Effects of social media motivations on women's psychological well-being in Pakistan
by Iffat Ali Aksar, Mahmoud Danaeae, Huma Maqsood, and Amira Firdaus

Abstract
Social media use has been increasing apace regardless of geographical and economic boundaries. In particular, its penetration has occurred more rapidly in developing and low-income countries with abounding health and psychological disadvantages. Given the understanding that women are more prone to psychological disorders than men, the current research is an effort to examine social media motives and subsequent effects on the psychological well-being of women social media users in Pakistan. The study is based on an online survey conducted to ascertain as to what extent social media use contributes to women’s psychological well-being or otherwise. The survey recorded responses of 240 women selected through purposive sampling technique. SEM-PLS analysis of the collected data revealed that social media usage plays a meaningful role in women’s psychological health. However, results exposed that Pakistani women, under the traditional patriarchal social pressure, not only have to observe cultural norms in online practices but are also forced to adhere to socially constructed gender roles in online spaces. The mixed results suggest conducting extensive research for a deeper insight into the role of social media in psychological well-being of women in other low-income countries.

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Introduction
Since the emergence of new media technologies, a huge bulk of the literature has touched upon the usage and effects of social media. Nonetheless, specific psychological consequences of social media use remain empirically contested (Pantic, 2014). While examining the overwhelming use of social media, scholars speculated and carried out studies to categorize the pros and cons to gauge whether social media use positively or negatively influences users’ psychological well-being.

A cursory perusal of the available literature highlights that concerns and questions raised by the researchers outnumber the answers provided by the studies. Three recent systematic reviews revealed wide gaps in the literature and identified questions which remain unexplored and unanswered. Best, et al. (2014) concluded with contradictory evidence on the impacts of social media in the context of users’ mental health. Whereas, Erfani and Abedin (2018) pointed out a lack
of media and well-being research in developing regions of the world and also pointed out women’s absence in new media and well-being research. Likewise, Lwoga and Sangeda (2018) revealed limited evidence on the long-term contribution of new media communication to well-being in developing countries.

The present article, therefore, examined the effects of social media on the psychological well-being of women in Pakistan — a society that is inherently male-dominated and prone to mental, emotional, and physical abuse of women. In such a state of affairs, women’s mental and emotional disorders and low self-esteem adversely influence their overall well-being. Consequently, they seem to be in search of some activity that offers them escape from the harsh realities of everyday life.

Background of the study

Women’s social positioning in Pakistan

Women worldwide suffer psychological disorders (Mootz, et al., 2019). However, some regions of the world, such as central Asia and southeast Asia, which are deeply patriarchal, face these issues more adversely. In these societies, women lag behind men in all fields of life and remain under-represented, while both religious and cultural forces also mutually contribute to women’s submissive status and low well-being (Urbaeva, 2019).

Similarly, established gender inequalities in Pakistan expose women to culturally inherited biases (Batool and Batool, 2018). The increasing number of harassment and domestic violence cases has included Pakistan among the list of most dangerous countries for women in the world [1]. Women are given a marginalized status and limited fundamental rights of education, health, and employment in the male-dominated society of Pakistan. According to statistics, only 47 percent of female citizens are literate as compared to 71 percent literate male citizens in Pakistan [2]. The mortality rate is also higher among women as evidenced from the fact that every 37 minutes a woman dies during childbirth, indicating limited healthcare facilities for women.

Women constitute 50 percent of the population in Pakistan; however, only 25 percent participate in the labor force and national development. Moreover, oppressive cultural and social norms, domestic violence, and financial dependency further contribute to women’s low well-being (Niaz, 2004); hence women suffer more psychological disorders than men do (Ahmed, et al., 2016).

Women’s social media accessibility and use in Pakistan

Currently, almost 4.5 billion people worldwide have access to the Internet and social media [3]. This technological proliferation has also penetrated in Pakistan, resulting in the increasingly growing use of the Internet and social media platforms. Moreover, the technological transition in Pakistan since the early 1990s with a slow dial-up connection to the recent 4G and Wi-Fi technology has transformed the socialization and interactional patterns and opened up new opportunities for information sharing, resulting in gradual cultural transformation (Mustafa, 2018).

Young people, both men and women use social media quite frequently (Jamil, 2018; Eijaz, 2013); the online spaces in Pakistan however, continue to remain male-dominated. Women are not usually welcomed in the online sphere (Kasana, 2016), thus, only 29 percent of them use new media technologies. According to the Digital Rights Foundation (2017), 45 percent of women in Pakistan face online harassment. Here, it should be borne in mind that several cases are not even reported or registered due to the culturally oppressive compliance to gender roles.

Literature review

Social media motives

Motivations to use social media differ among individuals. Considering it quite essential to identify the motives for social media use to determine its consequent effects (Valkenburg, et al., 2006), scholars tried to delve deeper into the task (Valenzuela, et al., 2009). Hence, multiple studies were carried out to enlist motives for social media use. These
studies mainly identified motives including information and knowledge-seeking; surveillance; entertainment; time-
pass; escape; socialization; self-status enhancement; self-exposure; identity establishment; and, utility (Johnson and
Kaye, 2004; Shao, 2009; Stafford, et al., 2004). While Sheldon (2008) reported six motives, which are relationship
making and maintenance, pastime, being part of a virtual community, fun, coolness, and companionship, Park, et al.
(2009) considered socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information as the motives of Facebook use.
Recently, scholars also observed that social media is intensively used for socializing, maintaining and strengthening
relationships, gaining information, and reducing stress (Basilisco and Cha, 2015).

An extensive review of the literature surfaced the impression that socialization, escapism, personal, emotional, and
information motives remained consistent, which were operationalized in varying terms. The present research also
relied on these five motives of social media use to examine its effects on the psychological well-being of females in
Pakistan.

**Socialization motives**

Irrespective of traditional or new media technologies, socialization has consistently been a major reason for
interaction. Scholars commonly mentioned socializing as an essential aspect of social media use (Park, et al., 2009;
Sheldon, 2008). However, keeping in touch with friends and family and people at large is also a significant motivation
for using social media. According to research, social media use creates a sense of belongingness, connectedness, and
companionship and reduces isolation and loneliness, thus resulting in overall well-being (Diomidous, et al., 2016;
Erfani and Abedin, 2018). Being a “natural companion” of “native speakers of the digital language” (Palfrey, et al.,
2011), the Internet and social media extend friendship circles and keep people connected (Tufekci, 2010). Through
social media platforms, people are closely associated with each other, which reduces loneliness (H.-T. Chen and Li,
2017).

Moreover, the feeling of being connected improves relationships and well-being of users. Apart from this, online
socialization enhances opportunities for communication and interaction with far-off people. Moreover, mutual sharing
brings fruitful results, such as employment and business opportunities (Sanchiz, et al., 2016). Scholars also believe that
social media usage improves the quality of life and self-esteem due to new connections and enhanced interaction (J.
Chen, et al., 2009).

**Escapism motives**

The concept of escapism has many connotations in terms of revival mechanism and coping with emotional distress to
relieve the harmful effects of stressful events on individuals (Stenseng, et al., 2012). The escapism or diversion motive
of media use has been explained as an alternate option to get away from a distressful situation by entertaining oneself.
This motive involves active engagement in social media to avoid real-life problems and turning to a utopian world
(Hastall, 2017).

People use Facebook for escapism, which in fact, reduces life satisfaction (Young, et al., 2017). Previous research
termed escapism motive as a psychological disorder as it takes users away from real life (Hassouneh and Brengman,
2014). A recent study also discovered escapism as promoting loneliness (C.-Y. Chen and Chang, 2019). No study was
found which explained or presented consequences of online escapism on psychological well-being, so keeping in view
the overall effect of escapism it is assumed that in the long run it negatively contributes to one’s psychological well-
being.

**Personal motives**

Personal motives include “status exposure” and identity (Park, et al., 2009) “self-presentation” and “coolness”
(Sheldon, 2008). Although personal motives are explained in different terms, the core concept of personal motives
indicates the use of social media for maintaining and expressing a positive online image. The study (Bailey, et al.,
2013) described the positive effects of online self-exposure on psychological well-being as it promotes users’
confidence and self-esteem. Since social media provide an opportunity to users to establish online profiles according to
their desire, users promote best aspects of their personality which enhance their self-esteem (Gonzales and Hancock,
2011) and thus form part of their psychological well-being.

**Emotional motives**

Sharing of personal information is said to be strongly associated with one’s emotions; hence the emotional expression
on social media has been widely discussed (Dupré, et al., 2019), and it is still part of the academic debate.
Social media are open platforms where users express their emotions and feelings in multiple ways through pictures, emoticons, posts, and quotes. One of the main reasons for sharing emotional information online is to express feelings and emotions related to an event or an experience. The easiest way to do this is to connect to social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or WhatsApp where one gets instant response and gratification (Waterloo, et al., 2018). While explaining the association of emotional motive and psychological well-being, the affective (emotional) well-being, which is an associative component of psychological well-being, has been discussed too (Weinstein, 2018). Both negative and positive emotions are expressed on social media, which leads to mixed effects on users’ psychological well-being.

**Informational motives**

In the Uses and Gratification research tradition, cognitive use or information-seeking motive of socialization remained central in traditional media use, such as reading newspapers and watching television (Eveland, et al., 2003). Traditional media (radio, television, newspapers) studies proposed cognitive need as an essential motive for media exposure (Norris and Jones, 1998). Scholars observed that cognitive use of media resulted in social behaviours such as political involvement and civic participation (Pasek, et al., 2009).

Likewise, pertaining to new media and informational use, scholars specifically focused on and explored the contours of the informational context of social media in politics (Gil de Zúñiga, et al., 2017). How the informational use of social media leads to or impacts ones psychological well-being did not receive academic attention, though (H. Lee and Choi, 2014). While observing the available evidence in the literature, it is assumed and expected that the informational use of social media can potentially contribute to psychological well-being and lead to better personal growth and enhanced environment handling.

**Psychological well-being and social media**

The concept of well-being is quite a complex phenomenon that can be defined or gauged in a number of ways. It, however, primarily relates to “optimal psychological experience and functioning” (Ryan and Deci, 2001). In new media research, the concept of well-being was vaguely defined, and multiple indicators of well-being such as happiness, life quality, level of depression, and loneliness, and life satisfaction were used to measure the effects of social media on users’ psychological well-being (Burke and Kraut, 2016; Chae, 2018). Moreover, it was believed that social media use reduced hopelessness and improved personal image (Hogue and Mills, 2019; Park and Baek, 2018).

Despite the use of multiple and diverse indicators of psychological well-being, new media research regarding psychological well-being is still controversial (Best, et al., 2014; Pantic, 2014). The massive growth of social media and prolonged online time motivated the scholars to observe new communication patterns at both individual and social levels to see whether or not the phenomenon contributes to users’ psychological well-being. The results of these studies, however, revealed inconsistent findings. For instance, the time spent on social media negatively influenced psychological well-being (Weinstein, 2018) and increased depression, anxiety, and loneliness (Oberst, et al., 2017). Likewise, frequent users of Facebook reported less life satisfaction and believed that others were happier and more content in their lives (Vogel, et al., 2015). Further, a study reported decreased emotional well-being and reduced life satisfaction among Facebook users (Verduyn, et al., 2017).

In comparison to the research that reported negative effects of social media on users’ psychological well-being, another group of scholars described its positive outcomes, such as the contribution of Facebook friends towards subjective well-being and social assistance (H.E. Lee and Cho, 2018), and reduced loneliness and depression (Nabi, et al., 2013). Moreover, these studies reported that online friends helped with extending connections, which increased and developed chances of positive relationships and contributed to users’ overall well-being (Gonzales and Hancock, 2011). Apart from online friends, other variables such as frequency, rate, and intensity of social media use also indicated a positive effect on users’ well-being (Valkenburg, et al., 2006).

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**Research and conceptual model**

Women’s inclusion in advanced technologies remains a worldwide issue although scholars strongly advocate the role of new media in eliminating gender inequalities and improving women’s lives and well-being (O’Donnell and
Sweetman, 2018). Therefore, the initiative of ICT4D (information communication technologies for development) was taken to increase women’s accessibility to technologies to get them a better status in society and to enhance their well-being (Roberts, 2016). However, despite numerous initiatives and technologies for women’s well-being, academic research mainly focused on women’s online self-presentation, body image, and stereotypical presence (Ramsey and Horan, 2018). Very little attention was given to examine the effects of new media on the psychological well-being of women, and unfortunately, no studies addressed the subject explicitly.

There is plentiful academic evidence that substantiates the association of social media use and psychological well-being. Researchers, after an extensive examination of the literature, identified two gaps — the absence of women in new media research related to psychological well-being, and how motives for social media use lead to psychological well-being. Most of the studies mainly measured social media uses in terms of lists of friends and time spent on social media and correlated these two variables with psychological well-being. Further, repeatedly, only happiness, loneliness, life satisfaction, and self-esteem were examined as the measures of psychological well-being.

Thus, to fill the gap, the current research was conducted to examine the effects of social media motives on women’s psychological well-being. The study is based on borrowed theoretical assumptions from Uses and Gratification theory of media and Ryff’s psychological well-being model (Ryff and Keyes, 1995) with six dimensions (autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, positive relation, environmental mastery, and purpose in life).

**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

Based on the above-stated objective, the following research question and research hypothesis was formulated:

\[ RQ: \text{How do social media motives (socialization; escapism; and personal, emotional, and informational uses) correlate to women’s psychological well-being?} \]

\[ H: \text{Social media motives (socialization; escapism; and personal, emotional, and informational uses) positively correlate to women’s psychological well-being.} \]
Methodology

Area and context of research

The study was conducted in the federal capital of Pakistan–ICT (Islamabad Capital Territory), which is a culturally diverse city. Being the capital, it is the hub of government offices, educational institutions, diplomatic missions, and many international and national companies. People from across the country and the world reside there for jobs and other purposes. Further, education is one of the main attractions for the general public to come to the city. According to the 2017 census, approximately 4.5 million people populated the city, and 47 percent of them were women.

Research participants

Research participants of this study were Pakistani female social media users who were employed as university faculty members. Earlier studies mainly focused on the youth of Pakistan while examining the online activities, patterns of usage, and effects of social media (Nasir, et al., 2012; Ahmad, et al., 2016; Mahmood, et al., 2018) and women were wholly ignored in new media research in Pakistan although they actively use social media despite cultural restrictions and limited access to technologies (Zubair, 2016; Qaisrani, et al., 2016). Considering the number of psychological issues among women, it is quite an important area to explore the effects of social media on women’s psychological well-being.

Sample and sample size

A reflective sample of the population (Hair, et al., 2016) was ensured to represent the population and generalize the results (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). There are multiple suggestions by statisticians for calculating appropriate samples for structural equation modeling, such as 100 and above, though (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012; Hair, et al., 2016). Although the small size (100+) is also considered adequate for PLS-SEM (Goodhue, et al., 2012; Hair, et al., 2016; Marcoulides and Saunders, 2006) to ensure ample and appropriate sample size, the study followed two approaches. The sample size was calculated by path direction (Barclay, et al., 1995). The path direction from IV to DV was (12 paths) calculated 10 times larger to determine the sample size (12*10=120) (Hair, et al., 2011; Marcoulides and Chin, 2013). Further, recommendations of Cohen (1992) were followed to ensure ample sample size and population representation.

Sampling technique

The study utilized the purposive sampling technique and selected working women as samples. Since the majority of Pakistani women work in the teaching profession, female teachers from universities were approached. In Islamabad, almost three thousand women are working as faculty members in universities. Their official e-mail addresses were taken from official Web sites, and a questionnaire link was sent to them via e-mail messages.

Research instrument

Part A: Demographic

The first section of the questionnaire recorded demographical information of the respondents, including age, occupation, education, and marital status.

Part B: Social media usage patterns

The second part of the questionnaire measured the trends and patterns of social media usage among women. This part of the instrument recorded online time, frequency of social media usage, number of social media sites with their profiles, and preference for a device for social media use.

Part C: Social media motives (independent variables)

The independent variables of the study included five motives of social media among women: socialization, escapism, information, emotional, and personal. Each motivation had four items.

The socialization motive focused on communication and interaction with friends and family; escapism motive
addressed the use of social media for diversion and time-pass; personal motive items centered on individual’s self-presentation and self-credibility and status; emotional motive focused on emotional disclosure, and informational motive addressed the use of social media for academic purposes.

Part D: Psychological well-being

The study utilized a revised version of the well-validated scale of psychological well-being by Ryff (1989) to measure the effects of social media on the psychological well-being of female social media users. The scale comprised six sub-dimensions and 30 items such as Autonomy; Environmental mastery; Positive relations; Purpose in life; Self-acceptance; and, Personal growth.

Autonomy: Being independent with hold on decision-making despite social pressure;
Environment mastery: Knowing and understanding available sources, and choosing and changing the course of action according to the situation;
Positive relations: Having positive and balanced relations with family, friends, and people at large;
Purpose in life: Having a clear and meaningful goal in life and the desire to achieve it;
Self-acceptance: Possessing self-understanding and a realistic view of ones’ personality; and,
Personal growth: Experiencing self-development over time and feeling improvement in self.

Data collection

A Web-based survey was carried out in 2019, and the online questionnaire link remained available for two months (June and July 2019). Scholars and statisticians suggested online survey mainly because it saves time and financial expenses (Wright, 2005). During these two months, fortnightly reminders were sent, and in total, four reminders were given to respondents to fill out the online questionnaire. Since during statistical analysis, outliers and missing data is common issue in researcher, therefore, suggestions and recommendations by Hair, et al. (2011) are followed, and 20 percent extra responses were obtained to avoid statistical analysis errors. Overall, 240 responses were received for the research.

Data analysis

For the analysis of quantitative data, second-generation statistical analysis technique PLS-SEM (version 3.3.2) was used. PLS-SEM is quite helpful in social sciences research as it not only measures the variables but also configures the errors among or within variables (Chin, 1998). In addition, the measurement model provides a detailed evaluation of the relationship between variables (Kline, 2015). Both confirmatory factor analysis and regression analysis produce reliable results (Grottke, et al., 2018).

Results

Demographics and social media usage

Two hundred and forty females from 30 to 60 years of age participated in the survey. Some 53 percent of them fell between 30 to 40 years of age. Fifty-six percent of the participants had completed 18 years of education, and 73 percent were employed as permanent faculty members in the social sciences and management sciences departments of several universities in the federal capital of Pakistan.

All the participants used social media with minimal variation in frequency and subscription to social networking sites. Ninety percent of the participants accessed social media through the handset and were actively using three to four social networking sites (mostly Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram). On average, they spent 4.5 hours daily on social media exclusively for personal reasons.

Social media motivations

The descriptive analysis was carried out to present the level of motivations for social media use among women participants.
According to the results, socialization motive predominates ($M=3.78$, $SD=.73$), and further informational ($M=3.74$, $SD=.56$), and escapism motives ($M=3.24$, $SD=.88$), were found higher among the participants respectively. The mean score of the personal motives ($M=2.86$, $SD=.98$), and emotional motives ($M=2.64$, $SD=.95$) revealed that these motives have less contribution in social media use among women.

**Structural equation modeling (SEM)**

Identification and elimination of outliers were performed to ensure results’ accuracy and reliability. Normal distribution of data was tested through the normality test. The obtained value of skewness calculated between 0.169 to -0.724 and the kurtosis ranged from 1.917 to -0.778, which indicated that data were normally distributed. The multicollinearity was measured by variance inflation factors (VIFs). The endogenous variable psychological well-being with six dimensions was studied in the research. VIF for psychological well-being was 1.729, and the correlation coefficients between exogenous constructs were less than 0.8, which also indicated that there was no multicollinearity.

**Measurement model**

The measurement model calculated convergent and discriminant validity. The model observed the variables and described the relationship between them. Convergent validity in social sciences research refers to the relationship of two constructs. The researchers measured the factor-loading of items (see Table 1) and then rechecked the modified factor-loading. We used Cronbach’s alpha value to determine reliability. The obtained Cronbach’s alpha value fell within the values suggested by scholars, i.e., 0.7 (Hair, et al., 2011). In modified factor loading, the obtained values less than 0.7 are deleted. Similarly, the average variance extracted (AVE) was measured, which suggested that the accepted value of AVE was 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The statistical analysis produced satisfactory values of factor-loading, Cronbach’s alpha and AVE, and indicated relevance and reliability.
### Effects of social media motivations on women's psychological well-being in Pakistan

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item3</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.693</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item4</td>
<td>0.642</td>
<td>0.636</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item5</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment mastery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item1</td>
<td>0.665</td>
<td>0.659</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item2</td>
<td>0.838</td>
<td>0.833</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item3</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>0.829</td>
<td>0.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item4</td>
<td>0.592</td>
<td>0.599</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item5</td>
<td>0.578</td>
<td>0.574</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discriminant validity

The discriminant validity tool measured the difference among the constructs. In simple words, the discriminant validity explains to what extent constructs are dissimilar and distinctive from each other. The discriminant validity is measured through multiple methods; however, for the current study, the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of criterion (HTMT) was employed (Henseler, et al., 2014) and results are presented in Table 2. Hair, et al. (2011) suggest that the HTMT values smaller than 0.85 (0.90) mean that the two constructs are distinct. This test further suggested that the constructs measured independently in the model and did not overlap during the measurement (Hair, et al., 2011).

Table 2: Correlation of latent constructs and discriminant validity (HTMT ratio).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motive</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment mastery</td>
<td>0.324</td>
<td>0.642</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapism motive</td>
<td>0.333</td>
<td>0.278</td>
<td>0.183</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational motive</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.226</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal growth</td>
<td>0.364</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>0.309</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal motive</td>
<td>0.116</td>
<td>0.662</td>
<td>0.366</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive relations</td>
<td>0.299</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.415</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.459</td>
<td>0.668</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose in life</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.587</td>
<td>0.643</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>0.662</td>
<td>0.387</td>
<td>0.855</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-acceptance</td>
<td>0.453</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>0.382</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.545</td>
<td>0.319</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization motive</td>
<td>0.316</td>
<td>0.224</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.279</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>0.436</td>
<td>0.325</td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td>0.251</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structural model analysis
For path analysis, the bootstrap approach was performed to examine the relationship and effects of independent variables on dependent variables. The first phase of the path analysis confirmed the level of relationship of social media motives with psychological well-being. The formulated hypotheses were tested through structural equation modeling. According to the research framework in the first model, the combined effects and significance of social media motives on overall psychological well-being were assessed.

**Model I**

The first model (Figure 3) focused on the relationship between social media motives and overall psychological well-being. Since the bootstrapping approach tests confirmed the statistical importance of coefficients and consequently the error of the expected path coefficients (Chin, 1998), the proposed relationship in formulated hypotheses was tested by the bootstrapping approach to evaluate the significance of hypotheses in the model. Figure 1 presents the values of path coefficients with significance (β), p-values, and the $R^2$ values of endogenous constructs.

![Path model using a bootstrapping approach for the first model.](image)

The result of the bootstrapping method in Table 3 showed the effect of social media motives on psychological well-being. According to these results, personal motives don’t have significant effects ($\beta = -0.211$, $p<0.004$) on psychological well-being. Although the emotional motives have negative effect on psychological well-being but significant ($\beta = -0.346$, $p<0.001$). According to the statistical analysis, personal and emotional motives had an inverse/negative relationship with psychological well-being. Remaining motives (socialization, escapism and informational) have positive and significant effect on women’s psychological well-being.
To obtain the $R^2$ values, the study utilized the Smart-PLS algorithm function. The adjusted $R^2$ for psychological well-being was 0.523, which indicated that social media motive could explain 52 percent of the variance of psychological well-being. In other words, 52 percent change occurred in overall psychological well-being due to social media motives.

### Table 3: Results of the bootstrapping approach for the first model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paths</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$t$-value</th>
<th>$p$-values</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialization motive – &gt;PWB</td>
<td>0.223</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>4.269</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapism motive – &gt;PWB</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>5.427</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal motive – &gt;PWB</td>
<td>-0.211</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>2.844</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motive – &gt;PWB</td>
<td>-0.346</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>6.256</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational motive – &gt;PWB</td>
<td>0.263</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>4.083</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Effect size**

$R^2$ indicated the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable and highlighted the difference in case an independent construct was omitted from the model. This is also known as the $f^2$ or effect size. The effect size is measured through its standardized values, such as small ($f^2 \geq 0.02$), medium ($f^2 \geq 0.15$), and larger ($f^2 \geq 0.35$) (Cohen, 1992). The effect size values in Table 4 indicated that socialization (0.083) and personal (0.054) motives had insignificant effect on psychological well-being, while escapism motive (0.199), emotional motive (0.163), and informational motive (0.117) had medium effect on psychological well-being.

### Table 4: Effect size $f^2$ for the endogenous variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exogenous variable</th>
<th>Endogenous variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialization motive</td>
<td>0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapism motive</td>
<td>0.199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal motive</td>
<td>0.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motive</td>
<td>0.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational motive</td>
<td>0.117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model II

Model I and statistical analysis presented significant effect of social media motives on women’s psychological well-being. However, to examine the effect of social media motive on each sub-dimension of psychological well-being, another path analysis was carried out. Model II identified the aspects of psychological well-being that are influenced by social media motive independently.

![Figure 4: Path model using a bootstrapping approach for the second model.](image)

Model II disclosed the effect social media motivations on each sub-dimension of women’s psychological well-being. According to the results (see Table 5) the personal motives don’t have significant effect on women’s autonomy, environment mastery, personal growth and positive relations. Similarly, the informational motives insignificant effect on women’s environment mastery, personal growth and positive relations. However, socialization, emotional and escapism motives have significant effect on women’s different aspects of psychological well-being.

Similar to Model 1, the $R^2$ value of Model II showed predictive capacity of the structural model. The adjusted $R^2$ values were autonomy (0.266), positive relations (0.351), personal growth (0.188), self-acceptance (0.407), environment mastery (0.337), and purpose in life (0.371). $R^2$ values explain changes in dimensions of psychological well-being by social media motive. The highest change occurred in self-acceptance, i.e., 40 percent, followed by purpose in life (37 percent), positive relations 35 percent, environment mastery 33 percent, and autonomy 26 percent. The lowest change occurred in personal growth, i.e., 18 percent.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paths</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-values</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialization motive – &gt;Autonomy</td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>3.024</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization motive – &gt;Environment mastery</td>
<td>-0.135</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>1.757</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization motive – &gt;Personal growth</td>
<td>0.366</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization motive – &gt;Positive relations</td>
<td>0.169</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>2.728</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization motive – &gt;Purpose in life</td>
<td>0.179</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization motive – &gt;Self-acceptance</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>1.866</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapism motive – &gt;Autonomy</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>1.687</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapism motive – &gt;Environment mastery</td>
<td>0.268</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>4.157</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapism motive – &gt;Personal growth</td>
<td>-0.121</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>1.658</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
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<td>Escapism motive – &gt;Positive relations</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>5.195</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapism motive – &gt;Purpose in life</td>
<td>0.295</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>4.217</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapism motive – &gt;Self-acceptance</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>7.752</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal motive – &gt;Autonomy</td>
<td>-0.018</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>0.192</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effects of social media motivations on women's psychological well-being in Pakistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal motive – Environment mastery</th>
<th>-0.062</th>
<th>0.078</th>
<th>0.796</th>
<th>0.426</th>
<th>Not supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal motive – Personal growth</td>
<td>-0.038</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>0.399</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal motive – Positive relations</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>0.708</td>
<td>0.479</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal motive – Purpose in life</td>
<td>-0.277</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>3.341</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal motive – Self-acceptance</td>
<td>-0.329</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>4.635</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motive – Autonomy</td>
<td>-0.232</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>2.956</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motive – Environment mastery</td>
<td>-0.498</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>7.753</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motive – Personal growth</td>
<td>-0.273</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>3.512</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motive – Positive relations</td>
<td>-0.349</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>4.903</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motive – Purpose in life</td>
<td>-0.208</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motive – Self-acceptance</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.307</td>
<td>0.759</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational motive – Autonomy</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>4.232</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational motive – Environment mastery</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>0.894</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational motive – Personal growth</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>0.955</td>
<td>0.340</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effects of social media motivations on women's psychological well-being in Pakistan

| Informational motive – > Positive relations | 0.13 | 0.074 | 1.752 | 0.080 | Not supported |
| Informational motive – > Purpose in life | 0.261 | 0.076 | 3.421 | 0.001 | Supported |
| Informational motive – > Self-acceptance | 0.27 | 0.075 | 3.599 | 0.001 | Supported |

**Effect size**

In Model II, $R^2$ values were calculated to examine the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. In Model II $f^2$ or effect size is also measured to explain the level of effect in standardized values, such as small ($f^2 \geq 0.02$), medium ($f^2 \geq 0.15$), and larger ($f^2 \geq 0.35$) (Cohen, 1992). The extended analysis of Model II presented the effect size of each social media motive on all six dimensions of psychological well-being.

According to results, Socialization motive had a close to medium effect on Personal growth (0.129) while the Escapism motive had a medium effect on Positive relations (0.146) and Self-acceptance (0.255). Personal motive only had a noticeable effect on Self-acceptance (0.104) while Emotional motive had a medium effect on Environment mastery (0.237) and Positive relations (0.119). The Informational motive, however, had a small effect on all dimensions of psychological well-being.

### Table 6: Effect size $f^2$ for the endogenous variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exogenous variable</th>
<th>Endogenous variable</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Personal growth</th>
<th>Purpose in life</th>
<th>Environment mastery</th>
<th>Positive relations</th>
<th>Self-acceptance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialization motive</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escapism motive</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.099</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>0.255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal motive</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional motive</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.237</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational motive</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td><strong>0.00</strong></td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.096</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion and analysis**

Delving into the gap in academic literature, this article provided an in-depth analysis of the effects of social media on
Effects of social media motivations on women's psychological well-being in Pakistan

Pakistani female users’ psychological well-being.

The social media wave emerged in Pakistan in the mid-2000s, transforming the social, political, and cultural landscape of the country. Interestingly, while Pakistan now stands at number 10 with the title of the emerging Internet economy, gender disparities in technological use and access are still widespread in the country. Unfortunately, reliable data is not available in Pakistan to determine the actual use and penetration of the Internet and social media. There are countless differences in government data and privately conducted surveys. However, higher use of social media is observed regardless of gender, age, and social class (Younus, 2018).

Numerous studies revealed multiple uses and gratification of social media needs (Ali, 2016; Hassan, 2018; Hussain, 2014; Shabib and Fatima, 2012); however, the question as to how these motives lead to women’s psychological well-being remained unanswered.

The results in this paper presented social media motivations among women in terms of socialization, escapism, informational, personal, and emotional. We examined the effects of social media motives on women’s psychological well-being and found an almost 52 percent ($R^2$: 0.523) change in women’s psychological well-being due to social media use. At the first stage, a statistical analysis presented the effect of each motive on overall psychological well-being. Although socialization motives were found higher among participants, results indicated that the escapism motive had a significant effect on psychological well-being of female social media users.

The escapism motive points towards tension release and diversion from routine issues. It indicates that women use social media to get rid of their daily-life problems and to seek pleasure, involving in diverse activities (Krcaburun and Griffiths, 2019), all having positive effects on psychological well-being. Pakistani women reportedly experience depression and mental issues owing to prevalent patriarchal social designs (Shaud and Asad, 2020), so they use social media as an escape from reality. The escapism motive sheds light on the real life of Pakistani women, providing insights into their psychological issues which they are trying to camouflage through social media.

Likewise, the personal motive, which explains disclosure, self-presentation, and objectification, and the emotional motive, which indicates the use of social media for emotional needs, were found less significant. Consequently, the results revealed that the personal and emotional motives both have an inverse relationship with psychological well-being. Although women join social media sites as an escape from the realities of their lives, the cultural norms do not really allow them to disclose their true identities (Hardaker and McGlashan, 2016) and seek emotional guidance. Women are bound to obey culturally inherited norms and not expose or establish their actual personalities (Tsegaye, et al., 2018). Discussion about emotional issues is considered taboo in Pakistan, especially for women, thus refraining them from sharing emotional expressions online (Younas, et al., 2020). Multiple studies suggest that online image and expression lead to improved self-confidence and enhanced well-being (Burke and Kraut, 2016; Erfani, et al., 2016; Kim, 2014; Ko and Kuo, 2009; Naemi, et al., 2014). Pakistani women, however, are not permitted to seek emotional help, so pent up emotions make them prone to developing mental problems.

According to the results, socialization and informational motives contribute positively to women’s psychological well-being. When women socialize online, the communication process positively influences psychological well-being. Similarly, the informational motive results in better knowledge and information and contributes to psychological well-being of women.

The second phase of the analysis presented the effect of each social media motive on the sub-dimension of psychological well-being. This analysis categorized each sub-dimension of psychological well-being and explained the aspect of psychological well-being that is highly influenced by social media motives.

According to statistical results, Model II showed that the socialization motive positively contributed to women’s psychological well-being. Other dimensions, including autonomy, self-acceptance, positive relations, purpose in life, and personal growth, were also positively and significantly influenced by the socialization motive. Only environmental mastery had the least contribution to psychological well-being. The results indicate that contrary to the socialization opportunities in the socio-cultural setting, online socialization empowers women, helps them develop functional and better relations and improve themselves, and affords them the guidance to achieve their goals in life.

The personal motive that women use social media for self-credibility did not contribute to women’s autonomy, personal growth, positive relations, self-acceptance, purpose in life, and environmental mastery. On the other side, the emotional motive negatively correlated to women’s autonomy, personal growth, positive relations, self-acceptance, purpose in life, and environmental mastery. These results reinforce women’s positioning in low-income patriarchal
social structures where, despite technological advancement, women suffer social pressures and cannot always use technologies to improve their well-being (Younas, et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The results of this research point to a positive contribution of social media to women’s psychological well-being in Pakistan. The results of this study contribute to evolving literature regarding women’s social media use in developing regions of the world with respect to leading effects on psychological well-being.

According to the results of this study, social media use has a strong connection with users’ psychological well-being, especially with respect to women users in developing and culturally patriarchal regions of the world. Online time spent in personal activities on social media platforms offers socio-culturally oppressed women a relief and escape from harsh realities of life. Here, it is pertinent to note that this relief is temporary though, yet it has a palpable importance in harmonizing the overall well-being of the social media users.

The findings of this study suggest further research in other low-income countries to better ascertain the positive or negative contribution of new media technologies in empowering women and improving their well-being. The results of this research, aligned with the social positioning and status of women’s well-being in low-income and patriarchal societies in particular, call for more academic research to uncover hidden realities and develop consistent findings on this subject.

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Notes

References


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**Editorial history**

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