



THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR EXAMINING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

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Abstract. This article addresses the rapidly emerging issue of the psychological influence of social networking platforms on young people. As social media occupies a central role in the everyday lives of younger users, their deep involvement in the digital environment gives rise to a range of psychological and social challenges, including the spread of cyberbullying, body dysmorphia, deficits in face-to-face communication skills, reduced levels of emotional intelligence, cognitive impairments, and increased vulnerability to mental health disorders. Against the backdrop of society's digital transformation, the study highlights the necessity of exploring the theoretical underpinnings of social media's psychological effects on youth.

Particular attention is given to new content formats, such as accelerated consumption patterns and short-form videos (e.g., TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts). These formats contribute to the development of clip thinking (a cognitive style characterized by fragmented and discontinuous processing of information), intensify sensory overload, and may trigger shifts in both cognitive functioning and emotional regulation. The article presents an overview of contemporary research on the psychological consequences of social media use, outlines the multiple levels of its influence on the individual, identifies existing gaps in the literature, and proposes directions for future inquiry.

Keywords: social media, psychological well-being, social media influence, young adults, short-form videos, fragmented thinking, cognitive processes

Introduction

Relevance of the Study. In the context of accelerating digital technologies and the pervasive digitalization of communication processes, the study of how social media affects young people acquires particular urgency. Young users, as one of the most active cohorts of digital platform consumers, are daily exposed to vast volumes of visual and audiovisual content. Over recent years, short-form video formats - such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and You-

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Tube Shorts - have gained remarkable popularity. These formats are characterized by rapid information delivery, frequent shifts in visual stimuli, and algorithmically curated recommendation feeds. Together, these features create a unique environment of human-media interaction.

Although scholarly interest in the psychological implications of digital media for mental health, cognitive functioning, and emotional well-being has grown substantially, the specific effects of accelerated, fragmentary video content on users' psychological states remain insufficiently explored. In particular, little is known about how such content alters processes of attention and memory, influences self-perception and self-esteem, and potentially contributes to heightened anxiety and emotional fatigue.

Consequently, identifying and theoretically framing the psychological effects of this emerging media format among young social media users is not only of academic significance but also of practical social importance. Such inquiry is essential for adapting psychological frameworks to the realities of digital media environments and for developing preventive and intervention strategies aimed at supporting youth well-being.

Problem Statement. While traditional forms of media - such as text-based communication and long-form video - have been relatively well studied, the psychological implications of short-form video remain under-investigated. The rapid, fragmented, and algorithmically personalized nature of these stimuli may provoke atypical patterns of attentional distribution, shifts in emotional regulation, and alterations in cognitive processing among young users. However, systematic data capturing the psychofunctional responses of youth to this form of media consumption are scarce. The absence of a comprehensive theoretical analysis hampers the development of evidence-based conclusions about its potential consequences for psychological development and resilience.

Aim of the Study. The primary aim of this review article is to systematize theoretical perspectives and critically examine current empirical findings on the psychological outcomes of social media use, with a particular focus on the influence of short-form content on youth well-being.

Research Objectives.

To synthesize and classify existing theoretical frameworks addressing the impact of social media on cognitive functioning and emotional regulation in young populations.

To conduct a content analysis of recent empirical studies published in leading international databases between 2020 and 2025.

To identify the specific psychological effects of short-form video content on cognitive processes and subjective well-being.

To highlight gaps in the existing literature and propose promising directions for further research in the psychology of the digital environment.

The novelty of the present study lies in a systematic review of contemporary international and Kazakhstani scholarly literature examining the psychological impact of social media on young people.

Methods of Literature Search and Selection

A systematic search and review of the literature on social media's influence on cognitive functioning and psychological well-being among young people was conducted. Sources were drawn from the following scientific databases: PubMed, Scopus и Google Scholar.

Search queries were refined using Boolean operators (AND, OR) to increase precision. The search covered publications from 2020 to 2025 in order to include the most recent findings. Keywords applied included:

"Social media" OR "social networking"

"Social media" AND "mental health"

"The impact of social media"

"Social media" AND "mental health" AND "young"

Table 1

Summary table of relevant publications

Key words:	Scientific database:	Number of articles:
"Social media"	PubMed	269,030
"Social media" AND "mental health"	PubMed	118,968
"Social networking"	PubMed	39,920
"The impact of social media"	PubMed	222,857
"Social media" AND "mental health" AND "young"	PubMed	68,854
"Social media"	Scopus	123,789
"Social media" AND "mental health"	Scopus	26,369
"Social networking"	Scopus	79,039
"The impact of social media"	Scopus	2,409
"Social media" AND "mental health" AND "young"	Scopus	12,558
"Social media"	Google Scholar	1,540,000
"Social media" AND "mental health"	Google Scholar	430,000
"Social networking"	Google Scholar	240,000
"The impact of social media"	Google Scholar	20,900
"Social media" AND "mental health" AND "young"	Google Scholar	1

The search results were systematically organized into a summary table №1, which reflected the number of relevant publications identified for each keyword across the selected databases. In the subsequent stage, a critical screening of the sources was conducted to ensure alignment with the study's aims and objectives, followed by an in-depth content analysis.

Stages of Analysis

1. Initial Search. Automated keyword-based searches across the selected databases.
2. Screening. Removal of duplicates and elimination of articles deemed irrelevant based on title and abstract.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Empirical and theoretical studies;
- Publications in peer-reviewed journals;
- Research providing data on the influence of social media on psychological functioning, behavior, self-perception, or the emotional well-being of young people.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Low-quality or non-systematic reviews;
- Publications without access to the full text;
- Studies not explicitly focused on youth populations.

Quantitative Outcome

The initial search yielded 35 publications. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 18 studies were selected for detailed analysis.

The extracted data were systematized into an analytical table that included the following parameters:

- Author(s) and study title;
- Year of publication;
- Type of study;
- Key findings;
- Reported limitations.

Psychological Well-Being as a Foundation of a Healthy Personality in Contemporary Society

Psychological well-being is traditionally conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional stability, subjective life satisfaction, existential meaning, and the capacity for self-actualization. Within humanistic psychology, it is closely aligned with Rogers' notion of "fully functioning" and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where higher-order levels such as self-actualization and personal growth serve as indicators of inner well-being (Schneider et al., 2015).

Building on this foundation, Carol Ryff proposed a more structured model of psychological well-being, consisting of six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. This framework remains widely applied in empirical research. For instance, (Seifert, 2005; Keyes, 2005) emphasize that sustainable mental health is not reducible to the absence of psychopathology, but rather entails the presence of cognitive and affective resources that enable effective adaptation.

Contemporary scholars (Diener et al., 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2001) further enrich this perspective by incorporating dimensions of subjective well-being, including life satisfaction, the frequency of positive versus negative affect, and the fulfillment of basic psychological needs - autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These components are particularly salient during youth, a developmental stage marked by identity formation, the maturation of self-regulation, and emotional growth.

In current interpretations, psychological well-being can be understood as a state of inner balance and harmony characterized by positive self-perception, adaptive functioning in response to environmental demands, a sense of life meaning, and resilience in the face of stress.

Relevance for Contemporary Individuals

- Emotional resilience: supports equilibrium amid rapid societal changes and uncertainty.
- Productivity: enhances motivation, learning capacity, and goal achievement.
- Social connectedness: facilitates the development and maintenance of meaningful interpersonal relationships.
- Physical health: closely interlinked with stress regulation and overall somatic functioning.

In today's context - marked by uncertainty, social transformations, and heightened information overload - stable mental health emerges as a critical resource. It defines an individual's adaptive potential, capacity to cope with challenges, sustained productivity, and subjective sense of fulfillment.

According to the Mental State of the World 2024 report, prepared by Sapien Labs, psychological well-being among young adults (18–34 years) continues to decline globally. Based on data from over one million survey responses across 80 countries, the average Mind Health Quotient (MHQ) for this cohort was reported at 38, a score indicative of significant functional difficulties that compromise daily activities and adaptive functioning (Sapien Labs, 2025).

The situation appears particularly concerning in Central Asia. In Kazakhstan, for example, up to 45% of young internet users fall into the category with MHQ scores below 30, reflecting persistent distress and symptomatology that interfere with both cognitive and emotional functioning.

Commonly reported difficulties include intrusive anxious thoughts, social withdrawal, emotional instability, procrastination, feelings of guilt, mood fluctuations, and diminished capacity for concentration and self-regulation. Comparative analysis indicates that the prevalence of these symptoms among young people is 35–40% higher than in older age groups.

Out of the 47 MHQ indicators, the most severely impaired domains among youth include attentional control, planning, speech-related functioning, impulse regulation, and stress tolerance. These findings underscore the

heightened mental health risks faced by younger generations and highlight the pressing need for targeted research to identify the factors driving deteriorating psycho-emotional well-being within the digital environment (Sapien Labs, 2025).

The Concept of Social Networks and Media Platforms

In scholarly discourse, social networking services (SNS) are generally understood as digital platforms that allow users to create individual profiles, communicate with others, and produce or exchange content within networked online environments. Beyond facilitating interpersonal communication, such platforms function as spaces for self-presentation, identity construction, and information exchange across social, professional, and educational contexts (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).

The broader concept of media platforms encompasses not only social networks but also streaming services, news portals, educational resources, and other digital infrastructures that collectively constitute the contemporary media ecosystem. These environments provide continuous access to visual, textual, and audiovisual content, thereby reshaping patterns of information consumption and communication within digital culture (Van Dijck, 2013). Contemporary platforms are distinguished by high levels of interactivity, algorithmic personalization, and the predominance of visual formats, particularly short-form video content, which has become especially attractive to younger audiences (Wang, 2024).

Social networking platforms fulfill diverse user needs, including interpersonal connection, identity exploration, information seeking, entertainment, and instrumental purposes related to education or professional activities. Within the framework of uses and gratifications theory, such forms of engagement are interpreted as attempts to satisfy social and psychological needs, while online interaction may also contribute to the accumulation of social capital through networks of trust and support embedded in digital communication (Bhatiasavi, 2024). At the same time, the influence of SNS is shaped not only by user motivations but also by platform architecture. Features such as personalized feeds, infinite scrolling, autoplay functions, and notification systems intensify attentional capture and prolong engagement, creating environments characterized by constant novelty and accessibility (Montag et al., 2021).

Recent research suggests that the psychological consequences of social media use depend largely on patterns of engagement rather than on exposure alone. Passive consumption, including browsing and scrolling, has often been associated with processes of social comparison and negative affect, whereas active interaction and supportive communication tend to demonstrate neutral or more positive associations with well-being (Orben & Przybylski, 2019). Exposure to curated content and experiences of fear of missing out have similarly been linked to higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, while cyberbullying and other forms of online aggression remain significant risks for adolescent mental health (Przybylski et al., 2013; Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).

A growing body of research also focuses on short-form video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. These platforms combine brief content units with highly personalized recommendation systems, producing distinctive patterns of rapid and continuous media consumption. Empirical studies indicate that intensive engagement with such content may be associated with sleep disturbances, elevated social anxiety, and difficulties in maintaining cognitive control under conditions of constant digital stimulation. However, scholars emphasize that the current evidence remains limited due to the scarcity of longitudinal and causal studies in this rapidly evolving media environment (Conte et al., 2025; Jain et al., 2025; Chiossi et al., 2023; Jiang & Yoo, 2024).

Within this broader international research context, studies conducted in Kazakhstan provide additional insight into the relationship between digital media use and youth psychological well-being. Evidence from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) project indicates a noticeable increase in problematic social media use among adolescents, rising from 6.9% in 2018 to 12.7% in 2022, with significant associations observed between problematic engagement and higher levels of depressive symptoms, anxiety, and reduced stress resilience (Adaeva et al., 2023). Similar tendencies are reported in studies of university students, where social media involvement has been linked to psychosocial factors such as self-esteem, perceived social support, and peer influence, the latter emerging as an important predictor of platform engagement (Bakhyt et al., 2025).

Survey data further illustrate the widespread integration of digital communication into the daily lives of young people in Kazakhstan. National studies report that the vast majority of respondents rely on the internet and social networking platforms as their primary source of information and spend several hours online each day. Additional cross-sectional research suggests that excessive screen time and intensive engagement with social media may increase the likelihood of depressive and anxiety-related symptoms, whereas moderate patterns of use appear to be associated with comparatively more favorable indicators of psychological well-being (Nussipova & Slanbekova, 2024; Zhamashova, 2024).

Taken together, both international and national findings suggest that the psychological consequences of social media use among young people should be interpreted as context-dependent and multifactorial. Outcomes appear to be shaped by patterns of user activity, the characteristics of consumed content, individual psychological and developmental factors, and the structural features of digital platforms. Despite the growing interest in this topic, empirical studies addressing the cognitive and emotional implications of social media use among young people in Kazakhstan remain relatively limited, particularly with regard to the rapidly expanding ecosystem of short-form video platforms. This gap highlights the importance of further research within the emerging field of digital media psychology.

Review of Empirical Evidence

A synthesis of empirical findings on the relationship between social media use and psychological well-being reveals that there is no single, definitive answer to whether these platforms are inherently beneficial or harmful (Beyari, 2023; Karim et al., 2020; Khalaf et al., 2023).

Longitudinal studies suggest that the sheer amount of time spent on social networking sites is rarely a robust predictor of mental health problems. Instead, the nature of engagement appears to be more consequential: active posting in public digital spaces has been associated with increases in anxiety symptoms and psychological distress, whereas passive content consumption does not consistently yield negative outcomes (O'Reilly, 2020; Plackett et al., 2023).

Cross-sectional research offers a more mixed picture. On one hand, intensive social media use has been linked to diminished self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, and heightened social anxiety (Berryman et al., 2018; Nesi & Prinstein, 2015). On the other hand, positive associations have also been observed, including strengthened social support, enhanced feelings of belonging, and reductions in loneliness. The lack of temporal sequencing, however, limits the ability of these studies to establish causal pathways (Braghieri et al., 2021; Mehrpour et al., 2025; Weigle & Shafi, 2024).

Systematic reviews and meta-analyses further confirm that the psychological impact of social media is highly context-dependent. Outcomes are shaped less by frequency of use and more by quality and motivation (Naslund et al., 2020; Zsila & Reyes, 2023). Critical moderators include individual factors (e.g., personality traits, age, digital literacy) and type of interaction (e.g., authentic self-presentation and supportive communication function as protective factors, whereas compulsive consumption amplifies vulnerability) (Azagba et al., 2024; David & Roberts, 2024; Dong & Xie, 2024).

Taken together, the evidence supports the notion that social media constitutes a dual-faceted phenomenon - a potential source of both psychological risk and psychological resource. To provide a clearer synthesis, a summary table was developed, collating recent publications by author, year, study design, main findings, and reported limitations. This structured format highlights both converging trends and existing gaps in the empirical literature, thereby informing the formulation of future research directions (Beyari, 2023; Liu, 2023).

Table 2
Summary of Empirical Evidence

Author / Study Focus	Year	Research Design	Key Findings	Limitations
Chloe Berryman, Christopher J. Ferguson, Charles Negy. Social Media Use and Mental Health among Young Adults	2018	Cross-sectional correlational	Time online and perceived importance of social media were not linked to negative outcomes. Risk factors included vague-bullying, parent conflict, and a strong need to belong, while social support served as a protective factor. Histrionic traits were inversely related to social anxiety and loneliness.	1. Correlational design 2. U.S. college sample limits generalizability 3. heavy reliance on self-report.
O'Reilly, M. Social media and adolescent mental health: the good, the bad and the ugly.	2020	Qualitative study	Tripartite appraisal by adolescents: good (reduced isolation, support), bad (FOMO, low self-esteem), ugly (cyberbullying, suicidal content). Teens emphasize personal benefits and externalize risks; professionals acknowledge benefits but prioritize risk mitigation.	1. Limited generalizability 2. Two U.K. cities 3. specialist sample under-diversified (mainly psychiatry staff).
Karim F, Oyewande AA, Abdalla LF, Chaudhry Ehsanullah R, Khan S. Social Media Use and Its Connection to Mental Health: A Systematic Review.	2020	Systematic review	Passive use is more strongly correlated with depression than active use; girls show higher problematic use; visual platforms are linked to body-image/eating concerns. Some null/mixed results (time online not always predictive). Small but notable benefits: access to support and mental-health information.	1. Predominantly cross-sectional evidence 2. Heterogeneous measures 3. Few studies test mediators (e.g., self-esteem, FOMO, family climate) Limited longitudinal/ 4. qualitative work.
Naslund JA, Bon-dre A, Torous J, Aschbrenner KA. Social Media and Mental Health: Benefits, Risks, and Opportunities for Research and Practice.	2020	Narrative review	High social media use among individuals with mental illness (~97% youth; ~70% adults). Platforms may reduce isolation and support engagement. Social media-based interventions (PeerFIT, HORYZONS) show promising outcomes. Risks include excessive use, cyberbullying, stigmatizing content, and privacy concerns.	1. Not a systematic review 2. Possible publication bias 3. Evidence concentrated in high-income countries.

Nichita A., Enache D., Andreescu C. V.: TikTok-the influence on school performance and social life of adolescents	2021	Quantitative study	Mixed pattern: psychological positives reported; however, problem use may foster dependence, maladaptive values, depressive symptoms, and suicidal ideation.	1. Small, geographically narrow sample 2. No significance testing 1. No objective indicators of achievement or social functioning 3. Largely argumentative treatment of mechanisms without analytic tests.
Braghieri, Luca, Ro'ee Levy, and Alexey Makarin. Social media and Mental Health.	2022	Quasi-experimental (generalized difference-in-differences)	Facebook rollout increased poor mental health symptoms (depression, anxiety); larger effects in vulnerable groups; rises in psychiatry visits and antidepressant use; adverse academic outcomes mediated by mental health.	1. U.S. college sample only 2. self-report outcomes 3. Early Facebook (2004–2006) differs from modern algorithmic platforms.
Nesi J, Burke TA, Caltabiano A, Spirito A, Wolff JC. Digital media-related precursors to psychiatric hospitalization among youth.	2022	Clinical, quantitative, cross-sectional (N = 343 adolescents)	42.9% reported at least one digital precipitant of hospitalization. Main precipitants: phone confiscation (24.8%), suicide-related social-media use (19.0%), online peer conflict (14.0%). Addictive smartphone use predicted all digital precipitants; suicide-related online behavior linked to higher suicidal ideation severity.	1. Cross-sectional 2. self-report only 3. No collateral informants 4. The COVID-19 period may inflate usage/symptoms.
Beyari, H. The Relationship between Social Media and the Increase in Mental Health Problems.	2023	Quantitative survey (N = 385; Saudi Arabia, 18–35)	Central risk factor: need for recognition/validation via likes/followers. Least salient factor: social gaming. Primary motive: entertainment.	1. No causal inference 2. self-report bias 2. A broad age range may blur developmental differences 3. gender not modeled as a moderator.

Khalaf A M, Alubied A A, Khalaf A M, et al. The Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Adolescents and Young Adults: A Systematic Review	2023	PRISMA systematic review (cross-sectional, longitudinal studies; meta-analyses)	Moderate yet significant links between social media use and depressive symptoms. Greater time online relates to internalizing (depression, anxiety) and externalizing problems (aggression, risk-taking). Bedtime use associates with sleep loss, poorer cognition/ achievement, and socio-emotional difficulties. Girls show stronger associations with body image and eating-related problems.	1. Evidence base dominated by cross-sectional, self-report studies 2. Shortage of longitudinal work 3. Limited attention to culture/context.
Zheng Lin Analysis of the Psychological Impact of TikTok on Contemporary Teenagers	2023	Analytical review with synthesis of empirical data on school-age samples (surveys; secondary analysis)	Benefits: space for self-expression; social connection; stress relief; potential contributions to cultural identity. Risks: high addictive potential (time loss); distorted values (extremism, hyper-sexualized imagery); cyberbullying; lower self-esteem; depressive symptoms; sleep problems.	1. Limited representativeness 2. No strict longitudinal design 3. absence of quantified effect sizes 4. Many claims rely on secondary sources rather than original data.
Zsila, Á., Reyes, M.E.S. Pros & cons: impacts of social media on mental health.	2023	Analytical narrative review	Confirms ambivalence: social media functions as both a resource and a risk. Distinguishes functional vs. dysfunctional use; quality-not quantity-of use predicts outcomes.	1. No original data 2. Methodological heterogeneity across included studies 3. limited cross-cultural/age-group analysis.
Adayeva, A.A., Slazhneva, T.I., Abdrahmanova, Sh.Z., Kausova, G.K., Kalmakova, Zh.A. Problematic Social Media Use and Psychological Well-Being of Urban and Rural Adolescents in Kazakhstan	2023	Cross-sectional study	1. The prevalence of problematic social media use increased from 6.9 percent in 2018 to 12.7 percent in 2022. 2. A statistically significant association was found between problematic social media use and depressive symptoms among adolescents (OR = 2.69 for urban adolescents and OR = 2.42 for rural adolescents). 3. Problematic social media use was also associated with higher anxiety levels and lower stress resilience among adolescents.	1. Cross-sectional design prevents causal inference. 2. Reliance on self-report questionnaires may introduce subjective bias. 3. The study does not account for media content characteristics or patterns of user activity.

David, M. E., & Roberts, J. A. TikTok Brain: An Investigation of Short-Form Video Use, Self-Control, and Phubbing.	2024	Two correlational studies: Study 1-U.S. college students (N = 282, 18–26); Study 2-online adult panel (N = 198, 19–73)	TikTok use uniquely predicts phubbing in both samples. Lower self-control mediates the TikTok–phubbing link (replicated across two self-control scales). Mechanism discussed via “flow” and algorithmic design (personalization, serendipity, ease of use), reducing attentional switching.	1. Correlational design self-reported use (no objective screen-time) 2. U.S. samples skewed toward White and female participants.
Dong, Zhiwen & Xie, Tian. Why do people love short-form videos? The motivations for using Chinese TikTok (Douyin) and implications for well-being	2024	Multi-stage empirical program	Motives-consumption: habit, novelty, maintaining ties, stress relief, escapism, time-killing. Motives-creation: fame-seeking, documenting experience, curiosity. Links to well-being: maintaining ties ↑ life satisfaction & affect balance; documenting/curiosity ↑ affect balance & ↓ loneliness; time-killing ↓ affect balance; fame-seeking ↑ loneliness.	1. No causal tests 2. Platform-specific (Douyin) without cross-platform comparison 3. Mechanisms (e.g., social comparison) are underspecified newer features (e.g., live streaming) not analyzed.
Sunday Azagba, Todd Ebling, Alperen Korkmaz Social media use and mental health indicators among US adolescents: A population-based study.	2024	Cross-sectional study	Heavy use (>4 h/day) is associated with higher odds of mental-health symptoms (OR = 2.22–2.91). Highest risk among bisexual youth (OR = 9.39) and gay/lesbian youth (OR = 8.31). Latent-class analysis: Adolescents with initially good mental health (53%) were more sensitive to negative effects.	1. No causality self-report bias content/type of use not modeled-frequency only.
Weigle, P.E., Shafi, R.M.A. Social Media and Youth Mental Health.	2024	Narrative review	Rising youth engagement coincides with increased anxiety/depression. Effects depend on individual characteristics and experiences. Differential links: depression ↔ social comparison/negative interactions; anxiety ↔ constant online presence & FOMO; suicidality ↔ participation in high-risk communities.	1. No primary data 2. Causal inference is limited by prior literature quality.

Wenjie Wang Exploring the impact of social media short-form videos on adolescents' psychological and psychosocial well-being	2024	Qualitative study (semi-structured interviews), thematic analysis	Positive effects included increased knowledge, social opportunities, and short-term stress relief. Negative outcomes involved lower life satisfaction among girls, guilt from excessive video use, and links to anxiety and sleep disruption. Dependency levels were generally low, though girls with anxiety and low self-esteem were more vulnerable. Girls showed greater sensitivity to social comparison, whereas boys demonstrated higher resilience.	1. Extremely small sample (N = 4), limited representativeness. 2. Cross-sectional design with no longitudinal tracking. 3. Data based solely on self-reports and interviews.
Yu Y, Dykxhoorn J, Plackett R The Impact of Different Types of Social Media Use on the Mental Health of UK Adults: Longitudinal Observational Study	2024	Longitudinal cohort (two waves)	Active content production (posting) predicted poorer mental-health indicators, whereas passive viewing showed no consistent independent association. The highest risk was observed among users high on both consumption and creation. Effects were stable across sex and age.	1. Only two time points (limited trajectory inference) 1. The COVID-19 period may elevate use/symptoms 2. GHQ-12 self-report 3. "Active use" operationalized solely as posting frequency.
Nussipova, A.U., Slanbekova, G.K. Social Media Landscape in the Republic of Kazakhstan: Navigating Youth Behavior and Ensuring Information Security	2024	Sociological survey study	Findings: 94.5 percent of young people use the internet and social media as their primary source of information. A large proportion of users spend between three and six hours online daily. Social media significantly influences information behavior and communication practices among youth. Risks related to cyber threats, misinformation, and insufficient media literacy were identified.	1. Findings rely on self-reported data. 2. The study is primarily descriptive in nature. 3. Psychological variables related to mental well-being were not examined in depth.

Zhamashova, D. Examination of the Effects of Social Media on the Mental Health of Young Adults in Ka- zakhstan	2024	Master's the- sis based on a cross-sectional study	Findings: High screen time and strong social media dependence are associated with increased risk of depressive and anxiety symp- toms. Users spending more than 7 hours per day on social net- working platforms show a significantly higher probability of depressive manifestations. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) emerges as a significant predic- tor of emotional distress and anxiety.	1. Pilot design and rela- tively small sample size. 2. Reliance on self-re- port measures. 3. Cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation. 4. Media content characteristics were not analyzed.
Mehrpour, A., Widmer, E. D., & Staerklé, C. (2025). So- cial network analysis in social psycho- logical research (1990–2020)	2025	Scoping review	Field mainly uses basic met- rics; dynamic models (SIENA, TERGM) are less common. Broad thematic spread; grow- ing use of longitudinal/mixed methods; recent focus on identity, communication, health, prejudice.	1. Heavy reliance on student/school samples 2. Shortage of experimental longitudinal designs 3. Simplification of complex networks 4. Geographic skew toward U.S./W. Europe.
Bakhyt, T.S., Mambetalina, A.S., Nuradinov, A.S., Lawrence, K.C., Ilieva, S.E. The Influence of Social Media on Mediating Gender Identity and Psychoso- cial Values in the Student Popula- tion of Kazakh- stan	2025	Quantitative study	Findings: Social media use is associated with the formation of gender identity and psychosocial values among university students. Peer influence emerged as the strongest predictor of engage- ment with social networking platforms. Social media environments function as spaces for social comparison and identity con- struction among young users.	1.The sample is limited to university students, which restricts gener- alizability to other age groups. 2.Data are based on self-reported responses, which may introduce subjective bias. 3.Cross-sectional design does not allow causal conclusions.

Within the framework of this study, an initial review of 50 scholarly publications examining youth psychological well-being in the context of digital platforms and social media use was conducted. After applying the established inclusion and exclusion criteria and assessing the methodological quality and relevance of the sources, 22 studies were selected for detailed analysis. These publications formed the empirical basis of the present review.

The selected works were published between 2018 and 2025 and were identified through major international academic databases, including Scopus and PubMed, as well as through targeted searches in Google Scholar. The studies represent a broad geographical distribution, covering research conducted in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Kazakhstan. A substantial share of the empirical data originates from investigations carried out in China, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Most of the analyzed studies focus on adolescents and young adults aged between 13 and 29 years.

In methodological terms, the majority of the reviewed publications rely on cross-sectional designs that examine statistical associations between patterns of social media use and indicators of psychological well-being. Alongside these studies, the sample also includes six analytical or review papers, two multi-stage empirical investigations employing combined research designs, two qualitative studies, three quantitative empirical works, one quasi-experimental study, and one mixed-method analytical investigation. Only a single study incorporated longitudinal data, which limits the ability to trace longer-term psychological dynamics associated with digital media use.

The findings reported across the selected studies suggest that the psychological consequences of social media engagement among young people cannot be interpreted in unequivocally positive or negative terms. Some studies identify links between intensive social media use and elevated levels of anxiety, depressive symptoms, and reduced life satisfaction. Other investigations, however, emphasize the potential benefits of digital platforms, including opportunities to maintain social connections, broaden interpersonal networks, and access informational resources. These differences indicate that the psychological outcomes associated with social media use depend on a range of contextual and individual factors rather than on the overall amount of time spent online.

Empirical research conducted in Kazakhstan reflects similar tendencies. Studies involving university students indicate that the use of social networking platforms is associated with variables such as self-esteem, perceived social support, and peer influence. National survey data also demonstrate a high level of youth engagement in digital communication environments, with many respondents identifying social media as a primary source of information. Other investigations conducted among young users in Kazakhstan report associations between intensive online engagement and increased levels of depressive and anxiety-related symptoms. Data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children program similarly point to a growing prevalence of problematic social media use among adolescents and its relationship with emotional distress and reduced stress resilience.

Taken together, the reviewed studies show that the relationship between social media use and youth psychological well-being is shaped by multiple interacting factors. These include patterns of user activity, the nature of the content being consumed, individual psychological characteristics such as vulnerability and self-regulation, and structural features of digital platforms, including recommendation algorithms and engagement mechanisms.

At the same time, the current body of research remains uneven. Many studies rely primarily on quantitative indicators of media use, particularly measures based on time spent online. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to the qualitative aspects of digital media consumption, including patterns of user interaction, the effects of algorithmically curated content, and the psychological implications of emerging formats such as short-form video platforms. This limitation is particularly noticeable in the context of Kazakhstan, where empirical research examining the cognitive and emotional effects of short-form video consumption among young users remains scarce.

These observations point to the need for further research aimed at clarifying the mechanisms through which contemporary digital media environments influence the psychological well-being of young people.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study aimed to examine the theoretical foundations of the psychological impact of social media and contemporary digital media environments on young users, with particular attention to the growing prevalence of short-form video content. The analysis of the reviewed studies suggests that the psychological implications of contemporary digital media environments cannot be interpreted within a single evaluative framework. Instead, the

influence of social media engagement appears to arise from the interaction between behavioral patterns of platform use, the motivational orientations of users, and the structural characteristics of digital content environments that increasingly shape everyday online experience.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that social media platforms simultaneously function as spaces for communication, identity construction, and information exchange, while also introducing new cognitive and emotional challenges. In particular, algorithmically mediated content distribution and the accelerated consumption of short-form videos appear to influence attention patterns, modes of information processing, and mechanisms of social comparison among young users. These findings support the view that contemporary digital media environments represent a complex psychological context in which both adaptive and potentially problematic forms of engagement may emerge.

Research conducted in Kazakhstan largely reflects tendencies reported in international studies and confirms the growing role of digital platforms in the everyday social life of young people. At the same time, the available national research remains relatively limited in scope, which constrains a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological implications of rapidly evolving digital media practices within the local socio-cultural context.

The analysis of the existing literature also reveals several methodological and conceptual limitations. A considerable proportion of studies continues to rely primarily on quantitative indicators of media exposure, whereas the qualitative characteristics of digital media engagement remain insufficiently explored. In particular, emerging forms of algorithmically mediated content distribution, especially short-form video platforms, require more systematic investigation, as they increasingly shape patterns of attention, communication, and self-perception among younger users.

Thus, the present review contributes to the ongoing scholarly discussion by integrating international and Kazakhstani research perspectives and by identifying several directions for future empirical investigation. Further systematic research, particularly within Kazakhstan, would allow for a more precise understanding of how contemporary digital media environments interact with cognitive and emotional processes in youth populations.

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of developing preventive educational initiatives aimed at supporting balanced and reflective digital media engagement among young users. One promising direction may involve the introduction of programs designed to develop skills of digital self-regulation and conscious media consumption. Such initiatives may include structured practices aimed at strengthening attentional control, restoring cognitive resources, and encouraging reflective awareness of media use. For example, brief techniques involving intentional cognitive pauses or short periods of mental disengagement from digital stimuli may serve as practical strategies for restoring attentional balance in environments characterized by continuous information flow.

The development and integration of such programs within educational contexts may contribute to strengthening psychological resilience and fostering more sustainable patterns of interaction with digital media environments, thereby helping to prevent or reduce potential negative effects associated with intensive engagement with social networks and short-form video platforms.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Author Contributions

M. Muratova - conceptualized the study, designed the methodology, conducted data analysis, and prepared the original draft of the manuscript.

G. Menlibekova - contributed to the theoretical framework development and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved and agreed to the published final version of the manuscript.

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**Жастарға әлеуметтік желілердің
психологиялық әсерін зерттеудің теориялық негіздері**

Аңдатпа. Мақала соңғы жылдары қарқынды дамып келе жатқан әлеуметтік желілердің жастарға психологиялық әсері мәселесіне арналған. Әлеуметтік желілер жас қолданушылардың өмірінде маңызды орын алатындықтан, олардың цифрлық кеңістікке тартылуы қоғамда жаңа психологиялық және әлеуметтік сын-қатерлерді тудырады: кибербуллингтің таралуы, дене дисморфиясы, тікелей қарым-қатынас дағдыларының жетіспеушілігі, эмоционалды интеллект деңгейінің төмендеуі, тұлғаның когнитивті бұзылыстары, психикалық ауытқулардың даму қаупі және т.б. Мақалада әлеуметтік желілердің жастарға психологиялық әсерін зерттеудің теориялық негіздерін цифрлық трансформация жағдайында қарастырудың өзектілігі айқындалады.

Мақалада жедел тұтыну форматы мен қысқа бейнероликтер (TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts) сияқты жаңа контент түрлеріне ерекше көңіл бөлінген. Олар клиптік ойлаудың қалыптасуына ықпал етіп, сенсорлық шамадан тыс жүктемені арттырады және когнитивті әрі эмоционалды салада өзгерістер тудыруы мүмкін. Мақалада әлеуметтік желілердің тұлғаға психологиялық әсері мәселесіне қатысты заманауи ғылыми базадағы зерттеулерге талдау жасалған, әлеуметтік желілердің ықпал ету деңгейлері ашылған, ғылыми базасындағы олқылықтар айқындалған және болашақ зерттеу бағыттары көрсетілген.

Түйін сөздер: әлеуметтік желілер, психологиялық әл-ауқат, әлеуметтік желілердің әсері, жастар, қысқа бейнероликтер, клиптік ойлау, когнитивтік процестер

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Теоретические основы исследования психологического воздействия социальных сетей на молодых людей

Аннотация. Статья посвящена остро развивающейся в последние годы проблеме психологического воздействия социальных сетей на молодых людей. Поскольку социальные сети занимают одно из ключевых мест в жизни молодых пользователей и их вовлеченность в цифровое пространство порождает новые психологические и социальные вызовы в обществе: распространение кибербуллинга, бодидисморфия, дефицит навыков живой коммуникации, снижение уровня эмоционального интеллекта, когнитивные нарушения личности, риск развития психических расстройств и т.д. В статье актуализируется проблема изучения теоретических основ психологического воздействия социальных сетей на молодых людей в условиях цифровой трансформации общества.

Особое внимание в статье уделяется новым форматам контента, таким как ускоренный формат потребления и короткие видеоролики (TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts), которые в свою очередь способствуют формированию клипового мышления (формирование фрагментарного способа обработки информации), увеличивают уровень сенсорной перегрузки и могут провоцировать изменения в когнитивной и эмоциональной сфере. В статье представлен анализ современных исследований, посвященных проблеме психологического воздействия социальных сетей на личность, раскрыты различные уровни влияния социальных сетей, выявлены пробелы в существующей научной базе и определены дальнейшие перспективы исследования.

Ключевые слова: социальные сети, психологическое благополучие, влияние социальных сетей, молодые люди, короткие видеоролики, клиповое мышление, когнитивные процессы

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