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# Smartphones and social media as status symbol of Gen Z

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**eywords:** status symbol, smartphone, social media, media literacy, influencer

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**bstract:** Smartphones have led to the formation of new habits and behavioral patterns and are the most widespread infocommunication tool today. They also appear as status symbols among the Z and Alpha generations. This tool performs an important role in the lives of the younger generation and impacts social media platforms; which has led to further questions. This is a particularly important topic nowadays because the area of media awareness does not only refer to the family, but also encompasses educational institutions that contribute

to the promotion of conscious use of the media. A PILOT survey was used with the goal of mapping out how students relate to their phones. This survey was the right choice because it is one of the cornerstones of education for proper media behavior and critical thinking. In the course of the research, I asked young people aged 13-19 what they thought about status symbols, how they related to their smartphones, what role they took on social media when they encounter a multitude of influencers.

## Introduction

In the 21st century, with the advancement of technology, we are constantly being judged by our fellow human beings. The information society has created a virtual world where most people can no longer imagine their daily lives without a smartphone or the internet. After all, today we can use these tools to pay in stores, keep in touch with our friends, and to do many additional leisure activities.

The emerging Z and Alpha generations have already socialized in this virtual society; leading to a situation where the ways in which they move on the Internet are more secure than in reality (András, 2014). For these generations, it matters more and more how much a phone knows, how modern it is, and how trendy it is. This situation makes it harder for parents to decide whether to buy an expensive cell phone as desired by the child because they feel their child may be ostracized by their peers. It also leads to difficult decisions about how much to check their child's online presence.

## Status – Status symbol

The question arises as to what may be the factors that socially delimit and differentiate. One of the main examples of this is clothing, as we it is what we see first on our fellow human beings, and we can immediately draw conclusions about their financial situation and the line of work they are in (Isaken & Roper, 2012). However, even those with poorer financial situation are more likely to strengthen their appearances by buying bigger branded products. A research paper from 2017 showed that material goods also perform a major role in social relationships, as they impact the formation and intensity of friendships (Islam, Wie, Sheikh, Hameed, Azam, 2017).

More research shows that the media influence attitudes about material goods, as the more advertising we see, the more materialistic we are (Oprea, 2014). Therefore, good advertising means proper marketing. However, the company must also take into account the consumer and their behavior. Due to this, companies are continually refocusing on the wishes and demands of the consumer, their success in this has a direct impact on their sales success (Szakál, 2018).

Not only can we talk about commercials on TV, but also about following the lives of media personalities, celebrities, and other famous people which positively influence the feelings of materialism (La Ferle and Chan, 2008). It can be assumed

that the interpretation of success is closely related to the possession of material goods. This relation is one way for young people to demonstrate their achievements in life (Gil, Kwon, Good & Johnson, 2012).

Constant internet access and smartphones have made it even easier to influence customers and spread advertisements. These technological advances have brought about a rapid change in demand. Due to this young people form a strong “consumer shield” and can find themselves in the crosshairs of companies (European Commission, 2014). Their consumer behavior is mainly influenced by price and quality related to the technology (Mura, Lincényi, 2015).

Kotler and Keller (2012) have summarized the characteristics of a consumer society and its model in previous research. The purchase decision, as shown in the figure below, was divided into several phases. They were the first to formulate rules that could influence the consumer and make them buy a product or a service. Then, the consumer is characterized by the decision-making process (Kotler, Keller, 2012).

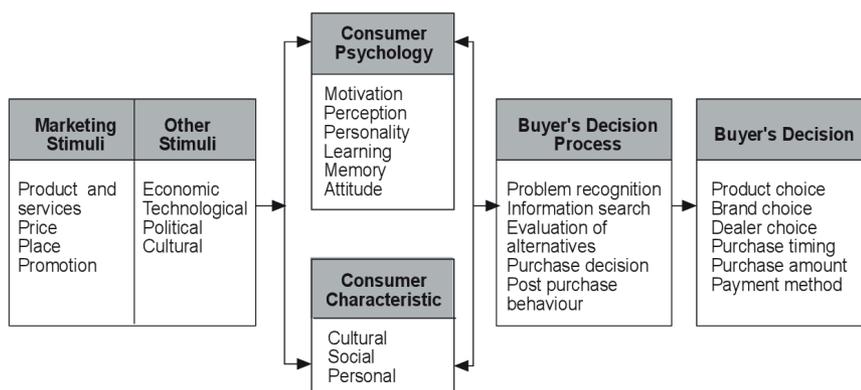


Figure 1. The consumer decision process

Source: Kotler P. – Keller K. (2012). *Marketingmenedzsment*. Akadémia kiadó.

Cultural Factors	Social Factors	Personal Factors	Psychological factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Subculture</li> <li>• Social Class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference group</li> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Role &amp; Status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age &amp; Stage of Life Cycle</li> <li>• Occupation</li> <li>• Economic conditions</li> <li>• Life Style</li> <li>• Personality and Selfconcept</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Perception</li> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Beliefs and attitude</li> </ul>

Table 1. The factors influencing consumer behavior

Source: Kotler P. – Keller K. (2012). *Marketingmenedzsment*. Akadémia kiadó.

Figure 2 shows the factors that influence consumption. Among these characteristics, culture has been given a prominent role. The subculture includes differences in nationality, religion, and geography (Wills, Storcksdieck genannt Bonsmann, Kolka, & Grunert, 2012). Friends, family, relatives, acquaintances can also form a reference group that influences our behavior. Status expresses the level of esteem accepted in the society (Törőcsik, 2017). These three areas make up the social characteristics. The personal characteristics of the model include the lifestyle of the consumer; the individual's field of interest, activity, opinion, and self-image and personality also perform an important role. Among the psychological characteristics is motivation, to which Maslow's hierarchy of needs model is closely related. In addition, the different behavior is displayed by perception of a given item. Learning involves the knowledge, behavior, and development of the individual. Attitude is especially important as it is the most difficult to change in one person (Malhotra & Simon, 2009). These models explain an individual's decisions about what resources they have, how they use them, what consumer items they buy, and how they behave on the consumer market. Consumer research has expanded these issues to include the pre-, post-, and post-purchase stages (Solomon, 2006).

Nevertheless, content consumption is much better traced among high culture and young people. Their consumption characteristics are different from previous generations, internet content is preferred. The appearance and proliferation of smartphones have generated changes, with the meaning of functionality and status becoming important (Törőcsik, 2012).

When talking about status consumption, it is important to mention the reference groups. After all, they are the ones with whom the individual has a closer relationship, and we consider them an influencing factor. The previous model already mentioned the family as a reference group, and I would highlight the parents who also act as a buying center. They mostly purchase products according to the needs of the children, who copy their parents, their attitudes, and their reactions to advertisements at an early age. This can be mapped to determine children's consumer motivations. By the age of 5, they are able to distinguish a TV show from advertising, and at the age of 7-8, they perceive the stimulating effect of advertising. By the time they are 10 years old, they will be skeptical about advertising (Szűcs, 2010).

Status can be obtained for example by graduating from a university, learning a foreign language, or getting a job. However, it also has an inheritable side that is assigned from birth, and if one is born into an aristocratic family, one inherits the status of the upper class. It is a matter of debate whether generations use status symbols in order to belong to the desired reference group or as an expression of their own style (Vincze, 2016).

The role of consumption and reference groups will be enhanced for future generations. The main starting point of motivation will be to belong to a homogeneous group, where they are forced to enter and comply. Popularity will be a defining tool in this transformation. Not only will it mean that something must look good, it needs

to be communicated as well. Appearance will have stronger expectations placed on it than ever before (Tari, 2013).

## Gen Z and Alpha

Generation is the age group born at the same time and people of about the same age living in the same age (Csepeli, 2006). Studies by generational researchers show that certain cohort experiences determine generations having an impact on the personality development of individuals and age groups. The economic, social, and technological environment of the given age also contributes to this (András, 2014).

Numerous, typically social sciences and humanities, studies and scientific articles deal with various aspects of generational change. Accordingly, the names of the generations are also very diverse: veteran, baby-boomer, X-, Y-, Z-, Alpha-generations, Millennials, Net-generation, Internet generation, bit-generation, etc.

“This generation is considered to be the first global generation, because no matter where in the world they live, they listen to the same music, they watch the same movie, they love the same fashion, the brand. This generation is also significantly different from previous generations in that it is a digital generation, they are the children of dotcom, born into the digital world.” (Duga, 2013)

They are born into a world where their consumption of status is also very different from previous generations, as they become part of the consumer society and have to find themselves in the information society.

We consider the Z generation to be the first global generation in the world born into a world increasingly defined by various digital technologies. Generation Z members are young people born between 1995-1996 and 2010. More literature refers to them as the “Google Generation” (Nicholas, 2011). They are in constant contact with each other, have unlimited and instant internet access, and can no longer imagine their lives without it. Their place of socialization is much more virtual than real. As a result, their communication skills change, which creates a stressful situation, shuts them down, and causes them to escape to the “safety” of the internet. This space is not always safe, and its language does not match the vocabulary used in the offline space. This makes it easy for them to develop anxiety and depression (Tari, 2013). The acquisition of information and the source of information also covered virtual reality. They can easily cope with parallel action, and the skills of multitasking and self-regulatory, collaborative learning do not cause them difficulty (András, 2014). They always look for everything, they always find the way to find it, the sources not necessarily the content, the lexical knowledge. Social channels are almost a living space for them. They listen to music on their phones, use social media sites, and chat with their friends and acquaintances at the same time. It is also necessary to mention that they are characterized by rapid changes, for example, if they do not like a job, they are ready for change and will change jobs. It will be almost natural for them, they are not worried about possible problems (András, 2014). The desire for entertainment has intensified, the language

of computers and the internet is spoken on a “mother tongue level”. As a result, an attraction to technology has developed and their way of thinking has changed (Prensky, 2001).

The members of the Alpha generation were born after 2010, they are completing their primary school education in these years and continue their studies in high schools. They are the ones who are already fully part of the internet, the “touchpad” generation, who from birth define the environment of the digital world. It is made up of “GenCs” who are connected to the internet almost their entire lives. They will make another generation of decision-makers and influence consumption. They are the ones are given phones as children, play on their own tablets, and easily watch videos. In this way, they see the world completely differently, the online space is more realistic for them. Other lifestyle competencies come to the forefront and this is reflected in communication, and its quality deteriorates. Due to this, they have a harder time expressing themselves than the previous generations. In the online world, a different attitude is adopted and later incorporated into the real world. They open up much better. There is a growing tendency for young people to become independent and to manage their lives in more and more areas. While they receive guidance from parents, it is up to them how much the child will become a conscious consumer, but they will have less and less influence, which can take over the “dominance” (Töröcsik, 2013).

According to child psychologist Andrew Fuller, “children cannot stay children for long, they become small consumers at a very young age” (Tari, 2011). For these generations, we are observing that they are registering on social media as users at an increasingly young age. According to a study, 37% of 5-7 years old were already available on Facebook in 2009, 18% of 8-11 years old, and 37% of 12-15 years old follow internet blogs. This can also be explained by the fact that parents do not supervise or regulate their children’s use of the internet (Borbély, 2015).

In light of their consumption, it is clear that belonging to smaller groups performs an important role. These are the so-called reference groups, which have an impact on the group’s population and determine their consumption. It is also possible that belonging to a group is determined by certain requirements, for example, the habits and fashion of the group must be followed. If it is different and if you do not buy the brand that the others do, you may be excluded because it will not be identical to the group (Tobi, 2013). Consumption also performs a role in creating the ideal self-image. The younger generations will buy products that symbolize this self-image. They are then judged by these symbols and their consumption habits (Prónay, 2011).

## Smartphones

A few years after the turn of the millennium, research has shown that almost all higher education students had a mobile phone. For the younger age group, it meant only the future and the status funded by their parents (Szántó, 2005).

With the proliferation of smartphones, we can recognize that these devices often reflect the personalities of consumers. The future is marked by technical optimism. The new generation of info communication tools, such as the smartphone or tablet, perform a major role in both the high school and university generation. With these tools becoming equally important for both sexes because they report the status. Young people love to personalize their phones, with things such as brand, color, size being taken into consideration. They are seen as an important part of everyday life and have become a prominent topic of conversation (Bauer, 2005).

In a previous study, universities in Hertfordshire, England, worked together to find out how personality traits are displayed by smartphones with a focus on the iOS and Android operating systems. Research has shown that Apple iPhones are typically owned by the younger generations, who also view their devices as a status symbol. Consumers of Android devices are more extroverted, no matter what device they have (Moscaritolo, 2016). It can also be shown that if someone gets used to the construction and use of a particular device and if they like it, then it is likely that in the future when they buy a new phone, they will choose the same brand (Heszler, 2004).

The world of marketing and advertising has clearly discovered that Generation Z is more easily influenced and used as a tool to get to their parents' money. They know what opportunities a brand has as a status symbol. Following the example of the English research, a Hungarian qualitative survey was also conducted. In-depth interview research highlighted Apple as a good communication tool, but also showed that the Apple product represents status. For the Generation Z, it is not the phone itself that is important, but its smart features such as the internet, social media, and YouTube. So is to be constantly connected, as the English term "always on" also suggests. The novel vision of life from Generation Z carries attitudes like quick reactions, multitasking, a constant presence on social media interfaces. Social fulfillment is experienced in the online space (Ságvári 2008, Törőcsik 2013). Respondents in the sample also said that mobile phones have a positive social role, as they facilitate communication. These brands also contribute with social applications, which are now core functions of smartphones. Tari and Ságvári also agree that for the emerging generation, smartphones will appear as a status symbol. But once again, it is important to emphasize that parents have a big task, as they finance these devices, and not everyone can have an iPhone just because the company is just that cool (Tari, 2013, Ságvári, 2008).

Based on the example of smartphones, we can see that people choose products that contribute to their social role and status. Largely, so that they can show them off to the outside world and demonstrate their status to others.

## **Social media**

In the past, the possession of certain objects and tools was a status symbol, but today it has changed a bit among young people. Property ownership was

supplemented by access and consumption (Kerekes, 2014). In the 2000s, the foundations were laid emergence and widespread use of the internet, infocommunication techniques, newer versions of mobile phones, social networks, big data, and the social economy (Felländer, Ingram, Teigland 2015). Mobile devices are making our lives and communication easier, and online space offers even more opportunities for users to access platforms and services anywhere and at any time (PWC, 2015). This process has also led to the development of the community economy. Social networks and social media have become part of our everyday lives (Dudás, Boros, 2019).

Social media are a platform where people can share their opinions, problems, and discuss them. It allows users to share and exchange information, whether in the form of images, videos, text, audio recordings, or interacting with each other (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). There is no doubt that the lines between social media and Web 2.0 devices, or “web applications,” are blurring. In general, social media include sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. They also include media sharing sites such as YouTube and Flickr. Lastly, they encompass creation and publishing tools such as wikis and blogs (Greenhow, 2011). Mobile computing and social media applications revolve around three themes, these characteristics include engaging students through continuous connectivity, facilitating collaborative learning, and enabling authentic learning on the go (Gikas & Grant, 2013). Social media have created a new kind of living space where we can be anyone, put on a mask and escape.

## **Influencer-activity**

Influencer agents are individuals who influence decision-making through their influence, authority, knowledge, social status, or relationships. We know two groups of them, one are the online celebrities, who are typically famous people, advertise brands, or share their thoughts with their followers. It is not necessarily about influencing the personal opinions of the followers in the case of influencers, but rather about controlling their purchasing decisions and habits. While the other group can be called professional opinion leaders who are professionally prepared and independent (Guld, 2020). Those who have more than one million followers are called mega-influencers, and few people in Hungary fall into this category. We are best known for the macro-influencer, which has a few hundred thousand followers. Those with less than a hundred thousand followers are called micro-influencers. They are often related to some special topic, much more committed than those with a larger fan base, because they appear more natural and reliable (Bövösvölgy, 2020).

The concept appeared as early as 1955 when examining the impact of the media. According to a study at the time, people’s opinions were shaped not by the media but by opinion leaders who were the church and secular leaders at the time. The term used today comes from the word to influence, which further implies influencers impacting people (Friesen, Lowe, 2011).

The new interactive medium in which influencer-activity is highly successful provides a widespread consumer access, thereby amplifying its impact (Guld, 2020). These activities are examined by many people from an economic, social, scientific, and marketing point of view. Additionally, it must not be forgotten that their audience also includes young people and students. Their credibility is questionable; we can never be sure that their carefully constructed image is an appearance or reality that they share on social media. Due to this, their work of influencing can also be interpreted as a fake news activity. This is also why the existence of a critical attitude is important (McCorquodale, 2019).

In its more modern form, an influencer can be anyone who has a large number of followers on some social media. Their influencing power can also be measured by the number of followers and likes, activity statistics and access guidelines can be used to determine the influential role and power of a given person. The influencer-agent must be actively present on the platforms of their choice and provide content to their followers at all times.

Of the social media interfaces, YouTube is best for producing longer, more relevant content. A video blog, vlog for short, is video-based user content that allows for personal speaking and engaging dimensions beyond the text. Vloggers are internet camera narrators who can directly address their audience. Perhaps, this is why it is a type of influence that is popular among children (Influenszerekről általában, 2020).

Their presence speeds up the changes and the flow of information, which we do not have time to process. However, there is importance to this information, because we do not necessarily have the real knowledge. For the Z and Alpha generations, the aforementioned contemporary group has a great impact. Also in terms of influencers, it is clear that the generation divide and followers are targeted closer to their age. Lastly, we come to the issue of reverse socialization, where we can observe that the elderly do not necessarily have more knowledge, but the young people are more advanced in many areas, which upsets socialization (Borbély, 2015).

## **Media literacy**

In recent years, media awareness and the development of digital competence have performed a major role in the Hungarian curriculum regulation, this can also be seen in the 2007 National Core Curriculum, which followed the recommendation of the European Parliament and the European Council 2006/962/EC and formulated lifelong learning key competencies (Herzog, 2016). Their spread also took place in the scientific world and created new conceptual categories and areas of education, which can be seen in the figure below. The fields of literacy prescribe development goals according to abilities. The new media literacy is multifaceted, as it has been supplemented with elements of digital, information, and critical literacy.

Media literacy is gaining increasing importance in the 21st century thanks to the digital world and the changing media environment. Media awareness is receiving growing attention both in the academic world and in education. Appropriate media behavior and critical thinking should be encouraged in children from an early age, so that they can move safely and effectively in the diverse media environment later on. Therefore, we interpret the family as the primary arena, but educational institutions also perform a big - if not bigger - role in their formation and development. The current situation, the pandemic, clearly proves that advanced digital competence, a confident presence in the online space, and advanced critical thinking are absolutely necessary. The lightning-quick digital transition forced by external circumstances made me realize even more how important it is for prospective teachers in higher education to have the highest possible knowledge of theoretical and practical ICT tools (Herzog, 2021).

Potter defined media literacy as: „the set of perspectives that we actively use when we interact with mass communication systems and interpret the messages that reach us” (Potter, 2015, p. 25). Both individual and external factors affect this literacy, as shown in Figure 7. Among the individual factors, social skills are the most important because of Internet mass communication and interactivity, thus we become active e-citizens. These individual factors are related to the cognitive, internal thought processes, which, with the existing knowledge and skills, shape us into critical thinkers and make us media aware.

In the 2012 National Core Curriculum, media literacy is one of the priority development areas, it is included among the cross-curricular competencies, and can be defined as an interdisciplinary task. This means that the skills, abilities, and attitudes that belong here must be displayed in everyday education in all 12 grades. The question arises as to how those teachers who previously did not receive adequate knowledge for teaching media literacy during their higher education studies will be able to include it in their everyday education. In addition, media awareness and critical thinking appear as development areas. The goal is for students to meet new media, learn about their tools, and become responsible and conscious participants in the global public. This process is hindered by the fact that students not only rely on personal experiences but also learn about the world through the media, as they spend several hours a day online on social media platforms (Sági, 2006).

The core curriculum defines the following goal of media literacy: students understand the language of new and traditional media, so they become responsible and conscious participants of the public. In addition, it emphasizes learning about the functioning of the media, the mutual relationship between the media and society, and the awareness of the differences between the real and the virtual world (Horváth, 2013, NAT 2012).

## Information literacy

The most important key competence of our knowledge society is information literacy. The concept does not only mean digital literacy but includes skills that filter, recognize, and overcome manipulations and effects due to information overload, as well as information search and information management. Anyone with adequate education knows how to find, organize, and utilize information (Varga, 2013). Information literacy includes the recognition, finding, evaluation, and use of information, and selection of information. In addition, the investigation of the authenticity and reliability of information, the ethical rules, and the question of how we communicate, in what form, and how we share information on social media are becoming increasingly important (Cilip, 2011).

We distinguish three models of information literacy. The first model is based on observable behavior and measures different abilities, this is the behaviorist model, which receives a lot of criticism. The second one, the constructivist model, additionally prioritizes critical thinking and independent learning, and is based on learning how to learn. The third model complements the constructivist approach with a relational, critical use of information, and advocates the interaction of the student and the world (Koltay, 2009).

Libraries perform an important role in the process of developing information literacy, as all their services promote this. And librarians must also have above-average general education. Along with the development of information and communication technology, the focus of information literacy education also changes. When information first became digital, librarians focused on computer and database search skills. With the advance of the web, the information environment has become more complex, so the focus of information literacy needs has shifted to conceptual understanding and critical thinking. Effective cognitive level instruction in IL requires librarians who understand and consider the development of students' intellectual stages. In addition, well-designed IL interventions can promote students' intellectual development (Wong, 2010).

21st century development skills include critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and creativity has become an important goal. IL is essential for students to become critical, reflective, and lifelong learners. McCormick wrote in 1983 that „one of the values of formal education is to help us continue our education throughout life, and library education can play a vital role in this process, especially education that teaches us to ask questions” (McCormick, 1983). The practice of effective pedagogy means that „higher education institutions should design learning experiences and student development interventions that focus specifically on the cognitive stage and help students move to the next stage” (Gatten, 2004). A fundamental element of library teaching is the learning acquired by students during their university life. Librarians are well positioned to contribute to the intellectual development of students as they progress. In teaching IL, librarians should work to develop interventions that can promote the alignment of cognitive

skills and improving students' developmental level (Wong, 2010). Basically, during all training, students must be supported in acquiring literacy and navigating through information. The shortest and most efficient way must be found to get from the recognition of the need for information to the reproduction and creative use of the acquired knowledge. Some domestic and international literature deals with how the library and librarians can support the acquisition of digital competence and literacy areas, and the development of skills (Varga, 2008).

## Research – PILOT study

During the quantitative research, an online questionnaire was prepared for members of the Z and Alpha genre, which the target group could complete from February 1 to 26. However, in the further results, we can only see the responses of generation Z, as the responses of the younger age group cannot be evaluated. The 13-question PILOT survey was completed by a total of 250 individuals from different age groups within the generation; from 7th grade of elementary school to high school graduate. The respondents are students of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, rural grammar schools, vocational grammar schools, and primary schools.

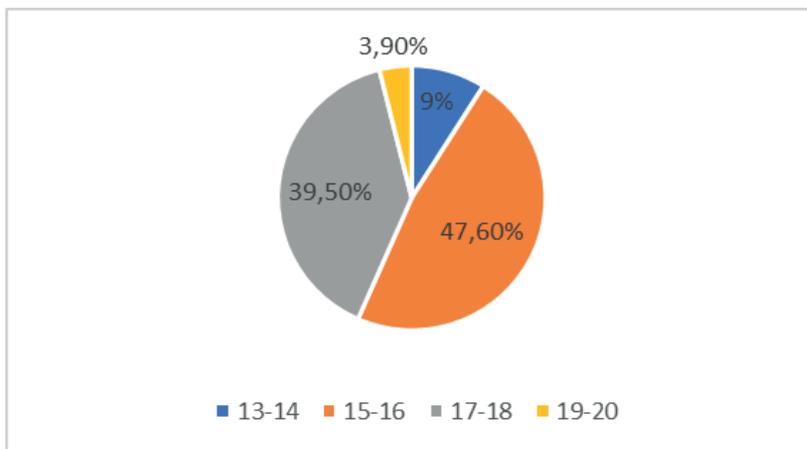


Figure 2. Age distribution

Source: Made by authors

The third figure shows the specific distribution of the age group, with the proportions of 15-16 years old and 17-18 years old standing out, because they form the core of secondary schools.

As expected, the proportion of women is higher at 61.4%, which can be explained by the attitude of the younger generations. The stereotype is that girls pay more attention to their studies and are better than boys in school, who often take things lightly. In the present case, laziness and carelessness may have contributed to this proportion, and boys are reluctant to take on extra-curricular

responsibilities outside of school. Although it should also be mentioned that the high school students are mostly girls.

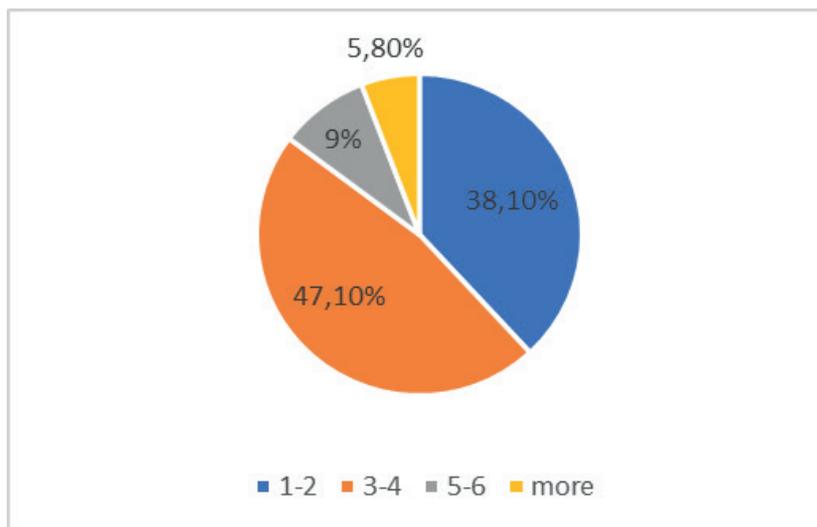


Figure 3. Number of own electronic devices

Source: Made by authors

Surprisingly, 15 people own more than 6 electronic devices, which I personally consider many in this age group. The financial situation of the parents also clearly contributes to this, which I have already explained in more detail in the previous chapter.

Only one of the respondents does not have a smartphone, which is surprising as we are talking about a rural town where students often also come from smaller villages. This shows how much we are experiencing the accelerating time, the development of infocommunication devices, and the launch of newer and newer devices. We can almost say the emerging generation cannot even imagine their lives without the internet and a smartphone.

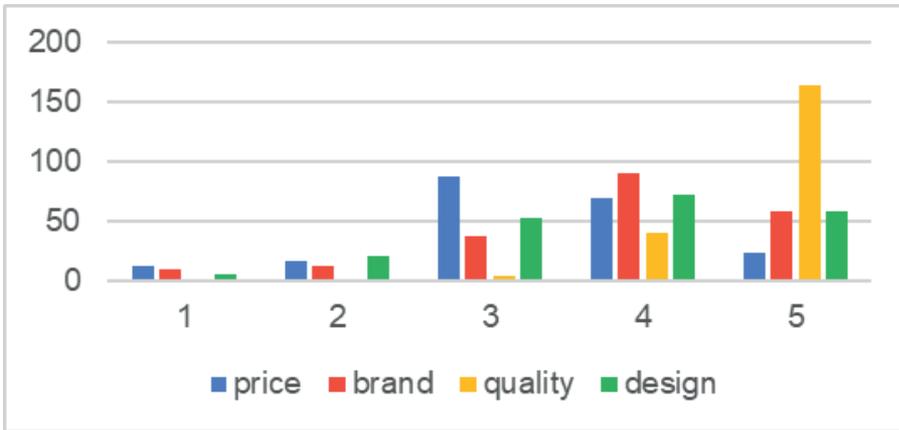


Figure 4. Importance of buying a smartphone (Likert-scale)

Source: Made by authors

Regarding the purchase of a smartphone, Figure 5 shows how important price, brand, quality, and design are to respondents. It is clear that everyone is informed about the devices online or offline, and the opinions of friends is important. But what qualities are the most important? The majority of responses on the Likert scale ranged from 3 to 5. Price is not the most important thing for the age group, as they are even adjusted to the financial situation of the parents, who finance the children. The brand and design show similar proportions. On the other hand, we see an overwhelming majority in terms of quality, which seems to be the most important attribute when choosing tools.

There was also a question about the telephone services, which shows what features young people use most often. It should be emphasized that the response was never highest in SMS. Internet usage, social media, and music playback are the three highlights that seem to be essential for 70-80% of the respondents.

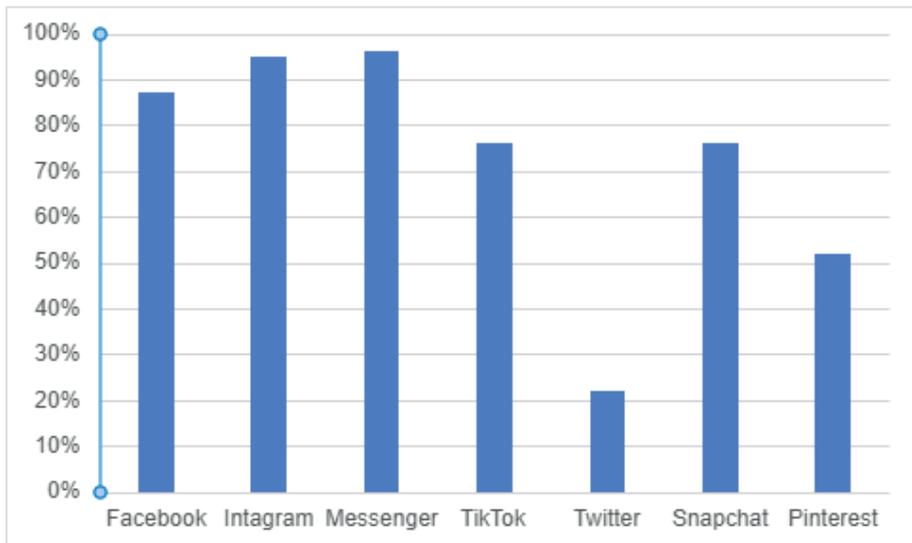


Figure 5. Social media usage

Source: Made by authors

Figure 6 shows the social media that are regularly used by Generation Z and Alpha respondents. As can be seen, a similar proportion of Instagram and Messenger platforms are used by most, followed by Facebook. Most of these apps are all owned by Facebook. The emerging platform called TikTok, formerly known as Musically, is enjoying a growing user base. It can be observed that Twitter is less used among young people. This is not necessarily the case of the generation, but in general it is not a widespread application in Hungary. Respondents also had the opportunity to enter various social media which they actively use on their own. It appears that not everyone knows what social media are, as platforms like Netflix, Google Classroom, have been mentioned.

Many argue about the right amount of time a young person can spend on the internet. The figure below shows that Generation Z and Alpha spend 3-6 hours a day in the digital world. They also say the number of followers and likes is not important. This overturned my hypothesis, which focused on the importance and calculation of these data.

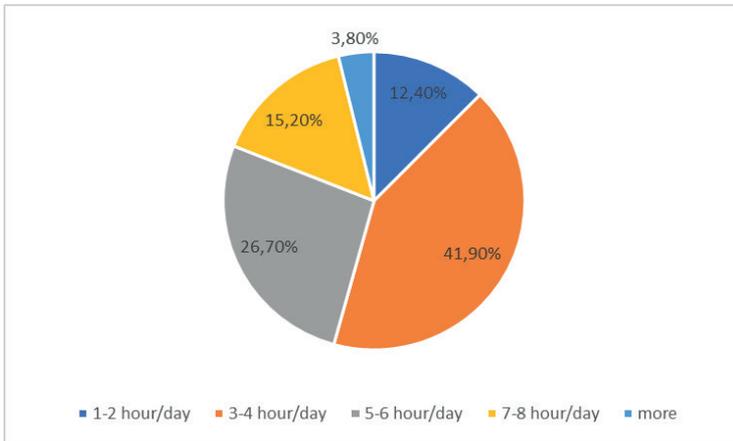


Figure 6. Social media usage hour/day

Source: Made by authors

In the last part of the questionnaire, the focus was on influencers. Young people have been shown to follow opinion leaders on a very wide range of topics; such as sports, music, and fashion. The target group is not aware of the purpose and function of these people, as they could not decide whether to measure a positive or negative impact on the followers. They argue that this is because there are those who have a completely positive influence, we call them professional opinion leaders, while most people who provide online advertising often have a negative image.

But I would like to highlight a few responses in which attention has been drawn to overrated advertising and a sense of responsibility. There are those who say it definitely influences people, as everyone puts themselves in a better light in the digital world, they can even provide a false self-image or a distorted picture of the world.

*So, I don't follow flu drugs very much, in fact I use the word basically pejoratively for youtubers who are often pushed down by 10-14 year olds for underage viewers who don't have any criticism of the elders who have built a personal cult around them for the sake of making money. throat. (18 years old boy)*

*Show that tangible assets are important in life and who has how many likes and followers (17 years old boy)*

*I think it's important to follow flu drugs that have positive effects. An example of such an effect is spelling. This is because we can even learn a lot from reading the content shared by the flu. However, if the words are not spelled correctly, they can even be incorrectly fixed and have a negative effect. (17 years old girl)*

*They get a big profit without investing in real work, for which others work long hours. (18 years old boy)*

*It's good because there's someone to occupy people. (17 years old boy)*

Reading these thoughts, we can really think about what is good for the emerging generation. The majority of respondents consciously provided feedback that they are not affected by an influencer. This answer is very similar to the ratio of followers to likes. Then, I would like to ask two questions: why are there more apps that can track who, when, followed, liked, blocked, etc. and why do so many people download these apps?

## Summary

As we can see, smartphones are performing an increasingly important role in the lives of the Z and Alpha generations in which the “lovemark” character is strongly present. With prestige products, the desired image is easily achieved and transmitted in the digital world. The prevalence of influencers among young people, which can be considered a new profession in the 21st century, provides a great basis for sharing. It includes several important questions that were also raised in the questionnaire. How good is it to observe a person’s behavior and accept his or her opinion? What is the responsibility of an influencer these days? Who says who can tell us what is right, what is true? How much impact is the one who is louder and has more followers having?

In this connection, I would like to quote the thoughts of Csaba Kajdi, “Cyla”:

*We live in an age when we are told what is right, what is good, what is truth. You either agree with that, or if you don't, you are an enemy. [...] We are frustrated, we hate, we hate something different every week, and although this is not a political conversation, it gives us so many negative waves, and we think that should be our opinion, because He said... (Csaba Kajdi)*

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# Smartfony i media społecznościowe jako symbol statusu Gen Z

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Dóra Szabó jest studentką programu doktoranckiego z zakresu Nauk o Edukacji i Kulturze na Uniwersytecie w Debreczynie (Węgry). W 2020 r. została nauczycielem języka i kultury niemieckiej oraz nauczycielem bibliotekoznawstwa i informacji naukowej. Podczas swoich studiów uniwersyteckich zaczęła odkrywać technologie informacyjno-komunikacyjne, kompetencje cyfrowe oraz kompetencje cyfrowe przyszłych nauczycieli w oparciu o informacje online, fałszywe wiadomości. Jej pole badawcze koncentruje się na przyszłych nauczycielach i ich postawie cyfrowej, umiejętnościach edukacji cyfrowej. Głównym pytaniem jest, jaki wpływ na edukację mają fałszywe wiadomości i wpływowe osoby.

Dani Erzsébet jest profesorem nadzwyczajnym z habilitacją na Uniwersytecie w Debreczynie (Węgry). Kierownik Instytutu Bibliotekoznawstwa i Informacji Naukowej i dyrektor Biblioteki Powiatowej Bács-Kiskun. Jej tematy badawcze to: czytanie badań/cyfrowe narracje czytania, upowszechnianie wyników naukowych, tożsamość kulturowa i historia instytucji w Basenie Karpackim.

**S**

**łowa kluczowe:** symbol statusu; smartfon; media społecznościowe; umiejętność korzystania z mediów; influencer

**S**

**treszczenie:** Smartfony wytworzyły nowe nawyki i wzorce zachowań i są obecnie najbardziej rozpowszechnionym narzędziem informacyjno-komunikacyjnym. Pojawiają się również jako symbole statusu wśród pokoleń Z i Alpha. To narzędzie odgrywa ważną rolę w życiu młodego pokolenia i ma wpływ na platformy mediów społecznościowych, co doprowadziło do dalszych pytań. To szczególnie ważny temat w dzisiejszych czasach, ponieważ o obszar świadomości

medialnej dba nie tylko rodzina, ale także instytucje edukacyjne, które przyczyniają się do promocji świadomego korzystania. Wykorzystano ankietę PILOT, aby określić, w jaki sposób uczniowie odnoszą się do swoich telefonów. Ta ankieta była właściwym wyborem, ponieważ jest jednym z fundamentów edukacji w zakresie właściwego zachowania medialnego i krytycznego myślenia. W trakcie badania zapytano młodych ludzi w wieku 13-19 lat, co myślą o symbolach statusu, w jaki sposób odnoszą się do swoich smartfonów, jaką rolę pełnią w mediach społecznościowych, gdy spotykają się z wieloma influencerami.

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# Smartphones und soziale Medien als Symbol des Gen-Z-Status

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Dóra Szabó ist Doktorandin im Bereich der Bildungs- und Kulturwissenschaften an der Universität Debrecen in Ungarn. Seit 2020 unterrichtet sie in deutscher Sprache und Kultur sowie Bibliothekswissenschaft und wissenschaftlicher Information. Während ihres Studiums begann sie die Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien, die digitalen Kompetenzen und die digitalen Kompetenzen der künftigen LehrerInnen in Anlehnung an die online Angaben und die falschen Informationen (Fake news) zu ergründen. Ihr Interesse konzentriert sich auf die künftigen LehrerInnen und ihren digitalen Hintergrund sowie die Fertigkeiten der digitalen Bildung. Die Hauptfrage bezieht sich darauf, was für einen Einfluss auf die Bildung die falschen Informationen und die einflussreichen Personen haben.

Dani Erzsébet ist habilitierte Professorin an der Universität Debrecen in Ungarn, Leiterin des Instituts für Bibliothekswissenschaft und Wissenschaftliche Information sowie der Kreisbibliothek Bács-Kiskun. Ihr Forschungsinteresse bezieht sich auf das Lesen von Untersuchungen, die digitale Narration des Lesens, die Freistellung von Forschungsergebnissen, die kulturelle Identität und die Geschichte der Institutionen im Karpatenbecken.

**S** **tichworte:** Statussymbol; Smartphone; soziale Medien; Fertigkeit, die Medien zu nutzen; Influencer

**Z** **usammenfassung:** Die Smartphones führten zur Entstehung von neuen Gepflogenheiten und Mustern von Verhaltensweisen und gelten heutzutage als das meist verbreitete Informations- und Kommunikationswerkzeug. Sie erscheinen auch als Statussymbole in den Generationen Z und Alpha. Dieses Werkzeug spielt eine wichtige Rolle im Leben der jungen Generation

und beeinflusst die Plattformen der sozialen Medien, was zu weiteren Fragen führte. Es ist ein besonders heikles Thema heute, denn der Bereich des Medienbewusstseins umfasst nicht nur die Familie, sondern auch die Bildungseinrichtungen, die zur Verbreitung einer bewussten Nutzung beitragen. Man benutzte die Umfrage PILOT, um zu bestimmen, wie die Schüler ihre Handys betrachten. Sie war eine gute Wahl, weil sie eines der Fundamente der Bildung im Bereich des geeigneten Medienverhaltens und des kritischen Denkens ist. Während der Untersuchung fragte ich die jungen Leute im Alter von 13 bis 19 Jahre, was sie von den Statussymbolen denken, wie sie ihre Smartphones betrachten, welche Rolle sie in den sozialen Medien spielen, wenn sie sich mit vielen Influencern treffen.