

Abstract

This doctoral thesis addresses the individual determinants of problematic social networking sites use, focusing on the role of personality factors. According to the theoretical models of specific Internet-use disorders, a person-related vulnerability and related to it motivational and emotional factors interact with an online environment and may contribute to the development of the problematic use of specific applications. Previous studies have emphasized the role of narcissism as the essential personality-related risk factor of problematic social networking sites use. However, most research has focused on a broad conceptualization of narcissism, neglecting its complexity. Moreover, the self-regulatory behaviors of individuals with high levels of narcissism can be explained by two self-motives, i.e., self-enhancement and self-protection. Therefore, the main aim of this project was to investigate the role of personality-related determinants of the problematic social networking sites use, with a particular focus on narcissism and its specific aspects. Further, a side aim of the project was to verify the robustness of the measurement of the explained construct. Therefore, this project also validates the scales measuring problematic social networking sites use and investigates the associations between problematic social networking sites use with psychosocial functioning and well-being. The doctoral thesis is based on seven studies conducted on samples of $N = 5698$ social networking site users, published in five articles. The results indicate that the scales used to measure problematic social networking sites have good psychometric properties necessary to conduct quantitative research. Problematic social networking sites use was also positively associated with stress and negatively related to well-being, confirming the good criterion validity of those scales. Furthermore, the results primarily indicate the negative relationships between problematic social networking sites use, emotional stability, and conscientiousness, which is congruent with previous studies. Additionally, problematic social networking sites use was associated with low self-esteem, low self-efficacy, higher loneliness, and higher social anxiety. 7 Notably, the presented study results indicated that both self-enhancement-based and self-protection-based aspects of narcissism might contribute to the problematic social networking sites use. Therefore, this doctoral project integrated the two hypotheses on the development of problematic social networking use, i.e., the path associated with the self-enhancement motive (the reward-driven hypothesis) and the path associated with the self-protection motive (the fear-driven/compensation-seeking hypothesis). Moreover, in terms of narcissism (especially for those aspects of narcissism based on self-protection motive), the mechanism of engaging in problematic social networking sites use is primarily based on escapism, searching for relief from negative emotions, and compensation for difficulties experienced offline. Therefore, this project puts the addiction perspective into emphasis. Lastly, by highlighting the possible mechanisms which stand behind the relationships between particular aspects of narcissism and related to this trait self-motives that were linked to the problematic social networking sites use, this project contributes to a better understanding of the psychological background of problematic online behaviors. Keywords: problematic social networking sites use, personality, narcissism, self-enhancement, self-protection, behavioral addiction