

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THE LEVEL OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN ADOLESCENTS

Mariana Floricica CĂLIN¹, Mihaela Luminița SANDU²,
Cristina-Ioana TASTAMAN³

¹Ovidius University of Constanta (Romania), mariana.calin@365.univ-ovidius.ro

²Ovidius University of Constanta (Romania), mihaela.sandu@365.univ-ovidius.ro

³Independent researcher, tastamancristinaioana@yahoo.com

Abstract: *People, from birth to old age, need each other to have a healthy lifestyle, to develop and to reach their full potential. This developmental process materializes following the influence of an important factor: socialization. Adolescence is a period of transition from the infantile, immature, and disorganized person to the one with an organized and complex thinking, when the young person forms his own identity, independent of the family, with a significant role in the development of the adult. This period is the most difficult, enhanced by both internal and external conflicts, emotional instability and increased lability of emotions, frequently moving from one state to another.*

Key words: relationship; networking; socializing; anxiety; depression; teens

1. The period of adolescence

Adolescence is perceived as an existential but natural crisis, present due to the multitude of psycho-hormonal changes, when the previous adaptive structures are outdated, far from the new organization, and the defense mechanisms can no longer bend to the new requirements, both from the external environment, as well as from the internal one. This disorganization can be part of both thinking and the motivational or affective side, a starting point for anxiety or depressive disorders.

During this period, there are major changes in the social plan, as a result of which adolescents tend to spend much more time with the elderly than in previous stages, looking for new people to attach, and time spent with family, especially parents, decreases considerably.

Social relations develop in the area of people outside the family environment, especially with people of the opposite sex, of the same generation, which are based on intimacy, trust, respect for their own needs and trying to get as close as possible. Consequently, the capacity for emotional autonomy acquires new valences, being much more flexible, as well as the decisional one, with both negative and positive impact on the future adult. It also increases the potential for emotional reactivity (Adams and Berzonsky, 2009), bringing with it new skills in understanding emotions. Adolescents perceive the world through the prism of their own reasoning, both empirical and scientific. They can engage in relationships based strictly on emotional feelings, and the flexibility of emotions can be due to the biological level, hormonal fluctuations.

Sociability is manifested by the need for affiliation (Sîntion, 2018), an interactive process of identification with someone else, through reciprocity, contributing to the social recognition of that person. The need for affiliation, during adolescence, acquires a colossal significance, being one of the main priorities of the

young person, which develops after joining a group, regardless of its category, in order (Șintion, 2018) to receive positive stimulation, to exchange various opinions or personal experiences, to clarify cases of uncertainty or for socio-affective support from the partner in key situations.

Grația Sion (2007) thinks that the transition from childhood to adulthood has as a point of support a longer break, focused on adolescence, a period described as: disturbed, tense and marked by certain crucial events in the life of the uninitiated young man. One of the major tasks of the adolescent is to create and maintain meaningful social relationships, and childhood friendships turn into increasingly intimate relationships. Another duty refers to the development of identity relationships and their management in interaction with loved ones. The method that facilitates this process is self-disclosure, an exchange of thoughts, feelings, behaviors.

2. The relationship between adolescents and social networks

Man has always had the need to communicate with others, to know, to obtain information and to pass it on to others, in writing or orally. Currently, there is no dimension of life that is deprived of the transformation generated by technological innovation and the multiple possibilities of manipulating information.

In the last two decades, reducing the time it takes to send messages and information has become one of the biggest challenges facing today's society. Social networks, as a means of communication, refer to all communication structures found in the Internet and characterize a means of multimedia transmission of ideas, thoughts, feelings.

Castellano (2002) believes that media interaction gives rise to both the advantage and the disadvantage of creating new movements of opinion, promoting socio-cultural manifestations, creating support groups for social causes or a new fashion of human behavior.

Social networks are promoted through expectations, stimulating information, but also through some cognitive restrictions, which lead to the deep interest of users.

In the opinion of Castellano (2002), the media network is meant to offer an illusion of company, without the demands of physical friendship. This provides the opportunity to create superfluous, frequent, but shallow relationships in which emotional behavior is masked and reduced to an emoticon.

In his studies, he claimed that one in six young people will experience an anxiety disorder in their lifetime, and four out of five social networking platforms produce feelings of anxiety, mental insecurity. This disorder can have a substantial negative impact on the development of adolescents, manifested by feelings of overwhelming worry, difficulty leaving home, communicating, attending classes or having a job.

Research (Hew, 2011: 662-676) has shown that adolescents who spend more than 3 hours a day on social networking sites are more likely to report poor mental health, including psychological stress (a specific symptom of anxiety and depression). Following photos posted on the social networking platform and the negative evaluation or under the expectations of teenagers, which gives certain users feelings of inequality and social inferiority. Unrealistic expectations (Becker, Alzahabi and Hopwood, 2013) on online opinions can reduce self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, disappointment, lack of appreciation, and dissatisfaction with the mind-body

relationship and lead. to the obsession with perfectionism, manifested in the form of anxiety or depressive disorders (obsessive-compulsive disorder).

Anxiety, caused by social networks, can be characterized by: interruption of face-to-face conversations to check social accounts, trying to reduce the time spent on such networks - but without success, neglect of duties at work or school, decreased appetite, metabolic disorders, but also vision problems decreased sexual activity, excessive agitation when the adolescent can not connect to such networks.

Statistics claim (Marhan, Popa, 2012: 73-92) that 40% of users of social media accounts on Facebook are young and very young.

Given this transitional period, they are more prone to the manifestation of anxious and depressive behaviors, being easily influenced by external factors, including social networks, which adolescents use quite frequently, such as (<https://socialmedialist.org/social-networks.html>): Facebook, which has about 2 billion monthly users; WhatsApp with about 1 billion users; LinkedIn with about 500 million users; Google+, which has about 150 million users; Twitter with about 320 million users or Instagram, a social network for accessing photos and videos, which has about 800 million users.

Although social networks have become an essential means of communication, their overuse can lead to a series of negative consequences in terms of emotional or social development of adolescents. Thus, the adolescent isolates himself in front of the phone, tablet or computer, resorting to a written communication to the detriment of the oral one, which implies a more intimate contact with the interlocutor, which requires more time. The activities on these platforms are much more captivating, and young people become detached from any other activity that deprives them of access to the Internet. Teenagers give up going out with friends or family to immerse themselves in the still undiscovered secrets of the online.

Knox, Daniela, Sturdivant and Zusman (2001) found, based on a study conducted in the USA, that 83.3% of men and 63.3% of women surveyed answered that they use internet social networks to initiate certain relationships, some temporary, some more lasting, friendly or intimate. A significant proportion of study participants stated that they use this path to reduce anxiety or fear of social rejection, but this condition is exacerbated the longer the time spent on such networks. They (Knox, Daniela, Sturdivant and Zusman, 2001) showed that the more shy a person is, the more dependent on the internet and the virtual people they come in contact with, the more accentuated they are, opting for refuge behind the screen, under anonymity or a false identity.

One of the reasons why teenagers, in particular, choose to take refuge in such an environment is the fear of not being rejected in the face of face-to-face interaction, but later become unable to develop their favorite interaction skills by establishing direct contacts, thus voluntarily avoiding them.

According to researchers (Cooper, Sportolari, 1997. 7-14), the average duration of relationships established in the online environment is about two years, after which certain differences begin to be observed. They (Cooper, Sportolari, 1997: 7-14) argue that among adolescents, females are much more confessional than males, regardless of the gender to which they are confessed.

3. Objectives

1. Identify the differences in the gender of the subjects and their anxiety level.
2. Identifying differences in the gender of subjects and their level of depression.
3. Identifying the differences in terms of time spent on social networks by subjects and their level of anxiety.
4. Identifying the differences in terms of time spent on social networks by subjects and their level of depression.

4. Hypotheses

1. It is assumed that there is a difference between gender and the level of anxiety in adolescents,
2. It is assumed that there is a difference between gender and the level of depression in adolescents
3. It is assumed that there is a difference between time spent on social networks and the level of anxiety in adolescents
4. It is assumed that there is a difference between the time spent on social networks and the level of depression in adolescents,

5. Sample

To conduct the study, a sample of 60 subjects was used, divided into 30 female subjects, 30 male subjects, of which 30 who spend less than 6 hours on social networking sites and 30 who spend more than 6 hours on social media sites. these sites. They were selected from the Theoretical High School "Carol I" Fetești, both in urban and rural areas.

6. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 1- It is assumed that there is a difference between gender and the level of anxiety in adolescents.

Table 1. Testul Mann-Whitney

	anxietate
Mann-Whitney U	8,000
Wilcoxon W	473,000
Z	-6,537
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

According to Table 1, the hypothesis is confirmed because the significance threshold is less than 0.05.

The development of gender identity, during adolescence, is an essential variable in shaping the adult of the future, due to the fact that the activities, habits, professional functions or moral principles to which the individual adheres are prescribed by gender stereotypes. Gender differentiation increases in significance because certain characteristics promoted for men and women, respectively, are capitalized differently.

Echeburia (2010) described males as more independent and performance-oriented. Thus, men are more detached from the results of the contacts they establish, less emotionally involved, and the explanations of failed activities come from outside, assumed by others, not by the results of their own actions. They are oriented towards professional life, having few but qualitative contacts, they emphasize more on direct communication, without too many sentimental implications, which determines them to be more confident, more optimistic unlike women.

Femininity is frequently associated with tolerance and sensitivity multiple social relationships that have an impact on daily life. Thus, having more friends is very difficult to have qualitative social relationships, which means investing the same amount of time and feelings with each other.

Another cause for the installation of anxiety in adolescents may have as a starting point cyberbullying, a phenomenon by which the harasser, in the real world, expresses himself through insults, humiliation, threats or blackmail, through the Internet, on whose platform publishes information, photos or videos with harmful and infamous content, which feature more female characters than male characters, much more exposed. Following this process, the protagonist girls are given desolate labels, which lead to rejection in the group of friends, abandonment of activities with others (to avoid malicious comments), giving up the search for new people to interact. The victim's self-esteem decreases, hatred and frustration occur, fear and the feeling of helplessness or stress appear, a mediating opportunity for the installation of anxiety.

Echeburia (2010: 91-96) explains that the motivation to use a smartphone, both women and men is multiple: to be visible to others, to assert one's identity in the group and to be connected with friends, but when in which this barrier transcends to intimate life, there tends to be some fear of not being subjectively interpreted in personal life information.

Hypothesis 2 - It is assumed that there is a difference between gender and the level of depression in adolescents

Table 2. Mann-Whitney

	depression
Mann-Whitney U	66,000
Wilcoxon W	531,000
Z	-5,678
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

According to Table 2, the hypothesis is confirmed because the significance threshold is less than 0.05 (sig.0 = 0.00) Gender differences, in terms of depression in adolescents, are usually reported following the analysis of individual variables. Signs and depression are present in both men and women, but their manifestation in the latter is more common than in men. During periods of depression, they tend to blame themselves, feel sad, apathetic, and develop poor or emotionally affected social contacts.

Adolescents are more prone to depression because they have increased emotional lability, both in terms of hormonal changes during this period and because

of the emotional ones, specific to this age, such as the appearance of sex differences. Girls mature prematurely compared to boys, both physically and emotionally. During this period, conflicting relationships with parents increase, and in the case of attachment there is a rupture that is difficult to repair. Many parents find it difficult to accept their change and the tendency to create their own identity. Parents try to maintain their authority over the imposition of rules.

They often have episodes of crying for the release of emotional tension, followed by outbursts of anger, episodes of inconsistency in feelings, which mainly affects contacts with relatives.

Following internet browsing, one can find topics such as eating problems (anorexia and bulimia), some of the most noticeable sources of affecting the psychological integrity of teenage girls, because at this age there is a concern for physical image. In this regard, women become concerned with finding various remedies that work more or less. Comparing themselves to people who are much weaker, more beautiful than them, they feel dissatisfied and eventually resort to social isolation, interrupt supportive contacts and make room for the early onset of depression.

Even when expressing their opinions (Weiss, 1973) adolescents may feel that they are not taken seriously, that they do not have sustainable arguments or that the conversation partner does not respect their opinions and thoughts. Lack of trust and support from the interlocutor affects self-confidence. Gender stereotyping also occurs, and when a girl relates, appreciates or promotes activities classified as specific to boys, she is rejected by other girls because the way she adheres to various habits and practices with is fully accepted by the group.

Hypothesis 3 - It is assumed that there is a difference between the time spent on social networks and the level of anxiety in adolescents.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney

	anxietate
Mann-Whitney U	284,500
Wilcoxon W	845,500
Z	-2,393
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,017

According to Table 3, the hypothesis is confirmed because the threshold of significance is less than 0.05 (sig. = 0.017) Interpersonal relationships (Șintion, 2018) may exist in a temporal framework: a past enters a relationship), the present and an imagined future (the expectations that the partner has from that relationship, the desires, the needs he wants to satisfy). Relationships between individuals involve mutual trust, and each of the partners instills in the other emotional states, information, expectations. The adolescent can get very deeply involved, from an emotional point of view, in a relationship born on a social network by spending a lot of time conversing with that person, and as a result he ignores his friends from reality. When the physical encounter occurs, the adolescent is disappointed. The person you

know on the social network does not match the pattern they displayed in the conversations.

According to the three-stage theory (Șintion, 2018), which can be applied even online, three fundamental steps in establishing interpersonal relationships have been highlighted. The first stage involves the perception and valorization of potential partners. In social relations, partners are chosen according to geographical area, age, musical preferences, civic principles or, in most cases, online social relations, according to the number of common virtual friends. The second stage involves choosing the interaction partner, ie the initial attraction, depending on the criteria presented above, what we know about that person, what satisfaction it can bring us and how to end that relationship. The last stage involves the functioning of the relationship through evolution or dissolution. Adolescents may find that the image of the person they have come in contact with is distorted, and the relationship becomes deadlocked and dissolves. This has repercussions on the mental life of the disillusioned partner, who has invested time, who has had expectations and who has made deep confessions to get closer to the seemingly right partner. Following repeated experiences derived from relational failures, spent on social networking sites, attachment anxiety occurs.

Adolescents who have been deprived of the necessary gratifications show the insecurity of complying with the expectations of others, distrust of their own strength, reaching the diffuse fear of interaction with other people, emotional and physical loneliness. Marshall, (2012) argues that one of the consequences relates to decreased social skills. The adolescent reaches a phase in which it is difficult for him to reveal himself, he fails to introduce himself, to have a conversation, becoming the favorite target of repeated ironies. Very few of them realize the socio-emotional influence of these social networks, and most of the time self-blame appears.

In other words, young people feel wronged by the fact that, as a result of situations, problems or emotional deficiencies, unmasked on social networking sites, they do not receive the expected emotional support, are judged and receive certain labels that lead to social ostracism. Social anxiety has been shown to be quantitatively and qualitatively linked to negative social feedback, poor interpersonal relationships (albeit in large numbers, but qualitatively worthless), perfectionism (as a defining trait for the adolescent who compares to others but cannot be obtained in reality) and by the increased presentation of the qualities considered essential in attracting the interaction partner.

Adolescents often use these networks to release their suppressed emotions during the day, being a much more comfortable expression mechanism, through which they can express their grievances related to family, friends, schoolmates, without having direct contact with stressful stimulus. In the perception of others, on social networks, there is the error of confirmation (Trope and Liberman, 1996) by which the adolescent tends to interpret events (for example: an appreciation or a comment on a post) in a way that disillusionment occurs. Contemporary adolescents no longer experience certain situations through their own experiences. Thus, instead of a trip to the mountains and an hour of skiing, he prefers to watch a video posted on a social network, in which a virtual friend practices a winter sport. The adolescent cultivates individualism, and the emphasis no longer falls on the spirit of the community, which becomes lonely, detached.

On the other hand, several studies have shown an association between the level of anxiety and different behavioral patterns of individuals in the social environment of the Internet (Moody, 2001: 80-110; Marhan and Popa, 2012: 73-92, Madariaga, 2010) The use of boarding for unrelated purposes with the transmission of important, urgent messages, they can lead to anxiety. This is supported by the fact that young people hide their problems behind a screen, they become more amplified and become more difficult to solve. Adolescents become addicted to the people they interact with, giving up real-life customs so as not to lose the person's attachment to the online environment. The gradual decrease in interaction is seen as abandonment. Having and using multiple accounts on social networks simultaneously has become a common thing among young people, being positively correlated with anxiety. They can be victims of a continuous social pressure to support their online identity, carefully analyzed from several perspectives: popularity (number of appreciations, number of friends), cultural level (kind of music, motivational quotes distributed on the profile), level material (places where users share their location).

Hypothesis 4 - It is assumed that there is a difference between time spent on social networks and the level of depression in adolescents.

Table 4. Test T, Levene

		Levene's Test		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error
		F	Sig.					
depression	Equal variances assumed	8,253	,006	5,540	58	,000	49,963	9,018
	Equal variances not assumed			5,709	57,454	,000	49,963	8,752

According to Table 4, the hypothesis is confirmed because the significance threshold is less than 0.05 (sig. = 0.00). By using social media recipes, access to inappropriate content posted by other users is allowed and facilitated. The teenager in question can interact with such people by making contact with various images, videos with both sexual overtones and scenes of violence, as a result of which psychological health may suffer.

In other words, they can publish their emotional status ("in a relationship with Y" or "engaged to X" seeking the approval of significant others or marking territory ("this boy is no longer available to other girls") In today's society there are young people willing to make public their identities, tastes, experiences and opinions on various topics in virtual conversations. A longitudinal study of high school students in Western Australia found a strong correlation between the time they spent on social networking sites and depression (Lenhart and Duggan, 2014)

Gaudix (2014) observed behavioral dissociations between social media users and non-users. Excessive use of Facebook has been associated with trends in self-harm

(depressive practice). For the research, the adolescents were arranged in 2 samples, the first had unlimited access to social networks, and the second had restricted access to only 10 minutes. After 3 weeks, when a questionnaire measuring the level of anxiety and depression was administered, the sample that had unlimited time for social media had a higher level than the members of the other sample. After imposing the same rules and the first sample, they were left with only mild symptoms.

A study by professors at the University of Pennsylvania (Whitty, 2008: 1707-1723) showed that spending a long time on social networks increases the level of depression in users. This study focused on 504 high school subjects using a scale that tested social media addiction, and most of the positive responses showed that adolescents used to compare themselves with others of their age, who had a better financial situation, went better. often during the holidays, and their posts had a greater impact, more appreciation and favorable comments. Subjects tended to post as many photos as possible with them and were bothered by tagging in posts that did not attract the attention of others. In adolescents, FOMO syndrome develops, namely the fear of being left out of solid groups with certain social requirements. The authors conclude that, in addition to the beneficial impact that certain media have, the only one who can set boundaries between the two worlds is the individual.

7. Conclusions

Smartphones with multiple functions and internet access have become an irreplaceable mechanism in everyday life, among young people who use them constantly to initiate from phone calls to exchanges of messages and multimedia content. Adolescents use such mechanisms to maintain a close link between real and online life. In the interaction mediated by social networks, different situations generate different behaviors. Thus, women are more likely to show depressive and anxious symptoms than men. They may show emotional lability related to how the interaction, positive or negative, the conversation partner or the meaning of the messages occurs. On social networks, a message can have both objective and subjective meanings, depending on the previous experience of the receiver.

Within the social connections that arise in the Internet, each situation to which the adolescent is exposed can have negative and positive values, having in the foreground how it allows to be affected by that situation, the human being having a hypercomplex behavior. and chameleon. In the online space, it can be modified, changed, sometimes radically transformed and can have a negative imprint on the further development of the future adult. Young people who spend more time on social networks have a more developed level of depression and anxiety Depression and anxiety have as a way of manifesting the way teenagers, more depressed than men, or people who spend more time on dating sites. socializing exposes their thoughts, emotions, feelings.

Teenagers are very open on social media networks, leaving aside inhibitions. Depressed young people tend to post on such channels or interact through these environments to the detriment of face-to-face communication.

Online communication is devoid of real, authentic emotions. Emoticons or writing or describing a condition is far from emotionally equal to the facial gesture or expression that accompanies it. Virtual communication has as a starting point more the

transmission of one's own feelings to the detriment of balancing the needs of others, being done only when the adolescent is connected to a device that allows this.

Online social networks have a great impact on the future development of the adolescent, but also on the present in which he lives and manifests himself.

The Internet and virtual proximity, drawn through social networks, lead to the loss of the direct character of interpersonal relationships and the development of technology-mediated, and behind the screen the individual wears a mask (Ceobanu, 2016), which reveals itself as much as it considers enough to meet the expectations or desires of others. Physical proximity loses ground to the detriment of the virtual one, which shelters an infinite space, with an unlimited number of accessible people to enter into an interpersonal relationship of any kind. The virtual environment facilitates the psychological approach, but its quality is weaker than the physical one, which requires more time, but is stronger and more authentic.

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