

## Abstract

Aim of the research: Social media is one of the most important socializing environments for teenagers, providing them with models of values, attitudes, and behaviour. The aim of the research presented in the doctoral thesis was to examine the relationship between social media use (analysed as an intensity and functions of use) and youth materialism/activism with self-esteem as a moderator of these relationships. Gender differences were also analysed. Participants: A total of 1,342 teenagers aged 13-16 ( $M = 14.50$ ;  $SD = 1.16$ ) participated in the study, including 779 girls (58%) and 559 boys (42%). Procedure: The first three studies (1:  $N = 111$ , 2:  $N = 200$ , 3:  $N = 343$ ) involved the development of a tool to measure preferred social media functions among adolescents. The next three studies were used to verify the hypotheses. In a correlational study ( $N = 303$ ), participants completed a set of questionnaires to measure social media use, materialism, activism, and self-esteem. In experimental studies (1:  $N = 235$ ; 2:  $N = 150$ ), participants in a specially designed online environment resembling social media performed tasks aimed at situationally priming social media functions. Results: The analysis confirmed some of the adopted assumptions. A correlational study found that (1) exposure to social media is associated with teenagers' materialism but not activism; (2) expressive use is positively associated with both materialism and activism, while exploratory use is negatively associated with materialism and positively with adolescent activism. The experimental studies revealed gender differences: (1) prolonged exposure to an environment resembling social media causes an increase in materialism in girls, (2) situational activation of the expressive function causes an increase in materialism, and the hedonic function – a decrease in activism in boys. The results also indicate that self-esteem – concerning the use of social media – is probably neither a resource that protects against materialism nor mobilizes for activism. Keywords: social media, materialism, activism, self-esteem, teenagers