



THE IMPACT OF NEW ELECTRONIC MEDIA ON CHILDREN'S PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING UNDER PERSPECTIVE OF NEP 2020: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ANALYSIS

Sumita Biswas ¹  & Dr. Soumi Mandal ²

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Author Details:

¹ Research scholar (Pursuing Ph.D.), Department of Education, Vinaya Bhavana, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, Bolpur, West Bengal, India; ² Assistant professor, Department of Education, Vinaya Bhavana, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, Bolpur, West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author:

Sumita Biswas

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Abstract

With the rapid advancement of technology in the 21st century, electronic media has become an integral part of every child's life. Online games, e-learning platform and digitally-mediated social communication networks influence the cognitive, emotional and social development of children. The main objective of this systematic review analysis article is to analyze the positive and negative effects of online media use on children in the NEP 2020 perspective and identify possible ways to balance them. An analysis of key research articles published between 2019 and 2026, based on the PRISMA model, reveals two contrasting outcomes, a positive side-encompassing educational opportunities, access to information and the fostering of creativity and empowerment and a negative side- involving stress and anxiety, social isolation, attention and sleep problems etc. According to NEP 2020, the use of digital technology is essential for the all-round development of children. Therefore, to reduce the negative effects of digital media, digital literacy, awareness of parents and teachers, setting time limits for digital platforms use and participation of children in online activities are very necessary. Overall, it can be said that although new electronic media has a two-way effect on children's mental health, it is possible to minimize the negative effects and maximize the positive effects through proper management and policy formulation.

Keywords: *Digital media, NEP 2020, psychological well-being, systematic review, digital literacy*

Introduction

In the current digital era, NEP 2020 has brought a radical change, the main objective of which is to provide holistic development of children and give more importance to psychological well-being. The matter will become clearer if discussed chronologically and sequentially. During the period from 2000 to 2010, limitations in technological development regarding the use of computer games and the internet were evident. People were not yet fully aware of the multifaceted applications of new electronic or digital media in other words, organized technological usage was not observed during this initial stage. Pempek et al. (2009). Conducted studies on usage of new online media and its effects on children. If the period from 2011 to 2019 is considered a second phase, it becomes apparent that the widespread availability of smartphones and the internet led to a manifold increase in children's use of digital platforms. Children began engaging with online content in increasingly diverse ways. A comparative study by Przybylski and Weinstein (2017). Regarding normal versus excessive online content usage revealed that excessive use led to adverse effects on children's mental health.

Then came 2020, a time when the devastating COVID-19 pandemic was wreaking havoc across the globe. As people were confined to their homes, social communication and interaction shifted massively to digital channels and the influence of online platforms and digital media become remarkably profound. While excessive screen time may aid children's academic, creative and skill development, detrimental effects on their psychological well-being have also been observed. Halapa & Djuranovic (2021). Identified a strong link between online media usage and deficits in children's social behavior and linguistic skills notably, issues such as anxiety, depression, social isolation and a lack of mental stability were found to be significantly prevalent.

In the next phase, after 2020 to till 2026, NEP 2020 focuses on how to enhance children's psychological well-being through advanced technology. It is said here that the negative effects of digital media (mental depression, digital media risks, lack of attention and social communication, etc.) should be controlled and the positive effects (such as increasing educational opportunities through e-learning, development of creativity and skills, ease of access to information, etc.) should be emphasized.

This ongoing study (2020-2026) demonstrates the complex, dynamic and multidimensional impact of new electronic media on children's psychological well-being. Dharejo et al. (2023). In their study, a systemic review reported that social media operates through the opposing forces of social connection and social isolation, thereby placing a strain on mental health.

Objectives

Investigators specified some objectives which are given below...

1. To analyze the positive and negative effects of online media on children's psychological well-being.
2. To analyze the role of screen time, type, parental and teacher guidance.
3. To evaluate the methods used in previous studies on this topic.
4. To analyze the consequence of this study in the perceptive of National Education Policy 2020.

Theoretical Analysis

In NEP 2020, explicitly states the need to incorporate technological education, child psychology and balanced inclusive education into the conventional curriculum, with a focus on the holistic development of the child. If this issue is analyzed in the light of various psychological and social theories, a theoretical form will be formed, which are as follows, Psychologist Jean Piaget, in his "Cognitive Development Theory" (1936), has meticulously analyzed the cognitive development of children across four distinct stages. Johnne Sewller explained in his "Cognitive Load Theory" (1988) that excessive information creates obstacles in the cognitive development of children. Judging from the relevance of digitally online media to these theories, it can be said that online contents enhance children's interactive learning but over screening, over information is not effective for cognitive development of children. Albert Bandura in his "Social Learning Theory" (1986) explained that children acquire knowledge through observation and imitation in other words, their social learning depends on social communication and appropriate social interaction. Lev Vygotsky in his "Socio-Cultural Theory" (1976) stated that a child can become socially and culturally integrated only when social interaction and language exchange occur effectively. While online platforms, games, social networks and digital content facilitate children's social learning, there are also harmful elements that can negatively influence their learning and behavior. Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner in his "Ecological Theory" (1986), has explained in detail that child development is affected by various levels of the environment (such as Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem & Macro System etc.) For Example, NEP 2020 belongs to the Macrosystem so new online media affects every level of it.

"PERMA-Well-Being Model" -- Martin Seligman (2011) in his book "Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being" -- has discussed in detail about the PERMA model, it is a model of Positive Psychology. The full meaning of 'PERMA' is, P-Positive Emotion, E-Engagement, R-Relationships, M-Meaning a correct understanding of oneself and one's work inspires children live purposeful lives, and A-Accomplishment-What is the goal of education and life? By what means is it possible to achieve it?

Erik Erikson's "Theory of Psychosocial Development" (1968) states that online content and digital platforms have both positive (e.g., identity formation) and negative (e.g., low self-esteem due to negative feedback) impacts on children during this crisis.

B.F. Skinner's "Behaviorism Theory" (1953) and Deci & Ryan's "Self-Determination Theory" (2017) show that children's learning, reinforcement and basic needs (Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness) depend on each other. Although these needs are met by various reward systems and gaming on social media, here are also some negative aspects. For example, excessive dependence increases stress and addiction.

Blumler & Katz's "Use and Gratification Theory" (1974) and Marshall McLuhan's "Media Ecology Theory" (1964) clearly highlight that "Media is the message", media influences human through, culture, and individuals use media extensively to fulfill their needs. As a result, although the digital environment helps in forming the mental structure of children, its excessive use creates mental problems.

George Gerbner in his "Cultivation Theory" (1969) and Robert Putnam in his "Displacement Theory" (2000) while explaining long-term media exposure, said that excessive and harmful content consumption not only creates fear and anxiety in children but also displaces children's social activities.

Thematic Analysis

Digital media has a complex and multidimensional impact on children's psychological well-being. Based on various studies, this issue is analyzed below through several themes these are as follow, Digital benefits & Flourishing: The appropriate, controlled and qualitative use of electronic online media develops creativity, collaboration, problem-solving skills in children NEP 2020 has emphasized more on technology based & skill development education. Digital play enhances problem-solving and mutual cooperation among children (Torres et al., 2021). Screening time & Psychological well-being: Children's psychological well-being depends significantly on the amount of time they spend on screen-based activities. If a child engages in screen time or goes online in a controlled manner, their psychological well-being improves, whereas excessive screening has a bad effect on psychology. In NEP 2020, it has been said to encourage healthy living by controlling screening time in the context of psychological well-being.

Content matters & Teacher-Parental role: The use of online digital platforms, while providing educational content, also provides inappropriate content due to its uncontrolled use, in this case, awareness, digital literacy and cooperation of teachers

and parents are highly desirable. NEP 2020 has emphasized on digital literacy and use of quantitative digital content, Parental well-being and family environment influence children's use of educational content and screen (Ciancimino et al., 2025).

Social media and Emotional behavioral problems: Excessive use of electronic online media is one of the main reasons for the increase in children's irritability, aggressiveness, low self-esteem, depression and behavioral addiction. NEP 2020 has focused on time management and life skill education for digital platforms use.

Imperial College London Study (2026). Indicates that 3 hours per day of social media use (extended use) increases negative effects such as anxiety and peer pressure in children.

New electronic media and social relationship isolation: New electronic media has brought about an unprecedented transformation in education while simultaneously making social interactions more open through various social media (such as Online Relations, Instagram, Facebook etc.) but as a result, face to face interaction of children has decreased and loneliness has increased. One of the key objectives of NEP 2020 is to eliminate social barriers and foster social, moral and value-based development by creating social networks through vibrant technology. Przybylski et al. (2021). Conducted an in-depth inquiry into online and offline social relationships, revealing a significant difference between the two.

Methodological Analysis

This article follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis) guidelines to ensure a systematic and transparent study; it examines the impact of new electronic media usage on children's psychological well-being within the context of the Indian educational framework.

Data source: The various database such as Scopus, PubMed, Google scholar, Research gate, SciSpace etc. are the main source of data collection which are very authentic and relevance for this article.

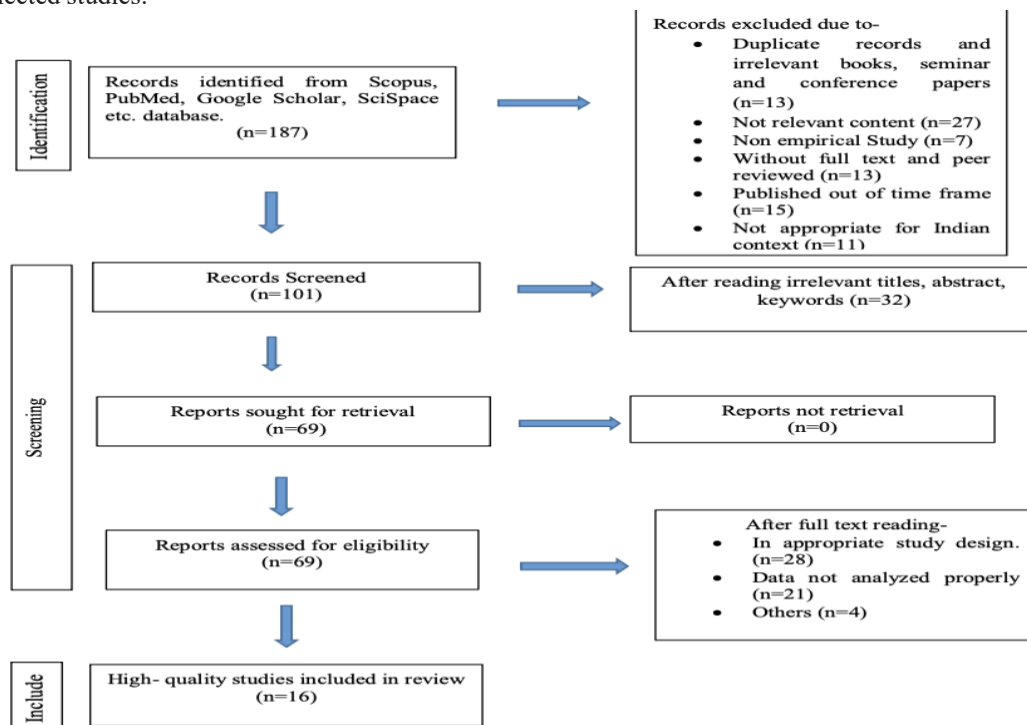
Inclusion Criteria: The specific aspects considered for the inclusion of research papers are as follows,

- Impact of new electronic media (Such as e-content, virtual social communication, gaming, etc.)
- Outcomes regarding the psychological well-being of children and adolescents.
- Peer-reviewed, full-text availability, and relevant to the Indian context (NEP 2020).

Exclusion Criteria: The specific factors included in the exclusion criteria are,

- Non-empirical studies.
- Lack of relevancy or inappropriate study design regarding the impact of electronic media on children's psychological well-being.
- Absence of full-text availability and peer-review status.
- Didn't publish between 2000 and 2026.
- Data not analyzed properly.

Data Analysis: Theoretical, thematic and methodological analysis (following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines) were employed to evaluate the selected studies.



(Page et al., 2021) → (PRISMA 2020 Diagram)

Findings and Discussion

The findings obtained from the data analysis are discussed below in the context of the objectives.

Objectives 1: To analyze the positive and negative effects of online media on children's psychological well-being.

Previous studies have shown a bidirectional relationship between digital platforms- specifically electronic media-and children's psychological well-being. While moderate use of digital devices can help children's mental development, excessive use can be harmful (Przybylski et al.,2021). There is a profound link between online risks and mental stress, which are closely related to each other. Information overload is a primary factor for increasing mental stress of children and adolescents (Livingston & Helsper, 2007).

Objective 2: To analyze the role of screen time, type, parental and teacher guidance.

Numerous studies have statistically measured the relationship between children's screen time, the type of screen usage and depression. More than 3 hours of online platforms use increases the risk of suicide in children (Twenge et al., 2018). Longitudinal research on adolescents for 5 years and found a strong relationship between screening time and eating related symptoms (Livet et al., 2024). However, proper guidance from parents and teachers, the use of beneficial online platforms (such as-educational games, virtual social interaction, essential academic e-content and various educational apps), and the maintenance of manageable screen time help reduce the mental health risks faced by children. So, it is very essential to guide the children in proper way through trained teachers and also important digital literacy for parents.

Objective 3: To evaluate the methods used in previous studies on this topic.

According to the previous researches there is combine results of many studies to reach a final mathematical conclusion on a specific topic. Multiple meta-analyses have shown that the negative effects of new electronic media differ by gender (Ghai et al.,2023). On the basis of understand through the trend analysis the extent to which the evolution of technology over time deeply influences changes in children's behavior. It has found a strong link between social communication and anxiety (Cristadoro, 2025). The role digital social communication is very vital for maintaining the children's mental health.

Objective 4: To analyze the consequence of this study in the perceptive of National Education Policy 2020.

From the perspective of NEP 2020, in few studies through content analysis and policy reviews regarding new electronic media or digital education have found that there are numerous challenges in the implementation of the policy. Although NEP 2020 tries to reduce the digital divide, there are no specific guidelines on its impact on rural children's psychological health (Spanakis et al., 2021).

Challenges

After theoretical, thematic and methodological investigation, researcher figure out some challenges on this topic, they are as follows,

- No profound logical relationship between electronic media and psychological well-being is clearly established across all contexts
- The research is significantly limited by geographical variations and the digital divide.
- The results cannot be generalized due to methodological and cultural differences.
- There is no adequate empirical evidence on the effectiveness of NEP 2020 implementation.

Recommendations

Some specific recommendations are given below,

- Cultural, Contextual, age-specific, longitudinal and mixed method-based research needs to be increased.
- Counseling for students, digital literacy and preparatory training for teachers and parents should be made mandatory.
- Screening time guidelines and infrastructure need to be improved.
- Offline activities (such as participation in social events, sports, group study) need to be encouraged along with online activities.

Conclusion

This systematic review-based analysis shows that new electronic media has a complex, multidimensional impact on children's psychological well-being combining theoretical, thematic and methodological analyses, it is known that the impact of electronic media depends on the type, time, content, environment and social context of use. Numerous investigations have confirmed that quality content plays a major role in the cognitive, social and emotional development of children. It is enhancing problem-solving abilities, creativity and skill development in children. In contrast, excessive use can foster negative factors such as stress, anxiety, social isolation and aggression etc. New electronic media has increased lots of opportunities and the availability of information in education but over information load has become one of the reasons for emotional problems and addiction in children.

In this context, NEP 2020 incorporates digital literacy in education, psychological well-being and mental health into education, parental-teacher training, cooperation, awareness and infrastructural development to foster the holistic development of children. Methodological differences bring diversity in the results, so only cross-sectional research is not enough, it is possible to get reliable results if emphasis is placed on mixed method based, contextual and longitudinal research. The educational framework has been designed with a child-centric approach, prioritizing a balanced and inclusive education system driven by advanced technology.

Therefore, this highlighted that there is a reciprocal connection between new electronic media and psychological well-being. Excessive use of digital platforms compromises children's psychological well-being and significantly exacerbates any existing mental health issues. So, the proper, conscious and controlled use of new electronic media is one of the main keys to the psychological well-being of children.

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