

Instagram paths to materialism in young people

Abstract: Instagram reached one billion users in 2018 and is the coolest social network among teenagers and young people. But its effects on materialism (the belief that possessions are essential to happiness and success) have not been yet studied. This article tests whether Instagram may increase materialism in young people via two mechanisms proposed by Kasser: feelings of insecurity and exposure to material models. 417 university students from a South American private university were surveyed, and data were analyzed using a Structural Equation Model. Results show that Instagram intensity is a significant predictor of materialism via three mechanisms: an increase in social comparison, an increase in technostress (which in turn reduces self-esteem) and the identification with icons followed in Instagram. The paths related to feelings of insecurity proved stronger than those related to material models.

Keywords: materialism, Instagram, social networks

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics