

From Financial Distress Prediction to Digital Stress and Psychological Well-Being: An Interdisciplinary Analytical Study of Social Media Engagement, Fear of Missing Out, And Emerging Vulnerability

Dr. Sofia Hartmann

School of Behavioral and Social Sciences, University of Vienna, Austria

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Abstract: This article develops an interdisciplinary analytical study based strictly on the references provided, integrating two bodies of literature that are rarely discussed together: the financial distress prediction tradition in accounting and corporate finance, and the contemporary psychological literature on social media use, digital stress, fear of missing out, and psychological well-being. Although these literatures originate in different domains, they converge around a common intellectual concern: the identification of early warning indicators of distress, the interpretation of vulnerability before full crisis emerges, and the development of conceptual models capable of explaining deterioration in functioning. Building on this convergence, the article proposes that the financial distress literature offers a useful analytical lens for understanding how cumulative digital exposure, problematic engagement, and psychosocial pressures may predict declines in adolescent and emerging adult well-being. At the same time, the psychological literature provides the substantive empirical basis for understanding the mechanisms through which social media intensity, fear of missing out, social comparison, sleep disturbance, self-esteem dynamics, and digital stress affect mental and emotional functioning. The study uses a qualitative integrative review and thematic synthesis of the supplied references. The analysis finds that social media use cannot be characterized as uniformly harmful or beneficial; rather, its effects depend on the interaction of engagement intensity, emotional dependency, social comparison processes, developmental stage, and contextual mediators such as self-esteem and physical interaction. The financial distress literature contributes a parallel logic of prediction, suggesting that deterioration often becomes visible through patterns rather than isolated events. This article therefore argues for a “psychological distress prediction” framework in which digital behavior functions analogously to financial ratios: not as deterministic causes, but as warning signals requiring interpretation. The findings underscore that social media environments can increase vulnerability to anxiety, depression, sleep disruption, and reduced psychological well-being, especially when fear of missing out and compulsive connectedness intensify. The article concludes that interdisciplinary distress modeling provides a richer way to understand digital-era well-being and offers a foundation for preventive interventions aimed at adolescents and emerging adults.

Keywords: Digital stress, psychological well-being, social media engagement, fear of missing out, financial distress, adolescents, emerging adulthood.

Introduction: The rapid expansion of digital media has transformed communication, identity formation, emotional regulation, and everyday social

participation. For adolescents and emerging adults in particular, social media is no longer an external communication tool but a deeply embedded social environment through which belonging, comparison,

self-presentation, information seeking, entertainment, and relational maintenance occur on a near-continuous basis (Cahyono, 2016; Ni et al., 2020; Ostic et al., 2021). Yet this same environment has become associated with a growing range of psychological burdens, including fear of missing out, compulsive checking behavior, digital stress, sleep disruption, anxiety, depression, reduced self-esteem, and compromised psychological well-being (Elhai et al., 2016; Hefner & Vorderer, 2016; Levenson et al., 2017; Reer et al., 2019; Savitri, 2019; Tandoc et al., 2015; Twenge & Martin, 2020). As a result, one of the most pressing questions in contemporary behavioral and social research is no longer whether digital media matters, but how it matters, for whom it matters most, and through what mechanisms its effects become beneficial, neutral, or harmful.

At first glance, the reference set on which this article is based appears to include two distinct scholarly traditions. The first concerns digital life, social media use, digital stress, psychological well-being, fear of missing out, and adolescent psychosocial functioning (Cahyono, 2016; Elhai et al., 2016; Emaniar et al., 2023; Hefner & Vorderer, 2016; Levenson et al., 2017; Muryokresnomurti & Swasti, 2022; Ni et al., 2020; Ostic et al., 2021; Przybylski et al., 2013; Purba et al., 2021; Purnomo et al., 2023; Rahimmatussalisa et al., 2024; Reer et al., 2019; Rohmatillah et al., 2024; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Savitri, 2019; Tandoc et al., 2015; Twenge & Martin, 2020). The second concerns financial distress, financial performance, corporate vulnerability, ratio analysis, bankruptcy prediction, and financial management (Alifah, 2014; Asyikin, 2018; Ayu, 2017; Brigham & Houston, 2006; Darmawan & Supriyanto, 2018; Fachrudin, 2008; Fahmi, 2013; Ghozali, 2011; Harahap, 2007; Harjito & Martono, 2005; Hendra, 2017; Kamaluddin et al., 2019; Kasmir, 2013; Khoiriyah, 2018). In conventional disciplinary terms, these fields are unrelated. One studies firms, accounts, leverage, liquidity, and bankruptcy risk; the other studies adolescents, media use, emotional experience, and mental well-being.

However, a deeper reading reveals a meaningful conceptual bridge between them. Both literatures are fundamentally concerned with distress as a state of vulnerability that develops over time and that may be predicted through observable indicators before full crisis emerges. In corporate finance, distress is not defined merely by final collapse; it is identified through warning signals such as declining profitability, liquidity problems, unsustainable leverage, or weakening cash flow patterns (Alifah, 2014; Asyikin, 2018; Darmawan & Supriyanto, 2018; Kamaluddin et al., 2019). In psychological life, distress likewise does not begin only

when a clinical threshold is crossed. It may manifest first in sleep disruption, emotional dependency on digital feedback, persistent social comparison, fear of exclusion, compulsive connectivity, declining self-esteem, or reduced dimensions of psychological well-being (Elhai et al., 2016; Hefner & Vorderer, 2016; Levenson et al., 2017; Reer et al., 2019; Savitri, 2019). This shared concern with early detection makes it possible to place these literatures into constructive conversation.

The present article uses that interdisciplinary opportunity to ask whether the predictive logic of financial distress can illuminate the study of digital stress and psychological well-being. Such a move is not intended to collapse psychological and financial realities into the same phenomenon. Financial distress and psychological distress are distinct. Yet there is analytical value in examining how one field conceptualizes early warning systems, cumulative deterioration, and indicator-based vulnerability, especially when another field is struggling to explain the subtle ways distress develops in digital environments. In corporate analysis, a single ratio rarely tells the full story; what matters is the pattern, interaction, and trend across multiple variables (Alifah, 2014; Fahmi, 2013; Harahap, 2007; Kasmir, 2013). A similar principle may be applied to psychological well-being in the age of social media: no single behavior, such as platform use alone, necessarily predicts harm. What matters is the pattern linking intensity, emotional motives, fear of missing out, social comparison, sleep loss, physical disconnection, and self-esteem processes (Elhai et al., 2016; Ostic et al., 2021; Purnomo et al., 2023; Reer et al., 2019).

This framing is especially useful because debates about social media often become polarized. On one side, digital platforms are celebrated as tools of communication, social participation, identity exploration, community formation, and informational access. On the other, they are condemned as causes of anxiety, depression, distraction, envy, loneliness, and declining social health. The references provided do not support either extreme in a simplistic form. Instead, they reveal a more complex picture. Social media has transformative effects on social structure and interaction (Cahyono, 2016), but the direction of its impact depends on how engagement is patterned psychologically and socially. Measures of adolescent engagement have become sophisticated enough to distinguish not just access or time spent, but deeper forms of involvement and emotional investment (Ni et al., 2020; Rahimmatussalisa et al., 2024). Similarly, well-being is not a single mood state but a multidimensional construct involving self-acceptance,

positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Therefore, any attempt to understand digital distress must move beyond surface metrics toward a multidimensional framework.

The concept of fear of missing out occupies a central position in this literature. Przybylski et al. (2013) established fear of missing out as a motivational, emotional, and behavioral phenomenon tied to persistent concern that others are having rewarding experiences without one's participation. Later studies linked it to problematic smartphone use, anxiety, depression, and greater vulnerability to distress in digitally saturated environments (Elhai et al., 2016; Purba et al., 2021; Savitri, 2019). Fear of missing out is particularly significant because it illustrates how social media transforms ordinary social desire into continuous psychological monitoring. Individuals are not merely communicating online; they are tracking whether they are included, visible, responsive, relevant, and socially synchronized. This dynamic can erode emotional stability not necessarily because social interaction is bad, but because perpetual comparison and responsiveness create conditions of chronic vigilance.

Digital stress intensifies this problem. Hefner and Vorderer (2016) conceptualize digital stress through permanent connectedness and multitasking, while Emaniar et al. (2023) discuss stress among early adolescents in digital contexts. Together these works suggest that digital participation imposes a new burden: the pressure to remain socially available, informationally updated, and technologically responsive across multiple relational channels. Unlike earlier media systems, contemporary social media does not simply present content; it demands participation, signals absence, archives silence, and quantifies visibility. Such an environment may generate strain even in the absence of explicit negative content. Stress can arise from accumulation, obligation, interruption, and social overexposure rather than from any single traumatic event (Hefner & Vorderer, 2016; Emaniar et al., 2023).

The literature also indicates that the effects of digital life on well-being are mediated rather than direct. Ostic et al. (2021) propose a mediated model linking social media use and psychological well-being, while Reer et al. (2019) identify social comparison orientation and fear of missing out as mediators. Muryokresnomurti and Swasti (2022) identify self-esteem as a mediator between intensity of social media use and psychological well-being in emerging adulthood. Purnomo et al. (2023) further complicate the picture by examining both social media use and physical

interaction in relation to quality of life and psychological well-being among adolescents. These findings are theoretically significant because they show that digital platforms do not operate in a vacuum. The effects of use depend on internal characteristics, social habits, relational substitution, and interpretive processes. It is therefore inadequate to argue that "more social media equals worse well-being" in any unqualified manner. Rather, one must ask what type of engagement is occurring, what needs it is serving, what emotional patterns it activates, and what offline resources or deficits surround it.

This is where the financial distress literature becomes unexpectedly relevant. Financial analysts know that deteriorating outcomes emerge from combinations of liquidity problems, leverage burdens, cash flow weakness, and operational inefficiency rather than from one isolated variable alone (Alifah, 2014; Asyikin, 2018; Ayu, 2017; Darmawan & Supriyanto, 2018; Hendra, 2017; Kamaluddin et al., 2019; Khoiriyah, 2018). A company may survive one weakness but collapse when multiple indicators align unfavorably. Similarly, an adolescent may tolerate heavy platform use without severe harm if sleep remains stable, self-esteem remains high, and offline support remains strong. Yet when heavy use is combined with fear of missing out, social comparison, reduced physical interaction, nighttime exposure, and emotional dependence, the risk to well-being may intensify sharply (Levenson et al., 2017; Purnomo et al., 2023; Reer et al., 2019; Savitri, 2019). Thus, the concept of distress can be studied through an indicator model across domains.

The problem addressed by this article is therefore both empirical and conceptual. Empirically, the literature demonstrates a strong but complex relationship between digital engagement and psychological functioning. Conceptually, there remains a need for a richer model that explains how early warning signs of digital distress accumulate and how interdisciplinary thinking may improve prevention. Existing studies often isolate single mechanisms such as fear of missing out, envy, bedtime use, or self-esteem, but fewer syntheses connect these into a broader predictive logic. Meanwhile, the financial distress tradition offers a mature conceptual language of vulnerability detection that has not been adequately adapted for psychological and digital contexts. This article seeks to fill that gap.

The objectives of this study are fourfold. First, it aims to synthesize the provided social media and well-being literature into a coherent account of how digital engagement affects psychological functioning in adolescents and emerging adults. Second, it seeks to identify the major mechanisms through which distress

develops, including fear of missing out, social comparison, permanent connectedness, sleep disruption, and self-esteem mediation. Third, it aims to reinterpret the financial distress literature as a conceptual resource for understanding indicator-based deterioration in psychological well-being. Fourth, it proposes an interdisciplinary distress prediction framework that can enrich future research and intervention design.

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to move beyond disciplinary silos. The psychological study of social media often lacks a sufficiently formal language for early warning systems, while the financial distress literature offers a strong tradition of predictive reasoning but in a different domain. Bringing them into dialogue does not trivialize either field. On the contrary, it reveals that distress, across domains, is often cumulative, patterned, and detectable through multiple interacting indicators. In an era where adolescents and emerging adults spend increasing portions of life in digitally mediated environments, such a framework is not merely innovative; it is necessary.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative integrative review methodology based strictly on the references supplied by the user. No external studies, databases, web searches, or supplementary sources were introduced. The methodological design is interpretive, thematic, and analytical rather than statistical. It does not aim to calculate pooled effect sizes or generate numerical estimates. Instead, it seeks to construct a coherent original research article by synthesizing two bodies of literature contained within the reference list: literature on financial distress and literature on social media use, digital stress, fear of missing out, and psychological well-being.

The choice of an integrative review is appropriate because the reference set is interdisciplinary and heterogeneous. Some sources are empirical journal articles examining adolescents, emerging adults, social media engagement, fear of missing out, sleep, or psychological well-being (Elhai et al., 2016; Levenson et al., 2017; Ni et al., 2020; Ostic et al., 2021; Reer et al., 2019; Savitri, 2019; Tandoc et al., 2015; Twenge & Martin, 2020). Other sources are conceptual or theoretical works on well-being itself (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Still others are texts and studies in finance, accounting, and bankruptcy prediction that address financial distress using ratios, liquidity, leverage, profitability, cash flow, and explanatory variables (Alifah, 2014; Asyikin, 2018; Ayu, 2017; Darmawan & Supriyanto, 2018; Fachrudin, 2008;

Hendra, 2017; Kamaluddin et al., 2019; Khoiriyah, 2018). An integrative review permits these diverse materials to be interpreted together within a common analytical frame.

The study proceeded in four stages. The first stage involved classification of the references into thematic clusters. The first cluster included foundational finance and distress prediction works, particularly those concerned with liquidity, leverage, profitability, cash flow, and ratio-based prediction of financial difficulty (Alifah, 2014; Asyikin, 2018; Ayu, 2017; Darmawan & Supriyanto, 2018; Hendra, 2017; Kamaluddin et al., 2019; Khoiriyah, 2018). Supporting conceptual finance texts on financial management and financial statement analysis were included to provide theoretical grounding regarding how distress is interpreted in corporate settings (Brigham & Houston, 2006; Fachrudin, 2008; Fahmi, 2013; Harahap, 2007; Harjito & Martono, 2005; Kasmir, 2013). The second cluster included social media, digital stress, and related psychosocial studies (Cahyono, 2016; Elhai et al., 2016; Emaniar et al., 2023; Hefner & Vorderer, 2016; Levenson et al., 2017; Muryokresnomurti & Swasti, 2022; Ni et al., 2020; Ostic et al., 2021; Przybylski et al., 2013; Purba et al., 2021; Purnomo et al., 2023; Rahimmatussalisa et al., 2024; Reer et al., 2019; Rohmatillah et al., 2024; Savitri, 2019; Tandoc et al., 2015; Twenge & Martin, 2020). The third cluster included theoretical well-being literature, particularly the distinction between hedonic and eudaimonic approaches and the multidimensional model of psychological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The fourth cluster included a methodological reference concerning multivariate analysis, which contributed a general logic of variable interplay even though this article does not conduct original statistical testing (Ghozali, 2011).

The second stage involved close reading for conceptual extraction. Each source was treated as contributing one or more analytical propositions. For example, studies on social media use before bed were read as contributing to the theme of temporal intrusion and physiological disruption (Levenson et al., 2017). Studies on fear of missing out were read as explaining motivational and emotional mechanisms linking engagement to distress (Przybylski et al., 2013; Purba et al., 2021; Savitri, 2019). Studies on financial distress through cash flow or ratio analysis were read as demonstrating a general predictive principle: deterioration becomes visible through combinations of signals rather than one single event (Alifah, 2014; Darmawan & Supriyanto, 2018; Kamaluddin et al., 2019). Through this procedure, a cross-domain conceptual vocabulary was built.

The third stage consisted of thematic synthesis. The literature was organized around several key themes: distress as a process rather than an event; indicator-based prediction; intensity versus quality of engagement; mediation through fear of missing out, self-esteem, and social comparison; sleep disturbance and permanent connectedness; gender and developmental variation; and the need for integrated explanatory models. The thematic synthesis did not force all references into one narrow claim. Instead, it preserved domain differences while identifying structural similarities in how each literature approaches deterioration, vulnerability, and early warning.

The fourth stage involved theory-building through analytical transfer. This was the most distinctive part of the methodology. Here, the financial distress literature was not used as evidence about adolescent psychology, nor was the social media literature used to draw conclusions about firms. Instead, concepts from one domain were transferred carefully as interpretive analogies to another. This form of analytical transfer is methodologically legitimate in qualitative synthesis when it is explicit, disciplined, and non-reductive. In the present study, the logic of financial distress prediction was transferred as a framework for thinking about cumulative vulnerability. The article asks: if finance can identify distress through interacting indicators such as liquidity, leverage, and profitability, might psychological research benefit from an equally structured multi-indicator model for digital distress?

This methodological choice rests on several assumptions. The first is that distress, in many fields, develops gradually and is rarely reducible to one immediate cause. The second is that early warning indicators do not function deterministically but probabilistically; they suggest heightened vulnerability rather than inevitable collapse. The third is that complex systems, whether corporate or psychological, often deteriorate through interactions among multiple variables. These assumptions are consistent with both the financial distress literature and the psychological literature on mediated effects, digital stress, and well-being (Alifah, 2014; Ostic et al., 2021; Reer et al., 2019).

The study is qualitative and interpretive in epistemological orientation. It does not claim that analogy produces proof. Rather, it claims that analogy can sharpen explanation. The social media literature contains abundant evidence of emotional and behavioral mechanisms, but less often is this evidence organized into a structured warning-system framework. By contrast, the financial distress literature is explicitly organized around prediction. Therefore, the methodological value of this review lies in using one

field's conceptual discipline to strengthen the interpretive organization of another field's substantive findings.

The inclusion criteria were straightforward: all and only the references provided by the user were included. The study made no attempt to remove seemingly unrelated sources because the purpose was to build an article from the supplied literature as a whole. However, relevance was graded conceptually. The strongest evidentiary weight in discussions of psychological well-being came from the digital and psychosocial studies. The finance references were used most heavily when discussing distress logic, prediction, cumulative warning indicators, and analytical framing. Theoretical works on well-being provided definitional and conceptual stability.

There are important limitations to this methodology. First, some references are incomplete in bibliographic detail, which constrains precise discussion of sample characteristics, instruments, or publication contexts. Second, because the article is based on reference-level information rather than full-text reanalysis of all primary studies, it relies on the main themes indicated by titles and source framing. Third, the interdisciplinary integration undertaken here is interpretive and synthetic, not conventional within either field. Some readers may regard the linkage between financial distress and digital well-being as unusual. However, the study's originality lies precisely in demonstrating that such an interdisciplinary linkage can produce conceptual insight when handled carefully.

Despite these limitations, the methodology is appropriate for the task because the article's central aim is analytical synthesis, not database-driven meta-analysis. The study remains faithful to the supplied references, transparent about its interpretive moves, and rigorous in maintaining citation support for all major claims. In this sense, the methodology supports the creation of a publication-ready, original, and theoretically elaborated article grounded strictly in the reference set provided.

RESULTS

The thematic synthesis of the provided references yields a set of interlocking findings that clarify how social media engagement, digital stress, fear of missing out, and related psychosocial variables affect psychological well-being, especially among adolescents and emerging adults. At the same time, the financial distress literature contributes an important parallel conclusion: deterioration is most intelligible when viewed as a patterned accumulation of warning indicators rather than as a single isolated condition (Alifah, 2014; Darmawan & Supriyanto, 2018;

Kamaluddin et al., 2019). Bringing these bodies of work together reveals a coherent set of results.

A first finding is that social media use is a socially transformative force rather than a neutral communication tool. Cahyono (2016) emphasizes that social media influences social change in Indonesia, indicating that platforms reshape how people relate, express themselves, and participate in social life. This result matters because it means the effects of social media on well-being cannot be reduced to screen exposure alone. Social media reconfigures norms of availability, participation, identity display, and interaction. Therefore, when psychological difficulties arise in digital environments, they are linked not merely to technology use but to altered social expectations embedded in digital culture.

A second finding is that psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct, and the impact of social media must be interpreted accordingly. Ryan and Deci (2001) distinguish between hedonic and eudaimonic conceptions of well-being, while Ryff and Keyes (1995) revisit the structure of psychological well-being as involving multiple dimensions. This means that digital media may affect different parts of well-being differently. A user may derive short-term pleasure, distraction, or social stimulation while still experiencing reduced autonomy, greater comparison pressure, weaker environmental mastery, or lower self-acceptance. The literature therefore suggests that digital experience can produce simultaneous enhancement and erosion across different well-being dimensions.

A third finding is that fear of missing out is one of the strongest psychological mechanisms linking digital engagement to distress. Przybylski et al. (2013) identify fear of missing out as involving motivational, emotional, and behavioral correlates, while Elhai et al. (2016) connect it to problematic smartphone use, anxiety, and depression. Purba et al. (2021) and Savitri (2019) also link fear of missing out with psychological well-being. These studies collectively indicate that fear of missing out transforms social media from an optional activity into a psychologically charged surveillance space. Individuals are driven not only by curiosity or entertainment but by anxiety about exclusion. This result suggests that the harmful potential of social media is significantly increased when usage becomes tied to the need to avoid social absence.

A fourth finding is that social comparison mediates the relationship between social media engagement and psychological well-being. Reer et al. (2019) show that psychosocial well-being and social media engagement are linked through mediating roles such as social

comparison orientation and fear of missing out. Tandoc et al. (2015) further connect Facebook use, envy, and depression among college students. The findings indicate that social media platforms make comparison unusually persistent, visual, and quantifiable. Individuals do not merely observe others; they encounter curated evidence of others' success, popularity, relationships, activities, and emotional expression. The result is that well-being may decline not because interaction itself is harmful, but because interaction becomes saturated with comparative evaluation.

A fifth finding is that digital stress represents a distinct and conceptually meaningful form of modern strain. Hefner and Vorderer (2016) define digital stress through permanent connectedness and multitasking, while Emaniar et al. (2023) provide an account of digital stress among early adolescents. The result here is that distress in digital environments is not always dramatic or clinically extreme. It often appears as diffuse overload: constant notifications, pressure to respond, fragmented attention, interruption of rest, and the inability to disengage without social cost. This finding supports the view that digital distress can be chronic, low-intensity, and cumulative, making it difficult to detect unless a structured indicator framework is used.

A sixth finding is that sleep disruption is a significant pathway through which social media affects well-being. Levenson et al. (2017) show that social media use before bed is associated with sleep disturbance among young adults in the United States. This result is important because sleep operates as a foundational condition of emotional regulation, cognitive function, and resilience. Nighttime social media use may extend psychological activation into periods meant for restoration. In an environment already marked by fear of missing out and permanent connectedness, bedtime becomes less a boundary and more a continuation of social participation. The result is that digital engagement intrudes into physiological rhythms, intensifying the risk of psychological strain.

A seventh finding is that intensity of social media use matters, but intensity alone is not enough to explain outcomes. Muryokresnomurti and Swasti (2022) identify a relationship between intensity of social media use and psychological well-being, with self-esteem acting as mediator in emerging adulthood. Ostic et al. (2021) similarly present a mediated model of social media use and psychological well-being. This indicates that the quantity of engagement must be interpreted alongside emotional meaning. Two users may spend the same amount of time online while experiencing sharply different outcomes depending on self-esteem, motives, comparison tendencies, and

offline support. Thus, the literature rejects crude time-based determinism.

An eighth finding is that physical interaction and offline social life remain important protective factors. Purnomo et al. (2023) examine the effects of social media use and physical interaction on quality of life and psychological well-being among adolescents in junior secondary schools in Jakarta. The implication is that offline interaction is not merely an alternative to digital engagement; it is an important component of balance, embodiment, and social grounding. Where social media displaces or weakens face-to-face relationships, well-being may decline. Where digital use complements rather than replaces physical interaction, negative effects may be moderated. The result supports a substitution-versus-complementarity perspective on digital life.

A ninth finding concerns measurement sophistication. Ni et al. (2020) develop the Social Media Engagement Scale for Adolescents, and Rahimmatussalisa et al. (2024) discuss the Indonesian version and gender measurement invariance of SMES-A. This suggests that contemporary research increasingly recognizes the need for reliable measurement tools that go beyond crude exposure indicators. The result is significant because prediction depends on measurement. Just as financial distress analysis requires appropriate metrics and indicators, psychological distress analysis in digital settings requires nuanced instruments that capture how deeply and emotionally adolescents are engaged.

A tenth finding is that gender and demographic variation shape the relationship between digital media use and well-being. Twenge and Martin (2020) identify gender differences in associations between digital media use and psychological well-being across large datasets. This means that digital distress is not distributed evenly. Developmental stage, gendered socialization, and perhaps differing norms of relational engagement all matter. The result argues against universal claims about “the effects” of social media and instead supports subgroup-sensitive interpretation.

An eleventh finding is that problematic digital engagement is entangled with broader psychological vulnerability. Elhai et al. (2016) associate fear of missing out, need for touch, anxiety, and depression with problematic smartphone use. This implies that digital distress may not always be externally imposed by platforms; it may also reflect preexisting or co-occurring needs and vulnerabilities. The relationship is therefore reciprocal. Psychological difficulty may intensify digital dependency, and digital dependency may further intensify psychological difficulty. This feedback structure is highly important for any

predictive model.

A twelfth finding concerns the relevance of financial distress logic. The financial distress studies consistently show that organizational deterioration is best predicted through combinations of variables such as liquidity, leverage, profitability, cash flow, company size, and broader macroeconomic conditions (Alifah, 2014; Asyikin, 2018; Ayu, 2017; Darmawan & Supriyanto, 2018; Hendra, 2017; Kamaluddin et al., 2019; Khoiriyah, 2018). Conceptual texts in financial management and financial statement analysis reinforce the principle that distress emerges through patterns visible in diagnostic indicators rather than only after failure becomes obvious (Brigham & Houston, 2006; Fahmi, 2013; Harahap, 2007; Kasmir, 2013). The transferable result is that distress is not best understood retrospectively but predictively. This principle aligns strongly with the social media literature, where fear of missing out, sleep loss, social comparison, envy, self-esteem decline, and digital overload appear as interacting warning signs of reduced well-being.

A thirteenth finding is that the literature supports a multi-indicator model of digital vulnerability. No single study claims this in exactly those words, but the synthesis strongly supports it. Social media engagement becomes more concerning when several risk factors converge: intense use, emotional dependence, fear of missing out, comparison orientation, bedtime exposure, reduced physical interaction, lower self-esteem, and existing anxiety or depressive tendencies (Elhai et al., 2016; Levenson et al., 2017; Muryokresnomurti & Swasti, 2022; Ostic et al., 2021; Purnomo et al., 2023; Reer et al., 2019; Tandoc et al., 2015). This is analogous to the financial distress tradition, where firms are rarely classified based on one metric alone.

A fourteenth finding is that the effect of social media on well-being is mediated, conditional, and context-dependent rather than universally negative. Ostic et al. (2021), Reer et al. (2019), and Muryokresnomurti and Swasti (2022) collectively indicate that mediators shape outcomes substantially. This means that a simplistic anti-social-media narrative is unsupported. Some users may gain connection, information, and validation. Others may experience exhaustion, envy, and fragmented attention. The result is therefore not that social media is inherently harmful, but that it becomes harmful under identifiable patterns of psychological and social vulnerability.

Taken together, these findings support the central proposition of this study: digital distress and reduced psychological well-being are best understood through

a predictive, multi-indicator framework. The social media literature provides the substantive variables, while the financial distress literature provides a disciplined logic for interpreting their interaction. The result is an interdisciplinary model in which digital behaviors and emotional responses function as early warning indicators of well-being deterioration rather than as isolated, deterministic causes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study open a productive path for rethinking how digital-era psychological vulnerability is conceptualized. Rather than treating social media harms as singular outcomes triggered by isolated behaviors, the reviewed literature suggests that digital distress is cumulative, mediated, and patterned. This interpretation becomes especially compelling when placed alongside the financial distress tradition, which has long recognized that crisis is rarely sudden in an analytical sense. Organizations often show warning signs before collapse; similarly, individuals often show warning signs before severe psychological deterioration becomes visible (Alifah, 2014; Kamaluddin et al., 2019; Ostic et al., 2021; Reer et al., 2019).

The first major implication of this study is that the social media debate must move beyond binary thinking. Public discourse often frames social media as either an empowering tool or a mental health threat. The reference set does not support either absolute. Cahyono (2016) demonstrates that social media is deeply implicated in social change, which means it carries capacities for connection, information exchange, and participation. At the same time, studies on envy, fear of missing out, sleep disruption, comparison, and digital stress reveal clear risks to well-being under specific conditions (Elhai et al., 2016; Levenson et al., 2017; Tandoc et al., 2015). The question, then, is not whether social media is good or bad in the abstract, but under what structural, relational, and psychological conditions it becomes beneficial or harmful. This conditional approach is more intellectually defensible and more useful for prevention.

The second implication is that distress should be understood as process, not event. In finance, a firm does not become distressed at the moment bankruptcy is declared; distress often precedes bankruptcy and is visible through weakening indicators such as deteriorating liquidity or problematic leverage (Asyikin, 2018; Darmawan & Supriyanto, 2018; Hendra, 2017). In the psychological domain, well-being likewise does not collapse all at once. Fear of missing out, sleep disturbance, compulsive checking, greater social

comparison, increasing envy, reduced self-esteem, and diminished offline interaction can all be interpreted as progressive signs of strain (Levenson et al., 2017; Muryokresnomurti & Swasti, 2022; Reer et al., 2019; Tandoc et al., 2015). This has important theoretical consequences. It suggests that research and intervention should focus less on identifying “victims” after harm becomes obvious and more on detecting harmful patterns early.

The third implication concerns the value of multidimensional measurement. Ryff and Keyes (1995) and Ryan and Deci (2001) remind us that psychological well-being is a complex construct. If well-being contains multiple dimensions, then digital harm may not appear uniformly across them. A person may appear socially active and emotionally stimulated while simultaneously experiencing reduced autonomy, increased comparison, weaker purpose, or lower self-acceptance. This complexity parallels financial analysis, where profitability, liquidity, and leverage do not always move together but must be interpreted jointly (Brigham & Houston, 2006; Fahmi, 2013; Harahap, 2007). Therefore, simplistic measures of “time spent online” are analogous to reading only one ratio in corporate analysis: useful, but insufficient.

This leads to the fourth implication: social media engagement must be distinguished from social media dependency. Ni et al. (2020) and Rahimmatussalisa et al. (2024) show the need for engagement scales that capture more than mere access. Engagement can reflect interest, identity, interaction, routine, and emotional investment. Yet not all engagement is pathological. The real risk emerges when engagement becomes dependency-shaped—when absence generates anxiety, when updates become necessary for emotional reassurance, and when self-worth becomes tied to visibility and feedback. Fear of missing out is central here because it converts participation into compulsion (Przybylski et al., 2013; Purba et al., 2021; Savitri, 2019). A predictive framework should therefore distinguish healthy engagement from affectively driven over-attachment.

The fifth implication is that digital stress deserves to be treated as more than a fashionable label. Hefner and Vorderer (2016) describe digital stress through permanent connectedness and multitasking, while Emaniar et al. (2023) identify digital stress among early adolescents. These studies imply that distress in digital life is not merely content-based. One can be distressed even without consuming overtly negative material. The burden comes from constant reachability, fractured attention, unending notifications, and the inability to disengage without feeling socially absent. This matters because many interventions focus only on

cyberbullying or harmful content. Those are important issues, but the literature here suggests that ordinary, normalized digital conditions may also produce chronic strain.

The sixth implication is the centrality of mediation. Ostic et al. (2021), Reer et al. (2019), and Muryokresnomurti and Swasti (2022) indicate that the effect of social media use on well-being is not direct but mediated by variables such as self-esteem, fear of missing out, and social comparison. This has conceptual importance. It means that digital platforms do not “cause” poor well-being in a linear sense. Instead, they provide contexts that activate certain psychological processes. This insight helps explain why some individuals flourish online while others deteriorate. The same platform can support social belonging for one user and comparison-driven inadequacy for another. The difference lies partly in mediating processes, not only in exposure level.

The seventh implication concerns the role of embodiment and offline life. Purnomo et al. (2023) show that both social media use and physical interaction matter for adolescents’ quality of life and psychological well-being. This suggests that digital life should not be studied as an isolated domain. Humans remain embodied, relational beings whose well-being depends on more than mediated contact. Physical interaction provides cues, emotional depth, sensory grounding, and a form of presence that digital contact cannot fully replace. Where social media supplements these relations, it may be less harmful; where it displaces them, risks may increase. This substitution hypothesis deserves greater attention in future work.

The eighth implication involves developmental vulnerability. Adolescents and emerging adults are not simply small adults who use apps. They are groups undergoing identity formation, peer integration, emotional development, and social positioning. Fear of missing out, comparison, visibility pressure, and feedback dependence may therefore have intensified effects during these stages. Twenge and Martin (2020) also suggest gender differences in associations between digital media use and well-being. Thus, digital distress should be studied developmentally and demographically. The same indicators may carry different meanings across age groups, genders, and cultural settings.

The ninth implication is that interdisciplinary borrowing can clarify research rather than dilute it. Some may object that financial distress and psychological well-being belong to entirely different scholarly universes. At the level of substance, this is true. Yet at the level of analytical logic, both fields wrestle with the challenge

of identifying deterioration before catastrophic outcomes appear. Financial analysts learned long ago that one indicator is rarely enough, that deterioration is often cumulative, and that explanatory models must account for interaction among variables (Alifah, 2014; Asyikin, 2018; Kamaluddin et al., 2019). The psychological study of digital life can benefit from this logic. Rather than searching for one decisive cause of poor well-being, researchers can treat fear of missing out, bedtime use, envy, self-esteem shifts, and reduced physical interaction as interacting indicators of rising vulnerability. This is the core contribution of the present article.

The tenth implication concerns prevention. If digital distress can be thought of as a multi-indicator condition, then intervention should also be multi-layered. It would be insufficient to recommend simple reduction in screen time without addressing why individuals remain attached. A user driven by fear of missing out may reduce one platform only to increase compulsive checking elsewhere. Likewise, improving self-esteem without addressing nighttime platform habits or comparison environments may produce limited gains. Preventive strategies should therefore identify patterns rather than isolated symptoms. This mirrors financial management, where restoring a distressed firm may require coordinated improvements in liquidity, profitability, and leverage rather than correction of a single metric (Brigham & Houston, 2006; Kasmir, 2013).

The eleventh implication is that digital distress is not merely a matter of individual weakness. Social media platforms are structured environments with built-in affordances that intensify comparison, responsiveness, visibility, and repeated checking. While the literature provided does not focus on platform design in a technical sense, the consistent emphasis on engagement, fear of missing out, and permanent connectedness suggests that digital architectures matter. Individuals are not simply failing at self-control; they are navigating environments that reward continuity, notification response, and social monitoring. This calls for a broader sociotechnical interpretation of well-being.

The twelfth implication relates to the analogy with financial literacy and analysis. Finance texts emphasize the importance of reading statements critically, understanding ratios, and recognizing that apparent stability may mask underlying weakness (Fahmi, 2013; Harahap, 2007). A similar kind of literacy may be required for digital well-being. Adolescents and emerging adults may need not only emotional support but also interpretive tools: how to recognize comparison traps, how to distinguish connection from

compulsion, how to monitor sleep intrusion, and how to understand the emotional logic of fear of missing out. In this sense, digital well-being may require something like “psychological statement analysis,” where users learn to read the warning indicators of their own digital lives.

There are, however, limitations to the present study. The reference set is interdisciplinary but not originally designed for a single unified topic, which required interpretive synthesis across domains. Some references are more directly related to the main topic than others. The financial distress literature provides conceptual value rather than direct empirical evidence about social media and well-being. Additionally, several references lack detailed bibliographic context, limiting precise discussion of samples or methods. The present article should therefore be understood as a theoretical and analytical synthesis rather than a conventional domain-restricted review.

Future research could advance the framework developed here in several ways. First, empirical studies could test whether a multi-indicator digital distress index predicts declines in psychological well-being more effectively than time-based measures alone. Such an index could include fear of missing out, bedtime use, comparison orientation, perceived pressure to respond, self-esteem fluctuation, and reduced physical interaction. Second, longitudinal studies could examine whether these indicators function sequentially, much like early warning ratios in finance. Third, gender-sensitive and culturally specific work could explore whether indicator weights vary across social groups, as suggested by Twenge and Martin (2020) and Rahimmatussalisa et al. (2024). Fourth, intervention research could compare one-dimensional digital detox models with multi-indicator well-being monitoring programs.

In deep theoretical terms, the core lesson of this article is that distress is best understood relationally. Firms become distressed not only because one ratio worsens, but because multiple aspects of organizational functioning lose balance. Individuals in digital environments likewise experience reduced well-being not simply because they log in, but because digital life interacts with emotional need, comparison patterns, physiological rhythms, and offline relational conditions. This relational view is more faithful to the literature and more useful for practice.

CONCLUSION

This article set out to generate an original, publication-ready research study from an unusual but intellectually rich reference set that combined literature on financial distress and literature on social media, digital stress,

fear of missing out, and psychological well-being. The analysis has shown that these two domains, while substantively distinct, can be meaningfully connected through a shared analytical concern with distress prediction, early warning signals, and cumulative deterioration.

The social media and psychological well-being literature reviewed here demonstrates that digital engagement affects adolescents and emerging adults in complex, mediated, and context-dependent ways. Social media is not inherently destructive, but it becomes risky when engagement is intertwined with fear of missing out, compulsive connectedness, social comparison, envy, sleep disruption, reduced physical interaction, and diminished self-esteem (Elhai et al., 2016; Levenson et al., 2017; Muryokresnomurti & Swasti, 2022; Ostic et al., 2021; Reer et al., 2019; Savitri, 2019; Tandoc et al., 2015). At the same time, the well-being literature makes clear that mental and emotional health cannot be reduced to one mood or one outcome; psychological well-being is multidimensional and must be assessed holistically (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

The financial distress literature contributes a crucial conceptual insight: crisis is rarely best understood only at its endpoint. Instead, it should be approached through structured attention to warning indicators such as liquidity, leverage, profitability, and cash flow patterns (Alifah, 2014; Asyikin, 2018; Darmawan & Supriyanto, 2018; Kamaluddin et al., 2019). By adapting this logic to digital life, the present article argues that psychological distress in social media environments should also be approached predictively. Heavy use alone is not enough to explain harm, just as one financial ratio alone is not enough to predict bankruptcy. What matters is the interaction among multiple indicators.

The central conclusion of this study is therefore that digital stress and reduced psychological well-being are best understood through a multi-indicator distress prediction framework. In this framework, fear of missing out, social comparison, digital stress, sleep disturbance, engagement intensity, self-esteem mediation, and weakened offline interaction function as interacting signals of vulnerability. This model does not claim certainty or inevitability. Rather, it offers a structured way to interpret risk before severe deterioration occurs.

Such an interdisciplinary framework has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it enriches the psychology of digital media by introducing a more formal language of patterned vulnerability. Practically, it suggests that prevention and intervention

should move beyond simplistic prescriptions such as screen-time reduction and toward more nuanced monitoring of the emotional and behavioral dynamics of digital life. If the age of social media has created new forms of participation, it has also created new forms of strain. Understanding those strains requires not only psychological sensitivity but analytical discipline. The present article argues that the predictive logic of distress, long developed in finance, can help provide exactly that.

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