

ABSTRACT

Background: Addictive and excessive use of the Internet and social networks are viewed as increasingly relevant topics and are widely discussed in professional and non-professional society. Research shows that these problematic forms of social network use are most prevalent among younger individuals, especially adolescents and young adults. Emotional attachment theory is one of the many important theories of addiction science that offers an explanation for the development of addictive forms of behaviour.

Aim: The aim of this thesis is to describe the relationship of emotional attachment in adolescence to the onset of social network use and the development of its problematic use.

Methods: A cross-sectional online questionnaire survey was conducted. The questionnaire consisted of two original sections of questions and the BFAS and ECR-RS questionnaire. Respondents were selected using a combination of self-selection and the Snowball method. The questionnaire's criteria for the respondents were age 18-26 years and having at least 1 established account on any social network. The data were assessed using descriptive statistics and the statistical significance was verified by chi-square test.

Results: A total of 310 people participated in the research, of whom 44 people (14.2%) used social networks problematically. They were found to have insecure types of emotional attachment to the attachment figures in adolescence more frequently than non-problematic users. In terms of concurrent types of emotional attachment, only the fearful type toward parents, which was more common among problem users, differed significantly between the categories of use. In the matter of creating social media accounts prematurely, the preoccupied type of emotional attachment to a friend was recognised as the riskiest. Early account creation was shown to be associated with problematic use. Secure attachment style wasn't found to be working as a protective factor in early account creation.

Conclusion: The thesis attempts to present comprehensive information about the age group of people who are, according to global research, the top users of social networks.

KEY WORDS

addiction – excessive use – social networks – emotional attachment – adolescence