

Internet use among undergraduate higher education students: findings from Finnish University Student Health Survey

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- Mind the gap! Building bridges to health for all young people

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



“Internet is a significant information finding and sharing forums of our time.”

- Higher education students use Internet daily in their studies, work, entertainment, communication, messaging and to run everyday tasks and errands (Debyrshire et al. 2013, Eurostat 2015).
- Internet use among higher education students’ has increased notably in the last 10 years:
 - ➔ **today’s usage is on average 5-6 hours a day (Peltzer et al. 2015).**
- Previous research indicates that daily “heavy” Internet usage has caused physical and psychological changes and also behavioural variations in students’ health (Kuss et al. 2013).
 - ➔ The definition for health effecting “heavy Internet use” varies from problematic, excessive to addictive use (Cash et al. 2012).

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVE

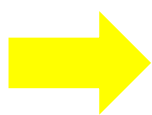
A PhD –research (UEF) conducted in a wider project:
University Student Health Survey 2016 (FSHS)

- A national sample (Finland). →
- Research participants consisted of Finnish undergraduate higher education students; *University* and *University of Applied Sciences* students.
- **The overall research objective is to find associations between higher education students' Internet use, health behavior and health outcomes.**



RESEARCH MATERIAL AND INSTRUMENT

- The participants were selected by stratified sampling using the information of the students' year of birth and study year enrolment (academic year 2015–2016).
- The sample included 10 000 students, who were 18–35 year old undergraduate Finnish higher education students.



Due to this study's theoretical framework and viewpoint, only the responses from 18–24 year old participants were chosen to be further examined.

- The data were collected in 2016 with a questionnaire.



STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 18–24 year old higher education students (N= 1446) :

Sample:

University students

Female: N = 536

Male: N = 288

University of Applied Sciences students

Female: N = 444

Male: N = 176

Other: N= 2



RESEARCH QUESTIONS



1. How much time do 18–24 year old undergraduate higher education students spend on the Internet for studying and for free-time activities?
2. What kind of online activities do 18–24 year old undergraduate higher education students have?

RESULTS

1. INTERNET USE BY TIME

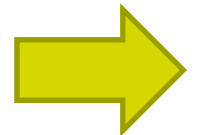
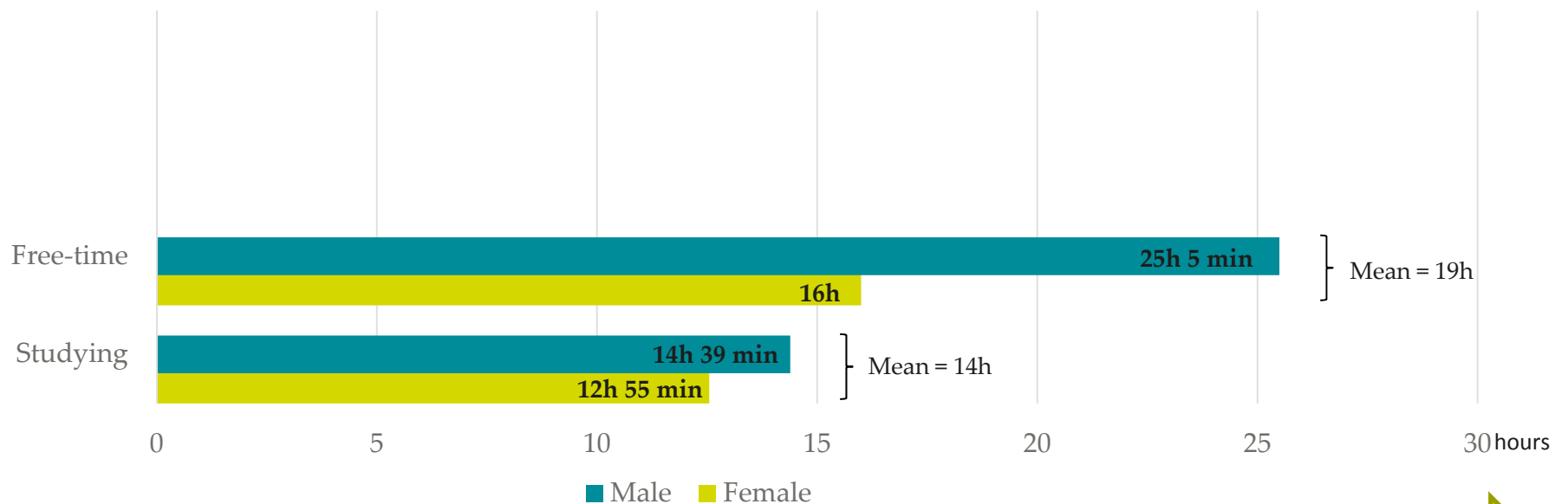
-studying and free-time activities



INTERNET USE / HOURS (Mean)

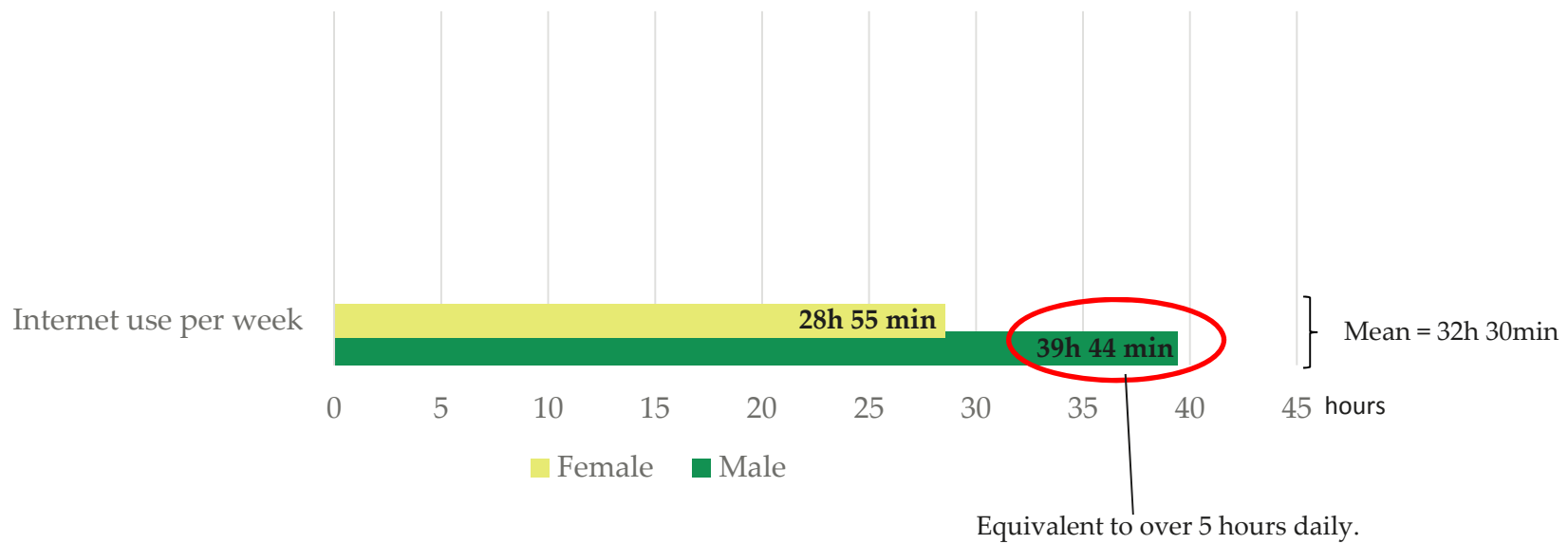
A statistical difference between University students and University of Applied Sciences students Internet use was not found.

Internet use for studying and for free-time activities per week



INTERNET USE BY TIME (=Mean)

- Total Internet use for studying and for free-time activities together per week

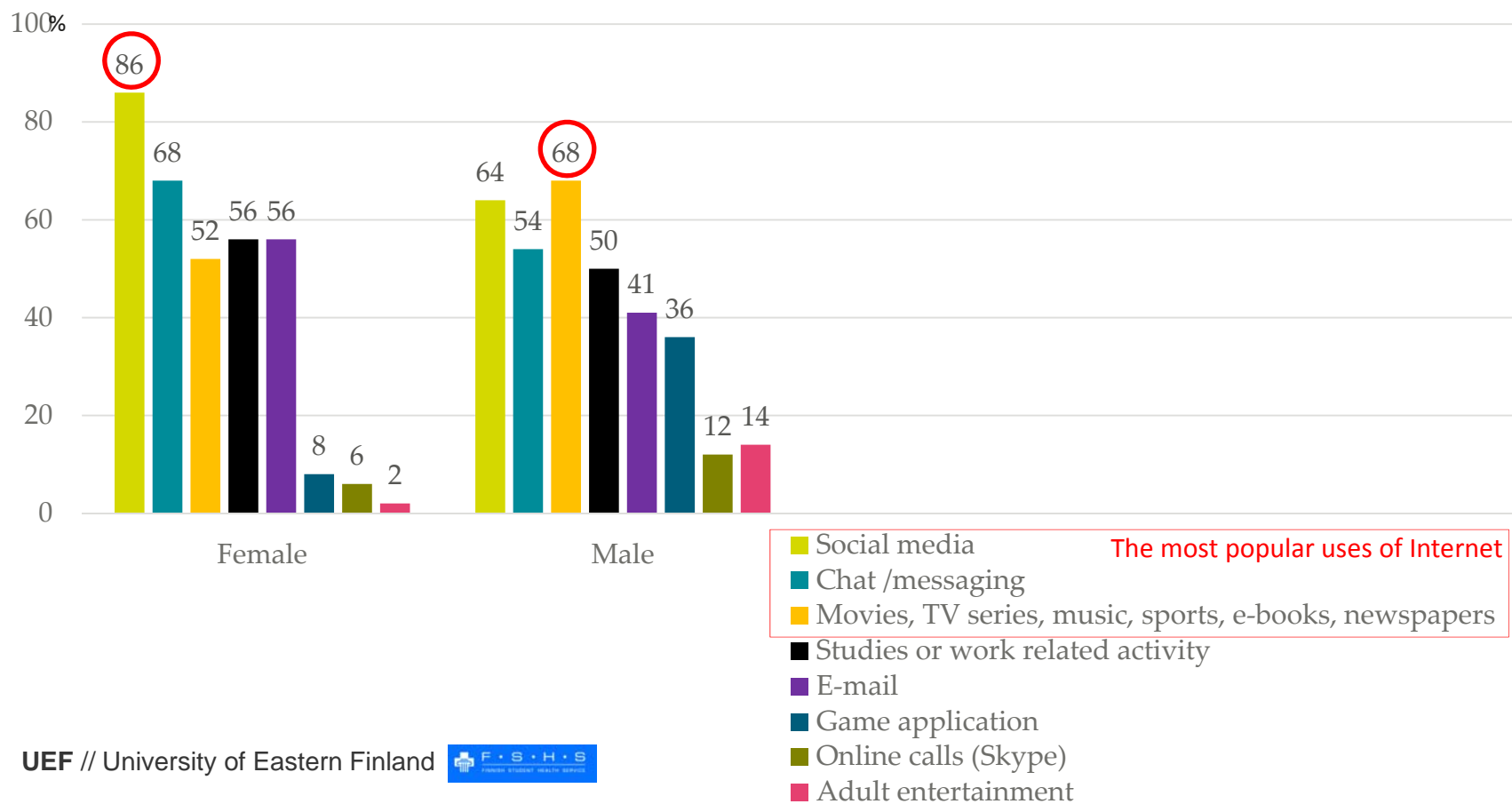


RESULTS

2. ONLINE ACTIVITIES



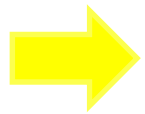
Students' most popular online activities



CONCLUSIONS

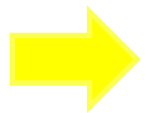


- The Internet use is present in students daily life.



The use needs ongoing research because computer technology advances rapidly and the usage habits change accordingly.

- There is a difference between the time students spend on the Internet for studying and for free-time activities.



Also differences between the genders Internet use exists.

- Further understanding of how Internet use may impact on health behavior in this population could influence health promotion guidelines.



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Thank you!

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