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(IJEPC)**www.ijepe.com**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL MEDIA
USAGE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN MALAYSIA**Shirly Anak Labent^{1*}, Kong Lek Chin², Jasmine Wong Xin Lin³, Siaw Leng Chan^{4*}¹ Department of Social Science and Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia Bintulu Campus, Sarawak, Malaysia
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DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.954021**This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)****Abstract:**

Social media use has become prevalent swiftly, which has created several problems associated with well-being. The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between well-being and social media usage among Malaysian young adults. This study used a cross-sectional survey method. A total of 204 young Malaysian adults aged between 18 and 40 years old, 47.1% of males and 52.9% of females, participated in this study through purposive sampling. The demographic questions were used to obtain background data from the participants. The Psychological Well-being Scale (PWBS) was used to examine the overall well-being of Malaysian young adults, and the Social Media Engagement Questionnaire (SMEQ) was used to examine how often the participants use social media. Findings demonstrated that well-being and social media usage were positively correlated. Moreover, the findings also indicated a moderate level of well-being among Malaysian young adults. The findings of this study concluded that the strategic utilization of social media may benefit Malaysian young adults' well-being. Most Malaysian young adults have a moderate level of well-being, which could reflect their transitional nature of young adulthood due to navigating various life changes such as education, career choices, or relationships. This study establishes the framework for future research. It emphasizes the significance of young adults regulating their social media usage to protect their psychological well-being by fostering mindfulness in their social media activities. Implications and future recommendations are discussed in this study.

Keywords:

Psychological Well-Being, Social Media Usage, Well-Being, Young Adult, Malaysia

Introduction

Greater well-being is connected to heightened longevity, improved immune system performance, diminished healing times, and a lower risk of disease, illness, and injury (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). Essentially, Ryff introduced a six-part framework for psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989a, 1989b). These domains include self-acceptance, meaningful relationships, autonomy, mastery of the environment, personal growth, and a feeling of purpose in life. Based on this model, psychological well-being involves sustaining a positive self-perception and reflection on one's past, constant personal growth, believing in life's meaning and purpose, cultivating healthy relationships, practical life and environment management, and undergoing autonomy. Consequently, individuals meeting these six criteria are likely to demonstrate elevated levels of psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 2006).

Social media is becoming increasingly popular among young adults, and recent studies have highlighted the tremendous impact that social media use has on their PWB (Wirtz et al., 2020). Young adults' use of social media provides them with a larger platform to express their ideas and sentiments about their rights, boosting self-assurance and confidence while also expanding their knowledge and comprehension (Zhang et al., 2023).

According to Twenge and Campbell (2019), people use social media for various purposes, including interaction, entertainment, and knowledge-seeking. Significantly, teens and young adults spend more time on social media, e-games, messaging, and online networking sites (Atske, 2019). It comes as no surprise that today's young adults are highly connected virtually. A previous study also found that frequent social media usage, such as Facebook, may contribute to the unpleasant signs and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress (Berryman et al., 2018; O'Reilly et al., 2018).

Statista Research Department (2023) reports that Malaysia's internet infrastructure has significantly improved in recent years, enabling its internet users to be more active online and primarily use it for personal activities like social media. The average time per day that Malaysians spend using the internet was approximately eight hours and six minutes as of the third quarter of 2022 (Statista, 2022). The average daily time spent on social media was approximately two hours and 47 minutes, and over 30 million people used social media regularly in Malaysia as of February 2022; these numbers indicated the significance of an internet presence among Malaysians (Statista, 2022). Nearly 91.7% of Malaysians were frequent social media users as of January 2022. Compared to 2016, when social media users comprised over 62 percent of Malaysia's entire population, this represented an increase of close to 30 percent (Statista, 2021; Statista, 2022).

Social media is an aspect of young adults' lives that is continually expanding, and its usage has increased as technology has developed over time. People use social media for various uses, including interaction, entertainment, and information seeking, where it is significant that teenagers and young adults spend more time on social networking sites, e-games, messaging,

and other online activities (Twenge & Campbell, 2019). According to previous research, one advantage of using social media was having access to inspirational and feel-good content that could help mental health by connecting participants with resources (Vaingankar et al., 2022). However, while social media platforms offer opportunities for communication, entertainment, and information seeking, the problem being addressed in this study is that previous research suggests that prolonged social media usage has been associated with well-being issues. Some findings have suggested a link between social anxiety, loneliness, and social media use (O'Day & Haimberg, 2021).

Additionally, young adults span ages from 18 to 40, according to Erik Erikson's hypothesis on the stages of psychological development (Sutton, 2020). At this point in life, developing close, loving bonds with others is the primary source of conflict (Muyang et al., 2023). While failure in this stage might result in feelings of isolation and loneliness, success at this stage leads to satisfying partnerships. This indicates that young adults utilize social media more frequently because it plays a significant role among individuals of all ages as they leverage their sense of belonging in various communities (Roberts & David, 2019).

According to Hunt et al. (2018) and Roberts and David (2019), young adults' use of social media improves their psychological well-being by fostering social connectivity and lowering FOMO (fear of missing out). Social media usage among young adults also helps them develop more human social connections (Park & Lee, 2012). Compared to individuals in the control group, those who did not utilize social media showed decreased life satisfaction, an uptick in negative emotions, and increased loneliness (Vally & D'Souza, 2019). However, a previous study shows that social media use affects well-being, and some findings have suggested a link between social anxiety and loneliness and social media use (O'Day & Haimberg, 2021). Faelens et al. (2021) found that although using social media such as Facebook does not increase the risk of depression, it can increase the likelihood of social comparison, which results in anxiety, body image issues, and mental health concerns.

Hence, the main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between well-being and social media usage among young adults in Malaysia. Subsequently, the sub-objective aimed to identify the level of well-being among Malaysian young adults.

This study aimed to answer the main research question: What is the relationship between well-being and social media usage among Malaysian young adults? Subsequently, the sub-research question to be answered was: What is the level of well-being among young Malaysian adults?

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized the quantitative method, particularly a cross-sectional survey, to collect participant responses. According to Bhandari (2023), a correlational study method focuses on correlations between variables without the researcher modifying or controlling them. A correlation might point in either a positive or negative direction. This study used a correlation to examine the relationships between the two variables, well-being and social media usage among Malaysian young adults.

A correlation shows the intensity or direction of the relationship between two variables. Price et al. (2017) state that Pearson's correlation coefficient, also referred to as Pearson's r , is a statistic used to determine the degree of a link between quantitative variables. This study was conducted by conducting survey methods through questionnaire distribution, whereby the sample was gathered through an online and face-to-face survey. Many researchers utilize the survey approach to collect data quickly due to its lesser costs, capacity to reach the masses, and ease of application (Gürbüz, 2017).

Purposive sampling was used to choose participants for this study. Thus, individuals who fit the study's inclusion criteria in particular ways were chosen. Purposive sampling is thought to be more feasible, more readily available, and capable of choosing study participants who meet the research requirements, according to Nikolopoulou (2022).

Sample and Data Collection

The total number of participants who participated in this study was 204 participants. The participants were young Malaysian adults aged 18 to 40 from East and West Malaysia. The inclusion criteria for this research included (a) individuals aged 18 to 40 years old, (b) Malaysian citizens, and (c) social media users. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria for this research encompassed the following: (a) individuals aged 41 years old and above, (b) non-Malaysian citizens, (c) individuals with severe mental health conditions, and (d) participants who do not engage in social media use.

For this study, the data were collected quantitatively by distributing a survey form comprising questions via social media and physically. A poster with the current study information, such as inclusion criteria, was distributed before recruitment. The participants signed informed consent, and 15 minutes were allocated for them to answer the questionnaires. The online surveys were distributed to participants throughout Malaysia (East and West) via social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts: Section A consisted of the demographic questions, Section B consisted of psychological well-being (PWB) questions, and Section C consisted of the social media engagement questionnaire (SMEQ). The data cleaning process was conducted to ensure no missing data. All the collected data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 23.0 software.

Research Instruments

The demographic questions in the survey were used to obtain background data from the participants, including gender, marital status, employment status, ethnicity, religion, state, and types of social media used, as these questions give context for the data gathered from the survey.

The Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), developed by Ryff and Keyes in 1995, has multiple versions, including 84, 52, 42, and 18 items. For this present study, the 18-item version of PWBS by Ryff in 2010 was used. The scale utilizes a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The items cover six elements of overall psychological well-being: Autonomy (e.g., "I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think"); Environmental Mastery (e.g., "In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live"); Personal Growth (e.g., I think it is vital to have new

experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world”); Positive Relations With Others (e.g., People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others”); Purpose in Life (e.g., some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them”) and Self-acceptance (e.g., When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far”). A past study by Chiang et al. (2019) employed 18-item PWB and indicated that Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the six PWBS subscales varied from 0.72 to 0.81, except 0.57 for the autonomy subscale. The 18-item PWBS has an overall alpha coefficient of 0.88. The 18-item PWBS had a positive connection with felt health ($r = 0.20$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that criterion validity is good (Chiang et al., 2019)

The Social Media Engagement Questionnaire (SMEQ) consists of five items designed to assess various dimensions of social media engagement. Participants were asked to respond to the items on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (not one day) to 7 (every day). The questionnaire was adapted from a previous study by Przybylski et al. (2013) to examine how the participants used social media in the last week. The items are designed to examine how often the participants use social media during the time (e.g., “How often did you use social media in the 15 minutes before you go to sleep?”, “How often did you use social media in the 15 minutes after you wake up?”) According to Przybylski et al. (2013), a reliable composite measure ($\alpha = .82$ to $.89$) may be formed by adding the responses to each of the five items to get an individual's score.

Data Analysis

This study's statistical analysis and results were derived using the IBM SPSS Statistics version 23.0. Demographic variables, including gender, marital status, employment status, ethnicity, religion, state, and social media usage, were assessed using descriptive statistics, specifically percentages. Conversely, age was measured using descriptive statistics, calculating the percentage, mean, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value.

Before running the Pearson Correlation analysis, a normality test was performed to ascertain whether a normal distribution adequately approximated the data set. Two normality indicators, skewness, and kurtosis, were used to test the normality assumption. Pearson's correlation analysis used a two-tailed test to answer the main objective and research question: to examine the relationship between well-being and social media usage among young Malaysian adults. Subsequently, a descriptive analysis was utilized to identify young adults in Malaysia's well-being level, using frequency and percentage to calculate.

Findings

Demographic Information of The Participants

Among the 204 participants, 96 (47.1%) were males and 108 (52.9%) were female. This study encompassed young Malaysian adults between 18 and 40 years old with $M = 3.50$ and $SD = 1.757$. The majority of the young adults were in the age range of 22 to 25 years old ($N = 62$; 30.4%) followed by 38 to 40 years old ($N = 47$; 23%), 30 to 33 years old ($N = 37$; 18.1%), 18 to 21 years old ($N = 23$; 11.3%), 26 to 29 years old ($N = 19$; 9.3%) and 34 to 37 years old ($N = 16$; 7.8%).

There were (60.3%; $N = 123$) participants in this study who were mainly from West Malaysia compared to East Malaysia (39.7%; $N = 81$). The participants of this study were made up of a total of 38.7% Malays ($N = 79$), 25.5% Chinese ($N = 52$), 15.7% Indian ($N = 32$), 16.2%

Bumiputera Sarawak (N = 33), 3.9% Bumiputera Sabah (N = 8). Most of the participants' marital status was single, 109 (53.4%), followed by 87 (42.6%) married, one (0.5%) widowed, one (0.5%) divorced and six (2.9%) engaged.

Out of 204 participants of this present study, most of them were employed full-time (N = 101; 49.5%), followed by students (N = 59; 28.9%), unemployed (N = 32; 15.7%) and self-employed (N = 12; 5.9%). The majority of the participants were Muslim (N = 82; 40.2%), followed by Buddhism (N = 45; 22.1%), Christianity (N = 44; 21.6%) and Hinduism (N = 33; 16.2%).

This study reported that the most prevalent social media platforms the participants used were Instagram (N = 157; 26.1%), Facebook (N = 155; 25.7%), TikTok (N = 139; 23.1%), Twitter (N = 113; 18.8%), and others (N = 38; 6.3%) such as Reddit, Whatsapp, XiaoHongShu, Youtube, Snapchat, Tinder, Pinterest, Threads, Life 360, and Omi (refer to Table 1).

Level of Psychological Well-being among Malaysian Young Adults

Descriptive statistics measured the level of well-being among young Malaysian adults who used social media to answer the sub-research objective. The data indicated that the mean total PWB score is 86.45 (SD = 10.18). Of 204 participants, 64 (31.4%) showed moderately high psychological well-being. Moreover, most participants (62.2%), encompassing 127, exhibited moderately low psychological well-being to moderate psychological well-being, whereas 13 (6.4%) participants showed a low degree of psychological well-being. Thus, the sub-objective of this research was answered.

There is a moderate level of psychological well-being among Malaysian young adults. Table 2 describes the descriptive statistics of the sample's Psychological Well-being (PWB) Scale level, offering insights into the prevalence and variability of their well-being scores. Figure 1 exhibited the percentage of participants' level of the PWB Scale.

Correlation Between Social Media Usage and Well-being Among Malaysian Young Adults

Inferential statistics have explored the relationship between social media usage and well-being among Malaysian young adults to answer the main research objective of the study. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumption of normality. In the current study, the correlation between the study variables revealed that social media usage had a significant positive relationship with well-being ($r = .311, p = 0.00 < 0.01$).

Hence, the central hypothesis is accepted. There was a significant positive relationship between well-being and social media usage among Malaysian young adults. Table 3 presented the inferential statistics, in which Pearson correlation was used to analyze the relationship between social media usage and well-being among Malaysian young adults.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Details of Participants

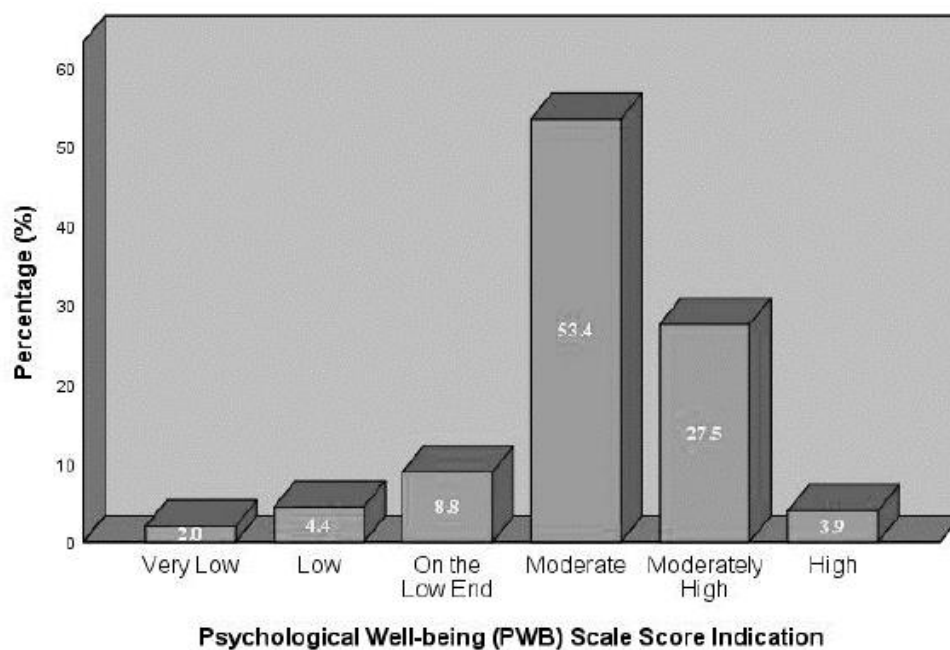
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>
Age			3.50	1.757	1	6
18-21 years old	23	11.3				
22-25 years old	62	30.4				
26-29 years old	19	9.3				
30-33 years old	37	18.1				
34-37 years old	16	7.8				
38-40 years old	47	23.0				
Gender						
Male	96	47.1				
Female	108	52.9				
Marital status						
Single	109	53.4				
Married	87	42.6				
Widowed	1	0.5				
Divorced	1	0.5				
Engaged	6	2.9				
Employment Status						
Employed full-time	101	49.5				
Unemployed	32	15.7				
Self-employed	12	5.9				
Student	59	28.9				
Ethnicity						
Malay	79	38.7				
Chinese	52	25.5				
Indian	32	15.7				
Bumiputera Sarawak	33	16.2				
Bumiputera Sabah	8	3.9				
Religion						
Christianity	44	21.6				
Muslim	82	40.2				
Hinduism	33	16.2				
Buddhism	45	22.1				
State						
East Malaysia	81	39.7				
West Malaysia	123	60.3				
Types of social media used						
Facebook	155	25.7				
Instagram	157	26.1				
TikTok	139	23.1				
Twitter	113	18.8				
Other	38	6.3				

Note. *N* = 204; *M* = Mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *Min.* = Minimum value; *Max.* = Maximum value.

Table 2: PWB Scale Level of Sample

PWB Score Indication		Frequency	%
Very Low	(18-40)	4	2.0
Low	(41-70)	9	4.4
In the Low End	(71-80)	18	8.8
Moderate	(81-90)	109	53.4
Moderately High	(91-100)	56	27.5
High	(101-126)	8	3.9

Note. PWB = Psychological Well-being; $N = 204$

**Figure 1: Percentage of Participants' Level of PWB****Table 3: Correlation Analysis Between Social Media Usage and Well-being among Malaysian Young Adults**

Correlation	
Well-being	
Social Media Usage	.311**

Note. ** $p < .01$, $N = 204$

Discussion

Relationship Between Well-being and Social Media Usage Among Malaysian Young Adults

This study examined 204 young Malaysian adults using social media to explore the relationship between well-being and social media usage. The correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between well-being and social media usage among Malaysian young adults. This showed that when an individual's social media usage increases, their well-being also shows a positive trend. This present study could be supported by a study conducted by Chen and Gao (2022), which found that engaging in social media is associated with increased self-esteem. Self-esteem, which relates to how people view their quality of life, is an essential measure of well-being (Du et al., 2017).

Moreover, this study's findings aligned with the study of Halston et al. (2019) and Zhang et al. (2023), suggesting that young adults not only gain valuable guidance from peers through social media but also experience enhanced self-assurance, confidence, and knowledge, positively influencing their psychological well-being and alleviating loneliness. The findings of this study were also in line with Ryff's psychological well-being (PWB) theory, where she mentioned that positive interpersonal relations involve engaging in social interactions and being part of a network that provides communication and support. These factors are crucial in establishing reliable and enduring partnerships (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Furthermore, the findings also aligned with a previous study that highlights a positive correlation between social media usage and well-being (Lake Yimer, 2021). This positive relationship was further supported by the notion that social media is a significant source of online social support from peers, acquaintances, and essential others, as highlighted by Haslam et al. (2017). This implies that social media usage can help people retain positive relationships with others. Positive relationships with others are one of the dimensions of well-being in which individuals can create and preserve healthy and positive relationships with close friends, family members, and intimate partners, as highlighted by Ryff (1989b).

Also, the current study's findings were consistent with past research by Hunt et al. (2018) and Roberts and David (2019), which asserted that young adults who use social media have better psychological well-being because it increases social connectivity and reduces FOMO (fear of missing out). Those who refrained from using social media displayed higher levels of loneliness, a rise in negative emotions, and a decline in life satisfaction compared to control group members (Vally & D'Souza, 2019).

These findings were also supported by past research, which described that intimacy vs isolation is a critical psychological milestone that occurs in young adulthood, roughly between the ages of 18 and 40, according to Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1963). This time is critical for building strong social relationships and laying the groundwork for a happy and healthy life. Individuals are faced with the choice of building intimate and lasting relationships with others or risking emotions of isolation and loneliness throughout this time. According to Erikson, intimacy is the strong tie shared by persons in close relationships, such as spouses, family members, and friends. It displayed a desire to form profound, long-lasting, and passionate connections. In addition to Erikson's psychological milestones, the positive relationship between well-being and social media usage observed among young adults aligns

with the understanding that social media plays a significant role among individuals of all ages, facilitating their sense of belonging in various communities (Roberts & David, 2019). The current study finding suggested that young adults are more likely to use social media because it fosters social contact, builds and maintains relationships, and shares ideas (Carlson et al., 2016), all of which may be highly associated with social support (Chen & Li, 2017; Holliman et al., 2021).

The social media engagement theory (SMET) used in this study suggests that the more often individuals use social media, the more valuable their contributions become (Gangi & Wasko, 2016). This suggested that social media encourages people to connect with others, share their experiences, and receive support. For instance, receiving positive comments or texts can considerably improve well-being (Zhang et al., 2023). This aligned with the findings, indicating a positive relationship between well-being and social media usage among Malaysian young adults. Thus, the results supported the hypothesis that social media usage is associated with well-being.

Level of Psychological Well-being of Malaysian Young Adults

This study measured the psychological well-being of Malaysian young adults. Results revealed that most Malaysian young adults involved in this study possessed moderate levels of psychological well-being. The findings of this study were consistent with previous research that describes young adults undergoing significant changes in their lives. Their social circle grew, their childhood roles altered as they matured, and independence and growing responsibilities were significant concerns throughout this developmental stage. They are expected to have different levels of psychological well-being (Bernstein et al., 2021).

Also, most Malaysian young adults who use social media have a moderate level of well-being, which could be due to the realization that one's full potential includes forming deep and intimate connections with others, such as family, friends, and romantic partners. This aligned with past assertions concerning medium scores in psychological well-being before understanding young adults' role in fulfilling human potential (Deci & Ryan, 2008). This portrays that young adults in Malaysia are in a developmental stage where they are involved in establishing and maintaining meaningful personal and social relationships. These connections contribute to psychological well-being, belonging, and personal fulfillment (Ryff, 1989b).

This study also indicated that young Malaysian adults understand their social role and physical security gained from the environment, consistent with Mazzuccheli and Purcell (2015) on the environmental influence on enhancing psychological well-being. Furthermore, the results showed that young Malaysian adults could select the proper needs from their surroundings, mainly social media, since it affects their well-being by forming positive and negative emotions. Thus, the examination of the level of psychological well-being among Malaysian young adults in this current study sheds light on essential aspects of their developmental stage. Most participants have a moderate level of psychological well-being, consistent with the transitory character of young adulthood, characterized by significant transitions.

Implication of the Study

This study provides a sense of awareness of the complex relationship between social media usage and well-being, especially among young adults. Findings of a positive correlation emphasize how important it is for everyone to practice mindfulness when controlling their

social media usage for their well-being (Zamir et al., 2022). The current study highlighted the proactive role that individuals can play in determining the results of their well-being by upholding a mindful attitude to social media activity. By encouraging participants and the public to think about the possible effects of their social media usage on their psychological well-being, the survey instrument used in this study serves as a concrete means of promoting this awareness. As a result, the study adds scientific insights and advocates for a more educated and purposeful approach to social media use from the standpoint of individual well-being.

Moreover, the current study contributes considerably to Malaysia's data pool repository by providing critical insights into the implications of social media on the well-being of young adults (Zaw & Azenal, 2021). This contribution is a foundational resource, enhancing people's understanding of the local context, offering critical knowledge for guiding future research endeavors, and supporting evidence-based decisions tailored to Malaysia's specific features. In line with the conclusions of this study, the expansion of Malaysia's data pool not only raises the scholarly debate on the issue but also provides policymakers with relevant information to create policies that correspond with the specific needs of Malaysian demography.

Furthermore, the findings of this present study indirectly inform policymakers in Malaysia about the potential risks and benefits associated with social media usage among young adults. This information is crucial for developing evidence-based policies and regulations to mitigate negative impacts and enhance the positive aspects of social media usage (Zaw & Azenal, 2021). For instance, policymakers at the university level, as mentioned in the significance, can use the insights to develop strategies for stress reduction and promote the beneficial use of social media in academic and non-academic settings (Zamir et al., 2022). Thus, the current study can provide insight that can guide the development of policies that address the impact of social media on overall well-being, which could involve implementing regulations or guidelines to promote healthier social media habits.

The current study also validates the PWB and SMET theory, which can guide future researchers or academicians. The study found a significant correlation; thus, it could provide empirical validation for the PWB in the context of Malaysian young adults. This strengthens the theory's applicability across diverse cultural settings. The results supported the SMET by demonstrating that increased social media correlates with more valuable contributions. This validates the notion that social media can encourage connection, show experiences, and receive support, aligning with the positive aspect of SMET.

Limitation of the Study

Several limitations in this study were determined. Firstly, through an online and face-to-face survey, a purposive sampling technique was used to enlist the participants. The inclusion of only those who used social media and the exclusion of those who did not use social media, having severe mental health issues, not a Malaysian citizen, and aged 41 years old and above resulted in selection bias. In addition, the study primarily comprised individuals from urban locations or socioeconomic backgrounds, even though the target age range was between 18 and 40. Thus, the limitation of this study is that the findings might not be generalized to all Malaysian young adults.

Furthermore, the questionnaires were self-reported measures. As a result, the results of self-report measures may be skewed since reactivity may occur after the participants are aware of

the measurement's objective. As Lavrakas (2008) asserts, reactivity occurs when the participant, such as the survey participants, is influenced by the instruments, interviewers, or items. Additionally, because PWB and SMEQ were self-report measures, participants were free to alter their answers to meet social expectations or reach an acceptable conclusion that meets their standards. Recall that bias and social expectations are, therefore, unavoidable.

Due to concerns about questionnaire length and time constraints, the current study used a questionnaire containing an 18-item version of the PWB scale proposed by Ryff to measure well-being. Psychological well-being is a complex and nuanced notion, and by limiting the number of questions per construct, the scale may lose the depth required to represent the complexities of each dimension. The 18-item reduced version may not fully capture the areas of the six well-being constructs (Ryff, 1989b). The limitation of the small 18-item PWB scale highlights the need for a more comprehensive version to enable a more reliable, valid, and varied assessment of psychological well-being.

Future recommendation

This current study recommended further investigating the complex correlation between well-being and social media usage among young adults in Malaysia, focusing on the diverse factors that influence these variables. It is crucial to examine how different social media platforms, material types, and consumption frequency affect various aspects of well-being. Furthermore, examining distinct variations such as personality traits, socioeconomic status, and cultural impacts could yield a more complex comprehension of the correlation.

Moreover, future research could use various participant recruitment strategies to overcome the limits of participant diversity. This includes expanding outreach to rural locations, generalizing to all age groups, and implementing random sample methodologies to create a representative and inclusive participant pool. By involving participants from different demographics and geographic locations, these initiatives will not only increase the generalizability and relevance of study findings. However, they will also contribute to a deeper understanding of how social media influences people's well-being in different contexts.

Furthermore, future researchers may also consider changing the research methodology to a mixed-method approach to understand participants' experiences better. Integrating qualitative and quantitative data-gathering approaches can provide valuable insights into the context and reasons for participants' responses. This comprehensive strategy enables researchers to triangulate findings and reduce the impact of reactivity on overall study outcomes.

For future study accuracy, researchers can use the PWB scale in more thorough variants, such as the original 84-item version, the 54-item version, or the 42-item version. These more extensive and nuanced explorations of the six well-being categories allow for a more accurate and reliable assessment of an individual's psychological well-being. The additional items in these extended scales cover a broader range of well-being experiences and activities, resolving the psychometric problems raised by the condensed 18-item version.

Conclusion

To sum up, this study explored the complex relationship between young adults in Malaysia who use social media and their level of well-being. The study began with thoroughly examining the importance of psychological well-being, focusing on the six essential elements that Ryff

(1989a) and Ryff (1989b) suggested. Significantly, worldwide trends showed a concerning fall in young adults' well-being, with mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression becoming widespread problems, especially in this age group (Newson et al., 2023).

This study showed a positive relationship between well-being and social media usage among Malaysian young adults. These findings supported earlier research by stressing the significance of social media in improving self-esteem, confidence, and knowledge and favorably increasing well-being. The observed positive relationship between both variables indicates that the strategic utilization of social media may benefit the well-being of young adults in Malaysia. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the relationship is complex, impacted by numerous circumstances, and prone to change throughout time.

Essentially, the current study highlighted the growing frequency of social media use, pushed by various factors and made more accessible by Malaysia's developing internet infrastructure. The research objectives and questions have been analyzed succinctly, laying the groundwork for the subsequent examination of potential limits. The study acknowledged the limitations of the sample, the reliance on self-reported data, and the constraint of focusing mainly on urban and specific demographic backgrounds.

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