

## **Abstract**

This doctoral dissertation addresses problematic Internet use in the context of family functioning and individual psychological determinants. As an inseparable element of contemporary life, the Internet creates both new opportunities and potential risks related to excessive, compulsive, and problematic use. Increasing attention has been given in the literature to the role of family factors in shaping the behaviors of young adults in the digital world, as well as to the influence of psychological mechanisms such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) – the anxiety associated with missing important information, events, or social interactions.

The theoretical section of the dissertation presents the socio-cultural context of Problematic Internet Use, definitions and theoretical models of this phenomenon, and previous research findings concerning its correlates. Particular emphasis is placed on the family as a system, whose functioning – conceptualized in terms of family resilience – may serve as either a protective or a risk factor in relation to Internet-related problems. To this end, the concept of family resilience, encompassing six dimensions (Family Communication and Problem Solving, The Utilizing Social and Economic Resources, Maintaining a Positive Outlook, The Family Spirituality, Family Connectedness, and Ability to Make Meaning of Adversity), was applied.

The empirical section presents findings from a study conducted with 505 young adults aged 18–25. A set of standardized psychometric instruments was used, including the Family Resilience Assessment Scale (FRAS-PL), the Problematic Internet Use Test (TPUI), and the FOMO scale, along with two self-developed questionnaires: one on Internet use and one on the family environment. The study employed a quantitative design and included descriptive analyses, correlational analyses, linear regression, and a mediation model using A. Hayes's PROCESS macro.

The results confirmed significant relationships between family resilience and Problematic Internet Use. Overall family resilience was negatively associated with Problematic Internet Use, indicating the family's protective role. Among the dimensions of resilience, positive outlook, family connectedness, and ability to make meaning of adversity were particularly significant. These findings are consistent with prior research (e.g., Masten, 2018; Walsh, 2016) emphasizing the role of family resources in adaptive coping with contemporary challenges. An unexpected finding, however, was the positive correlation between family spirituality and

Problematic Internet Use, suggesting the multidimensional and potentially ambivalent nature of this variable.

Mediation analysis demonstrated that FOMO mediated the relationship between family resilience and Problematic Internet Use. Specifically, lower levels of family resilience predicted higher levels of FOMO, which in turn led to greater Problematic Internet Use. This mediation effect was statistically significant and highlights the importance of psychological processes related to Fear of Missing Out in mechanisms underlying excessive Internet use.

The dissertation also includes exploratory analyses of Internet use patterns in everyday and social contexts. Findings revealed that individuals with higher levels of Problematic Internet Use and higher FOMO more frequently engaged in online activity in situations requiring attention (e.g., while driving or walking in traffic) or in social settings (e.g., family gatherings, theater, church). They also reported more intense negative emotional and somatic reactions when deprived of Internet access. Moreover, they tended to prefer a style of constant online availability, in contrast to individuals with lower Problematic Internet Use and lower FOMO, who more often adopted a task-oriented style.

Overall, the findings indicate a significant association between the family environment, individual psychological mechanisms, and young adults' online behaviors. Family resilience and FOMO emerge as important predictors of Problematic Internet Use, and incorporating both dimensions into diagnostic and preventive efforts may enhance their effectiveness.