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Psychological Impact of Social Media Use on Quality of Life and Human Potentiality

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Psychological Impact of Social Media Use on Quality of Life and Human Potentiality

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

Social media is a form of information transfer through websites or applications operating on the Internet, within communities created by users of these websites, which are part of virtual media and are an essential factor in the development of information and communication technologies (ICT4D). Examples are Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Skype, Instagram, and Twitter. Social media, serving various psychological functions, may alleviate negative emotions caused by distressing life circumstances, despite potentially leading to adverse outcomes, as a compensatory model of Internet-related activities posits. Excessive social media use leads to increased anxiety instead of lessening it (Boursier et al., 2020). Filling time is a crucial motivator for scrolling through social media. Seven-day abstinence from social media increased mental wellbeing and social connectedness; coping, habit, and boredom were responsible for social media use (Brown & Kuss, 2020). Thus, both the negative motivations and adverse effects of social media usage could question whether online activity could improve wellbeing. The role of the media is unique, especially in a crisis, such as pandemics or the threat of war or climate awareness.

We study the relationship between the use of social media, human potentiality (HP), and quality of life (QL) of knowledge workers (KWs) in Poland, a transition economy in a crisis, in an ecological approach. We believe that the use of social media influences the development of HP and the QL of KWs in information systems. By HP, we understand the sensitivity and perception of oneself and others in specific contexts. So we think about a holistic vision of the world, wisdom, awareness of the decision-making sense, world views, ethics and morality, openness to other people, commitment to achieving goals, or aesthetic sensitivity. The QL can mean life satisfaction, wellbeing, and happiness. It is perceived subjectively by the individual and more clearly defined by standard terms or areas. It includes a sense of subjectivity in life, good social relationships, job or family satisfaction, physical wellbeing, and the ability to express an individual spirituality (Anke & Fugl-Meyer, 2003).

Our methodological process comprised mixed methods. Qualitative methods included a critical literature review, judgment sampling, and focus group interviews. Quantitative methods based on social media use new indicators and adaptation of psychosocial shorter tools for measuring HP and QL. Social media use indicators were the ways of time spent, the frequency of initiating a new session, the number of platforms the participants are engaged in, and the subjective importance attached to the social media use. We intend to collect the data online with newly adopted questionnaires among 400 KWs from Lower Silesia.

We based our study on two research questions: "P1. Does social media influence QL and HP in keywords? 'and' Q2. What dimensions of QL and HP do social media have the greatest impact?". Social media use preliminary research results suggest differentiated relationships between the use of social media various types, QL, and HP among knowledge workers in Poland, a transition economy. We conducted the pilot study among 67 KWs in May 2022, after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Poles admitted approximately three million refugees mainly, and the Polish Ministry of Health announced the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe these two phenomena may have impacted our data, although we cannot yet determine the direction of the bias. We intend to explore this with retrospective experimental research. Our study extends the current research trend regarding the use of psychological effects in social media, especially in crises such as pandemics and the feeling of being threatened by war. We believe that the results of our research will support KWs in their professional and personal development in the educational context.

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