



Social media as a more positive place for users in the future

Melanie Mecklin

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Abstract:

In this work, the impact of social media on users is investigated with emphasis on the positive side of social media. Since the topic of social media is so broad, this work focuses on the more positive side of social media and how to make it better for future users. "How do users view the idea of an earlier introduction to critical thinking over social media in schools?" and "How would a better relationship to social media from a young age benefit society?" are the research questions of this thesis. To get as relevant and honest answers as possible about how users are influenced by social media, written interviews were conducted for participants in three age groups: 14–19 years, 20–35 years and 40–60 years. These age groups were chosen for the survey because they were at different stages of life when social media started to grow into what it is today. Many aspects of both negative and positive were highlighted in the responses, some of which were similar in all age groups and some of which were more specific to a certain age group, for example the younger groups had more to say in their responses. The question where all but one answer was of the same opinion that an earlier introduction to critical thinking about social media already at the first stage in schools could promote the relationship between the user and social media. This is supported by the theories addressed in the work, Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development (1934), Albert Bandura's theory of social learning (1977) and Jan Piaget's developmental theory (1936, 1950) and more. According to the results, social media really has a very positive impact on users, although there were a lot of negative aspects as well, which contributes to the discussion of how to solve the problems that come with social media such as bad mental health.

Keywords: Critical thinking, Learning, Misinformation, Globalization, Mental Health, Developmental theories

Lärdomsprov

Melanie Mecklin

Sociala medier som en mer positiv plats för framtida användare

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Sammandrag:

I detta arbete undersöks sociala mediers påverkan på användare. Eftersom ämnet sociala medier är så pass brett, fokuserar detta arbete på positiva sidan av sociala medier och hur man kan göra den ännu bättre för framtida användare. Undersökningsfrågorna lyder "Hur ser användare på en tidigare introduktion om kritiskt tänkande gällande sociala medier i skolor? Hur skulle en bättre relation till sociala medier från ung ålder gynna samhället?". För att få så relevanta och ärliga svar som möjligt om hur användare påverkas av sociala medier, genomfördes skriftliga intervjuer för deltagare i tre olika åldersgrupper: 14–19 år, 20–35 år och 40–60. Dessa åldersgrupper valdes till undersökningen eftersom de varit i olika skeden av livet när sociala medier började bli så stor som den är idag. Många aspekter om både negativt och positivt lyftes fram i svaren, varav en del var liknande i alla åldersgrupper och en del var mer specifikt för en viss åldersgrupp, som till exempel yngre grupperna hade mycket mer att säga i deras svar. Frågan där alla, förutom ett svar, var av samma åsikt var att en tidigare introduktion till kritiskt tänkande över sociala medier redan i första stadiet i skolor kunde främja förhållandet mellan användaren och sociala medier. Detta stöds av teorierna som tas upp i arbetet, Lev Vygotskys sociokulturella teori om den kognitiva utvecklingen (1934), Albert Banduras teori om social inlärning (1977) samt Jan Piagets utvecklingsteori (1936, 1950) med mera. I resultaten kan man se att sociala medier verkligen har en mycket positiv inverkan på användare, även om det framkom en hel del negativa aspekter till lika vilket bidrar till diskussion hur man kan lösa problemen som kommer med sociala medier, som till exempel dålig mental hälsa.

Nyckelord: Kritiskt tänkande, Inlärning, Missinformation, Globalisering, Mental hälsa, Utvecklingsteorier

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1 Introduction

For a long time, social media has been seen and talked about as having a bad influence on users around the world. Everything from bad self-images to easy spreading of misinformation has been mainly on display. That young people are affected at an early age by a distorted image of reality and are exposed to “ideals” on how they should look and what counts as successful. In my work I will dive deeper into these sides of social media but what I really want to find out is if social media can be seen as a positive asset instead of an addictive, constant negative influence for users. Why I chose this topic is because of how many negative opinions there are about social media but the fact that people still use social media on daily basis raises questions and interest about why people view social media the way they do. Therefore, I also wanted to consider the positive side of social media because there certainly are a lot of concrete positive aspects to it as well.

1.1 Background

What does social media actually mean and why has it grown so big among people? Social media are different internet forums where only the users create the content. Users can be anything from individual people to large companies that market through social media and advertise their products or services and thus reach a large audience. Individual people can post almost any content they want as long as they follow the platform's rules and regulations. There you can also follow other people's profiles and see their posts on your own feed.

These platforms form huge global communities that the user can participate in in any way they find suitable for them. Users can participate in discussions via comments on other people's posts or start threads that other people can comment on. For many people, this gives a sense of belonging somewhere to something bigger than oneself, as also stated in the Yle “vetamix” (Lindholm, 2022) article *“Sociala medier får oss att må dåligt, men ändå är vi där- Hjärnforskaren Sissela Nutley förklarar varför”* (Lindholm, 2022) and that your voice is heard around the globe. Examples of social media are YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Skype and many more. All

these platforms have different uses as some of them are meant more for formal interactions like work while others are meant for marketing or influencing and for fun and pleasure.

1.2 Aim of the study

In my work I want to find out if the positive sides of social media are noticed by users and why many people view social media so negatively. Why I do this research and analysis is to try to highlight the real power social media holds and how to turn the power into positive outcomes instead of what it is today. It is obvious that social media can have a very negative impact on users, especially the younger you are, and because of this, investigate if there is anything you could do to change that for future generations. In the article by Yle “vetamix” in association with the brain scientist Sissela Nutley, she talks about the negative effects on the users and the reasons users still want to continue using these platforms. The aspects of this article are an asset to find solutions in this thesis that could help renew the global view of social media to a rather positive and more opportunity-oriented view of what social media actually could provide for the users and the whole world.

During early childhood up to early adolescence, the brain is most receptive to information and is heavily shaped into the early identity the child is going to have, but the brain is always changing and adapting, this is called neuroplasticity, according to the site “Verywellmind” in the article “what is neuroplasticity” (Cherry, 2022). During the brain's most plastic years, it is very important to lay good foundations for the child to form a strong identity foundation instead of building an unstable and insecure foundation which comes easily with irresponsible use of social media. To prevent this from happening, according to my own opinion, it would be good to introduce at a very early age, for example in schools, the impact of social media and critical thinking at a level that suits the young students.

1.3 Research questions and hypothesis

These are the research questions of this thesis. How do users view the idea of an earlier introduction to critical thinking over social media? How would a better relationship to social media from a young age benefit society? For the answers I am going to conduct interviews and study theories and earlier studies on human psychology and development. The reason for these research questions is to potentially help people to form and develop around the world we live in and not to expect the world to form around each separate individual.

1.4 Limitations

In this thesis I am going to focus more on a positive and more opportunity-oriented view, but with the facts of the negative in mind. Because of social media being such a broad area of information and content, limitations to the problem area needed to be put for a more targeted thesis. While this thesis is, as already mentioned, focusing on the positive aspects of social media and how to make it a better place for users in the future, it is still important to include the main negative influences social media has on the user. This is because the problems need to be pointed out to be solved.

1.5 Structure of thesis

The chapters of this paper cover every step of this research, methods used, analyzing of the results and the discussion. After this introduction, we move on to the methods used to collect the data needed to form a strong enough foundation to answer the research question. The method chapter deals with how the data was gathered and grouped as well as the choosing of relevant articles and theories handling this matter.

The third chapter covers the results gotten from the interviews. The interview consisted of 13 questions and each one was handled in the order from one to thirteen with the answers put together from each group but still separated from each other so it would be clear who answered what and their similarities and dissimilarities. In this chapter, there are some charts depicting the statics of the interview for a clearer and accurate picture.

The discussion and analysis of the results and conclusions of the data gathered in the recent chapter, happens in chapter four. Here are some of the psychological theories and articles lifted forward for comparison and finding the reasons certain people may have certain views on social media and to find an answer to the research question and try to prove the hypothesis right.

Lastly you will find the chapter that includes the research questions in all three languages.

2 Method of research

The approach to this was with an interest in how other people view social media, so the logical way to go was interviews. I have discussed with a few people prior to writing this thesis about what social media is capable of, both positive and negative, which is why I decided to do interviews with people instead of just reading what is written on the internet. When asked the right questions and people feel they have no judgement whatsoever about their answers, the truest and most honest answers are to be expected and that is exactly what this thesis is about, true feelings about social media and how to potentially turn it in to a more positive place for all users.

When conducting interviews, it is important to inform the person about to be interviewed, their integrity such as if their answers are going to be anonymous, what their answers will be used for and to give them information on what the interview is about and let them know it is voluntary, according to TENK, Finnish national board on research integrity, in their publication “ The ethical principles of research with human participants and ethical review in the human sciences in Finland “ (2019). After this, they can decide whether or not to be a part of the study. In this case, the answers were anonymous and the information that was going to be used was informed at the start of the written interview. I also made sure, that if the interviewee was a minor, to have the consent of a parent either through text or verbally, to interview the minor and they also got to look through the questions beforehand if they so requested, as this was also mentioned in TENK’s publication about ethical principles with human participants and minors (2019).

The interview was written on a document that I sent to all the people I chose to interview through messages. The participating age groups were divided into three categories, 14-19 years, 20-35 years, and 40-60 years. I chose these groups because all of them were in dissimilar stages of life when social media spread and grew into what it is today. All of whom were interviewed were someone who I knew or was acquainted with from before. Some I knew were more into the social media influencer lifestyle while some I knew were more of a regular social media user.

The primary plan was to get 3-5 people from each age group to answer the questions, but the number of participating people ended up being a little bit different. In a whole, 17

people participated in answering the interview while 24 people were invited to the interview. I analyzed the differences between the age groups' views on social media and how it affects them according to their opinions and realizations. Some chose to send me voice messages of their answers because of personal preferences.

Why I chose to conduct a written interview was because I wanted the interviewed to be able to take a while to think about the answers and not feel as if they had to know the answer right away. By this, there was an opportunity to have more people answer than if I had conducted face to face interviews with the ones interviewed. Even people who lived further away were able to answer this way, which was handy for both them and me.

The oldest interviewees had developed a skill of critical thinking, and their brain was more or less fully developed when social media hit trough, in contrast to the younger interviewees. The ones in the age group from 20-35 were an older child or a teenager when social media started to take a place in our everyday routines. At this point social media was not as big as it is today, but big enough to start to change the view of the world for the younger generation who had been introduced to the new world of easily accessible social media.

Moving on to our youngest interviewees, aged 14-19. They have grown up with social media from the earliest stages of their life. This means that social media is, and have been, in some way always present in their lives and because of their brain being in such a receptive stage to all information around them, it is most likely for them to be extremely influenced by social media platforms. The growth of social media has been extremely fast and wide, which is why I chose these groups as groups of interest even if they are not that far apart objectively but in this case the perspectives on social media, are expected to be somewhat different between these three groups.

2.1 Interview questions and method of analyzation

The interview consisted of questions on the interviewee's views on social media and their own habits and preferences on their feed and profile. Some of the questions asked the interviewee to describe their own thoughts on how social media had impacted them both in positive and negative ways as well how they viewed its impact on society. The documents of the interview were made in three different languages, Finnish, Swedish and English, for a wide range of people to be able to answer the questions but in the end, only the Finnish and Swedish documents were sent out because there were no English-speaking participants this time.

Below are the interview questions asked, in English.

1. What are your first thoughts when thinking about social media?
2. What social media platforms do you use?
3. How often do you use these platforms?
4. What content do you like to see on your feed?
5. Do you think social media has an influence on you?
 - If you said yes, how does it influence you?
6. Has social media ever had a positive influence on you?
 - If it has, how?
7. Has social media ever had a negative influence on you?
 - If you like, you can give examples.
8. Does social media have a more negative or positive influence on you?
9. Do you feel pressured to post “perfect” pictures on social media?

10. Have you ever been away from social media for a longer period of time? How did it feel?
11. Do you think social media has a big influence on the users?
12. What positive influences does social media bring to society and the individual user in your opinion?
13. Do you think it would be beneficial to introduce social media and critical thinking over social media in the first stage in schools?

The analysis of the answers through the interview is going to be divided into different categories, each age group is going to be compared to each other and by that dissimilarities and similarities are going to be visible for figures and visual representations to be made. The participating people and gender as well as age, are going to be made into visual representations as diagrams for a clear understanding of who did participate and what their answers were, anonymously, of course.

Now to conclude the whole method, starting from doing research about social media itself and the effects it has on users, there was a lot of negative on the internet. In a way, there is a lot of demonization of social media on the internet. One can absolutely find positive opinions and views of social media on the internet, but to get deeper and more analytical answers by people who you know use the internet and answer certain questions needed to get a complete grip on the matter, provides a more targeted and exact answers that are needed to do this study.

The process from deciding who to interview to analyzing the results took a few weeks in total. The people were picked based on their age and the information that they use at least some social media platform. Some were more invested in social media than others, which would lead to more diverse answers to cover a bigger area of opinions and experiences.

The written interview suited everyone chosen and allowed everyone to answer at their own pace with no pressure about any interruptions or any sort of onleading from the counterpart such as misunderstandings of body language or wrong interpretation of the answer. This method gave written and clear answers.

To analyze the answers, the answers by both men and women are to be divided into two groups, analyzed separately and to each other to point out the possible similarities and differences there are amongst the same genders and amongst the two different genders. After that, the answers are divided into the three age groups which then are analyzed separately and to each other. In the next chapter, the answers themselves are going to be deeply analyzed and written in a detailed manner. Each question is to be gone through from the three age groups' views, and this is also to be read in the next chapter more closely.

3 Theory

There are many psychological theories and studies on how the human brain works and in what stages different things happen to human development. Some of these will be taken up in a more detailed view further in the thesis while analyzing the answers from the interview, to really get into why people in different stages view social media the way they do and if it is possible to maybe give social media a better reputation and build a better foundation for people who use it or will be using it in the future.

The theories that are used to analyze the results are chosen because they cover human behavior, development, and learning. Many theories, such as Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1934) and Piaget's cognitive developmental theory (1936,1950), state that children's learning happens through them doing things themselves while another social learning theory based on the work of Albert Bandura (1977) clearly states that children learn through any kind of stimuli and example, all this according to the site "verywellmind" (Cherry, 2022). They also state that Vygotsky (1934) and Piaget's (1936,1950) theories share the similarity of learning happening through own drive and live experiences while Bandura's theory (1977) has a strong emphasis on a very wide learning range such as both hands on and observation. According to Bandura's social learning theory, (1977) children are extremely receptive to anything they see and take in behavioral examples from their surroundings both from live experiences and through what they see on tv and media. This leads us on to the path why these three groups were chosen and supports the media being a sculptor of the users and has even a stronger grip on the younger users.

Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1934) strongly talks about the psychological development happening through social interactions and the influence of peers, surrounding culture and family. According to this theory human learning is mostly based on these social interactions throughout life and very influenced by people who one sees have the role of a mentor or someone one looks up to. Vygotsky also talks about one very important concept of sociocultural development known as the zone of proximal development and means the distance between the knowledge a child can use by themselves to them needing guidance from an adult with more information, verywellmind writes (Cherry, 2022)

The social learning theory introduced by Albert Bandura speaks of children learning through observing the consequences of the actions of their surrounding people and peers. He also speaks of the actions rewarded are more likely to be repeated and more easily imitated by others but on the other hand, the actions punished and with bad outcomes are avoided by the observants, verywellmind writes (Cherry, 2022).

According to “verywellmind” (Cherry, 2022), the theory by Piaget (1936,1950) states that learning happens throughout the entire life and that people absorb new points of view and opinions their entire life as they are exposed to different new things. In his theory, he lists four different stages of development: Sensorimotor stage, birth to the age of two, preoperational stage from two to the age of seven, concrete operational stage from ages seven to eleven and lastly the formal operational stage from twelve upwards (Cherry, 2022). Even if the oldest interview group had already developed a strong foundation of their own personality and world view when social media started playing a bigger role in the life of people, it still was a new and dramatically said, life altering force.

For younger people the opinions and views change much faster than for adults because as Piaget’s theory of cognitive developmental theory (1936,1950) states, the learning happens in different stages and from 12 upwards, the logical and systematical thinking starts developing and continues developing into adulthood. This is the formal operational stage in Piaget's theory according to the article on Piaget's theory (1936,1950) on “verywellmind” (2022). In the earlier stage of the formal operational stage the person is more sensitive to new information than an adult but at any stage it is bound to influence the person.

The article by Yle “vetamix” (Lindholm, 2022), in association with brain scientist Sissela Nutley, talk about people being negatively affected by social media but still finding themselves on these platforms spite of the harmful effects it has on the mental health of the users. Further in the article they discuss that social media provides a place where people can put themselves and their opinions out for others to see and even feel a sense of belonging. She also says that scrolling through social media can even be a way of reward seeking for the user. She also states that when dividing users in groups, the negative effects reported are apparent to certain groups, for example, young women. It is also clear,

according to Nutley, that the more time users spend on social media, in particular the ones who already have a weakened state of mental health, the more negative the effects are.

Many platforms have age limits and restrictions on their platforms to protect the young from possibly rough and harmful content for the sake of them being sensitive to new information as theories mentioned above state. Even if the platforms may have an age limit such as Instagram has the age limit 13, according to Instagram's own website, under "Continuing to make Instagram safer for the youngest members of our community" (2021), there are many ways for younger people to get onto social media. On the site "Technipages", in the article "how to use TikTok without creating an account" (2021) is step-by-step described how anyone, no matter the age, can use TikTok without creating a profile nor giving out any personal information. This enables a free path for very young children to get onto social media which can potentially be harmful without the right tools.

Doing research on when a child starts to take notice on their appearance, on the site Fatherly.com in an article about child development named "When do children start to care about their looks" (Lauren Vinopal, 2021) Oksana Hagerty who is a developmental psychologist, speaks about children being even as young as five years old, start to care about their appearance. She also states that the child's worldview on how things are supposed to be, is largely formed by what the child is surrounded by much like in the theories mentioned above.

4 Results of the interview

As earlier mentioned, a total of 17 people answered the interview while 24 were invited, making up the three age groups. The statistics of these groups are depicted below. Voice messages had to be transcribed onto a document where all the answers were gathered for reading and final analyzation. There were a few who had forgotten to answer and needed a reminder to answer and did answer after the reminder. As time was running out, the ones who still had not answered had to be left unanswered but were still included in the statistics on how many had been invited to answer the interview.

During the whole analysis of the results, the positive and negative sides of the answers were documented to paint a clear picture if there were more positive or negative views on the social media and from which age group or gender group it was more visible, what similarities and differences were there between these groups.

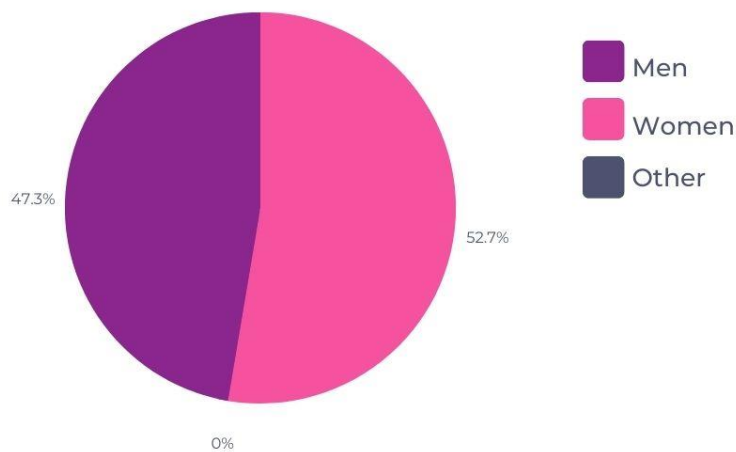


Figure 1. genders of the participants

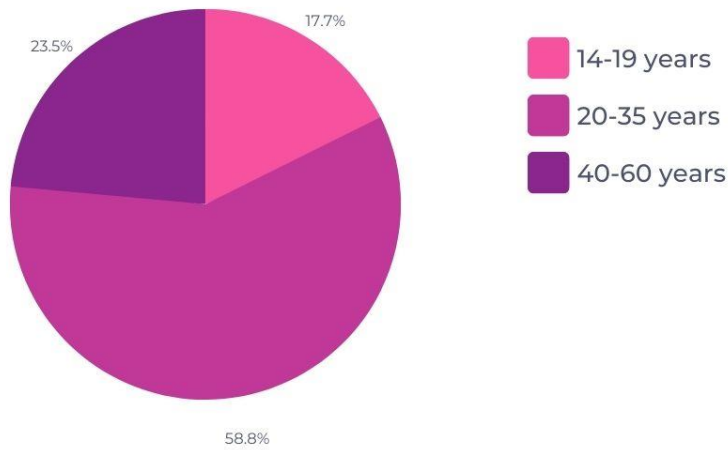


Figure 2. Participants in each age group

After reading through the answers from the interview there was an element of surprise that was not very similar to the writings on the internet about social media. In short, most participants had a much more positive view on social media than the internet sites let one believe. As an example of this, the article by Yle where Sissela Nutley talked about social media having a bad impact on the wellbeing of the user, but users keep using it despite of that (Lindholm, 2022). In this article Nutley discusses that as an example, if there are beauty ideals someone can relate to on social media, it can push the user to compare oneself to these ideals they are exposed to. In many of the answers it was pointed out that this in fact has been or still is an issue that users are dealing with quite often. As they clearly state in the article by Yle and Nutley (Lindholm, 2022), it is very noticeable, that social media can have a very negative impact on users' well-being, but does it really have to be this way? In many of the answers there are a couple of them pointing out this issue but also some solutions they themselves have taken to work against social media's negative impacts that Yle talks about in their article.

When dividing the participants into two different categories, men and women, the women shared a few similarities as well as the men. As this thesis is focusing more on the positive aspects of social media, both sides as well as the negative aspects are taken into consideration to get a clear picture of what social media is in the daily users' opinion and to find solutions to the existing problems.

4.1 First thoughts when social media is mentioned

A few women already in the beginning when asked what their first thoughts on social media were, the comparing to others was integrated in their answer. Otherwise, both genders answered that they see social media as an easy way to keep in touch with both close friends and less close friends, no matter where they live. This was also in every age group a very common answer from both women and men. Another common point between men and women and all the age groups, was that social media is a place where information is easily spread to the user community.

4.2 Most used platforms

The second question in the interview was about which platforms they use. The most common amongst the three age groups was Instagram, WhatsApp and snapchat. The older the age group, the more common the more formal and work-related platforms were, such as LinkedIn and Facebook and occasionally twitter. The younger participants had a little wider range of platforms they used, for example TikTok, snapchat, BeReal, Jodel, Tise and other apps that are more for entertainment and pastime purposes.

In every group there were exceptions of course, but these are the average answers gotten from each group. In nearly every single answer Instagram was named, which indicates that it is the most timeless and well suited for every age group in this study. The age group that was in the middle (20-35) had the broadest variety of platforms including both

entertainment and work-related platforms. In all the average number of platforms each person used was around 4-5 platforms no matter the age group.

4.3 Usage of these platforms

As for the third question, how often the participants use one or more of these platforms, everyone answered daily, without exceptions. Some of the two younger age groups even added an hour estimate on how much they use social media each day and these estimates ranged between 3 hours to even up to 8 hours a day. The highest number came from a person that works through social media which is in this case worth mentioning.

4.4 Desired content

The content users want to see according to the answers from the interview was related to their interests, making their life easier through tips and hacks, positive content and hobbies. This was very common throughout all of the age groups. The thing that separated women from men was the beauty interest. Some of the women wrote about their interest towards makeup hacks, clothes and upcycling ideas and beauty inspiration in all. Also, the men had appearance related content as a part of what they wanted to see on their feed such as clothing and overall trends but mostly in the two younger age groups. What was common in the older age group was the more open view of the content they wanted to see. Overall positive and happy content was a common answer between all of the participants in the older age group as well as their interest related content.

4.5 Personal view on the impact on social media

The fifth question of the interview had the participants discussing with themselves if social media impacts them somehow. The group ranging from 40-60, had a more simple and positive view on how social media affects them than the younger groups. The third

and oldest group answered in a shorter and concise manner while the two younger groups dove deeper into the matter writing about both negative and positive ways social media impacts them and their wellbeing. Many from the two younger groups, both women and men, mentioned the possibilities and ideas that come through social media, making their lives easier. Some mentioned the marketing happening through the platforms which turned out to have both positive and negative outcomes, according to the results from the interview. Some that had encountered good marketing and found good products had a more positive view from this marketing angle than the ones who had ended up regretting buying the product or service they had seen.

Many also spoke in a negative way about the comparing to others, both men and women in different aspects. Women wrote more and very clearly about the beauty standards and comparing themselves to other women both appearance wise and lifestyle wise. Men on the other hand talked about self-esteem in general and comparing life situations to others they encounter on social media. Many also mentioned the time wasted on the platforms as a negative thing about social media.

4.6 Positive impacts of social media

When asked about the positive ways social media had impacted the ones participating in the interview, there were more than a few things that came up. As earlier mentioned, many pointed out the lifehacks and new ideas social media brings the user making their lives easier and was a very common answer across all the ages of the participants as well as social media being a brilliant place for spreading information and news about anything and people being able to choose what they want to see. On social media followers can also comment on other people's posts which a few wrote they had gotten compliments and good feedback from other people on the internet. Another common answer was getting new contacts with new people and seeing old friends thrive through social media makes the users feel good and has a very positive impact on users. No matter how far away one lives, they are always available through some social media platform, and it makes it easier for people to stay in contact. Many also use social media as a source of motivation when they lack it, for example getting them to do something they feel they

have no energy for or not enough courage to do. Some even wrote they have been a source of information for others on the platform and by this, gotten positive feedback and even money through work they do on or through social media.

4.7 Negative impacts of social media

On the other hand, when asked about the negative effects social media had on the participants, the list was far from empty. Just like in the earlier questions, the two younger groups wrote much more about the negative effects social media has on them than the oldest group did. The comparing to others' pictures and appearances was now a common answer amongst both men and women. The women had more appearance empathic answers compared to men who talked about the comparison to others posts and talking about the time they feel like they waste on social media and it being a thief of their night sleep.

As earlier mentioned, marketing on social media can lead to unnecessary purchases which also was mentioned in the answers to this particular question. All groups had some negative aspects of the social media they talked about but what was apparent was the fact that the oldest group had been the least negatively impacted by social media, according to the results. They merely mentioned one thing if anything, such as they had tried a bad tip, hack or recipe that failed or other people on the platform posting whatever comes up in their mind and opinions as facts, without further thought, leading to frustration and anger.

One answer from the third group (40-60) wrote about criticism, for example criticism over bad service or a bad product, not belonging in the world of social media. Something that was a reoccurring part of many answers was the pointing out of the participants having been more negatively affected earlier when they were younger than they are letting themselves be now. This was common for both the younger groups.

4.8 Social media as a more positive or negative place the user personally

According to the results of the interview all in all, most of the participants felt they were more positively impacted by social media but like earlier, there were a few who felt strongly about social media being a more negative place than a positive for them, but still stated it had both negative and positive impacts. The ones who felt that social media was a more negative place than a positive, had earlier mentioned that they tend to compare themselves to others and feel like their self-esteem and self-image suffers from the comparing to others. A few wrote that social media has both a positive and negative influence on them. Many wrote about the possibility everyone is given when entering social media to weed out the bad influences such as profiles one knows will impact oneself negatively. This is one of the solutions to a healthier relationship to social media. This in its own turn will make the users feel it is a more positively influential place. In some of the earlier answers, the possibility of choice had been brought up several times by different age groups but mainly in the second group.

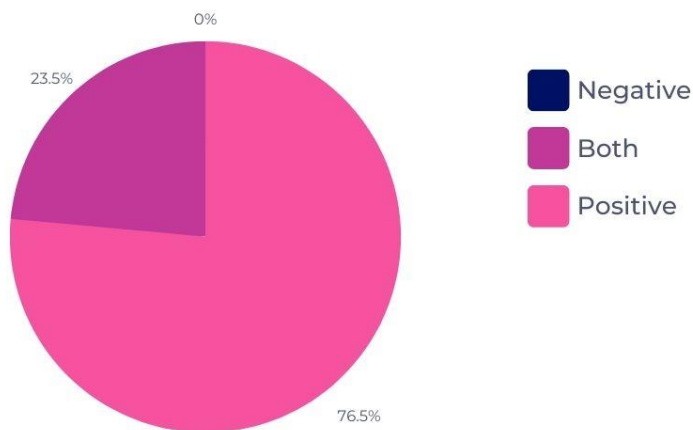


Figure 3. The negative or positive influences of social media according to results

4.9 The pressure of posting perfect content

The image one gives out on social media of oneself is up to each user on the platform as long as they follow the rules of the platform. When interviewing the participants if they feel any pressure to post only in their mind perfect pictures according to their interpretation of society's view on perfection, of themselves, most answered in all the groups that they don't directly feel pressured for them to be perfect. Though, many of these still wrote that they don't want to post pictures of them where they feel like they don't look good or representative.

As well as in the earlier answers there were a few stating that they had felt more pressured to post only perfect pictures when they were younger and as they have gotten older, the pressure has slightly lifted more and more throughout the years. A point that was brought to attention was that different platforms can have different weights of pressure to post the perfect content. Taken directly from the result, one woman from the second group spoke about Instagram being more of a pressure point for them than TikTok for instance. Men on the other hand did not on an average feel very pressured to post the perfect pictures, exceptions did exist, but they talked about wanting to post pictures that represented them but are still seen as aesthetically pleasing to others.

Already in the youngest group, the most common answer was that they did not feel a certain pressure to post the perfect pictures but still, as earlier said, pictures that they felt were representative and not unpleasing to them. The second group, according to the results, the older the participants got, the less they post on social media and do not feel a certain pressure to post the perfect pictures and paint a perfect picture of their life on social media for others to see. The ones who did feel pressured to post perfect pictures were mostly the same who thought that social media does have a more negative impact on their lives and were evenly distributed between women and men in the second group. All in all, the most common answer between all the groups was that they do not feel pressured to post perfect pictures but still they want to post pictures they like themselves.

4.10 Thoughts on taking a break from social media

As social media is a daily pastime activity for most users, the next question had the participants discussing if they had ever gone a longer period of time without any social media platform. Most commonly all the groups answered that they had not taken any breaks from social media, at least not intentionally. Some of the ones who realized they did have periods of time when for example they did not have access to social media because of no network connection or other reason, felt a little empty or jittery because they were used to always having something to scroll on or talk to others through, but after a while they got used to it and then the feeling of less pressure and a feeling of release and freedom came forward.

A couple of participants from the second group wrote they had chosen to be without social media for a while and one of them said it was freeing and another said she did not see any difference. One participant wrote that she herself had not tried being without social media, but she described how her friend had deleted all social media except for WhatsApp so they could have contact with their family and have time to work on themselves. After this, when taking back social media, she wrote that her friend did not get the same pleasure out of social media anymore and now they barely use any platform at all.

Some from the two younger groups stated that they should try for their wellbeing and see how they react, while one who works with social media said she is not about to take any breaks because of her strive for a bigger following number and thus, more career opportunities. One from the youngest group wrote that they could not see themselves taking any breaks because they would, according to them, not be able to withstand social media or as a middle group participant put it, he did not want to take a break because it would be inconvenient for his friends who communicate with him through these platforms.

4.11 Social media and the impact on the users

When the interviewees were asked if social media has in their own opinion a big impact on users in general, a few different answers came forward. A few of them were a simple “yes”, social media has a big impact on users, without further take on the matter. All of the participants answered that social media does have some sort of an impact on people on these platforms, the differences lie in the way the participants in the interview thought social media have an impact on people.

In the older group there was one answer stating she thinks that in her age, social media does not have an impact on people anymore but for younger people the impact is bigger and stronger. Across all the age groups there were a few common answers, one of which was users being affected by the information they consume on social media. The other was the easy way to stay in contact with others no matter where they go or live. In the middle group where ages ranged from 20-35, there were a variety of views on how social media affects the users. One pointed out, as earlier mentioned, the time wasted on social media scrolling through content posted by other people, another spoke about the algorithms making it possible to aim certain content to certain people for maximum efficiency on for example marketing. An algorithm being the system that identifies what one user spends time looking at and liking and then suggests things in that category or things in close range to that interest group, to the user.

One from the middle group stated that she had noticed the youth being, in a way, nearly possessed by social media and behave in a totally different way that she did in her childhood, while another from the same age group stated she felt that even if she does not feel much of the appearance pressure, it is a huge part of many a people's lives today because of social media.

From the youngest group came an answer containing a name for this kind of behavior, painting a perfect picture of a perfect life and appearance, “that girl”. When doing research of the naming “that girl”, a good and short description from the site Bustle.com (Sahar Arshad, 2021) read “*That girl is the queen of romanticizing her life*”. In the same answer there was another example of “the Facebook mom” who, according to the interviewed, paints the picture of having the most perfect life and posting nearly all of it for

her friends and followers to see. Another from the youngest group pointed out that through social media comes norms and trends which strongly affect the users.

4.12 The impact of social media on society

Not only does the individual get affected by social media, but also the whole society gets impacted by what is shown and talked about on these popular platforms. The twelfth question in the interview covered in what positive ways social media has impacted society and the individual user. Some of the answers to this question were quite long and well formulated and thought out. A common answer through all age groups was that social media enables accessibility of information, as often mentioned through this thesis, easily for all users.

In the middle group there was again a wide range of different answers ranging from short concise to long and detailed. The possibilities of marketing for companies, artists getting seen, communicating with old friends and new people, finding new interests and getting ideas, self-expression, new job opportunities, posting content as memories for oneself, easily spread information and keeping up with other people's lives.

There was one very different answer amongst all the others from the second age group, talking about the power of sharing on social media. The person wrote that he believes that sharing in fact has an impact on others in a bigger way than one would think. As stated in the comment, social media has promoted the globalization of humanity and made the world smaller. It is easy to stay up to date on what is happening around the globe thanks to social media. In his comment he also writes that as many think that sharing content on important topics will not change things at all, which he disagrees with, he then states, thoughts always turn into actions at some point.

The freedom that has come with social media to express oneself can be threatening to some governments. This has even led to some governments not wanting their citizens to step up against their position in power, to block these services from the citizens just to keep their power to themselves, he writes. As for what comes to the individual, he writes

about the platforms being a great place to channel one's own thoughts and when others like the post, it feels like resonating with other people. Another pointed out the things spread on social media that promotes the society and government, for example the fight against global warming and information on it for the individual people and as a while back when there was the municipal election here in Finland, many posted information about their values and movements.

This question got many answers alike, many existed in all the age groups, but the most detailed answers came from the second age group. Even if the question itself was focused on the positive, there was one answer that included a very important point about mental health and society but covered the negative ground. She wrote that social media can, as earlier mentioned, cause appearance pressure and this has a direct link to user's mental health. Because of this direct link between the pressure from social media to mental health and as social media being so widely used, there are many who suffer from the negative impacts from social media and need professional help from a mental health department. The problem she indicates is that the mental health stations are already full, so it is difficult to get fast help from there, and as the user number grows, the more cases on bad mental health caused by social media there are going to be adding on to the already existing problem.

4.13 The integration of critical thinking over social media in schools

Lastly the interviewed were asked if they think that schools should integrate critical thinking into the curriculum, already on the first stage, about social media on a suitable level for the children to comprehend. Most commonly the participants wrote that they think it would be great and the earlier the better. A few wrote, both from the oldest and the middle group, that yes, it would be a great add-on to the curriculum, but it matters who teaches them the critical thinking of social media. One from the middle group stated it would be important to acquaint young people with social media's both harmful and good sides, because the number of young users grows continuously.

There was one from the middle group lifting an important point into light by writing that it is important to teach the young to understand why the things they learn about have certain effects on them and in this case, social media. He continues by writing that it is important to teach young children what is worth sharing on social media and what is not to be shared. The pictures one posts on a platform, the platform has rights over the picture and even if the picture was deleted, it is not certain it will disappear from the internet completely. This is something that maybe young people have a hard time understanding but as he writes, it would still be important to teach them this because later when they dive deeper into the matter, the students see it as something familiar and have an easier time to take it in and understand the information that is given to them.

A few other of the interviewed, answered commonly that it would be very important to teach young children the critical thinking of social media because of the amount of information being spread on the platforms, to be able to filter what is to be believed and what is not. Anyone can be behind the screens, and this is also to be taught to the young in schools, another from the youngest group wrote. According to an answer from the youngest group, a 16-year-old woman wrote that she sees the idea as good because they have never handled social media in their school, and it would be important to build a good foundation on what to and not to do on social media before it's too late and mistakes are made. This would also be a way to avoid future cases of appearance pressure and comparing themselves to others which can lead to bad mental health, and instead the young have a better relationship to social media and with themselves. This was also brought up in the middle and youngest group quite often.

Even if the majority saw this as a possibility, there was one exception from the middle group writing she does not see it being necessary before the 6-9th grade. She continues by writing that later in the 6-9th grade briefly touching on the matter and letting students know, the door is always open to discuss the matter with a teacher, is enough. According to her answer, because of the age limit, there are not that many young people who use social media and even if they had accounts or were on the platforms, they do not actively follow others or post content themselves regularly. She then stated that the appearance starts to interest children after the 6th grade and only then one starts comparing to others but a general knowledge of the fact that everything is not as it seems on social media is

to be brought forward without making a big deal out of it because, as she writes, it could wake the interests to go investigate the world of social media themselves. As a conclusion to the answers to the last question, it again was quite like-minded throughout all age groups, except one in the middle group.

4.14 Summary of the results

The results gotten from all the questions brought different aspects to light that are easy to forget. This was the reason to conduct a written interview for the participants to really write their own answers and that is what the results show. Some wrote more detailed answers, most who did, wrote all of the answers quite detailed while the ones who wrote clearly and concisely, wrote most of their answers that way. The oldest group had the short and concise theme as a common ground while the middle group had both participants who wrote short but concise and those who dove deeper into the answers they wrote. The reason why the second group was so diverse could have been due to a variety of things like having the most participants and the widest age range. The youngest group wrote a good amount of text in their answers and had a pretty good grasp on their view on social media which was a very positive surprise. All in all, all the groups had a more positive view on social media than expected but they were none the less aware of the dark side of social media.

5 Discussion

The results indicate that social media is a big part of many people's lives, providing material to make everyday tasks, chores, and mundane actions easier, thus making life easier. As established from the results of the interview, social media is a brilliant way to spread information which in its own turn can be both positive and negative depending on the source of the information. If the source is reliable and factual it can today be a challenge, even for adults and not only children using these platforms, to identify and to weed out the misinformation. The fact that anyone can put out content on the internet claiming it to be facts, makes it really hard to know and identify which sources are actually reliable and not opinions stated as facts or plain misinformation.

How should one tackle these problems? Going back to the hypothesis “an earlier introduction to social media's positive and negative sides in a child's life, could improve the relationship to social media in the future” is relative in this matter. When asked in the interview if the participants thought it would be good to integrate critical thinking into the curriculum for children already in the first stage of school, most answered that it would be a good way to prevent future mental health problems and it would also be a great way to understand how to weed out misinformation and other harmful aspects. This would, as said in the answers above, be of service to the whole society.

The comment on why it should not be integrated into the curriculum at an early age and only briefly mentioned after the sixth grade while not making a big number out of it, gave a great contrast to this thesis and material for a discussion. Firstly, why I am taking a closer look at this comment is not to push it down, but to break it into pieces, answering the questions that are directly connected to this thesis and to get an interesting discussion between the problems that can exist in integrating critical thinking into the curriculum and how to deal with these problems. In this chapter, I am going to lift other comments for closer inspection and discussion too.

The participant who wrote about not making a big deal out of critical thinking over social media writes that there is an age limit prohibiting children under a certain age from creating accounts or using these platforms and even if they do have an account or are using

the platforms, they do not actively follow others nor do they post regularly themselves, in her opinion. The age limit is a good way to keep social media on a little too high a shelf for children to reach, but the problem is that the shelf rarely stops them, because there is always some sort of a ladder or chair, they can step on to reach up on the shelf. This metaphor painting the picture of while there is an age limit, in my personal experience, it does not stop underage children from logging on to or using these platforms quite easily.

While doing some research on the age limits on social media, it turned out, TikTok for example, will let anyone with an internet connection use their platform. As mentioned in the theory chapter, on the site “Technipages” exists an article named “How to use Tik Tok without creating an account” (2021) explaining step by step, with direct links to the platform, how to use and see content from the platform without giving out any personal information whatsoever. According to the site, by this, you will not have the full extent of the features like liking, commenting, and sharing posts, but watching videos by other creators is possible. This means that no matter how old you are, this is in your reach. YouTube is another platform where anyone can post content that has an account but anyone, even without an account, can watch these videos.

When further analyzing the same answer, I did some research regarding the statement written by the participant, that children start worrying about their appearance after 6th grade forward. What I found was quite worrying, thinking about how easily children are affected by what they see, especially on social media, as earlier mentioned in the theory chapter, according to the article on the site Fatherly.com, “When do children start to care about their looks” (2017, updated 2021) by Lauren Vinopal in association with the developmental psychologist Oksana Hagerty, Hagerty told Fatherly that children as young as five years old had start to take notice in how they look. As Lev Vygotsky's theory states, a child is formed by what and who the child is surrounded by, which means, if the peers, siblings and parents talk about physical appearance, it will most likely start affecting the child as well. The same goes for social media and if the people surrounding the child are using social media in any way, it will also most likely find its way to the child in focus, like anything else.

Lastly, in this comment the participant also wrote that teachers should not make a big number out of it, because this will likely push the children to go explore social media on their own, according to the answer. I did some research, and I chose to compare this to the problem of smoking amongst children. On a site called ash (action on smoking and health) they talked about children being easily affected and pressured by their peers and siblings to take up smoking, in an article “young people and smoking” (2019). Here they also state that the number of children smoking is continuously decreasing, as recently mentioned, and education and knowledge about consequences can, according to the article “result in the postponement of initiation” but does not directly influence the numbers of underage smokers, themselves. The similarities between the children being affected by social media and smoking are proven by many studies and supported by many theories, such as the social learning theory by Albert Bandura (1977) stating children learn through all kinds of stimuli.

In another answer where the participant wrote about social media and governments blocking certain services because they find them threatening towards their position in power, I found it necessary to do some research on the matter. I found a site called “Time” and in an article by them “These are the countries where Twitter, Facebook and TikTok are banned” (Eloise Barry, 2022), were listed countries that had banned social media for exactly the reasons the participant had mentioned earlier in his answer regarding the power social media gives people and society.

5.1 Targeting the research question

"How do users view the idea of an earlier introduction to critical thinking over social media, in schools?". "How would a better relationship to social media from a young age benefit society?" Through this thesis data has been gathered for finding a solid and reliable answer to these research questions. The developmental theories by Lev Vygotsky (1934), Jean Piaget (1936,1950) and Albert bandura (1977) all state that young children are most receptive to the impact of the information from the environment and surroundings, thus, making them the most vulnerable to the harmful sides such as misinformation

and other misleading content on social media. This also points to the fact that at an early age by giving the children the right tools and building a solid foundation for the use of social media and critical thinking, it would in the long run help the children in the future to weed out the harmful content and be able to critically look at the information they are exposed to.

In the interview answers, the ones who see critical thinking of social media as a necessary implementation to the first stage in schools, also state it would in the long run lessen the probability of falling ill mentally by the cause of social media which would benefit the society with less cases of bad mental health caused by social media. Every earlier mentioned theory and study throughout this paper, supports the idea it would be beneficial to introduce critical thinking on a suitable level for the children to comprehend. With the help of this added to the curriculum, children would be able to begin to understand the fundamentals and what to look out for in the big and wide world of social media. Due to their receptive brain in their young age, as mentioned in the developmental theories in the theory chapter, it is a brilliant time to begin grasping the matter of critical thinking of social media. This would directly affect the future mental health problems caused by social media by teaching them not to believe in everything on the platforms, not to do certain things harmful to their integrity and safety and red flags to stay away from certain content they feel like could be harmful to their wellbeing.

6 Svensk sammanfattning av arbetet

6.1 Inledning

Sociala medier ses ofta som ett väldigt negativt och beroendeframkallande medel för användarna. Allt från dålig själv bild till missinformation har varit främst på tapeten. Unga personer utsätts dagligen för idealer om hur man skall se ut till hur man skall leva sitt liv. I detta arbete tar jag djupare upp dessa sidor av sociala medier och hur man kunde göra sociala medier en bättre plats för användare. Orsaken varför jag valde detta ämne är för att det finns mycket negativt skrivet om sociala medier på nätet men användare stannar fortfarande på dessa plattformar. Detta väckte ett intresse om att ta reda på varför människor ser på sociala medier som de gör. I detta ämne har jag huvud fokuset på den positiva sidan av sociala medier.

Sociala medier byggs upp av flera digitala forum och i praktiken kan vem som helst ta del i dem med att skapa innehåll och följa andra som skapar innehåll. Både individuella användare samt företag som vill göra t.ex. marknadsföring genom sociala medier. Man kan som användare lägga ut nästan precis hurdant innehåll man vill, så länge det följer plattformens regler. Detta möjliggör diskussioner mellan användare och en möjlighet att uttrycka sig som man vill.

För många ger det en känsla av samhörighet, som nämndes i artikeln av Yle “vetamix” *“Sociala medier får oss att må dåligt, men ändå är vi där- Hjärnforskaren Sissela Nutley förklarar varför”* (Fredrika Lindholm, 2022) av Nutley. Exempel på sociala medier är YouTube, Tik Tok, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook och Skype, för att nämna några.

I detta arbete vill jag ta reda på om användare av sociala medier ser positiva sidorna av sociala medier och varför så många ser den på ett så negativt sätt. Eftersom sociala medier kan ha väldigt negativa effekter på användare, speciellt unga, skulle jag också reda ut om det fanns någonting man kunde göra för att ändra på detta. I artikeln av Yle med Nutley (Lindholm, 2022), finns många aspekter som kan hjälpa att hitta lösningar för att göra

sociala medier till en bättre och mer möjlighetsinriktad plats för användare i framtiden. Med att ha koll på de huvudsakliga negativa påverkningarna sociala medier har på användare, hjälper det att sedan lösa problemen och hitta lösningar.

Under barndomen är hjärnan som mest mottaglig för ny information enligt artikeln “what is neuroplasticity” (2022) på nätsidan “verywellmind” där de diskuterar hjärnans utveckling. Under denna tid vore det optimalt att bygga en fast grund om deras identitet vilket kan skakas till med ansvarslös användning av sociala medier. Detta kunde enligt mina tankar förhindras med att i ett tidigt skede lära ut kritiskt tänkande om sociala medier för barn på första stadiet i skolor. I artikeln “What is sociocultural Theory?” (2022) på nätsidan “verywellmind, talar skribenten Kendra Cherry om att Lev Vygotskys syn på inläring och utveckling av hjärnan handlar mycket om att barn lär sig genom sociala tillfällen. Att ge en god grund för sociala medier via skolor kunde vara lönsamt istället för att lämna de hamnar bemöta denna värld, utan rätta verktyg, genom deras vänner.

Hur ser användare på en tidigare introduktion om kritiskt tänkande gällande sociala medier i skolor? Hur skulle en bättre relation till sociala medier från ung ålder gynna samhället? Dessa är frågorna i fokus genom ämnet till vilka samlas information och data för att kunna senare besvaras.

Sociala medier är ett väldigt brett ämne vilket betyder att begränsningar för vad som inkluderas i detta arbete görs. I huvudsak behandlar arbetet de positiva aspekterna om sociala medierna men de negativa aspekter som kan hjälpa att bidra till förbättring av dessa medier för användare i framtiden.

6.2 Metod av undersökning

Som metod för datainsamling används teorier om inläring och utveckling hos människan samt intervjuer med olika personer med olika vanor av användning av sociala medier. Intervjun gjordes skriftligt var den intervjuade fick svara med egen tid och var än hen befann sig. Senare kunde den intervjuade skicka svaren och de dokumenterades alla på samma plats för senare analys. Svaren var anonyma och det enda som användes tillsammans med deras svar var ålder och kön. Deltagarna delades upp i tre olika åldersgrupper:

14-19 år, 20-35 år och 40-60 år. Detta gjordes för att de har varit i olika skeden av livet när sociala medier började växa till vad de är idag.

I intervjun fanns 13 frågor angående deltagarnas syn på och användning av sociala medier. Frågorna var skrivna i tre olika språk för en större målgrupp: finska, svenska och engelska. Svaren samlas på ett och samma ställe för slutlig analys och på en del information görs grafer. Varje årsgrupp jämförs med varandra för att hitta likheter samt skillnader mellan dessa grupper. Dessutom jämförs könens olika likheter och olikheter med varandra.

6.3 Teori

Som grund för analys fungerade Lev Vygotskys sociokulturella teori (1934), Jean Piagets utvecklingsteori (1936,1950) och Albert Banduras sociala lärandeteori (1977) för att få en djupare syn på människans beteende, utveckling och inläring samt varför de ser på sociala medier på det sätt de gör. På nätsidan "verywellmind" skriver Cherry om att Banduras teori (1977) talar om att ett barn lär sig genom vad som helst för stimulus de utsätts för vilket är mycket relevant i detta ämne. Piaget's (1936,1950) och Vygotskys (1934) teorier talar om att barn lär sig genom att göra saker själv och genom upplevelser där de själv agerar. Banduras teori (1977) i sin tur talar om att barn lär sig genom alla stimuli från vad de observerar till egna erfarenheter.

I artikeln av Yle "vetamix" (Lindholm, 2022) talar hjärnforskaren Sissela Nutley om att sociala medier har mycket negativa påverkningar på användaren men att fortfarande stannar användare på dessa plattformar. Framåt i artikeln talar Nutley om att för många kan sociala medier skapa ett medel där man kan göra sig hörd samt skapar en känsla av samhörighet åt användare. Hos berättar dessutom för Yle att tidsanvändning på sociala medier kan vara en form av belöningssökande. Det är främst synligt för vissa grupper som till exempel unga kvinnor, att sociala medier har en negativ effekt på dem och om man redan lider av en försämrad mental hälsa, har sociala medier en mycket mer negativ effekt på användaren, säger Nutley i denna artikel.

Även om det finns åldersgränser för barn att ta del i sociala medier, finns det ändå möjligheter för även dem att ta del i flödet av information och innehåll från sociala medier. För att se på t.ex. Youtube videon behövs ingen information anges vilket möjliggör det för barn att inta inflyt därifrån. Enligt sidan "technipages" artikel "how to use Tik Tok without creating an account" (2021) kan vem som helst använda sig av innehållet av plattformen utan att skapa ett konto och vara utan att ge ut personlig information. På sidan finns det steg för steg uppgivet instruktioner med direkta linkar hur man skall göra för att komma åt innehållet.

Barn börjar redan i mycket ung ålder bry sig om deras utseende, som artikeln på Fatherly.com, i samarbete med Oksana Hagerty som är en utvecklings psykolog, "When do children start to care about their looks" betonar. Hon lyfter också fram att barns världsbild och uppfattningar formas i stort sett genom det vad de utsätts för, som t.ex. vänner och familj.

6.4 Resultat

Alla tre grupper svarade mycket mer positivt än förväntat i deras svar om sociala medier och deras syn på den. Av 24 inbjudna deltagare svarade 17 personer. De två yngre grupperna skrev i genomsnitt mycket mer text i varje text än den äldsta gruppen. Många av svaren som kom in, pratade om hur de har själv påverkat deras intag av negativt material och negativt påverkande inlägg, i och med att sociala medier låter användaren välja själv vad som visas på ens flöde.

Även om många talade om att sociala medier nog kunde ha eller har en negativ påverkan på dem, ser de mycket positivt som kommit med sociala medier som t.ex. idéer, tips och inspiration vilket var gemensamt för alla åldersgrupper.

I de yngre åldersgrupperna talades det mer om utseendepress och trender. Allt som allt hittade alla någonting positivt med sociala medier men de flesta ansåg att det vore nyttigt för unga att lära sig att se kritiskt på sociala medier, redan i tidigt skede i skolan för en

stadig grund och att förebygga psykiska svårigheter som förorsakas på grund av sociala medier. Alla förutom ett svar ansåg det vara nyttigt för skolor att implementera kritiskt tänkande gällande sociala medier i skolor redan på första stadiet. Detta svar behandlade aspekter som att åldersgränser finns samt att så pass unga barn inte följer eller delar inlägg regelbundet. En annan aspekt som lyftes fram i svaret var att inte göra sociala medier till ett stort nummer för barn, eftersom det kan locka dem till plattformarna, enligt den intervjuade.

6.5 Diskussion

Som resultaten indikerar, är sociala medier för användare en stor del av deras dag. Många ser sociala medier som mer positivt men klart som det också var i resultaten, att sociala medier kan ha mycket negativa påverkningar som utseendepress och att man lätt kan jämföra sig själv med andra personer på sociala medier. Det är i dagens läge mycket svårt för alla ålders användare att urskilja sant från falskt innehåll på dessa plattformar eftersom vem som helst kan lägga ut inlägg och text som "fakta" utan att ha någon sanning i sig alls.

Hypotesen att en tidig introduktion till kritiskt tänkande över sociala medier förbättrar relationen mellan användaren och sociala medier stöds av alla dessa ovannämnda teorier. Dessutom av de resultaten som kom in genom intervjun, ser de det som mycket relevant att integrera undervisning om kritiskt tänkande gällande sociala medier innan användaren hinner göra potentiella skadliga misstag på någon plattform.

Eftersom unga är så receptiva till ny information enligt teorierna upptagna genom detta arbete, skulle det vara den mest optimala tiden för barnen att lära sig grunderna för ett kritiskt tänkande.

Ett gott förhållande med sociala medier skulle inte bara gynna individen men också underlätta samhället med att förebygga dålig psykisk hälsa.

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