



Buddhist Psychology in the Digital Age

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Abstract

This article aims to examine and present the application of Buddhist psychology principles in the digital age to assist individuals in coping with psychological and emotional challenges arising from the use of technology and social media. By employing Buddhist concepts such as mindfulness, detachment, and contentment, people can become more aware of their thoughts and emotions in the present moment and reduce attachment to impermanent phenomena. The article emphasizes the importance of mindful technology use and discovering inner happiness amidst the complexities of the digital world, ultimately seeking to create mental equilibrium and lead to a more meaningful and valuable life in this rapidly changing era.

Keywords: Psychology; Buddhist Psychology; Digital Age



INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, where technology plays a crucial role in the daily lives of people worldwide, connecting with information and others through the internet and social media has become inevitable. While technology brings convenience and new opportunities, it also gives rise to various psychological and emotional issues, such as stress, anxiety, loneliness, and a sense of meaninglessness in life (Twenge & Campbell, 2019). Applying Buddhist psychological principles to address these issues provides a pathway for people to discover inner happiness and peace amidst the complexities of the digital world (Phra Brahmagunabhorn (P.A.Payutto), 2008).

The psychological problems arising from the use of technology and social media are of significant importance today, as their impact extends beyond the individual level to create changes at the societal level. For example, addiction to social media can lead to a lack of concentration and time devoted to meaningful activities, while comparing oneself to others can result in feelings of inadequacy and unhappiness, as well as high levels of depression and stress (Kross et al., 2013). Therefore, this article aims to connect Buddhist principles and concepts with social issues in the digital age, providing readers with guidance on applying Buddhist psychology to develop their minds and live mindfully in a rapidly changing world.

BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Buddhist psychology in the digital age is a topic of great relevance and interest in contemporary society, as digital technology and social media play significant roles in people's daily lives worldwide. Applying Buddhist psychological concepts can help address the negative impacts of the digital world (Thana Nilchaikovit, 2017). Key aspects to consider include:

1. The Impact of Technology on the Mind. Analysis of how technology and social media usage affect mental health, such as the occurrence of depression, stress from social comparison, feelings of loneliness and isolation, loss of focus, and smartphone addiction (Twenge & Campbell, 2019).

2. Practicing Mindfulness in the Digital World. Approaches to practicing mindfulness and maintaining present-moment awareness while using technology, such as setting intentions before use, taking deep breaths before responding to messages or posts, and taking breaks



when feeling stressed or fatigued. The practice of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness can be effectively applied to technology use (Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto), 2003).

3. Information Management and Media Filtering. Presentation of methods for using Buddhist psychology principles to filter information received from social media, avoiding falling victim to fake news or anxiety-inducing content by employing mindfulness and wisdom to discern the truth of information (Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto), 2009).

4. Dealing with Social Comparison. Analysis of the effects of comparing oneself to others on social media and the use of Buddhist psychological principles, such as the Four Bases of Success (chanda, viriya, citta, vimamsa), to cultivate self-satisfaction and avoid negative comparisons (Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto), 2000).

5. Creating Valuable Online Relationships. Methods for building friendly and understanding online relationships based on the principles of loving-kindness and compassion in Buddhist psychology, to create a positive and supportive online community (Phra Paisal Visalo, 2014).

6. Coping with Stress and Digital Media Addiction. Application of Buddhist psychological principles to reduce dependence on digital media and manage stress or pressure arising from excessive technology use, such as meditation practices to increase calmness and mental control (Germer et al., 2013).

7. Balancing Online and Offline Life. Approaches to living a balanced life without allowing technology to dominate, following the Middle Way principle in Buddhism, to enjoy technology efficiently without losing happiness in real life (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2006).

Buddhist psychology offers methods to address these issues by emphasizing mindfulness training, detachment from attachments, wisdom development, and creating meaning in life. These concepts help people not only manage arising problems but also lead to mental development and sustainable happiness. This is why studying Buddhist psychology in the digital age is of great importance in the present day.



ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA ON HUMAM PSYCHOLOGY AND HAPPINESS

Technology and social media play significant roles in people's daily lives in the present era. While they offer numerous benefits in connecting people and facilitating rapid access to information, they also have negative impacts on human psychology and happiness. The analysis can be summarized as follows:

1. Social Comparison: Social media platforms create an environment where people often compare themselves to others' lives, potentially leading to feelings of inferiority, dissatisfaction with oneself, and a sense of worthlessness. These comparisons can result in stress, anxiety, and depression, especially among adolescents who are sensitive to others' opinions (Vogel et al., 2014).

2. Addiction: Excessive use of smartphones and social media can lead to addiction, causing users to spend considerable time scrolling through screens and finding it difficult to stop. The effects of technology addiction include reduced work efficiency, insufficient sleep, and exacerbated mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017).

3. Decreased Attention Span: The rapid use of technology and instant access to information can reduce people's ability to concentrate on tasks, as there is an expectation of quick results and immediate responses. This decreased attention span affects work, learning, and daily life, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction with outcomes (Firth et al., 2019).

4. Lack of Real-Life Connections: While social media helps connect people globally, it often reduces face-to-face relationships as most people spend more time communicating through screens rather than in person. This lack of real-life connections can lead to loneliness, feelings of isolation, and a lack of emotional support.

5. Impact on Mental Health and Well-Being: Continuous consumption of information from social media can lead to stress and depression, especially when exposed to negative content such as anxiety-inducing news or hostile opinions. Several studies have found that excessive use of social media is associated with increased feelings of unhappiness and life dissatisfaction (Twenge & Campbell, 2019).

6. Loss of Mindfulness and Present-Moment Awareness: Continuous use of technology can cause people to become engrossed in the digital world, neglecting to observe their surroundings or be mindful of what is happening in the present moment. This lack of



mindfulness aligns with Buddhist concepts that emphasize the importance of being present and aware. The absence of mindfulness can lead to a loss of concentration ability and emotional control in various situations, potentially affecting happiness and quality of life.

Practicing mindfulness and meditation according to Buddhist psychological approaches is an effective method to help reduce the impact of technology. This can include setting time limits for usage, creating boundaries for social media use, and regularly engaging in activities that promote relaxation and calmness.

This analysis of these impacts demonstrates that while technology and social media have many benefits, they also have negative effects that need to be carefully managed to ensure that people can live with good mental health and genuine happiness.

METHODS OF APPLYING BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY TO ADDRESS FEELINGS OF UNHAPPINESS AND LACK OF MEANING IN LIFE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Applying Buddhist psychological principles to address feelings of unhappiness and lack of meaning in life in the digital age can help restore balance to the mind and discover inner happiness. Buddhist psychology offers several approaches that can be applied, such as:

1. Mindfulness Practice

Mindfulness is a process that helps us become aware of the present moment and perceive what is happening in our minds without judgment. Having mindfulness helps us deal with feelings of unhappiness by recognizing negative thoughts and emotions when they arise and choosing not to respond to them with self-criticism or attachment to suffering. Mindfulness can be practiced through meditation, observing the breath, or performing daily activities with concentration, such as walking, eating, or listening to surrounding sounds (Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto), 2003).

2. Consideration and Practice of the Four Noble Truths

Understanding "suffering" as an inherent part of life that cannot be entirely avoided is a good starting point for facing feelings of unhappiness. The Four Noble Truths include:

1) Dukkha (Suffering) - Recognizing that life naturally involves dissatisfaction and problems



2) Samudaya (Origin of Suffering) - Understanding that the cause of suffering is attachment and craving (CSD-314)

3) Nirodha (Cessation of Suffering) - Realizing that suffering can be ended through letting go

4) Magga (Path to the Cessation of Suffering) - The journey to liberation through practicing the Middle Way (Eightfold Path) (Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto), 2009)

3. Practicing the Eightfold Path

The Eightfold Path is a way of life that encompasses thinking, speaking, acting, and developing the mind. It can be applied to manage feelings of unhappiness and lack of meaning, especially by considering Right View and Right Intention, which emphasize changing our perspective and attitude towards life (Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto), 2000).

4. Letting Go and Reducing Attachment

One of the key principles in Buddhism is letting go and not being attached to impermanent things. Accepting that things in life are temporary and not clinging to success or failure can help reduce feelings of unhappiness and dissatisfaction in life. This includes not being attached to images or things seen on social media, which may be mere illusions that do not reflect reality (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2006).

5. Meditation for Developing Wisdom and Inner Peace

Meditation is an important tool that helps calm the mind and provides clarity in considering thoughts and emotions. Regular meditation can help us recognize and understand feelings of unhappiness and develop wisdom in finding solutions to problems (Phra Brahmaganabhorn (P.A. Payutto), 2008).

6. Practicing Loving-Kindness and Compassion

Practicing Metta (loving-kindness) and Karuna (compassion) not only helps create positive feelings towards oneself but also opens the heart to perceive and understand the suffering of others. When we have compassion for ourselves and others, we reduce self-criticism and build meaningful and supportive relationships (Phra Paisal Visalo, 2014).



7. Developing Contentment

Practicing appreciation for what we have in life and being content with what already exists creates a positive attitude towards life and reduces unnecessary desires. Practicing contentment will help us discover true happiness from within (Thana Nilchaikovit, 2017).

8. Reconnecting with Nature and Oneself

Taking time away from digital media and returning to nature can help restore our relationship with ourselves. Spending time on outdoor activities, such as walking in a garden or listening to natural sounds, can calm the mind and make us feel more connected to real life (Bratman et al., 2015).

9. Setting Meaningful Life Goals

Setting meaningful goals that align with one's values is important in creating a sense of purpose in life. Buddhist psychology encourages positive thinking and commitment to doing things that benefit oneself and others (Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto), 2000).

Applying these Buddhist psychological principles in the digital age will help us effectively deal with feelings of unhappiness and lack of meaning in life by emphasizing internal mental development and creating balance in life to respond to a constantly changing world.

NEW BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The article “Buddhist Psychology in the Digital Age” presents the application of Buddhist psychology in the digital age to help people cope with the mental and emotional problems caused by using technology and social media. The article focuses on using Buddhist concepts such as mindfulness, letting go, and developing contentment with what you have to help people become aware of their current thoughts and emotions and reduce their attachment to the ephemeral.

The main knowledge from this article can be divided into the following key topics:

The Impact of Technology on the Mind Technology and social media affect the mind, such as comparing oneself to others, digital media addiction, reduced concentration, and lack of real-life relationships.

Practicing Mindfulness in the Digital World, practicing mindfulness while using technology, such as setting intentions before use, taking deep breaths before responding to messages, and taking breaks from use when feeling stressed.

Managing Information and Media Screening, Using Buddhist psychology to screen information from social media to prevent falling victim to fake news or anxiety-inducing information.

Dealing with Self-Comparison, The Four Bases of Power (Chanda, Viriya, Citta, Vimangsa) help create self-satisfaction and avoid negative comparisons.

Creating Valuable Online Relationships, creating friendly and understanding online relationships based on the principles of loving-kindness and compassion in Buddhist psychology.

Dealing with Stress and Digital Addiction: Meditation to Calm and Control the Mind
Balancing the Online and Real Worlds: A Guide to Living a Balanced Life Without Technology
Dominating Your Life According to the Buddhist Middle Way.

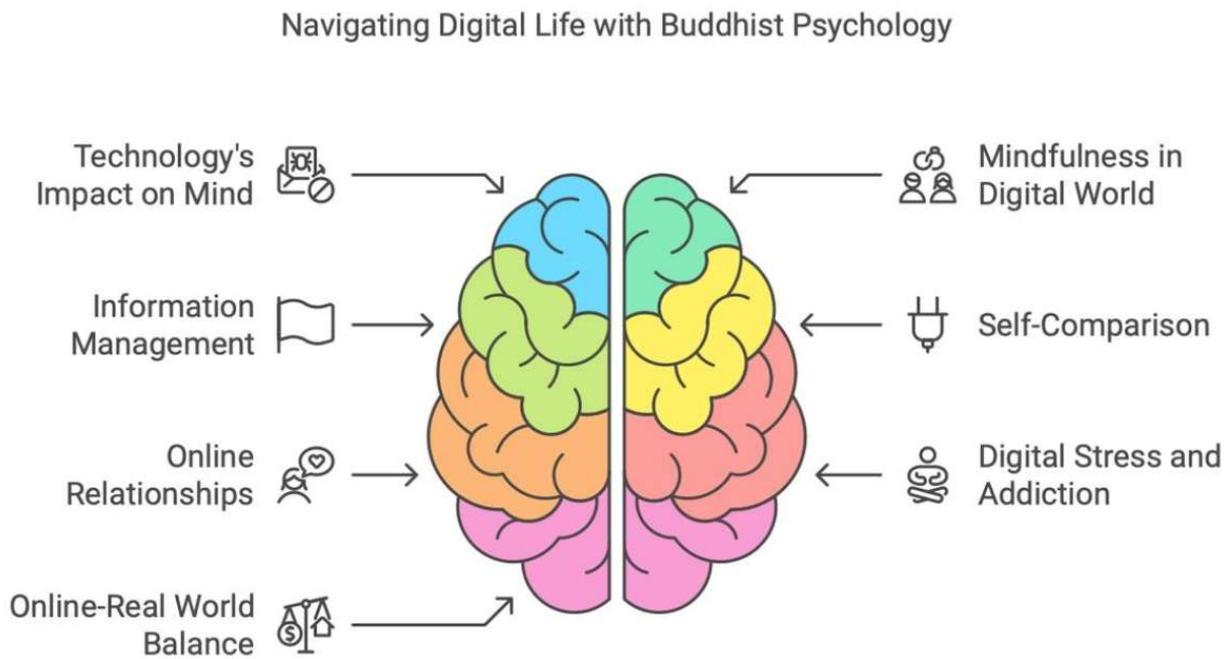


Figure 1: shows the new body of knowledge

This article focuses on developing mindfulness, concentration, wisdom, and creating meaning in life so that people can live mentally sound and truly happy lives in the digital age.



CONCLUSION

Buddhist psychology in the digital age involves applying Buddhist principles and concepts to help cope with mental challenges and problems arising from the use of technology and social media in daily life. In the digital era where we are increasingly connected through screens, applying Buddhist psychology can help create balance and good mental health. Key approaches include:

Mindfulness Practice helps us concentrate and be aware of the present moment, reducing domination by negative information or feelings of comparison with others on social media. Letting Go emphasizes reducing attachment to impermanent and uncontrollable things, helping us accept imperfections and dissatisfaction in digital life more easily. Practicing Loving-Kindness and Compassion help develop empathy for oneself and others, reducing self-criticism and building good relationships in the online world. Reducing Comparison and Contentment lessens the comparison of one's life with others on social media and cultivates satisfaction with what we have and are. Developing Meaning in Life by setting goals aligned with one's values helps life become meaningful and purposeful, not diverted by unnecessary desires in the digital world. Connecting with Nature and Being Present involves returning to nature and being present to restore relationships with oneself and reduce domination by technology.

Therefore, Buddhist psychology in the digital age creates a balance between using technology and maintaining mental health through developing mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. It helps us find inner peace and happiness even in a rapidly changing society, allowing us to live with it happily.

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