student at Marmara University Guidance and Psychological Counseling Department. Previously, he worked as a research assistant in Istanbul Kültür University Guidance and Psychological Counseling Department. He received his expertise in Ege University Guidance and Psychological Counseling Department. His areas of interest are scale development/adapted, problematic internet use, technology addiction and positive psychology.

Özlem Acar-Bulut graduated from Hacettepe University Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department in 2013 as a high honor student and completed her master's degree in Yeditepe University Psychological Counseling and Guidance Program in 2019. The author, who has been continuing her doctoral education in Marmara University Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department since 2019, also works as a psychological counselor at the Ministry of National Education. Couple and family counseling, family communication, early childhood problems, positive psychology, postmodern therapies and emotion-focused therapies, technology addiction are areas of interest for the author.

Seval Erden-Çınar expertise with the MA thesis titled "The examination of the relationships between anger-anger expression styles and attachment styles of teacher candidates" and received a Ph.D. degree in the thesis entitled "Examination of interpersonal relationships in young adulthood in terms of gender, sex-role, and loneliness". Erden-Çınar is the author of "Interpersonal Relations "and" Group Counselling Practices with CBT" books, as well as chapter authors for Group Psychological Counselling from Adolescence to Adulthood, Guidance, Mental Health, Education Psychology, and Educational Science. The author, who developed the "Interpersonal Relationship Dimension Scale" according to Turkish culture, has various national and international papers and publications. Her areas of interest are cognitive-behavioral therapies, interpersonal relationships, women's studies involving gender and gender roles, attachment, and emotional experiences such as anger, stress, guilt, shame, loneliness.



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