E.ISSN.2614-6061
P.ISSN.2527-4295
DOI : 10.37081/ed.v14i3.8510
Vol. 14 No. 3 Edisi September 2026, pp.564-569

DIGITAL INTERACTION DYNAMICS AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Oleh :
Abidah[1)], Aklima[2)], Abd Razak[3)]
[1] STAIN Teungku Dirundeng Meulaboh Aceh Barat
[2] Fakultas Keperawatan, Universitas Syiah Kuala Banda Aceh
[3] Fakultas Syariah dan Hukum, Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh
[1]email: abidahmarzuki@staindirundeng.ac.id
[2]email: aklima@usk.ac.id
[3]email: abd.razak@ar.raniry.ac.id

Informasi Artikel
Riwayat Artikel :
Submit, 2 Agustus 2026
Revisi, 25 September 2026
Diterima, 27 September 2026
Publish, 28 September 2026

Kata Kunci :
Digital Interaction,
Psychological Well-Being,
University Student.

ABSTRACT
The development of digital technology has transformed the way university students' interaction in carrying out both academic and social activities. Digital media provides opportunities to access information, communicate, engage in discussions, and build social support. However, unregulated use may also be associated with various psychological challenges. This article aims to analyze the dynamics of students' digital interactions and their implications for psychological well-being, as well as to identify factors that may support or challenge students' psychological well-being in digital environments. This study employed a literature review method by analyzing relevant scientific articles on digital interaction, social media use, psychological well-being, fear of missing out (FoMO), social media fatigue, social media addiction, doomscrolling, cyberbullying, self-control, and student resilience. The literature was analyzed descriptively and thematically by comparing and synthesizing findings from previous studies. The results indicate that students' digital interactions have a two-sided dynamic. Purposeful and well-managed digital use can support academic activities, expand social relationships, and provide social support. In contrast, problematic use may be associated with FoMO, social media fatigue, social media addiction, sleep disturbances, exposure to negative information, and experiences of cyberbullying that may undermine psychological well-being. These dynamics are not determined solely by the duration of digital media use but also by the purpose of use, quality of interaction, ability to regulate digital use, and students' psychological conditions. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy, self-control, resilience, and the ability to develop healthy patterns of digital interaction is important for supporting students' psychological well-being.

This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license

Corresponding Author:
Nama: Abidah
Afiliasi: STAIN Teungku Dirundeng Meulaboh Aceh Barat
Email: abidahmarzuki@staindirundeng.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of digital technology and cyberspace has fundamentally transformed the communication landscape and the social construction of student life. Interpersonal communication, previously centered on face-to-face interaction, has shifted into a digital ecosystem comprising social media platforms, instant messaging applications, and learning management systems. In higher education, digital platforms have been integrated to facilitate

academic activities such as accessing course materials, discussing assignments, and conducting independent researchwhile also expanding students' social networks (Handayani et al., 2024). Through online social support, this digital connectivity enables students to build cross-regional relationships and gain emotional support from peers, serving as a protective factor during the process of adapting to campus life (Abad Santos et al., 2023).

However, constant digital connectivity is an "always-on" environment which entails complex psychological consequences and burdens. The lives of university students, characterized by high academic demands and the need to adapt to independent living, often intersect with the pressure to remain constantly connected in the digital realm. An inability to limit technology engagement risks triggering social media fatigue, manifesting as cognitive overload, emotional exhaustion, and social withdrawal (Zhang et al., 2021; Nurhalizah & Widyastuti, 2023). This phenomenon is frequently driven by the "Fear of Missing Out" (FoMO), a compulsive urge to monitor others' activities—which can lead to problematic social media use and diminish students' psychological well-being (Zhu & Xiong, 2022; Ulfa & Farida, 2023). Furthermore, negative digital interactions such as cyberbullying and the habit of repeatedly consuming negative news (doomscrolling) exacerbate students' emotional burdens by increasing stress, anxiety, and sleep disturbances (Zhu et al., 2023; 2024; Syakira et al., 2025).

These dynamics illustrate the paradoxical nature of digital technology, wherein academic-social benefits and psychological risks coexist. However, the impact of the digital environment on students' mental health cannot be generalized in a linear fashion or measured solely by the duration of technology use. Prolonged usage does not automatically result in negative outcomes; rather, it is problematic usage characterized by a loss of self-control that consistently diminishes student well-being (Ansari et al., 2024; Godard & Holtzman, 2024). Grounded in the theory of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989), an individual's psychological state emerges from the dynamic interaction between environmental (external) pressures and internal resources. In this context, personal protective factors such as self-control and resilience play a crucial role as psychological buffers that neutralize digital stressors (Bandura, 1997; Kasapoğlu, 2023; Fitriana & Malahati, 2024).

While numerous studies have examined the dynamics of digital interaction and student psychological well-being, a comprehensive synthesis specifically mapping the relationship between digital stressors and the role of students' internal protective factors remains lacking. This article aims to comprehensively analyze the dynamics of students' digital interactions and their impact on psychological well-being (encompassing both adaptive and maladaptive outcomes), while identifying the role of personal protective factors (self-control and resilience) in mitigating cyber-stressors. This study is expected to contribute conceptually to the cyberpsychology literature and serve as a practical reference for higher education institutions in formulating strategies to strengthen student mental health in the digital era.

2. METHOD

This study employs a literature review using a descriptive-qualitative approach. This method was selected because the research aims to understand the dynamics of students' digital interactions and their implications for psychological well-being based on findings from prior studies. A literature review is a type of research that utilizes various written sources such as books, journal articles, and previous research findings as primary data sources, without involving direct data collection in the field (Sari & Asmendri, 2020; Fadli, 2021). Furthermore, a literature review enables researchers to identify, evaluate, and integrate various research findings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a specific topic (Snyder, 2019).

The research data sources consist of scholarly articles relevant to topics such as students' digital interactions, social media usage, psychological well-being, fear of missing out (FoMO), social media fatigue, social media addiction, online social support, cyberbullying, self-control, resilience, and doomscrolling. Literature was selected based on its alignment with the study's focus, the clarity of publication details, and the relevance of the research findings to the issues under discussion. The review process involved searching for, selecting, and reading relevant sources, as well as recording key information from them. Sari (2021) explains that library research can be conducted by analyzing various written sources, emphasizing the analytical strength applied to existing theories and concepts. Haryono et al. (2024) further affirm that library research can utilize journals, books, and supporting documents as sources of information without the need for fieldwork.

The analysis was conducted using descriptive and thematic approaches. The literature review process involved several stages, including literature identification and collection, screening and selection of relevant sources, reading and data extraction, identification of relevant findings, categorization and comparison of findings, thematic analysis, and synthesis and interpretation. The selected findings were organized into several key themes, namely utilization of adaptive digital tools, maladaptive psychological consequences, and intenal protective factors that may support or challenge students' psychological well-being. The overall

process of literature collection and analysis is presented in Figure 1.

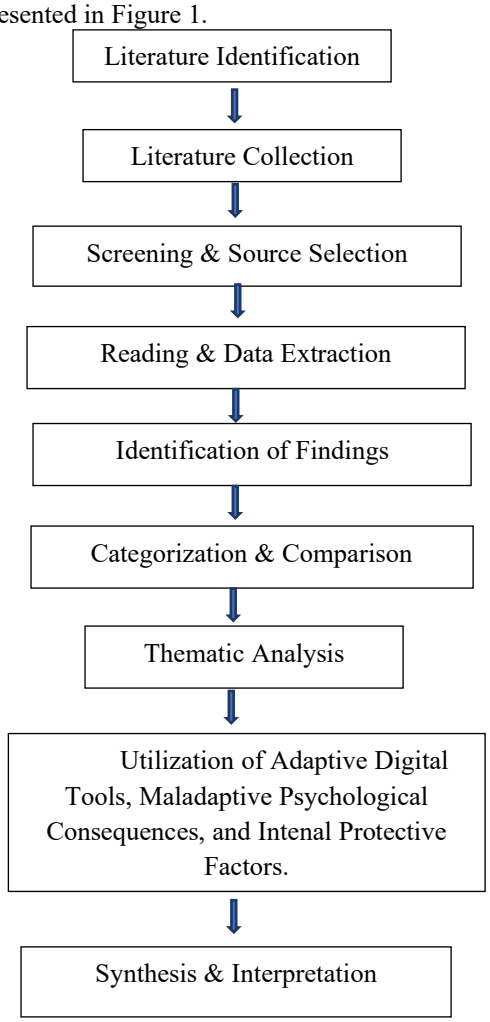


Figure 1. Literature review process from literature identification to data analysis

The flowchart illustrates the stages followed in collecting, selecting, analyzing, and synthesizing the literature included in this study.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis and synthesis of the reviewed literature, research findings regarding the dynamics of digital interaction and their relationship to students' psychological well-being can be mapped into three dimensions: utilization of adaptive digital tools, maladaptive psychological consequences, and intenal protective factors.

Table 1. Dimension of digital interaction dynamics and its relationship to students' psychological well-being

Dimensions	Key Findings & Interaction Patterns	Psychological Impact	Academic Reference
Utilization of Adaptive Digital Tools (Academic & Social)	Search for course materials & online academic discussions	Improving study efficiency and task completion	Handayani et al. (2024)
	Information exchange & study groups	Expanding connections without the constraints of space and time.	Abad Santos et al. (2023)
	The relationship between social factors and mental health is relatively small.	Emotional coping varies when interacting with digital media.	Godard & Holtzman (2024)
Maladaptive psychological consequences	The urge to excessively monitor social media (FOMO)	Decline in students' psychological well-being	Zhu & Xiong (2022); Ulfa & Farida (2023)
	Information overload	Triggers social media fatigue (cognitive, emotional, behavioral)	Zhang et al. (2021), Nurhalizah & Widyastuti (2023)
	Problematic social media use (addiction)	Reduces sleep quality and triggers insomnia.	Zhu et al. (2023); Kasapoğlu (2023)
	Cyberbullying & doomscrolling	Increases anxiety, stress, and symptoms of depression.	Arif et al. (2024); Syakira et al. (2025)
Intenal Protective Factors	Digital self-regulation (self-control) skills	Helps maintain a balance between sleep and study time.	Ryff (1989); Bandura (1997); Kasapoğlu (2023)
	Resilience and adaptability	Maintaining psychological well-being under digital pressure	Fitriana & Malahati (2024)

Utilization of Adaptive Digital Tools (Academic Benefits and Social Support)

Research findings indicate that digital interactions play a multifaceted role in students' lives, supporting both their academic pursuits and social activities. The digital realm can no longer be viewed as separate from students' daily realities; instead, it has become a primary medium for their activities. In an academic context, digital platforms enable students to locate information, keep pace with scientific developments, and exchange course materials (Handayani et al., 2024). This usage demonstrates that digital technology has evolved from a mere source of informal entertainment into an essential instrument in the higher education learning process.

Beyond their academic function, digital spaces play a vital role in expanding and maintaining students' social networks. Through online communication, students can share experiences, engage in discussions, and receive social support

without being hindered by geographical boundaries. As noted by Abad Santos et al. (2023), online social support is a crucial mechanism for understanding the relationship between internet usage and student mental health. Access to these broader social networks provides a safe space for students to seek emotional support when facing academic pressure.

However, the existence of these benefits does not necessarily imply that higher social media usage intensity always correlates directly with improved psychological well-being. A meta-analysis by Godard and Holtzman (2024) confirms that the associations between social media use and mental health, well-being, and social support are actually small and highly variable. This indicates that the impact of students' digital experiences depends on the context and purpose of use, rather than solely on the frequency or duration of technology usage.

Maladaptive psychological consequences

The complexities of digital media usage can evolve into a threat when online behavior is driven not by academic needs or healthy communication, but by maladaptive psychological impulses. A primary manifestation of this is the "Fear of Missing Out" (FoMO), an anxiety stemming from the belief that others are having significant or enjoyable experiences without one's own participation. This apprehension compels university students to monitor social media excessively to avoid feeling left out (Zhu & Xiong, 2022). Such anxiety-driven monitoring behavior has been shown to have a direct link to a decline in students' psychological well-being (Ulfa & Farida, 2023).

When FoMO-driven digital activity coincides with high academic demands such as assignments, exams, and degree completion requirements students become susceptible to "social media fatigue." This fatigue encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral exhaustion resulting from the relentless flow of information and the pressure to remain responsive in the digital realm. Consequently, the volume of incoming information exceeds the brain's capacity to process, comprehend, and make decisions effectively a state known as information overload (Zhang et al., 2021). Nurhalizah and Widyastuti (2023) also identified a positive correlation between academic stress and social media fatigue, demonstrating that digital exhaustion does not occur in isolation but rather compounds the existing psychological burden of university studies.

If this situation persists unchecked, social media usage can escalate into problematic use or addiction. This phenomenon is widespread enough to disrupt basic daily functioning, particularly the quality of students' sleep. Zhu et al. (2023) confirmed a reciprocal relationship between social media addiction, social media fatigue, FoMO, and diminished sleep quality. An inability to manage rest time due to digital attachment risks undermining students' physical and emotional readiness to engage in academic activities.

Beyond the factor of usage intensity, the quality of interactions in the digital realm also determines the level of psychological distress experienced by students. Negative experiences such as cyberbullying have been shown to be closely linked to the onset of serious mental health issues—including depression, anxiety, and stress—among students (Arif et al., 2024). Furthermore, the habit of repeatedly consuming negative information (doomscrolling) has emerged as a new digital threat, exposing students to constant emotional anxiety (Syakira et al., 2025).

The Role of Intenal Protective Factors

Amidst complex digital dynamics, an individual's internal capacity is a key factor determining whether students derive benefits or experience a decline in psychological well-being. Drawing on the theories of Ryff (1989) and Bandura (1997), psychological well-being is influenced by self-regulation capabilities in managing environmental demands. In this context, self-control serves as a personal resource that enables students to curb the impulsive urge to constantly access social media. Kasapoğlu (2023) demonstrates that self-control is positively associated with psychological well-being and plays a role in mitigating the risks of insomnia and problematic social media use.

Alongside self-control, resilience is a crucial protective factor for university students, particularly those belonging to Generation Z. Resilience reflects an individual's ability to bounce back from adversity, adapt to changing environments, and maintain positive psychological functioning under pressure. Fitriana and Malahati (2024) found a significant relationship between resilience and the psychological well-being of university students who use social media. These findings underscore that the impact of the digital environment does not absolutely determine students' psychological state; rather, it depends heavily on the students' capacity for resilience in responding to digital stressors.

Practical Implications and Institutional Recommendations

A synthesis of this discussion indicates that efforts to support students' psychological well-being in the digital era cannot rely on simplistic measures such as limiting usage duration or banning technology altogether. A more adaptive approach involves equipping students with digital self-regulation skills, the ability to filter information, and the awareness to recognize signs of digital fatigue. Higher education institutions play a strategic role in designing interventions based on healthy digital literacy and providing campus counseling services that are responsive to digital mental health issues (such as FoMO, social media fatigue, and internet addiction). By strengthening self-control, fostering resilience, and cultivating a supportive academic

climate, students can optimally utilize digital technology to enhance their academic achievements and social relationships without compromising their psychological.

4. CONCLUSION

Studies indicate that digital interaction has become an integral part of students' lives, serving both academic activities and social needs. Digital media facilitates information gathering, communication, discussion, networking, and access to social support. However, students' experiences in the digital realm vary. While digital interaction offers benefits when engaged in purposefully and in a balanced manner, it can pose challenges when usage becomes difficult to control or involves negative experiences such as FoMO (Fear of Missing Out), social media fatigue, problematic social media use, cyberbullying, and exposure to negative information.

These dynamics demonstrate that students' psychological well-being cannot be understood solely by the frequency or duration of their digital media use. Factors such as the purpose of use, the quality of interactions, the nature of experiences gained, and the students' ability to manage technology usage all shape how the digital environment is perceived and utilized. Self-control, resilience, and social support are crucial elements that help students navigate the various demands and pressures of the digital environment.

Consequently, students' use of digital technology should be guided toward healthy, balanced, and meaningful interaction patterns. Students need the ability to leverage technology for academic and social purposes while limiting usage that might disrupt their daily lives. Higher education institutions also need to provide support by strengthening digital literacy and promoting psychological health, thereby enabling students to face the challenges of the digital environment. Such efforts aim to help students reap the benefits of technology without compromising their psychological well-being.

This literature review has the strength of bringing together findings from previous studies to provide a broader understanding of the dynamics between students' digital interactions and psychological well-being, including both the potential benefits and psychological challenges associated with digital technology use. However, this study is limited by its reliance on previously published literature and therefore does not provide direct empirical evidence of students' experiences in specific educational contexts. Future research is recommended to conduct empirical studies involving university students from diverse backgrounds and educational settings to further examine how different patterns of digital interaction influence psychological well-being. Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method studies may also provide more detailed evidence regarding the factors that strengthen or weaken students' ability to maintain psychological well-being in increasingly digital learning environments.

5. REFERENCES

Abad Santos, P. M. T., Cleofas, J. V., Austria, A. G. O., de Guzman, A. K. B., & Sarile, B. A. F. (2023). The double-edged impact of Internet use on mental health outcomes among Filipino university students: The mediating role of online social support. *Frontiers in Sociology, 8*, 1132523. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.1132523

Ansari, S., Iqbal, N., Asif, R., Hashim, M., Farooqi, S. R., & Alimoradi, Z. (2024). Social media use and well-being: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 27*(10), 704–719. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2024.0001

Arif, A., Qadir, M. A., Martins, R. S., & Khuwaja, H. M. A. (2024). The impact of cyberbullying on mental health outcomes amongst university students: A systematic review. *PLOS Mental Health, 1*(6), e0000166. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmen.0000166

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman and Company.

Elsayed, H. A. E. (2025). Fear of missing out and its impact: Exploring relationships with social media use, psychological well-being, and academic performance among university students. *Frontiers in Psychology, 16*, 1582572. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1582572

Fadli, M. R. (2021). Memahami desain metode penelitian kualitatif. *Humanika, 21*(1), 33–54. https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1.38075

Fasya, S. S., & Qudsyi, H. (2024). Fear of missing out and psychological well-being among undergraduate university students who are working on thesis in Indonesia. In *Proceedings of the 6th International Seminar on Psychology (ISPsy 2023)*. EAI. https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.18-7-2023.2343374

Fitriana, F. N., & Malahati, F. (2024). The relationship between resilience and the intensity of social media use with psychological well-being of Gen-Z students. *Jurnal Psikologi Tabularasa, 19*(2), 185–194. https://doi.org/10.26905/jpt.v19i2.13880

Godard, R., & Holtzman, S. (2024). Are active and passive social media use related to mental health, wellbeing, and social support outcomes? A meta-analysis of 141 studies. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 29*(1), zmad055. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmad055

Handayani, F., Jalwis, & Prahatmaja, N. (2024). The role of social media as a source of academic information for students. *Record and Library Journal, 10*(1), 103–111. https://doi.org/10.20473/rlj.V10-I1.2024.103-111

Haryono, E., Suprihatiningsih, S., Septian, D., Widodo, J., Ashar, A., & Sariman, S. (2024). New paradigm metode penelitian kepustakaan (*library research*) di perguruan tinggi. *An-Nuur, 14*(1). https://doi.org/10.58403/annuur.v14i1.391

Kasapoğlu, F. (2023). An examination of the relationship between psychological well-being, social media usage, self-control, and insomnia of Turkish university students. *Journal of Theoretical Educational Science, 16*(2), 268–286. https://doi.org/10.30831/akukeg.1142221

Nurhalizah, A., & Widyastuti, F. (2023). Social media fatigue ditinjau dari stres akademik selama pembelajaran daring di masa pandemi COVID-19. *Jurnal Psikologi Integratif, 11*(1), 121–133. https://doi.org/10.14421/jpsi.v11i1.2829

Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069–1081. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069

Sari, M., & Asmendri. (2020). Penelitian kepustakaan (*library research*) dalam penelitian pendidikan IPA. *Natural Science: Jurnal Penelitian Bidang IPA dan Pendidikan IPA, 6*(1), 41–53. https://doi.org/10.15548/nsc.v6i1.1555

Sari, R. K. (2021). Penelitian kepustakaan dalam penelitian pengembangan pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia. *Jurnal Borneo Humaniora, 4*(2), 60–69. https://doi.org/10.35334/borneo_humaniora.v4i2.2249

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research, 104*, 333–339. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039

Syakira, N. R., Ifdil, I., & Khairati, A. I. (2025). Analisis doomscrolling pada mahasiswa berdasarkan jenis kelamin, usia, dan intensitas penggunaan media sosial. *Jurnal Konseling dan Pendidikan*, 13(2), 561–577. https://doi.org/10.29210/1164100

Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, W. K. (2018). Associations between screen time and lower psychological well-being among children and adolescents: Evidence from a population-based study. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 12, 271–283. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2018.10.003

Ulfa, I. S. S., & Farida, I. A. (2023). Fear of missing out sebagai prediktor psychological well-being pada mahasiswa pengguna Instagram. *Flourishing Journal, 3*(10), 421–433. https://doi.org/10.17977/um070v3i102023p421-433

Zhang, S., Shen, Y., Xin, T., Sun, H., Wang, Y., Zhang, X., & Ren, S. (2021). The development and validation of a social media fatigue scale: From a cognitive-behavioral-emotional perspective. *PLOS ONE, 16*(1), e0245464. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0245464

Zhu, X., & Xiong, Z. (2022). Exploring association between social media addiction, fear of missing out, and self-presentation online among university students: A cross-sectional study. *Frontiers in Psychiatry, 13*, 896762. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2022.896762

Zhu, X., Zheng, T., Ding, L., Zhang, X., Li, Z., & Jiang, H. (2023). Exploring associations between social media addiction, social media fatigue, fear of missing out and sleep quality among university students: A cross-section study. *PLOS ONE, 18*(10), e0292429. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0292429