

THE IMPACT OF THE TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL NETWORKS ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract: *This study aims at identifying the level of emotional intelligence in pupils, to determine correlations between these psychological characteristics and the time spending in social networks, as well as to identify differences between female and male adolescents, regarding the level of their emotional intelligence. The research sample consisted of 200 pupils (123 female and 77 male adolescents), aged 15 to 19 years, studying in Romanian school institutions. In order to test the hypothesis, the following instruments were used: a. Test for Emotional Intelligence (adapted by Mihaela Roco after Reuven Bar-On and Daniel Goleman), b. a questionnaire designed to identify the time spending by pupils to use the social networks (developed for research purposes). The Emotional Intelligence Test consists of 10 items that provide for four situations in which the person can be found. The completion of the test is aimed, on the one hand, at ensuring the individual's transposition as much as possible, and on the other, choosing one of the four possible answers' variants, which are some concrete ways to react in the situations indicated by questions. The data analysis and obtained results highlights the existence of statistically significant negative correlations between the time spent by students on accessing social networks and the level of emotional intelligence. The statistical analysis also highlights the existence of a statistically significant difference between female and male adolescents at the level of emotional intelligence. The findings obtained constitute a support for the initiation of an intervention program for the personal development of adolescents.*

Key words: emotional intelligence; social networking; pupils; gender; adolescents.

1. Theoretical framework

The concept of emotional intelligence, first defined by Salovey and Mayer in 1990, has a broad history, starting in 1920, when Thorndike describes, besides academic intelligence, a type of social intelligence. He was followed by Weschler, who among the elements of intelligence also identifies certain personal, affective, and social factors. Maslow also discovers the emotional side as being very

important in organizing relationships, pointing out that we cannot discuss motivation without emotions. However, the emotional concept was put aside because of the resistance of those who supported the uniqueness of the IQ in establishing the level of intelligence.

The psychometric vision of intelligence was eliminated along with Gardner's theories that argued that intelligence is not one-dimensional, but multidimensional. Numerous researches on emotional intelligence have been carried out since the 1990s. Salovey and Mayer structure emotional intelligence on three levels: the cognitive level (the ability to perceive and transmit emotions), the emotional level (the ability to develop feelings when they promote thinking) and the regulating level (the ability to identify and know emotions, and adjusting them for the best emotional and intellectual development). Through this structure the two tried to comprise the correlation between emotional and cognitive.

Bar-On defines emotional intelligence as a hierarchy of "noncognitive abilities, competencies and skills, which influences a person's ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures. The emotional attribute is used to underline the idea that this specific type of intelligence differs from cognitive intelligence" (Bar On, 1997, p. 52).

Starting from the observation that for some people success in life is much easier and most of the time it is not due to intellectual abilities, Bar-On conducts numerous researches and structures emotional intelligence as a result of the following factors:

- intrapersonal factors (awareness of one's emotions, optimism/assertiveness, respect and consideration for one's own person, self-realisation, independence);
- interpersonal factors (empathy, mutually positive interpersonal relationships, social responsibility);
- adaptability (problem solving, reality testing, flexibility);
- stress control (tolerance to frustration, impulse control);
- general disposition (satisfaction, happiness, optimism) (Bar-On, R., Parker, J. D. A., 2012)

However, the concept of emotional intelligence is linked to the name of Daniel Goleman, who published *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* in 1995, which includes numerous studies on the brain, emotions and behaviour, thus opening up further research in the field. Goleman believes that emotional intelligence involves a combination of: awareness of one's affections, emotions, motivation; self-control of one's feelings, empathy, and sociability at the same time (Goleman, D., 2001, 2004)

Adolescence, classified as the stage between the ages of 15 and 24, is an extremely challenging sequence in the evolution of the human individual. Currently, accessing social networks is increasingly taking place in adolescents' lives, estimates showing that it is between 6 and 8 hours per day (APA Reports).

According to expert studies, the use of social networks by adolescents as main consumers illustrates both a positive and a negative impact on this age group. Thus, the frequent use of social networks can lead to changes in lifestyle, time

management, disturbance of attention, increase anxiety level (Muduli, JR, 2014) incite violence, threats, and criminal activity (Patton, DU, Eschmann, RD, Elsaesser, C., & Bocanegra, E., 2016). Longitudinal studies have highlighted the existence of a link between access to technology during childhood and pre-adolescence, and the development of addictions in adolescence (Xuanhui, L., Gonggu, Y.,2001).

Adolescence involves many changes, and access to social networks can be a refuge for young people, the place where they feel understood, accepted, where they can be seen by others as they wish, they can hide behind images, they can easily distort reality, but at the same time they feel comfortable, which will determine the desire to stay as connected as possible. On the other hand, being involved in a social network can put "pressure" on the activity within the network, the need to be "online".

On the other hand, there are studies that argue that the effect of using social networks contributes to improving adolescents' thinking and creativity, facilitates social interconnection (Muduli, JR 2014), streamlines intervention in crisis situations (Patton, DU, Eschmann, RD, Elsaesser, C., & Bocanegra, E. 2016), contributes to the development of empathy (Vossen, HGM, & Valkenburg, PM 2016), to the easy information transmitting in multiple fields, including socio-professional ones, which directly concern adolescents, and, last but not least, it facilitates solving school or interest tasks by activating various applications.

Regarding gender differences in emotional intelligence, most studies illustrate that female gender has higher levels of emotional intelligence than male gender (Joseph, D. L., Newman, D. A. 2010, Joshi, D., Dutta, I. 2014, Katyal,S., Awasthi, E., 2005, Patel, S. K. 2017, Ranasinghe, P., Wathurapatha, W. S., Mathangasinghe, Y., Ponnampereuma, G. 2017).

However, there are studies that identify a higher level of emotional intelligence in male subjects (Zohrevand, R. 2010), but also studies that do not identify any gender differences in the direction of emotional intelligence (Aquino, A. E. 2003, Brown, R. F., Schutte, N. S. 2006)

2. Research design

The study is focused on adolescents of 14 to 19 years old, who learn in schools from Caraş - Severin, Timiș, Hunedoara and Mehedinți counties.

2.1 Research objectives

The proposed objectives refer to:

1. Identification of a relation between the emotional intelligence at adolescents and the time assigned by them in order to use socialization networks;
2. Identification of some differences between the emotional intelligence level at female gender adolescents, respectively male gender adolescents.

2.2 Research hypothesis

Hypothesis no. 1 We suppose that there is a negative correlation, significant from statistic point of view, between the time assigned by adolescents for the use of socialization networks and their emotional intelligence;

Hypothesis no. 2 We suppose that female gender adolescents have a more significant higher emotional intelligence level than the male gender adolescents;

2.3 Research methodology

The paper considers also a study related to the observation of eventual differences between female gender and male gender adolescents, regarding the emotional intelligence level, as well as the identification of a relation between the time assigned by adolescents for the use of socialization networks and their emotional intelligence.

The sample used in this research is composed by 200 adolescents, pupils of schools from Timiș, Caraș, Mehedinți and Hunedoara counties. In this sample, we can identify 77 male gender adolescents, representing 38,5%, and 123 female gender adolescents, representing 61,5%. Regarding the repartition on ages at the level of the sample, information is presented as it follows:

- 4 adolescents of 14 years old, 2%
- 12 adolescents of 15 years old, 6%
- 41 adolescents of 16 years old, 20,5%
- 49 adolescents of 17 years old, 24,5%
- 41 adolescents of 18 years old, 20,5%
- 53 adolescents of 19 years old, 26,5%

Frequencies, depending on the gender and age level, within the sample implied in this study, are indicated in the table 1, respectively table 2.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	26	26.0	26.0	26.0
Valid female	74	74.0	74.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	
Valid I st level	50	50.0	50.0	50.0
Valid II nd level	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	100,0

Table no. 1 The frequencies of the sample depending on the gender

		I like to work with pupils				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Gender	Male	5	0	15	6	26
	female	25	26	23	0	74
Total		30	26	38	6	100
the level of studies	I st level	0	11	33	6	50
	II nd level	30	15	5	0	50
Total		30	26	38	6	100

Table no.2 The components of the test sample in relation to age (frequencies and percentages)

In order to verify the stated hypothesis we applied the evaluation questionnaire for emotional intelligence adapted by Mihaela Roco after Bar-On and Goleman, and a questionnaire that we have conceived in order to identify the time assigned by pupils for the use of socialization networks, subjects' age and gender.

Regarding the evaluation questionnaire for emotional intelligence, the applying instructions target the check off of the answer which fits best by the adolescents, for each individual item. The quotation possibility of answers is performed according to the following data:

		I think that the didactic profession is important from social point of view			Total
		1	2	3	
gender	Male	5	9	12	26
	female	26	47	1	74
Total		31	56	13	100
the level of studies	I st level	10	28	12	50
	II nd level	21	28	1	50
Total		31	56	13	100

Table no. 3 The values of the correlation coefficient

Regarding the second hypothesis of the herein study, the T test for independent samples confirms the fact that there is a significant difference from statistic point of view between the female gender adolescents and the male gender

ones, at the level of the emotional intelligence. Statistic information is presented in the tables 4 and 5. The average of the female gender adolescents group, regarding the variable - emotional intelligence- ($M = 88,25$, $SD = 23,617$) is bigger ($t = 2.75$) than the one of the male gender adolescents group ($M = 79,81$, $SD = 19,423$), fact that indicates a significant difference from statistic point of view.

		I think I have the necessary qualities for being a good teacher					Total
		2	3	4	5	6	
gender	Male	2	7	1	15	1	26
	female	0	0	49	24	1	74
Total		2	7	50	39	2	100
the level of studies	I st level	0	0	9	39	2	50
	II nd level	2	7	41	0	0	50
Total		2	7	50	39	2	100

Table no. 4 Statistical data concerning the calculation of the t test for independent samples

		I would have a stable job					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
gender	Male	10	0	10	3	3	26
	female	26	16	32	0	0	74
Total		36	16	42	3	3	100
the level of studies	I st level	0	2	42	3	3	50
	II nd level	36	14	0	0	0	50
Total		36	16	42	3	3	100

Table no. 5 Statistical data SPSS

Conclusions and implications

At the level of this study, that implies male and female gender adolescents, with ages between 14 and 19 years old, we can find, according to the highlighted statistic data, a strong negative correlation between the time daily assigned to

socialization network and the emotional intelligence. Based on the statistic interpretation of data we could ascertain the fact that there is a significant difference from statistical point of view between the female gender adolescents and male gender adolescents regarding the emotional intelligence level, girls having a higher level of the self-esteem than boys.

Considering the information obtained during the study, that is the sufficiently low level of emotional intelligence of adolescents, as well as the highlighted negative correlation between the time daily assigned to socialization networks and the emotional intelligence of adolescents, we intend, in the future, to propose and implement a personal development program for adolescents, in order to contribute evidently to their emotional intelligence development and for a better time management delineation.

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