

A KÖZÖSSÉGI MÉDIA HASZNÁLAT HATÁSAI A FIATAL EGYETEMISTÁK SZEMÉLYKÖZI VISELKEDÉSÉBEN SOCIAL MEDIA EFFECTS ON „STUDENTS” INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Tóth Dávid Zoltán⁰⁰⁰⁰⁻⁰⁰⁰²⁻⁵¹⁰⁵⁻³²³⁹¹, Dr. Gósi Zsuzsanna⁰⁰⁰⁰⁻⁰⁰⁰²⁻⁰⁶⁰³⁻⁵²³⁴²

¹Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, Institute of Sports Science - Szombathely

²Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, Institute of Health Development and Sports Science – Budapest

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Összefoglalás: A közösségi média napjaink részévé vált, és hatásait sorra vizsgáljuk a fiatalabb korosztályokban, ám az idősebb fiatal felnőtteket minimális szakirodalom vizsgálja. Kutatásunk során arra a kérdésre kerestük a választ, hogy a közösségi média használata, milyen hatást gyakorol fiatal egyetemisták személyközi kommunikációjára. A mérésünket 55 első-, és másodéves sportszakos hallgató online töltötte ki, és az eredményeink azt mutatják, ebben a korosztályban is fedezhetőek fel hatások.

Abstract: Social media has become part of our day and its effects are being studied in younger age groups, but there is minimal literature on older young adults. Our research sought to answer the question of the impact of social media use on the interpersonal communication of young college students. Our survey was completed online by 55 first- and second-year sports students, and our results show that effects can be detected in this age group.

1. Introduction:

Recent years have seen the rise of social media. Young people have access to an almost infinite amount of information of dubious quality. One of the reasons for this is the proliferation of smart devices that allow us to enter the online world from anywhere, at any time [1]; [26]; [34]; [35]; [37]. Technological developments at the beginning of the 21st century have brought about many changes in the socialization of adolescent children; [28]; [37]. These developments have led to the emergence of new factors in the media that have opened up new areas of investigation. Most of the stimuli are delivered through social media applications (TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc...), which allow the user to produce content and decide what and whom to "follow" [23]. Many studies on social media and mental health in young people have concluded that there is a link between social media use and various mental health problems [17]; [18]; [19]; [29]. There is also agreement that social media has an impact on people's lifestyles and research is an ongoing, never-ending process to identify the nature of the impact in all societies and countries [19]; [20]; [21]; [34]; [37].

Social media is the fastest and cheapest way to access the world, so it is crucial for people of all ages. The number of users is growing every day and spreading at a high rate worldwide. The majority of young people prefer to spend their time on social media rather than watching TV, listening to the radio, or reading the newspapers [3]; [26]; [30]. The social media 'craze' of youth raises many questions about its impact on society [20]; [32]; [37]. Research on social media and adolescents' mental health has proliferated in recent years, and several studies have investigated whether increased use of social media is associated with various mental health problems [17]; [18]; [22]; [29]. In many cases, social media use has a small but significant negative effect on mental health research to date on the effects of social media has mainly involved adolescents, but it is also worth looking at the impetus on young adults. Adolescents' experiences with peers play a crucial role in the development and maintenance of interpersonal behavior media allow peer interactions to occur with increased frequency, immediacy, and intensity, and thus already influence people's interpersonal behavior [20]; [21]; [21]; [32]; [36]; [37]. Previous research has identified online peer experiences as a mainly negative factor.

- Cyber victimization,
 - experiences of being a victim of online peer bullying have been consistently associated with higher rates of self-harm and suicidal behavior [18].
- Internalization is an externalization of problems [14].
- Online conflicts
- Drama [4]

Besides the negative effects, we should also mention the benefits. Social media also offers unprecedented opportunities to raise mental health awareness, and social media-based health promotion efforts have been tested for a range of mental and behavioral health problems [2]; [35]. The majority of researchers think that social media can help to access information instantly, as well as speed up medical consultations [2]; [4]; [14]; [17]; [20]. Researchers describe that social media can help speed up the flow of information over distances and knows no boundaries as an advantage. Precisely for this reason, it has become a target for companies and one of the most popular venues for marketing in the 21st century. In light of the above, it can therefore be said that the impact of social media needs to be addressed because it has become a living space, which for the younger generations has also become a social space. Social media has the potential to provide a platform where the socialization of young „people” can take place more easily [26]. Previous studies highlight that many young individuals today cannot communicate face-to-face and find it more difficult to create personal bonds [19]; [28]; [32]; [34]. This is of course different from previous generations, but social media can help young people to interact, it is of course not a substitute for face-to-face communication, but it gives young persons an additional opportunity. Time spent online cannot be minimized or eliminated and it affects everyone. How much does it affect the interpersonal behavior of students? This is the question we were looking for the answer to! The trend shows that social media are being used more often for role modeling due to the increased time spent online [15];

[28]; [30]; [31]. Several studies show that social media have several positive benefits [1]; [2]; [4]; [10]; [32]. One of the clearest benefits identified by researchers is social networking, with 81% of teenagers reporting that social media helps them bond with friends [4]. Social media also allows for day-to-day interaction, promoting individuals' well-being, and can even help to foster acceptance and a sense of belonging [3]; [10]; [34]. In our research, we sought to answer the following question. Given a situation that affects society, especially the society of the future, the increased time spent online (not real) is creating an indifferent, "empathy-deficient" society. There is a lot of research on the effects of social media, but most of it focuses on young school children, 10-14 year-olds. In addition to us, several researchers have highlighted the need to look at the older, but still young, university age group [32]; [34]; [35]; [36]; [37]. We feel that our research has looked at an important age group to study but has not yet received enough attention.

2. Method

In the first phase of our research, we conducted secondary research. The main focus of our documentary analysis was social media usage patterns and their effects. After the initial phase, we conducted primary research, where we asked our sample in person to fill in questionnaires of our choice. The questions were designed to obtain accurate information about young people's time on the internet and how they use it. In the second part of the research, we measured the interpersonal behavior of the respondents using the SEARS-C test. SEARS-C is a recently developed experimental 52-item self-assessment test. The SEARS-C measures respondents' perceptions of their social-emotional competencies and social values and specifically quantifies learning in groups and "living" in communities [9]; [16]; [24]. The test was developed to measure the development of necessary skills and competencies. In the validated test, participants were asked to rate on a 4-point scale how true a behavior was for them (i.e. 0 = "never true", 1 = "sometimes true", 2 = "often true", 3 = "always true") [9]; [24]. Our data collection was personal because we felt it was important to have a 100% completion rate. This required more organization, but it allowed us to get responses from all participants. Another reason for our choice was that a "questionnaire commissioner" could help us to interpret and understand the tests we chose.

3. Results

Our research involved university students (N=55). 30 boys and 25 girls completed our test. Our sample was access-based. Our measurements showed that students also spend a lot of time on social media. Our population spends an average of 146.1 minutes on social media, but we observed a gender difference. *Figure 1* shows the basic data of our research.

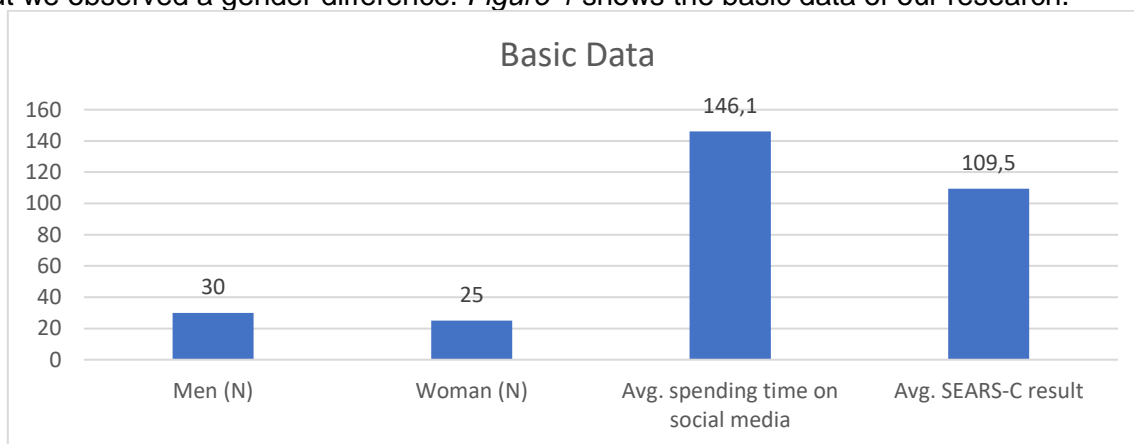


Figure 1: Basic data of our research (own editing)

On average, boys spend 133.4 minutes, and female respondents 161.3 minutes browsing social media sites. The result of the Mann-Whitney rank test with independent samples: $U = 285.00$, $p = .130$. The high values can be explained, among other things, by the fact that 100%

of the respondents admitted to having their phone and internet subscriptions. *Figure 2* shows the distribution of respondents' use of social media.

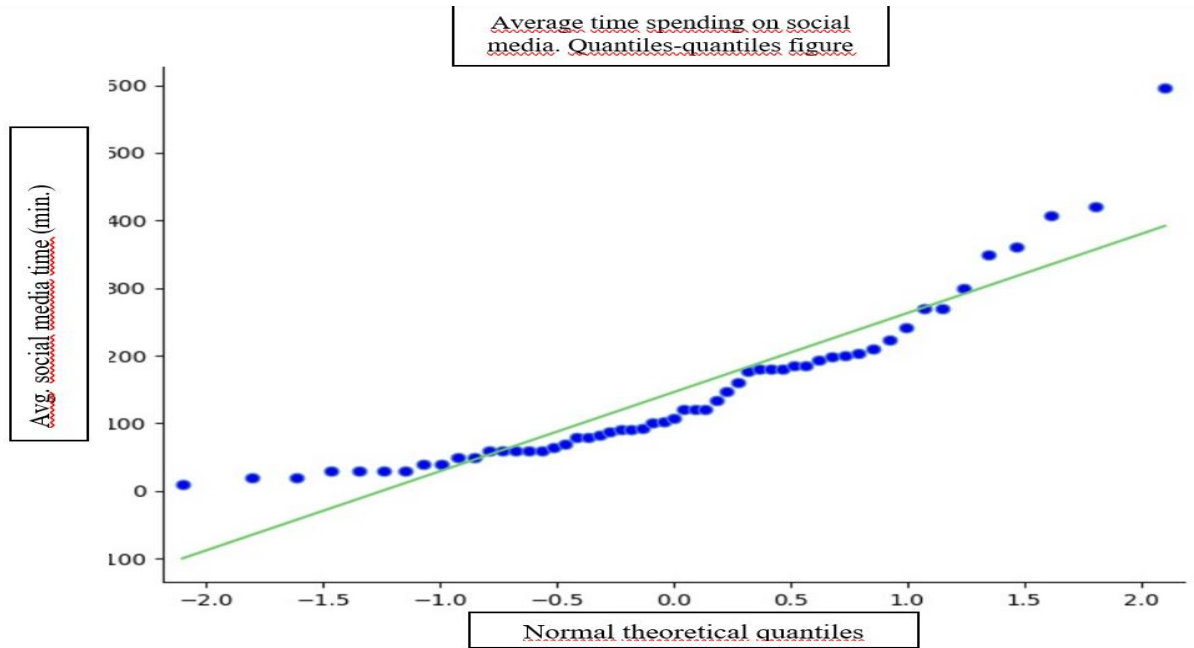


Figure 2: Distribution of participants' social media use (own editing)

Our respondents use social media in a variety of ways. 80% of respondents said they find social media use as a contact tool. Our survey also showed that they use social media primarily for this purpose, but that their motivations include entertainment, watching videos, and learning, although there was no complete agreement among respondents on the reliability of the information they find there. Less than 1/3 of respondents (27.3%) indicated that they fully trust what they see there. Despite this small group, it is clear that social media offer many opportunities for young people and that the university age group is already better at filtering the information they receive.

We found a gender difference in SEARS-C scores, which collapses with previous research. The effect of gender on students' self-report is also shown by girls' scores on the SEARS-C, as female completers scored significantly higher ($M = 110.16$, $SD = 23.34$) than boys ($M = 104.55$, $SD = 25.18$). Girls reported significantly higher scores on the SEARS-C than boys, $t(894) = 3.46$, $p < .05$. In our study, we used an independent samples Mann-Whitney rank test to examine the gender correlation, which resulted in $U = 302.00$, $p = .220$. *Figure 2* shows the gender gap in the SEARS-C results.

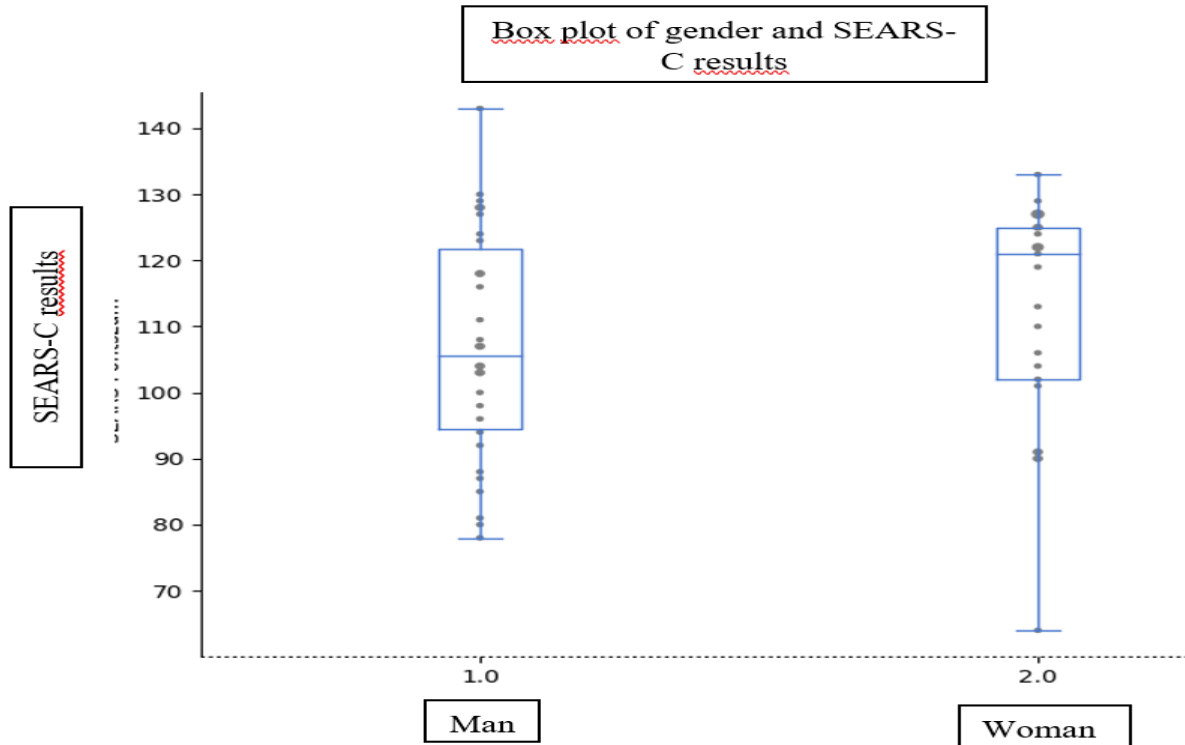


Figure 2: Box plot of gender and SEARS-C results (own editing)

After presenting these two variables, we can conclude that time spent on social media is a weaker influencing factor than gender. Although female respondents spend more time in the online space, they scored higher on the SEARS-C test. To confirm or refute this hypothesis, we examined the power of the two variables on the SEARS-C score. The result of the Kruskal-Wallis test was $\chi^2(3, N = 55) = 5.23, p = .156$, which showed us that, although there is a significant correlation between gender and SEARS-C score due to gender differences, $p = .156$. 220, but there is a stronger relationship between time spent on social media and SEARS-C scores $p = .156$.

In conclusion, the above values support the researchers who say that social media can not only negatively influence young people's interpersonal behavior and communication. Figure 4 examines the relationship between SEARS-C scores and time spent online. For ease of interpretation, the time spent on the internet variable has been split into 4 groups. Group 1 is defined as respondents who spend less than 1 hour online daily. Group 2 is more than 1 hour but less than 2 hours online. Group 3 is made up of respondents who spend between 2

and 3 hours a day online. The last group, group 4, spends more than 3 hours a day online.

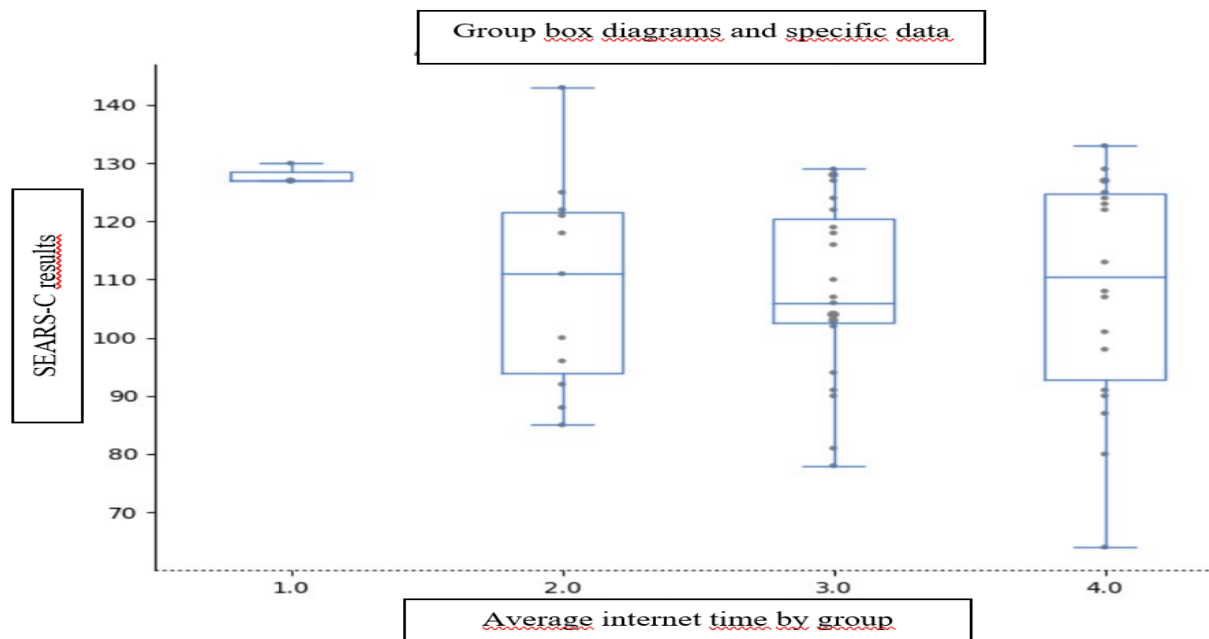


Figure 4: Relationship between SEARS-C score and internet use

More than half of the respondents (N=41) are in groups 3 or 4, 11 are in group 2, and less than 5% of respondents are in group 1. The graph illustrates that there is no directly proportional relationship between the SEARS-C score and the amount of internet use. The average SEARS-C scores of groups 2, 3, and 4 are almost identical. Those who spent less time online scored an average of 109.2, those who spent between 2 and 3 hours online scored 108.2, but those who spent more than 3 hours online also scored 108.3. So, for our study population, neither social media nor the amount of time spent online has a significant effect on the interpersonal behavior of young students.

4. Conclusions:

We want to continue our research and by working with a larger sample, we would be able to draw more confident conclusions from the results. Our results also show that the amount of time spent on social media does indeed have a small influence on young „people's” interpersonal behavior. In today's world, however, it is inconceivable that social media use patterns would change drastically. The trend shows that the time spent online will continue to increase, and there is no way to prevent this. A situation cannot be prohibited, prevented, or regulated. But can we use these platforms to improve young people's interpersonal behavior? Rather, we need solutions that can bring value to young people through social media. One of these solutions is the social responsibility of professional sports clubs and sportsmen and women, which draws attention to issues that affect society and which can convey value to young people. The popularity of sports companies means that their CSR activities can reach many individuals [5]; [12]; [13]; [31]. Until now, it has been seen mainly as a marketing tool, but its value and reach make it worth investigating whether it can have an impact on young people's emotions.

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