

Chapter 1

The Social Media Psyche: Modeling Mental Disturbance in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

Amid the pandemic, people express the cause and consequences of their mental disturbance on social media platforms with ease. The causal analysis through cause detection, cause inference, and cause classification, and identifying consequences such as loneliness and low self-esteem expedite the interpersonal risk factors. The interpersonal risk factors of thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness trigger clinical depression, which if left untreated advances to suicidal ideation and self-harm. The mental health practitioners are reliable on mental health triaging and motivational interviewing. To this end, this chapter models the evolution of mental disturbance through self-reported texts generated by users suffering with mental disturbance. The clinical psychology theories on interpersonal needs questionnaire (INQ) supporting a theory on thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness is followed by extracting causes and consequences in a given text.

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA PSYCHE

With increasing concerns with social and mental wellbeing, *social determinants of health* plays a pivotal role in society now. Social determinants of health (SDOH) refers to the key factors which are responsible for wellbeing of a person and to achieve the SDOH 2030 goals, there is an accelerated growth of both academic and industrial growth to address the impact of human behavior. Social behavior of a person underlying social interactions, induces the need of *interpersonal skills*. The skills and actions that enable people to interact, cooperate, and communicate effectively with others in social or professional settings are known as interpersonal skills. People meet their *interpersonal needs* by honing their ability to connect with others, through enduring relationships, and communicating clearly by developing strong interpersonal skills. Interpersonal needs is the psychological practice for meaningful social interactions

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and relationships such as social support, intimacy, belongingness, and affection. Presence of these needs (met) contributes to the feelings of happiness, fulfillment, and well-being, and their absence (unmet) arouses the feelings of loneliness, isolation, and distress.

With increasing complexities in life, especially in the post COVID-19 era, increase in the demand of a clinical psychologist/ mental health therapist has revealed the limitation of healthcare supply (Garg *et al.*, 2023). According to the World Health Organization, approximately 280 million people in the world have depression. Mental health problems are considered as a social stigma/ taboo. People with mental health are considered not sick enough to provide healthcare and thus, are often ignored. Amid *social distancing*, people prefer disclosing their thoughts and share their experiences on social media platforms and through other digital media, with ease. As a result, the digital media, despite its ethical issues (Anshari *et al.*, 2022), has become a more reliable and insightful resource to uncover latent mental disturbance which may lead to prospective chronic disease, if left untreated. To this end, it becomes seemingly important to identify the potential resources to extract potential data that is required to solve the elevating problem of severe mental disorders.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND MENTAL HEALTH

The emerging global phenomenon of social media use suggests novel insights about social cognitive processes as it offers latent indicators of processing, remembering, and using contextual information by online users to explain and predict their own behavior and that of others (Meshi *et al.*, 2015). Thus, social cognition, being a part of the psychological aspect, enables the individuals to understand human perspectives and their behavior towards each other. This journey of perception to decision-making follows a three-step process as examined via the lens of cognitive functionality: (i) social perception, (ii) social understanding, (iii) social decision-making (Arioli *et al.*, 2018). Perception is the state of being aware of something through our five senses: vision, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and the sixth-one being common sense. Perception plays a vital part in mental health as it determines how individuals understand and respond to diverse situations, experiences, and stimuli which facilitates the development of positive and adaptive perceptions that may lead to improved mental health outcomes. Moreover, mental disturbance affects how we think, feel, and act, thereby determining the stress handling, making healthy choices and highlighting the importance of mental wellbeing. One of the major psychology-grounded theory on evolution of suicide risk from mental disturbance is based on the impact on interpersonal needs of a person.

Interpersonal Risk Factors: Evolution of Suicide Risk

As discussed above, the interpersonal needs of a person, if left unmet, raise serious concerns of loneliness, isolation, and low self-esteem. Such concerns of loneliness and low self-esteem, if left untreated, may elevate to interpersonal risk factors such as thwarted burdensomeness and perceived belongingness (Sommerfeld *et al.*, 2019). A well-established theory in clinical psychology 'Interpersonal Theory of Suicide' was given by Thomas Joiner in 2005 (Joiner *et al.*, 2005), suggests that two factors are critical in the development of suicidal ideation: (i) Thwarted Burdensomeness (TBe), and (ii) Perceived Belongingness (PBU) which are examined using the Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ).

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