

Social Media Use and Life Satisfaction: Examining the Impact of Rumination in Young Adults

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Abstract: In recent years, social media has become deeply integrated in our everyday life, particularly among young adults. Its pervasive presence resulted in growing concern and scholarly interest regarding its potential implications for mental health. Consequently, the relationship between social media use and psychological well-being has emerged as a significant area of focus for researchers, clinicians, and the broader society. There is a significant amount of research discussing whether social media (e. g., Instagram, TikTok, etc.) have a beneficial or detrimental effect on users, but this is, to a much lesser extent, combined with research that considers the complex mental processes that contribute to this impact. This study intends to bridge this gap, exploring not only the correlation between social media use and life satisfaction but also the effects of rumination.

In order to investigate these associations, quantitative correlational research design was used and data from 152 young adult participants, ranging from 18 to 25 years old was collected using a questionnaire. The participants filled out three standardized self-report measures: one assessing their levels of social media utilization, one assessing their general tendencies toward rumination, and one measuring whether or not they were satisfied with life. The data was analyzed using a statistical software (SPSS and Jamovi). Descriptive statistics, SPSS' Pearson's correlations, and Jamovi's simple linear regression were used to thoroughly analyse the data.

The results were conclusive. The study showed that individuals from the age group of 18 to 25 who invested the most time on the various social media platforms had significantly low levels of life satisfaction. This reversal of rankings presents a case for the adverse effects of extended internet hours. Furthermore, the study also showed that the individuals who used social media the most had greater tendencies to ruminate.

These findings imply that positive and negative applications of social media exist simultaneously, as it is not just the amount that young adults spend on social media that determines their overall well-being, but also the internal processes that occur as a result of that exposure. Rumination was identified as an important mechanism for current use of social media and life satisfaction, potentially guiding future interventions. Overall, this research points us towards a broader outlook at the impact of social media, one that considers factors such as rumination. There is much to be learned by equally investigating the other side of the coin (i. e., people who spend a great deal of time on social media but are still psychologically healthy). Diverting our attention to protective factors and solutions will enable us to develop a better understanding of how to best approach mental health and wellbeing in a digital world.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Today, people around the world are engaging with social media in multiple ways regularly. It affects how one communicates, presents his/herself, and compares himself/herself to others. Yet, there is increased attention given to the implications of social media on the health of adolescents and young adults. The researchers, policy makers, and public health organizations emphasize that it is not enough to advise users to reduce screen time in order to regulate the implications. (Lee & Patel, 2026). The facts suggest that using social media can be beneficial because it

increases feelings of connectedness while at the same time it correlates with greater feelings of anxiety, increased symptoms of depression, and decrease in overall life satisfaction (Garcia et al., 2025). According to the World Health Organization, health is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well, being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". It is not just the avoidance of sickness, it is about feeling able to face challenges, be resilient, manage stress, and be involved in life (World Health Organization, 2025). Life satisfaction is plays a primarily. It is simply how people assess the quality of their lives and compare that to their own expectations for how their lives should be

(European WHO Office, 2018). The more satisfied with their lives in young adulthood, the better their functioning and coping. While there have been years of research on social media and mental health, there is still much that remains unknown about the neurological implications. One such process that has yet to be explored is rumination, which is the tendency to focus on negative memories or ruminate about unpleasant feelings over and over again. It is evident that Rumination is a risk factor for depression and anxiety, however very few examined if this process acts as the link between social media usage and life satisfaction in young adults.

According to the WHO, mental health is not just the absence of distress; it also entails the ability to cope with, and manage stress, to know your strengths, and to do something good for others. Life satisfaction perfectly captures the way a person evaluates the 'true state of things' in terms of SWB. While a large body of research has been done on the impact of social media usage on mental health, there are many research questions that remain unanswered, especially cognitive processes that account for how online behavior impacts one's evaluation of life. Rumination has long been a predictor of negative affect, such as anxiety and depression. Yet, only a few studies have analyzed whether rumination serves as mediator in the relationship between social media behavior and life satisfaction among young adults. This study examines the interactions between social media use, rumination, and life satisfaction in a sample of young adults aged 18-25.

II. METHODOLOGY

➤ *Aim of the Study*

This study sought to understand the social media- life satisfaction relationship among young adults, particularly the role of rumination.

➤ *Objectives of the Study*

- The objectives of the present study were:
- To examine the relationship between social media use and life satisfaction among young adults.
- To assess the relationship between social media use and rumination.
- To examine the relationship between rumination and life satisfaction.
- To analyse whether rumination impacts the relationship between social media use and life satisfaction among young adults.

➤ *Hypotheses of the Study*

- Null Hypothesis (H00): There is no significant relationship between social media use and life satisfaction among young adults.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H11): There is a significant relationship between social media use and life satisfaction among young adults.
- Null Hypothesis (H02): There is no significant

relationship between social media use and rumination among young adults.

- Alternative Hypothesis (H12): There is a significant relationship between social media use and rumination among young adults. Null Hypothesis (H03): There is no significant relationship between rumination and life satisfaction among young adults.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H13): There is a significant relationship between rumination and life satisfaction among young adults.

➤ *Variables of the Study*

- The variables included in the present study were:
- Independent Variable:
- Social Media Use Dependent Variables:
- Life Satisfaction Rumination

➤ *Research Design*

Quantitative Correlational methodology was used in the study to gain a more accurate understanding of how social media may be related to rumination and life satisfaction in young adults. Instead of intervening or manipulating the variables of the study to isolate the effects of the relationship between social media and life satisfaction, the correlational design allowed researchers to observe these relationships as naturally occurred in the ordinary experiences of lives of young adults. The mediating effect of rumination examined in this study assesses whether repeatedly thinking about the unpalatable cause of one's feelings or thoughts mediated the relationship between social media use and life satisfaction. In doing so, the study aimed to determine the directional and magnitude of the relationship between social media use and life satisfaction, whether positive or negative.

➤ *Sample*

The sample of participants for this study included 152 young adults who ranged in age from 18, 25 years old. This age range was selected so that individual responses could be meaningfully generalized to represent individuals growing up at a time during which digital technologies have long been integrated into western life. As all the participants were active social media users, the influence of the target phenomenon was relevant. The sample was selected through convenience sampling, as a necessary first step at the exploratory phase of the research. The use of this sampling method allowed for data collection from a broad cross, section of young. were all adult social media users. Including individuals of all gender identities in the sample created an opportunity to gain a more nuanced perspective on my research questions in light of the varied experiences of young adults.

➤ *Sample Characteristics*

The study population was classified according to the following characteristics: Age: All the users involved with the study were within the 18, 25 age range. This age group can be viewed as being very engrossed in social media and experiencing major on life learning developments., Gender: All genders were represented within the sample which is an important factor. Having male and female participants should

promote generalizability of any results found because they are not limited by any gender specific factors. 2., subject: every subject was a daily use of social media, which implied that they interacted daily with one or more social media., Number of samples: the whole final sample is 152, so there were enough samples to make a statistical analysis and increase the significant of the results.

➤ *Tools Used for Data Collection:*

In order to examine the variables of interest, three psychometrically validated scales were utilized which contained different factors of each construct:

- *Social Media Use Questionnaire*

This questionnaire measured different aspects of the usage and levels of activity of social media. Many questions measured variables such as; total time on social media, the number of times a person checks their account, the activity on social media that they engaged in, such as blogging, having a passive glance or writing comments and specific usage types that may seem to have varying effects of social media usage (e. G., more active usage than a passive glance). A scoring system is indicative of how much time a person spends on social media and the extent of usage, taking into account not only the time on social media but the directions of usage within these times (e. G., active versus passively browsing).

➤ *Ruminative Responses Scale (RRS)*

This scale examined how likely it is that a person ruminates, a behavioral manifestation of THOUGHTS and feelings that dwell on negative aspects of a person’s life. The RRS survey questions examined both the frequency and persistence or difficulty of a participant dwelling on crises and problematizing ideas, thoughts and feelings. The RRS provides a score of how much a person overthinks and regards their problem to an extreme extent, with additional values indicating greater difficulty (and more frequency) within these cycles of thoughts and feelings. This scale is motivated by the known connection between rumination and detriments to psychological health and well, being.

➤ *Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)*

This scale provided an overall indicator of the participant’s degree of satisfaction with his/her life. The questionnaire asked questions about their well, being and whether or not participants accounted their current lives conform their initial/expected life plan. It specifically examines whether or not your life has been what you expected it to be, and if you are happy with how your life unfolded. A scale that indicates general life satisfaction. Participants’ responses identified the extent to which the participant was happy with their life overall with greater or lesser degrees of satisfaction. This informs the extent of participant well, being level relative to their levels of social media use and rumination.

Table 1 Reliability and Validity of the Study Instruments

Scale	Cronbach’s α	Evidence of validity
Social Media Use Questionnaire (SMUQ)	.76–.85	Demonstrated good construct and convergent validity through factor analysis and correlations with measures of problematic internet use
Rumination Scale (Ruminative Scale; RRS)	.88–.92	Established construct and criterion validity; positively associated with depression and emotional distress
Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)	.80–.89	Strong construct and convergent validity; correlated with subjective well-being and positive affect

Note. Cronbach’s α Values are Reported as Ranges Based on Previous Research

➤ *Procedure*

The means by which data was collected for this research was through the use of structured questionnaires. Before administering the questionnaires, the nature of the study and the procedures involved was explained to possible respondents. It was made clear that participation was purely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research at

any stage. They were also told that their responses would remain anonymous and that they would be assured of the confidentiality of the data they provided. Participants were then asked to sign a consent form, providing their consent to take part in the research. With consent gained, the questionnaires were issued, with the request that all questions are answered truthfully and as accurately as possible. The

questionnaires were designed in such a way that they would minimize probability of misinterpretation and inaccuracy. Upon collection of the completed questionnaires, data from the returned questionnaires was checked for inaccuracy or failure to submit responses to all the questions, with any such responses being discarded, leaving 152 used for analysis.

➤ *Statistical Analysis*

All the gathered data was processed through the use of a Computer Statistical Package for the Social Science. (SPSS). This enabled us to produce the descriptive statistics,

which described the demography of our sample. Through the use of descriptive statistics we gained an insight into the demography of our samples, including age and gender. This enabled us to gauge where the most significant responses were (such as the majority being female), and also whether our sample was representative of the group being sampled. As well as producing descriptive data, many inferential tools were used to analyze the data, in particular correlation analysis to produce the social media and rumination variables were significantly correlated.

III. ANALYSIS OF RESULT

Table 2 Participant Consent to Take Part in the Study

Response	n	%
Yes, I provided informed consent	152	100

Note. All Participants Provided Informed Consent Prior to Participation.

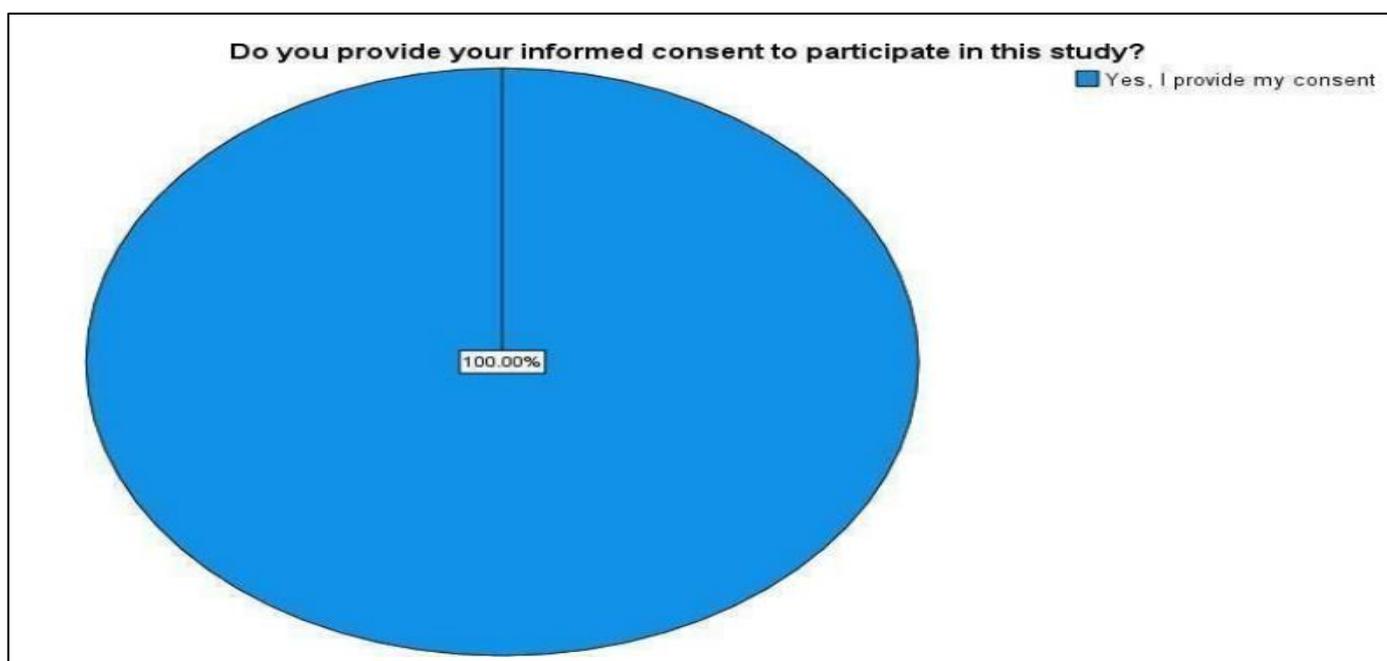


Fig 1 Do You Provide Your Informed Consent to Participate in this Study

There was full consent from all participants (N = 152, 100%) to participate in the new physiotherapy intervention, (see Table 2, and Figure 1). This highlights that those taking part in the study did give consent before they were aware of

the nature and purpose of this study. The participants were fully informed and consented to participate in this study which adheres to guidelines of ethical standards thus making data collected trustworthy.

Table 3 Age Distribution of Participants

Age (years)	n	%
18	6	3.9
19	3	2.0
20	11	7.2
21	28	18.4
22	42	27.6
23	23	15.1
24	22	14.5
25	17	11.2
Total	152	100.0

Note. Percentages are Based on the Total Sample Size (N = 152).

The age distribution of the participants reflected a very heavy grouping of those in the young adult age range of 18, 25 years of age. This distribution coincides well with the purpose of a study that focuses on the transitional age period into adulthood. The most prevalent group of people within the sample was 22, year, olds, which made up 27.6% of the sample. This relatively large portion of the sample indicated that 22, year, old experiences and attitudes, which often include leaving university and entering the workforce, are likely to be particularly influential in this study.

Just behind the 22, year, olds (who made up 20.0% of the sample), were 21, year, olds (with 18.4%), and 23, year, olds, (with 15.1%). These ages are generally associated with going to college, starting a new job, and creating a new identity. The 24, year, olds (14.5% of the sample) and the 25, year, olds (11.2%), also.

Individuals further into their transition. Earlier in this transition, a significant milestone of this stage may have been gaining a job (or considering a career). Later in this stage, financial independence, entering into a longterm relationship,

or the decision to begin a family may come into play. Early adulthood is often a time of simultaneous worry and zeal.

At the younger end of the scale, we had significantly fewer subjects: the age categories of 20 years old was represented by 7.2%, while 18 years of age by 3.9% and 19 year, olds 2%. Though these numbers are not high in the context of the study’s total sample size, one could argue that these individuals are different from their mid, to, late twenties counterparts in that they are not simply ‘transitioning’ out of adolescence but still technically in it and have a life context which might differ slightly from those mid to late twenties.

These participants provided a rich, nuanced snapshot of young adults that included all the good and bad that characterize this time in life. Thus, although on the broad end of the spectrum, the findings of the study as pertains to social media, rumination, and life satisfaction seemed to truly reflect the risks and opportunities of young peoples’ lives. To focus on this population, the research allows us to explore how emerging adults are using technology and managing the psychological demands of an increasingly relentless world.

Table 4 Gender Distribution of Participants

Gender	<i>n</i>	%
Female	94	61.8
Male	58	38.2
Total	152	100.0

Note. Percentages are Based on the Total Sample Size (N = 152).

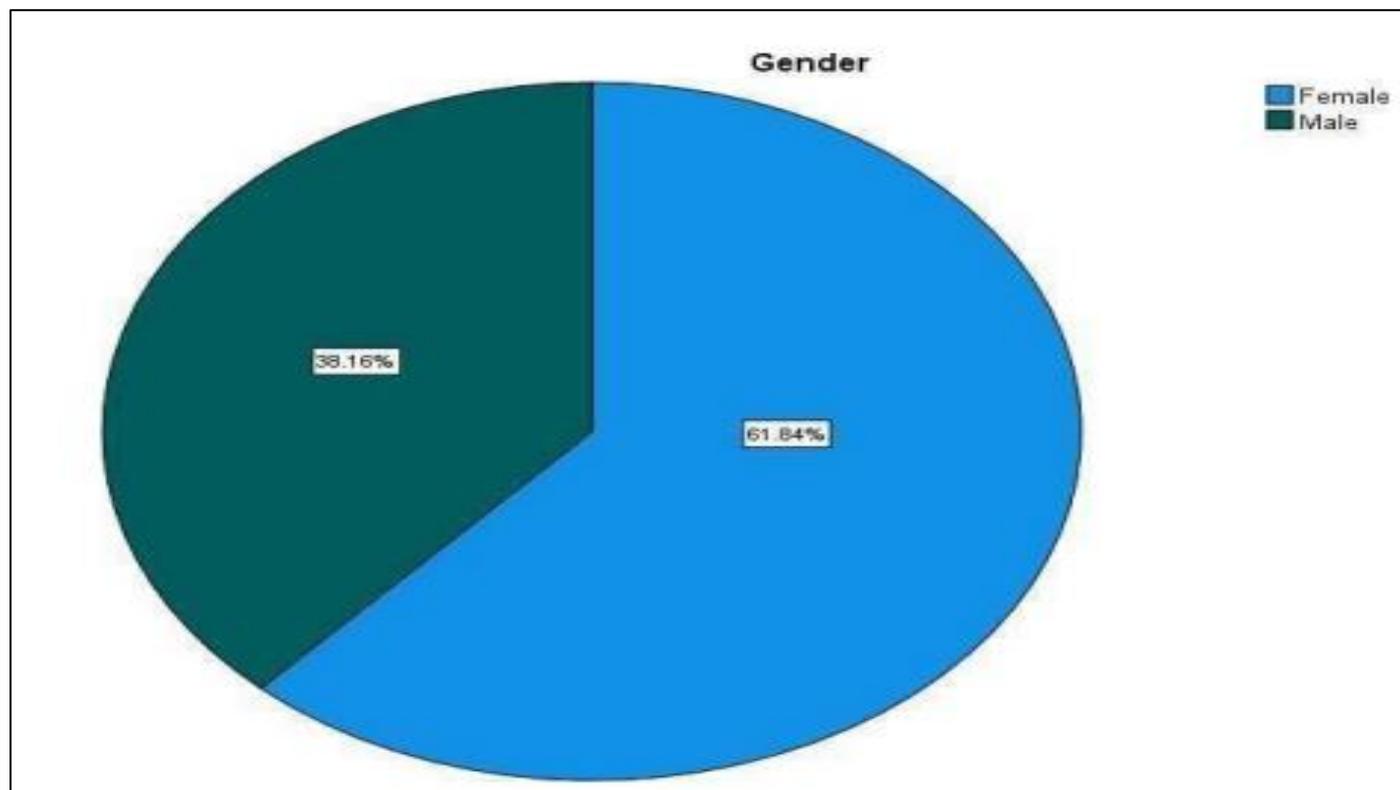


Fig 2 Gender Distribution of Participants

Table 4 and figure 2 highlight that within the overall sample 61.8% were female and 38.2% were male. These figures suggest that there was a greater female response rate,

which could either have been a greater likelihood for female participants to opt to take part in a self, report study or a larger interest in the area of psychological well, being topics.

Although the dispositional differences shown above do seem to be enough to balance the genders of the respondents so the results can be read in relation to the two genders, it is

true we could not get a clearer gender split. Yet the sample does have a real extensive field of view into social media and the psychological processes involved.

Table 5 Educational Status of Participants

Educational status	<i>n</i>	%
Bachelor’s degree (completed)	43	28.3
Bachelor’s degree (currently pursuing)	53	34.9
Higher secondary (Class 12 or equivalent)	3	2.0
Master’s degree (completed)	15	9.9
Master’s degree (currently pursuing)	38	25.0

Note. Percentages are Based on the Total Sample Size (N = 152)

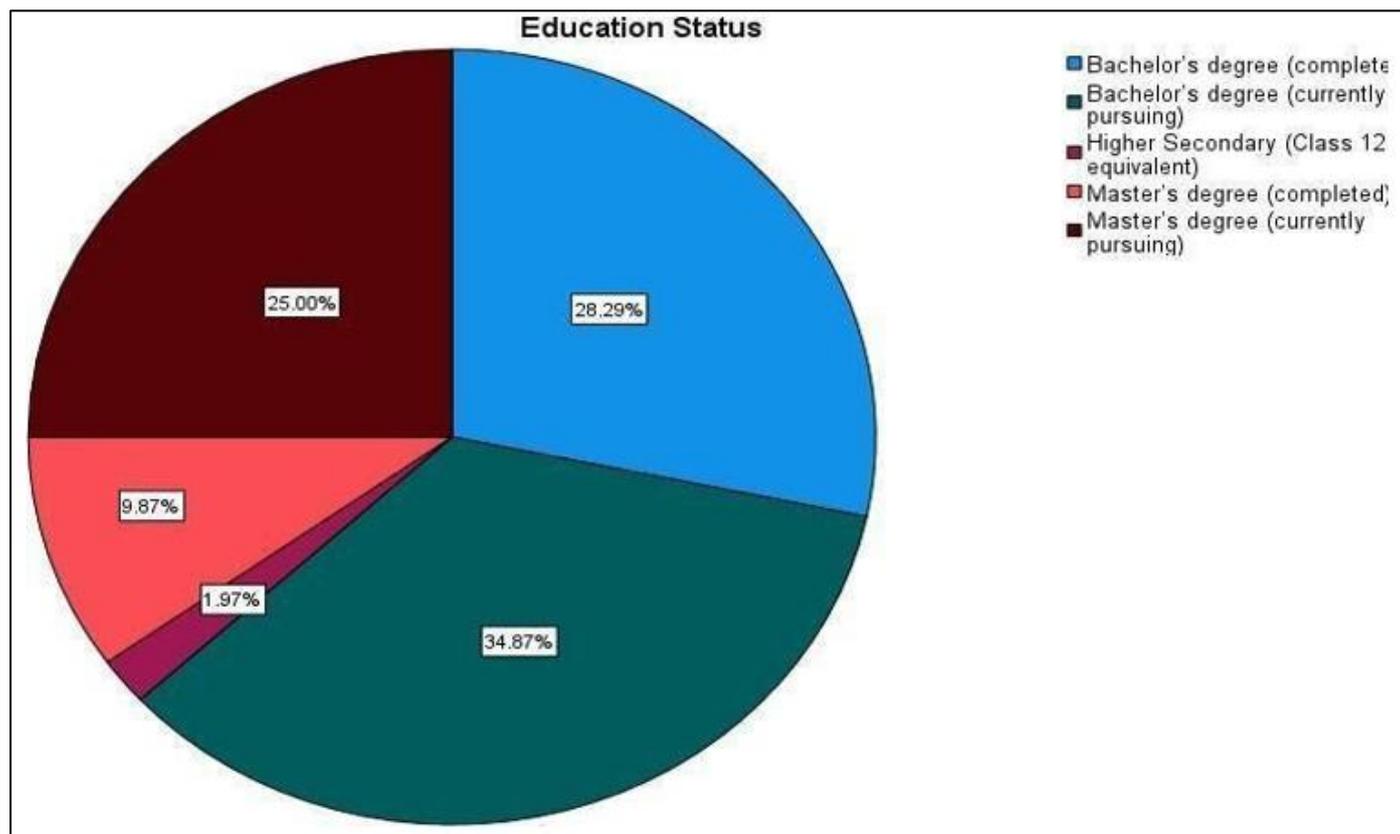


Fig 3 Education Status

While estimating the average daily duration of use, the social networking sites routinely, habitually, or regularly used in and integrated into the daily/routine lives of users, included 54.6% of users who reported that they habitually, daily, or regularly use social media 2, 4 hours. This indicates moderate to high user activity (see also Table 6 and Figure 4). 34.9% of the users who claimed to use social media daily for 1, 2 hours also demonstrated typical user activity, however, they exhibited tight control over their self,

regulatory behaviors limiting social media use to 1, 2 hours. A few users (11.2%) use social media for 4 or more hours and this user activity was classified as problematic (heavy user activity) by these participants. The sparse users (2.6%) who spend less than one hour a day in social media indicate that adult social media users spend, even more, on social media, emphasizing research interest in the relationship of social media use to rumination and life satisfaction.

Table 6 Average Daily Time Spent on Social Media

Time spent per day	<i>n</i>	%
Less than 1 hour	4	2.6
1–2 hours	53	34.9
2–4 hours	78	51.3
More than 4 hours	17	11.2
Total	152	100.0

Note. Percentages are Based on the Total Sample Size (N = 152).

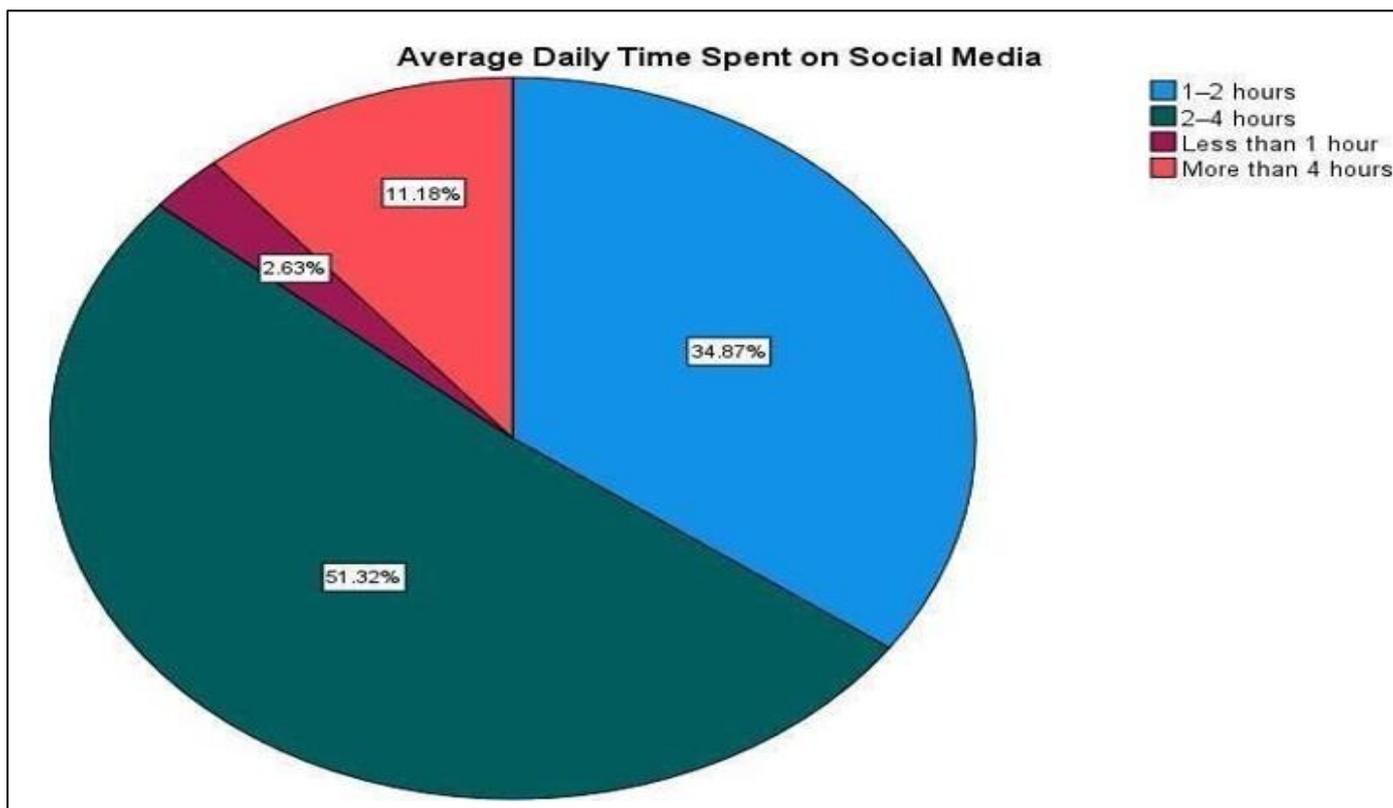


Fig 4 Average Daily Time Spent on Social Media

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IV. PEARSON CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Table 7 Correlation Between Social Media Use and Satisfaction with Life

Variable	1	2
Satisfaction with Life	—	
Social Media Use	-.36***	—

Note. N = 152. ***p < .001 (Two-Tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Social Media Use and Satisfaction with Life was found to be $r = -.36$ with a p-value of $< .001$ (N = 152). The obtained correlation coefficient indicates significant negative

relationship between social media use and life satisfaction indicating that higher social media use was associated with low levels of life satisfaction among the participants in the present study.

Table 8 Correlation Between Social Media Use and Rumination

Variable	1	2
Social Media Use	—	
Rumination	.34**	—

Note. N = 152. **p < .01 (Two-Tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Social Media Use and Rumination was found to be $r = .034$, with a p-value of $< .01$ (N = 152). The obtained correlation coefficient indicates a positive relationship between social

media use and rumination suggesting that increased social media use is associated with a significant increase in ruminative thinking among the participants.

Table 9 Correlation Between Rumination and Satisfaction with Life

Variable	1	2
Rumination	–	
Satisfaction with Life	-.63***	–

Note. N = 152. **p < .001 (Two-Tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficient between Rumination and Satisfaction with Life was $r = -0.627, p = .000$ (N = 152). The correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2, tailed). The coefficient was found to infer a fairly strong negative relationship between rumination and life satisfaction. This shows us that the more young adults engage

in ruminative thinking, the less likely they are to be satisfied with their lives. The size of this correlation suggests that rumination is an important variable to consider when researching subjective well-being.

V. SIMPLE LINEAR REGRESSION

Table 10 Variables Entered in Regression Analysis

Model	Variables entered	Variables removed	Method
1	Satisfaction with Life	None	Enter

Note. Dependent Variable: Social Media Use.

To determine whether life satisfaction of young adults is a statistically significant predictor of social media use, a regression analysis was conducted. The regression model

predicts social media use based on life satisfaction which is the independent variable. Social media use is the dependent variable in this analysis.

Table 11 Model Summary for Regression Predicting Social Media Use

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SEE
1	.68	.46	.45	5.10

Note. Predictor = Satisfaction with Life; Outcome = Social Media use. SEE = Standard Error of the Estimate.

Table 12 ANOVA for Simple Linear Regression Predicting Social Media Use from Life Satisfaction

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3812.20	1	3812.20	127.78	.000
Residual	4475.80	150	29.84		
Total	8288.00	151			

Note. Dependent Variable = Social Media Use; Predictor = Satisfaction with Life. $p < .001$.

Regression results indicated there was a positive relationship between Life Satisfaction and Social Media Use with an R of .68 and an R² of .46, indicating that life satisfaction accounts for 46% of the variance social media use. The standard error of the estimate of 5.10 indicates there is a lot of error when using social media use to predict life

satisfaction.

These results indicate that life satisfaction is a good predictor for social media use in young adults and are consistent with the correlation results which indicated two variables are related.

Table 13 Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Rumination	152	22	86	55.07	15.96
Life Satisfaction	152	10	32	20.16	4.65
Social Media Use	152	0	37	20.32	9.31

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation. Valid N for Social Media Use Questionnaire Was 152.

Our aim was to examine how a cohort of young adults process their thoughts (namely rumination), their level of satisfaction with life and how often they use social media platforms. Our findings present a detailed insight of these three linked elements of modern life. Starting with rumination, participants completed a reliable instrument, the Rumination Scale, to measure frequency of persistent thoughts. For this scale, scores ranged from 22 to 86 for the 152 young adults in our sample. The mean was approximately 55, and standard deviation was slightly below 16. In terms of the distribution in this particular sample, this indicates that,

on average, these young adults often fell into spirals of repetitive thinking, although to varying degrees. However, some fell into these spirals very rarely and others very often. This large spread of scores indicates that while persistent thinking is a common experience, it occurs with varying frequency.

We then examined life satisfaction, evaluated using the Satisfaction with Life Scale. Scores ranged from 10 to 32, with a mean of 20.16, and a standard deviation of 4.65, a much narrower spread than we observed with rumination.

This suggests a moderate and relatively stable sense of life satisfaction across this group of young adults, with some variability. The range is not nearly so dramatic (particularly with such a narrow SD) perhaps because life satisfaction is less subject to fluctuation than rumination, although the presence of some low, and high, scoring individuals suggests there can be wide variance in life satisfaction.

The third domain we looked at was social media use. Everyone reported a huge variance in social media use in that the minimum possible score was zero (meaning no social media use whatsoever) and maximum possible score was 37 (meaning very high engagement). The mean of 20.32 fits mid-range of usage and the standard deviation (stdev of approximately 9.3) reveals that some young adults use social media more heavily or frequently than others. This information highlights how much variation exists even in a group assumed to be mostly digitally engaged: there are some who are not very active offline at all, and there are some who are highly engaged with virtual worlds online. This somewhat surprising spread across all three measures, rumination, life satisfaction, and social media consumption, turns out to be really fortuitous for our project. Instead of just a bunch of just thinking, just feeling college students, we now have a whole smorgasbord of people, all sounding their own unique way. This kind of data spread is exactly what we need for our part of the project; it'll allow us to easily explore what sorts of things happen together. Does more rumination mean more sadness? Less social media use? Can't tell, but that's what we're here to find out.

VI. DISCUSSION

➤ *Overview of the Study*

This present research has investigated the relationship between social media use and life satisfaction in emerging adults and whether rumination acts as a mediating factor. The data was collected from 152 young adults in the age range of 18, 25 and was analyzed using a social media use, rumination and life satisfaction scale. In this chapter, I will describe the results in relation to the aims and hypotheses of the research, other findings as well as the theoretical and practical implications.

➤ *Discussion of Descriptive Findings*

Descriptive results indicate the participants showed moderate levels of social media use, life satisfaction and rumination. These wide ranges across rumination and social media usage suggest that young adults differ substantially in terms of their levels of cognitive engagement and behavior, whereas the life satisfaction scores were more stable and showed a relatively balanced cognitive evaluation of life on the part of the participants. These findings make a case for using all three variables in a more advanced inferential analysis.

➤ *Relationship Between Social Media Use and Life Satisfaction*

Practically all variables concerning social media usage and life satisfaction demonstrated at least a significant value. Life satisfaction predicting a participant's social media usage

was equally as significant. The model satisfied to a significant degree the variable of social media usage can be predicted by the life satisfaction of participants. The model of social media usage being predicted by the life satisfaction of the participants means that the usage of social media does not actually determine how young adults feel about their lives. Until now, when considering which direction social media usage takes, the assumption has been made that the more a person takes in social media, the more negative of direction it will take his or her mental and overall psychological well-being, however the data reveals that the relation is more simple and straightforward than that. Social media usage is a factor that a handful of considerations can conjure up and influence a subjective assessment of the global cognitive, emotional and psychological well-being of a singular individual. This subjective evaluation of life satisfaction is rooted in the individual's value system, emotional system, relational system and the comparative success that is defined by his or her community or society within an academic, occupational or professional role and the mental regulation of od.

➤ *Relationship Between Social Media Use and Rumination*

Rumination and use of social media were also found to be significant. This indicates a positive correlation between the two where increased use of social media would relate to an increase of rumination and perseveration, thus relating to increased use of social media. This finding might imply that perseveration is likely to be more driven by individual differences in cognitive skill, personality and emotional sensitivity, rather than quantity of use of social media itself. It perhaps also indicate the variability of engagement with social media among young adolescent, some toward it as a distraction, some towards it as a social enrichment, while other towards it being more passive, i. e. Affectively or psychologically, social media.

➤ *The Link Between Rumination and life Satisfaction*

In regard to rumination and how it related to life satisfaction, the findings were very significant, negative, and strong. Using a Pearson correlation analysis, it demonstrated that when rumination increased, life satisfaction decreased. The result has indicated that rumination may be one key psychological factor that affects the level of SWB adversely. Ruminative thinking may prevent individual from making a constructive, positive and satisfying evaluation of their life. Rumination has been related to the increased severity of negative affect, reduced and limited involvement in rewarding activities, and reduced supplemented problem-solving, all of which in particular lead to low SWL.

➤ *Implications for the Focus on Role of Rumination*

There is no established link between social media use and life satisfaction or rumination however that of rumination and life satisfaction demonstrates this where rumination appears to be an important psychological process. Perhaps the social media influence on well-being is not so much correlated directly with how much a person uses them but by the individual.

This makes sense given the conceptual underpinnings of the study we posit that in addition to exposure, the psychological mechanisms need to take primacy and influence the impact on well, being. Rumination may impact the effects directly but it still helps to account for why some people are experiencing lower life satisfaction.

VII. CONCLUSION

➤ Summary

Overall, we aimed to understand the complexity of the links between social media use and life satisfaction among emerging adults, specifically understanding the process through which rumination may influence this relationship. As social media have become fixtures in our everyday lives and questions about their influence on mental health loom large, we wanted to look past the prescriptive approaches at the media, and look at the underlying psychological processes that may be at work.

In order to do this a 152 college, aged sample was taken. All were between the ages of 18 25 years old. Participants completed a questionnaire assessing their use of social media, their amount of rumination, and their score on the satisfaction with life scale. The questionnaire was composed of validated scales and the data was analyzed using Pearson's correlations and simple linear regression.

The results demonstrated the picture is rather straightforward: social media occupies much of their high school experience, with the majority of participants reporting active daily use. The life satisfaction scores were quite average (closest to a neutral). Rumination on the other hand was quite high, revealing a good proportion of this age group has some difficulty with negative repeatedly thoughts.

Analysis yielded 3 main results: greater social media use was negatively correlated with life satisfaction, and more time spent on social media was positively correlated with greater rumination. Most impressively, rumination was strongly negatively correlated with life satisfaction, a predictor variable of our research question. We did not formally test for mediation, but found that social media use has its effect on life satisfaction primarily through cognitive tendencies (beyond just amount of time spent on social media), and specifically through the development of rumination.

All in all, these findings show that though social media usage is prevalent and generally linked with problems in well, being, it is in the processes, like rumination, that seem to exert a greater influence on young adult evaluations of life.

➤ Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from this research highlight the nuanced relationship between digital technology and mental health issues among young people. In contrast to a reductionist cause, and, effect explanation where only social media usage is to blame for decreases in life satisfaction, the findings show that the real culprit was the internal use of thought, such as rumination.

This further sense of dissatisfaction with life produced by the self, perpetuated thought cycles of rumination and obsession contributes to a vicious, cycle that worsens individuals' physical, emotional and mental state, as well as distracting them from garnering positives they may have received from their social networks, friends or community, both virtually and physically. Increasingly, the use of social media sites to constantly compare oneself to others, seek social validation, and view images and updates of others' lives can further reinforce and worsen these depressive leaning cognition patterns.

Our results fit in quite nicely with what the literature says. Response Styles Theory suggests that the act of dwelling on negative thoughts increases prolonged negative mood, hindering an individual's ability to rebound from stressors or setbacks. Social Comparison Theory suggests that mindlessly browsing the nicely curated content of Facebook can lead to feelings of inadequacy or users feeling like they're falling behind. The I, PACE model speaks to how differences in one's thinking patterns, , like spurring rumination, have an interaction with digital environments that affects overall mental health.

The overall conclusion to be drawn, then, is not that social media is bad but that certain mental habits can be potentially harmful when applied to it while others can be potentially helpful. Some young adults with effective coping strategies and resilience will be less harmed by social media while some who ruminate will be more harmed. This has implications for ways young people could be supported to experience less risk from the digital age and, more specifically, ways they can be supported to develop better mental strategies and habits rather to decrease screen time or make it less tempting.

So what implications does this have for young people's actual day, to, day experience, and day, to, day navigation through the world? Rather than just telling young people to log off, or enforce high restriction of the 'Time' function, it is best to teach young people how to identify and liberate themselves from dysfunctional thinking cycles through cognitive techniques, such as mindfulness, compassion and emotion regulation. By using these techniques we are not only equipping young people with the skills to address their online behavior, but also the skills to address other day, to, day encounters in their lives within which they experience similar negative thoughts. It is through equipping young people with the skills to identify these thoughts, and having them learn not to dwell in them, that we empower young people to be more resilient and to make better choices in life whatever the pressure of digital media.

VIII. LIMITATIONS

Although this study provides some valuable new information regarding the relationships between social media use, rumination, and life satisfaction in young adults, there are some limitations of the research which should be taken into consideration when reflecting on the results.

First of all, since this is a correlational study that we are unable to draw any firm conclusions about causality. We found that the more time spent on social media, the more frequently participants ruminated and the less satisfied they were with life. But we do not find out whether people who ruminate more also seek out social media more, whether people who seek out social media more tend to ruminate more or whether life satisfaction affects both variables of interest. In future researches, to pinpoint this relationship, we should use a longitudinal study design or manipulation of the independent variable, social media use, and then observe the effects this in turn has on rumination.

Another limitation in this study was the use of convenience sampling. Most individuals surveyed were either currently in college or just out of college. The demographic may have been a bit limited in scope which may make the results less generalizable. Young adults that are not currently attending college, and have full time employment or live in rural or lower income areas may have very different experiences with social media and mental health. Cultures, socioeconomic status, where you live, all of those factors can affect not only whether a person has access to technology, but what they do with it, and how they deal emotionally. Missing those groups from the discussion means our understanding is not comprehensive, and future research needs to provide more representative samples of young adults.

Gender imbalance is another factor, as the volunteers in this study were primarily females. Past research indicates the existence of different social media use, emotional expression, and rumination tendencies amongst males and females. Females may be more prone to report ruminative thoughts or emotional distress, strengthening the connections from this study. A gender imbalance in future research would influence the strength of any published findings between social media, rumination and life satisfaction.

Furthermore, the sole reliance on self-report surveys creates certain limitations. Over, or under, reporting, or responding according to what one thinks is socially favorable, should be expected when it comes to variables such as social media use or individual mindfulness. This creates bias related to social desirability or retrospective recall, among others. Usually individuals' difference exists between self-report responses and actual behaviors, especially in sensitive issues such as mental health or internet usage. Including objective measures in the study such as digital tracking or behavioral observation could also limit these issues.

Finally, we have grouped all uses of social media together as if it were a singular task, rather than acknowledging that there is considerable variation across the number of different ways in which people use online services and the nature of the platforms themselves. Past research has indicated that the affects of social media are situation-dependent, some acts such as shallow scrolling while engaging in comparison techniques have been associated with more negative outcomes than others such as actively posting or participating in others' lives.

Additionally, some sites may elicit different virtual feeling tones than others. If we have oversimplified by grouping all of these factors together into one lump category, some important differences may have been lost.

In conclusion, although this study provides important insights to the discussion of social media and youth well-being, it also calls for a more rigorous, nuanced and inclusive approach to research in order to comprehensively understand the complexity among these entwined topics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As we look forward, our study and the gaps that still remain can serve as a number of 4. pathways for future research that might enrich our knowledge of this complex dynamic between social media, rumination, and life satisfaction.

➤ *Prioritize Longitudinal and Experimental Approaches*

To really understand how social media impacts mental health over time, it is important to see the results of longitudinal designs where people are followed for months or years. Only then can we track the development of spiraling social media behaviors, the tendency to ruminate, and global well-being as all evolve, week after week. Longitudinal studies can also help determine causality; for example, do passive Facebook loves create more rumination, or are ruminators simply more likely to contain Facebook loves? Interventional experiments that manipulate individual social media behaviors (taking breaks, engaging in positivity, avoiding screen time altogether, etc.) can give us a clearer picture of which behaviors influence mood and rumination in the short term. This combinatorial, methodologically diverse approach can get us beyond correlates and to the source of what causes what on social media.

➤ *Examine the Nuances of Social Media Engagement*

Quantification of the use of social media will no longer be enough; research will need to explore the content of one's use of social media. Are they creating content? Are they practicing: 'what they preach,' or blindly favoring, or lurking? Which What kinds of platforms do they hang around on, visual, heavy ones like Instagram and TikTok, or more conversation, dominated ones like Twitter or Reddit? The types of emotional input received online, constant interaction with obsession, inducing highlight reels that let us compare ourselves to others, or immersion in ever-expanding support communities, can make a huge difference in some areas. We can discover what features help people feel better, and which ones further hasten rumination and dissatisfaction, when we drill down to this degree of specificity.

➤ *Expand Diversity and Context in Samples*

Much of what is investigated today is from homogeneous groups, usually university students of similar ethnicity and cultural background. It is important that research includes participants of different socioeconomic levels, different ages, different occupations and from other countries so that we can better understand interactions across

different populations. Cultural aspects, including the popularity or acceptance of technology, of seeking help for mental health issues, or of expressing ones feelings and emotions, may influence the different ways in which people engage with social media and the diverse effects it has. Examining research through cross, cultural comparisons or analyzing findings in an international context may demonstrate whether effects are culturally specific or not so that more accurate, culturally relevant suggestions and recommendations can be made.

➤ *Integrate Objective Data with Self, Reports*

Using self, report data can be subject to recall biases and inaccuracies, and can be unreliable when trying to track time online, or retrospection of one's emotional states. Data from an objective measure (i. e. loading screen time on a mobile device, app analytics, in the moment measures of mood and emotional states) and through self, report can robustly inform the research, as you can verify your measure along with depth and richness of subjective experience.

➤ *Develop and Test Targeted Interventions*

We need to start moving from noticing to action. Future We would suggest that future research should concentrate on the development and experimental evaluation of interventions that can be used with frequent social media users at risk of rumination. For instance, we could investigate the efficacy of a range of interventions, such as cognitive, behavioral therapy or mindfulness training to promote healthy thinking, gratitude interventions and digital detox measures, in reducing negative thought patterns and increasing life satisfaction. We could then implement interventions to combat mental health issues both in clinical contexts and everyday life.

IMPLICATIONS

There are important wider implications of these results for a range of different areas, with the ability to influence how individuals, practitioners, and society in general, interpret and react to social media's impact on people's well, being.

➤ *Theoretical Implications*

Finally, the present findings support purely cognitive and affective models of well, being, reinforcing how the moderators within one's mind (i. e., rumination) may be more important to overall life satisfaction than the actual magnitude of social media engaged with during any given period. This finding is further consistent with theoretical models, such as the Response Styles Theory and newer digital well, being models, that seek to incorporate cognitive moderators with nature of the digital era, seen here in the form of interactive features available online.

➤ *Clinical and Mental Health Implications*

Implications for mental health practitioners would indicate that instead of presenting time spent on social media as the problem, interventions should center around changing cognitively unhelpful thoughts and beliefs. Interventions that incorporate emotion regulation, resiliency, or other adaptive coping techniques such as mindfulness, cognitive reframing,

or acceptance-based techniques may be more effective than simply suggesting less screen time. This approach provides a more flexible, This provides policy, makers, practitioners, families and young people with practical advice in an approachable language that is grounded in evidence and takes into account how integral the internet now is to the lives of young people, making support more accessible, less stigmatised and providing realistic advice.

➤ *Educational Implications*

Schools and universities, therefore, remain an ideal space for implementing a program of digital literacy that can improve mental health of students. On one hand, students can learn to identify and regulate rumination, and on the other hand, they can prepare their steps in digital and social media consumption, as well as education.

➤ *Policy and Public Health Implications*

What should public health campaigns and policy efforts do then? Simply reiterate the "lower your screen time" message? More promising than telling individuals and families how to cut down on technology is direct investment and education on the development of emotional intelligence, psychological stamina, and media literacy on a community level. Policy efforts and health campaigns might fund accessible mental health programs and subsidize digital "life skills" education for schoolchildren, and enlist technology companies to implement reflective apps that encourage deleterious screen usages.

➤ *Social Implications*

The subtle conclusions contradict popular mantras that argue that social media, by its very nature, is bad; they support a more sophisticated reality, life online is characterized by intrusive timesickness, which is founded on thought, trains and affective, trains, and which function very differently from person to person. Such a viewpoint fosters a more even, keeled, less fear, inducing public dialogue about social media, and it benefits member of the public, who, if they are willing to participate in open debate, might learn how to live with technology more healthfully and more productively.

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