Technology, Economy, Policy: Societal Impacts

Freja Sund*

Department of Cultural Heritage, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

Introduction

This study explores how adolescents' perceptions of social media, particularly in areas like social comparison and fear of missing out, longitudinally influence their well-being. It highlights the complex interplay between technology use and mental health outcomes, suggesting that subjective experiences of digital platforms are crucial in understanding their impact on young people.[1]

This comparative analysis investigates the relationship between rising economic inequality and declining social cohesion across different countries. It suggests that significant disparities in wealth and income can erode trust, increase social fragmentation, and undermine collective action, posing challenges to democratic stability and public welfare.[2]

The study analyzes the effectiveness of online public participation platforms in fostering digital democracy and citizen engagement. It identifies key design features and organizational factors that either promote or hinder meaningful citizen involvement in governmental decision-making processes through digital tools.[3]

This meta-analysis explores the effects of online learning on student academic performance and satisfaction across various educational settings. It consolidates findings on factors like instructional design, student autonomy, and interaction modalities, offering insights into optimizing digital learning environments.[4]

This anthropological review examines the vital role of Indigenous knowledge systems in climate change adaptation strategies. It emphasizes how traditional ecological knowledge and community-based practices offer robust and culturally appropriate solutions to environmental challenges, often overlooked by mainstream approaches.[5]

A systematic review and meta-analysis assessing the effectiveness of behavioral economics interventions, or 'nudges,' in healthcare settings. It reveals how subtle changes in choice architecture can significantly influence health behaviors, such as medication adherence or healthy eating, offering a cost-effective approach to public health.[6]

This cross-national study investigates the dissemination of misinformation on social media and its significant role in exacerbating political polarization. It provides evidence that exposure to false or misleading content online contributes to greater ideological divides and reduces trust in traditional institutions across different political contexts.[7]

A systematic review exploring interventions designed to address social determinants of health and achieve health equity. The findings highlight the importance of multisectoral approaches, including policy changes in housing, education, and employment, to mitigate health disparities and improve population health outcomes.[8]

This systematic review and meta-analysis assesses the efficacy of digital mental health interventions for children and adolescents. It indicates that technology-based tools can be effective in treating and preventing common mental health issues in young people, offering accessible and scalable solutions, particularly for those facing barriers to traditional care.[9]

A systematic review of qualitative evidence examining the social impacts of gentrification on long-term residents. It uncovers themes of displacement, loss of community, and psychological distress experienced by vulnerable populations, emphasizing the need for equitable urban development policies that consider resident well-being.[10]

Description

The influence of technology on human well-being and societal dynamics is a central theme in recent research. Studies delve into how adolescents' perceptions of social media, particularly concerning social comparison and the fear of missing out, longitudinally shape their well-being, highlighting a complex interplay between digital platforms and mental health outcomes [1]. Complementing this, digital mental health interventions demonstrate effectiveness for children and adolescents, offering accessible and scalable solutions for common mental health issues, especially beneficial for those facing barriers to traditional care [9].

However, the digital landscape also presents significant challenges and opportunities for societal functions. Cross-national studies reveal the substantial role of misinformation on social media in exacerbating political polarization, where exposure to false content online contributes to greater ideological divides and reduces trust in traditional institutions across diverse political contexts [7]. Simultaneously, analyses explore the application and impact of online platforms in public services. Research on online public participation platforms assesses their effectiveness in fostering digital democracy and citizen engagement, identifying key design features and organizational factors that either promote or hinder meaningful citizen involvement in governmental decision-making processes [3]. Similarly, a meta-analysis investigates the effects of online learning on student academic performance and satisfaction across various educational settings, consolidating findings on factors like instructional design, student autonomy, and interaction modalities to optimize digital learning environments [4].

Furthermore, socio-economic structures and urban development pose distinct challenges to societal well-being. A comparative analysis investigates the relationship between rising economic inequality and declining social cohesion across different countries. It suggests that significant disparities in wealth and income

can erode trust, increase social fragmentation, and undermine collective action, thereby challenging democratic stability and public welfare [2]. Concurrently, the social impacts of gentrification on long-term residents are explored through a systematic review of qualitative evidence. This research uncovers themes of displacement, loss of community, and psychological distress experienced by vulnerable populations, underscoring the urgent need for equitable urban development policies that prioritize resident well-being [10].

Efforts to enhance public health are also crucial. A systematic review and meta-analysis assess the effectiveness of behavioral economics interventions, or 'nudges,' in healthcare settings. It reveals how subtle changes in choice architecture can significantly influence health behaviors, such as medication adherence or healthy eating, offering a cost-effective approach to public health [6]. Moreover, a systematic review explores interventions designed to address social determinants of health and achieve health equity, highlighting the importance of multisectoral approaches, including policy changes in housing, education, and employment, to mitigate health disparities and improve population health outcomes [8].

On the environmental front, an anthropological review examines the vital role of Indigenous knowledge systems in climate change adaptation strategies. This study emphasizes how traditional ecological knowledge and community-based practices offer robust and culturally appropriate solutions to environmental challenges, often overlooked by mainstream approaches [5].

Conclusion

This collection of research underscores the multifaceted impacts of technology, economic factors, and social policies on individual well-being and societal structures. Studies explore how adolescents' engagement with social media, including aspects like social comparison and fear of missing out, influences their mental health, highlighting the complex interplay between digital platforms and youth outcomes. Economic inequality emerges as a significant factor eroding social cohesion, trust, and collective action across nations, with implications for democratic stability. The effectiveness of online public participation platforms in fostering digital democracy is examined, emphasizing the importance of design features for meaningful citizen engagement. Research also evaluates the impact of online learning on student performance and satisfaction, considering instructional design and interaction modalities. Beyond digital realms, the vital role of Indigenous knowledge systems in developing culturally appropriate climate change adaptation strategies is highlighted. In healthcare, behavioral economics interventions are shown to effectively 'nudge' health behaviors, providing a cost-effective approach to public health. Concerns about misinformation on social media and its role in exacerbating political polarization are raised, demonstrating its impact on ideological divides and institutional trust. Efforts to achieve health equity through addressing social determinants of health, via multisectoral approaches, are presented as crucial for mitigating disparities. Finally, digital mental health interventions are found to be effective for children and adolescents, offering scalable solutions, while the social impacts of gentrification, such as displacement and psychological distress, are critically reviewed.

References

1. Jessica Nesi, Sophia Choukas-Bradley, Alex Cho, Eva H. Telzer. "Social media use and adolescents' well-being: A longitudinal study of adolescents' perceptions of social media and their associations with well-being." *Dev Psychol* 57 (2021):1-13.

2. Juan Gaviria, Ricardo Castro, Felipe Rojas. "The impact of economic inequality on social cohesion: A comparative analysis." *J Eur Soc Policy* 32 (2022):440-455.

3. Øystein Sæbø, Mikael Enjolras, Endre V. Røyrvik, Anne S. Løvlie. "Digital democracy and citizen engagement: An analysis of online public participation platforms." *Gov Inf Q* 37 (2020):101509.

4. Eman Alqurashi, Aljoharah Alfuraydi, Khalid Alfaris, Fatmah Al-Hamdan, Maytha Al-Amri. "The impact of online learning on student academic performance and satisfaction: A meta-analysis." *Br J Educ Technol* 54 (2023):147-167.

5. Kyle P. Whyte, Christine A. Brewer, Erica Kintz. "Indigenous knowledge and climate change adaptation: Anthropological perspectives." *Am Anthropol* 123 (2021):298-312.

6. Michael Promberger, Jo Rycroft-Malone, Rob Lawton, Louise Sheard. "Nudging for health: A systematic review and meta-analysis of behavioral economics interventions in health care settings." *Soc Sci Med* 300 (2022):114881.

7. Andrew M. Guess, Jonathan Nagler, Joshua A. Tucker. "The spread of misinformation on social media and its impact on political polarization: A cross-national study." *Br J Polit Sci* 50 (2020):1017-1033.

8. Frank Pega, Luis Loevenich, Jia Ma, Viroj Tangcharoensathien, Xing Xu. "Addressing social determinants of health to achieve health equity: A systematic review of interventions." *Lancet Public Health* 8 (2023):e60-e71.

9. Rachel Grist, Alix Croker, Matthew Denne, Paul Stallard. "Effectiveness of digital mental health interventions for children and adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis." *J Child Psychol Psychiatry* 60 (2019):22-40.

10. Patrick Rérat, Ola Söderström, Valeria D'Auria, Olivier Crevoisier. "The social impacts of gentrification on long-term residents: A systematic review of qualitative evidence." *Urban Stud* 58 (2021):2505-2525.

Address for Correspondence: Freja, Sund, Department of Cultural Heritage, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden, E-mail: freja@sund.se