The relationship of vulnerable narcissism with life satisfaction & perceived social support in dysfunctional Instagram users

Merve Topcu¹, Yusuf Coşku İnceler¹, Deniz Köroğlu¹
¹Department of Psychology, Çankaya University (Turkey)

Instagram use affects individuals’ well-being. Previously found that there is a significant and positive relationship between Instagram using and narcissism. Vulnerable narcissism (VN) is related to socially avoidant behaviors, sensitivity to failure and being criticized, the existence of high levels of anxiety, and feelings of emptiness and inadequacy (Casale, Fioravanti, & Rugai, 2016). Research suggested negative association among VN, life satisfaction (LS) (Ng, Cheung, & Tam, 2014) and perceived social support (PSS) (Dickinson, & Pincus, 2003). However, research on the relationship between Instagram use and VN is limited (Casale, Fioravanti, & Rugai, 2016).

The relationship among VN, LS, and PSS in Instagram users was examined. A cross-sectional online survey was conducted. 246 Instagram users who are within the age range of 16 and 30 and reported decrease in daily functioning in their life due to Instagram use enrolled in the study. Informed consent, socio-demographic form, the Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale, the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support were given to the participants.

Correlational analysis revealed that VN is significantly and negatively associated only with friend dimension of PSS (PSS – F) ($r = -.18, p < .01$) (Table 1). In addition, Linear regression analysis demonstrated that PSS – F ($t = -2.85, p < .01$) also significantly predicted VN ($F(1, 244) = 8.11, p < .01$). R^2 revealed that perceived social support from friends explained the variance of VN with the proportion of 3%.

That is, perceiving low social support from friends may increase the severity of VN or may be an eventual consequence of vulnerable narcissistic relational patterns. It can be said that significance of only friend dimension could be related to university students sampling. Also, Individuals with vulnerable patterns may affect negatively more from Instagram even if their frequency of account use is less.

In addition, those with vulnerable narcissistic patterns may perceive themselves as dysfunctional rooted from feelings of emptiness and inadequacy. Since the Instagram reinforces the ideal, they may feel more failure, emptiness and inadequacy resulting higher anxiety so they may externalize and blame Instagram for their dysfunction. Therefore, it can be concluded that those with vulnerable narcissistic patterns may be influenced negatively more than the grandiose ones so their frequency and time spent on Instagram may be found less or insignificant in the literature regarding vulnerable narcissistic patterns.

Table 1. Correlation coefficients for variables of Hypersensitive Narcissism (VN), Satisfaction with Life (LS) and Perceived Social Support (PSS) (N = 246)

	VN		LS		PSS – F		PSS – S	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
LS	-.01	.87						
PSS – F	-.18*	.01	.21*	.00				
PSS – S	.06	.38	.27*	.00	.19*	.00		
PSS – O	-.02	.71	.44*	.00	.42*	.00	.27*	.00

Note. PSS – F = Friends, PSS – S = Significant other, PSS – O = Others.
* $p < 0.01$

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