

Susceptibility to social influence predicts behavior in online social networks

Susceptibility to social influence (SSI) has been suggested to be a key factor for social influence in online social networks (OSNs) such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. In four online studies, I found that the personality trait of SSI predicts the extent to which OSN users comply with the behavior of others in OSNs (e.g., buying, voting, or visiting what other OSN users post). In Studies 1 and 2, I find that SSI correlates with diverse OSN behaviors that are the expressions of being affected by social influence. In Study 2, I find that the perceived importance of the topic of OSN behaviors (e.g., fashion or politics) moderates the effect of SSI on OSN behavior, with higher importance resulting in a stronger effect of SSI on OSN behavior. In Studies 3 and 4, I find that SSI predicts the extent OSN users “like” diverse topics (e.g., socializing) in OSNs. The studies contribute to research on the personality-based prediction of OSN behavior. Overall, this research helps to better understand the dynamics of social influence in OSNs, underlining the vulnerability of susceptible OSN users.