Perfectionistic Self-Presentation and Smartphone Addiction: The Role of Instagram Use Motives and Behaviours

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This study investigates the link between the perfectionistic self-presentation and smartphone addiction, with a particular focus on the driving motives and behavioural patterns associated with Instagram use. Engaging a sample of 313 individuals, predominantly female (58.5%), aged 18 to 39 (M = 23.67; SD = 4.77), we meticulously examined the factors that might underpin this dynamic. The following scales were used as measures: the Perfectionistic Self-Presentation Scale, the Motives for Instagram Use Scale, the Instagram Usage Questionnaire, and the Smartphone Addiction Short Scale. The path analysis results revealed a correlation between the perfectionistic self-presentation and smartphone addiction. It was also confirmed that perfectionistic self-presentation was associated with increased motives for Instagram use, which were further linked to Instagram usage habits, ultimately leading to higher levels of smartphone addiction. All motives were found to be connected to the need for perfectionistic self-presentation, with different motives underpinning active or passive use of social networks and subsequent potential addiction. Interpreted through the lens of the Perfectionistic Social Exclusion Model and the Uses and Gratifications Theory, our results offer richer understanding of how social media can fulfil perfectionistic tendencies and contribute to addictive behaviours. The study emphasizes the need for a multidimensional approach to examining the social media's psychological impact, proposing a bridge between individual predispositions and broader social phenomena. These insights not only contribute to academic discourse, but also have implications for mental health practitioners and policy makers concerned with the growing intersection of social media use and psychological well-being.

Keywords: perfectionistic self-presentation, smartphone addiction, Instagram, motivation for social media use

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Introduction

The pervasive influence of social media on modern life (Internet World Stats, 2022) underscores a complex interplay between psychological needs and digital interaction, a nexus that has sparked considerable academic inquiry (Seidman, 2013). The rise in social media engagement not only reflects changing communication patterns, but also highlights the evolving nature of social connectivity and community building in the digital age (Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2000). This study delves into the motivations that underpin social media use, particularly focusing on the psychological construct of perfectionistic self-presentation and its potential to foster smartphone addiction. The emergence of platforms like Instagram, with their emphasis on visual content, offers a unique environment for individuals to engage in self-promotion and validation-seeking behaviours. By examining the motives that drive Instagram use and their subsequent impact on behavioural patterns, this study seeks to provide insights into the broader implications of social media on psychological well-being and addiction, thus addressing a gap in the current literature and responding to the pressing need for a multidimensional exploration of social media's psychosocial effects.

The Motives for Using Instagram

Instagram has been the most popular social network among young adults in recent years (Internet World Stats, 2022). Unlike other social networks, which were previously focused on building and maintaining relationships, Instagram focuses on self-promotional behaviours (Hu et al., 2014). According to Yurdagül and colleagues (2019), the nature of Instagram that distinguishes it from other social networks is primarily determined by the emphasis on the photos and videos that are uploaded. This distinction is highlighted even more by the popularity of newer functions such as short videos (Ryan & Linehan, 2022) that are temporarily published on the profile (so-called stories and reels). Recent findings (Lin, 2022; Reimann et al., 2023; Roberts & David, 2023) suggest that Instagram serves as a platform not only for personal expression, but also as a means for users to navigate their social environments, seeking out the content that aligns with their personal interests and aspirations.

Building upon the foundational work of Hu et al. (2014), the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) offers a framework for exploring the psychological motivations behind Instagram usage. This theory, as articulated by Blumler and Katz (1974), posits that media consumption serves to fulfil individual desires and needs. The UGT proposes that people choose to consume certain kinds of media because they expect to obtain specific gratifications as a result of those selections. Within the context of Instagram,

GOLJOVIĆ N.: PERFECTIONISTIC SELF-PRESENTATION AND SMARTPHONE ADDICTION: THE ROLE OF INSTAGRAM USE MOTIVES AND BEHAVIOURS

31

these needs can include seeking validation, escapism, or fostering social connections (Phua et al., 2017). The relevance of the UGT to this research lies in its ability to dissect the multifaceted motivations for Instagram use, particularly the ways in which individuals seek to project an idealized version of themselves, connect with others, and escape from daily stresses.

The pursuit of validation on Instagram can often involve meticulous crafting of a public persona that aligns with one's ideal self (Smith, 2021). This is especially relevant given the platform's visual nature, where images and videos serve as a conduit for self-expression. Escapism, on the other hand, is facilitated through the immersive experience of stories and reels, offering a temporary respite from one's daily life (Kocak et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Finally, the need for social connection is catered to by Instagram's interactive features, which allow for instant feedback and engagement, fostering a sense of belonging and community (Boursier & Manna, 2018; Diefenbach & Anders, 2022).

Sheldon and Bryant (2016) identified the primary motivations for Instagram use among students, offering a comprehensive categorization of the prevalent behaviours. The focus of this paper will remain on their study due to its extensive scope and its targeted relevance to the age group that is also the focus of the current research. The study by Sheldon and Bryant (2016) pinpointed the key drivers behind engagement on Instagram: monitoring the activities of other users, reporting events in their lives to others, expressing and demonstrating their creativity, and increasing their popularity. Understanding these core motivations for using Instagram sets the stage for exploring how these needs translate into specific user behaviours. These motivations do not exist in isolation; rather, they are intricately woven into the fabric of user interactions on the platform. The transition from motivation to action is mediated by the platform's affordances, enabling the users to engage in a spectrum of activities that range from active content creation to passive consumption.

These behaviours, as delineated by the Dual-Factor Model of Social Media Use, vary from active content creation to passive consumption (Song et al., 2004). Active behaviours on Instagram, such as posting high-quality photos or stories – known as broadcasting – often fulfil self-promotional motives. This reflects an individual's desire for external validation and a carefully crafted self-image, as described by Toma and Hancock (2013). On the other hand, passive behaviours, encompassing the communication-oriented use of Instagram, such as commenting on posts or messaging, cater to an intrinsic need for social connection, allowing the users to foster and maintain relationships (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). These behaviours are driven by the inherent human need to belong and to feel connected to a community, which is particularly pronounced in online social networks (Baumeister & Leary,

1995). Based on the model presented, Underwood et al. (2011) explicitly discuss the theoretical dichotomy of 'broadcasting' versus 'communicating', rooted in the active and passive use of social networks.

Exploring the core motivations for using Instagram reveals how these can lead to specific behaviours that, if excessively indulged, may mirror patterns akin to addiction. This progression underscores the potential shift from regular to compulsive use, particularly when the platform's use is persistently aimed at fulfilling unregulated psychological needs. Recognizing this dynamic is crucial, as it highlights the nuanced trajectory from habitual engagement to possible dependency scenarios, warranting careful consideration in the context of smartphone addiction discussions.

Understanding the main reasons why people use Instagram, like seeking approval, escaping reality, or connecting with others, is crucial for identifying how they interact with the platform, from sharing creative content to simply browsing. When these motivations lead to consistent and heavy use, there's a risk that normal engagement might turn into excessive use. This intensification of use could subtly indicate a potential slide towards behaviours associated with smartphone addiction (Andreassen, 2015).

Smartphone Addiction

While smartphones introduced another means for communication, staying in touch, and general connectivity, they have also ushered in an increase in usage, accompanied by a rise in negative outcomes and problematic user behaviours. Smartphones embody a "technological paradox", offering liberation by enhancing connectivity and access to information, while also potentially fostering increased dependency and contributing to adverse effects on social interactions and mental health (Alhadad et al., 2022). Smartphones have a high addictive potential (Jeong et al., 2016), with device addiction referring to the compulsive use of the phone itself, often manifested by constant checking and anxiety when separated from the device. In contrast, application/content addiction is specific to the overuse of particular apps or media consumed on the phone (Barnes et al., 2018; De-Sola Gutiérrez et al., 2016).

Song and colleagues (2004) classified Internet use into two categories: process use and social use. Van Deursen and colleagues (2015) extended this classification to smartphone use. The use of smartphones for content-based media consumption, internet browsing, and multimedia content such as photos, videos, and the like are referred to as the process use in this case. Social use refers to social networking and the exchange of instant messages to maintain contact with others. Using this model as a theoretical foundation, research results show that problematic smartphone use is related to the process use, but not the social use (Elhai et al., 2017; Van Deursen

GOLJOVIĆ N.: PERFECTIONISTIC SELF-PRESENTATION AND SMARTPHONE ADDICTION:
THE ROLE OF INSTAGRAM USE MOTIVES AND BEHAVIOURS

33

et al., 2015), whereas another study finds that problematic smartphone use is related to the social use but not the procedural use (Lopez-Fernandez et al., 2014; Zhitomirsky-Geffet & Blau, 2016). The study by Van Deursen et al. (2015) suggests that problematic use is more associated with process-oriented interactions, such as habitual checking or gaming, rather than social connectivity. In contrast, Zhitomirsky-Geffet & Blau (2016) find its association with the social use, implying that over-engagement in social apps or networking sites is the key concern. This variation highlights the complexity of smartphone addiction, suggesting that the underlying cause of problematic use can differ significantly based on personal motivations and the specific needs that smartphone use satisfies. In their study, based on the dual classification of Song et al. (2004), they concluded that if people showed addiction to the Internet because it satisfied their social needs, they were more likely to develop smartphone addiction (Elhai et al., 2017; Rozgonjuk & Elhai, 2021). According to the studies of problematic smartphone users, social use is far more prevalent than the process use (Lee et al., 2014; Lopez-Fernandez et al., 2014).

The gratifications obtained from social interactions, such as sharing, liking, and commenting, can foster dependency that makes disengagement from the smartphone challenging (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). Furthermore, when these platforms are used for impression management, the continuous crafting of an online self can become a compulsive behaviour, reinforcing the smartphone's indispensability to maintain one's social presence (Hou et al., 2019). This dependency is heightened by the variable reward structures inherent in social media, where intermittent likes and comments can drive compulsive checking behaviours akin to gambling addictions (Turel et al., 2018), thus further entrenching the smartphone's role in users' daily lives.

Behaviour on social media and the excessive use of the internet and smartphones are sometimes driven by deep-seated personal needs. The compelling urge for self-presentation, where individuals are inclined to showcase themselves in an idealized, flawless manner, could be among these needs. This inclination reflects a broader psychological dynamic, where the quest for perfection in how one is perceived becomes a significant motivator behind their digital interactions.

Perfectionistic Self-Presentation

Perfectionistic self-presentation (PSP) was first identified by Hewitt et al. (2003). It is based on the idea that perfectionism and the ideal self are inextricably linked (Hewitt & Genest, 1990). Perfectionism is commonly associated with the desire to be perfect; however, some studies link perfectionism to the desire to appear perfect to others (Hewitt et al., 1991). According to Hobden and Pliner (1995), perfectionists with a high level of

socially prescribed perfectionism use various self-presentation strategies to manage the impression of others more successfully. Socially prescribed perfectionism refers to the pressure individuals feel to meet high standards perceived as being imposed by others, often leading them to strive relentlessly for perfection to gain approval and avoid criticism. The need to portray oneself perfectly, according to Hewitt et al. (1991), is a specific neurotic form of perfectionism, i.e. perfectionistic self-presentation. They define it as the need to present an impeccable image of oneself to others in public.

The three facets of PSP, as delineated by Hewitt et al. (2003), encompass self-promotion, the assertive display of one's perceived strengths; non-display of imperfection, the deliberate avoidance of revealing flaws; and non-disclosure of imperfections, the intentional withholding of one's mistakes or flaws. These dimensions represent a spectrum of behaviours, from the active exhibition of an idealized self to the passive concealment of imperfections, reflecting a strategic management of personal image. The differentiation is crucial as it aligns with Weisinger and Lobsenz's (1981) observations that co-expressive perfectionists (suggesting acting in conjunction with others in social interactions), who fear negative judgment, may engage in such behaviours to avoid interpersonal rejection.

By integrating the principles from the cognitive-behavioural theories and attachment research, the Perfectionism Social Disconnection Model (SDM) provides valuable insights into the mechanisms through which perfectionism exacerbates social disconnection, offering nuanced understanding of how individual and social factors interact in order to influence psychological well-being. The SDM, as proposed by Hewitt et al. (2006), highlights the ways in which individuals with high levels of perfectionism often feel unaccepted, disconnected, and constantly falling short of others' expectations, leading to significant interpersonal dysfunction and perceived social disconnection. The SDM articulates how the drive for perfection, often seen as a strategy to gain social acceptance, paradoxically leads to greater isolation, creating a vicious cycle that perpetuates the feelings of disconnection (Stoeber, 2012). The SDM suggests that the cycle of perfectionism and social disconnection is manifested through both the subjective feelings of detachment and objective struggles in maintaining relationships, indicating a profound link between perfectionism and diminished social support (Sherry et al., 2008).

The Internet, and, by extension, social media platforms accessible via smartphones, could offer a compensatory space where some individuals can forge virtual connections that may be lacking in their offline lives (Valkenburg & Peter, 2009). Smartphones enhance this dynamic, providing tools for users to manage their impressions and curate their online presence with greater ease and reach (Walther, 2007). This digital environment allows individuals to present a selective, often idealized version of themselves, concealing perceived flaws and fostering an illusion of perfection (Toma & Hancock, 2013). As

GOLJOVIĆ N.: PERFECTIONISTIC SELF-PRESENTATION AND SMARTPHONE ADDICTION:
THE ROLE OF INSTAGRAM USE MOTIVES AND BEHAVIOURS

35

a result, the constant feedback loop from virtual audiences can validate these online selves, potentially leading to an overreliance on these digital platforms for social acceptance, and, in turn, contributing to an increased risk of smartphone addiction (Elhai et al., 2017). Recent studies indicate a correlation between PSP on social media and heightened smartphone use, suggesting a mediating role of social media in the relationship between perfectionistic tendencies and smartphone addiction (Lee et al., 2014).

The Focus of the Study

This study posits that perfectionist self-presentation – the deliberate portrayal of a flawless self to others – may intensify engagement on social media platforms like Instagram, which, given the mobile-centric nature of such platforms, naturally translates into heightened smartphone usage. Smartphones are the primary access points for social media, not just because of convenience but also due to their personal, always-available nature, which intertwines social media habits with other daily activities, potentially amplifying the frequency and intensity of usage. Furthermore, the mobile-specific functionalities of platforms such as Instagram, which are optimized for spontaneous, frequent engagement, encourage users to interact with these platforms more regularly, thus naturally leading to increased smartphone use. This association is based on the Perfectionistic Social Disconnection Model (SDM), which posits that a higher level of perfectionistic traits could lead towards social media to alleviate the feelings of social isolation and make connections in a virtual space where imperfections can be easily concealed (Hewitt et al., 2006). Instagram offers individuals various opportunities to socialize and satisfy different needs. These needs are particularly pronounced in a perfectionistic population, which may turn to Instagram's curated environment to seek approval and mitigate the feelings of social exclusion (Flett & Hewitt, 2006; Hewitt et al., 2017). In line with the UGT theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974), this study examines how Instagram functions to fulfil a range of motives and needs – from social interaction to self-expression – and how these motives manifest in different behaviours on this social network (e.g., communicating or sharing content, direct self-expression). The theory is that users are attracted to Instagram not just as passive consumers, but as active proponents of satisfying their intrinsic needs for social integration, creative expression and escapism. It is therefore assumed that various motives can be fulfilled through different online behaviours, which may not necessarily entail active engagement.

The objective of this study is to explore and elucidate the relationships between perfectionistic self-presentation, motives and behaviours of Instagram use, and smartphone addiction. The research aims to dissect the intricate web of relations that underlie the use of Instagram and its

psychological implications, grounding the analysis within the framework of the Perfectionistic Social Exclusion Model (PSEM) and the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory. By examining this dynamics, the study seeks to contribute to deeper understanding of how digital self-presentation and social media engagement influence, and are influenced by, psychological patterns and potential addictive behaviours.

Considering the partially exploratory nature of this research, the primary objective is to explore the correlation and employ path analysis to examine the relationship between perfectionist self-presentation and smartphone addiction, through the lens of Instagram use motives and behaviours.
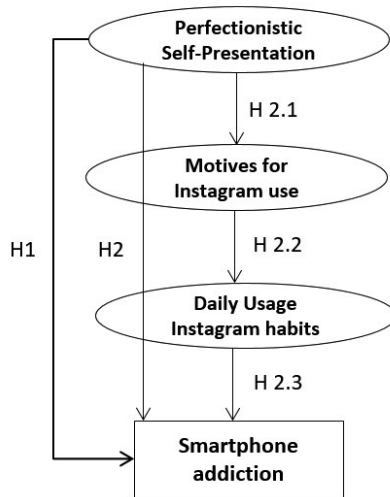

Figure 1
Graphic representation of the hypotheses and the assumed model

H1: Perfectionistic self-presentation is positively associated with smartphone addiction.

H2: Perfectionistic self-presentation is associated with increased motives for Instagram use, which are further associated with the daily usage Instagram habits, ultimately leading to higher levels of smartphone addiction.

H2.1: Perfectionistic self-presentation is positively associated with all motives for using Instagram (social interaction, surveillance, self-promotion, creativity, escapism). This hypothesis posits that individuals with higher levels of perfectionistic self-presentation are more likely to engage with Instagram to fulfil these varied motives, driven by the desire to portray an idealized self-image across social contexts.

GOLJOVIĆ N.: PERFECTIONISTIC SELF-PRESENTATION AND SMARTPHONE ADDICTION: THE ROLE OF INSTAGRAM USE MOTIVES AND BEHAVIOURS

37

H2.2: The motives for using Instagram are positively associated with the daily usage Instagram habits (broadcast, communication). It is hypothesized that the motives that represent self-promoting and creativity are more closely associated with broadcasting behaviours, reflecting a desire for external validation and self-image crafting, while the motives that include social interaction and escapism are expected to predict communication behaviours, fulfilling the users' needs for social connectivity and psychological escape.

H2.3: The daily usage Instagram habits are positively associated with smartphone addiction. This suggests that higher engagement in these specific Instagram activities, driven by their respective motives, is linked to an increased risk of smartphone addiction, reflecting a dependency on the platform for fulfilling social and personal needs.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The sample consisted of 313 respondents (58.5% female), aged 18 to 39 (M=23.67; SD=4.77). It comprised mainly undergraduate and master's students who were not employed at the time (70.9%), and employees (21.7%). Only 3.8% of the respondents had not completed high education. A total of 59.7% of respondents came from urban areas, 18.2% from rural areas, and 22% from small towns. All respondents (100%) had Instagram accounts, and, in addition to this platform, 99% also had a Facebook account, 21.4% LinkedIn, 36.7% X (only 12.8% actively used it), and 31.3% had Snapchat (only 2.9% actively used it).

The sample for the study was constructed using a convenient sampling method. The questionnaire was disseminated online via Google Forms and distributed through social networks, primarily Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, employing a snowballing technique to enhance reach. Data were collected during August and September 2022. All respondents had to agree to the informed consent before filling out the questionnaire.

Measures

Perfectionistic Self-Presentation Scale (*PSPS*; Hewitt et al., 2003). It consists of 27 items that measure an individual's need to present as perfect. PSPS has three subscales: Self-promotion (the need to present ourselves as perfect to others), Non-Display of imperfection (the need to avoid the situations in which others perceive us as imperfect), and Non-disclosure of imperfection (the need to avoid admitting imperfection to others). Participants provided answers on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = I do not agree

at all; 7 = I completely agree). In the research of Hewitt and colleagues (Hewitt et al., 2003), good internal consistency coefficients were obtained in the calculation of reliability, ranging from .81 to .88. For the purposes of this study, the scale was translated into Serbian using the back-translation method (Hedrih, 2019). The results of the CFA indicated that the scale had acceptable fit indices: $\chi^2(304) = 540.879$; $p <.001$; CFI = .90; RMSEA = .05 (90% CI = .05, .49), and SRMR = .06. The inclusion of correlations among residuals was based on the theoretical considerations and empirical observations of lexical similarities, aiming to more accurately reflect the construct's complex nature.

Motives for Instagram Use Scale. (*MIU*; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). The scale was created on the basis of a focus group, where the authors empirically validated the construct and established the dimensions in later studies (Sheldon & Newman, 2019). The questionnaire consists of 26 items (2 items removed due to low loading and low reliability). The scale comprises five subscales: Social Interaction (i.e. "To depict my life through photos"), Surveillance/knowledge about others (i.e. "To see what other people share"), Self-promotion (i.e. "To become popular"), Creativity (i.e. "To show off my photography skills") and Escapism (i.e. "To escape from reality"). Participants provided answers on a 7-point Likert scale (1 – do not agree at all; 7 – completely agree). The scales showed satisfactory psychometric characteristics in previous research, and the reliability of the initial research (Sheldon & Newman, 2019) ranged from .65 to .77. For the purposes of this study, the scale was translated into Serbian using the back-translation method (Hedrih, 2019). The results of the CFA indicated that the scale had acceptable fit indices: $\chi^2(256) = 668.355$; $p <.001$; CFI = .88; RMSEA = .07 (90% CI = .08, .12), and SRMR = .08.

Instagram Usage Questionnaire. The construction of the questionnaire was informed by a detailed examination of various behaviours possible on the social network Instagram, with the intent to explore the applicability of the Dual-Factor Model of Social Media Use theory to these behaviours. This approach was guided by a synthesis of the literature review and previous research findings, ensuring that the questionnaire comprehensively covered the spectrum of daily Instagram usage behaviours. Construct validity and a detailed presentation of the questionnaire are provided in the results section for a thorough understanding of its grounding and application. The first part asked the respondents for pieces of information on the number of people they interacted with and the number of photos they published online. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of additional questions that examined how often they interacted with others, used the specific functions, observed or published a certain type of content. The answers were given on a five-point Likert scale (1 – never; 5 – daily). Each score was first standardized by translating it to the Z scale, and the new scores were later treated equally.

GOLJOVIĆ N.: PERFECTIONISTIC SELF-PRESENTATION AND SMARTPHONE ADDICTION:
THE ROLE OF INSTAGRAM USE MOTIVES AND BEHAVIOURS

39

Smartphone Addiction Short Scale (*SAS-SV*; Kwon, et al., 2013). The short scale was obtained by adapting the original scale into Spanish and French (Lopez-Fernandez, 2017). It consists of 10 items, and it is a one-dimensional measure. It measures the problematic use of smartphones, labelled as addiction, and was developed on the basis of the Internet addiction scale. Answers were given on a five-point Likert scale (1 – do not agree at all; 5 – completely agree). In previous research (Lopez-Fernandez, 2017), the scale showed excellent results when it came to the measure of reliability – above .90. For the purposes of this study, the scale was translated into Serbian using the back-translation method (Hedrih, 2019). The results of the CFA indicated that the scale had very good fit indices: $\chi^2(32) = 82.993$; $p < .001$; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .07 (90% CI = .09, .26), and SRMR = .05.

Results

In order to examine the frequency of using the Instagram features, the latent structure of this instrument was examined. The recommended number of factors based on Horn's parallel criterion, in the program FACTOR (Timmerman & Lorenzo-Seva, 2011), indicated two factors. The EFA was conducted to explore the latent dimensions (see Table 2).

Table 2
Instagram Usage Questionnaire: Exploratory factor analysis

	M	*SD*	Eigenvalue	Variance	Loading
Active use – Broadcast			4.26	32.75	
Followers – number	445.01	408.46			.81
Following – number	374.56	268.53			.75
Posting a story	2.78	1.13			.70
Being followed by someone	3.27	1.03			.67
Posts – number	128.62	163.18			.63
Posting photos and videos	2.61	.86			.48
Following someone	2.88	0.83			.35
Passive use – Communication			1.60	12.28	
Watching a story	4.17	1.14			.77
Watching photo and video posts	4.32	.97			.72
Using direct messages (DM)	3.47	1.25			.64
Scrolling through explore pages	3.32	1.45			.62
Watching Live	1.51	.72			.55
Watching IGTV	1.46	.81			.42

Two isolated factors were named: Active use – Broadcasting and Passive use – Communication. Factor names were assigned based on an analogy with a similar study (Underwood, Kerlin & Farrington-Flint, 2011), proposed by the Dual-Factor Model of Social Media Use.

Table 3

Intercorrelations, descriptives and reliability

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	M (SD)	α
Self-promotion (PSP)	-										2.55 (.70)	.81
Non-display of imperfection	.49**	-									2.54 (.71)	.76
Non-disclosure of imperfection	.33**	.42**	-								2.41 (.67)	.69
Social Interaction	.25**	.17**	-.08	-							3.13 (.92)	.89
Surveillance	.23**	.30**	.11	.51**	-						2.92 (.78)	.75
Self-promotion	.29**	.17**	.04	.38**	.32**	-					1.47 (.70)	.75
Creativity	.05	.04	-.02	.45**	.28**	.22**	-				2.65 (1.1)	.70
Escapism	.15**	.28**	.19**	.14*	.28**	.25**	.15**	-			1.61 (.92)	.71
Broadcast[a]	.15**	-.04	-.05	.49**	.26**	.39**	.30**	.16**	-		.00 (.68)	.55
Communication[a]	.07	.07	.06	.38**	.44**	.19**	.21**	.22**	.46**	-	.00 (.63)	.69
Smartphone addiction	.19**	.24**	.11	.23**	.31**	.26**	.10	.38**	.33**	.35**	2.23 (.75)	.81

[a] Standardized scores were used.

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

Table 3 shows the results of the correlation analysis for all variables used in the research. The highest correlation coefficient obtained in the study was below the limit of .70, so we concluded that, in this case, there was no basis for considering the problem with multicollinearity. The reliability of the tested instruments ranged from good to excellent according to the Cronbach alpha coefficient of internal consistency. The obtained correlations showed that there was a positive connection of mostly low intensity between the variables, along with the fact that there was no connection between the Non-disclosure of imperfection and almost all motives for using Instagram (except Escapism), as with Smartphone Addiction. Also, both the motive Creativity and the Communication dimension did not correlate significantly with the PSP variables.

The hypotheses testing via path analysis between the variables was carried out in the AMOS software, using the Maximum Likelihood estimation method. In the model, a single latent variable was employed to represent the three dimensions of PSP, thus offering a more integrated and theoretically cohesive approach, allowing for the complex nature of the PSP to be captured holistically, enhancing the interpretability of its influence within the structural model, both with improving the statistical power of the tested model. The results are shown in Figure 2.
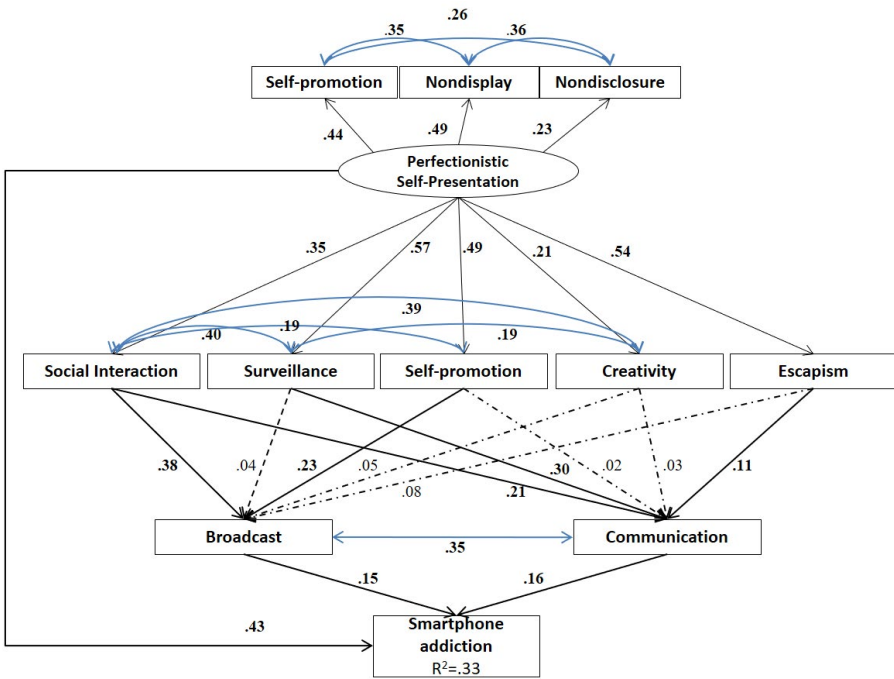
Figure 2

Instagram motives and usage in the relationship between the dimensions of Perfectionistic Self-Presentation and Smartphone Addiction

* Non-significant connections are shown with a dashed line.

** The blue lines indicate correlations between residuals.

The obtained results from testing the fit of a causal structure of the conceptual model (see Fig. 1) are as follows: $\chi^2(24) = 73.7$, p <.001; χ^2/df = 1.66; CFI = .94; RMSEA = .08; (90% [CI] = .06, .10); SRMR = .05. Fig. 1 also provides the path models with coefficients and variances explained. The findings indicate a positive direct correlation between the PSP and smartphone addiction. PSP significantly predicts all identified motives for Instagram use, with Social Interaction and Self-Promotion emerging as primary predictors for the Broadcasting dimension, whereas Surveillance and Escapism are key for the Communication dimension. Creativity does not predict any daily usage Instagram habit. Both dimensions exhibit a statistically significant relationship with smartphone addiction, underscoring the multifaceted impact of Instagram engagement on addictive smartphone use. This model accounts for 33% of the variance in the criterion measure.

Discussion

Our study aimed to explore the relationships between PSP and smartphone use, specifically focusing on the ways in which PSP impacts engagement with Instagram and its subsequent influence on smartphone addiction. By analysing the motives for using Instagram and the frequency of specific in-app behaviours, we sought to understand the links of these factors with smartphone addiction. This approach allowed for a specific examination of the ways in which the PSP tendencies and Instagram interactions contributed to the broader phenomenon of smartphone addiction.

In our research, we examined the measure designed to quantify Instagram usage frequency, ensuring its alignment with theoretical expectations and extant empirical findings. As stated previously, the Dual Factor Social Media Usage model posits a dualistic approach to social network engagement, which we corroborated through our data. This approach delineates two primary behaviours: active content publication and passive content consumption and communication. Our empirical analysis confirmed the existence of these distinct behavioural modalities, resonating with the theoretical dichotomy of 'broadcasting' and 'communicating' explicated by Underwood et al. (2011). We found that 'broadcasting' behaviour on Instagram – akin to a one-to-many interaction – was most strongly related to the users' desires for self-promotion and impression management. Conversely, 'communicating' encapsulates the more intimate, reciprocal interactions that highlight collective identities, in alignment with previous research findings (e.g., Song et al., 2004; Elhai et al., 2017). The congruence between our instrument's metrics and the behaviours outlined by the Dual Factor Social Media Usage model not only validated our measurement approach, but also reinforced the model's applicability to the Instagram context. This study confirmed the questionnaire's adequate structure for exploring the interaction patterns on Instagram and their potential role in linking the PSP with increased smartphone usage, as indicated by the EFA. However, further scrutiny through CFA and evaluation of convergent validity are essential for a comprehensive validation.

Self-promotion and Non-Display of imperfection showed low positive correlations with smartphone addiction, which suggests that these facets of PSP, which involve portraying an ideal self and hiding imperfections, may subtly contribute to increased smartphone usage as individuals seek validation or avoid negative judgment on social media. This aligns with the findings of Casale and Fioravanti (2018), who noted that the desire for social approval and fear of negative evaluation on social networks could drive addictive behaviours. However, the Non-Disclosure of imperfections' lack of a significant correlation might indicate that internally motivated tendencies to conceal flaws do not have the same external manifestation in smartphone addiction, perhaps due to less direct interaction with social media dynamics.

GOLJOVIĆ N.: PERFECTIONISTIC SELF-PRESENTATION AND SMARTPHONE ADDICTION:
THE ROLE OF INSTAGRAM USE MOTIVES AND BEHAVIOURS

43

This distinction highlights the nuanced impact of different PSP dimensions on technology use, suggesting that the externalization of perfectionistic traits is more relevant to addictive patterns than internal concealment efforts. The first hypothesis of the research assumed that the dimensions of PSP had a statistically significant correlation with smartphone addiction, which was indeed confirmed by our findings, but only partially.

Our second hypothesis posited that PSP was associated with the increased scores on motives for Instagram use, which were further associated with the daily usage Instagram habits, ultimately leading to higher levels of smartphone addiction. Further exploratory hypotheses were constructed to substantiate this directional flow. The initial auxiliary hypothesis investigated whether the PSP dimensions could predict Instagram usage motives. Our findings endorsed this hypothesis, illuminating that PSP dimensions were indeed prognostic of the motives for engaging with Instagram.

Surveillance involves a vigilant monitoring of the shared content by others. Research by Whiting and Williams (2013) connected behaviours related to surveillance with the act of "spying on people", suggesting that a significant number of individuals engage in this to fulfil a deep-seated need to stay informed about others' lives. This inclination may be fuelled by the aspirations of ideal self-representation, where keeping abreast of the social media trends empowers the users to curate a more illustrious self.

Escapism, as a motivation for using Instagram, seems to be intricately linked to a desire to perfect one's outward image and mask any imperfections. Instagram thus becomes a sanctuary for the users to craft an idealized self-image, enabling self-promotion and selective disclosure that aligns with one's aspirational self.

The direct satisfaction provided by Instagram for the PSP is undeniable. It facilitates a broad outreach, fostering popularity and acknowledgment. Studies such as the one by Hu and colleagues (2014) indicate how Instagram's interface encourage self-promotional behaviour. This is further augmented by the platform's 'likes' system, described by Dumas et al. (2017), which serves as a positive feedback loop, constantly spurring users towards self-presentation. Instagram is particularly adept at fulfilling this need for recognition and validation.

The dimension of social interaction, as it relates to self-promotion on social networks, underscores the interplay between seeking visibility and the need for genuine engagement. It highlights the balance between promoting oneself and the essential role of engaging authentically with others, pointing towards a deeper understanding of social dynamics in digital environments.

Creativity emerges as the least emphasized factor, implying that the users focused on optimal self-representation might have less opportunity to express their creative flair, conforming instead to the prevailing social norms.

Nevertheless, creativity is essential for generating unique content that can distinguish one's profile from the masses, reducing the likelihood of content saturation.

Integrating these findings within the UGT theory and Perfectionistic Social Exclusion Model offers a more profound theoretical understanding. According to the UGT, media usage is propelled by the user's quest for satisfaction of specific needs, such as self-expression and social connection, which Instagram adeptly provides. The SDM elucidates how striving for a perfectionist presentation on social media might stem from an avoidance of social exclusion, with Instagram offering a platform to mitigate such fears through controlled self-representation. These theories collectively contextualize our results, illustrating a sophisticated interaction between the psychological needs of users and the rewards they seek from Instagram use. Recent research by Chen et al. (2021) substantiates this, indicating that the balance between interactive engagement and content consumption on social media platforms can reflect broader socio-psychological phenomena, further supporting the relevance of the UGT and SDM in analysing social media behaviour.

Continuing the exploration of social media behaviour, the nuanced findings of this study can be enriched by drawing parallels with the existing literature. Motivations like Social Interaction and Self-Promotion, which significantly predict the Broadcast factor, echo the findings of Dwivedi et al. (2021), who demonstrated that the visibility afforded by social media platforms directly fed into the self-promotional strategies of users, consistent with the UGT's postulation of active media use for personal gain and social connectivity. The absence of predictive power from Creativity, Escapism, and Surveillance for the Broadcast factor can be juxtaposed with the work of Zhao et al. (2016), where it was found that the self-curation facet of social media often overshadows creative expression, particularly when the ultimate goal is self-presentation rather than pure creative output.

The relationship between the Social Interaction dimension and content creation aligns with the findings by Toh and Lee (2022), who reported that the desire for social maintenance predicted content sharing behaviour. This supports the notion that users engage in content creation not just for self-promotion but also to foster social bonds, resonating with the social integrative and affective needs described in the UGT theory.

The Surveillance dimension's predictive nature regarding the Communication factor can be linked to the research by Tandon et al. (2018), which suggested that passive engagement on social platforms often satisfied the user's voyeuristic tendencies rather than active engagement needs, offering a different gratification as posited by the UGT. This passive use, aligned with Surveillance, can be indicative of the user's adaptation to the

GOLJOVIĆ N.: PERFECTIONISTIC SELF-PRESENTATION AND SMARTPHONE ADDICTION:
THE ROLE OF INSTAGRAM USE MOTIVES AND BEHAVIOURS

45

social environment, as per SDM, where observing others helps mitigate the feelings of social exclusion.

Finally, the confirmation of the third sub-hypothesis, indicating a uniform relationship between the use of Instagram's functionalities and smartphone addiction, may find support in the work of Nguyen et al. (2019). Their study suggests that the frequency of smartphone use is a platform-agnostic predictor of addiction, regardless of whether the use is for active posting or passive consumption, which might reflect a broader behavioural pattern not limited to Instagram but prevalent across various digital platforms.

The observed correlation between the PSP and smartphone addiction, analysed through path analysis, suggests that the PSP may exert influence through additional mechanisms not captured by the current model. This suggests that PSP-related behaviours, including those not directly linked to Instagram, such as broader social media activity or offline perfectionistic tendencies, may also contribute to smartphone addiction. The path analysis reveals that the PSP impacts smartphone addiction through various activities, indicating the need to consider a broader spectrum of smartphone use when examining the influence of the PSP on addictive behaviours.

Supporting this notion, a study by Turel and Serenko (2020) found that individuals often engaged with multiple social media platforms to satisfy their varied psychological needs, which can contribute to an overall greater dependency on smartphones. For example, while Instagram may cater to image crafting and immediate social feedback, other platforms like Twitter or LinkedIn might satisfy the needs for information gathering and professional networking, respectively. As such, it is plausible that the PSP influences addiction through these multifaceted social media behaviours, which are not fully captured by focusing solely on Instagram use. Therefore, while Instagram serves as a valuable context for understanding social media behaviour, it is a part of a broader ecosystem of smartphone use, where multiple platforms may interact to fulfil the perfectionistic desires of individuals, potentially leading to a cumulative effect on smartphone addiction.

The scope of the study, while informative, is limited by the sample size. A more diverse and extensive sample would enhance the generalizability of our findings. Further limitations include not examining the potential moderators, such as age and gender, which, given the sample's heterogeneity, could have significantly influenced the observed relationships. The reliability of certain scales within the study is questionable, indicating a need for improvement in future research to ensure more accurate and consistent measurements. Furthermore, considering the popularity of platforms like TikTok and Snapchat among youth, and Facebook among older adults (Pew Research Center, 2021), future research should extend beyond Instagram to capture the full spectrum of social media influence on PSP and smartphone addiction.

The cross-sectional, non-causal approach of our study provides valuable insights, but limits our ability to infer causality. Longitudinal research would be more definitive in understanding these relationships over time. Additionally, Instagram's evolving landscape, with the introduction of new features, may affect user engagement. Therefore, it is essential to continuously update research parameters to reflect these changes. A comprehensive analysis should also account for the concurrent use of multiple social networks, acknowledging that each may satisfy similar needs differently. By refining our approach to consider these factors, we could obtain a more holistic view of the intricate relationship between social media behaviours and smartphone addiction. While our study advances understanding of the dynamics within relationships, it only hints at the potential mediating mechanisms behind these interactions. Future research should explore the possibility of serial mediation within these relationships to provide deeper insights into the underlying processes.

Conclusion

In keeping with the objectives of the current research, we explored the connection between PSP and smartphone addiction, particularly through usage of the Instagram social network. Our study confirmed a significant relation between PSP and smartphone addiction, suggesting that Instagram behaviours do play a role in this addicting behaviour, implying a potential mediation role.

Theoretically, this paper makes a contribution to the discourse on the Perfectionistic Social Exclusion Model by demonstrating how social media platforms can serve as arenas for perfectionistic self-display, potentially leading to addictive behaviours. It also offers a nuanced application of the UGT theory by delineating specific user motivations in the context of Instagram, and how these gratifications relate to broader patterns of smartphone use.

On a practical level, the findings suggest that mental health practitioners should integrate awareness of the PSP's impact into therapy, focusing on the strategies to mitigate its influence on social media use. Digital platform designers, on the other hand, are encouraged to create the features that promote mindful engagement, such as usage reminders or content filters that discourage excessive comparison. Such interventions could be organized around educational programmes that enhance digital literacy, emphasizing the psychological effects of PSP, and the tools within social media platforms that help users manage their engagement and reduce the risk of addiction.

While this study comes with its limitations, we believe it builds constructively upon previous research, providing insights into a significant topic. It offers guidance and, if nothing else, may serve as a catalyst for future

researchers to broaden the context of the social networks examined. As such, the study represents a step forward in deciphering the complexities of digital social interaction and its impact on everyday life.

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49

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Perfekcionistička samoprezentacija i zavisnost od pametnih telefona: uloga motiva i ponašanja na društvenoj mreži Instagram

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Ovaj rad ispituje povezanost između perfekcionističke samoprezentacije i zavisnosti od pametnih telefona, sa posebnim fokusom na motive i obrasce ponašanja koji su povezani sa korišćenjem Instagrama. Uzorak čini 313 ispitanika, pretežno ženskog pola (58,5%), starosti od 18 do 39 godina (AS = 23,67; SD = 4,77). Kao instrumenti u istraživanju korišćeni su: skala perfekcionističke samoprezentacije, skala motiva za korišćenje Instagrama, upitnik za korišćenje Instagrama i kratka skala zavisnosti od pametnih telefona. Rezultati analize puta (eng. path analysis) potvrdili su korelaciju između perfekcionističke samoprezentacije i zavisnosti od pametnih telefona. Takođe je pokazano i to da je perfekcionistička samoprezentacija povezana sa višim skorovima motiva za korišćenje Instagrama, koji su dalje u vezi sa navikama korišćenja Instagrama, što na kraju dovodi do viših nivoa zavisnosti od pametnih telefona. Svi motivi bili su u korelaciji sa potrebom za perfekcionističkom samoprezentacijom, različitim motivima iz kojih proizilazi aktivna ili pasivna upotreba Instagrama i kasnija moguća zavisnost od pametnog telefona. Tumačeni u kontekstu modela perfekcionističke socijalne isključenosti i teorije korišćenja i zadovoljstava, rezultati studije pružaju osnovu za razumevanje načina na koji korišćenje Instagrama može zadovoljiti perfekcionističke težnje i razviti ponašanja koji su u vezi sa zavisnošću. Studija naglašava potrebu za multidimenzionalnim pristupom u ispitivanju psihološkog uticaja društvenih medija, pojašnjavajući vezu između individualnih predispozicija i širih društvenih fenomena. Ovi uvidi ne doprinose samo akademskom diskursu već imaju i implikacije za praktičare mentalnog zdravlja i donosioce politika, koji su zainteresovani za sve veći značaj uloge društvenih medija i psihološkog blagostanja.

Ključne reči: perfekcionistička samoprezentacija, zavisnost od pametnih telefona, Instagram, motivacija za korišćenje društvenih mreža