Article

Hypomanic Personality, Social Media Use Motives, and Problematic Social Media Use: A Parallel Multiple Mediation Analysis

Yu-Ju Choi[1]
Young-Jin Lim[2,*]

[1]Department of Psychology, Daegu University, 38453 Gyeongsan, Republic of Korea
[2]Department of Psychology, Gachon University, 13120 Seongnam, Republic of Korea

Abstract

Background: Although considerable research has been conducted on the associations between personality traits and problematic social media use, studies examining the association between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use and the potential indirect role of social media use motives have been rare. The two purposes of this study were to examine whether hypomanic personality was associated with problematic social media use and whether this association showed significant indirect associations through social media use motives.

Methods: Scales measuring hypomanic personality, social media use motives, and problematic social media use were administered to 250 Korean adults. A parallel multiple mediation analysis was performed using PROCESS Macro Model 4 proposed by Hayes (2018).

Results: Hypomanic personality showed a significant positive total association with problematic social media use (effect = 0.24, 95% confidence interval (CI) [0.10, 0.39]). Significant indirect associations were observed through coping motives (effect = 0.07, 95% CI [0.02, 0.13]) and enhancement motives (effect = 0.03, 95% CI [0.01, 0.07]). A small, unanticipated indirect association through concealment motives was also observed (effect = 0.03, 95% CI [0.0002, 0.06]).

Conclusions: These findings suggest that enhancement and coping motives may be relevant intervention targets for problematic social media use among individuals high in hypomanic personality.

Keywords

social media; technology addiction; personality; motivation

Introduction

Social media can be described as an online environment in which people can share information, interact with people who have similar interests, and disclose or present aspects of themselves and their daily lives [1,2]. Popular social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter). The rapid development of mobile technology and the widespread availability of the Internet have led to an increase in social media use. As of January 2021, social media user identities across the globe totaled 4.20 billion, accounting for 53.5% of the global population, and people spent an average of 16 hours and 55 minutes per week using social media platforms [3].

Social media provides users with several positive benefits [4]. Social media users can maintain contact with family members and friends who are far away, access news and information in real time, build professional networks, and participate in communities where common interests and issues are discussed. Because of these advantages, social media has become an important part of daily life. However, social media has negative aspects as well as positive ones [4]. Through social media, personal information may be leaked, misinformation may spread, and harmful online behaviors, such as cyberbullying, cyberstalking, harassment, and other forms of online abuse, may occur.

Social media addiction has recently emerged as a ma-

Submitted: 22 July 2026 Revised: 30 September 2026 Accepted: 22 October 2026 Published: 25 November 2026
*Corresponding author details: Young-Jin Lim, Department of Psychology, Gachon University, 13120 Seongnam, Republic of Korea. Email: yjlim0109@naver.com

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

jor topic in addiction research and represents a particularly serious adverse consequence associated with social media use. Social media addiction is a condition in which an individual spends excessive amounts of time on social media, resulting in clinically significant impairment not only in psychological health and well-being but also in interpersonal relationships, career, and/or education [5]. Because social media addiction is not an officially recognized diagnosis, the present study used the term problematic social media use instead of social media addiction.

Problematic social media use is regarded as one type of behavioral addiction that produces effects similar to those of substance use. According to the components model of addiction [6], which identified the common characteristics of behavioral and substance addictions, all addictive behaviors share six fundamental components.

First, salience means that addictive behavior becomes the most important and dominant aspect of an individual's life. Second, mood modification refers to alleviating or eliminating negative emotions through addictive behavior. Third, tolerance refers to an increase over time in the frequency, duration, or intensity of addictive behavior required to achieve the desired effect. Fourth, withdrawal symptoms refer to the psychological or physiological discomfort experienced when addictive behavior is discontinued. Fifth, conflict refers to the deterioration of occupational, academic, or interpersonal functioning due to being absorbed in addictive behavior. Sixth, relapse refers to returning to the previous level of addictive behavior after unsuccessful attempts to reduce or stop the behavior. According to the components model of behavioral addiction, all of these components must be present for a behavior to be classified as addictive.

Problematic social media use has been reported to be associated with various negative consequences for users. Individuals who exhibit problematic social media use experience more depression, insomnia, and loneliness than those who do not [7,8]. Adolescents who exhibit problematic social media use are more likely to have eating disorders than those who do not [9], and students who exhibit problematic social media use have been found to show lower academic functioning than those who do not [10]. These findings suggest that problematic social media use is associated with various mental disorders and negatively affect individuals' functioning, indicating the need to regulate and manage it effectively.

Effective regulation and control of problematic social media use require knowledge of the factors that contribute to its development. Several personality traits have been identified as contributing factors to problematic social media use. Among the Big Five personality traits, high neuroticism and low conscientiousness, as well as the Dark Triad traits, borderline personality disorder, obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, and schizotypal personality disorder, have been identified as personality factors associated with problematic social media use [11].

However, no study to date has examined the relationship between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use. Hypomanic personality refers to traits that resemble those observed in hypomanic episodes of bipolar II disorder without meeting the diagnostic criteria for hypomanic episodes of bipolar II disorder. Individuals with hypomanic personality tend to exhibit high energy, increased activity, impulsivity, elevated mood, sociability, optimism, creativity, and risk-taking behavior. Hypomanic personality is not a disorder but rather a trait that may exist to varying degrees in the general population [12].

Several studies support the expectation that hypomanic personality is related to problematic social media use. Previous research has shown that hypomanic personality is significantly correlated with general addictive tendencies and addictive personality features [13]. Recent studies have described hypomanic personality as a multidimensional construct that includes affective lability, elevated activation, interpersonal confidence, impulsivity, and disinhibition [14], and some of these dimensions may increase vulnerability to risky or uncontrolled behavior [15]. Additionally, studies have reported that college students with hypomanic personality traits are more likely to have alcohol use disorders [16], and that among 292 patients receiving treatment for cocaine addiction, 13% exhibited hypomanic personality traits and were described as well-adjusted, fun-loving, and action-oriented extroverts prior to their addiction [17].

In this study, we move beyond simply examining the direct association between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use. Instead, we aim to identify the mediating mechanisms underlying this relationship, specifically motives for social media use. According to the Interaction of Person-Affect-Cognition-Execution model, broad dispositional characteristics, such as hypomanic personality, are linked to behavior-related antecedents, such as motives for social media use [18]. In addition, the uses and gratifications approach proposes that individuals make deliberate and active choices among various social media platforms [19] and that their social media use is purposeful and intended to fulfill particular psychological or social demands reflected in their motives for social media use.

Actas Esp Psiquiatr 2026;1–11. https://doi.org/10.62641/aep.2473 | ISSN:1578-2735
© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

These motives can be organized within a two-dimensional framework defined by the source of motivation (internal vs. external) and the nature of reinforcement (positive vs. negative) [20]. This model is adapted from motivational theories related to alcohol use [21].

The first category, which combines internal motivation and positive reinforcement, includes enhancement and information motives. This category reflects the desire for cognitive stimulation and gratification through social media use. Enhancement motives involve using social media to increase positive emotions such as enjoyment, excitement, or fun. Information motives relate to obtaining knowledge, educational content, updates, and similar resources. These motives emphasize an internal desire for enjoyment, stimulation, and intellectual engagement. The second category, internal motivation paired with negative reinforcement, includes coping and pastime motives. Both involve using social media to relieve negative internal states such as boredom, anxiety, and stress. Coping motives reflect the use of social media to escape from sadness or distress. Similarly, pastime motives involve using social media to avoid boredom. These motives underscore the role of social media in regulating unpleasant emotional experiences. The third category, which combines external motivation and positive reinforcement, consists of social and expression motives. These involve using social media to attain desirable social outcomes. Social motives include initiating and maintaining relationships, while expression motives involve sharing personal achievements or strengths publicly. These motives highlight the pursuit of connection and recognition. The final category, external motivation paired with negative reinforcement, includes conformity and concealment motives. These reflect efforts to avoid negative social consequences or hide personal vulnerabilities. Conformity motives involve avoiding exclusion or bullying, while concealment motives involve masking perceived weaknesses. These motives emphasize social pressure and impression management.

Social media use motives have been reported to serve as proximal correlates that may statistically account for associations between demographic, situational, psychological, interpersonal, and personality variables and problematic social media use. For example, coping motives have been shown to mediate the relationship between covert narcissism and problematic social media use [20]; conformity and social motives mediate the influence of peer pressure [22]; and expression and pastime motives link trait emotional intelligence to problematic use [23].

Previous studies have found that individuals high in hypomanic personality experience more negative emotions than those low in this trait [24,25] and have difficulty regulating negative emotions in response to stress [26]. Therefore, it is expected that individuals with high levels of hypomanic personality will use social media with coping motives. Additionally, individuals with high hypomanic personality traits tend to pursue pleasurable activities and, due to their higher levels of extraversion, experience greater positive affect in response to positive stimuli than individuals with lower levels of extraversion [13,27]. Thus, it is also expected that they will access social media with enhancement motives, which involve using social media to increase positive emotions.

A parallel multiple mediation model will be used to examine the motivational mechanisms underlying the relationship between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use in this study. This model allows researchers to determine whether a specific mediating variable retains its effect even when the influence of other mediators is controlled, and it helps identify the relative contribution of each mediator [28].

Based on previous findings, this study hypothesizes that both coping and enhancement motives serve as mediators of the association between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use. That is, this study aims to examine whether coping motives and enhancement motives can still mediate the relationship between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use even after controlling for the other use motives. Although the hypotheses focused only on enhancement and coping motives, all eight motives were included simultaneously in the parallel multiple mediation model because they constitute a single integrated theoretical framework and are interrelated. This comprehensive approach allows for the exploration of potentially unanticipated mediating mechanisms.

Hypotheses: 1. Hypomanic personality is significantly and positively associated with problematic social media use. 2. Hypomanic personality is significantly and positively associated with coping motives and enhancement motives. 3. Significant indirect associations between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use are expected through coping motives and enhancement motives in the parallel multiple mediation model (Fig. 1).

Materials and Methods

Participants

A total of 250 adults participated in this study. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling by

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

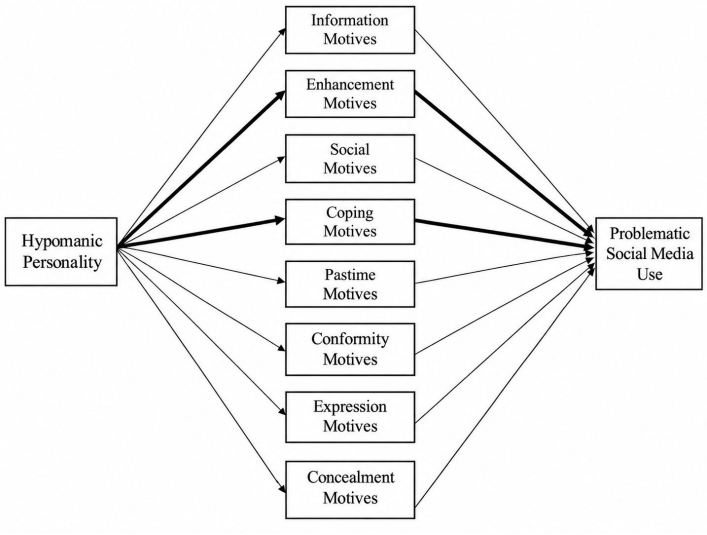


Fig. 1. Parallel multiple mediation model of the associations among hypomanic personality, social media use motives, and problematic social media use. The predicted indirect paths are indicated in bold.

distributing an online survey link through the researchers' personal networks and online communities. Eligibility criteria for participation were being 18 years of age or older, currently using at least one social media platform, providing informed consent, and completing the online survey. Individuals who were under 18 years of age, did not use social media, did not provide informed consent, or submitted incomplete questionnaires were excluded. All 250 respondents met the eligibility criteria and provided complete data; therefore, no questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis.

Participants were selected based on their use of online platforms that facilitate social interaction and content sharing. Because KakaoTalk provides user profiles, group communication, content-sharing functions, Open Chat communities, and channels, KakaoTalk was regarded as a messenger-based or hybrid social media platform and its users were included in the study.

Measures

The Hypomanic Personality Scale (HPS)

In this study, the HPS originally developed by Eckblad and Chapman [12] and translated by Kim and Oh [29] was used to measure hypomanic personality. This scale was primarily designed to identify individuals who have a trait-like predisposition to hypomania and have a high risk for developing bipolar disorders. This scale consists of 48 items and three factors. The three factors of the HPS are social vitality, mood volatility, and excitement [30]. Participants are instructed to choose one of two responses, yes or no, with yes responses scored as 1 and no responses scored as 0. The internal consistency (Cronbach's α) of the scale was 0.83 [29]. Higher total scores suggest greater hypomanic personality.

The Social Network Site Use Motives Scale-Revised (SUMS-R)

In this study, eight social media use motives—information, enhancement, social, coping, pastime, conformity, expression, and concealment motives—were measured using the SUMS-R [20]. The SUMS-R consists of a total of 40 items, with each of the eight social media use motives comprising five items. Respondents answered using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), and the total score for each social media use motive ranges from a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 25. Higher scores indicate stronger motives for use. Each subscale demonstrated good internal consistency, with Cronbach's α coefficients for the eight social media use motives ranging from 0.78 to 0.91, thereby meeting the conventional criteria for Cronbach's α [20].

The Social Network Site Addiction Proneness Scale (SAPS)

The SAPS was employed to assess levels of problematic social media use [31]. This scale consists of 24 items reflecting eight dimensions of problematic social media use: salience, tolerance, mood modification, relapse,

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

withdrawal, conflict, daily life impairment, and orientation toward virtual worlds. Respondents rate each item on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). The Cronbach's α for the scale was 0.92, indicating good internal consistency [31]. The total score of this scale ranges from a minimum of 24 points to a maximum of 96. Higher total scores suggest greater problematic social media use.

Procedure

The researchers informed the participants of their rights and the purpose of the study before collecting data from them. After providing informed consent electronically, the participants responded online to the following questions: age, gender, social media platforms, duration of social media use per day, and standardized scales. Data were collected from March to April 2021.

Data Analyses

SPSS (version 27) was used to analyze the research data (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA). Prior to hypothesis testing, Harman's one-factor procedure was conducted to assess potential method-related variance arising from the use of self-report scales administered during a single data-collection occasion. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to describe the various properties of the study sample (gender, age, social media usage time, type of social media used, and number of social media platforms used), provide an overview of key variables, and examine the distribution of the data. To verify the internal consistency reliability of the key variables included in this study, Cronbach's α was calculated, and when the value was 0.70 or higher, the internal consistency of the variable was considered guaranteed [32]. When the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis are between –1 and +1, the distributions are generally considered to show no substantial deviation from normality [33]. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine the relationships among the variables in this study. All statistical tests were two-sided, with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. In this study, PROCESS Macro Model 4, as described by Hayes (2018) [34], was used for parallel multiple mediation analysis. Before entering the variables into the parallel multiple mediation model, all variables except gender and social media platforms went through a standardization process, because standardization makes regression coefficients easier to interpret and makes it easier to compare different measures. When social media platforms were included in the analysis, participants who used each platform were coded as 1, and participants who did not use it were coded as 0. In mediation analysis using PROCESS Macro Model 4, the total, direct, and indirect effects are considered statistically significant only if their confidence intervals (CIs) do not contain the value 0. The indirect effects were estimated using 5000 bootstrap samples, with 95% bootstrap CIs.

Results

Participant Characteristics

Table 1 presents the baseline characteristics of the study participants. The sample consisted of 74 males (29.60%) and 176 females (70.40%), with a mean age of 28.17 years (standard deviation [SD] = 9.64; range = 18–69 years). Participants reported an average daily social media use time of 161.73 minutes (SD = 111.88) and used an average of 2.18 social media platforms (SD = 0.91; range = 1–5). KakaoTalk was the most commonly used platform (91.60%), followed by Instagram (63.20%), Facebook (36.40%), Naver Band (13.20%), Twitter (7.20%), Kakao Story (2.40%), and Line (0.80%).

Table 1. Baseline characteristics of the study participants (n = 250).

Characteristic	Mean ± SD or n (%)	Range
Age, years	28.17 ± 9.64	18–69
Sex	—	—
Male	74 (29.60)	—
Female	176 (70.40)	—
Daily social media use, minutes	161.73 ± 111.88	—
Number of social media platforms used	2.18 ± 0.91	1–5
Social media platform used	—	—
KakaoTalk	229 (91.60)	—
Instagram	158 (63.20)	—
Facebook	91 (36.40)	—
Naver Band	33 (13.20)	—
Twitter	18 (7.20)	—
Kakao Story	6 (2.40)	—
Line	2 (0.80)	—

Continuous variables are presented as mean ± standard deviation, and categorical variables as n (%). Participants could report using more than one social media platform; therefore, platform percentages do not sum to 100%. SD, standard deviation.

Preliminary Analysis

Harman's single-factor test was performed to assess common method variance, which can occur when all vari-

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and reliability coefficients for the study variables (n = 250).

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Hypomanic personality	—									
2. Information motives	0.19**	—								
3. Enhancement motives	0.24***	0.65***	—							
4. Social motives	0.20**	0.40***	0.59***	—						
5. Coping motives	0.19**	0.47***	0.54***	0.57***	—					
6. Pastime motives	0.18**	0.54***	0.67***	0.51***	0.63***	—				
7. Conformity motives	0.1	0.33***	0.34***	0.66***	0.62***	0.43***	—			
8. Expression motives	0.28***	0.44***	0.50***	0.68***	0.46***	0.43***	0.57***	—		
9. Concealment motives	0.24***	0.35***	0.39***	0.46***	0.51***	0.35***	0.59***	0.69***	—	
10. Problematic social media use	0.25***	0.50***	0.59***	0.59***	0.76***	0.60***	0.66***	0.59***	0.60***	—
Mean	16.9	15.91	16	14.09	11.69	16.19	11.01	12.19	9.82	48.62
SD	7.88	3.92	3.82	4.12	4.67	5	4.69	4.68	4.25	13.54
Range	3–42	5–25	5–25	5–24	5–24	5–25	5–25	5–25	5–25	24–93
Skewness	0.6	–0.45	–0.46	–0.13	0.3	–0.53	0.5	0.2	0.93	0.16
Kurtosis	–0.05	–0.14	0.04	–0.38	–0.65	–0.45	–0.49	–0.53	0.78	–0.22
Cronbach's α	0.86	0.81	0.88	0.82	0.92	0.91	0.93	0.91	0.93	0.95

The lower triangle contains Pearson correlation coefficients; the upper triangle is omitted to avoid duplication. SD, standard deviation. $^{**}p < 0.01$. $^{***}p < 0.001$.

ables are measured at a single time point using self-report scales [35]. According to the exploratory factor analysis of all 112 items in this study, the first of the 26 components with eigenvalues greater than 1 was found to explain 23.26% of the total variance. However, because Harman's single-factor test has a limited ability to detect common method variance, it is difficult to regard this result as evidence of the absence of common method bias.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 provides mean, standard deviation, range, skewness, kurtosis, and Cronbach's α. All variables examined in this study demonstrated acceptable to excellent Cronbach's α coefficients ranging from 0.81 to 0.95, all exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. In addition, the skewness of all variables ranged from –0.53 to 0.93, and the kurtosis ranged from –0.65 to 0.78, meeting the criteria of Hair *et al*. [33] and indicating no substantial deviation from normality.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients are presented in Table 2. Hypomanic personality was significantly and positively correlated with seven of the eight motives for social media use (r = 0.18–0.28, $p < 0.01$) and with problematic social media use (r = 0.25, $p < 0.001$). In addition, all motives for social media use were significantly and positively correlated with problematic social media use. The eight motives for social media use were also significantly and positively intercorrelated (r = 0.33–0.69, $p < 0.001$).

Parallel Multiple Mediation Analysis

Prior to the parallel multiple mediation analysis, the data were evaluated to determine whether they met the assumptions underlying regression analysis. The data satisfied the assumptions of linearity, as indicated by the scatterplots of standardized residuals versus standardized predicted values. However, the Breusch–Pagan test was conducted and yielded a significant result ($\chi^2 = 24$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that the assumption of homoscedasticity was violated. Thus, robust standard errors were used. Multicollinearity among the eight social media use motives was assessed using variance inflation factors (VIFs) and tolerance values. The VIF values ranged from 1.89 to 3.07, and the tolerance values ranged from 0.33 to 0.53. These values were within generally accepted limits, indicating that multicollinearity was not a serious concern in the present analysis.

Based on previous studies showing that gender, age, and social media platforms are closely related to problematic social media use or social media use motives, gender, age, and social media platforms were included as covariates in the parallel multiple mediation analysis to eliminate the potential confounding effects of these variables on the relationship between hypomanic personality and problem-

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

Table 3. Parallel multiple mediation analysis results for social media use motives linking hypomanic personality to problematic social media use.

Path	β	SE (HC3)	t	p value	95% CI	
					LLCI	ULCI
Hypomanic personality → Information motives	0.18	0.07	2.46	0.015	0.04	0.33
Hypomanic personality → Enhancement motives	0.21	0.06	3.58	<0.001	0.09	0.32
Hypomanic personality → Social motives	0.18	0.06	2.9	0.004	0.06	0.3
Hypomanic personality → Coping motives	0.18	0.06	2.86	0.005	0.06	0.31
Hypomanic personality → Pastime motives	0.14	0.06	2.31	0.022	0.02	0.26
Hypomanic personality → Conformity motives	0.1	0.07	1.48	0.141	–0.03	0.23
Hypomanic personality → Expression motives	0.27	0.06	4.22	<0.001	0.14	0.39
Hypomanic personality → Concealment motives	0.24	0.08	3.18	0.002	0.09	0.39
Hypomanic personality → Problematic social media use	0.05	0.04	1.25	0.211	–0.03	0.13
Information motives → Problematic social media use	0.03	0.05	0.56	0.579	–0.07	0.13
Enhancement motives → Problematic social media use	0.17	0.06	2.87	0.005	0.05	0.28
Social motives → Problematic social media use	–0.05	0.07	–0.76	0.45	–0.18	0.08
Coping motives → Problematic social media use	0.37	0.07	5.58	<0.001	0.24	0.5
Pastime motives → Problematic social media use	0.11	0.06	1.9	0.058	–0.004	0.22
Conformity motives → Problematic social media use	0.23	0.06	3.51	<0.001	0.1	0.35
Expression motives → Problematic social media use	0.1	0.06	1.68	0.095	–0.02	0.22
Concealment motives → Problematic social media use	0.11	0.06	1.92	0.056	–0.003	0.21

Hypomanic personality was the independent variable, problematic social media use was the dependent variable, and the eight social media use motives were parallel mediators. Gender, age, Facebook use, Naver Band use, and Instagram use were covariates. SE (HC3), HC3 robust standard error; CI, confidence interval; LLCI/ULCI, lower/upper limits of the 95% CI.

atic social media use. Among the social media platforms reported by the participants, Facebook, Naver Band, and Instagram were included as covariates because their usage status showed sufficient variability for inclusion in the regression model.

Hypomanic personality was significantly associated with information (β = 0.18, p = 0.015), enhancement (β = 0.21, $p < 0.001$), social (β = 0.18, p = 0.004), coping (β = 0.18, p = 0.005), pastime (β = 0.14, p = 0.022), expression (β = 0.27, $p < 0.001$), and concealment motives (β = 0.24, p = 0.002). However, hypomanic personality was not significantly associated with conformity motives (β = 0.10, p = 0.141) (Table 3). Thus, Hypothesis 2, which proposed positive associations of hypomanic personality with coping and enhancement motives, was supported. Enhancement (β = 0.17, p = 0.005), coping (β = 0.37, $p < 0.001$), and conformity motives (β = 0.23, $p < 0.001$) were significantly associated with problematic social media use after controlling for the other mediators and covariates.

According to Table 4, hypomanic personality had a significant total effect on problematic social media use (effect = 0.24, 95% CI [0.10, 0.39]). Therefore, Hypothesis 1, which proposed a significant positive association between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use, was supported. However, the direct effect of hypomanic personality on problematic social media use was not statistically significant (effect = 0.05, 95% CI [–0.03, 0.13]).

Table 4. Total and direct effect of hypomanic personality on problematic social media use.

Effect type	Effect	SE (HC3)	t	p value	95% CI	
					LLCI	ULCI
Total effect	0.24	0.07	3.41	<0.001	0.1	0.39
Direct effect	0.05	0.04	1.25	0.211	–0.03	0.13

Hypomanic personality was the independent variable, problematic social media use was the dependent variable, and the eight social media use motives were parallel mediators. Gender, age, Facebook use, Naver Band use, and Instagram use were covariates. SE (HC3), HC3 robust standard error; CI, confidence interval; LLCI/ULCI, lower/upper limits of the 95% CI.

As displayed in Table 5, hypomanic personality had a significant total indirect effect on problematic social media use through motives for social media use (effect = 0.19, 95% CI [0.08, 0.30]). Among the eight social media use motives, the indirect effects of coping motives (effect = 0.07, 95% CI [0.02, 0.13]), enhancement motives (effect = 0.03, 95% CI [0.01, 0.07]), and concealment motives (effect

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

= 0.03, 95% CI [0.0002, 0.06]) were all statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 3, which proposed significant indirect associations through enhancement and coping motives, was supported.

Table 5. Indirect effect of hypomanic personality on problematic social media use.

Indirect effect path	Effect	Boot SE	95% CI	
			Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Total indirect effect	0.19	0.05	0.08	0.3
Information motives	0.01	0.01	–0.01	0.03
Enhancement motives	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.07
Social motives	–0.01	0.01	–0.04	0.01
Coping motives	0.07	0.03	0.02	0.13
Pastime motives	0.02	0.01	–0.0005	0.04
Conformity motives	0.02	0.02	–0.01	0.06
Expression motives	0.03	0.02	–0.004	0.06
Concealment motives	0.03	0.02	0.0002	0.06

Hypomanic personality was the independent variable, problematic social media use was the dependent variable, and the eight social media use motives were parallel mediators. Gender, age, Facebook use, Naver Band use, and Instagram use were covariates. Effect = standardized indirect effect. Boot SE, bootstrap standard error; CI, confidence interval; Boot LLCI/Boot ULCI, lower/upper limits of the 95% bootstrap CI.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use and to determine whether social media use motives showed significant indirect associations in this relationship. As a result of the study, hypomanic personality was significantly associated with problematic social media use, and thus hypothesis 1 was supported. In addition, hypomanic personality was significantly associated with enhancement motives and coping motives among social media use motives, and thus hypothesis 2 was supported. Finally, significant indirect associations were observed through enhancement and coping motives between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use, and thus hypothesis 3 was supported.

In this study, in addition to the results predicted through the hypothesis, a significant indirect association was observed through concealment motives in the relationship between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use. The following explanations can be given for these unexpected results. According to the previous study [25], individuals with hypomanic personality have a tendency to experience identity problems, which may be associated with using social media as a means of managing their self-image or hiding aspects of themselves they perceive as vulnerable.

In this study, the regression coefficient between hypomanic personality and concealment motives was statistically significant, whereas the regression coefficient between concealment motives and problematic social media use was not statistically significant. However, when the bootstrapping method was used, the indirect effect of concealment motives was found to be statistically significant (effect = 0.03, 95% CI [0.0002, 0.06]). Although the path from concealment motives to problematic social media use was not statistically significant, the bootstrapping method can detect the statistical significance of the indirect effect independently of the statistical significance of the individual paths. This makes it possible to detect mediating effects even when individual pathways are relatively weak or statistically insignificant [34]. However, considering that the lower bound of the CI was close to zero and that the path from concealment motives to problematic social media use was not statistically significant, the indirect effect of concealment motives should be interpreted with caution.

After the indirect effects through motives for social media use were taken into account, the direct association between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use was no longer statistically significant. These findings are consistent with an indirect-only statistical association through enhancement, coping, and concealment motives. Specifically, individuals high in hypomanic personality may be more likely to engage in problematic social media use when they use social media to experience positive emotions, soothe negative emotions, and manage others' impressions by concealing negative aspects of themselves.

In addition to the significant indirect effects, the nonsignificant indirect effects also need to be examined. Hypomanic personality was significantly associated with information, social, pastime, and expression motives; however, after the other use motives were simultaneously included in the model, these motives were not uniquely associated with problematic social media use. These findings may be attributable to the overlap between the associations of these motives with problematic social media use and those of more proximal motives, particularly enhancement and coping motives, or to the high intercorrelations among the eight motives, which may have reduced the unique contribution of each mediator in the parallel multiple mediation model. In contrast, conformity motives were not significantly associated with hypomanic personality but were

Actas Esp Psiquiatr 2026;1–11. https://doi.org/10.62641/aep.2473 | ISSN:1578-2735
© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

significantly associated with problematic social media use. Thus, conformity motives may be more closely related to interpersonal variables, such as peer pressure and rejection sensitivity, than to hypomanic personality traits.

This study has important implications for preventing problematic social media use. Prevention programs targeting individuals high in hypomanic personality can help them recognize their social media use motives and adopt appropriate prevention strategies based on those motives. For adults with enhancement motives, providing stimulating alternatives may be effective; for those with coping motives, teaching emotion regulation skills would be beneficial; and for individuals with concealment motives, promoting self-awareness and authenticity could help prevent problematic social media use.

The results of this study have important implications for interventions targeting problematic social media use. When working with adults who exhibit problematic social media use and hypomanic personality traits, personalized therapeutic approaches may be considered based on their specific social media use motives. Adults with enhancement motives may benefit from treatments that channel their need for stimulation into healthier, more constructive, and goal-directed activities. For those with coping motives, treatments that foster emotion regulation and stress management may reduce the tendency to use social media to alleviate negative emotions. For individuals with concealment motives, interventions that promote self-acceptance, identity exploration, and authentic relationships may help them reduce the need to use social media to hide their true selves, including their weaknesses and shortcomings.

This study has important limitations. First, although common method bias was examined and no serious concerns were identified, all variables in this study were assessed using self-report measures at a single point in time. Therefore, causal relationships among the variables cannot be established, and future experimental or longitudinal studies are needed to re-examine the proposed relationships. Second, the proportion of male participants in this study was relatively lower than that of female participants. This gender imbalance may have resulted in the characteristics of female participants having a greater influence on the estimated means of hypomanic personality, social media use motives, and problematic social media use, as well as on the associations among these variables. In addition, if the relationships among the study variables differ by gender, the gender imbalance may have obscured or underestimated gender-specific patterns. Because the number of male participants was relatively small, the statistical power to detect gender-specific effects may have been limited, and the estimates for male participants may have been less stable and less precise. Although this issue was addressed by using gender as a control variable, it remains difficult to generalize the results to male populations. Therefore, the findings should be re-validated using data with a more balanced gender distribution. Third, only three social media platforms were included as covariates because some platforms were used by too many participants, whereas others were used by too few. In particular, KakaoTalk was not included in the regression model because the number of nonusers was very small, resulting in insufficient variability and potentially unstable estimates of the association between KakaoTalk use and the study variables. To enhance the generalizability of the findings, future studies should obtain samples with greater variability in the use of various social media platforms, including KakaoTalk. Fourth, hypomanic personality measured by the HPS reflects trait-like hypomanic tendencies rather than bipolar disorder or current hypomanic symptoms. Therefore, the present study is limited by its failure to screen for and exclude participants experiencing a current hypomanic or manic episode. Fifth, the present model controlled only for gender, age, and selected social media platforms; however, problematic social media use and hypomanic personality are closely associated with depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, impulsivity, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) traits, narcissism, neuroticism, sleep problems, and general psychological distress. Because the omission of these variables from the model raises concerns about the possibility of residual confounding, future studies need to re-examine the findings of the present study by including these variables. Sixth, the participants in this study had a broad age range of 18 to 69 years, and relatively younger participants were more highly represented in the sample. Accordingly, statistically controlling for age alone may not fully account for nonlinear age-related differences in the associations among hypomanic personality, social media use motives, and problematic social media use, and the findings may primarily reflect the characteristics of the relatively younger participants in the sample. Future studies should recruit samples with a more balanced age distribution and examine whether the proposed relationships differ across age groups. Finally, the data for this study were collected between March and April 2021, during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Although changes in daily life and psychological distress caused by the pandemic may have influenced participants' social media use motives and problematic social media use, the present study did not assess pandemic-related experiences and had no pre-pandemic comparison data. Therefore, the potential effects of pandemic-related changes in daily life and psychological distress on the study findings cannot be determined. Ac-

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

cordingly, the findings of this study should be interpreted only within the context of the pandemic and need to be re-examined using post-pandemic samples.

Conclusions

This exploratory, cross-sectional study identified significant associations between hypomanic personality and problematic social media use, including hypothesized indirect associations through enhancement and coping motives. A small exploratory indirect association through concealment motives was also observed. However, because the data were collected at a single time point, the directionality and causal relationships among the variables cannot be determined. Therefore, experimental or longitudinal studies, studies with balanced gender ratios, and those examining a wider range of social media platforms are needed to provide a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of this relationship. Such efforts would enhance the generalizability and causal interpretation of the results. Despite these limitations, the study offers important implications for both the prevention and treatment of problematic social media use among individuals with hypomanic personality.

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Author Contributions

YJC: Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization, Writing—original draft. YJL: Supervision, Data curation, Conceptualization, Writing—review & editing. Both authors gave final approval of the version to be published. Both authors participated fully in the work, took public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or completeness of any part of the work were appropriately investigated and resolved.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

All procedures of the study were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Daegu University (IRB number: 1040621-202007-HR-007). Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their participation in the study. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Acknowledgment

Not applicable.

Funding

This research received no external funding.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

References

[1] Boyd DM, Ellison NB. Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication. 2007; 13: 210–230. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x.

[2] Kietzmann JH, Hermkens K, McCarthy IP, Silvestre BS. Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. Business Horizons. 2011; 54: 241–251. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005.

[3] Kemp S. Digital 2021: Global Overview Report. DataReportal. 2021. Available at: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-global-overview-report (Accessed: 30 September 2026).

[4] Baccarella CV, Wagner TF, Kietzmann JH, McCarthy IP. Social media? It's serious! Understanding the dark side of social media. European Management Journal. 2018; 36: 431–438. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2018.07.002.

[5] Andreassen CS, Pallesen S. Social network site addiction—An overview. Current Pharmaceutical Design. 2014; 20: 4053–4061. https://doi.org/10.2174/13816128113199990616.

[6] Griffiths M. A "components model" of addiction within a biopsychosocial framework. Journal of Substance Use. 2005; 10: 191–197. https://doi.org/10.1080/14659890500114359.

[7] Aslan I, Polat H. Investigating social media addiction and impact of social media addiction, loneliness, depression, life satisfaction and problem-solving skills on academic self-efficacy and academic success among university students. Frontiers in Public Health. 2024; 12: 1359691. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1359691.

[8] Çiftci N, Sarman A, Çoban M. The relationship between social media addiction, insomnia, and depression in adolescents. Psychology, Health & Medicine. 2025; 31: 437–452. https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2025.2465659.

[9] Mushtaq T, Ashraf S, Hameed H, Irfan A, Shahid M, Kanwal R, *et al*. Prevalence of eating disorders and their association with social media addiction among youths. Nutrients. 2023; 15: 4687. https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15214687.

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.

[10] Mou Q, Zhuang J, Wu Q, Zhong Y, Dai Q, Cao X, *et al*. Social media addiction and academic engagement as serial mediators between social anxiety and academic performance among college students. BMC Psychology. 2024; 12: 190. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-01635-7.

[11] Ahmed E, Ahmed S. Social media addiction, personality traits, and disorders: An overview of recent literature. Current Opinion in Psychiatry. 2025; 38: 72–77. https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0000000000000969.

[12] Eckblad M, Chapman LJ. Development and validation of a scale for hypomanic personality. Journal of Abnormal Psychology. 1986; 95: 214–222. https://doi.org/10.1037//0021-843x.95.3.214.

[13] Meyer B, Rahman R, Shepherd R. Hypomanic personality features and addictive tendencies. Personality and Individual Differences. 2007; 42: 801–810. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2006.08.024.

[14] Stanton K, McArtor DB, Watson D. Parsing the hypomanic personality: Explicating the nature of specific dimensions defining mania risk. Assessment. 2019; 26: 492–507. https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191117725170.

[15] Traykova M, Raucher-Chéné D, Maranci JB, Barrière S, Besche-Richard C, Kaladjian A. "The captain wanted to stay with the sinking…(can't say boat)": How hypomanic personality traits interfere with inhibitory control? Journal of Psychiatric Research. 2025; 186: 9–15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2025.03.060.

[16] Kim B, Kwon S. Behavioral activation system hypersensitivity among Korean undergraduates with hypomanic personality: Perspective from the BAS model of bipolar disorder. Korean Journal of Clinical Psychology. 2016; 35: 703–710. https://doi.org/10.15842/kjcp.2016.35.3.010.

[17] Lemere F, Smith JW. Hypomanic personality trait in cocaine addiction. British Journal of Addiction. 1990; 85: 575–576. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.1990.tb01679.x.

[18] Brand M, Wegmann E, Stark R, Müller A, Wölfling K, Robbins TW, *et al*. The Interaction of Person-Affect-Cognition-Execution (I-PACE) model for addictive behaviors: Update, generalization to addictive behaviors beyond Internet-use disorders, and specification of the process character of addictive behaviors. Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews. 2019; 104: 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2019.06.032.

[19] Katz E, Blumler JG, Gurevitch M. Uses and gratifications research. Public Opinion Quarterly. 1973; 37: 509–523. https://doi.org/10.1086/268109.

[20] Lim YJ. Development and psychometric properties of the Social Network Site Use Motives Scale–Revised. Psychiatry and Clinical Psychopharmacology. 2023; 33: 309–315. https://doi.org/10.5152/pcp.2023.23691.

[21] Cooper ML. Motivations for alcohol use among adolescents: Development and validation of a four-factor model. Psychological Assessment. 1994; 6: 117–128. https://doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.6.2.117.

[22] Kim SJ, Lim YJ. Peer pressure and SNS addiction in adolescents: The mediating role of SNS-use motives. Canadian Journal of School Psychology. 2021; 36: 23–33. https://doi.org/10.1177/082957352096327.

[23] Süral İ, Griffiths MD, Kircaburun K, Emirtekin E. Trait emotional intelligence and problematic social media use among adults: The mediating role of social media use motives. International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction. 2019; 17: 336–345. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-018-0022-6.

[24] Meyer TD. The Hypomanic Personality Scale, the Big Five, and their relationship to depression and mania. Personality and Individual Differences. 2002; 32: 649–660. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(01)00067-8.

[25] Oh J, Park H, Ebesutani C, Choi S. The validation study of the Hypomanic Personality Scale for use in Korea. Korean Journal of Stress Research. 2018; 26: 7–17. https://doi.org/10.17547/kjsr.2018.26.1.7.

[26] Bentall RP, Myin-Germeys I, Smith A, Knowles R, Jones SH, Smith T, *et al*. Hypomanic personality, stability of self-esteem and response styles to negative mood. Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy. 2011; 18: 397–410. https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.780.

[27] Durbin CE, Schalet BD, Hayden EP, Simpson J, Jordan PL. Hypomanic personality traits: A multi-method exploration of their association with normal and abnormal dimensions of personality. Journal of Research in Personality. 2009; 43: 898–905. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2009.04.010.

[28] Preacher KJ, Hayes AF. Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. Behavior Research Methods. 2008; 40: 879–891. https://doi.org/10.3758/BRM.40.3.879.

[29] Kim YA, Oh KJ. Psychological characteristics of hypomanic tendency as a risk factor for bipolar disorder. Korean Journal of Clinical Psychology. 1996; 15: 103–115.

[30] Schalet BD, Durbin CE, Revelle W. Multidimensional structure of the Hypomanic Personality Scale. Psychological Assessment. 2011; 23: 504–522. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022301.

[31] Jung SY, Kim JN. Development and validation of the SNS Addiction Proneness Scale for college students. Korean Journal of Health Psychology. 2014; 19: 147–166. https://doi.org/10.17315/kjhp.2014.19.1.008.

[32] Nunnally JC, Bernstein IH. Psychometric Theory. 3rd edn. McGraw-Hill: New York. 1994.

[33] Hair JF Jr, Black WC, Babin BJ, Anderson RE. Multivariate Data Analysis. 7th edn. Pearson Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ. 2010.

[34] Hayes AF. Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach. 2nd edn. Guilford Press: New York. 2018.

[35] Podsakoff PM, Organ DW. Self-reports in organizational research: Problems and prospects. Journal of Management. 1986; 12: 531–544. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206386012004.

© 2026 The Author(s). This is an open access article under the CC BY 4.0 license.