

The Relationship Between Materialism and Self-Transcendence in University Students Sample

Cemal Can

Fatih University Institute of Social Sciences Master of Arts in Psychology

Adres: Sincan Kaymakamlığı Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Vakfı
Hükümet Konağı, 06930 Sincan ANKARA
Tel: +905303635419,
Fax: +903122718584
E-Mail: psk.cemalcan@gmail.com

Special Thanks: I would like to thank my advisor Professor Kemal SAYAR for his generous and never ending support, intuition and inspiration. I am honestly grateful to Assistant Professor Samet KÖSE from Vanderbilt University for motivating me and guiding me with his suggestions and knowledge. This thesis would not have been possible without their contributions.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: A basic debate that has been frequently discussed is whether humankind's searching for happiness through material good is good or a bad thing. Many people wonder if more money, more leisure or more stuff would make them happier. In recent years number of studies has examined the relationship between materialism and well-being and there are some evidences that materialism is related to personality.

Method: In this study, 143 university students completed a battery of questionnaires including Richins and Dawson's material values scale, and Cloninger's Temperament and Character Inventory, Beck depression inventory, hopelessness scale and empathy quotient scale.

Findings: Even though there is not a significant correlation between total self transcendence scores and materialism scores; there is a significant negative correlation between the total materialism scores and the transpersonal identification facet of self transcendence ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$). There is also significant negative correlation between the transpersonal identification and the materialistic happiness ($r = -.22$, $p < .01$).

Discussion and Conclusion: Another result of the study is that the students who have relatively high materialism scores are likely to have low empathy scores.

Keywords: materialism, well-being, personality, TCI, Cloninger's psychobiological model

ÖZET

Üniversite Öğrencileri Örnekleminde Kendini Aşkınlık ve Maddiyatçılık İlişkisi

Amaç: İnsanların mutluluk için maddi çıkarların peşinde koşmasının doğru olup olmadığı öteden beri tartışılmıştır. Çoğu insan, daha çok mal-mülk sahibi olmak, daha fazla boş vakit geçirmek veya daha fazla çalışmak konusunda kararsızdır. Son zamanlarda maddiyatçılık ile esenlik arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen pek çok araştırma yapılmıştır ve kişilik özelliklerinin maddiyatçılık ve esenlik arasındaki ilişkide önemli belirleyicilerden olduğu gösterilmiştir.

Yöntem: Bu çalışmada, 143 üniversite öğrencisi Richins ve Dawson'un maddiyatçılık ölçeğini ve Cloninger'in karakter ve mizaç envanterinin alt ölçeği olan kendini aşkınlık altölçeğini içeren kapsamlı bir soru formunu doldurdu.

Bulgular: Kendini aşkınlık boyutu ile maddiyatçılık puanları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunamamasına rağmen, kendini aşkınlık boyutunun alt ölçeklerinden olan kişilerarası özdeşim puanları ile maddiyatçılık puanları arasında olumsuz ilişki gözlemlenmiştir ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$).

Tartışma ve Sonuç: Araştırmanın diğer bir sonucu olarak maddiyatçılık puanları görece yüksek olanların görece düşük empati puanı aldıkları gözlemlenmiştir ($r = -.22$, $p < .01$).

Anahtar Kelimeler: maddiyatçılık, kişilik, karakter, mizaç, Cloninger'in psikobiyolojik modeli

INTRODUCTION

There is a huge amount of research concerning the historical investigation of human being for searching happiness through materialism. Researchers have tried to find out the reason that makes people happy, for instance, is it money, leisure or working hard?

In United States, the homeland of materialism, Myer (2000) reported that the number of people defined themselves as “very happy” had slightly declined between 1957 and 1998 and in this period the divorce rates doubled while teen suicide tripled. The argument that higher income indicated higher happiness was not always seemed to be true. Likewise, national income per capita which is a standard measure for development of countries was 4322 USD in 1998 while it was 10285 USD in 2008 in Turkey (TUIK, 2010). Although the statistics showed that people are getting richer, it is questionable if they are getting happier.

Materialism

In recent years, theoreticians and researchers from different disciplines tried to understand the effect of materialism on people, cultures and behaviors. The relationship between materialism and life satisfaction had been examined in previous research. However, there were few studies which try to figure out the relationship between materialism and personality.

Materialism is defined in Macmillan Contemporary Dictionary (1986), in two different ways. The first meaning refers to a philosophical doctrine; “everything that exists is either composed of matter or depends on matter for its existence”. The second definition refers to the popular use of the term; “tendency to be unduly concerned with material rather than intellectual or spiritual things”.

Although the popular meaning of materialism is different from philosophical usage, Richins and Rudmin (1994) suggested that people who were materialistic mostly counted on physical (material) possessions as a route to abstract constructs such as happiness, status, and social competences. They thought they need to have “material good” to be happy. This dependency on material objects reminds the philosophical use of the term.

Belk (1985) defines materialism as “the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions”. Such possessions are assumed that they have a central place in a person’s life at the highest levels of materialism. These possessions are the main source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

According to Belk (1985), there are three main personality traits related to materialistic people; posses-

siveness: “the inclination and tendency to retain control or ownership of one’s possessions”, non-generosity: “an unwillingness to give possessions to or share possessions with others”, and envy: “desire for others possessions, be they objects, experiences or persons”. He also found that a negative relationship between materialism and happiness in life. Ger, Russell and Belk (1990), reported interesting findings in their cross-cultural studied implemented in Turkey, United States and France. They tested Belk’s materialism scale and found that Turkish sample was the most materialistic and most generous and most materialistic at the same time. This contradicts the view that materialism is a western phenomenon observed in developed countries.

Materialism is defined by Csikszentmihaly (2005), as the tendency to reserve most of the attention for goals that include material goods like willingness to own them, consume them, or exhibit them. A person is materialist when he invests his psychic energy in materialistic objects and their symbolic meanings wealth, status, and power based on possessions. Therefore this person sees life mainly from the perspective of materialistic experiences. For a materialistic person object is not just an object. This person aims to reach goals that begin with that object but pass beyond the object itself. Owning an object doesn’t mean just owning the functions of it but to use the object as a bridge to happy life. Csikszentmihaly has two description of materialism in respect of its effects. **Instrumental materialism** is relatively harmless form in which the person sees objects as necessary means for discovering and improving personal values and strengthening interpersonal relationships. **Terminal materialism** on the other hand is a potentially destructive form in which the desire for more possessions run out of control and consumption mere goal is the consumption itself and noting more.

Richins and Dawson (1992), defines materialism as a value that is valid in a variety of situations and not just consumption issues namely is a guide for person’s choices. Materialism as a value influences preferences of good purchased but it also influences the allocation of that person’s resources, including time, money or labor.

Four main specifications of materialistic people are described by Richins and Dawson (1992). The valuation to acquire wealth and possessions is significantly higher for materialistic people than the others. Secondly, materialistic people can be evaluated as self-centered. Thirdly material complexity is an essential fact for materialist people which means that

materialist people over invest in material goods. Finally materialists can never be satisfied with what they have; they always want more and more.

Kasser and Ryan (1993) studied deeply the relative importance of attaining financial goals comparative to other life domains. To measure the materialism they developed a new scale taking into accounts this relative importance, called 'aspiration index'. These measures contained rating aspirations on their personal importance and the likelihood they will be realized. In their aspiration index they intended to include four goal contents; the first one is **self-acceptance**. Acceptance can be defined as aspirations for personal psychological development, self-esteem and autonomy. The second one is **affiliation**. Affiliation can be defined as aspirations that concern relations with family and good friends. The third one is **community feeling**. Community feeling can be defined as aspirations about one's Endeavour to make the world a better place through one's action. The last one is **financial success**. The financial success can be defined as aspiration to attain more wealth and material success.

The debate was far from ending as new studies conducted. Kasser claimed that the American Dream desperately tried to be aspired to and achieved by financial success might have a dark side. Kasser and Ryan (1993) conducted some studies to examine to test whether aspirations for financial success exclude the other life goals and if this is the case then it would be negatively associated with psychological adjustment. Whereas greater well-being and less distress were associated with the relative centrality of aspirations for self-acceptance, affiliation and community feeling, this was not case for financial success aspirations.

Richins and Rudmin (1994), emphasize that an important motivation for work is the desire to get more and more good is a generally accepted fact. According to this materialists want to obtain goods more than other people and to this end, they work harder and they struggle to get higher paying jobs.

Materialists are also less inclined to share a cash windfall with others and less likely to be in charitable events. Typically a materialist positions the possessions s/he has at the center of her/his life, and judges her/his life as a success according to these possessions. But also s/he has a desire to exhibit their status (even it is desired or actual) or success to others. From this point of view if they are motivated to give gifts, the meanings of these gifts should be considered as a way consistent to their desire.

For developed industrial countries the issue of discretionary income and discretionary time incense-

ment is still a current consideration. As a matter of fact discretionary time management and incensement is an indication of being a developed country. This time and money supposed to be used as means to pursuit of happiness. But how will these resources lead to happiness. According to Boven and Gilovich (2003) this has to be by the way of acquisition of life experiences more than acquisition of more material goods. In other words they put the old dilemma to be or to do as to do or to have. For them it is to do that leads to a "good life". They offer three rational causes why to do is better than to have. First, the experiences are open to reinterpretation and hence they never end; second, experiences are more related to one's identity and in fact it can be said that it is the experiences that constitutes self; and finally experiences have greater "social value".

Temperament and Character

Cloninger has a model personality with seven factors which complement earlier models which tried to describe personality since it takes into account both temperament and character dimensions (Köse 2003).

According to Cloninger (Cloninger et al. 1993), temperaments which are moderately heritable and stable throughout life, refer to non-cognitive emotional responses to experiences. However, **characters** refer to self-concepts and individual differences with respect to goals and values. Character is moderately influenced by insight, cognition and learning.

The model of personality proposed by Cloninger (Cloninger et al. 1993) is well defined in that it is rationally and empirically based on robust findings about neurobiological and experiential influences on personality structure and development. Theoretically and empirically, the relations among temperament and character dimensions are strongly nonlinear, reflecting the hierarchical nature of the supervisory cognitive processes (character) that control emotional conflicts (temperament) (Cloninger et al. 1997).

Cloninger and colleagues (1993) proposed a psychobiological model, differentiating four dimensions of temperament and three dimensions of character according to this model. The temperament dimensions are; Novelty Seeking (NS) is the tendency to respond actively to novel stimuli leading to pursuit of rewards and escape from punishment, Harm Avoidance (HA) is the tendency to inhibit responses to signals of aversive stimuli that lead to avoidance of punishment and non-reward, Reward Dependence (RD) is the tendency for a positive response to conditioned signals of reward that maintain behavior, Per-

sistence (P) is perseverance despite frustration and fatigue based on resistance to extinction of intermittently reinforced behavior. The character dimensions are; Self-Directedness (SD) (the ability of an individual to control, regulate, and adapt his or her behavior to fit the situation in accord with individually chosen goals and values), Cooperativeness (CO) (accounts for individual differences in identification with and acceptance of other people), Self-Transcendence (ST) (associated with spirituality, and it refers generally to identification with everything conceived as essential and consequential parts of a unified whole).

The temperament dimensions are believed to express early in development, are supposed to be associated with monoaminergic activity (Cloninger 1986), and refer to individual differences in behavioral-learning mechanisms, explaining responses to novelty, danger, or punishment and cues for reward (NS), avoiding aversive stimuli (HA), and reactions to rewards (RD) (Cloninger 1987).

The Cloninger's psychobiological model, based on a range of neuro-pharmacological, neuro-anatomical, and biochemical data, assumes that both genetic and environmental factors have an influence on the development of a specific personality vulnerability that could lead, in turn, to develop either an addictive or an impulsive-compulsive disorder and assumed to provide a comprehensive account of normal and maladaptive individual differences. The model has been used to describe different types of addictive behaviors such as alcoholism (Cloninger 1987).

Cloninger (2006) divided the general population into three groups according to their levels of well-being. For Cloninger the first group is immature and is vulnerable to psychopathology; the second group as average is getting by without much disability or happiness; and the third group is flourishing with high frequency of positive emotions and low frequency of negative emotions and satisfaction with their life. These three groups can be separate from one another on the basis of their three TCI character scores. Happy people are characterized by the will to cooperate with each other, the ability to direct themselves to success and the feeling of superiority to the others. Each of the three components of mental self – government measures by the TCI are involved in the path toward the well-being. If a person neglects one of these three aspects of healthy character development than this person has the tendency to be vulnerable to a wide variety of deficits in well-being.

The TCI can be useful aid in assessment of personality disorders. The character scales are designed to

distinguish whether a person has a personality disorders, and the temperament scales allow the differential diagnosis of categorical subtypes of personality disorders. The TCI also help to identify comorbid psychopathology since clinical differences between and within types of psychopathological syndromes. The TCI is also widely used in multiple neuroimaging, neuropsychological, neurogenetic studies assessing correlations of brain lesions, neuropsychiatric disorders, and also normal variation (Köse 2003).

Self-Transcendence

Self-transcendent individuals are described as people who lack pretensions. They are highly satisfied, patient, creative, selfless, and spiritual. In Eastern societies, they are described as enlightened and wise, whereas in Western societies the same ones may be described as naive. These individuals seem to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty. These people enjoy what they do without having to know the outcome and without feeling the urge to control it. Self-transcendent individuals are described by the others as humble and modest persons who are content to accept the failure even of their best efforts and who are thankful for both their failures and their successes. A high Self-Transcendence person has adaptive advantages when a person is confronted with suffering and death, which is inevitable with advancing age. In contrast, individuals who achieve low scorers are likely to be proud, impatient, and unimaginative, unappreciative of art, self-aware, materialist, and unfulfilled. They cannot tolerate ambiguity, uncertainty, and surprises. Instead, they strive for more control over almost everything. Low scorers are described by the others as pretentious persons who seem to be unable to be satisfied with what they have. Individuals low in Self-Transcendence is often admired in Western societies for their rational, scientific, and materialistic success. But, they may have difficulty accepting suffering and death which leads to difficulties in adjustment with advancing age (Cloninger et al. 1993, Cloninger et al. 1994).

There are quite a number of studies that report materialism as negatively correlated with self-esteem, well-being, quality of life and satisfaction in life generally (Richins and Dawson 1992, Sirgy 1998, Kasser 2002, Roberts et al. 2005). It is reported that the consequences of high level of monetary aspiration appeared to be low self-esteem, diminished well-being, low life satisfaction etc. Furthermore, Cloninger (2006) suggests that self-transcendence is an essential component in the processes of maturation and integ-

ration of personality. He found that people who score high on all three character traits (cooperativeness, self-directedness, and self-transcendence) have higher level of well-being. He describes well-being in terms of the presence of positive emotions, absence of negative emotions, satisfaction with life or virtuous conduct. The capacity for love and work have also been recognized as important for well-being, but Cloninger (2006), also observed that people need to experience self-transcendence in order to cope well with suffering or enjoying life's wonders and mysteries.

The aim of this study is to examine the relation between materialism and self-transcendence as a dimension of personality. At the same time, the relation between materialism and empathy; the relation between materialism and well-being are also examined. Depression and hopelessness are used as a measure of well-being.

METHOD

Participants

Participants of this study were 143 students from eight different universities. 90 of these students were female and 53 were male. Their ages ranged between 18 and 32. There were 70 participants from state and 73 participants from private universities.

Materials

Material Values Scale

The short version of Material Values Scale (MVS) with 15 items was used in the current study. Turan calculated the Cronbach's coefficient Alpha to assess the reliability of the translated version of MVS, for the whole scale and for the three subscales which are success, centrality, and happiness in her unpublished master's thesis (2007). The internal consistency for the overall scale was found to be .84. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .77 for success, .74 for centrality, and .72 for happiness sub-scales, respectively. These reliabilities were quite close to the reliabilities of the scale in its original language and were acceptable.

Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) – Self Transcendence Subscale

Temperament and Character Inventory is a self-administered scale with 240 items. Köse et al. (2004) analyzed validity, reliability and factorial structure of the Turkish form of TCI; the coefficient alphas were between .60 and .83 for 25 subscales. In this study, the Self transcendence subscale of TCI with 33 items was used. For Self transcendence subscale, the coefficient alpha was .80. Self-transcendence has also three subs-

cales. The coefficient alpha was for self-forgetfulness (.70), transpersonal identification (.69), and spiritual acceptance (.59) respectively.

Empathy Quotient Scale

The Empathy Quotient (EQ) is a short questionnaire made up of 40 items tapping empathy and 20 filler items (Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright 2004). Bora and Baysan (2009) investigated the Psychometric features of Turkish version of empathy quotient in university students. They reported the Cronbach alpha values as .85. For reliability analyses they used Split-half method and calculated The Guttman coefficient for the scale as .78. Cronbach alpha coefficient for the first half of the scale was 0.75 and for the second part was 0.74. Test-retest reliability was .76.

Beck Depression Inventory

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was a self-rating scale with 21 items. Its aim was to evaluate emotional and cognitive motivations besides the strength (intensity) of depression (Beck et al., 1961). The internal consistency for original version had a coefficient alpha of 0.86 for psychiatric patients and 0.81 for non-psychiatric subjects (Beck et. al, 1988). Turkish form was standardized by Hisli (1988). In the study with college students the Cronbach alpha coefficient was found as .80. The relation between the MMPI subscale of depression and Beck Depression inventory was .50 (Hisli, 1989). Turkish version BDI total scores of 0–9 indicated minimal, 10–19 mild, 20–28 moderate and 29–63 severe depression (Uslu et al. 2008).

Hopelessness scale

Hopelessness Scale (HS) was developed by Beck, Lester, and Trexler (1974), consisted 20 items. They found the alpha reliability for the whole scale as .93. The item-total correlations for the scale were ranged between .39 and .74. In this study the Turkish form of hopelessness Scale was used. Transition and adaptation was performed by Seber (1993) and Durak (1994). They found the alpha coefficient as .85 and she reported the item-total correlation as ranging between .31 and .67.

Procedure

The voluntary participants had been involved in the study from state universities and private universities. Participants were briefly informed about the aim of the study and told them how to answer the questions before they filled out the questionnaires. A battery of measures including Material Values Scale,

Table 1. The correlations between Materialism and Self Transcendence Scales (N=143)

Self-transcendence (ST)	Range	Success 5-23	Centrality 6-24	Happiness 5-24	Total 20-65
Self-Forgetfulness	1-11	.03	.03	.04	.05
Transpersonal Identification	0- 9	-.12	-.12	-.22**	-.20*
Spiritual Acceptance	0-13	.08	-.002	.04	.05
Total	2-32	.01	-.03	-.05	-.03

* p<.05, ** p<.01,

Self Transcendence subscale of TCI, Beck Depression Inventory, Beck Hopelessness Scale, and Empathy Quotient Scale was given. A demographic form asking participant's gender, age, school, included. A brief introduction about the study and how to answer the questions was given. Each student answered the questions in about 45 minutes.

FINDINGS

The results (Table-1) showed that there was very low (almost none) negative correlation ($r=-.03$) between total material value scale scores and total self-transcendence scores as expected but not significant. So correlation between the subscales of ST and MVS was examined and again low negative correlation between transpersonal identification (one of ST) and happiness subscale of MVS ($r=-.22$, $p<.001$) and between transpersonal identification and total MVS ($r=-.20$, $p<.05$) were found.

Results showed that the students who had higher transpersonal identification scores were more materialistic and they saw their acquisitions (material) as the pursuit of happiness.

As shown in Table-2; there were significant negative correlations between MVS total scores and empathy ($r=-.18$, $p<.005$). There was very low correlation between materialism (MVS) and depression ($r=.14$) and also between materialism and hopelessness ($r=$

.13). These two correlations were not significant.

The correlations between subscales of materialism and empathy, depression, hopelessness respectively were also examined. There was significant negative correlations between success and empathy ($r=-.28$, $p<.01$), while there was significant correlation between success and hopelessness ($r=.23$, $p<.01$) and between happiness and depression ($r=.23$, $p<.01$).

The students who had higher materialism scores tend to be less empathic. Results also showed that the students who defined their success by means of their possessions were less empathic.

The results showed that the students who had higher materialism scores were not more depressed but the students who saw their acquisition as the pursuit of happiness tend to be more depressed.

Students who had higher materialism scores did not have higher hopelessness scores but the students who defined success by means of their possessions tend to have higher hopelessness scores.

As shown in Table-3; there were significant correlations between empathy and self-transcendence scores ($r=.22$, $p<.001$). There were also significant correlations between empathy and spiritual acceptance ($r=.20$, $p<.005$), between empathy and transpersonal identification ($r=.20$, $p<.005$). Significant but low correlation between hopelessness and total self-transcendence scores ($r=-.19$, $p<.005$) were also found.

Table 2. The correlations between materialism and empathy, depression and hopelessness (N=143)

Variable	Range	Success 5-23	Centrality 6-24	Happiness 5-24	Total 20-65
Empathy	0-64	-.28**	-.07	-.07	-.18*
Depression	0-40	.13	-.02	.19*	.14
Hopelessness	0-20	.23**	-.03	.07	.13

* p<.05, ** p<.01,

Table 3. The correlations between self-transcendence and empathy, depression and hopelessness (N=143)

Self-Transcendence (ST)	Range	Empathy 0-64	Depression 0-40	Hopelessness 0-20
Self-Forgetfulness	1-11	.11	.06	-.13
Transpersonal Identification	0- 9	.20*	-.05	-.16
Spiritual Acceptance	0-13	.20*	.06	.16
Total	2-32	.22**	.04	-.19*

* p<.05, ** p<.01,

DISCUSSION

Even though there was not a significant correlation between total self-transcendence scores and materialism scores; there was a significant negative correlation between the total materialism scores and the transpersonal identification facet of self-transcendence ($r=-.20$, $p<.05$). There was also significant negative correlation between the transpersonal identification and the materialistic happiness ($r=-.22$, $p<.01$).

The hallmark of transpersonal identification is a feeling of connectedness to the universe and everything in it –animate and inanimate, human and non-human, anything and everything that can be seen heard, smelled or otherwise sensed. People who score high for transpersonal identification can become deeply, emotionally attached other people, animals, trees, flowers, streams, or mountains. Sometimes they feel that everything is part of one organism (Hamer, 2004). Albert Schweitzer (1987), Nobel Peace Prize winner believed “everything that maintains and enhances life was good, every that destroy or hinders it was bad” in other words reverence for life. He thought because of abandoned affirmation of (and respect for) life as its ethical foundation, Western civilization was decaying.

On the other hand individuals who score low on transpersonal identification tend to be individualists and feel less connected to the universe and therefore feel less responsible for it. They are more concerned about themselves and more inclined to use nature than to appreciate it (Hamer 2004).

Research showed that materialistic values are associated with making more antisocial and self-centered decisions involving getting ahead than rather than co-operating. As a result others in community are treated as objects to be manipulated and used. Materialistic values also conflict with concern for making the world a better place, and desire to contribute to equality, justice and other aspects of civil society (Kasser 2002).

Individuals focused on materialistic values care less about “beautiful cities and countryside” (Inglehart 1997), and the circumflex model of values show that across many cultures, values for wealth oppose concerns to “protect to environment,” to have a “world of beauty” and to attain unity with nature” (Schwarz 1994).

When consumption, possession, and money become our primary aims, we become less concerned with fully understanding others’ subjective experience, feelings, and desires. Instead, others become objects and thus lose value as people. In the materialist mindset, people exist largely to reflect well on ourselves and to be used and manipulated to obtain what we want (Kasser 2002).

Previous research demonstrated that materialistic people are self-focused (Belk 1985, Fournier and Richins 1991). Kilbourne, Grünhagen and Foley (2005), examined the materialism in relation to Schwartz (1994) Value System. In this value system one of the value axis is self enhancement and self-transcendence on the other hand. They showed that the relationship between materialism and self-transcendence is negative whereas the relationship between materialism and self enhancement is positive. Although a different theory based scale used in Kilbourne’s study; it is fair enough to assume that the self-transcendence end point of the axis mentioned in the study and the self-transcendence variable in our study are parallel especially with transpersonal identification subscale. Because people who have low scores from transpersonal identification subscale have more individualist tendencies which is also parallel with the self enhancement end point of the axis mentioned in Kilbourne’s study.

It is important that transpersonal identification is significantly correlated with materialistic happiness and total materialism score. However centrality subscale of materialism and success subscales of materialism, self-forgetfulness and spiritual acceptance are

not correlated with other subscales. It seems that materialistic happiness and transpersonal identification are key factors. It may be that happiness may be the only determinant materialistic factor developed considerably during university education. Because while materialistic centrality and materialistic success hasn't got much importance in the life of a collage life; materialistic happiness provides a basis for comparing himself/herself with others that have goods he or she wants. The participants who have low scores on transpersonal identification may be characterized as more individualistic persons who tend to feel they are neither directly nor indirectly responsible for what's going on with others or the world. So people who pursue happiness through materialistic goods are also individualistic.

The students who have relatively high materialism scores are likely to have low empathy scores. The students who have relatively high scores of success on materialism scale also have low scores of empathy. In other words materialistic individuals care less about the viewpoints of other people. Kasser and Sheldon (2000), measured collage students' empathy, or willingness or ability to consider the point of view of other people using likert scales. Empathic statements were such as "before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place" and the statements that are not empathic were such as "if I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments". Empathic people agreed with the empathic statements more than the non-empathic statements. Results showed that students who have materialistic goals showed relatively low levels of empathy. Materialistic students think that there is not much need to see another's viewpoint.

Materialistic values by definition may conflict with social human relationships. Materialistic pursuits about wealth, status, and image are naturally against deeper and quality relationship with social and non-social environment. High materialistic values lead people to objectify the others and to the feelings of alienation. In an absolute sense a materialistic person cannot relate to another being animate or inanimate.

Another result of this study which is considerably new is that empathy scores are also positively correlated with self-transcendence scores. Although new this is not a surprising result because by definition self-transcendent individuals tend to see everything and everyone as a part of one great totality. They see connections everywhere between people, between things. From this point of view, even the distance bet-

ween an animal and a person is not too far. That's why such a person will try to understand another one because understanding him/her will eventually provide knowledge about himself/herself.

As Hamer (2004) put also Maslow has entered into the area of self-transcendence. His "self actualizers" share one other key characteristic which is called peak experiences. Peak experience key feature is a sense of wholeness and unity with everything and everyone. People having peak experiences see the things as they really are. Maslow called this way of thinking "being cognition". The other key characteristic of self actualizers is being empathetic. They empathize and even sympathize with all kinds of people and the nature itself. However, although it seems trivial the relationship between being empathic and being self-transcendent, there should be more clear research designs to investigate and establish such a relation in the future.

The adoption of modern marketing practicing in the west has led to the emergence of a consumerist society. A consumerist society's key feature is to be directed largely by the consumption of material goods (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2002). A consumerist society in that sense is a materialistic society and these societies are too much about themselves and not enough about others. Modern marketing promotes a hedonistic lifestyle and by this undermines other cultural values. From this point of view consumption has been labeled the most value destroying activity of Western civilization. In Western civilization people work not because it's desirable and rewarding in its own right but because it helps them to consume more and more (Lee et al. 2009).

Previous research has shown that there is correlation between depression and hopelessness. In this study it is replicated and the correlation between depression and hopelessness scores is .54 (N=143) which is not surprising.

The results showed that there is relationship between depression and happiness subscale of materialism but not with total materialism scores. It was also expected that materialism and hopelessness are correlated. There is correlation between success subscales of materialism with the hopelessness scores whereas the correlation between the hopelessness scores and the total materialism scores is not significant.

As stated above materialistic happiness provides a basis for comparison. But as expected happiness through having goods lead happiness, because they cannot reach whatever they want. This causes them to feel more depressed.

To explain the difference between what we expect and what we have obtained it is reasonable to mention the age, occupation of a job and high amount of house income. The participants were mostly private university students who didn't have jobs and have house income which is above the Turkey population average. As Nickerson, Schwarz and Diener, (2007) stated in their study as house income becomes higher, financial aspirations will be unrelated to overall life satisfaction situations. The relationship between materialistic tendencies and financial aspirations is obvious. Life satisfaction can be defined as ones reaching his/her own goals. These goals may be interested in "being" or "having". If these goals are about "being" then it is about also self-transcendence. So being materialistic in case of high house income may be unrelated to self-transcendence. So it may be reasonable to infer that as house income becomes higher materialistic tendencies may not affect self-transcendence characteristics.

According to Cloninger (2004); to produce well-being the all three character traits must synergistically interact with the others. Only individuals who are high on all three traits have frequent positive emotions and infrequent negative emotions since we didn't examine the other traits. The cooperativeness and self-directedness may explain seemingly controversial results.

The participants in this study are all students, so as all students the participants may only feel responsible for their grades, to pass the exams and other things which are not directly in relation with maintaining a family or a house. So their materialistic tendencies may not fully develop. The students in this study have relatively higher self-transcendence scores according to Turkish norms of TCI. These may be another explanation or limitation which is also has to be verified by future research.

The major limitation of this study is the participants being from higher socioeconomic status that most of the participants are educating in private universities (62 %). The study was conducted by 143 students and this number should be greater. Another limitation for this study is asking limited questions about participant's economic status. We asked their household income by means of their monthly fellowship or their pocket money from their families. Their family's household income didn't ask.

For future research; first of all materialistic value scale's validation and reliability studies must be done properly. Considering this, future research must be done with more heterogeneous participants namely

with a working population and with a higher ages, more heterogeneous socioeconomic status.

As stated before materialism is a "value destroying" construct that the dark side of materialism had been shown repeatedly by the theoreticians from psychology, economy, philosophy and other areas. In this study we tried to understand materialism in perspective of personality and these complications has shown partially that materialism is associated with diminished well-being and lower empathy.

Turkey, as a developing country, with the effect of globalizing has to face eventually the complications of consumerism. In the center of these dangers, is the materialism construct. Although a developing literature can be seen, there is little in Turkey. This study may shed a light on materialism for future research in Turkey among others.

REFERENCES

- Baron-Cohen, S, Wheelwright S (2004) The empathy quotient: an investigation of adults with Asperger syndrome or high functioning autism and normal sex differences. *J Autism Develop Disord*; 34: 163-175.
- Beck AT, Lesker D, Trexler L (1974) The measurement of pessimism: The hopelessness scale. *J Consulting Clin Psychol*; 42: 861-874.
- Beck AT, Ward CH, Mendelson M, Mock J, Erbaugh J (1961) An inventory for measuring depression, *Arch Gen Psychiatry*; 4: 561-571.
- Belk RW (1985) Materialism: trait aspects of living in the material World. *J Consumer Res*; 12: 265-280.
- Bora E, Baysan L (2009) Empati ölçeği türkçe formunun üniversite öğrencilerinde psikometrik özellikleri, *Klinik Psikofarmakoloji Bülteni*; 19: 39-47.
- Cloninger CR (1986) A unified biosocial theory of personality and its role in the development of anxiety states. *Psychiatr Dev*; 4: 167-226.
- Cloninger CR (1987) A systematic method for clinical description and classification of personality variants: a proposal. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*; 44: 573-588.
- Cloninger CR (2004) *Feeling good: The Science of Well-Being*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cloninger CR (2006) The science of well-being: An integrated approach to mental health and its disorders. *World Psychiatry*; 5: 71-76.
- Cloninger CR (2006) Differentiating Personality Deviance, Normality, and Well Being by the Seven Factor Psychobiological Model. Stephen S, editor. *Differentiating Normal and Abnormal Personality*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Cloninger CR, Svrakic DM (1997) Integrative psychobiological approach to psychiatric assessment and treatment. *Psychiatry*; 60: 120-141.
- Cloninger CR, Svrakic DM, Przybeck TR (1993) A Psychobiological model of temperament and character, *Arch Gen Psychiatry*; 50: 975-989.

- Cloninger CR, Przybeck TR, Svrakic DM, Wetzel RD (1994) The Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI): A guide to its development and use. St. Louis, MO: Center for Psychobiology of Personality.
- Csikszentmihaly M (2005) Materialism and the Evolution of Consciousness. Kasser T, Kanner AD, editors. Psychology and Consumer Culture. Washington: American Psychological Association, 91-104.
- Durak A (1994) Beck umutsuzluk ölçeğinin geçerlik ve güvenilirlik çalışması. Türk Psikoloji Dergisi; 9: 1-11.
- Fournier S, Richins ML (1991) Some theoretical and popular notions concerning materialism. J Soc Behav Personality; 6: 403-414.
- Ger G, Belk R (1996) Cross-cultural differences in materialism. J Economic Psychol; 17: 55-57.
- Hamer HD (2004) The God Gene: How faith is Hardwired into Our Genes. Westminster, MD: Doubleday Publishing.
- Hisli N (1988) Beck Depresyon Envanteri'nin geçerliği üzerine bir çalışma. Türk Psikoloji Dergisi; 6: 118-126.
- Inglehart R (1997) Modernization and Post-Modernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies. Princeton University Press, 108-109.
- Kasser T (2002) The High Price of Materialism. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kasser T, Ryan MR (1993) The dark side of the American dream: correlates of intrinsic and extrinsic goals, J Person Soc Psychol; 65: 410-22.
- Kasser T, Sheldon KM (2000) On wealth and death: Materialism, mortality salience and consumption behavior. Psychol Sci; 11: 348-51.
- Kilbourne W, Grunhagen M, Foley J (2005) A cross-cultural examination of the relationship between materialism and individual values, J Econ Psychol; 26: 624-641.
- Köse S (2003) A psychobiological model of temperament and character: TCI. Yeni/New Symposium; 41: 86-97.
- Köse S, Sayar K, Kalelioğlu Ü, Aydın N, Ak I, Kırpınar İ, Reeves RA, Przybeck TR, Cloninger CR (2004). Mizaç ve karakter envanteri (Türkçe TCI) geçerlik, güvenilirliği ve faktör yapısı. Klinik Psikofarmakoloji Bülteni; 14: 107-131.
- Lee M, Pant A, Ali A (2010) Does the individualist consume more? The interplay of ethics and beliefs that governs consumerism across cultures. J Business Ethics; 93: 576-581.
- Mc Millan Contemporary Dictionary (1st Ed.) (1986) Istanbul: ABC Yayınevi.
- Myers DG (2000) The funds, friends, and faith of happy people. Am Psychologist; 55: 56-67.
- Nickerson C, Schwarz N, Diener E, Kahneman D (2003) Zeroing in on the dark side of the American dream: a closer look at the negative consequences of the goal for financial success, Psychol Sci; 14: 531-536.
- O'Shaughnessy J, O'Shaughnessy N (2002) Marketing, the consumer society and hedonism. Eur J Marketing; 36: 524-547.
- Richins ML, Dawson S (1992) A consumer values orientation for materialism and its measurement: scale development and validation. J Consumer Res; 19: 303-316.
- Richins ML, Rudmin F (1994) Materialism and economic psychology. J Econ Psychol; 15: 217-231.
- Roberts JA, Tanner JF, Manolis C (2005) Materialism and the family structure stress relation. J Consumer Psychol; 15: 183-190.
- Schweitzer A (1987) Civilization and Ethics, the Philosophy of Civilization. Buffalo: Prometheus Books.
- Schwartz SH (1994) Are there universal aspects of the structure and contents of human values? J Social Issues; 50: 19-45.
- Seber G, Dilbaz N, Kaptanoğlu C, Tekin D (1993) Umutsuzluk ölçeği: geçerlilik ve güvenilirliği, Kriz Dergisi; 1: 139-142.
- Sirgy JM (1998) Materialism and quality of life. Soc Indicators Res; 43: 227-260.
- TÜİK (2010) Gelir ve Yaşam Koşulları Veri Seti. Ankara: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu.
- Turan G (2007) Relationship Between Materialism and Self-Constructs, Unpublished master's Thesis.
- Uslu RI, Kapci EG, Oncu B, Ugurlu M, Turkcapar H (2008) Psychometric properties and cut-off scores of the Beck depression inventory-II in Turkish adolescents. J Clin Psychol; 15: 225-233.
- Van Boven L, Gilovich T (2003) To do or to have: that is the question. J Personal Soc Psychol; 85: 119-212.