

# Effect of Technology-Driven Environment on Indian Millennials: Examining Its Effect on Social Psychology and Authentic Self Representations

Tanushree Sharma and Maithili Ganjoo

*Department of Media Studies and Humanities,  
Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad, Haryana, India*

**Keywords:** Indian Millennials, Social Media, Behaviour, Technology, Social Psychology, Authenticity.

**Abstract:** India's economy is swiftly advancing, positioning itself among the world's fastest-growing economies. Moreover, millennials constitute a substantial proportion of the populace, having been raised in a different environment compared to that of their predecessors. Millennials are surrounded by technology and social media, and this has had a profound impact on the way that they interact with each other. Recently, the proliferation of digital technology and social media platforms has significantly impacted the way millennials communicate, interact, and express themselves. While technology has enabled instant gratification, connection, and convenience, it has also raised concerns about the impact on social and psychological wellness, resulting in more than one identity – digital and offline. The current research study aims to investigate the effects of the technology-driven environment on the social psychology and authentic self-representations of Indian millennials. This research paper will use a mixed methodology where both quantitative and qualitative tools will be used. A survey will be conducted among online millennials from tier-one cities in India. The findings of the study are expected to provide insight into the effects of technology-driven environments on the social psychology and authenticity of Indian millennials. The study hypothesizes that overabundant use of technology and social media can lead to a dual identity, raising the issue of authenticity of self-representation. Conversely, the study also hypothesizes that technology can provide opportunities for self-expression, connection, and personal growth, leading to positive self-representation.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, technology has transformed the world and has become an integral part of our lives. Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, have grown up in a world that has been influenced by technological advancements. The emergence of social media, smartphones, and the internet has revolutionized our modes of interaction, employment, and communication. India, akin to numerous other nations, has experienced this transformative shift and has experienced rapid technological advancements in recent years, which has had a significant impact on the social psychology of Indian millennials. Social psychology refers to the study of how individuals think, feel, and behave in social situations. Millennials have witnessed the evolution of the internet, the rise of social media, and the advent of smartphones. As a result, their behavior,

beliefs, and attitudes toward the world have been shaped by technology to a large extent. The effect of technology on social psychology has been widely studied in the literature. According to a study by Hampton et al. (2011), the usage of social media is correlated with increased social capital but also with increased stress and anxiety. A paper by Namita Nagpal and Sarvesh Dutt Tripathi highlights the shift occurring in the media and communication habits of young people. Another study by Lin et al. (2016) proved that the use of social media is related to decreased life satisfaction, while Lee et al. (2014) found that social media use is associated with increased loneliness and depression.

Within the Indian context, research conducted by Parthasarathy and Krishnan (2019) uncovered a relationship between social media utilization and heightened self-esteem and life satisfaction among college students in India. Similarly, Sood and Sharma (2018) revealed that Indian youth engaging with

social media exhibited increased tendencies towards narcissism and aggression. The impact of technology on self-presentation has been extensively explored in literature.

## 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The foundation for this article's theoretical framework incorporates various fundamental concepts from the realm of social psychology. Kurt Lewin, who is regarded as the initiator of modern social psychology, defined it as a branch of psychology that investigates how individuals interact with others and are impacted by them in social circumstances. Its primary objective is to grasp how the social environment in which individuals operate molds their thoughts, emotions, and actions. A fundamental theory in social psychology is social identity theory, pioneered in the 1970s by Henri Tajfel and John Turner. This theory posits that individuals shape their self-concept based on the groups to which they belong, encompassing factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or occupation. Another significant concept in social psychology is social influence, which elucidates how others impact individuals within their social milieu. Social influence manifests through various mechanisms, including conformity, obedience, and persuasion. A seminal study illustrating social influence is the Milgram experiment, conducted by Milgram in 1963, showcasing the authority's ability to compel individuals to engage in harmful actions.

Another concept is the social comparison theory by Festinger (1954), which suggests that individuals evaluate themselves by comparing themselves to others. In a technology-driven environment, social comparison is facilitated through social media platforms, where individuals can easily compare themselves to their peers and other individuals who are presented as aspirational figures.

## 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

The world we live in today is a technology-driven environment. With the advent of the internet and the proliferation of social media, technology has profoundly impacted the way humans communicate. This has had a significant impact on the lives of millennials, whose world is immensely different from that of previous generations. This thematic literature

review examines the effect of a technology-driven environment on Indian millennials and how it affects their social psychology and authentic self-representation.

### 3.1 Technology and Social Psychology

The field of social psychology has been considerably affected by the usage of technology. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have become an inseparable aspect of millennials' daily routines. These platforms enable individuals to communicate with others and express their emotions, viewpoints, and experiences. Nonetheless, social media usage has been associated with numerous adverse repercussions, such as heightened emotions of depression, loneliness, and anxiety (Hunt et al., 2018). One of the factors behind this is that social media platforms often encourage a culture of comparison, where individuals evaluate their lives to the filtered and idealized versions of others that are displayed online (Kross et al., 2013). This can give rise to sentiments of inadequacy and diminished self-esteem as individuals strive to measure up to impractical expectations.

Social media has ingrained itself as a ubiquitous aspect of modern society, boasting a global user base exceeding 3.8 billion individuals (Kemp, 2022). Research has consistently highlighted associations between social media usage and diverse psychological impacts, including heightened levels of loneliness and depression (Lin et al., 2016), as well as diminished overall well-being (Twenge & Campbell, 2019).

In addition to social media, technology has also influenced the way in which people form and maintain relationships. Online dating platforms have become increasingly popular, with over 30% of American adults having used these platforms (Pew Research Center, 2020). Furthermore, technology has revolutionized individuals' perception and engagement with their surroundings.

To sum it, the literature on technology and social psychology highlights the ways in which technology has transformed the social landscape.

### 3.2 Self-Representations

Self-portrayals on social media have evolved into a pervasive aspect of online interaction. Individuals utilize these platforms to showcase their identities and craft narratives that mirror their personal and communal personas. The concept of genuine self-representation pertains to the degree to which

individuals authentically and accurately depict themselves to others.

Research has revealed that social media platforms influence individuals' genuine self-representations. For instance, a study conducted by Toma and Hancock (2013) observed that individuals often portray themselves in a more favorable light on social media platforms compared to their real-life personas. However, the pressure to create a positive image online can also lead to the creation of false or exaggerated identities, known as "catfishing" (Drouin et al., 2015). This can have negative consequences for both the individual and those they interact with online.

One perspective on self-representations on social media is that they are often idealized and curated to present an aspirational version of the self (Zhao et al., 2008). Individuals use social media to create a positive impression of themselves, which can lead to social comparison and the formation of unrealistic expectations for themselves (Fardouly et al., 2015). Research has also suggested that this self-representation can have detrimental effects on individuals' mental health, particularly when comparing themselves to others (Kross et al., 2013).

An alternative viewpoint regarding self-representation on social media suggests its potential to empower individuals who have historically been marginalized or silenced (Boyd, 2010). Social media platforms provide a space for individuals to express their viewpoints and connect with others who share similar interests, fostering the creation of communities and the cultivation of collective identities (Miller & Slater, 2000).

### 3.3 Effects on Indian Millennials

The influence of a technology-driven environment on Indian millennials represents a burgeoning area of investigation. While relatively nascent, research indicates that technology usage significantly impacts the social psychology and genuine self-representations of this demographic.

Social media platforms have seamlessly integrated into the daily routines of Indian millennials, with platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok enjoying particular popularity (Hans et al., 2021). Nevertheless, social media usage among Indian millennials has also been associated with several adverse outcomes. For instance, research by Chakraborty et al. (2018) identified a correlation between excessive social media use and heightened feelings of anxiety and depression among Indian college students.

Regarding genuine self-representation, studies reveal that Indian millennials exhibit self-presentation bias on social media platforms. Yadav et al. (2020) discovered that Indian college students tend to portray themselves in a more positive light on social media compared to real-life scenarios.

Alternatively, social media is perceived to aid in identity development and self-expression among Indian millennials (Kaur & Kumar, 2016). These platforms offer a medium for sharing experiences, beliefs, and values, fostering avenues for self-discovery and expression (Sharma & Sharma, 2020).

Social media has also impacted Indian millennials' political engagement. Research has shown that social media has become a primary source of political news and information and has played a role in shaping Indian millennials' political views (Chadha & Kaur, 2020).

## 4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study attempts to serve two purposes: first, to investigate the effect of a technology-driven environment on the social psychology of Indian millennials (IM), and second, to understand the concept of self-representation in terms of millennials' social behavior.

The three objectives formulated based on gap areas identified from the literature review are

1. To assess the influence of technology, specifically IM.
2. To test the extent of realization of the impact
3. To examine the self-representation and the authenticity of IM

### 4.1 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are developed on the basis of the review of the literature:

*Hypothesis 1:* Excessive use of technology and social media can lead to a dual identity, raising the issue of authenticity of self-representation

*Hypothesis 2:* Technology can provide opportunities for self-expression, connection, and personal growth, leading to positive self-representation.

### 4.2 Research Design

The primary objective of this investigation was to analyze the interplay between technology and social psychology, along with the self-portrayal tendencies observed among the Indian millennial populace.

Specifically, it aimed to ascertain whether such usage led to the emergence of a dual identity, raising concerns about the genuineness of self-portrayal, or whether technology provided avenues for self-expression, connection, and personal development, consequently fostering positive self-presentation. To accomplish this goal, a mixed-method approach incorporating qualitative and quantitative methodologies was employed. Reliable questionnaires were administered to collect data from Indian millennials, with the individual serving as the primary unit of analysis.

### 4.3 Sample Recruitment

The present study focused on a group of Indian millennials who are technologically savvy and possess smartphones, residing in tier 1 and tier 2 cities. A total of 150 millennials were selected to participate in the study, and the survey questionnaire was used as the primary tool for data collection. Among the selected participants, 110 individuals responded to the survey questionnaire, representing a response rate of approximately 75%.

### 4.4 Analysis and Findings

The present study is done to find out the possible relationship between Indian Millennials and technology. The majority of the respondents of the study spend more than five hours on smartphones. This will help the study assess the extent of smartphone usage by Indian Millennials on a daily basis and the impact of technology on their daily routine and behavior. The major findings of the survey are summarized below in the survey.

**Social Behaviour, Social Identity and Self-Esteem.** The study revealed that a majority of urban Indian Millennials spend over four hours daily on social media, showcasing the significant role of technology in shaping social behavior and psychology. Participants reported varied impacts on their social lives, with 48% citing positive effects, 31% negative, and 21% neutral. Notably, 46% felt social media negatively influenced their self-esteem, while 31% reported positive effects. Additionally, 59% felt pressured to maintain a certain image online. Concerning comparison behaviors, 41% often compared themselves to others on social media, 30% did so sometimes, and 29% rarely or never did. These findings underscore the prevalence of social media usage among Indian Millennials and its complex interplay with their social interactions, self-

perception, and pressures to conform to online standards.

### 4.5 The Self and the Other

Inquiring about the accuracy of the online persona in representing the authentic self, the study found that 34% of respondents believed that their online persona accurately represents their authentic self, 43% believed it to be somewhat accurate, and 23% believed it to be inaccurate. This question aimed to explore respondents' perceptions of their online personas and their accuracy in representing their true identity, with responses indicating the extent to which respondents believed their online persona reflected their genuine self. These findings provide support for the study's hypothesis that the realization of a dual identity prompts questioning of self-behavior.

Regarding the use of technology to avoid face-to-face communication or social interaction, the study found that 57% of respondents reported having done so, while 29% did not, and 14% were neutral. These results indicate that technology is increasingly being viewed as a tool to circumvent face-to-face communication or social interaction.

### 4.6 Technology and Relationships

The study delved into the influence of technology, particularly smartphones and social media, on romantic relationships among Indian Millennials. It focused on assessing trends in romantic relationships, with specific emphasis on the impact of technology. Findings revealed that 40% of respondents use dating apps, indicating technology's significant role in partner search. Additionally, 80% felt pressured to maintain a certain image on these apps, highlighting potential social pressures. Over 75% believed technology both facilitated and hindered romantic relationships, indicating its complex role. Furthermore, 90% of respondents disapproved of "ghosting," emphasizing the importance of respectful communication in relationships. These insights underscore the nuanced impact of technology on romantic relationships, including its facilitation of partner search, imposition of social pressures, and its role in communication dynamics.

### 4.7 Technology and Mental Health

The study examined the impact of technology on the mental health, self-expression, communication patterns, and overall well-being of Indian Millennials. Results showed that nearly half of respondents

experienced anxiety or stress when disconnected from technology, indicating a dependence on it. Over 60% believed that social media and technology significantly affected their mental health, emphasizing its profound influence. More than half admitted to deleting social media posts due to concerns about others' perceptions, revealing the impact on self-expression and authenticity. Additionally, a majority felt pressured to respond immediately to notifications, indicating the role of technology in communication expectations and anxiety. Over 50% felt overwhelmed by the pervasive presence of technology in their lives, suggesting its impact on well-being and productivity. These findings established the complex relationship between technology and the mental and emotional well-being of Indian Millennials, highlighting both its benefits and challenges in contemporary society.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study delves into the intricate relationship between technology and the social psychology of Indian millennials, examining both interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics. Intrapersonally, it explores self-image, self-esteem, and psychological well-being, while interpersonal aspects cover social behavior, comparison, and psychology. Results indicate that millennials recognize the impact of technology on their daily lives, acknowledging both positive and negative effects. They feel compelled to conform to societal norms online, leading to self-censorship and concerns about self-presentation. Social media usage correlates with self-image and self-worth, highlighting its influence on identity construction. The study suggests that millennials navigate dual identities online and offline, impacting their behavior. Moreover, technology increasingly substitutes face-to-face interactions, affecting social behavior and relationships. Specifically focusing on romantic relationships, technology both facilitates and complicates their initiation and maintenance. Importantly, the study establishes a direct link between technology use and mental health, with respondents experiencing heightened anxiety and stress, largely due to constant notifications and digital overload. Indian millennials feel overwhelmed by the abundance of gadgets vying for their attention, disrupting their routines. In conclusion, the findings emphasize the multifaceted impact of technology on the social and psychological well-being of Indian

millennials, shedding light on identity formation, communication patterns, and mental health challenges in the digital age.

### 5.1 Limitations of the Study

This study on the effect of technology-driven environments on Indian millennials and their social psychology and self-representation has many limitations that must be considered. The study was conducted only in urban areas of India, which may limit its generalizability to rural areas or other countries with different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. The sample size was also relatively small.

Another limitation is that the study relied on self-reported measures to assess the impact of technology on social psychology and self-representation. Self-report measures can be influenced by response biases or social desirability biases, which may have impacted the accuracy of the results. Additionally, the study did not explore the specific types of technology that the participants were using, which could impact the findings.

Ultimately, the study did not explore potential variations in how technology affects social psychology or self-representation based on gender or socioeconomic status. Subsequent research endeavors could delve into these potential disparities to attain a more nuanced comprehension of technology's impact on diverse demographic groups.

## REFERENCES

- Banakou, D., Groten, R., & Slater, M. (2013). Illusory ownership of a virtual child body causes overestimation of object sizes and implicit attitude changes. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110(31), 12846-12851.
- Boyd, d. (2010). Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In *Networked self: Identity, community, and culture on social network sites* (pp. 39-58). Routledge.
- Chadha, M., & Kaur, J. (2020). Impact of Social Media on Youth: A Study on Indian Millennials. In *Advances in Indian Branding* (pp. 55-63). Springer.
- Chatterjee, S. (2019). The Impact of Social Media on Indian Society: A Review. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 14(3), 318-329.
- Duguay, S. (2016). Dressing up Cinderella: Interrogating authenticity claims on the mobile dating app Tinder. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(3), 351-367.
- Fardouly, J., Diedrichs, P. C., Vartanian, L. R., & Halliwell, E. (2015). Social comparisons on social media: The

- impact of Facebook on young women's body image concerns and mood. *Body image*, 13, 38-45.
- Jelenchick, L. A., Eickhoff, J. C., & Moreno, M. A. (2013). "Facebook depression?" Social networking site use and depression in older adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52(1), 128-130.
- Kaur, M., & Kumar, S. (2016). Impact of social media on Indian youth. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research*, 6(2), 14-18.
- Kemp, S. (2022). *Digital 2022: Global Overview Report*. We Are Social.
- Kross, E., Verduyn, P., Demiralp, E., Park, J., Lee, D. S., Lin, N., ... & Ybarra, O. (2013). Facebook use predicts declines in subjective well-being in young adults. *PLoS one*, 8(8), e69841.
- Lin, L. Y., Sidani, J. E., Shensa, A., Radovic, A., Miller, E., Colditz, J. B., Hoffman, B. L., & Primack, B. A. (2016). Association between social media use and depression among US young adults. *Depression and anxiety*, 33(4), 323-331.
- Marwick, A. E., & Boyd, D. (2011). To see and be seen: Celebrity practice on Twitter. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 17(2), 139-158.
- Miller, D., & Slater, D. (2000). *The Internet: An ethnographic approach*. Berg.
- Peck, T. C., Seinfeld, S., Aglioti, S. M., & Slater, M. (2013). Putting yourself in the skin of a black avatar reduces implicit racial bias. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 22(3), 779-787.
- Pew Research Center. (2020). 5 facts about online dating. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/02/06/5-facts-about-online-dating/>
- Ratan, R. A., Williams, D., Monnin, K., & Steinfield, C. (2015). Is virtual violence really violence? The effect of virtual violence on aggression. *Media Psychology*, 18(1), 138-157.
- Sharma, R., & Sharma, R. (2020). Impact of Social Media on Youth: A Study of Millennials in India. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 6(10), 192-196.
- Wang, Q., Chen, W., & Liang, Y. (2011). The effects of social media on college students. *Journal of Educational Technology Development and Exchange*, 4(1), 1-14
- Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S., & Martin, J. (2008). Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Computers in human behavior*, 24(5), 1816-.