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MASS MEDIA USE AND WELLBEING

Abstract: *The Oxford Happiness Inventory and Multiple Lickert scale were deployed to get 2608 valid inputs on questions about attitudes, fears, media use and closeness of different social categories to the participants. Research results confirm all hypotheses. Quantity of television use decreases happiness. As for the quality of television and newspapers use, those consuming contents such as culture, sports and IT are happier than others. When looking at the television only, those that consume programs such as cartoons, culture, music, fashion, science, IT and sports are happier than others.*

Keywords: *Happiness, Media Use, Television, Newspaper, Wellbeing*

1. INTRODUCTION

Different inquiries have been dealing with personality, socio-economic and demographic variables as indicators of happiness (subjective well-being). One of the main findings is that quality relationships are connected with happier and healthier lives, Vaillant [1]. On the other hand, literature on relationship between media use and happiness is scarce. Also, happiness has not been the topic of previous research inquiries from Serbia.

Negative social well-being is positively associated with levels of uses of media that are essentially about interpersonal interaction such as phone and online communication as well as uses of media that are not, like video, music, and reading, write Pea et al. [2] Authors find video use, media multitasking is particularly strongly associated with negative social well-being indicators. was also associated with negative social indicators. On the other hand, face-to-face communication is strongly associated with positive social well-being, according to research by Pea et al.

According to research by Mathers et al. [3] high overall electronic media use such as television, video games, computers and telephone is associated with poorer behavior, health status and health-related quality of life. Researchers find a favorable association between computer use and psychological distress, whereas high video game use was associated with poorer health status, health-related quality of life, global health, and depression.

Brown & Bobkowski [4] find that both older and newer media such as television, music, movies, magazines, the Internet, cell phones and social networking contribute to aggressive behavior, disordered eating, distorted ideas about relationships, earlier sexual behavior, as well as underage drinking and tobacco and drug use. They also conclude that some of the early fears such as cyber-bullying media addiction and sexual predators may not be as problematic as initially thought, but can be problematic for those already at high risk.

Research of Depp, Schkade, Thompson & Jeste [5] show older people enjoy watching TV more and spend more time in front of a television set than young adults. More importantly, greater TV use is related to lower life satisfaction, conclude Depp, Schkade, Thompson & Jeste.

Interestingly, Bruni & Stanca [6] find the effect of income on life satisfaction is significantly smaller for heavy television viewers than for occasional viewers. Researchers conclude that increasing role of television viewing in modern society raises material aspirations, but at the same time contributes to offset the effect of higher income on personal happiness. The effect of higher income on happiness is offset by lower consumption of relational goods, with television playing a significant role in explaining under consumption of relationality, write Bruni & Stanca.

On the other hand McDaniel, Coyne & Holmes [7] conclude that blogging may improve new mothers' well-being, as they feel more connected to the world outside their home

through the Internet.

Kim, LaRose & Peng [8] show that lonely individuals are likely to develop strong compulsive Internet use behavior harming significant activities such as work, school, or significant relationships instead of relieving their original problems. Researchers conclude Internet use isolate individuals from healthy social activities and lead them into more loneliness.

Although time spent on-line is not associated with daily well-being, the closeness of instant message communication partners was associated with daily social anxiety and loneliness in school, write Gross, Juvonen & Gable [9].

Gaming and entertainment usage of Internet are found to predict perceived social support, introversion and happiness, while use of the Internet for mischief-related activities such as downloading without payment, fraud and snooping is associated with lower levels of happiness and social support, claim Mitchella, Lebowa, Uribe, Grathousea & Shogerb [10].

Research of Hinkley et al. [11] suggests that increased levels of electronic media use predicted poorer well-being outcomes. The likelihood of adverse outcomes in children ranged from a 1.2- to 2.0-increase for emotional problems and poorer family functioning for each additional hour of television viewing or e-game/computer use depending on the outcome examined, write Hinkley et al. They conclude that higher levels of early childhood media use are associated with children being at risk for poorer outcomes with some indicators of happiness.

Kataria & Regner [12] estimate a microeconomic life satisfaction function and find little support for the claim that television viewing in general has a negative impact on individual happiness.

Findings of the inquiry by Bojic & Marie [13] are that media addiction increases with those who use media for fun, level of media addiction is increases with users of new media and more interactive and less practical online applications such as social networks and chat are more addictive. Bojic & Marie conclude that when looking into nature of new and old media addiction may be related to number of senses grabbed by media and media features, such as live broadcasting and interactivity.

There has been no research inquiry into relationship of specific television and newspaper contents and happiness. Therefore, these aspects of relationship between media and happiness will be explored by the following research questions.

Question 1. What is the relationship between quantity of media use and happiness?

Question 2. What is the relationship between quality of television and newspapers use and happiness?

2. METHODS

The Attitude Examination Survey has been conducted by TNS Medium Gallup - Public Opinion, Market and Media Research Company from Belgrade in collaboration with the University of Megatrend in November of 2009. This annual survey consists of 366 questions placed into the following sections: Daily Activities, Attitudes and Statements, Satisfaction, Emotions and Values, Relationship with Others, Media, Society and Politics, Household and Demographics.

Interviewing was done by students of The Faculty for Culture and Media. They had an assignment to interview citizens as a part of their Media Analytics course. Students conducted face-to-face surveys. The response rate of the interviews was 75%. An average interview lasted 25 min. The sample included cities such as Belgrade, Novi Sad, Nis and rural areas. Coordinators of the research received 2966 inputs from the students. After filtering, multistage random sample of 2608 subjects was considered valid. This sample was representative for general Serbian population older than 15 years of age.

The sample is formed in three steps: first, sample points are randomly chosen without replacement, from the lists of voting stations, writes Branković [14]. Second: Statistical database of voting places is used as a source for selecting sample points. Selection is conducted randomly, with probability of selecting that is proportional to the share of a given sample point in the total number of adult population. Ten respondents in each sample point are chosen. In the second and third stages participants are chosen at random and systematically. The following procedure of choosing of participants was implemented: the interviewer would start from a initial point, randomly determined by

local supervisor from maps and street lists. Going up from the given home number, interviewer enters every 2nd household (household is defined as all persons living in the flat or in a house). In the household, interviewer chooses individual older than 15 years of age whose birthday is closest to the day of discussion. If the chosen respondent is not available at the moment of the first visit, the interviewer schedules next appointment (on different time and day). In the case of denial, the interviewer would enter the next household.

Data came from several questionnaires/scales. Each participant was assured of the confidentiality of the investigation and subsequently received a booklet containing the following questionnaires which they were asked to complete.

Main personal background of survey participants was recorded, such

as age, gender, marital status, levels of income and education.

Participants also completed the 30-item Oxford Happiness Inventory, created by Argyle, Martin, & Crossland, [15] which is similar to the Beck Depression Inventory, showing test-retest

reliability of (r = -0.78) and a of between 0.64 and 0.87.

Multiple Lickert scale self-report inventory questions were employed to access attitudes, fears, media use and closeness of social categories to the participants.

SPSS was used to analyze data. The two main tools of this statistical software were employed. First, Pearson correlations were calculated to examine significance and strength of relationships between happiness and items of interest. After that, multiple regressions were used to examine these relationships in more detail and provide final conclusions

3. RESULTS

Significant positive correlation of weak strength has been found between feeling of happiness (OHI) and A2/1 in relation of quantity of TV use (r=-.160, p<.000, n=2406).

Correlations have not been found between feeling of happiness (OHI) and the following variables: A2/2 in relation to the "listening to radio", A2/3 in relation to the "reading newspapers", A2/4 in relation to the "speaking on a mobile phone, including texting", A2/5 in relation to the "talking on stable phone", A2/6 in relation to the "speaking face to face with other people" and A2/7 in relation to the "using Internet (e-mail and messaging apps)".

Significant positive correlations of weak strength have been found between feeling of happiness (OHI) and the following variables: M3/23/N in relation to the "Culture: film, theater, literature" (r=.158, p<.000, n=2404), M3/8/N in relation to the "Basketball" (r=.118, p<.000, p=2405), M3/17/N in relation to the "Popular science, new discoveries, scientific findings etc." (r=.116, p<.000, n=2403), M3/21/N in relation to the "Tech programs focusing on mobile phone technology" (r=.107, p<.000, n=2404) and M3/20/N in relation to the "Tech programs focusing on IT in general" (r=.106, p<.000, n=2404). Answers on questions relating to quality of newspapers use are presented on Figure 1.

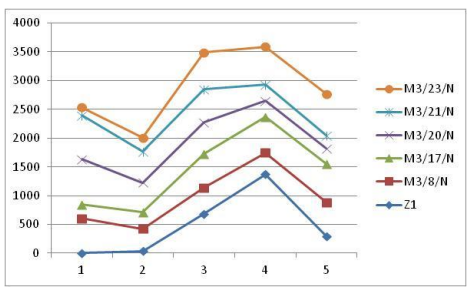

Figure. 1 - Feeling of happiness

Figure. 1 Feeling of happiness (OHI) is correlated to different kinds of newspaper use. Survey answers on OHI, M3/8/N, M3/17/N, M3/20/N, M3/21/N and M3/23/N are presented as stacked line graph in which number of answers is presented on Y axis, while answers (1 to 5) are presented on X axis.

Correlations have not been found between the feeling of happiness (OHI) and the following variables: M3/1/N in relation to the "Politics – foreign affairs", M3/2/N in relation to the "Politics – internal issues", M3/3/N in relation to the "Economics, business, startup and entrepreneurship", M3/4/N in relation to the "Social issues", M3/5/N in relation to the "Discovering unknown details about important events from recent and distant history", M3/6/N in relation to the "Criminal", M3/7/N in relation to the "Football", M3/9/N in relation to the "Tennis", M3/10/N in relation to the "Other kinds of sport (boxing, handball, volleyball, water polo…)", M3/11/N in relation to the

"Travel programs about various destinations, countries and cultures and similar", M3/12/N in relation to the "Celebrity reports from different events, concerts, parties etc.", M3/13/N in relation to the "Porn – sex", M3/14/N in relation to the "Humor (caricatures, jokes, anecdotes about celebrities)", M3/15/N in relation to the "Celebrity gossip", M3/16/N in relation to the "Mysteries and paranormal activities", M3/18/N in relation to the "Religious topics", M3/19/N in relation to the "Automobiles", M3/22/N in relation to the "Health" and M3/24/N in relation to the "Ads".

Significant positive correlations of weak strength have been found between feeling of happiness (OHI) and the following variables: M3/37/T in relation to the "Children programs" (r=.172, p= <.000, n=2406), M3/23/T in relation to the "Culture: film, theater, literature" (r=.153, p<.000, n=2406), M3/39/T in relation to the "Music - classic, jazz, rock, pop…" (r=.148, p<.000, n=2406), M3/34/T in relation to the "Fashion programs" (r=.123, p<.000, n=2406), M3/8/T "Basketball" (r=.117, p<.000, n=2405), M3/17/T in relation to the "Popular science, new discoveries, scientific findings etc." (r=.107, p<.000, n=2404) and M3/21/T in relation to the "Tech programs focusing on mobile phone technology" (r=.104, p<.000, n=2405). Answers on questions relating to quality of television use and happiness are presented on Figure 2.

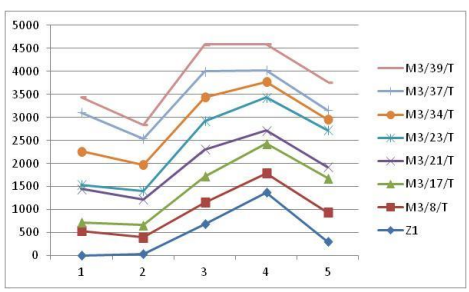

Figure 2 - Feeling of happiness

Figure. 2 Feeling of happiness (OHI) is correlated to certain kinds of television use (M3). Survey answers on OHI, M3/8/T/T, M3/17/T, M3/21/T, M3/23/T, M3/34/T, M3/37/T and M3/39/T are presented as stacked line graph in which number of answers is presented on Y axis, while answers (1 to 5) are presented on X axis.

Correlations have not been found between the feeling of happiness (OHI) and the following variables: M3/25/T in relation to the "Domestic series; M3/26/T Latin series", M3/27/T in relation to the "Comedy series, etc.; M3/28/T Domestic films", M3/29/T in relation to the "Foreign films: action, criminal", M3/30/T in relation to the "Foreign films: dramas, romantic comedies", M3/31/T in relation to the "News", M3/32/T in relation to the "Political talk programs", M3/33/T in relation to the "Show programs such as talk shows and quizzes", M3/35/T in relation to the "Sport broadcasts and other sport programs", M3/36/T in relation to the "Educational programs", M3/38/T in relation to the "Reality show programs", M3/40/T in relation to the "Music (country music)" and M3/41/T in relation to the "Folk music".

4. CONCLUSION

All hypotheses of this inquiry are confirmed. It may be possible to conclude that unhappy are those that watch TV the most. As for quality of television and newspapers use, those consuming contents such as culture, sport and IT are happier than others. When looked at television only, those that consume thematic programs such as cartoons, culture, music, fashion, science, IT and sports are happier than others.

It may be interested to emphasize the fact that more expressive activities are connected to happiness. This goes along the international conclusions on this matter which relate happiness on one side and increased extroversion, decreased neuroticism, increased openness to experience and increased agreeableness. These common results do not mean much if we fail to notice the ones connecting strong social component and happiness. The explanation to the fact that happier people are those with strong ties to family and friends might be intensity and quality in those relationships which basically means high expressivity. This may be compared to earlier finding about the media addiction claiming the highest levels of dependence to newer when compared to older media. Internet may be more expressive because it engages more senses than TV, radio and press and therefore that may be the reason it is the most addictive. Reducing expression and reception potential towards non-proffered media may be caused by substitution of more expressive activities, such as direct communication with less expressive

activities such as Internet communication (Bojic, Marie & Brankovic, 2013: 366). Thus the reason why extraversion is correlated with happiness may be that family and social interactivity imply high expressivity.

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