

Cyberpsychology in Brazil: Impacts on Mental Health and Social Interactions

Sheyla Christine Santos Fernandes¹ 

Marck de Souza Torres² 

Tailson Evangelista Mariano³ 

João Gabriel Modesto⁴ 

Carlos Eduardo Pimentel⁵ 

José Carlos Santos Ribeiro⁶ 

Mariana Matos Nascimento Oliveira⁶ 

Alanda Maria Ferro Pereira⁶ 

Maria Isidora Bilbao Nieva⁷ 

Abstract: This narrative review explores how cyberpsychology has developed in Brazil by bringing together research on mental health, social interactions, and political behavior in digital environments. Although international studies offer important frameworks, they often overlook the sociocultural and technological conditions that shape Brazilian experiences, such as structural inequality, high social—media penetration, and the central role of messaging platforms. By synthesizing findings usually examined separately, the review shows that emotional well-being, online engagement, and political expression are deeply interconnected. Brazilian evidence highlights how emotional vulnerability, identity dynamics, and platform affordances influence both interpersonal exchanges and collective behaviors. Integrating these domains offers a more complete view of how digital technologies affect everyday life in Brazil and helps refine broader cyberpsychological models. This perspective contributes to international debates by showing why Brazil is a meaningful context for understanding the links between technology, mental health, and sociopolitical participation.

Keywords: social psychology, social interactions, mental health

Ciberpsicologia no Brasil: Impactos na Saúde Mental e nas Interações Sociais

Resumo: Esta revisão narrativa examina como a ciberpsicologia se desenvolveu no Brasil ao reunir pesquisas sobre saúde mental, interações sociais e comportamento político em ambientes digitais. Embora estudos internacionais ofereçam referenciais importantes, eles frequentemente ignoram as condições socioculturais e tecnológicas que moldam as experiências brasileiras, como a desigualdade estrutural, a ampla penetração das mídias sociais e o papel central das plataformas de mensagens. Ao integrar resultados geralmente analisados separadamente, a revisão mostra que bem-estar emocional, engajamento online e expressão política são dimensões interligadas. As evidências brasileiras revelam como vulnerabilidade emocional, dinâmicas identitárias e características das plataformas influenciam tanto as trocas interpessoais quanto comportamentos coletivos. A articulação desses domínios oferece uma compreensão mais completa dos efeitos das tecnologias digitais na vida cotidiana e contribui para o aprimoramento de modelos ciberpsicológicos. Essa perspectiva também amplia debates internacionais ao evidenciar por que o Brasil é um contexto-chave para entender as relações entre tecnologia, saúde mental e participação sociopolítica.

Palavras-chave: psicologia social, interações sociais, saúde mental

¹Universidade Federal de Alagoas, Maceió-AL, Brazil.

²Universidade Federal do Amazonas, Manaus-AM, Brazil.

³Universidade Católica de Pernambuco, Recife-PE, Brazil.

⁴Universidade Estadual de Goiás, Luziânia-GO, Brazil.

⁵Universidade Federal da Paraíba, João Pessoa-PB, Brazil.

⁶Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador-BA, Brazil.

⁷Universidad Alberto Hurtado — (UAH Chile), Santiago, Chile.

Support: Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Amazonas (FAPEAM) e a Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES).

Correspondence address: Sheyla Christine Santos Fernandes. Av. Lourival de Melo Mota, S/N, Tabuleiro dos Martins, Maceió-AL, Brazil. 57072-970; E-mail: sheyla.fernandes@ip.ufal.br

Ciberpsicología en Brasil: Impactos en la Salud Mental y las Interacciones Sociales

Resumen: Esta revisión narrativa examina cómo se ha desarrollado la ciberpsicología en Brasil al reunir investigaciones sobre salud mental, interacciones sociales y comportamiento político en entornos digitales. Aunque los estudios internacionales ofrecen marcos importantes, a menudo pasan por alto las condiciones socioculturales y tecnológicas que conforman las experiencias brasileñas, como la desigualdad estructural, la amplia penetración de las redes sociales y el papel central de las plataformas de mensajería. Al sintetizar hallazgos que suelen analizarse por separado, la revisión muestra que el bienestar emocional, la participación en línea y la expresión política están profundamente interconectados. La evidencia brasileña destaca cómo la vulnerabilidad emocional, las dinámicas identitarias y las características de las plataformas influyen tanto en los intercambios interpersonales como en los comportamientos colectivos. Integrar estos ámbitos ofrece una visión más completa de los efectos de las tecnologías digitales en la vida cotidiana y contribuye a perfeccionar modelos ciberpsicológicos más amplios. Esta perspectiva también enriquece los debates internacionales al mostrar por qué Brasil es un contexto clave para comprender la relación entre tecnología, salud mental y participación sociopolítica.

Palabras clave: psicología social, interacciones sociales, salud mental

The digital revolution has brought about significant transformations in social, cultural, and psychological dynamics, reshaping how individuals interact, build identities, and experience their interpersonal relationships (Gallese, 2024). In this context, cyberpsychology has emerged as an interdisciplinary field dedicated to investigating the impacts of digital technologies on human behavior. Its diverse areas of inquiry encompass mental health, online political activism, social media engagement, and technology-mediated social interactions (Donard, 2016).

Although international research has documented the psychological and sociopolitical effects of digital technologies, most existing reviews are based on evidence from the Global North. Consequently, these reviews often overlook how structural inequality, regional disparities, and the specific digital ecosystem of platforms shape mental health outcomes and political behavior. This gap hinders the ability of current models to explain the dynamics observed in large, diverse democracies such as Brazil.

The development of cyberpsychology reflects the rapid expansion of digital technologies and their deepening influence on both the public and private spheres (Ancis, 2020). Early studies in the field focused on digital identity, computer-mediated communication, and the formation of virtual communities (McKenna & Bargh, 2000), establishing the foundations for broader investigations into how digital environments affect social interactions. In recent decades, Brazilian research has accompanied this global evolution while also addressing context-specific challenges. Local scholars have examined the mental health impacts associated with social media use, increases in antisocial digital behaviors, and the role of algorithmic systems in political dynamics. These lines of inquiry reveal a sociocultural landscape marked by profound inequalities and one of the highest rates of social media use worldwide (Pimentel et al., 2023), positioning Brazil as a particularly informative setting for the advancement of cyberpsychology.

Brazil is an especially relevant context for empirical and theoretical development in the field because digital interactions

unfold amid the intersecting dimensions of socioeconomic inequality, racialized vulnerabilities, and unequal access to digital infrastructure. The pervasive use of encrypted messaging platforms, the rapid circulation of political content, and the influence of institutional actors—such as the Superior Electoral Court (TSE)—shape online behavior in ways that challenge conventional theoretical models. These conditions not only heighten the relevance of studying cyberpsychology within Brazil but also offer an opportunity to refine, expand, or contest prevailing international frameworks.

This review argues that integrating Brazilian evidence on mental health, social interactions, and political behavior reveals a distinctive sociotechnical configuration in which digital platforms amplify both psychological vulnerabilities and collective dynamics in ways not fully captured by existing international models. Building on this perspective, this article examines the evolution of cyberpsychology in Brazil, from early studies on digital identity to current research on political polarization, radicalism, and mental health. We first describe the main characteristics of the field and then discuss advances in studies addressing mental health and social media use, highlighting both the potential for emotional support and well-being and the risks associated with excessive or problematic use.

Next, we analyze research on political behavior and online activism, with emphasis on how digital platforms contribute to affective polarization, algorithmic amplification, and the mobilization of social movements. Although these topics have expanded significantly within Brazilian scholarship, integrating them reveals shared concerns that underscore both the relevance of cyberpsychology as a field and the urgent need for further empirical refinement.

Given the heterogeneity of Brazilian empirical studies and the absence of prior integrative reviews connecting mental health, political behavior, and social interactions, a narrative approach is well suited to synthesizing diverse findings, identifying conceptual convergence, and highlighting persistent gaps. The article proceeds as follows: we outline the historical development of cyberpsychology in Brazil, examine

mental health outcomes associated with ICT use, review evidence on political polarization and online activism, and conclude by proposing an integrative framework that situates Brazilian digital dynamics within broader theoretical debates while identifying methodological and ethical implications for future research.

This review argues that Brazil's unique sociotechnical context reveals interdependent mechanisms linking mental health, social interactions, and political behavior. This idea expands on existing cyberpsychological models and offers a theoretical contribution.

Method

The present study adopted a narrative literature review design, aiming to describe, analyze, and critically synthesize the scientific literature on cyberpsychology and social interactions. As Green et al. (2006) proposed, this review was constructed via several methodological steps. First, the following research question was formulated: How can cyberpsychology, as an interdisciplinary and rapidly evolving field, contribute to the understanding of social interactions in an increasingly digital world?

To strengthen methodological transparency in line with international standards, this review employed additional procedures to refine the search strategy and ensure contextual relevance. Although broader databases such as PsycINFO, Scopus, and Web of Science were initially considered, preliminary searches revealed a limited number of Brazil-focused empirical studies at the intersections examined here. These results supported the decision to prioritize SciELO and LILACS, which are accessed through the BVS platform, owing to their consistent indexing of Brazilian psychological research and related fields.

Only studies published in Portuguese, English, or Spanish were included; publications in other languages were excluded because of their limited relevance to the Brazilian context and inconsistent indexing across databases. In addition to database searches, an exploratory scan of the Currículo Lattes profiles of researchers affiliated with the ANPEPP Working Group 97 (Cyberpsychology and Social Interactions) was conducted to identify potential supplementary studies. Publications found through this strategy were included only if they met all eligibility criteria independently, thereby minimizing the risk of overrepresentation of a single research network.

The search covered publications from January 2000 to December 2025. This period corresponds to the time when digital technologies expanded in Brazil. To ensure adequate coverage of studies relevant to the Brazilian context, eligible works included texts published in Portuguese, English, or Spanish. Descriptors were selected in three languages to ensure comprehensive retrieval across regional publication practices. In English, the search included the terms “cyberpsychology,” “mental health,” “social interactions,” “political behavior,” “social media,” and “digital behavior.” In Portuguese, the corresponding terms were “ciberpsicologia,” “saúde mental,”

“interações sociais,” “comportamento político,” “mídias sociais,” and “comportamento digital.” The Spanish search incorporated “ciberpsicología,” “salud mental,” “interacciones sociales,” “comportamiento político,” and “redes sociales.” These descriptors were combined via Boolean operators. For example, searches included expressions such as (“cyberpsychology” OR “digital behavior” OR “social media”) AND (“mental health” OR “psychological functioning” OR “well-being”) AND (“Brazil”); (“ciberpsicologia” OR “mídias sociais”) AND (“saúde mental” OR “bem-estar psicológico”) AND (“Brasil”); and (“ciberpsicología” OR “conducta digital”) AND (“salud mental” OR “bienestar psicológico”) AND (“Brasil”).

Eligibility criteria were established to guide the selection of studies included in this review. Only works presenting empirical data involving Brazilian participants or digital contexts relevant to Brazil were considered. Additionally, studies had to examine at least one of the following domains: mental health and ICT use; social interactions in digital environments; or political behavior, including polarization and online activism. Eligible materials included peer-reviewed articles, books, book chapters, theses, and dissertations, and full-text availability was needed. Studies consisting solely of literature reviews, theoretical essays without empirical grounding, editorials, commentaries, or works not specifically addressing the Brazilian context were excluded.

For each eligible study, information was systematically extracted regarding the following: research design; sample characteristics; psychometric instruments and their properties; digital platforms examined; analytic strategies; and key findings related to mental health, social interaction, or political behavior. When available, contextual moderators such as age, gender, race, socioeconomic conditions, regional disparities, and platform affordances were also documented to expand the interpretive depth of the review. The search encompassed publications from January 2000 to December 2025, a period corresponding to the rapid expansion of digital technologies in Brazil and the subsequent surge in academic interest in ICT-mediated behavior. To ensure comprehensive coverage of studies relevant to the Brazilian context, works published in Portuguese, English, or Spanish were included.

Results and Discussion

What is cyberpsychology?

In every historical period, various lifestyles emerge from cultural, ideological, socioeconomic, and technological conditions, creating multiple realities. These elements shape the learning experiences, values, attitudes, and beliefs of each generation (Patrão & Leal, 2019). The present time, for example, is significantly marked by the mediation of digital technologies in human interactions. This phenomenon ultimately influences social exchanges; identity-building processes; and people's behaviors, values, and attitudes.

It even influences the political and economic spheres of a globalized society (Ancis, 2020; Gallese, 2024).

With the advent and popularization of personal computers, the internet, and devices offering rapid access to digital environments, the term “cyber” (short for “cybernetic”) was coined to describe large concentrations of advanced technology. In the context of psychology, cyberpsychology is a field of the human sciences that focuses on studying behaviors and their relationships with technology and different realities while considering the potentialities and challenges to human development at the individual, relational, occupational, group, and organizational levels (Patrão & Leal, 2019).

In other words, cyberpsychology studies the influence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on human behavior, emotional states, and psychological processes (Attrill, 2015). Donard (2016) emphasized that cyberpsychology enables psychology to expand its scope of research beyond the problems arising from digital media use to include a multitude of mediations that have not yet been explored.

From a theoretical and methodological point of view, research in cyberpsychology has primarily adopted an integrative approach (Donard, 2016). Discussions and evidence production in this field emphasize the importance of considering the theoretical and empirical diversity offered by psychology and exploring the cognitive and psychodynamic phenomena that occur when people interact with digital environments.

The field of cyberpsychology includes trends and orientations regarding ethics, research, training, and applications, focusing on five major areas: (1) online behavior and personality; (2) social media use and psychological functioning; (3) games and gaming; (4) telepsychology; and (5) virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI), and applications (Ancis, 2020).

In Brazil, psychology researchers are also interested in exploring the use of technology in mental health (Souza & Cunha, 2019) and social behavior (Bittencourt & Albino, 2017). This includes all the topics and problems inherent to the state of this field's art. Therefore, as an interdisciplinary field with multiple applications, cyberpsychology allows scholars to explore countless themes and adopt different theoretical and methodological approaches in Brazil and abroad, demonstrating its heterogeneous nature.

Cyberpsychology and Mental Health

As a field of study and application of cyberpsychology, the broad field of mental health is behind an increase in the number of studies, especially if we consider all the production developed during the COVID-19 health crisis.

The pandemic can be seen as an important milestone for scientific advances, given the way in which the various areas explored by cyberpsychology researchers are expanding the knowledge about the influence of the uses and appropriations of ICTs in the context of mental health. This historical moment stressed the need for the design and improvement of several tools mediated by digital technologies that could offer some

level of psychological support. When mental health is correlated with cyber-psychology, related studies have focused predominantly on the following macro themes: (1) the internet and daily life; (2) the effects of overuse; (3) privacy; and (4) the effects of ICT-mediated interactions (Catamio & Distor, 2022).

The first macro theme, the internet and daily life, is explored in studies that seek to investigate the influence of technological mediation on the routine of individuals and the relationship between smartphone use and mental health. The second macro theme, effects of overuse, considers markers such as gender, age group, and specific content/media to identify potential damage arising from excess or inappropriate uses of ICTs. The third macro theme, which covers privacy issues that can interfere with mental health, includes research on control perceptions, behaviors, and guidelines for the use of virtual environments; the fourth macro theme, effects of ICT-mediated interactions, investigates how internet use affects the relationships between users and their mental health (Catamio & Distor, 2022).

In this context, methods have been proposed for various areas and macro themes that are at the intersection between cyberpsychology and mental health. Malhotra et al. (2023), for example, suggest the creation of two major categories for the analysis of research data exploring this relationship: moderating factors and contextual factors. In this way, researchers can work with elements and variables that can be adapted to support both the collection and the analysis of data, for example, the sociodemographic data of users, the action of algorithms, exposure to certain content, direct and indirect interventions for mental health, privacy and data security, ethical aspects, and social interactions.

Regardless of the area or macro theme, Malhotra et al. (2023) strongly argued that when their findings are analyzed, researchers should consider that the use of digital technologies can offer as many advantages as risks to people's mental health. Therefore, conducting research that explores this relationship and avoids biases is at the core of understanding the impact of the virtual world on everyday life (Catamio & Distor, 2022).

Similarly, the anthropological approaches that expand and contribute to the production of knowledge in the relationship between the areas of cyberpsychology and mental health also perform a robust contextualization of concepts, definitions and significant milestones that form the research field, dividing the empirical findings into two other categories (Hawkins et al., 2024). The first considers the informational aspects related to the various topics in mental health that are available in digital environments, whereas the second focuses on the technical elements that influence the uses and appropriations taking place in these environments. This is still a relatively new field of research, with a vast potential for exploration and expansion of scientific production, whether in Brazil or abroad. This potential includes conceptual and empirical aspects, favoring the use, emergence, and improvement of the various methodological tools available that assist in research conducted in digital environments. In addition, it facilitates the input of knowledge from the most diverse areas that also focus on aspects concerning people's mental health.

Conversely, it should be noted that the conscious use of social media can foster well-being and expand support networks (Wang et al., 2021). Digital platforms offer opportunities to disseminate positive messages, connect individuals seeking emotional support, and implement digital therapeutic interventions. Studies highlight that positive attitudes toward social media are associated with a healthier use of these tools, leveraging the construction of support networks and the development of strategies that maximize the benefits of these platforms while mitigating potential risks (Santos et al., 2023). In contexts where excessive or problematic use of social media can negatively impact mental health, such strategies are particularly important because they can foster balanced and conscious use.

Digital platforms have long aroused the interest of researchers (Ansari et al., 2024; Junco, 2012; McAndrew & Jeong, 2012), Facebook (Fernandes et al., 2024; Pimentel et al., 2023) and Instagram (Santos et al., 2023). These studies highlight the need to analyze the behavior of Brazilians in the digital context via adequate methodological procedures. The findings indicate a significant influence of the connection between social psychology and emerging problems, especially with respect to the analysis of attitudes toward social media platforms. One of the relevant contributions of research conducted in Brazil is the development of psychometric instruments for the study of social media.

Among the variables most studied with social media, gender plays a moderating role in digital interactions. Pimentel et al. (2023) investigated attitudes toward violence and cyberstalking and reported greater vulnerability of women to online stalking behaviors, especially on social media, whereas men reported greater involvement in antisocial practices. These findings reinforce the need for public policies that consider the intersections between gender and technology, especially in the fight against harmful behaviors.

In addition, some studies report strategies to address the challenges posed by social media use, highlighting how these platforms affect not only individual behavior but also social dynamics, including prosocial behaviors, interpersonal interactions, and technology-mediated changes in social relations (Pimentel et al., 2023).

Social media, as a cultural and psychological phenomenon, represents a dynamic setting that affects behavior, interactions, and mental health. This topic is central to cyberpsychology because it connects psychosocial and technological aspects in a constantly changing environment. The development of psychometric instruments and the debate on mental health, as well as the dissemination of information, stress the importance of interdisciplinary approaches that enhance positive changes and promote ethical interventions and educational strategies with the goal of encouraging healthy and balanced use of digital platforms.

Cyberpsychology applied to social behavior

Considering a more political and social approach, two overlapping topics stand out in cyberpsychology studies:

political behavior and online activism (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014). Notably, there is intensive debate on the relationship between cyberpsychology and mental health, as well as several different issues that include technology-mediated political behavior and activist movements. Therefore, there are multiple implications that can be addressed from different perspectives.

One of the social milestones that can be deemed important for understanding the relationship between political behavior and social media was the ban on Twitter/X in Brazil. In this context, there has been growing debate on the use of social media as spaces taken up by extremist political groups. Even those who do not use social media nor do research on them were probably aware of the decision of Minister Alexandre de Moraes, who stated that the platform had “extremist groups and digital militias (...), with massive dissemination of Nazi, racist, fascist, hate, anti-democratic narratives, even in the period before the municipal elections of 2024” (O Globo, 2024). Although the abovementioned social media platform resumed service in Brazil after compliance with court rulings, the debate on the use of social media for political radicalization is far from over. When conducting studies on cyberpsychology in Brazil, researchers have sought to analyze radicalization in social media, among other phenomena that pervade online political behavior (defined herein as political action and interaction by individuals or organizations in the online environment). They assume that social media—regardless of their type—are powered by algorithms that foster the creation of social bubbles (Pariser, 2012). In this sense, it can be argued that social media platforms are created to provide users with appealing content, which favors intensive use. Therefore, when users access specific content online, they are more likely to be presented with other similar content, boosting the formation of social bubbles (Pariser, 2012).

While it may seem harmless that algorithms are meant to favor the consumption of posts and news about what we are interested in, this has a number of negative implications for the political field. When people begin to consume extremist political content, they will be presented with other similar content, and as a result, they are unlikely to open up to other ideas, and their beliefs will be validated by like-minded groups in a process of social influence (Mendes et al., 2023). This whole mechanism is at the core of the discussion on political polarization.

Political polarization can be defined as a form of hostility between individuals supporting different political groups (Iyengar & Krupenkin, 2018), that is, a form of political prejudice (Mendes et al., 2023) that tends to be enhanced by social bubbles on social media platforms. Therefore, the process of polarization arises from social identity mechanisms (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) linked to an ingroup vs. outgroup opposition, which tends to be rationalized in different ways, for example, by the attribution of negative characteristics to the opposing political group (Mendes et al., 2023).

Although the phenomena are related, there are relevant differences between them. Polarization, as mentioned, involves distancing between political groups (Iyengar & Krupenkin,

2018). Radicalism, in turn, is defined as a willingness to act violently and illegally for political reasons (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009). In this sense, algorithms and social bubbles favor not only the distance between groups but also the radicalization of individuals.

Although different studies emphasize that political intolerance is enhanced by social media use, political discussions in cyberspace also allow the expression of other forms of online political behavior. Given that the internet can disseminate information easily and rapidly, activist debates have increasingly expanded their reach since cyberspace is an important means of expressing minorities (Battezzini & Reginato, 2016). Indeed, websites and applications have been consolidated as efficient tools for knowledge dissemination in diverse forms of interaction; in addition, an increasing number of different people have started to consume political, scientific, media, or entertainment content on a regular basis. In this context, the activism that spreads in social media, called cyberactivism, is in the spotlight because, as a manifestation of social movements, it is as effective as offline activism (Greijdanus et al., 2020).

In Brazil, online activism began in June 2013, when protests against public transportation fare increased. The protests first raided the streets against municipal governments and state governments, but soon, there were demonstrations against the federal government. In the following years, other protests took place. A common feature in all of them was the intensive use of social media to recruit new activists, schedule demonstrations, and disseminate real-time information on the events. This was the key characteristic of cyberactivism (Queiroz, 2017).

Rossi (2017) stresses that cyberactivism has important effects and accelerates transformations in intergroup relations since it advances discussions about demands made by specific groups. Thus, groups become communities and develop bonds that offer security and support among their members. In this way, the online world can be seen as a beneficial tool for promoting engagement, empowerment, and visibility for social issues that are commonly silenced in the offline environment.

Like cyberpsychology, cyberactivism draws on different disciplines and a variety of theoretical perspectives. For example, some studies analyze the roots and effects of cyberactivism on the basis of a social, historical, and political debate on social movements (Alcântara, 2015), and the internet is understood as an element in the process of developing social interactions, as well as a communication tool. In addition, other elements pertinent to social movements, such as organization, diffusion, repertoire, and identity, are objects of analysis.

Similarly, in several studies on cyberactivism, researchers assume that the internet is not an entity apart from political institutions but rather an environment integrated into a broader communication arena that includes counterhegemonic interactions (Albuquerque et al., 2015). As part of their method, such researchers usually perform analyses of social media, collecting data on platforms that reveal the structure of the network organized around the object of study (which can be a public personality, a topic, a political party, or any

targets associated with online activism) and its relationship with institutions that are outside the internet.

Research on cyberactivism has also addressed the processes for the construction of identity (Barreira & Maia, 2022), beliefs (Teixeira et al., 2024), and behavioral choices (Albuquerque et al., 2011), encompassing a range of activist social movements, from cyberfeminist movements (Dutra, 2018), LGBTQIA+ cyberactivism (Barreira & Maia, 2022), decolonial and indigenous movements (Pereira et al., 2024), and proenvironmental movements (Del Vecchio-Lima et al., 2023).

Given this scenario, we can elucidate the important sociopolitical function that social media has assumed to promote mass mobilizations around different agendas and protests, involving an increasing number of studies aimed at revealing the nature and role of cyberactivism in the lives of people and groups. In this sense, many challenges have arisen in this field of research. First, there is limited knowledge, especially in the Brazilian psychology context, about the benefits and scope of cyberactivism or its dimensions and limits, which puts cyberpsychology at the center of this debate. Second, one must be aware that the production of knowledge cannot always keep up with the evolution of online activism; therefore, the integration of theoretical, methodological, and ethical discussions is crucial to foster reflection on the need to produce socially committed knowledge that can meet the demands of intersectionality.

Soares & Stengel (2021) noted that although we still need to advance knowledge about research in online environments, it is undeniably important to consciously and creatively put much effort into this area because there are countless advantages in the diverse data provided by these environments, such as cost reduction and time effectiveness, when using artificial intelligence tools in research (Sampaio et al., 2024).

Cyberpsychology, as an interdisciplinary and rapidly evolving field, is essential for understanding social interactions in a world that are increasingly mediated by digital technologies. In Brazil, this emerging field has highlighted specific challenges, such as the role of social media in political polarization and radicalism, as well as its impact on mental health. The exploration of these phenomena contributes not only to theoretical advances but also to the development of practical solutions that foster digital and social well-being.

Cyberpsychology in Brazil can be strengthened by integrative methodological approaches that can capture the long-term effects of technologies and connect Brazilian cultural and social specificities to a global perspective. In addition, it is essential to integrate academic research and public policies to create strategies that mitigate the risks associated with digital technologies and maximize their benefits. These strategies may include regulations on algorithms, awareness-raising campaigns to promote online security, and encouragement for well-informed social media use.

By addressing specific challenges, such as the problematic use of technologies and inequalities in digital accessibility, cyberpsychology in Brazil can offer relevant contributions to the global advancement of the field, highlighting its ability to integrate different theoretical and practical perspectives.

This interdisciplinary approach not only enriches scientific understanding but also fosters the creation of a safer, inclusive digital environment that is adapted to contemporary demands.

Finally, cyberpsychology in Brazil is a field with considerable growth potential. Research on digital dynamics and its implications for human behavior is essential for understanding contemporary challenges and promoting a more adapted and resilient society in the face of technological transformations. By integrating theoretical, methodological, and practical advances, the field not only strengthens psychological practice but also contributes to the construction of a digital environment that favors collective well-being and innovation.

Taken together, the reviewed evidence demonstrates that mental health, social interactions, and political behavior in Brazil are not isolated phenomena but rather mutually reinforcing dynamics that are shaped by structural inequality, identity processes, and platform-based communication capabilities. This review offers a conceptual synthesis that integrates these domains, challenging assumptions derived from Global North contexts and positioning Brazil as an analytically significant environment for refining cyberpsychological theories. These insights highlight the necessity of future research that explicitly links psychological and political outcomes, employing multimethod approaches capable of capturing the complexity of Brazil's digital landscape.

Data Availability

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

References

- Albuquerque, A., Carvalho, E. M., & Santos, M. A., Jr. (2015). Ciberativismo no Brasil [Cyberactivism in Brazil]. *Cadernos Adenauer*, 16(3), 75-95. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Afonso-Albuquerque-2/publication/318792753_Ciberativismo_no_Brasil_Blogosfera_Progressista_e_Rede_Antipetista/links/5d0c0fd8a6fdcc246297bb46/Ciberativismo-no-Brasil-Blogosfera-Progressista-e-Rede-Antipetista.pdf
- Albuquerque, F. M. F., Pereira, R. C. F., & Bellini, C. G. P. (2011). Do repertório de comportamentos do consumidor: Retaliação e vingança no ciberespaço [From the repertoire of consumer behavior: Retaliation and revenge in cyberspace]. *Revista de Administração*, 46(2), 135-149. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0080210716301960>
- Alcântara, L. M. (2015). Ciberativismo e movimentos sociais: Mapeando discussões [Cyberactivism and social movements: Mapping the debates]. *Aurora: Revista de Arte, Mídia e Política*, 8(23), 73-97. <https://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/aurora/article/view/22474/18888>
- Ancis, J. R. (2020). The age of cyberpsychology: An overview. *Technology, Mind, and Behavior*, 1(1), 9-23. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tmb0000009>
- Ansari, S., Iqbal, N., Asif, R., Hashim, M., Farooqi, S. R., & Alimoradi, Z. (2024). Social media use and well-being: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 27(10), 704-719. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1089/cyber.2024.0001>
- Attrill, A. (Ed.). (2015). *Cyberpsychology*. Oxford University Press.
- Barreira, M. M. L., & Maia, L. M. (2022). Ações ciberativistas LGBTQIA+ no YouTube: Identidades e minorias ativas [LGBTQIA+ cyberactivist actions on YouTube: Identities and active minorities]. *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão*, 42, e242166. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-3703003242166>
- Battezzini, A. P., & Reginato, K. C. (2016). O ativismo popular e o papel das mídias digitais: Reflexos de um novo modelo de exercer democracia no cenário contemporâneo e seus impactos na esfera política [Popular activism and the role of digital media: Reflections on a new model of practicing democracy in the contemporary context and its impacts on the political sphere]. *Revista de Direito Brasileira*, 15(6), 173-184. <https://doi.org/10.26668/IndexLawJournals/2358-1352/2016.v15i6.2991>
- Bittencourt, P. A. S., & Albino, J. P. (2017). O uso das tecnologias digitais na educação do século XXI [The use of digital technologies in 21st-century education]. *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estudos em Educação*, 12(1) 205-214. <https://doi.org/10.21723/riace.v12.n1.9433>
- Catamio, J. R. C., & Distor, J. M. (2022). Cyberpsychology and mental-health: Trends and practice. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 4(6), 2-6. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7112177>
- Del Vecchio-Lima, M. R., Colatusso, V. C. W., Valginhak, D. A., & Aires, N. B. F. (2023). Net-ativismo ambiental nas plataformas de petições online Avaaz. org e Change. org: Algumas observações [Environmental net-activism on online petition platforms Avaaz.org and Change.org: Some observations]. *Intercom: Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação*, 46, e2023105. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-58442023105pt>
- Donard, V. (2016). A pesquisa em psicologia na era digital: Novos campos e modalidades [Research in Psychology in the digital age: New fields and modalities] *Revista San Gregorio*, (12), 27—35. <https://revista.sangregorio.edu.ec/index.php/REVISTASANGREGORIO/article/view/150>
- Dutra, Z. A. P. (2018). A primavera das mulheres: Ciberfeminismo e os movimentos feministas [The women's spring: Cyberfeminism and feminist movements]. *Revista Feminismos*, 6(2), 19-31. <https://periodicos.ufba.br/index.php/feminismos/article/view/30384/17906>

- Fernandes, S. C. S., Freires, L. A., Silva, M. L. V., Martins, M. N., & Rocha, S. A. F. (2024). Preconceito sexual online: Intolerância homoesbotransfóbica no facebook [Online sexual prejudice: Homoesbotransphobic intolerance on Facebook]. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Homocultura*, 7(22), e15810. <https://periodicoscientificos.ufmt.br/ojs/index.php/rebeh/article/view/15810>
- Gallese, V. (2024). Digital visions: The experience of self and others in the age of the digital revolution. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 36(6), 656-666. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2024.2355281>
- Green, B. N., Johnson, C. D., & Adams, A. (2006). Writing narrative literature reviews for peer-reviewed journals: Secrets of the trade. *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine*, 5(3), 101-117. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0899-3467\(07\)60142-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0899-3467(07)60142-6)
- Grijdanus, H., Matos Fernandes, C. A., Turner-Zwinkels, F., Honari, A., Roos, C. A., Rosenbusch, H., & Postmes, T. (2020). The psychology of online activism and social movements: Relations between online and offline collective action. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 35, 49-54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.03.003>
- Hawkins, C., Awondo, P., & Miller, D. (Eds.). (2024). *An anthropological approach to mHealth*. UCL Press.
- Iyengar, S., & Krupenkin, M. (2018). The strengthening of partisan affect. *Political Psychology*, 39(S1), 201—218. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12487>
- Junco, R. (2012). The relationship between frequency of Facebook use, participation in Facebook activities, and student engagement. *Computers & Education*, 58(1), 162—171. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.08.004>
- Malhotra, S., Priyadharshini, S. L., Bharathi, D., & Singh, A., & Khadse, K. N. (2023). Cyberpsychology and the impact of AI on mental health. *Journal for Re Attach Therapy and Developmental Diversities*, 6(10s), 276-287. <https://jrtd.com/index.php/journal/article/view/1103>
- McAndrew, F. T., & Jeong, H. S. (2012). Who does what on Facebook? Age, sex, and relationship status as predictors of Facebook use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(6), 2359—2365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.07.007>
- McKenna, K. Y. A., & Bargh, J. A. (2000). Plan 9 from cyberspace: The implications of the internet for personality and social psychology. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4(1), 57—75. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0401_6
- Mendes, J. A., Brandão, F. D., & Modesto, J. G. (2023). Identidade política e fake news: Percepção de indivíduos sobre credibilidade e compartilhamento de notícias. *Revista Sociais e Humanas*, 36(1), e74577. <https://periodicos.ufsm.br/sociaishumanas/article/view/74577/62702>
- Moskalenko, S., & McCauley, C. (2009). Measuring political mobilization: The distinction between activism and radicalism. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 21(2), 239—260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550902765508>
- O Globo. (2024, 18 de setembro). Entenda por que o Twitter virou X: Usuários relatam volta da rede social [Understand why Twitter became X: Users report the platform's return]. <https://oglobo.globo.com/politica/noticia/2024/09/18/entenda-por-que-o-twitter-virou-x-usuarios-relatam-volta-da-rede-social.ghtml>
- Pariser, E. (2012). *O filtro invisível: O que a internet está escondendo de você [The filter bubble: What the internet is hiding from you]*. Zahar.
- Patrão, I., & Leal, I. (2019). *Intervenção em Ciberpsicologia [Interventions in Cyberpsychology]*. Pactor.
- Pereira, M. D., Brito, L. M. T., & Siqueira, M. (2024). O ciberativismo indígena da comunidade Amarelão Potiguar em meio à pandemia da covid-19 [Indigenous cyberactivism of the Amarelão Potiguar community during the covid-19 pandemic]. *Acta Scientiarum. Human and Social Sciences*, 46(2), e69855. <https://doi.org/10.4025/actascihumansoc.v46i2.69855>
- Pimentel, C. E., Mariano, T. E., & Santos, I. L. S. (2023). *Psicologia da mídia: Fundamentos teóricos e tópicos atuais [Media psychology: Theoretical foundations and current topics]*. Dialética.
- Queiroz, E. D. F. C. (2017). Ciberativismo: a nova ferramenta dos movimentos sociais. *Revista Panorama-Revista de Comunicação Social*, 7(1), 2-5. <https://doi.org/10.18224/pan.v7i1.5574>
- Rossi, T. (2017) Redes Sociais e Ciberativismo: motivações, expectativas e esperança. Tese de Doutorado, Programa de Pós Graduação em Psicologia Clínica. Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
- Sampaio, R. C., Chagas, V., Sanchez, C. S., Gonçalves, J., Borges, T., Alison, M. B., Tigrinho, C. S., Souza, J. R., & Paz, F. S. (2024). Uma revisão de escopo assistida por inteligência artificial (IA) sobre usos emergentes de ia na pesquisa qualitativa e suas considerações éticas [An AI-assisted scoping review on emerging uses of artificial intelligence in qualitative research and their ethical considerations]. *Revista Pesquisa Qualitativa*, 12(30), 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.33361/RPQ.2024.v.12.n.30.729>
- Sandoval-Almazan, R., & Gil-Garcia, J. R. (2014). Toward cyberactivism 2.0? Understanding the use of social media and other information technologies for political activism and social movements. *Government Information Quarterly*, 31(3), 365-378. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2013.10.016>
- Santos, A. A., Ferreira, B. O., Leitão, C. L., Silva, I. R., & Torres, M. S. (2023). Phubbing behavior, personality, and use of Instagram by Brazilian adults: A correlational and predictive study. *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica*, 36, 24. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41155-023-00268-w>

- Soares, S. S. D., & Stengel, M. (2021). Netnografia e a pesquisa científica na internet [Netnography and scientific research on the internet]. *Psicologia USP*, 32, e200066. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0103-6564e200066>
- Souza, K., & Cunha, M. X. C. (2019). Impactos do uso das redes sociais virtuais na saúde mental dos adolescentes: Uma revisão sistemática da literatura [Impacts of social media use on adolescents' mental health: A systematic literature review]. *Revista Educação, Psicologia e Interfaces*, 3(3), 204-217. <https://doi.org/10.37444/issn-2594-5343.v3i3.156>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33—47). Brooks/Cole.
- Teixeira, A. P., Couto, F. P., Carvalho, S. C. S., & Manoel, B. D. (2024). Das (re) criações necessárias: A negritude enquanto potência [On the (re) necessary creations: Blackness as power]. *Tabuleiro de Letras*, 18(2), 353-370. <https://doi.org/10.35499/tl.v18i2.21568>
- Wang, Y., Chung, M. C., Wang, N., Yu, X., & Kenardy, J. (2021). Social support and posttraumatic stress disorder: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 85, 101998. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2021.101998>

Sheyla Christine Santos Fernandes is a Professor of the Universidade Federal de Alagoas, Maceió-AL, Brazil.

Marck de Souza Torres is a Professor of the Universidade Federal do Amazonas, Manaus-AM, Brazil.

Tailson Evangelista Mariano is a Professor of the Universidade Católica de Pernambuco, Recife-PE, Brazil.

João Gabriel Modesto is a Professor of the Universidade Estadual de Goiás, Luziânia-GO, Brazil.

Carlos Eduardo Pimentel is a Professor of the Universidade Federal da Paraíba, João Pessoa-PB, Brazil.

José Carlos Santos Ribeiro is a Professor of the Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador-BA, Brazil.

Mariana Matos Nascimento Oliveira is a PhD Student of the Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador-BA, Brazil.

Alanda Maria Ferro Pereira is a PhD Student of the Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador-BA, Brazil.

Maria Isidora Bilbao Nieva is a Professor of the Universidad Alberto Hurtado — (UAH Chile), Santiago, Chile.

Authors' Contribution:

All authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of this study, to data analysis and interpretation, and to the manuscript revision and approval of the final version. All the authors assume public responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

Associate editor:

Víctor Gabriel dos Santos Tomaz

Received: Jul. 29, 2025

1st Revision: Dec. 02, 2025

Approved: Jan. 26, 2026

How to cite this article:

Fernandes, S. C. S., Torres, M. S., Mariano, T. E., Modesto, J. G., Pimentel, C. E., Ribeiro, J. C. S., Oliveira, M. M. N., Pereira, A. M. F., & Nieva, M. I. B. (2026). Cyberpsychology in Brazil: Impacts on Mental Health and Social Interactions. *Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto)*, 36, e3605. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-4327e3605>