

Passion for Online Social Networking and Internet Addiction: Testing a Dual Theory Conceptual Framework

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Introduction. The Internet is one of the most important forms of media, which is revolutionizing human behavior, with people spending more and more time online—studying, learning, communicating, creating, and entertaining themselves (Wallace, 2014). In fact, some (e.g., Hoffman, Novak, & Venkatesh, 2004) have proposed that Internet has become indispensable to one's self-identity. Consequently, Internet and addiction are on the rise. In this study, we focused on one specific type of Internet addiction, namely online social networking and its influence on Internet addiction. Furthermore, the aforementioned relationship is explored by proposing a research model using two theories—the *Dualistic Model of Passion* (Vallerand, 2015) and the *Self-Determination Theory* (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Background. Per the Dualistic Model of Passion, there are two types of passion towards an activity—*harmonious* and *obsessive*. Harmonious passion leads to positive experiences (e.g., expanded cognitive repertoire) and facilitates psychological well-being and personal growth (Vallerand, 2015). On the other hand, obsessive passion leads to negative experiences (e.g., depression) and impedes psychological well-being and personal growth (Vallerand, 2015). It is posited that these passions towards online social networking are related to Internet addiction, which has been linked to a host of negative problems (see Young & de Abreu, 2011). Additionally, according to the Self-Determination Theory (an orgasmic approach, Ryan & Deci, 2000), humans have three [universal] basic psychological needs (BPN)—autonomy (A, a sense of personal initiative), competence (C, to interact effectively with the environment), and relatedness (R, to feel connected to others)—which form the motives for engagement in various human activities. Meeting one's BPN has been related to positive outcomes in life in general. Based on existing research (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vallerand, 2015), it is posited that passion for online social networking is related to Internet addiction, and this relationship is linked to A, C, and R needs. However, the role of BPN vary as a function of passion typology.

Hypotheses. In total, based on the proposed research model, 11 hypotheses have been proposed. The proposed hypotheses follow:

H1: Harmonious passion is positively related to: A (*H1a*); C (*H1b*); and R (*H1c*).

H2: Obsessive passion is negatively related to: A (*H2a*); C (*H2b*); and R (*H2c*).

H3: A (*H3a*), C (*H3b*), and R (*H3c*) are negatively related to Internet addiction.

H4: Harmonious passion is negatively related to Internet addiction.

H5: Obsessive passion is positively related to Internet addiction.

Methods. Data were collected through an online survey administered by a survey sampling company. The online survey consisted of 7-point Likert-type scales measuring: internet addiction (Caplan, 2002) (scale items adapted in social networking site context), harmonious and obsessive passion (Tosum & Lajunen, 2009), autonomy (Blais, Vallerand, & Lachance, 1990), competence (Losier, Vallerand, & Blais, 1993), and relatedness (Richer & Vallerand, 1996). Demographic items were also included in the survey. SPSS 22.0 was used to perform descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, whereas Mplus 7.0 was used to run the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypotheses *H1-H5*.

Results. A total of 312 useable complete responses were collected. Majority of the respondents were female (71%), white (82%), with household income less than \$50K (58%), and spent more than 3 hours on internet/day (51%). Cronbach's α for all constructs ranged from .89 to .98 demonstrating the required internal consistency. Because the constructs had numerous items, parceling technique (Bandalos, 2002) was used. Measurement model was tested through SEM. The measurement model with parceled items resulted in an acceptable model fit ($\chi^2 = 241.26$, $df = 75$, $p < .001$; CFI = .97; RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .03). Subsequent structural model resulted in an acceptable fit as well ($\chi^2 = 249.50$, $df = 76$, $p < .001$; CFI = .97; RMSEA = .09; SRMR = .04). SEM results showed that all the hypotheses were supported except *H1b*, *H3a*, and *H4*. Harmonious passion was positively related to autonomy ($\beta = .265$, $p = .005$) and relatedness ($\beta = .255$, $p = .006$). Obsessive passion was negatively related to autonomy ($\beta = -.363$, $p = .000$), competence ($\beta = -.304$, $p = .001$), and relatedness ($\beta = -.233$, $p = .010$). Competence ($\beta = -.11$, $p = .002$) and relatedness ($\beta = -.092$, $p = .008$) were negatively related to the internet addiction. Obsessive passion ($\beta = .64$, $p = .000$) was positively related to the internet addiction. In total, the proposed research model explained 86% of the variance ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion. The present study has theoretical as well as practical implications. For example, this is the first study to investigate Internet addiction using the dual theory framework. The proposed model explained 86% of variance in the terminal construct, which demonstrates that it is a solid research model. We strongly encourage future studies to investigate other dark side consumer phenomenon such as compulsive buying. As far as practical implications are concerned, the findings of the present study has important reasons to find solutions for the new research area of behavioral addictions (e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy, CBT).

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