

THE IMPACT OF ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA CONSUMPTION ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF YOUNG ADULTS

SYEDA FATIMA TAHIRA GILLANI

PHD SCHOLAR, SCHOOL OF MEDIA STUDIES, THE SUPERIOR UNIVERSITY LAHORE, PAKISTAN.
sftgillani@gmail.com

DR SAYED TANWEER AHMED

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUKKUR IBA UNIVERSITY. tanweer.ahmed@iba-suk.edu.pk

DR MUHAMMAD ASLAM KAMBOH

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (EDUCATION) SZABIST UNIVERSITY CAMPUS LARKANA. aslam@lrk.szabist.edu.pk /
muhammadaslamkamboh2@gmail.com

DR. ABDUL BASEER QAZI

BAHRIA UNIVERSITY. abq.buic@bahria.edu.pk

ALI AKBAR

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE LECTURER IN UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION. aliakbarlaaffi141@gmail.com

ZAAFRAN KHAN

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE UNITED KINGDOM. zaafrankhan@connect.glos.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The present study examined the impact of entertainment media consumption on the psychological well-being of young adults, with the aim of understanding whether patterns of entertainment media use are associated with and contribute to their psychological well-being. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was adopted, and data were collected from 523 young adults in Punjab and Sindh, Pakistan, through a structured self-administered questionnaire distributed using an online data-collection approach. The collected responses were organized and analyzed using appropriate statistical procedures, including descriptive analysis, reliability assessment, Pearson correlation, simple linear regression, independent-samples t-test, and one-way analysis of variance. The findings indicated that entertainment media consumption had a significant positive relationship with psychological well-being and emerged as a significant predictor of young adults' psychological well-being. The findings also demonstrated significant differences in psychological well-being across gender and age groups, suggesting that demographic characteristics may influence how young adults experience psychological well-being in relation to entertainment media consumption. The study is significant because it contributes to the growing understanding of entertainment media as an important component of young adults' everyday lives and highlights the potential role of balanced and purposeful media engagement in supporting psychological well-being. The findings may assist educators, mental-health professionals, policymakers, and researchers in promoting healthier entertainment media practices and developing interventions that encourage positive psychological functioning among young adults.

Keywords: Entertainment Media Consumption, Psychological Well-Being, Young Adults, Media Use, Mental Health, Digital Entertainment, Psychological Health, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Entertainment activities dominate the free time of young adults and include nearly all forms of digital entertainment. Entertainment can be used to recovery from feelings of everyday stress, stimulate the mind, produce positive emotions, and enable psychological detachment. These activities can be used to relax. However, this potential only exists with a balance perspective towards entertainment usage (Reinecke & Eden, 2017; Rieger et al., 2014). With regard to entertainment, this balance is formed by the kind of entertainment used, why entertainment is used, how and when entertainment is used, and even the context of entertainment use (Ansari et al., 2024; Kross et al., 2013).

As young adults experience school-to-work transition, and become more socially, emotionally, and financially independent, they experience a greater need for entertainment in their activities to distract, regulate emotions, and fill a need for social relationship connections (Jo & Shin, 2024; Koh et al., 2024). While digital entertainment provides relief to stress, excessive and problematic use of digital entertainment is more strongly associated with psychological problems when compared with how much people use digital media (Yu et al., 2024). Also, some studies suggest positive effects of digital gaming on individuals' mood and emotions, yet the findings are dependent on the purpose and type of media used (Vié et al., 2024; Zhao, 2024).

Entertainment media cannot simply be labeled as good or bad. Its influence on people is complex and depends on various factors, making its effects more nuanced than a straightforward positive or negative judgment. Entertainment media should be classified as good when used in balance by young adults.

Entertainment media consumption refers to ways that individuals use media to entertain, relax or relieve themselves from stress. Media can be in the form of television, movies, music, radio, podcasts, or even social networking. Modern research has shown how entertainment media engages a person's psychological needs and regulates emotions. Entertainment can be done in many forms, and both relaxation and entertainment can take the form of hedonic or eudaimonic experiences (Oliver & Raney, 2011; Vorderer et al., 2004).

Diverse digital technologies have largely impacted entertainment by rendering it both more accessible and more incorporated into people's daily lives. With relaxation and entertainment being the primary goals of its use, purposeful entertainment consumption has been shown to facilitate recovery. However, the aim of entertainment consumption should not be compulsivity (Reinecke et al., 2014). Other studies have shown that entertainment media consumption and the addictive use of media are highly associated with anxiety, depression, poorer well-being, and sleeping disorders, but not with measuring how much time an individual spends on entertainment consumption online (Akhtar et al., 2024).

From a recovery perspective, entertainment media can help young adults take a break from the occupational and financial challenges of everyday life, as well as the stressful nature of social interactions. According to Klimmt and Vorderer (2010), theories of psychological detachment describe how moments of psychological detachment can support psychological states that confer numerous benefits for positive psychology and wellbeing. For this reason, engagement with entertainment media has to be seen as a multi-layered, behavioral and experiential construct. The psychological consequences of entertainment media consumption are dependent upon the structure, function, motivation, and pattern of media engagement, as opposed to how much time is spent consuming media (Mirrlees, 2013).

Dimensions and Psychological Functions of Entertainment Media Consumption

Entertainment can have different psychological benefits for young adults dealing with academic, occupational, social, or other kinds of stress. Activities such as media consumption can allow young adults to psychologically detach from stressful events. Media consumption can allow young adults to relax and help them gain a sense of control and provide them with the energy to engage with the world. Entertainment can help young adults experience calmness and provide them with opportunities to socially connect, experience a sense of belonging and engage in parasocial interaction. Problematic social media use, on the contrary, has been associated with increased social media use, feelings of social disconnection, poor social wellbeing and greater social comparison (Serrano-Puche & Novoa-Jaso, 2025).

Media use and particularly video games, have both positive and negative aspects. Positive aspects could include enjoyment and achievement. Games can be immersive and provide social interaction. Digital gaming is associated with improvements in young people's positive affect and mental wellbeing (Bryant & Vorderer, 2013). Excessive and problematic digital gaming may cause young adults to become sleep deprived and negatively impacts their daily functioning and has been associated with poorer sleep and delayed sleep onset (Bulboacă et al., 2025).

Young adults can use entertainment media to improve their mood and cope with negative feelings. For mood improvement, they can select and consume entertainment media. Entertainment media can distract young adults and help regulate arousal. Young adults may use media to engage in parasocial interaction. Perspectives on media choice show that people choose entertainment to meet their psychological needs for mood management, social connection, and escape (Hartmann, 2013). Entertainment media can be a positive psychological resource with purposeful and reasonable consumption. Problematic or excessive use can result in negative psychological and behavioral consequences.

Psychological Well-Being

Positive psychological functioning may allow for the experience of meaningful, purposeful lives, satisfaction, and fulfillment. It is about more than just the absence of psychological issues. This perspective emphasizes autonomy, mastery of one's surroundings, development and growth, constructive and supportive relationships, having a purpose in life, and self-acceptance, as outlined in Ryff's multidimensional model (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). While psychological well-being and subjective well-being are closely related, they are separate concepts. Although psychological well-being and subjective well-being are related concepts, subjective well-being is focused more on emotional experiences

and the quality of life, while psychological well-being is concerned with the quality of ongoing functioning and the realization of the potential of the self and the self's development (Huppert, 2009).

In young adults, psychological well-being is affected by school and work, finances, relationships, loneliness, sleep, physical activity, and use of digital media. Recent research suggests that patterns of problematic media-use have more consistent adverse effects on well-being than the use of media. In addition, this adverse effect may be reciprocal as media-use may increase to cope with a lack of well-being (Warr, 1978). Thus, we cannot infer that media-use causes a lack of well-being.

Entertainment media may also impact psychological well-being in the area of social connection and belongingness. Social media, multiplayer games, online communities, and groups for specific fandoms are a few examples that fulfill social and personal needs. These mean of social interaction and entertainment may fulfill social needs and may positively impact psychological functioning and well-being.

The advantages of digital media use are diverse, but depend on the type of engagement. Online communication can lead to social risks, when it becomes a substitute for offline relationships, as social media platforms represents a false sense of togetherness (Rothman et al., 2003). Psychological well-being is also a multifaceted construct that can be positively impacted or negatively impacted by the active or passive consumption of media (Weiss et al., 2016).

Psychological Well-Being as an Outcome of Entertainment Media Consumption

Entertainment media can positively impact psychological well-being, but this can also result in the opposite effect. Purposeful entertainment can relax someone and improve their mood. Entertainment can also help distract someone from unpleasant activities and psychologically detach people from stressful activities. Recovery theories suggest that stress is reduced by leisure activities if participants are able to detach themselves from the activity for a short time (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2018). Entertainment and leisure activities can help people relax, gain energy, and recover their vitality.

Media and entertainment consumed in excessive and poorly controlled amounts can negatively impact psychological well-being because it can displace important restorative activities. This includes sleep, physical activity, social contact, attendance to one's duties, and more. Problematic social media use has also been linked to psychological distress and poorer well-being (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2026), and excessive gaming has also been related to sleep problems and social problems (de la Rosa Fernández-Pacheco et al., 2026). The effect of entertainment media on someone is not based primarily on how much they consume, but more on how, and under what circumstances, they consume. More recent studies do not support the assumption that entertainment media consumption has an overall positive or negative effect on peoples' psychology. The effect depends primarily on how a person uses or consumes entertainment media.

Recent large-scale review studies have shown that general social media use has only a weak connection with depression and anxiety. However, when social media use becomes excessive or problematic, it is more strongly linked to anxiety, depression, poor sleep quality, and lower overall well-being. Similar evidence, which includes 680,000 participants, shows that differentiating excessive social media use or problematic social media use from general media use is necessary to evaluate the impact of social media on psychological and subjective well-being (Twenge & Campbell, 2019). Thus, the impact of entertainment media use on psychological well-being may be contextual. Meaningful use of entertainment media may be psychologically enhance well-being, while problematic use of entertainment media may be psychologically harmful.

Research Objectives

- To examine the relationship between entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being among young adults.
- To determine the impact of entertainment media consumption on the psychological well-being of young adults.
- To assess whether entertainment media consumption significantly predicts psychological well-being among young adults.

Problem Statement

Young adults connect daily with digital entertainment, yet the relationship between digital entertainment and psychological well-being is still poorly understood. Much of the existing research puts an emphasis on different forms of digital media like social media and has neglected the exploration of entertainment media consumption as the broader construct that includes streaming services, online videos, music, gaming, and entertainment-related social networking. More recent research has indicated that the psychological impact of media use is associated with the type and pattern of engagement, rather than the frequency or the duration of media use. Problematic use has been found to have stronger negative relationships with psychological well-being in comparison to normal media use (Hylkilä et al., 2024). Thus, a research gap exists in determining the relationships between entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being among young adults, where problematic use of entertainment media is analyzed across multiple platforms and in relation to positive psychological functioning. The goal of this study is to fill that gap by empirically examining

the relationship between entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being of young adults. This study will help determine if entertainment media is used for rest and recreation and if excessive and problematic use is associated with diminished psychological well-being (Lute, 2026).

Significance of the Study

This study is essential as entertainment media is a constant part of young adults' daily lives and reconfigures the way young adults rest, engage in entertainment, socialize, regulate emotions, and engage in other mental functions. Research in this area is justified since young adults engage extensively in several entertainment media segments, such as television, films, streaming, social media entertainment, music, online videos, and gaming. The author intends to add his voice and research to the little area of study on entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being of young adults in the existing literature. In addition, he hopes that his study will help psychologists, teachers, and parents in particular, and the concerned community in general, to see the good and bad sides of entertainment media, and to help them develop appropriate strategies for young adults' entertainment media consumption. His study could emphasize the need to develop training in young adults' entertainment media consumption in order to strike a balance and promote enjoyable entertainment media consumption.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entertainment Media Consumption Among Young Adults

Digital technologies have changed entertainment media consumption. It is easier than ever before to consume films, television, music, online videos, podcasts, social-media entertainment, and digital games using constantly available and personalized options. Entertainment has psychologic functions including pleasure, relaxation, mood regulation, psychologic detachment, stimulation, and social connection and recovery from the stress of the day (Ganter, 2025). For young adults who face numerous academic, occupational, interpersonal, and social demands, intentional entertainment can provide psychological recovery and restoration of psychological resources (Baskaran & Israel, 2023).

Recently however, psychological outcomes have begun to be examined in the context of the quality of media use and engagement rather than the quantity of time spent with media. Problematic media use indicates poorer overall well-being; however, the outcomes vary depending on the media type and the dimension of well-being assessed (Edgerly, 2017). Relatively low engagement in gaming for example has not shown a direct, negative impact on sleep; in contrast, more intensive gaming (e.g. compulsive gaming) negatively impacts sleep quality and sleep timing in a significant manner (Davies, 2007).

Finally, consumption of entertainment media should be viewed in the context of a variety of positive effects that include relaxation, pleasure, feelings of accomplishment, social connection, and restoration of psychological resources, as well as negative effects that will occur as a result of media consumption beyond what is moderate and/or poorly controlled. The impact of media on individuals depends on how they use and engage with it. Problems may arise when media use begins to interfere with important daily activities such as sleep, social relationships, education, work, or other personal responsibilities (Sihvonen, 2015).

Psychological Well-Being Among Young Adults

Psychological well-being is an aspect of psychology that looks at positive functioning and goes beyond the simple absence of pathology. According to Winefield et al. (1992), psychological well-being consists of six components or dimensions: autonomy, mastery of one's environment, growth, acceptance, and healthy relationships and presence of purpose. (Haworth & Hill, 1992) posited that psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept that looks at the functioning of individuals in their lives in a meaningful and effective way as opposed to transient positive moods or feelings of happiness. Although contemporary psychology has embraced the notion of psychological well-being to include positive feelings, personal growth and purposeful living, and mastery of the life one has shaped (Conner et al., 2017), the concept of psychological well-being is especially relevant for young adults, when the digital environment has been integrated into their leisure, communication, and social activities (Roberts & Bengtson, 1993). The relationship between digital media and psychological well-being is an intricate one, for the most part because the existing body of research has focused more on distressing psychological conditions such as depression, anxiety, distress, loneliness, and sleep problems, rather than positive psychological functioning. It has been found that general social media uses negative or weak correlations with well-being, while problematic or specific patterns of use correlate strongly with psychological problems (Fatima et al., 2021). That being said, digital media may still promote psychological well-being by the positive psychological functions, social connections, and psychological relief they may provide. On the flip side, uncontrolled consumption of digital media may still promote psychological well-being at the expense of sleep, physical activity, and social and academic interaction (Gondoh et al., 2009).

Gaming research demonstrates that the type and level of engagement informs the outcomes of casual, excessive and addictive gaming. Casual gaming has different outcomes than excessive and addictive gaming. The media-induced

recovery perspective helps explain how entertainment media impacts psychological well-being. This perspective argues that relaxation media allows individuals to recover from the stress of the day by offering psychological detachment from the demands of the day. (Razini, 2018) documented that the relaxation of hedonic entertainment and psychological detachment were positively associated with eudaimonic entertainment and the subsequent recovery of vitality. Similarly, (Evans & Haworth, 1991) documented that media use recovering from stress caused by the psychological recovery need was justified, whereas demonstrated that media use can be a recovery activity. Consequently, the consumption of entertainment media supports psychological well-being; however, poorly regulated media engagement may have the opposite effect (De-Juanas et al., 2020).

Entertainment Media Consumption as a Predictor of Psychological Well-Being

Entertainment media consumption has a strong theoretical basis for predicting psychological well-being because entertainment activities can generate detachment, relaxation, mastery, and positive mood, and can strengthen social connections and help stress recovery (Bartsch & Oliver, 2016). Although this positive predictive relationship may be context-dependent on the quality and regulation of media use, which is negatively correlated with well-being (Eden et al., 2020), if entertainment meets recovery needs, it can sustain and enhance positive psychological functioning. The psychological impact of entertainment is likely different based on the form and pattern of consumption. While some digital games may even support mental health, sports with over-engagement may create gaming-induced sleep disruption and impairment (Wheeler, 2015). Similarly, research on social media has shown that active, passive, excessive, and even problematic engagement should not be equated with positive psychological well-being (Hamer et al., 2010). Entertainment media consumption is likely to predict positive psychological well-being, but its strength is likely to depend on the reason for and the frequency of entertainment consumption.

There is a significant gap in the research on positive psychological well-being of young adults caused by the primarily fragmented and narrowed focus on entertainment media consumption.

Many studies are strictly focused on specific social media platforms, or link use to symptoms of anxiety, depression, and poor sleep, or case relationships to problematic use (Horwood & Anglim, 2019). Entertainment consumption and positive psychology are often overlooked. This study aims to narrow the literature gap and examine the predictors of psychological well-being for young adults, as entertainment media is a predicted relaxation and psychological detachment, emotional recovery, and restoration of psychological resources after fulfilling daily obligations.

Research Gap

Despite growing research on digital media use and psychological outcomes, an important gap remains in understanding the specific relationship between entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being among young adults. Existing studies have largely focused on individual digital platforms, particularly social networking sites and problematic social media use, rather than examining entertainment media as a broader construct that includes streaming videos, films, television, music, online gaming, short-form entertainment, and other recreational content. Moreover, findings remain inconsistent, as recent meta-analytic evidence suggests that general or excessive social media use may have weak or nonsignificant associations with psychological well-being, whereas problematic use demonstrates stronger negative relationships with well-being (Kumari et al., 2022). Similarly, systematic reviews have reported predominantly negative associations between problematic social networking use and social well-being while identifying substantial variation in how media use and well-being are conceptualized and measured (Lippke et al., 2021). Recent evidence further highlights considerable heterogeneity across studies, indicating that psychological outcomes cannot be explained simply by the amount of time individuals spend using media (Park et al., 2014). Therefore, insufficient empirical evidence exists regarding entertainment media consumption as an integrated leisure-oriented media behaviour and its association with positive psychological well-being among young adults. The present study addresses this gap by examining the relationship between entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being, determining its impact, and assessing its predictive contribution to the psychological well-being of young adults (Ayobi et al., 2026).

Hypotheses

- H1:** There is a significant relationship between entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being among young adults.
- H2:** Entertainment media consumption significantly predicts psychological well-being among young adults.
- H3:** There is a significant difference in psychological well-being among young adults based on gender.
- H4:** There is a significant difference in psychological well-being among young adults across different age groups.

Conceptual Framework

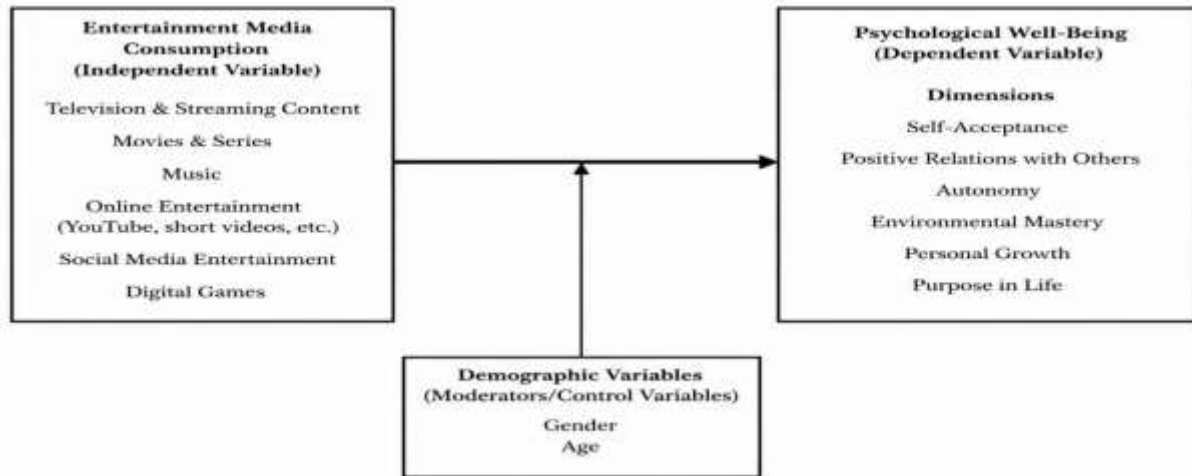


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The impact of entertainment media consumption on the psychological well-being of young adults in Pakistan was analyzed using a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. Given that data collection was facilitated through an administered questionnaire and answers were analyzed using critical statistics, this study adopted a quantitative approach. The cross-sectional design was justified since data were collected from the surveyed population at a single point in time, instead of multiple successive surveys. Given that this research study aimed to assess entertainment media consumption and the psychological wellbeing of young adults, and in the absence of complex interrelationships, a cross-sectional research design was deemed most appropriate.

Population of the Study

This study investigated young adults in the Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan. The study population included young adults pursuing or having completed any level of academic attainment, as well as young adults accessible through universities and colleges within the defined geographical boundaries. In the Punjab province, survey teams visited multiple educational networks in Faisalabad, Lahore, Multan and other major districts, while surveys in Sindh were done through the educational networks in Hyderabad, Karachi, Sukkur and other major districts. The selection of the Punjab and Sindh geographical regions was aimed at representing the two largest provinces in Pakistan, and at capturing the consumption of entertainment media by the young adult population in Pakistan across various urban centers and different educational institutions.

Target Audience

The participants in this study were young adults aged 17 to 25 years from Punjab and Sindh, Pakistan, who regularly used or were exposed to different forms of entertainment media. Participants needed to have used at least one of television programs, films, movies, digital streaming, videos, music, podcasts, other electronic games and/or social media, as well as other forms of digital entertainment. Young adults were selected as participants because entertainment media are typically a major component of adults' leisure and daily media usage, and in addition, previous studies have analyzed the link between entertainment and recovery, as well as between entertainment and well-being. For instance, in one study, Rieger et al. (2014) reported that the use of media connected both hedonic and eudaimonic forms of entertainment to media use, recovery, and a subsequent feeling of increased vitality.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was used to collect data. Respondents were contacted via educational institutions, university and college networks, social network sites, and online communication tools in Punjab and Sindh. Electronic convenience sampling was found to be the most appropriate sampling technique for this study since the questionnaire was distributed online and the participants' response depended upon their accessibility and their willingness to participate. Inclusion of respondents of different level and types of education along with participants of varied

geographical locations was done to have a broader representation of the young adult segment in the selected provinces. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were apprised of the academic nature of the research before they filled the questionnaire.

Sample Size

A total of 523 surveys were included in the analysis. 523 completed surveys were obtained from young adults living in Punjab and Sindh, Pakistan. Only complete surveys were included in the analysis, and responses not containing the information required for the proposed analyses were excluded. The sample of 523 participants was sufficient to conduct descriptive analysis, reliability testing, a Pearson correlation, regression analysis, an independent-samples t-test, and a one-way Analysis of Variance.

Data Collection

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire that built upon demographic data, a measure of entertainment media consumption, and psychological well-being. Consumption of entertainment media was measured by particular items pertaining to streaming television and movies, music, online entertainment, social media, and digital games. These items were adapted from methods that capture the frequency, duration, and type of entertainment consumed, including the hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions (Rieger et al., 2014; Oliver & Raney, 2011). Psychological well-being was measured with a shortened version of the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being, which includes the dimensions of self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and purpose in life, with a higher score reflecting a greater sense of psychological well-being. The questionnaire was adapted to measure the early adult population of Pakistan. Responses to each question were recorded on a Likert scale. The items that needed to be reverse scored were identified. Once this was done, a total psychological well-being score was computed. The completed version of the questionnaire was uploaded on to the online Google Forms platform and posted via the networks and social media pages of the researcher and colleagues, as well as several online forums used by eligible participants. Participation in the study was voluntary. Before completing the survey, participants were informed of the study goals.

Data Analysis

Data were collected, downloaded into Microsoft Excel, and organized for initial screening. After the preliminary analysis in Microsoft Excel, the data were imported into IBM SPSS Statistics for advanced statistics. Prior to the actual analysis, screening was performed to identify surveys that were not completed, incorrectly coded surveys, and questionnaires that contained values that were beyond the scope of the study. Descriptive statistics were performed to explain the study variables and the demographic elements of the study. The internal consistency between the different parts of the entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being scales was measured by Cronbach's alpha.

The direction, strength, and statistical significance of the relation between entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being of young adults was analyzed through Pearson's product-moment correlation. Additionally, simple linear regression was performed to assess entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being of young adults, where entertainment media consumption was the independent variable and psychological well-being was the dependent variable. The regression analysis was performed by exploring R, R², adjusted R², F-statistic, B, standardized β , t-value, and p-value. R² was interpreted as the relative importance of entertainment media consumption to psychological well-being.

Independent-samples t-test were conducted to explore psychological well-being among males and females. When the demographic factors consisted of more than two categories, one-way ANOVA was performed. In the case of a statistically significant result of ANOVA, multiple comparisons such as Tukey's HSD were performed to identify the groups that demonstrated significant mean differences. Statistical significance was set as $p < .05$.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 523)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	281	53.7
	Female	242	46.3
Age	18–21 years	142	27.2
	22–25 years	196	37.5
	26–29 years	123	23.5
	30–35 years	62	11.9

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Education Level	Intermediate	74	14.1
	Bachelor's	247	47.2
	Master's	154	29.4
	M.Phil./Ph.D.	48	9.2
Residence/Province	Punjab	315	60.2
	Sindh	208	39.8
Employment Status	Student	283	54.1
	Employed	157	30.0
	Self-employed	51	9.8
	Unemployed	32	6.1
Total		523	100.0

According to the analysis of this demographic data, there was somewhat of a balance regarding gender with 281 (53.7%) respondents being male and 242 (46.3%) being female. The age group of 22 up to 25 years (37.5%) was the largest respondent percentage, followed by 18 up to 21 years (27.2%), 26 up to 29 (23.5%), and 30 up to 35 (11.9%). The largest group, 47.2% of respondents, held a Bachelor's degree, followed by a Master's degree the next largest group with 29.4%. Of the respondents, 14.1% were at an intermediate level and 9.2% were at a M.Phil./Ph.D. level. Respondents were distributed geographically with 60.2% being from Punjab and 39.8% from Sindh. Respondents were classified into the following employment categories; students, 54.1%; employed, 30%; self-employed, 9.8%; and unemployed, 6.1%. In summary, the sample of 523 young adults, showed fair representation regarding gender, age, education level, geographical location, and employment status.

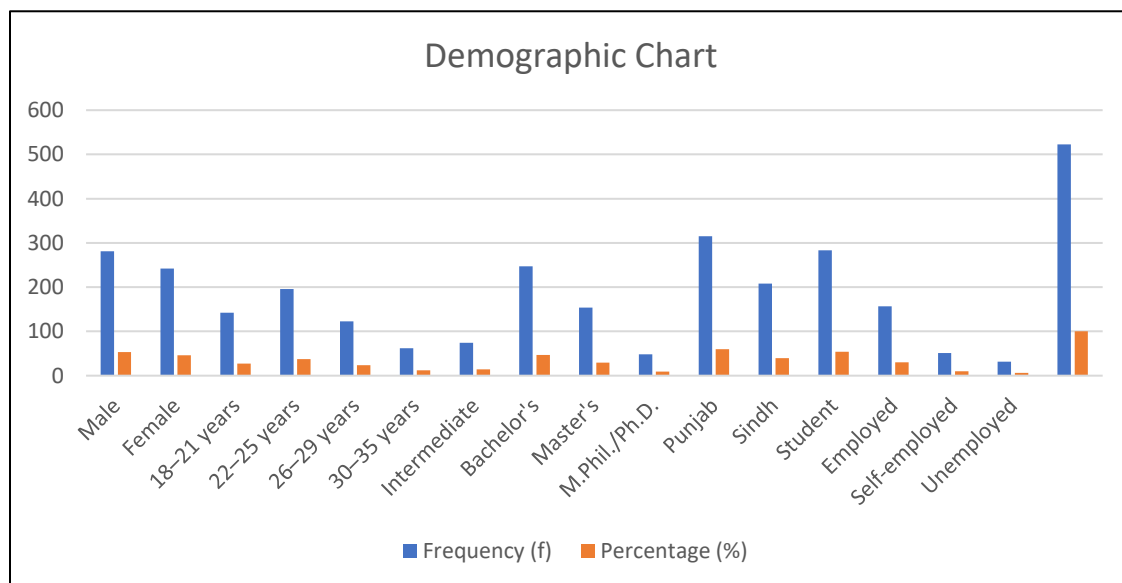


Fig. 2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: Reliability and Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 523)

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Entertainment Media Consumption	10	0.918	3.71	0.68
Psychological Well-Being	18	0.934	3.76	0.64
Overall Scale	28	0.941	3.74	0.61

According to the analysis of reliability, entertainment media consumption had excellent internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.918, mean score of 3.71 and standard deviation (SD) of 0.68. Mental well being also had

excellent internal consistency with a value of Cronbach's alpha of 0.934, mean score of 3.76, and SD of 0.64. The total questionnaire also had excellent internal consistency with a value of Cronbach's alpha of 0.941 with a mean score of 4.36 and SD of 0.61. Overall, it may be concluded that the study variables were sufficiently consistent and reliable for use in future studies.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis between Entertainment Media Consumption and Psychological Well-Being (N = 523)

Variables	Entertainment Media Consumption	Psychological Well-Being
Entertainment Media Consumption	1	0.472**
Psychological Well-Being	0.472**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	—	<0.001
N	523	523

Note. $p < .01$ (2-tailed).

Pearson correlation analysis showed a positive relationship between entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being for young adults ($r = 0.472$, $p < .001$, $N = 523$). The correlation coefficient showed a positive relationship, where increased consumption of entertainment media correlated with higher levels of psychological well-being. The positive relationship was statistically significant, suggesting the relationship could not be explained by chance. Thus, our results aligned with our hypothesis on entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being among young adults.

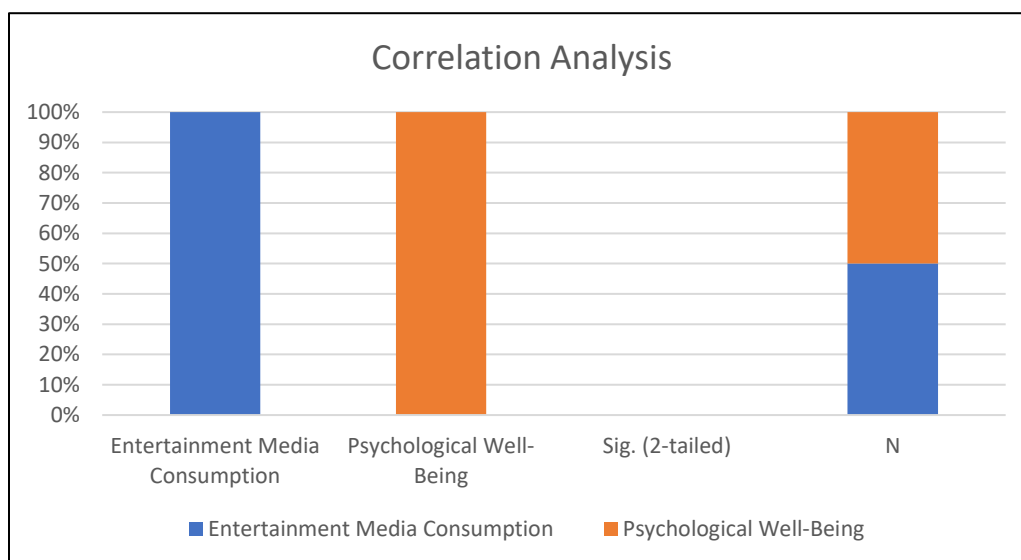


Fig. 3 Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Entertainment Media Consumption on Psychological Well-Being (N = 523)

Model Summary

R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.472	0.223	0.221	0.566

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	42.817	1	42.817	133.55	<0.001

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Residual	167.04	521	0.321		
Total	209.857	522			

Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	2.041	0.150	—	13.61	<0.001
Entertainment Media Consumption	0.463	0.040	0.472	11.55	<0.001

The results of the simple linear regression analysis revealed that entertainment media consumption was a positive predictor of psychological well-being for young adults ($\beta = 0.472$, $B = 0.463$, $t = 11.55$, $p < .001$). The model resulted in an R^2 value of 0.223, meaning entertainment media consumption accounted for approximately 22.3% of the variance in psychological well-being. Overall, the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 521) = 133.55$, $p < .001$, meaning entertainment media consumption accounted for a significant variance in the prediction of psychological well-being. Thus, the results of the regression analysis supported our hypothesis on entertainment media consumption and psychological well-being.

Table 5: Independent-Samples t-Test of Psychological Well-Being by Gender (N = 523)

Gender	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Male	281	3.68	0.65
Female	242	3.85	0.61

Test	Levene's F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed	1.842	0.175	-2.98	521	0.003	-0.17

The results of an independent samples t-test suggest that there was a statistically significant difference in psychological well-being among male versus female young adults, $t(521) = -2.98$, $p = .003$. In this sample, females reported a higher psychological well-being than males ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.61$) versus ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.65$). Levene's test was non-significant, $F = 1.842$, $p = .175$. Equal variances were assumed. These results suggest that in this sample psychological well-being was differentiated among males versus females.

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA of Psychological Well-Being across Age Groups (N = 523)

Descriptive Statistics

Age Group	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
18–21 years	142	3.61	0.64
22–25 years	196	3.78	0.60
26–29 years	123	3.86	0.61
30–35 years	62	4.01	0.58
Total	523	3.76	0.64

ANOVA Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.274	3	2.758	7.02	<0.001
Within Groups	201.583	519	0.388		
Total	209.857	522			

Post-Hoc Test (Tukey HSD)

Comparison	Mean Difference	Sig.
18–21 vs. 22–25	-0.17	0.071
18–21 vs. 26–29	-0.25	0.006
18–21 vs. 30–35	-0.40	<0.001

Comparison	Mean Difference	Sig.
22–25 vs. 26–29	-0.08	0.635
22–25 vs. 30–35	-0.23	0.048
26–29 vs. 30–35	-0.15	0.321

Results from a one-way ANOVA showed that psychological well-being was significantly different across the 4 age groups, $F(3, 519) = 7.02$, $p < .001$. The individuals in the age group of 30–35 years reported the highest mean psychological well-being ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.58$), while the 18–21 years group reported the lowest mean ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 0.64$). The significant ANOVA result indicated that at least one of the age groups was different from the rest. The results of the Tukey HSD post hoc analysis indicated that psychological well-being differed significantly among the 18–21 versus the 26–29 ($p = .006$) and the 18–21 versus the 30–35 ($p < .001$) and the 22–25 versus the 30–35 ($p = .048$) groups. The other comparisons were not significant. These results suggest that in the sample studied, psychological well-being was differentiated among the various age groups of young adults.

DISCUSSION

This study shows that entertainment media use and the psychological well-being of young adults in Pakistan correlate positively at $r = .472$, $p < .001$. We can draw the conclusion that people who tend to engage more with entertainment media also show a higher level of psychological well-being. Furthermore, it was shown that entertainment media use can be accounted for in predicting psychological well-being and that entertainment media use explains 22.3% of psychological well-being ($R^2 = .223$, $p < .001$). (Ostic et al., 2021) mentioned that media engagements fulfill emotional and social recovery needs, which makes the viewpoint that recreational media engagements can be therapeutic much more justified. Moderate media use can also reduce the negative effects of stress and increase enjoyment (Janicke-Bowles et al., 2022). It is important to distinguish between normal and problem media use, since previous studies suggest that media use can be therapeutic as long as media use is moderate, while excessive media use is related to poorer well-being (Pathak-Shelat, 2014). Overall, the literature points to entertainment media having neutral effects, while negative effects depend on the intensity, timing, and pattern of media use (Anshida et al., 2025).

The study shows that psychological well-being differs not only by age but also by gender. Females showed a higher level of well-being than males. The level of well-being was highest in the 30–35 age group, while the level of well-being in the 18–21 age group was the lowest. The findings can be attributed to the fact that different demographic groups may differ in social support, coping, emotional state, degree of autonomy, personal agency, and mastery alongside different levels of accountability and maturity (Lüders, 2025). Research has described similar factors, including age and gender, in relation to how media is linked to psychological outcomes, and it has documented adverse social well-being consequences of problematic social networking on young adults (Jiang et al., 2026).

The research contributes to the literature as it considers entertainment media within a broader context than specific platforms or activities. The results conclusively pinpoint the quality, objectives, content and context of engagement as important factors for the psychological effects of entertainment. Entertainment that supports relaxation, engagement, and emotional regulation may lead to psychological well-being. Compared to the former example, problematic media use, which encroaches upon and disrupts social engagement and sleep, should be avoided (Ong et al., 2024). Entertainment media should be studied within a psychological and social context, as employment and other activities are equally important for well-being. Entertainment media should be incorporated into the context of a social psychological framework.

CONCLUSION

Entertainment media consumption was positively associated with psychological well-being among young adults. Young adults who consumed entertainment media were found to score higher on psychological well-being, with entertainment media consumption explaining a significant proportion of psychological well-being. Entertainment media consumption may help young adults relax, help them regulate their emotions, and detach psychologically while also allowing young adults to engage socially and be entertained.

Although entertainment media has benefits, it seems to be more about finding that balance and using it for a reason rather than just increasing how much is consumed. The study also showed that psychological well-being differs greatly across different demographic segments, and especially across gender and age segments. Women's psychological well-being was higher than men's in our study, and older young adults had more psychological well-being than the younger group. It is important to note that entertainment media consumption is one of the many factors associated with psychological well-being, but it is not the only factor. Well-being is the outcome of several personal and social factors. Entertainment media can be used in balance with the other important aspects of young adults' lives. Young adults

have many competing demands like work, school, relationships, and personal demands; therefore, a balance should be struck.

Future Implications

Research on the effects of entertainment media on psychological well-being is incomplete and requires further explanation. These studies should not be limited to the previous formats of entertainment media, but should include social media, online videos, gaming, music, television, and streaming. Current studies need to expand beyond the simplicity of entertainment media usage by presenting various formats of entertainment media and stating the reasons entertainment media is used. Previous research has shown that the use of entertainment media has psychological and physiological consequences that are worth studying. The focus of longitudinal research should be on consequences of entertainment media on general well-being and psychological consequences. Self-esteem, positive coping, relaxation, and social support should also be included. It is important to understand the Psychosocial Effects of entertainment media on developed and developing countries, especially Pakistan, to establish a reference point on the entertainment media usage constraints and psychosocial outcomes.

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