

Understanding the role of extracurricular activities in socioemotional development and its impact on young people digital media involvement: an exploratory study



CATOLICA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
AND PSYCHOLOGY

PORTO

Bárbara Nobre¹, Luísa Campos¹, Marta Tavares¹, Maria Dias¹, Lurdes Veríssimo¹, Pedro Dias¹, Catarina Morais¹, Gary Jones² & Jordi Bernal³

¹Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Research Centre for Human Development, Portugal

²Nottingham Trent University, Department of Psychology, UK

³Universitat Ramon Llull, Faculty of Psychology, Education Sciences and Sport Blanquerna, Spain

Introduction

Young people spend a **significant amount of time online**, which brings both **risks and opportunities** (e.g., Hamilton et al., 2021). Since not all risks lead to actual harm, the aim is to **identify key protective factors in order to empower young people in their use of technology** (e.g., Campos et al., 2021). Recently, studies focused on the impact of young people's use of digital media have **emphasised the importance of the socioemotional skills of the person behind the device** (e.g., Odgers & Jensen, 2020).

Contexts such as extracurricular activities can take on particular importance because of **the role they play in young people's socioemotional development** (e.g., Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2015, 2022; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), as described earlier, and it is **important to understand how and why this happens**.

Objectives

- To explore how **youths** and **parents** perceive the **contribution of Extracurricular Activities (ECA) to socioemotional development of young people**.
- To explore how socioemotional skills developed in these activities may be a **protective factor in Digital Media Use (DMU)**.

Method

2 focus groups:

- 7 youths: 4 boys and 3 girls (12-15 years old) practicing basketball, dance, music, soccer, squash, tennis, and theatre.
- 7 parents: 6 mothers and 1 father (mean age 48.3).

Results

VARIABLES THAT INFLUENCE

Identified by parents:

- **Instructors' role**: reference figure and balance discipline/motivation.

Identified by youths:

- **Instructors' role**: emotional support from instructors.

Identified by both:

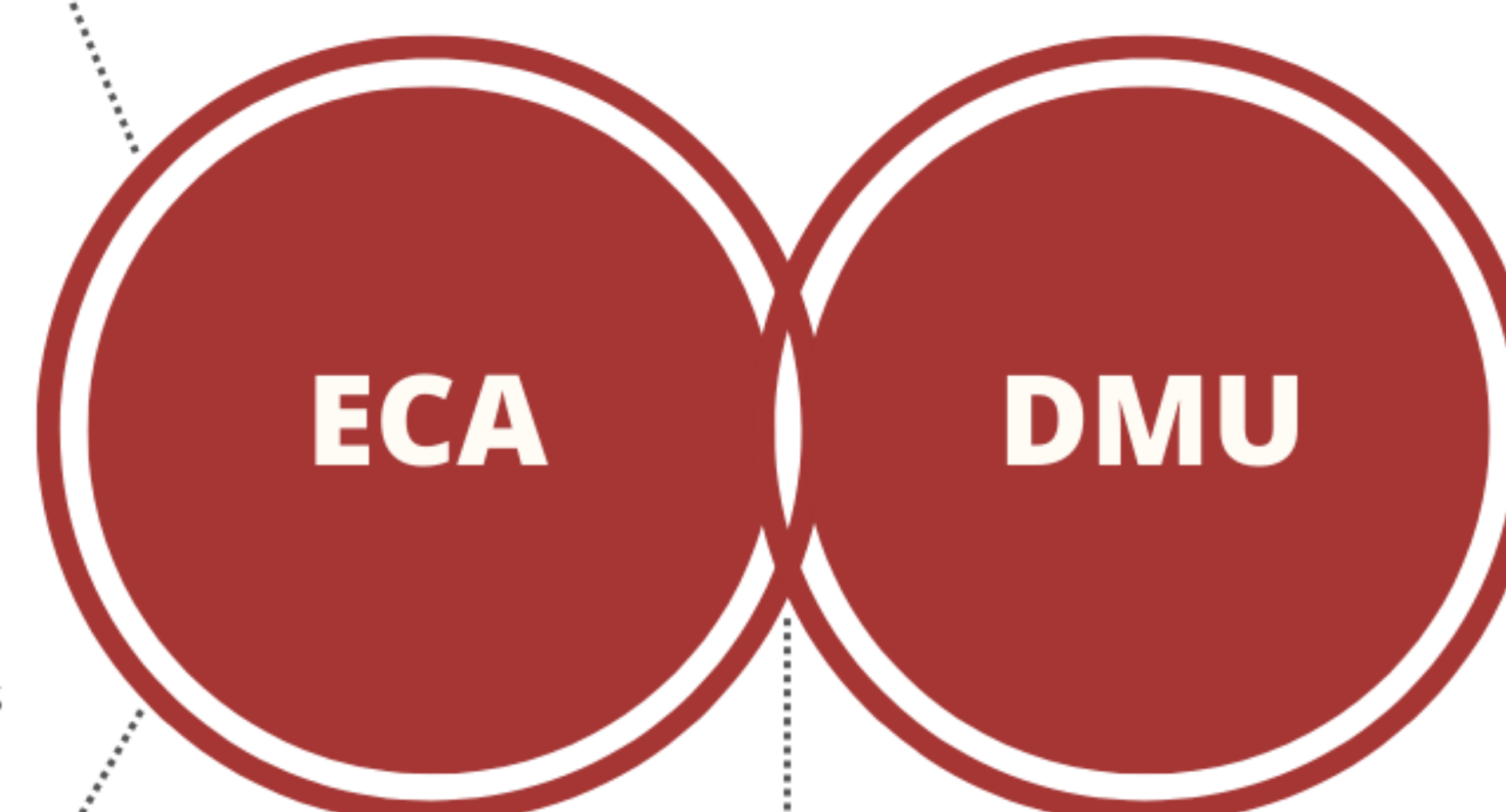
- **ECA**: social and competitive dimensions.
- **Parental involvement**: emotional support and logistics (e.g., transport).

SOCIOEMOTIONAL SKILLS

Identified by parents: time management; self-discipline and emotional regulation.

Identified by youths: attention focus and deal with pressure.

Identified by both: positive peer relationships and sense of belonging.



IMPACT ECA - DMU

Identified by parents: most did not identify any relationship.

Identified by youths: higher intentionality in digital media use.

Identified by both: less amount of time using digital media.

POSITIVE USE DIMENSIONS

Identified by parents:

- **Parental mediation**: active mediation (communication/support) and restrictive mediation (amount of time/family time).
- **Socioemotional skills**: social awareness.

Identified by youths:

- **Socioemotional skills**: self-control and responsible decision-making.

Conclusions

- The results showed that both youths and parents identified similar socioemotional skills such as positive peer relationships and sense of belonging arising from the participation in extracurricular activities. They also linked it to the development of self-management skills. In addition, digital media mediation strategies and young peoples' socioemotional skills (e.g., responsible decision-making) were found to be important in offsetting the negative impact of digital media.
- The majority of the parents did not identify a link between involvement in extracurricular activities and digital media use, except that youths spend less time with digital media. The latter was also reported by youth who indicated a higher intentionality using digital media.
- These findings confirm the relevance of the present study and will inform the development of two questionnaires that focus on assessing these variables. Further, the aim will be to understand the relationships between these variables. It may also be interesting to conduct further focus groups with instructors of extracurricular activities to explore their perspectives on these dimensions.

References

Campos, L., Veríssimo, L., Nobre, B., Morais, C., & Dias, P. (2021). Protective Factors in the Use of Electronic Media According to Youth and Their Parents: An Exploratory Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(7), 3573. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18073573>

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2015). 2015 CASEL guide: Effective social and emotional learning programs: Secondary school edition. Chicago, IL: Author.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2022). What is the CASEL Framework?. <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>

Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2006). Extracurricular involvement and adolescent adjustment: Impact of duration, number of activities, and breadth of participation. *Applied developmental science*, 10(3), 132-146. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads1003_3

Hamilton, J. L., Nesi, J., & Choukas-Bradley, S. (2022). Reexamining social media and socioemotional well-being among adolescents through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic: a theoretical review and directions for future research. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 17(3), 662-679. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916211014189>

Odgers, C. L., & Jensen, M. R. (2020). Annual Research Review: Adolescent mental health in the digital age: facts, fears, and future directions. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 61(3), 336-348. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13190>