



Lying Flat in the Context of Digital Media: Mechanisms of Addiction

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Abstract. This study aims to explore the influence between addiction and Lying flat in the context of digital media, and provide theoretical and practical enlightenment for the construction of digital society and enterprise management. In this study, 521 people were tested by questionnaire, and the collected data were analyzed. Under the background of digital media, individual self-evaluation and dependence on digital media played a mediating role in the relationship between digital media and Lying flat.

Keywords: Digital media, Lying flat, Digital media use dependence, Human resources Management

1 Introduction

Over the past 20-30 years, society has rewarded those who work hard and endure hardship. However, the word "Lying flat" is a popular word with great influence in recent years, which expresses a new attitude towards life in most contexts. This study specifically analyzes the following questions: (1) What is the relationship between social comparison and Lying flat on in the context of digital media? (2) Does digital media use dependence play a mediating role between upward social comparison and Lying flat on digital media?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Lying Flat

The word "Lying flat" has been active in the public's vision since it became a buzzword on the Internet in 2021¹. The social public's view of Lying flat from the discussion of Lying flat youth, to the rational view of Lying flat, and then to the rational analysis of the causes of Lying flat and related influencing factors, people gradually changed from the psychology of watching the fun to accept and understand Lying flat. In order to

better understand "Lying flat", we can first understand two other words that were popular at that time Buddha-like and Involution. The term "Buddha-like" originally originated in Japan and later became popular in China and other places to describe an attitude and philosophy of life. The meaning of the Buddhist system is to maintain a detached and calm attitude towards life, not to pursue utilitarianism and success, but to pursue inner peace and comfort². The Buddha-like people advocate not being burdened by external pressures and social expectations, but choosing to go with the flow and accept themselves and everything around them. Individuals may be influenced by a variety of factors and eventually choose Buddha-like life. On the one hand, the factor is the influence of social pressure. The competitive pressure and life pressure of modern society make some people choose Buddha-like attitude, trying to get rid of social utilitarianism and comparison mentality, and pursue inner peace and comfort³; On the other hand, there is cultural influence. The Buddha-like attitude towards life is influenced to a certain extent by the Buddha-like thought in Eastern culture, which emphasizes the attitude towards life that is spontaneous and detached from the world⁴. The term "Involution" originally originated as a popular term on Chinese digital media to describe a social phenomenon and mentality. The meaning of Involution means that in a certain field or social group, due to excessive competition pressure and serious comparison mentality, individuals continue to increase investment, constantly exceed their limits, and even fall into a vicious circle⁵. The phenomenon of Involution shows that the social competition is too fierce, and the individual keeps increasing the investment in order to pursue success and meet the social expectation, which leads the whole society into a state of vicious competition and pressure. The Involution can be said to be the opposite of the Buddha-like and Lying flat. The competitive pressure of society is an important factor leading to the phenomenon of Involution, especially in the fields of education and occupation. Due to fierce competition, individuals constantly increase their investment in pursuit of success and meeting social expectations, leading to the phenomenon of internal examination⁶. The expectations of families and society on individuals will also affect the emergence of Involution phenomenon. Some families and organizations have too high expectations on individuals, resulting in individuals constantly increasing investment in order to meet expectations and falling into the state of Involution⁷. The mentality and values of individuals will also affect whether they are easy to fall into the state of Involution. Some individuals have too high a pursuit of success and achievement, and are easy to fall into the vicious circle of Involution⁸. After the Buddha-like and the Involution, many young people said that "it's too tired to Involution" and "it's a better choice to go back to their hometown for a job." According to the results of the 7th National Census bulletin released by the National Bureau of Statistics, the elderly population aged 60 and above in China is 264 million, accounting for 18.7% of the total population. The power of the young generation urgently needs to be brought into play. However, in the social environment, many young people give up making efforts in order to ensure they can live a normal life, which also reflects the changes of the Times. The needs and demands of the young people in the new era are quite different from those of the previous generation.

Xinyuan Qin et al. (2022)⁹ summarized the change of social mentality from Involution to Buddha-like and then to Lying flat. They mentioned that people try to realize

their self-worth, and when they find that their personal value cannot be realized, they begin to adjust their Buddha-like mentality, and finally, when they find that the Buddha-like still cannot solve the problem, they begin to be Lying flat.

As for how to solve the problem of Lying flat, some scholars believe that the main reason for Lying flat is that laws and policies at the social level can provide support¹⁰. People who make efforts to make progress do not get corresponding rewards, so the state should adjust relevant laws and preferential policies, and people will naturally work harder if they get a return equivalent to their efforts.

2.2 Upward Social Comparison in Digital Media

In 1954, Festinger put forward the social comparison theory, which refers to the process in which an individual makes a clearer understanding of himself when comparing with others¹¹. Social comparison can be divided into three directions: upward, downward and parallel. Upward social comparison is more likely to occur in digital media, and upward social comparison in digital media is more likely to lead to individuals' dissatisfaction with the social status¹². As a strategy to cope with pressure and dissatisfaction, Lying flat is likely to be affected by upward social comparison in digital media based on upward social comparison produce negative emotions such as anxiety, and resulting in dependence on digital media, and then Lying flat¹³. The comparison of an individual's life with others on digital media may lead to fluctuations in self-evaluation and even self-deprecation¹⁴. Meanwhile, the reasons for mobile phone addiction can be traced back to excessive use of mobile phones, as a means of escaping from the real world, excessive use of mobile phones is often used to mitigate the effects of self-deprecation, which in turn increases the risk of mobile phone and Internet addiction¹⁵. Furthermore, the fear of missing out (FoMO), anxiety, lack of confidence, anger and other complex emotions can arise from missing out on information from digital media. Based on these studies, it is proposed that the use dependence of digital Media has a positive correlation with the upward social comparison and level of digital media (Hypothesis 1).

2.3 Digital Media Use Dependent

According to the Media Dependency theory, media has an important impact on information transmission in modern society, people become dependent on the media when there is no substitute for the media. The greater the degree of dependence, the greater the influence of mass media on the individual, and vice versa. Therefore, the degree of dependence on digital media use dependent plays a mediating role between digital media on social comparison and Lying flat (Hypothesis 2).

3 Shortcomings of Existing Research

1) Lying flat is a socialized phenomenon, but most of the existing studies have investigated college students, and there are insufficient studies on other age groups.

2) Existing studies have been verified separately the relationship between the pairs of social comparison, core self-evaluation, self-concept clarity and digital media use dependence on digital media, but there is insufficient research on the relationship in all of them and how those factors influence Lying flat in the context of digital media.

3) It has been proved that neuroticism, as an important personality variable, has a greater impact on emotion and behavior than other personalities, but there is insufficient research on the effect path of neuroticism on Lying flat, which needs to be explored through empirical research.

4 Methods

4.1 Research Design

Two studies were set up. In the first study, quantitative research was used to preliminarily verify the correlation between social comparison and Lying flat in the context of digital media, and to explore the mediating role of digital media use dependence, core self-evaluation and self-concept clarity, and the modulating role of neuroticism. In the second study, the qualitative research method of grounded theory is adopted to more effectively explore the hidden emotional psychological and behavioral mechanisms between "upward social comparison on digital media" and "Lying flat", so as to help us further explore the deeper internal psychological mechanism differences between individuals on digital media upward social comparison and Lying flat.

In order to enhance the rigor of the experiment, study 1 conducted a preliminary survey of 60 samples before the formal start of the experiment, and corrected the problems that were easy to cause ambiguity. Then stratified random sampling method was mainly adopted. 521 questionnaires with equal proportion of men and women were randomly distributed through digital media across the country and in different industries and occupations. 15 questionnaires were judged invalid (the filling time was less than 120 seconds), with an effective recovery rate of 97.1%.

In study 2, 8 questions were determined, and the subjects were interviewed in the form of one-to-one telephone interview. The average length of each interview was 20 minutes and 10 people were interviewed.

4.2 Method of Data Collection

Questionnaire survey method and Interview method. There are 4 questionnaires are used, includes Digital media ascending social comparison scale, Digital media use dependence scale, Lying flat scale and Semi-structured interview questionnaire.

4.3 Data Analysis Techniques

In study 1, SPSS27.0 was used to conduct Harman single factor test, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis for each variable, and PROCESS v4.1 was used to conduct single sample *t* test, regression analysis and Bootstrap mediation analysis. ANOVA

single factor analysis of variance was used to analyze the differences of age, education background and city in the relevant dimensions of variables such as upward social comparison in digital media.

The study 2 selects interview method to collect information, and uses grounded theory to analyze. Interview is a common method of information collection. The interviewees answer the questions of the researcher, and the researcher records the interview process and analyzes the text data after the interview to form a conclusion. Grounded theory was proposed in 1967 by two scholars, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, and is a scientifically valid qualitative research method. The role of grounded theory is to construct a new theoretical phenomenon, which is characterized by theoretical exploration and research context¹⁶. The research of grounded theory generally includes three basic steps: open coding, spindle coding and selective coding. Open coding is the process of systematizing the field notes and interview recordings by refining them. Spindle coding is to organize open coded data through cluster analysis. The main function and purpose of selective coding is to integrate the main category, refine the core category, and thus establish the relationship between the core categories¹⁷. After the interview, the researcher sorted out the recordings and notes within 24 hours, extracted key points for each question, and analyzed the text to find the logic between each key point. The main steps include: (1) Using the Feishu software to transcribe the recording, and revising the error statements in the Feishu software according to the original recording; (2) Read text materials and be familiar with text data; (3) Based on the grounded theory, the three-layer coding method and NVIVO11, a commonly used analysis tool for qualitative research, were used to extract the main views of each interviewer and summarize them according to the order of interview questions; (4) Summarize and analyze the sorted text again to explore the logical relationship.

5 Result Presentation

5.1 Common Method Bias Test

Harman single factor test was used for analysis and control in this study. The results showed that the variance explained by the first factor was 30.06%, excluding the possibility of severe homologous bias.

5.2 Correlation Analysis Among Variables

The results of correlation analysis show that digital media upward social comparison is significantly positively correlated with digital media use dependence and Lying flat; Digital media use dependence is significantly positively correlated with Lying flat, and the correlation table for each dimension is shown in Table 1. The results of regression analysis are shown in Table 2. The results show that the social comparison on digital media is significantly positive in predicting digital media use dependence ($\beta=0.51$, $P<0.001$) and Lying flat ($\beta=0.31$, $P<0.001$), and digital media use dependence is positive in predicting Lying flat ($\beta=0.01$, $P<0.05$).

Digital media Use dependencies					0.01	0.04	2.26*	[0.012,0.172]
Control variables								
Gender	1.16	0.80	1.44	[-0.421,2.737]	0.64	0.73	0.87	[0.797,2.069]
Age	-1.36	0.34	4.05** *	[-2.023,-0.702]	-0.38	0.31	-1.23	[-0.990,0.226]
Education	1.08	0.51	2.11*	[0.074,2.079]	0.09	0.46	3.52** *	[-2.544,-0.720]
Sectors	0.09	0.08	1.12	[-0.066,0.241]	-0.07	0.07	-0.93	[-0.205,-0.074]
Occupations	0.06	0.06	1.08	[-0.051,0.176]	0.04	0.05	0.71	[0.066,0.140]
City	0.30	0.37	0.81	[-0.426,1.027]	0.92	0.34	2.73**	[0.257,1.574]
R ²	0.25				0.25			
F	20.94***				18.02***			

5.3 Construction of Qualitative Interview Model

Open coding.

Referring to the practice of Yingdong Ji et al. (2024)¹⁸, the researcher first sorted out the data, deleted the redundant statements that affected the understanding, and then marked the nodes, analyzed and sorted out the logical relations, and merged the nodes with similar semantics. In the end, 48 initial categories are formed.

Spindle coding.

The logical relationship of each open code is emphasized when sorting out¹⁹. This study summarized the 48 initial categories into 7 main categories,.

Selective coding.

Study 2 classifies the 7 main categories into 4 core categories, and the relationship between the core categories is shown in Figure 1.

When individuals use digital media, they will have both positive and negative effects. Negative effects such as too much negative information and false information will affect social comparison on digital media, resulting in a sense of competition, remorse or envy. If there is a negative psychology after social comparison on digital media, such as not confident and easy to follow the crowd, it will further produce frustration or forced to accept reality, and finally lead to procrastination, less social interaction and Buddha-like behavior.

And for those who are confident and purposeful, they still don't be Lying flat after making social comparisons on digital media. At the same time, people who do not Lying flat think that Lying flat or not is a choice, and this choice not only depends on the individual will, but also affected by the social environment.

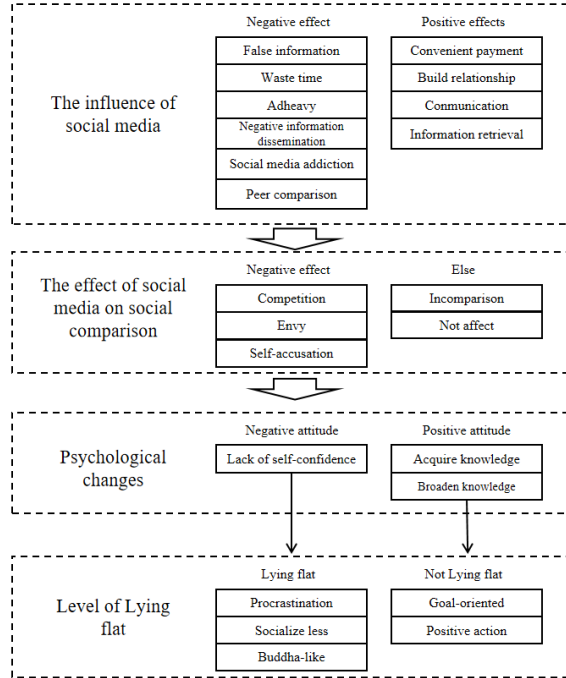


Fig. 1. Relationships between core categories

6 Conclusion and Discussion

The results of study 1 and Study 2 successively found: The negative correlation of social comparison on Lying flat brought by digital mediat, which is similar to previous findings²⁰, indicating that this influence is stable, and this influence is more influenced by individual self-factors, such as core self-evaluation, self-concept clarity, and negative emotions²¹. Factors such as city, age and education background were compared horizontally, and the relationship between social comparison, Lying flat and demographic variables on digital media was analyzed from multiple perspectives.

Some studies have shown that the core self-evaluation of employees in state-owned enterprises has a positive predictive effect on job engagement²², the core self-evaluation and job engagement of college counselors are positively correlated²³ and the self-concept clarity of primary school teachers is positively correlated with job engagement²⁴, which is inconsistent with the results of this study. An individual's self-concept is an individual's comprehensive understanding of his own character, behavior, think-

ing, values and other aspects, while an individual's core self-evaluation is an individual's basic evaluation of his own ability and value, both of which are related to self-knowledge. The researchers believe that the reason for the difference between the conclusions of this study and those of previous studies may be that the sample scope of this study is nationwide, rather than a specific type of occupation or enterprise.

In this study, there are few previous studies in this area which can provide more basis and data for future social research, and the objectivity of the conclusions needs further discussion. People in first-tier cities generally have higher core self-evaluation and self-concept clarity, which may be related to their exposure to educational resources and social contacts. Simply put, when they live or work in first-tier cities, they meet more people and encounter more things, and gradually become more peaceful and likely receptive to negative emotions and events. When they encounter difficulties, although they will be discouraged and complain, they will continue to work hard, or to some extent, in the face of the huge pressure of life in first-tier cities, they have to work hard. Similar conclusions were not found in previous studies, and later scholars can continue to explore. There was significant correlation between age, social comparison and Lying flat equality variables on digital media. Age has a significant negative correlation with digital media, which may be because young people are immature or have fewer resources and are more likely to believe the information conveyed by digital media. Educational background also has a certain influence on various variables. People with low educational background are more likely to show the phenomenon of social comparison on digital media, dependence on digital media use and Lying flat, which may be because of the groups they usually come into contact with, and they may be more easily persuaded or influenced by others, so they Lying flat when others around them Lying flat.

Based on the results, the researchers found that there is still a lot to explore when it comes to Lying flat and digital media use. From the relationship between the two, this paper obtains the following enlightenment:

(1) Excessive use of digital media can aggravate emotional stress. Both young and old people should pay attention to the time of use digital media, especially in their spare time. They can develop their own hobbies, timely detect their negative emotions and intervene, and form clear self-cognition and self-evaluation.

(2) Look at all kinds of information in digital media objectively and stay alert. Digital media information is sometimes difficult to distinguish between true and false, people should distinguish when using digital media, rational view of the information pushed by digital media.

(3) Supervision should pay more attention to the identification and handling of social false news. Digital media platforms should strengthen the supervision of users, timely detect and deal with users who often post false information, so that other users can surf the Internet more green.

(4) Enterprises and institutions should update their management concepts and methods in a timely manner. Enterprises and public institutions can combine the current social development needs and social phenomena to guide and cultivate the values and behavior habits of employees, so that management can play an effective role.

(5) In terms of policies, reasonable guidance should be given to people who lie flat not to lie flat. The government should explore the influencing factors of leveling more deeply, make targeted policy improvements, and strengthen the supervision of digital media platforms.

(6) Rationally treat the meaning and function of Lying flat. Lying flat not only have negative significance, but also a positive significance, all sectors of society should rationally look upon Lying flat, conform to the rhythm of social development, believe in the self-drive and vitality of the young generation and give Lying flat young people more encouragement and trust.

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