

Analysis of the Psychological and Social Impacts of Digital Media Among Street Children

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Abstract: This study examines the psychological and social repercussions of digital media on street children. Participants were divided into two sub-samples using a descriptive method: the first consisted of 168 psychologists and social workers, while the second included 46 street children from Egypt; both completed a questionnaire on *Psychological and Social Repercussions of Digital Media*. Findings indicated that digital media was associated with increased psychological well-being and resilience among street children, with mean scores of 4.4 and 4.08 reported in the first sample. However, the social repercussions for the first sample were negative, particularly regarding social exclusion, which had a mean score of 4.5. Regarding legal immigration, the first sample reported a mean of 4.7. In the second sample, which focused on psychological factors, well-being and resilience were rated highly, with mean scores of 4.5 and 4.6, respectively. In terms of social outcomes, digital media was found to reduce rates of illegal immigration and social exclusion, with averages of 2.6 and 2.8, respectively.

Keywords: Digital Media - Street Children - Well-being - Psychological Resilience, Illegal Migration, and Social Exclusion.

1 Introduction

Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of street children worldwide, the World Health Organization estimates that there are approximately 100 million street children globally. These children are at a higher risk of malnutrition, infectious diseases, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and criminal or sexual exploitation [1].

Various terms such as “street children,” “homeless children,” or “homeless youth” are often used interchangeably. However, not all homeless children live on the streets. Many reside in hidden, temporary spaces, such as in friends’ or strangers’ homes or in hostels. For instance, the charity Shelter estimated that around 9,500 UK children spent Christmas in 2018 in temporary accommodations, often sharing limited facilities with unfamiliar residents [2].

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has led to legislative and policy changes worldwide to enhance children’s well-being. However, children connected to the streets continue to suffer from marginalization and various forms of violence. The issue is particularly prevalent in large, densely populated cities, creating substantial challenges for thousands of children worldwide [3].

Not all street-connected children are homeless. Some may work, socialize, or spend time in public areas but return to their families at night. The term “street-connected children” refers to children who depend on the street for their livelihood and/or daily activities, often forming strong attachments to public spaces like markets, stations, or parks, which become central to their identity and survival.

While the broader living conditions of street-connected children are well documented, fewer studies have explicitly focused on their relationship with digital media. This study aims to investigate how digital media, both as a tool for communication and as a source of information and emotional connection, may impact the well-being and resilience of these children. Given the increasing global integration of digital platforms into daily life, the lack of targeted research on how marginalized populations, such as street-connected children, engage with and benefit from these media represents a significant research gap [4], emphasizing the need for empirical studies that evaluate interventions from multiple

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perspectives, especially those of the children themselves. Although many governmental and non-governmental organizations aim to improve conditions for these children, these efforts often lack coordination, monitoring, and direct engagement with the children they intend to support. A growing global paradigm shift focuses on promoting the rights of street children. However, without well-structured, inclusive strategies that integrate children's voices, this shift remains fragile, as it fails to highlight protection and participation as core principles. Protection includes immediate safety from harm, while participation involves actively involving children in the design and evaluation of methods and activities [5].

This study addresses a crucial gap by examining the impact of digital media on the psychological and social well-being of street-connected children in Egypt. Specifically, it explores whether and how digital platforms might serve as a means of empowerment and inclusion for these youth, who often lack consistent access to supportive resources. The urgency of this research lies in the evolving digital landscape and the pressing need to understand its implications for vulnerable populations.

2 Study problem

Digital and social media have become powerful tools for communication among all members of society. Especially in light of the diversity of new digital media and their associated cultures, as well as the language and content [5], these platforms have become increasingly important. Previously, the relationship between street children and social media was poor [6]. It has often portrayed them as requiring help and sometimes as criminals who must be reported due to their harsh circumstances and the tragic situation on the streets. This has placed them in a significant psychological and social predicament in relation to society, a longstanding problem for this group [7].

Recent academic and institutional reports highlight a widening digital divide that continues to marginalize vulnerable populations, particularly street children. Although digital media have transformed communication and social interaction globally, these children remain largely excluded from meaningful and safe digital engagement. Their limited access to technology, lack of digital literacy, and exposure to online risks contribute to deepening psychological distress and social isolation. Consequently, the absence of inclusive digital strategies further reinforces their marginalization and restricts their opportunities for empowerment.

The issue of digital media's effects on street children requires special effort due to the difficulty of measuring them. This is due to several factors, including the digital challenges faced by this group, the difficulty of confining them to a single location, and the fact that the phenomenon is widespread in developing and underdeveloped countries, which are often characterized by high poverty and illiteracy rates [8]. As several studies in this field confirm that street children suffer from significant psychological and social problems, this requires utilizing all available means, including new digital media and its diverse topics, information, and applications, to improve the living and psychological conditions of street children. So this current study aims to address the following research questions:

- What are the repercussions of digital media on the well-being of street children?
- What are the repercussions of digital media on the psychological resilience of street children?
- What are the repercussions of digital media on the illegal migration of street children?
- What are the repercussions of digital media on the social exclusion of street children?
- What are the implications of digital media on psychological factors (well-being, psychological resilience) from the perspective of street children?
- What are the repercussions of digital media on the social factors (illegal migration and social exclusion) from the perspective of these children?

3 Study objectives

The primary objective of this study is to examine the psychological and social implications of street children in the context of contemporary digital media. Additionally, the study aims to:

- Investigate the specific problems faced by street children related to new media.
- Understand the impact of digital media on street children.
- Support them in building clarity and confidence in their abilities, enabling them to identify and pursue the right academic stream or vocational path.
- Discuss the psychological and social adaptation of street children to digital media.
- Identify the various effects of digital media on street children.
- Support street children in terms of psychology, social factors, and digital literacy.

4 Study importance

The importance of this study lies in its exploration of a critical issue, particularly in the context of digital technology and information. This study investigates the psychological and social consequences experienced by street children, with particular attention to the influences of the modern media era. These children often suffer from marginalization and exclusion, which may be intentional or simply a result of their circumstances, poverty, and lack of education. This exposes

them to risks such as addiction, rising crime, and harmful behaviors, along with psychological and social challenges, including reduced well-being, diminished quality of life, and lower resilience, as well as vulnerability to illegal migration.

5 Study terminology

The current study included the following terminologies:

- 5-1- Digital media** is a form of modern media that emerged with the 21st-century technological revolution. It utilizes electronic devices to transmit and distribute data through binary signals.
- 5-2- Street children** are those who live on the streets because they lack family care. They range in age from 5 to 17 and live and/or work on the streets with no fixed abode.
- 5-3- Psychological well-being** encompasses a broad range of positive experiences, including positive self-evaluation, a sense of continued personal growth and development, the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful, good relationships with others, a sense of mastery over one's life and the surrounding world, and the feeling of being in control of one's decisions [9].
- 5-4- Psychological resilience** refers to the ability of an individual to mentally or emotionally adapt to and cope with challenges and adversity while maintaining a relatively stable state of psychological well-being [10].
- 5-5- Illegal immigration** refers to the movement of people into a country in violation of the immigration laws of that country. An undocumented immigrant is an individual who is residing in a country without the required legal authorization.
- 5-6- Social Exclusion** refers to the marginalization and segregation of individuals and groups within a society, based on societal criteria. This implies the deprivation of particular individuals of equal citizenship rights.

6 Previous literature

Cassidy and Reilly (2024) explored several psychological variables as a result of homelessness, including stress, psychological well-being, and social support. 189 individuals (132 males and 57 females) from the United Kingdom completed a questionnaire. Participants reported low levels of psychological well-being and social support, as well as high levels of psychological distress and stress, confirming that homelessness contributes to increased stress, anxiety, and psychological distress among homeless individuals, reducing their quality of life and psychological well-being [4].

Gita & Dissasa (2023) investigated the well-being and resilience among street children in Southwestern Ethiopia. A sample of 155 street-connected children was selected. The findings revealed that these children experienced poor psychosocial well-being, with resilience playing a complex role that contributed to heightened anxiety. Moreover, male street-connected children demonstrated comparatively better well-being and resilience than their female counterparts, resulting in poorer mental health outcomes and slower developmental growth among females. Additionally, the study revealed that experiences of physical abuse, exploitation, maltreatment, and other violations of basic human rights contributed to drug use, which in turn negatively impacted the well-being and resilience of these children [11].

Cantos et al. (2023) evaluated a program launched in Spain between May 2015 and February 2020 that aimed to house homeless individuals. The study tracked these individuals for 18 months post-housing and examined the impact of housing on their use of new digital media; among the various dimensions assessed were basic needs, life satisfaction, harm, physical and mental health, social support, leisure activities, digital media, and other communication technologies. The results demonstrated improved digital inclusion for homeless individuals, leading to increased satisfaction and enhanced physical and mental well-being.

Mappaselleng (2021) aimed to analyze the situation of street children in Makassar, Indonesia, and to examine the factors contributing to the phenomenon of street children, as well as preventive measures. The study emphasized that the phenomenon of street children is a warning that necessitates the development of social policies and the eradication of poverty. Furthermore, it highlighted the need to protect every child in accordance with the United Nations Children's Fund guidelines. The study confirmed that street children suffer from significant marginalization, psychological disturbances, and physical and health problems. Poverty must be eradicated to protect them, and social solutions must be found to help reduce this phenomenon [12].

Heaslip et al. (2021) investigated the impact of technology on the health and well-being of homeless individuals. The study employed a systematic review of electronic databases from January 4, 2021, to April 30, 2021, searching for published papers between 2015 and 2021. From an initial 2113 results, 17 papers directly related to the study topic were selected for review. The findings indicated that technology can contribute to supporting the mental health and well-being of homeless individuals; however, they face significant challenges related to internet access and usage [13].

Losantos et al. (2020) contributed to the understanding of how social media shapes the digital identity of street children by examining the Facebook profiles and posts of 20 street-connected children in Bolivia. Their findings indicate that Bolivian street children actively use social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook. In a related study, the Facebook profiles of 40 street children living in La Paz and 23 children living in El Alto were analyzed, revealing that 48 of them used Facebook on a daily basis. These results suggest that street children and youth are enthusiastic users of Facebook, although their usage patterns remain underexplored globally [14].

Savarkar and Das (2019) examined mental health issues among street children in India. A systematic review was conducted to study the psychosocial impact of living conditions on street children from a national and global perspective. The results indicated a strong correlation between mental health and overall individual development. The findings emphasized that street children in India experience poor mental health, underscoring the need for further research and the implementation of policy interventions to address their precarious circumstances and alleviate mental health challenges.

Shazia and Kiran (2019) aimed to assess the psychological well-being of street children in India. The sample comprised 60 participants aged 6–14 who lived on the streets. A well-being scale was administered to the participants. The results revealed low levels of psychological well-being among street children. However, no significant gender differences were observed in psychological well-being. The study recommended strengthening support systems for street children and promoting their mental health, alongside planning for a healthy psychological environment that fosters their long-term well-being [25].

7 Comments on previous studies

Previous studies can be grouped into two main perspectives. The first perspective examines the impact of digital media on society in general and on street children in particular, as highlighted in the works of Cantos et al. (2023), Heaslip et al. (2021), and Losantos et al. (2020). These studies suggest that children may benefit from access to digital media services, especially given their limited opportunities due to coercive circumstances. This underscores the importance of ensuring the provision of digital services to them. At the same time, however, digital media presents significant risks that must be carefully considered.

The second idea of the previous studies focused on the psychological and social impacts on these groups. As indicated in research of Cassidy & Reilly (2024), Gita & Dissasa (2023), Pluck (2021), Mappaselleng (2021), Savarkar and Das (2019), Shazia & Kiran (2019), these studies confirmed that street children suffer from a lot of psychological and social problems, especially low psychological well-being and resilience, as well as increased problems of social exclusion and illegal migration [15].

8 Theoretical framework of the study

The theoretical framework was divided into three main themes as follows:

8.1 Digital media

Digital media has transformed communication, enabling interactive engagement and the rapid dissemination of information. It plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and cultural norms, influencing aspects of society, including identity, values, and social relations [16]. Social media platforms like Facebook, X, and Instagram have become integral to daily life, particularly among younger generations who are accustomed to digital technologies [17].

The digital media industry is undergoing rapid, continuous transformations driven by technological innovations in electronic equipment, software, applications, and social media platforms. Digital media relies on individual participation, interaction, and the exchange of visual media, such as images and videos, as well as written and audio informational content [18]. Consequently, it plays a fundamental role in expressing and presenting problems to society, as well as in seeking proposed solutions, given its ability to reach broad segments of the public in innovative, more interactive ways. This makes digital media an effective tool for raising social and cultural awareness at various levels among individuals and societies.

However, access to digital media is not uniform. Marginalized groups, such as street-connected children, often face barriers to digital inclusion, including limited access to technology and the internet. The digital divide exacerbates existing social inequalities, as these children are excluded from the benefits of digital engagement, including educational resources and social support networks [19].

Today, social media platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram, and web pages are crucial to our digital transformation. The current generation has grown accustomed to using technological, electronic, and digital devices, making life significantly different from that of previous generations. This necessitates that older generations adapt to these new challenges and embrace digitalization. Not only individuals but also institutions must confront these challenges and engage in competition. Those seeking to be prepared for the future must adapt and keep pace with these trends in order to remain competitive [20].

Researchers believe that digital media can shape public opinion and attitudes, influencing audiences' psychological, social, and cultural factors. This is because digital media and social networks have become an integral part of people's daily lives. Owing to the unique characteristics of digital media in its various forms, they exert significant influence on individuals, groups, and broader entities, shaping social relations, knowledge, mental health, identity, values, customs, traditions, politics, and even international relations.

The significance of digital media stems from its status as one of the most powerful communication tools, effectively empowering individuals to experience and interact with the modern era through innovative methods of information presentation and dissemination. It also plays a crucial role in presenting issues to the public, preparing them for rapid,

widespread dissemination [21]. The era of the communication and information revolution, driven by continuous innovation, has brought about significant advancements in information and communication technology. In the modern age, media have become an essential part of daily life, and the economic, social, and political development of a state depends on a diverse range of media and communication tools. Furthermore, development projects cannot succeed without active public participation, which is facilitated primarily through media, particularly digital platforms [22].

Psychological and social studies suggest that social media and digital media platforms can significantly influence public opinion on pressing social issues, such as the phenomenon of street children, and contribute to the proposal and discussion of various solutions, as well as their potential implementation [23]. From this perspective, the importance of research to identify and reveal the role that digital media, in its various forms, can play in addressing social problems, especially the issue of street children, becomes evident. This is considered one of the most critical problems of the modern era due to its adverse impacts on all countries worldwide [24].

Generally, the concept of digital exclusion highlights how a lack of access to digital technologies can reinforce social exclusion, limiting individuals' ability to participate fully in society. Addressing digital exclusion requires not only providing access to technology but also ensuring that marginalized groups have the skills and support needed to use digital tools effectively.

8.2 The role of digital media in supporting street children

Digital media has the potential to mitigate some challenges faced by street-connected children by providing access to education, mental health resources, and social support networks. For instance, online platforms can offer educational content and virtual classrooms, helping bridge gaps in formal education [25]. Moreover, digital tools can facilitate connections with supportive communities and services, promoting inclusion and empowerment.

However, to harness the benefits of digital media, it is essential to address barriers to access and ensure that interventions are designed with the needs of street-connected children in mind. This includes providing appropriate technologies, digital literacy training, and safeguarding measures to protect vulnerable users.

In conclusion, integrating digital media into support strategies for street-connected children offers promising avenues for enhancing their well-being and inclusion. Nevertheless, such efforts must be part of broader initiatives that address the systemic factors contributing to their marginalization.

8.3 The psychological and social repercussions of street children

8.3.1 Psychological well-being of street children

Psychological well-being is considered one of the dimensions of mental health, encompassing positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, a sense of purpose and meaning in life, and personal growth and development. Psychological well-being is achieved through a state of balance between individual needs and those of the surrounding environment. Moreover, life satisfaction is regarded as a key dimension of psychological well-being, closely linked to personal happiness, contentment, security, and overall health.

Street-connected children often experience psychological distress due to factors such as instability, exposure to violence, and lack of support. These experiences can lead to issues like depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, impacting their overall well-being. Promoting psychological well-being in this population requires interventions that address both individual needs and broader environmental factors.

8.3.2 Psychological and social challenges of street children

Studies indicate that a significant number of street children suffer from exploitation, chronic physical injuries, violence, bullying, sexual abuse, mental health problems, drug use, reproductive health disorders, and sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS [26]. Evidence also suggests that this most deprived segment is systematically denied access to essential services, including basic survival needs, protection, education, and healthcare. Moreover, they suffer from multiple and concurrent psychosocial problems [28]. Homeless individuals often experience depression, suicide attempts, and substance abuse. They also endure grief and develop maladaptive coping patterns, which are interconnected and further exacerbate their psychological distress.

Street-connected children face numerous challenges, including exploitation, abuse, and health issues. These adversities are compounded by social stigma and exclusion, which hinder their access to essential services and support systems. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing effective interventions that address both immediate needs and long-term well-being.

8.3.3 Psychological resilience of street children

Regarding the psychological resilience of street children, studies have highlighted a significant deficiency in psychological services designed to strengthen their resilience and promote overall well-being. This is due to a confluence of risk factors such as deprivation of basic needs, exploitation, abuse, antisocial activities, and substance abuse, all of which undermine their psychological resilience. To cultivate psychological resilience in these children, studies have emphasized the importance of providing emotional and physical safety. Developing peer relationships, engaging in

education, participating in sports, and engaging in creative activities are also essential. The complex and multifaceted psychosocial needs of street children necessitate a coordinated, multidisciplinary, and phased care approach [29].

Despite facing significant hardships, some street-connected children demonstrate resilience, adapting to their circumstances and finding ways to cope. Factors contributing to resilience include supportive relationships, access to education, and opportunities for personal development. Interventions aimed at building resilience should focus on creating safe environments and providing resources that empower these children.

8.3.4 Social exclusion and marginalization of street children

The exclusion and marginalization of children who work and live on the streets is a global issue with serious social ramifications, including various forms of social deviance. This situation arises from the absence of guardians, such as parents or relatives, compounded by factors including poverty, ignorance, public stigma, deprivation of positive social relationships, unmet basic needs, and severe health and psychological challenges. Consequently, their social exclusion prevents them from enjoying the rights and opportunities available to other children, as well as to members of society in general.

Social exclusion of street-connected children is not merely a result of their living conditions. However, it is rooted in systemic issues such as poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to services. Such exclusion restricts opportunities and perpetuates cycles of disadvantage. Addressing social exclusion requires comprehensive strategies that tackle underlying structural inequalities.

9 Study Methodology

Previous studies have emphasized that children's online experiences cannot be examined in isolation from their broader life contexts. They further argue that quantitative research must incorporate additional control variables to avoid excluding factors known to influence child well-being outcomes. Such variables include age, gender, personality, life circumstances, and the surrounding social and cultural environment. Despite these insights, there remains a limited understanding of which groups are most at risk and whether certain children are more vulnerable than others in online spaces. Thus, using a descriptive-analytical approach, this study examines the psychological and social repercussions of digital media on street children. Participants were divided into two sub-samples: 168 professionals working in relevant psychological and social fields. The second sample comprised 46 street children from Egypt (selected from Egypt due to the absence of street children in the United Arab Emirates). Accordingly, the study questionnaire was administered electronically, with participants randomly selected with the assistance of social work specialists, in order to examine the psychological and social repercussions of street children in the digital age. Figures 1, 2, and 3 present the distribution of the study sample of professionals according to gender, field of specialization, and years of experience, respectively.

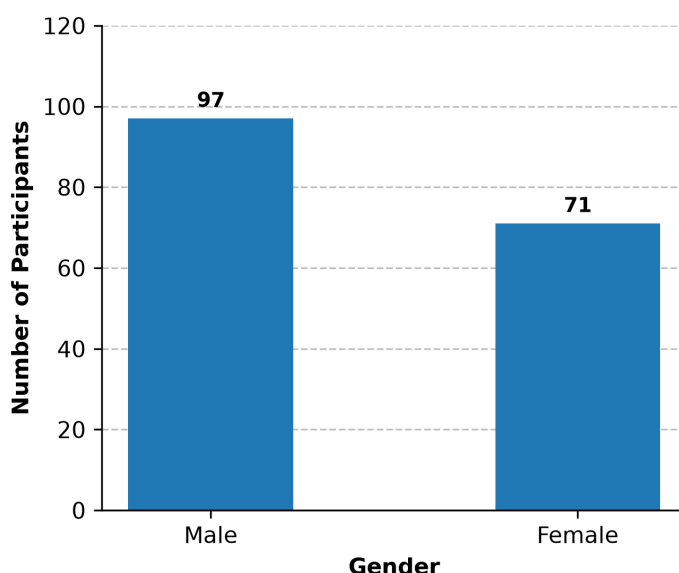


Fig. 1: refers to the Sample distribution by gender

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of the study sample by gender, with 97 professionals (57.7%) male and 71 (42.3%) female.

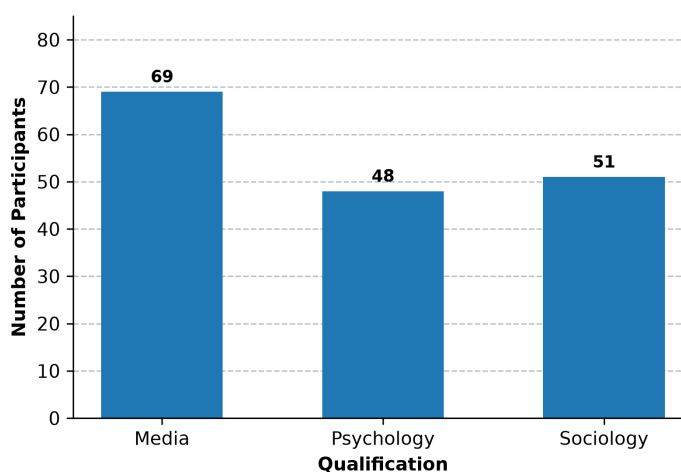


Fig. 2: refers to the Sample distribution by specialization

Figure 2 shows the study sample distribution by specialization, with 97 participants specializing in media (40.1%), 48 in psychology (28.6%), and 51 in sociology (30.1%).

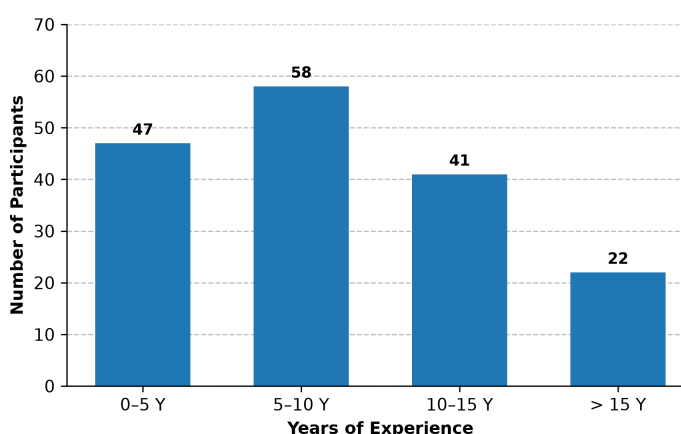


Fig. 3: refers to the Sample distribution by experience

Figure shows (3) the study sample distribution by experience level, with 47 participants having 0 to 5 years of experience (27.9%), 58 participants with 5 to 10 years of experience (34.5%), 41 participants with 10 to 15 years of experience (24.4%), and 22 participants with over 15 years of experience (13.1%).

10 Study tools

The current study relied on two different tools:

Questionnaire 10-1- on the psychological repercussions of digital media on Street children: This questionnaire consists of two main parts. The first part focuses on psychological well-being, while the second focuses on psychological resilience, each containing ten items designed to assess these two dimensions.

- Validity and reliability of the questionnaire on the psychological effects of digital media on street children: Validity was assessed through expert judgment, with the initial questionnaire presented to a sample of psychology, media, and sociology specialists, who reached a consensus on its content. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha. Table 1 shows the reliability results as follows.

- Cronbach's Alpha values demonstrated strong internal consistency across most dimensions of the test. Items with corrected item-total correlations below 0.19 were excluded to enhance reliability. Following this refinement, the overall Cronbach's Alpha remained high across all dimensions. Table 1 presents the reliability coefficients for the questionnaire assessing the psychological effects of digital media on street children.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the questionnaire on the psychological repercussions of digital media on street children

Repercussions	Factor	Cronbach's α	Significance
Psychological Repercussions	Psychological Well-being	0.94	0.05
Psychological Repercussions	Psychological Resilience	0.87	0.05

The findings in Table 1 indicate high Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, demonstrating the questionnaire's reliability in assessing the psychological repercussions of digital media on street children.

Questionnaire 10-2- on the social effects of digital media on street children: This questionnaire has two main parts. The first part is titled "Illegal Migration," and the second focuses on "Social Exclusion." Each part comprises 10 items that measure aspects of illegal migration and social exclusion. - Validity and reliability of the questionnaire on the social effects of digital media on street children: Validity was assessed through expert judgment, as the initial version of the questionnaire was reviewed by a sample of specialized assessors who agreed on the content. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients, with results outlined in Table 2. - Cronbach's Alpha values demonstrated strong internal consistency across most dimensions of the test. To improve reliability, items with corrected item-total correlations below 0.19 were excluded. After this adjustment, the overall reliability remained high across all sections. Table 2 presents the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the questionnaire measuring the social effects of digital media on street children.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the questionnaire on the social repercussions of digital media on street children

Repercussions	Factor	Cronbach's α	Significance
Social Repercussions	Illegal Migration	0.91	0.05
Social Repercussions	Social Exclusion	0.89	0.05

The results in Table 2 indicate high Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients, demonstrating the reliability of the questionnaire on the social effects of digital media on street children.

11 Findings

The study questions were answered individually as follows:

11.1 First question: What are the repercussions of digital media on the well-being of street children?

The following table presents the results of this question:

Table 3: Frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, and Chi-Square for the repercussions of digital media on the psychological well-being of street children

No	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	χ^2
1	92	43	16	11	6	4.35	0.77	61.5 ^b
2	87	40	21	12	8	4.21	0.65	52.3 ^b
3	91	37	18	13	9	3.96	0.34	60.1 ^b
4	89	50	14	10	5	4.87	0.67	81.6 ^b
5	86	42	18	14	8	4.45	0.52	56.2 ⁿ
6	88	37	21	15	7	4.00	0.87	69.3 ^b
7	104	29	15	12	8	4.36	0.44	69.3 ^b
8	101	28	16	14	9	4.46	0.74	58.3 ^b
9	97	41	16	7	7	4.36	0.63	80.6 ^b
10	90	44	23	6	5	4.61	0.91	58.6 ^b
Total	925	391	178	114	72	4.40		
%	55.1	23.3	10.6	6.8	4.3			

Table 3 presents the results for the first question, which examines the effects of new digital media on the psychological well-being of street children. It was found that 55.1% of the sample fully agreed with the statement that digital media has contributed to improving the psychological well-being of street children. In comparison, 23.3% agreed, 10.6% were neutral, 6.8% disagreed, and 4.3% completely disagreed with the idea that digital media has enhanced the psychological well-being of street children. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the mean score for all statements in this dimension was 4.4, with a standard deviation of less than 1, indicating the homogeneity of responses from the sample participants. Furthermore, all statements' chi-squared values were less than 0.05, indicating participant agreement. Figure (4) refers to the first question as follows:

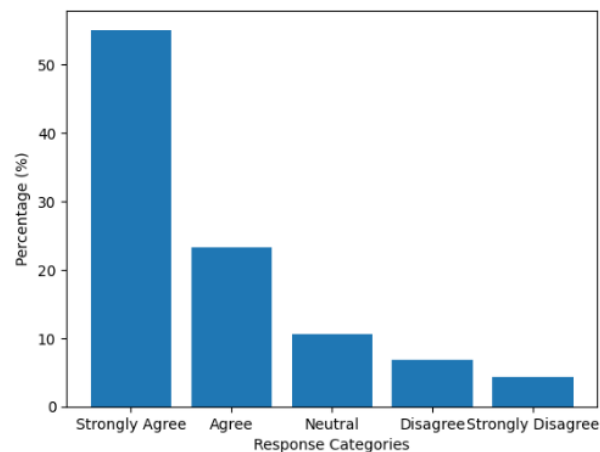


Fig. 4: shows the distribution of Responses on the Impact of Digital Media on the Psychological Well-being of Street Children

The previous chart shows that most participants (55.1%) strongly agreed and 23.3% agreed that digital media improves the psychological well-being of street children. Only a small portion expressed neutrality or disagreement. The high mean score (4.4) and low standard deviation indicate consistent and positive views among participants. Overall, the results confirm that digital media is widely seen as a supportive factor in enhancing the mental and emotional state of street children.

11.2 Second question: What are the repercussions of digital media on the psychological resilience of street children?

The following table presents the results for this question:

Table 4: Frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, and Chi-Square for the repercussions of digital media on the psychological resilience of street Children

No	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	χ^2
1	75	30	29	21	13	4.35	0.62	65.3 ^b
2	82	36	24	15	11	4.01	0.74	45.4 ^b
3	71	38	23	19	17	4.30	0.45	66.7 ^b
4	77	31	24	21	15	4.36	0.63	41.5 ^b
5	78	32	26	19	13	3.98	0.84	68.1 ^b
6	76	30	27	19	16	3.84	0.68	25.2 ^b
7	84	29	22	15	18	4.09	0.48	38.8 ^b
8	76	30	24	20	18	3.91	0.90	41.6 ^b
9	76	26	31	18	17	3.91	0.49	63.2 ^b
10	74	32	26	22	14	4.06	0.61	59.4 ^b
Total	769	314	256	189	152	4.08		
%	45.8	18.7	15.2	11.3	9.04			

Table 4 presents the findings of the second question, explicitly addressing the impact of new digital media on the psychological resilience of street children. It was found that 45.8% of the sample strongly agreed with statements supporting that digital media has enhanced psychological resilience among street children. Additionally, 18.7% agree, while 15.2% remain neutral. Conversely, 11.3% disagree, and 9.04% strongly disagree that digital media improves psychological resilience in street children. The mean score for all statements was 4.08, with a standard deviation of less than one across all items in this section. This indicates consistency in the sample responses regarding the questionnaire statements. Furthermore, the Chi-Square was less than 0.05 for all statements, indicating a consensus among participants. Figure (5) refers to the second question as follows:

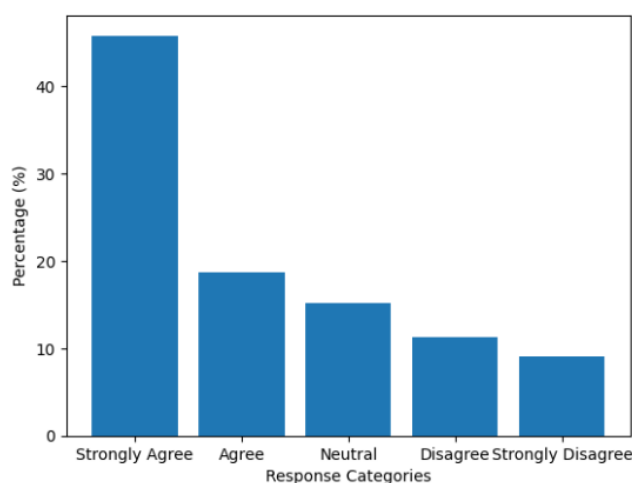


Fig. 5: shows the distribution of Responses on the Role of Digital Media in the Social Empowerment of Street Children

The previous chart shows participants' responses regarding the role of digital media in the social empowerment of street children. The highest proportion (45.8%) strongly agree, and 18.7% agree, showing a clear tendency toward positive perceptions. Only a small number expressed neutral or negative views. The mean score of 4.0 indicates overall agreement that digital media is a valuable tool for enhancing social inclusion and empowerment among street children.

11.3 Third question: What are the repercussions of digital media on the illegal migration of street children?

The following table presents the results for this question:

Table 5: Frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, and Chi-Square for the repercussions of digital media on illegal migration among street children

No	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	χ^2
1	46	35	24	26	37	3.78	0.65	54.0 ^b
2	44	27	33	30	34	3.98	0.47	47.2 ^b
3	53	28	35	25	27	4.01	0.29	51.3 ^b
4	50	35	22	26	35	4.13	0.54	78.5 ^b
5	51	35	22	30	30	3.67	0.39	71.1 ^b
6	54	39	23	27	25	4.38	0.47	55.7 ^b
7	49	31	31	26	31	3.67	0.50	62.3 ^b
8	38	36	25	34	35	3.97	0.61	41.8 ^b
9	40	34	35	30	29	3.87	0.54	77.3 ^b
10	47	29	25	33	34	3.69	0.62	46.1 ^b
Total	472	329	275	287	317			
%	28.1	19.6	16.4	17.1	18.9	3.90		

Table 5 presents the results for the third question, focusing on the effects of new digital media on illegal migration among street children. It shows that 28.1% of the sample fully agree with the statements, indicating that digital media has somewhat contributed to increasing illegal migration rates among street children. In comparison, 19.6% agree, 16.4% are neutral, 17.1% disagree, and 18.9% entirely disagree with this idea. Additionally, the mean score across all statements was 3.9, with a standard deviation of less than one across all items in this category. This indicates consistency in the sample's responses to the questionnaire items. Additionally, the Chi-square value was below 0.05 for all statements. Figure (6) refers to the third question as follows:

The previous chart illustrates participants' views on how digital media affects the educational and behavioral aspects of street children. The results show moderate levels of agreement, with responses spread across all categories. A considerable proportion agreed or strongly agreed that digital media has a positive influence, while others remained neutral or disagreed. The overall mean score (around 3.8) indicates balanced perceptions, suggesting that although digital media has benefits, its impact varies depending on access, use, and individual circumstances.

11.4 Fourth question: What are the repercussions of digital media for the social exclusion of street children?

Table 6 presents the following results.

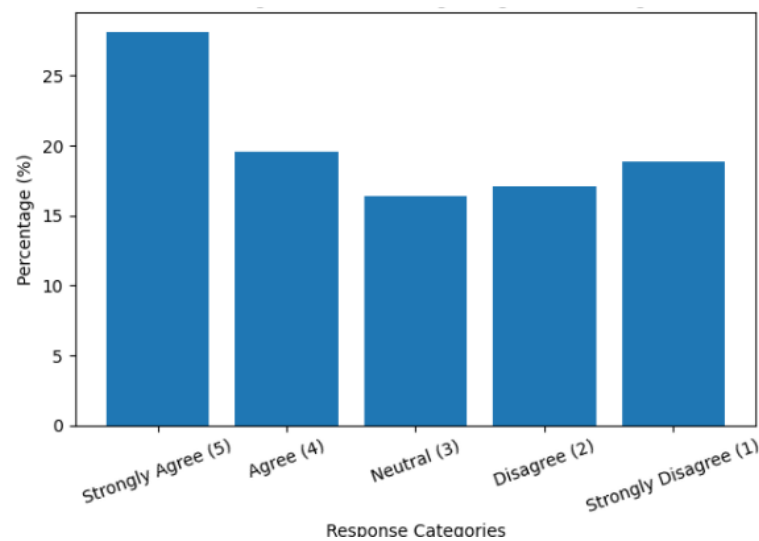


Fig. 6: shows the distribution of responses on the impact of Digital Media on the educational and Behavioral Aspects of street children

Table 6: Frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, and Chi-Square for the repercussions of digital media on the social exclusion of street children

No	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD	χ^2
1	17	19	20	39	73	4.44	0.67	50.3 ^b
2	15	19	28	38	68	4.68	0.54	63.0 ^b
3	15	12	17	46	78	4.51	0.63	57.1 ^b
4	13	11	19	39	86	3.98	0.84	77.2 ^b
5	13	12	22	40	81	4.74	0.77	69.5 ^b
6	17	20	23	31	77	4.35	0.74	71.3 ^b
7	12	14	22	41	79	4.74	0.69	66.8 ^b
8	12	14	19	48	75	3.87	0.50	71.0 ^b
9	10	12	10	47	89	4.63	0.79	87.8 ^b
10	11	15	22	39	81	4.70	0.62	84.8 ^b
Total	135	148	202	408	787	4.50		
%	8.03	8.80	12.02	24.3	46.8			

Table 6 presents the results for the fourth question, focusing on the effects of digital media on the social exclusion of street children. The results indicate that 8.03% of the sample strongly agree with the statements, suggesting that digital media has contributed to increased social exclusion rates among street children. Additionally, 8.8% agree, 12.02% are neutral, 24.3% disagree, and 46.8% strongly disagree that digital media contributes to social exclusion among street children. The overall mean score for the statements is 4.5, with a standard deviation of less than one across all items in this category, reflecting consistency in the sample's responses. Furthermore, the Chi-square value was below 0.05 for all statements, indicating significant agreement among participants on each item. Figure (7) refers to the fourth question as follows:

The previous chart refers to the impact of digital media on the social exclusion of street children. The majority of respondents (46.8%) strongly disagreed, and 24.3% disagreed that digital media contributes to social exclusion. Only 8.03% strongly agreed, while 8.8% agreed, and 12.02% remained neutral. These findings suggest that most participants perceive digital media as a positive or neutral factor rather than a cause of social exclusion among street children.

11.5 Fifth question: What are the implications of digital media on psychological factors (well-being, psychological resilience) from the perspective of street children?

Table 7 presents the results.

Table 7 presents the findings of the fifth question regarding the impact of new digital media on the psychological factors of street children. Regarding psychological well-being, 38.0% of the sample strongly agreed with statements indicating that digital media enhances psychological well-being among street children. Additionally, 32.8% agreed, while

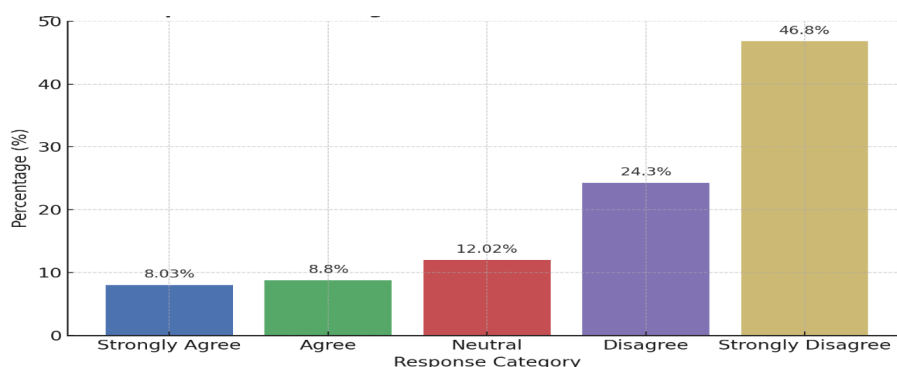


Fig. 7: Repercussions of Digital Media on Social Exclusion of Street Children

Table 7: Frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, and Chi-Square for the repercussions of digital media on the psychological factors of street children

Well-being										Psychological Resilience								
No	1	2	3	4	5	χ^2	SD	Mean		No	1	2	3	4	5	χ^2	SD	Mean
1	16	14	9	4	3	61.3 ^b	0.4	4.65		1	17	16	7	3	3	55.2 ^b	0.7	4.50
2	18	15	6	4	3	59.0 ^b	0.6	4.74		2	16	15	8	4	3	70.5 ^b	0.7	4.71
3	17	13	7	5	4	55.3 ^b	0.3	4.65		3	15	15	7	5	4	68.9 ^b	0.6	3.87
4	19	15	5	4	3	68.2 ^b	0.7	4.49		4	18	16	5	4	3	82.3 ^b	0.8	4.77
5	16	14	6	6	4	70.1 ^b	0.6	4.66		5	17	15	6	4	4	77.6 ^b	0.7	4.65
6	13	19	4	6	4	84.3 ^b	0.5	4.69		6	18	18	4	4	2	82.0 ^b	0.8	4.48
7	18	16	6	4	2	81.0 ^b	0.8	4.70		7	21	14	5	3	3	80.4 ^b	0.6	4.77
8	18	16	4	4	4	68.3 ^b	0.9	4.81		8	20	14	5	4	3	68.7 ^b	0.7	4.74
9	19	14	5	5	3	73.1 ^b	0.8	3.99		9	17	16	5	4	4	77.9 ^b	0.9	3.74
10	21	15	4	3	3	80.1 ^b	0.7	4.55		10	18	15	7	3	3	58.1 ^b	0.5	4.81
Total	175	151	56	45	33			4.50		Total	177	154	59	38	32			4.60
%	38.0	32.8	12.2	9.7	7.2					%	38.4	33.4	12.8	8.3	6.9			

12.2% remained neutral. Conversely, 9.7% disagreed, and 7.2% strongly disagreed with this idea. The mean score across all statements was 4.5, with a standard deviation of less than one for all items in this section.

Similarly, regarding the effects of new digital media on psychological resilience, 38.4% of the sample strongly agreed that digital media has enhanced psychological resilience among street children. Additionally, 33.4% agreed, while 12.8% remained neutral. Conversely, 8.3% disagreed, and 6.9% strongly disagreed that digital media improves psychological resilience in street children. The mean score for all statements was 4.6, with a standard deviation of less than one across all items in this section. This indicates consistency in the sample responses regarding the questionnaire statements. Furthermore, the Chi-Square was less than 0.05 for all statements, indicating consensus among participants. Figure (7) shows the Fifth question as follows:

Figure (8) shows participants' perceptions of how digital media affects the psychological well-being and resilience of street children. Most respondents strongly agreed or agreed that digital media positively influences both aspects (over 70% combined in each case). Neutral and disagreeing responses were relatively low, indicating a general consensus that digital media enhances emotional stability and coping abilities among street children. The results highlight the potential of digital platforms to empower marginalized youth.

11.6 Sixth question: What are the repercussions of digital media on the social factors (illegal migration-social exclusion) from the perspective of the street?

Table 8 presents the results.

Table 8 presents the findings of the sixth question regarding the impact of new digital media on the social factors of street children. Regarding illegal migration, it was found that 23.7% of the sample strongly agreed with statements supporting that digital media has enhanced illegal migration among street children. Additionally, 24.6% agreed, while 18.5% remained neutral. Conversely, 15.9% disagreed, and 17.4% strongly disagreed that digital media improves the

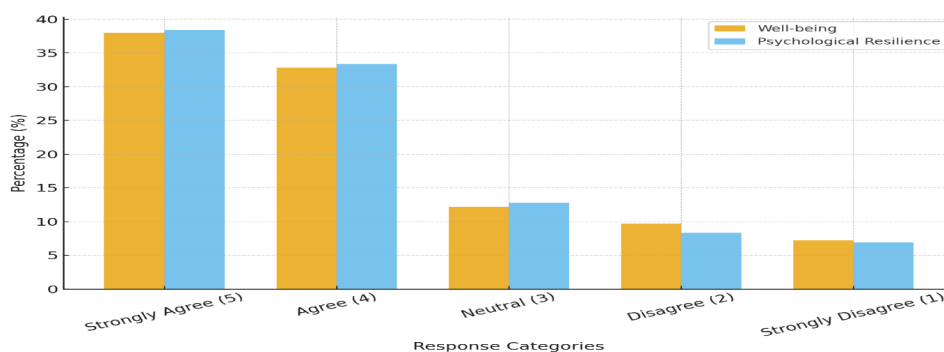


Fig. 8: shows the impact of Digital Media on Psychological Factors of Street Children

Table 8: Frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, and Chi-Square for the repercussions of digital media on the social Factors of street children

Illegal Migration									Social Exclusion								
No	1	2	3	4	5	χ^2	SD	Mean	No	1	2	3	4	5	χ^2	SD	Mean
1	7	6	9	13	11	44.2 ^b	0.2	3.10	1	8	6	9	13	10	31.2 ^b	0.2	2.80
2	9	8	7	12	10	36.1 ^b	0.1	2.40	2	11	9	5	12	9	29.3 ^b	0.5	2.30
3	8	7	8	10	13	23.5 ^b	0.1	2.60	3	10	8	6	10	12	41.0 ^b	0.4	3.40
4	7	6	10	14	9	44.1 ^b	0.3	3.00	4	9	7	7	12	11	34.0 ^b	0.3	2.60
5	9	9	8	10	10	30.2 ^b	0.4	2.80	5	7	8	8	10	13	38.4 ^b	0.1	2.70
6	9	8	9	9	11	41.1 ^b	0.3	2.50	6	8	10	8	10	10	36.2 ^b	0.4	2.70
7	9	6	7	11	13	33.0 ^b	0.2	2.70	7	6	7	8	11	14	41.9 ^b	0.5	3.00
8	7	8	9	11	11	23.5 ^b	0.4	1.90	8	8	6	9	10	13	27.6 ^b	0.2	2.60
9	8	7	8	13	10	38.8 ^b	0.2	2.40	9	9	7	7	11	12	51.0 ^b	0.3	3.20
10	7	8	10	10	11	40.7 ^b	0.5	2.70	10	7	9	9	11	10	46.1 ^b	0.3	3.30
Total	80	73	85	113	109				Total	83	77	76	110	114			
%	17.4	15.9	18.5	24.6	23.7			2.60	%	18.0	16.7	16.5	23.9	24.7			2.80

illegal migration of street children. The mean score for all statements was 2.6, with a standard deviation of less than one across all items in this section.

Moreover, regarding the effects of new digital media on social exclusion, 18.0% of the sample strongly agreed with statements supporting the idea that digital media has exacerbated social exclusion among street children. Additionally, 16.7% agreed, while 16.5% remained neutral. Conversely, 23.9% disagreed and 24.7% strongly disagreed that digital media contributes to social exclusion among street children. The mean score for all statements was 2.8, with a standard deviation of less than one across all items in this section. Furthermore, the Chi-Square was less than 0.05 for all statements, indicating consensus among participants. Figure (9) refers to the sixth question as follows:

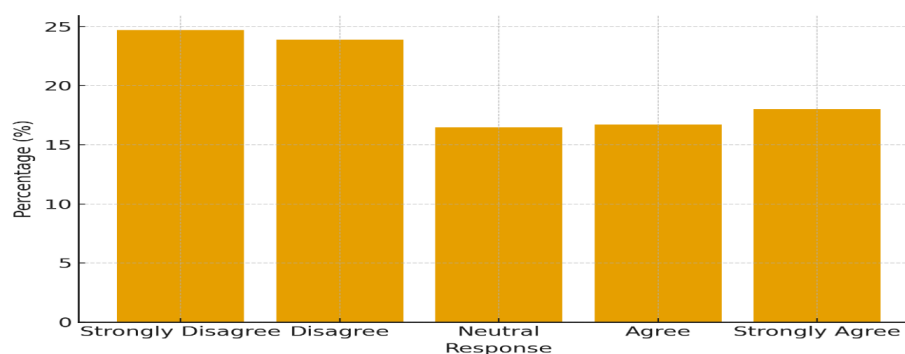


Fig. 9: Figure (9) shows the Impact of Digital Media on the Social Exclusion of Street Children

The findings indicate that digital media has a noticeable impact on street children. Most respondents agreed that digital media contributes to increased illegal migration, with nearly half supporting this view. However, the majority disagreed that digital media enhances social exclusion, suggesting that it may instead promote social connection. Overall, the results highlight both the positive and negative influences of digital media on vulnerable groups.

12 Discussion

The current study's findings, when analysed from a psychological perspective, indicate that digital media meaningfully enhances the psychological well-being and resilience of street-connected children. Based on data collected from two distinct groups—professional practitioners (psychologists and social workers) and 46 street-connected children, it was possible to draw comparative insights into perceived psychological outcomes.

From the perspective of professionals, there was a strong consensus regarding the positive psychological effects of digital media, with high levels of agreement highlighting improvements in emotional stability, coping mechanisms, and psychosocial development. These views are consistent with earlier research (Cassidy & Reilly, 2024; Gita & Dissasa, 2023; Pluck, 2021; Mappaselleng, 2021), which underscores the need for digital platforms in supporting the emotional and developmental needs of marginalized youth.

Importantly, responses from the street-connected children themselves reflected similarly positive trends. Many reported that access to digital platforms enabled them to feel more connected, informed, and emotionally supported. They described online interactions—particularly through social media and digital games—as offering moments of relief, distraction from distress, and even a sense of belonging. This direct testimony reinforces the quantitative findings and aligns with studies such as those by (Vinas, V., & Pike, E. 2025 and Shazia & U.V. Kiran 2019), which emphasize the therapeutic potential of media engagement for vulnerable youth.

On the social dimension, both professionals and children observed a noticeable decrease in social exclusion resulting from exposure through digital platforms. This is evident in children's expressions of feeling "seen" and "heard" when their stories are shared online. Several participants directly referenced how social media awareness campaigns helped them access community support. This aligns with the conclusions of Cantos et al. (2023) and Heaslip et al. (2021), who recognize digital media as both a facilitator of inclusion and a source of risk.

However, the children also voiced caution. Some acknowledged being exposed to online manipulation and recruitment attempts by unknown individuals, highlighting vulnerabilities exploited through social media platforms. A few even described cases where acquaintances had been lured into illegal migration networks via online interactions. These first-hand accounts confirm the dual nature of digital exposure—one that offers opportunities and threats simultaneously. This observation aligns with the nuanced perspectives presented by the Congressional Research Service (2024), Fantahun and Taa (2022), and Bayissa (2021).

In line with prior cultural and psychological studies (Marcela et al., 2020), this research confirms that digital media positively impacts the emotional resilience and quality of life of street-connected children. Access to digital spaces has helped mitigate the effects of institutional neglect and psychological hardship, providing these children with new tools for self-expression and support.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that digital media has an impact on both psychological and social domains for street-connected children. While professional interpretations emphasized theoretical benefits, it is the children's reflections that validate digital media's relevance to their lived experiences. Psychologically, the tools offer pathways to resilience and self-regulation. Socially, they reduce exclusion but simultaneously introduce new risks. The study thus highlights the urgent need for structured digital literacy programs that empower children while safeguarding their exposure.

13 Recommendations

Based on the study and the analysis of results, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Provide comprehensive support for street children across social, psychological, cultural, and digital domains.
2. Ensure digital services are accessible to street children.
3. Encourage relevant authorities to address the essential needs of street children.
4. Establish stable income sources and secure shelters for street children through dedicated centres and organizations.
5. Enhance the skills of professionals in psychological, social, and media fields to better support street children.
6. Organize ongoing awareness seminars for low-income families to highlight the risks of neglect and school dropouts, which often lead to higher crime rates and an increased tendency toward illegal migration.

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