

## Self-Disclosure on Social Media and Its Influence on the Well-Being of Youth

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### ABSTRACT

This article investigates how social networking sites (SNS) usage among youth influence their wellbeing. It specifically examines the impacts of SNS from the perspective of information sharing and self-disclosure. The study subjects are students at a vocational institute in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This group was chosen due to their unique and different academic orientations compared to their private and public universities counterparts. Based on a qualitative approach, the study explores the following research objectives based on in-depth online interviews with twenty first-year students: to determine respondents' preferred SNS and how they use them, and how self-disclosure on SNS affects their well-being. The finding found three types of groups concerning the level of self-disclosure and its effect on wellbeing among youth. The first group mainly engages in passive SNS, mostly uses Instagram, and regards SNS as less meaningful but positively influences their lives. The second group engages in active social media usage but only discloses positive aspects of their daily lives. This group mainly uses Facebook and found social media meaningful and positively influenced. The third group is those who use SNS actively and express their happiness and upsetting emotional state on SNS. They are very active on Twitter and find social media very meaningful. This study shows that different individuals apply their strengths and virtues differently on SNS to adapt to different life situations. The findings found that respondents flourish under certain conditions when using SNS regardless of different levels of self-disclosure and SNS usage.

**Keywords:** *Social media, wellbeing, youth, usage influence, self-disclosure.*

### INTRODUCTION

Many studies show that social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have been blamed for negatively impacting well-being, particularly among youth (Tromholt, 2016; Tandoc, Ferucci & Duffy, 2015). However, certain features and mechanisms of social media sites may increase their well-being, and the sites may serve as platforms for positive interventions to reach large populations and improve their lives. In line with the point posited by Boyd (2014), rather than fearing what might happen if youth embrace social media, society should help youth develop the skills and perspective to navigate the complications brought by the social media world productively.

The use of social network sites in Malaysia has boomed during the last decade. According to The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), which tracks Internet use trends over time, Internet penetration in Malaysia is almost 90% of the overall population. Approximately 25 million Malaysians, which is about 78% of the population, are using social media as of 2018. Almost 40% of the users are young adults in their 20s (MCMC, 2019). Facebook is currently the most popular social network site in Malaysia, with more than 97% of SNS users having a Facebook account. However, several other social networks have a large number of members as well. For example, more than 14 million users in Malaysia have Instagram accounts, and almost 6 million people in Malaysia are active on Twitter (MCMC, 2019).

In addition, different SNS have different modalities of content, which determine what types of content users generally share. Twitter, for example, revolves around publishing short 240-character text messages. This has led Twitter to become a popular tool for short, immediate commentary and real-time content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). Since Twitter users are required to post quick thoughts and retorts, research has shown that Twitter content is negatively valenced even when it concerns positive events (Thelwall, Buckley & Paltoglou, 2011). Instagram, in contrast, is a platform focused on sharing pictures with various filters. This emphasis on visuals and aesthetics leads users to focus on sharing positive and self-promotional content (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Facebook, in particular, is based on the reciprocal following, which makes the presence of strong and weak ties in one's audience (McLaughlin & Vitak, 2012). This is in contrast with Twitter and Instagram, which rely on the nonreciprocal following, often associated with a more significant proportion of weak ties and strangers in one's network (Lin et al., 2015).

#### WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE

The concept of well-being is based on positive psychology, which theorises the synergetic power of positive emotions and character traits for the optimal functioning of individuals, groups, and institutions (Seligman, 2019). The field of positive psychology argues that subjective well-being and associated constructs such as life satisfaction, happiness, and optimism have numerous positive effects on health, success, education, and other important life outcomes (Diener, 2012; Diener & Chan, 2011). A key focus for the field is defining, understanding, and supporting human flourishing, which generally can be defined as feeling good and functioning well in life (Huppert & So, 2013). The most recent construct based on the concept of human "flourishing" is Seligman's proposed model of well-being (2011, 2018).

Seligman (2011, 2018) identified five components of well-being: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment – hence the PERMA acronym. Positive emotions refer to positive feelings such as hope, compassion, contentment, empathy, gratitude, joy, and love (Seligman, 2018). Engagement is concerned with feeling absorbed, interested and engaged with something in life, such as work, a personal interest, or a hobby (Seligman, 2011). Relationships include feelings of being socially integrated and a person's ability to build and maintain positive relationships with others (Seligman, 2011). Meaning refers to one's purposeful existence in the world and feeling connected to something greater than oneself, while accomplishment is related to making progress towards goals and feeling a sense of accomplishment and success.

Previous studies have argued that SNS use negatively effects on people's well-being. Facebook use, in particular, was reported to deteriorate mood and lead to the decline of the affective dimension of well-being (Sagioglou & Greitemeyer, 2014). These adverse effects are often identified as the by-product of unrealistic social comparisons on Facebook, which induces feelings of envy and the perception of Facebook as a meaningless activity (Tandoc, Ferucci & Duffy, 2015; Krasnova et al., 2015). Previous studies have also found that using SNS depends on how the social network is used. The experience of adverse effects especially holds for people using SNS passively (Tandoc, Ferucci & Duffy, 2015). Passive usage refers to monitoring other people's lives without engaging in direct exchanges, such as scrolling through news feeds or looking at other users' profiles, pictures, and status updates. Studies conclude that passive usage is associated with low subjective well-being levels (Krasnova et al., 2015; Verduyn et al., 2017). A study by Ke Guek Nee and Wong Siew Fan (2018) on 800 adolescents in Malaysia aged between 17 and 22 years old revealed that higher usage of SNS

resulted in lower psychological well-being of adolescents. In other words, Malaysian adolescents who are high in SNS usage are generally slightly low in various aspects of psychological well-being.

As with all of the present findings, the direction of this relationship remains to be established. Anxious adolescents may tend to use social media more, in line with previous findings that those higher in neuroticism prefer social uses of the Internet (Hamburger & Ben-Artzi, 2000). Similarly, depressed adolescents may use social media more to regulate their low mood, in light of evidence that children and adults use TV viewing for emotional regulation (Van Der Goot, Beentjes & Van Selm, 2012). In addition, a handful of studies has found no links between Facebook use and well-being (Valenzuela, Park & Kee, 2009; Jelenchick, Eickhoff & Moreno, 2013) and some studies have found that Facebook uses able to cause positive effects on the users' well-being (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011).

A study by Naeemi et al. (2014) of 401 adolescents aged between 13-16 years old found that the extension of social communication as the main function of Facebook positively affects adolescents' psychological well-being. The research study supports the previous findings (Ellison et al., 2011; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007) and expresses that the communicative use of Facebook provides positive psychological well-being outcomes because it facilitates communication for those who are not in a face-to-face connection (Grieve et al., 2013). A study by Wu (2014) examines China's leading social network, WeChat, and found that it may positively impact users' well-being. The strong-tie-based community, selective friend list, increased chance of capitalisation and of savouring experiences, and the encouragement of visual communication are hypothesised as key processes towards increased happiness for WeChat users.

#### SELF-DISCLOSURE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media applications can provide more opportunities for disclosure, impacting interpersonal closeness and relationship outcomes and psychological well-being. Any information and message about oneself that an individual conveys to other people can be referred to as self-disclosure (Luo & Hancock, 2020; Schlosser, 2020). Initially, the concept was centred on two persons disclosing information to each other. However, in the era of social media, sharing private information may be done privately or with a large group of people. Thanks to social media platforms, millions of people now self-disclose their personal information regularly. This form of public self-disclosure is shared with various and diverse audiences, blurring the lines between publicness and private. This includes expressing profound personal sentiments and beliefs to chronicling banal facts of everyday life. (Bazarova & Choi, 2014).

SNS can be shared publicly with a large and diverse audience, ranging from strangers and distant acquaintances to close friends and family members or dyadically or selectively with a specific group of recipients via chat or private messaging (Gilbert & Karahalios, 2009). SNS allow users to post personal information from deeply private information such as sexual preferences, relationship updates, and mental health issues, with more general information such as clothes or restaurant preferences. Self-disclosure spans numerous dimensions, including frequency, length, depth, accuracy, intention, and valence (Luo & Hancock, 2020; Bazarova & Choi, 2014).

According to Luo and Hancock (2020), online self-disclosure can improve relationship quality more than face-to-face disclosures. Self-disclosure on social media has the potential

to influence psychological well-being via four mechanisms: perceived connectedness, social support, capitalization process, and psychological authenticity. The term "perceived connectedness" refers to a psychological desire related to people's feelings of being linked to one another in their daily lives (Baumeister & Leary, 2017). Social media allows for public disclosure and makes other people's input visible through comments and 'Likes' (Luo & Hancock, 2020). Because of that, studies show that sharing status updates about everyday personal experiences might improve connectivity, which reduces loneliness. Individuals who are restricted from posting on Facebook, on the other hand, may perceive a weaker sense of belonging or closeness (Tobin et al., 2015).

Those who disclose on SNS are more conscious of other people's attention to their needs, and may perceive stronger social support (Lu & Hampton, 2017). According to research, online social well-being and psychological distress, such as depression and loneliness, can be improved by perceived social support from one's social media networks (Seo, Kim & Yang, 2016). Furthermore, as a result of self-disclosure, social support has been shown to predict greater levels of self-esteem and satisfaction (Luo & Hancock, 2020; Zell & Moeller, 2018).

The valence of the triggering event significantly influences the consequences of self-disclosure on SNS (Choi & Toma, 2014). People feel more optimistic when they share positive emotional disclosure and less optimistic when they share negative emotional expressions. The capitalization process suggests that expressing personal emotions could affect psychological well-being because it increases the significance of the events and allows people to rearrange and reemphasize their memories of the events during the expression process (Gable & Reis, 2010). Furthermore, because of the Internet "positivity culture", positive disclosure is more common and predicts positive feedback and social support, leading to increased emotions of connectivity (Vogel, Rose, & Crane, 2018; Utz, 2015).

The sense of authenticity may also play a role in social integration and other beneficial psychological effects. When people feel freer to express their genuine selves, they experience psychological authenticity (Luo & Hancock, 2020). Social media allows for selective self-presentation, allowing for self-expression that may differ from one's genuine self. Recent research has found that accurate and authentic self-disclosure can improve self-esteem and general well-being in mindful people, whereas inaccurate and inauthentic self-disclosure can make people feel less socially connected (Yang, Holden & Carter, 2017).

It is important to note that people in different psychological states will engage in different types of disclosure. The need for self-disclosure may be more prevalent among those with psychological distress (e.g. loneliness or social anxiety) because they have larger desires for connection and affiliation (Teppers et al., 2014). For example, those who were lonely or socially anxious were more inclined to reveal themselves on social media than those who were less socially anxious (Lee, Noh & Koo, 2013). Studies show that people with poor self-esteem post on Facebook on many topics than those with high self-esteem. Lonely people were more inclined to disclose on social media due to their increased motivation for social compensation and social networking (Creed & Mills, 2018).

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts online semi-structured interviews to identify patterns concerning participants' lived experience, views and perspectives, and behaviour and practices, specifically among youth, on how their use of social media impacted their wellbeing. The semi-structured interview method is the best method in this study because it enables reciprocity between the interviewer and participant, enables the interviewer to improvise follow-up questions based on the participant's responses and allows space for participants' verbal expressions (Kallio et al., 2016). The subjects of the study are students at a vocational institute in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This group is chosen in regard to their unique and different academic orientations. The institute provides technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) that includes formal, non-formal and informal learning that prepares young people with the knowledge and skills required for work. Due to lower entrance requirements, most students who could not get entrance to the public university would join the vocational institute.

This research seeks to understand how they self-disclose on their social media and navigate the social media experiences that have become essential communication platforms nowadays. The respondents consist of 20 semi-structured online interviews (9 female and 11 male) with youth aged between 20-23 years old. The age group is chosen because it is known as late adolescence or young adulthood, a period of frequent change and exploration that covers many aspects of their lives, namely work, home, family, and school (Enstad et al., 2019). Participants were acquired through a snowball sampling which involved asking participants for recommendations of acquaintances who might qualify for participation. This is particularly useful because the youth population is unlikely to respond to advertisements due to the nature of the topic, which is to probe their behaviour in using social media.

The interviews were carried out between July and August 2020 through the Zoom video-conferencing application. The interviews were conducted based on the following research objectives; to determine respondents' preferred SNS, how they use them, and how self-disclosure on SNS affects their wellbeing. The respondents will be given a list of questions before the interviews. Follow-up questions were added as the interview progressed. A consent form was given to the respondents, and they could decide anytime if they wanted to withdraw from the interview. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. In this article, the respondents are not identified by their real names to ensure confidentiality. Transcripts were read through several times to become immersed in the data and subject to thematic analysis. Throughout the thematic analysis, categories and subcategories were created based on the framework of self-disclosure and well-being, underpinning this study on how young people navigate social media usage for wellbeing. The thematic analysis will be based on a six-phase approach (Clarke & Braun, 2018): familiarising with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the analysis.

## FINDINGS

The analysis found three groups regarding the level of self-disclosure and its effect on wellbeing among participants in this study. The first group consisted of participants who would only occasionally post on social media and never disclose their feelings and emotional state to their social media friends. The second group participates in active social media usage, such as sharing life experiences, creating text, audio, or video content, and frequently responding

to other users. The third group of respondents actively uses SNS, creating comments and updates and uploading pictures and other content on their social media. The analysis also found that each group has different preferences for SNS. This article focuses on three SNS, namely Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

*a. Self Disclosure Avoidance*

Analysis shows that five out of 20 respondents are using social media passively. They rarely disclose their life and their inner thoughts. All these five participants share the same preferable SNS platform- they mainly use Instagram and are not active on Twitter. As shown below, these participants indicate that they are scrolling through their SNS timelines almost daily, but they only post occasionally, about once a month.

On Instagram, I browse through it every day. If there are activities or pictures, I will post them once every three weeks. If there is a family program with friends or a program at IKM, I will post (Respondent A, personal communication, August 2020).

I post on Instagram once every two to three months. For Instagram Story, every two to three weeks. Because sometimes not everything we want to share. We look at other people's lives. We don't show very much about our lives (Respondent B, personal communication, August 2020).

According to the participants, the main reason for not sharing or posting, is that they do not have much to share. One respondent, as shown below, even said she has no confidence in posting on SNS. They also said they rarely comment on their friends' postings and prefer to scroll through and observe their friends' SNS stories and pictures.

I don't post or share often because I don't feel confident to post. I'm afraid people will criticise the picture (Respondent A, personal communication, August 2020).

I don't post every day. I rarely post. Sometimes there is nothing to post. Once a month, if I post, it may be about work or activities. I am active in *silat* (martial arts). So sometimes, I post about martial arts. I have nothing to share, nothing interesting either. If something is interesting, I will post it. Not just for the sake of doing it (Respondent C, personal communication, July 2020).

Three themes emerged from this group about their social media usage and wellbeing. The first theme is that social media does not contribute much meaning to their lives. As indicated below, they mostly use social media for passing the time, relaxing entertainment, and escapism.

For me, it's more to fill my free time; it's okay. If I don't do anything, I'll scroll through (Respondent D, personal communication, July 2020).

Not so meaningful. Last time I used it to buy Raya (Eid) clothes because many boutiques were not open (because of the COVID pandemic), and they sold a lot

on Instagram. So it is beneficial sometimes. I rarely post. I just browse through it. I like to look at clothes, shoes and food. I always buy, sometimes at IG Shop, especially if there are promotions (Respondent A, personal communication, August 2020).

The second theme is that although they are using SNS passively, it makes them happy and helps them regulate their emotions. As indicated below, happiness mainly comes from the informational aspect, and the entertainment provided by SNS helps make them less stressed.

Sometimes it's like when I'm stressed; I just open Instagram; I just use it when I feel bored (Respondent A, personal communication, August 2020).

When I'm sad and watch funny and hilarious videos, my emotions stabilise again (Respondent B, personal communication, August 2020).

Although I rarely use SNS, it is really interesting when I use it. Things that we didn't know before, now we know. Like COVID 19, if we want to know about what is happening in foreign countries, we know through social media. For example, what happened in Italy and so on (Respondent C, personal communication, July 2020).

There is emotional support sometimes. When I'm sad. Watching funny videos helped my emotions again (Respondent E, personal communication, August 2020).

The third theme is that, although these participants are using social media passively, they still regard social media to contribute positively to their lives. This positivity comes from the affordances of social media to connect with their friends on SNS. In addition, this group of participants also find their passive act of knowing and getting updates from their friends on SNS an enjoyable experience.

The positives are many. Sometimes some friends ask me to post on Instagram. My friends advise me to be confident to post on social media because I am a little shy (Respondent A, personal communication, August 2020).

What makes me feel happy about Instagram? Sometimes, when we post, our friends comment like "long time no see". It is like we can still talk even we are far away (Respondent D, personal communication, July 2020).

For me, SNS has many positives than negatives. If we use it properly, it has a positive impact. For example, I have long lost contact with friends. So when there is FB and IG, I can see other people's lives. I rarely comment. If my comments are only friends' comments (Respondent E, personal communication, August 2020).

Previous studies conclude that passive usage is associated with low subjective well-being levels (Krasnova et al., 2015; Verduyn et al., 2017). These negative effects are often identified as the by-product of unrealistic social comparisons on SNS, which induces feelings of envy, and due to the perception of SNS as a meaningless activity (Tandoc, Ferucci & Duffy, 2015; Krasnova et al., 2015). One participant indicates that he gets affected by social comparison through social media. However, he said it is just temporary.

Sometimes when we see other people, like on Instagram, which is better than us, we will feel a little sad because people will show off on social media. So I will feel a little down. However, not long after that, I will be ok. No problem for me to scroll back on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter (Respondent D, personal communication, July 2020).

Although previous studies found that passive SNS use reduces well-being in participants by inducing envy (Verduyn et al., 2017), respondents believe that their engagement in passive SNS use positively affects their lives. This group of participants enjoyed observing their friends' life and the occasional connections made with their friends and found happiness in the informational and entertainment values provided by the SNS. This could relate to findings from Burke and Kraut (2016) and Young et al. (2017), which argue that positive daily life events may positively affect mood, possibly encouraging social behaviours, including passive Facebook use. In contrast, negative daily life events may negatively affect mood and potentially reduce individuals' engagement with social behaviours, such as passive Facebook use.

#### *b. Self-Disclosure of Positive Emotions*

The second group, the most dominant group in the study, regularly posts on social media. Ten out of 20 participants indicate they are using social media actively. However, as indicated by the respondents below, they only disclose their happy and positive emotions. Another essential characteristic is that these respondents mostly prefer Facebook as their main SNS.

I post happy things only. I don't post sad things on social media. Because I'm not interested in expressing my feelings on social media; most of it is about myself, my hobbies, games, family and, friends (Respondent F, personal communication, July 2020).

I don't like to share my feelings on social media because a lot of people are watching. I share family activities, eid celebration etc. I love reposting positive quotes that lift my spirits (Respondent G, personal communication, August 2020).

I really don't express my feelings on social media. If on Instagram, I post more about hobbies and experiences. For example, my hobbies are cars and motorcycles. I share a lot about that (Respondent H, personal communication, July 2020).



Three themes emerge from this group in relation to their social media usage and well-being. First, this group would refrain from sharing negative feelings on the SNS platform. For them, SNS is mainly for sharing something enjoyable, entertaining or engaging. They regularly share their business, interest, and daily activities, as indicated below.

If on Facebook, I always post items I sell, such as spring rolls; for business. If I have wiring work, I will make a video, then post it on Facebook. I will also post pictures of going on vacation, but not always (Respondent I, personal communication, July 2020).

I share about work experiences on Facebook and Instagram. I rarely share feelings on Facebook and Instagram. If there are any ideas, I will post them on Facebook. For example, what kind of idea to make things for business, like selling perfume (Respondent J, personal communication, July 2020).

I share most about my hobbies, experiences and so on. For example, when I want to post a picture of me, I will write a sentence about what experience has happened to me. On Facebook, I repost exciting information in my status. I posted about my mother and my father. I will post about hobbies or something that can inspire others (Respondent K, personal communication, August 2020).

Second, this group finds social media more meaningful, particularly in helping market their business and get help with their study and daily activities. The respondents revealed that they achieved a sense of accomplishment through using SNS. For this group, SNS provides enormous opportunities to capitalise, enhance and increase their social capital, particularly the weak ties (Ellison & Vitak, 2015). The weak ties are significant as they help increase access to various resources, including novel information and diverse perspectives (Donath & Boyd, 2004). As explained below, this informational value of Facebook gives a sense of accomplishment, meaning and engagement among respondents that contributes to their well-being.

It is meaningful because, on Facebook, there are many career opportunities. We can also share our products and sell what we want to sell. If on Instagram, we have many contacts and we can share various things (Respondent I, personal communication, July 2020).

It really helped a lot; for example, I learned about electrical. Posts from Instagram and Facebook related to my field will motivate me to reach my targets. It will lift my spirits to learn and work harder to achieve what I want (Respondent J, personal communication, July 2020).

I joined a group on Facebook especially related to my field of work in the electrical department. My knowledge is limited. I will snap a picture and post it on the electrical group I join, and I will ask them to explain for me to understand more (Respondent F, personal communication, July 2020).

The third theme that emerges from this group is the connection that the SNS platform provides and the affordance that the SNS gives to sharing interests and life experiences with others, contributing positively to their lives.

I feel happy to use Facebook and Instagram because we can share knowledge and we can also share our daily lives (Respondent I, personal communication, July 2020).

I'm happy with Facebook and Instagram; even with distant friends, we will know about their lives. We will learn about our family; things like that can bring joy to me (Respondent L, personal communication, August 2020).

Since most of the participants of this group prefer to use Facebook, one argument can be made of why respondents are reluctant to disclose how they feel on Facebook is that Facebook consists of respondents' strong social ties (Valenzuela, Correa, & de Zuniga, 2018). Therefore they prefer to share and present positive experiences among their close family and friends.

#### c. Self-Disclosure of Both Positive and Negative Emotions

Five out of 20 respondents use SNS regularly. Similar to the previous group, this group is more than happy to disclose themselves on SNS. However, unlike the previous group, they disclose both their happy and upsetting feelings as well as personal feelings, thoughts, inner thoughts and emotional states. They are not afraid to express their feelings and are transparent about their emotions. Unlike the previous two groups, this group is active on Twitter. They prefer to express and disclose their feelings on the platform, as indicated below. They are also less active on Facebook.

I use Twitter as a diary, expressing my feelings. On Instagram, I post about my hobby of playing the guitar. On Twitter, I always about feelings, emotions and sadness. I also posted new ideas and my success on Twitter (Respondent M, personal communication, July 2020).

I use Instagram most often. I post stories every day. I use Twitter if I want to express my feelings. I don't use Facebook much except to watch videos and current issues (Respondent O, personal communication, August 2020).

The first theme that emerges from this group is that disclosing their true feeling on SNS or venting their frustrations alleviates tension and stress. Two of the respondents below explain that they are making their Twitter accounts private so that emotional disclosures are only for selected friends. Another respondent is using a different platform for different purposes. He uses Instagram to share his hobby and interest and Twitter to express his feelings. The finding is in line with the arguments that young people tend to disclose more on social media than in real-life environments to one's entire network of virtual friends. This is also incongruent with arguments by Boyd (2014) that young people are using social media to free themselves from the adult gaze to socialise and explore their identities.

If it's on Twitter, I try to let go of what I feel, and I don't expect anything from others. When I post that, I feel relieved and calm (Respondent O, personal communication, August 2020).

On Twitter, I share a lot about my feelings. I usually retweet what other people tweet, especially during MCO. I tweet when I'm bored. A lot about feelings or emotions. Because on Twitter, many young people express their feelings (Respondent P, personal communication, July 2020).

I express what I feel on Twitter. My Twitter is private, so I know who's my followers. On Instagram, I post about my hobby because I also have other people who have the same interest: playing musical instruments. So I hope they will see my interest and challenge themselves as well. On Twitter, I often express my feelings (Respondent M, personal communication, July 2020).

The second theme from this group of participants is that they have a strong connection with their SNS friends and followers, mainly weak ties. As explained below, respondents enjoy sharing on SNS and genuinely appreciate the feedback they get from their SNS friends.

It makes us feel like we want to share good things with others. It's not that we want to show off. It's just that we think our friends are closer to us. When we share, our friends 'Like', meaning our friends still know about us and we can see our friends' activities (Respondent N, personal communication, July 2020).

I hope what I share will benefit my friends and follow the good deeds that I do. I always share my daily routine, what I do and with whom, often with family, friends and siblings. I will make a video and save it for memories (Respondent O, personal communication, August 2020).

If my friends' share they just bought new things, we will not feel jealous and feel happy. We feel close to them, even though our friends are far away from us. We know their story; we can see their achievements on social media (Respondent N, personal communication, July 2020).

In line with the theme explained before, relationships were frequently identified as necessary for these respondents as they indicated increased support or peer friendships among their online friends when disclosing their emotional state. The feedback they get from their SNS friends and followers out of their emotional disclosure helps them regulate their feelings.

Sometimes we are stuck and don't know what to do. Our friends will DM us and try to help. For example, if I make a story and express my feelings, my old friends will DM me and try to help emotionally, even if not all. Once I was down, I wrote on Twitter, then my member said, "Just chill, life is like that" he replied. Twitter is sometimes like our personal space. We can tell our personal story

there. We can share our feelings when we are not satisfied with this or that person. Twitter is like our diary (Respondent N, personal communication, July 2020).

For me, social media gives meaning to my life...when I post on Twitter, a lot of friends retweet and reply me. It's like I want to buy a bike or a house, so my friends on Twitter will give me suggestions. Once or twice I said I was sad. Many contacted me and provided moral support (Respondent P, personal communication, July 2020).

On Twitter, if our friends know we have a problem, they will DM you to know about the problems. It's a little relieving. We can forget about that problem for a moment. It provides emotional support as well. Emotionally, it helped me forget about problems for a while. It can make me feel relieved (Respondent M, personal communication, July 2020).

The third theme from this group of respondents is that SNS provides a meaningful aspect to their lives, mainly helping them connect with the broader community. They indicated that SNS is meaningful, significantly as a platform for gaining information and motivations and providing them with a broader set of information and real-life experiences. As explained below, SNS usage motivates them to fully engage and discover their interest by providing resources and environments and keeping them motivated.

I run a business online, so social media can positively benefit me. I use Instagram for business. For example, I sell food, clothes, clothes, lipstick and so on (Respondent O, personal communication, August 2020).

If we see other talented people, we will also challenge ourselves to be like them. When we think our friend is good at playing the guitar, we also have to find a way to be like him. Some friends post comments and give lots of tips. I play the guitar quite seriously. I want to be a professional. But I'm still at entry-level (Respondent M, personal communication, July 2020).

Findings from this group support the argument that social networks can strengthen users by bridging social capital or the benefits derived from casual connections, which lead to tangible outcomes such as novel information from distant connections. It is related to "weak ties", which are loose connections between individuals who may provide non-redundant information, resulting in benefits such as employment references. In this study, bridging social capital might be augmented by Twitter and Instagram use, which supports loose social ties, allowing users to create and maintain more extensive, diffuse networks of relationships from which they could potentially draw resources (Donath & Boyd, 2004)

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings showed that three groups of respondents engaged in different levels of self-disclosure. The first group consists of young people who refrain from sharing information about themselves on SNS. This group who uses the SNS passively regards SNS mainly for passing the time, relaxing entertainment and escapism. This group is more likely to use

Instagram and not use Twitter. They also found that using SNS did not give much meaning to their lives and did not expect emotional support from their online friends. Since posting on SNS may give lower belongingness or connectedness (Tobin et al., 2015), this group still found that SNS helps them create positive emotions through informational values, entertainment values, and connections to their online friends.

The second group uses SNS actively. However, they only share positive emotional disclosure without sharing their unhappy emotional state. In terms of capitalisation, this group is more in line with the 'positivity norm' of Internet culture, where they only give positive disclosure, predicting positive feedback and more social support (Metzler & Scheithauer, 2017; Vogel, Rose & Crane, 2018). This group appears to perform selective self-presentation by expressing only their positive self in terms of authenticity. This group does not expect greater perceived social support by suppressing their negative feelings. However, in terms of well-being, they use SNS to fully engage in their interest, providing them with a broader set of information and access to opportunities such as sharing and disclosing their study, work, and business opportunities. This group posts status updates about personal daily experiences and interests, which can increase connectedness, referring to the feeling of relatedness with one another in their lives (Vacchiano & Valente, 2021).

The third group actively uses social media and engages in self-disclosure, from sharing their interests and activities to expressing their deep personal feelings, both happy and sad. They all use Twitter as a platform to express and share their state of emotions. In line with the four well-being mechanisms of Luo and Hancock (2020), this group fully uses the SNS platform to enhance their perceived connectedness, social support, capitalisation process, and psychological authenticity (Luo & Hancock, 2020). Besides using SNS to increase their perceived connectedness and relatedness with one another in their lives, they also use SNS to reduce psychological distress and receive increased social support. In terms of capitalisation, this group expresses both happy and unhappy personal thoughts and emotions. They do not receive feedback to make them feel better; they also share positive emotional disclosure through other platforms such as Instagram and Facebook.

Concerning differences between the three SNS platforms, the results found that negative emotions were shown more on Twitter than on Instagram and Facebook. For positive emotional expression, perceived appropriateness was higher on Instagram and Facebook than on Twitter. Although the previous study found that users find it acceptable to express negative and positive emotions on Facebook (Waterloo et al., 2018; Qiu et al., 2012), this study argues that youth tend not to express their positive emotions due to strong ties that existed on Facebook. However, in line with previous research, Instagram is used for self-promotional posting due to its visual properties (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). This may explain why positively valenced content is more prevalent on the platform. Twitter is seen as the go-to platform for youth willing to disclose their sad and unhappy emotions. This could explain the popularity of negatively valenced content on Twitter (Naveed et al., 2011). Twitter serves as a platform for individuals to seek and broadcast requests for support or information. Since it consists of connection of weak ties, young people are using the platform to free themselves from the adult gaze in order to socialise and explore their identities (Boyd, 2014; Kasmani, Abdul Aziz & Zulaikha, 2021)

Although gender differences are not part of the scope of this article, it is interesting to note that four out of five respondents who are more willing to express positive and negative emotions on SNS are males. In addition, three out of five respondents who would

rarely disclose on SNS are females. This contrasts with findings that show males find it less acceptable to share their feelings than females (Waterloo et al., 2018). While many studies on self-disclosure have failed to find gender differences (Cho, 2007), this study provides an interesting understanding of how male youth are more willing to express emotional expressions on SNS (Waterloo et al., 2018).

Based on the five components of well-being by Seligman (2011, 2018): positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment –this study shows that different individuals apply their strengths and virtues differently on SNS to adapt to different life situations, feel satisfied with their life experiences, and not be trapped by depressive conditions (Chang et al., 2014). The findings found that respondents flourish under certain conditions when using SNS regardless of different levels of self-disclosure and SNS usage. It helps them in some way or another to create positive emotions, be happy about their life and be optimistic about their future based on the affordances provided by social media (Chang et al., 2014). This is also in line with the arguments of Lin and Utz (2015) that we do not need to worry too much about how young adolescents use social media because the positive effects of browsing through SNS outweigh the negative effects. What is clear from this study is that SNS users, regardless of their level of self-disclosure, find happiness through their connections with their family and friends. The findings of this study highlighted that young people seem to know the kind of platform and posts that can make them happy, motivate them and encourage them to engage in their aims and interests.

This study reveals that the level of self-disclosure helps to explain youths' well-being. Despite the limitation in terms of the number of respondents involved, the depth and insights of the findings are of great importance in shedding light on how young people self-disclose on SNS to promote well-being. The importance of self-disclosure in social media for well-being can help us understand how the younger group of society uses it as an avenue for developing and maintaining the present social ties and creating new ones (Lönngqvist & Deters, 2016). It is important to note that future research can also further investigate the relations between different levels of self-disclosure concerning the personality, the level of self-esteem and the state of mental health of the respondents. More importantly, it is hoped that such studies can contribute to an unequivocal understanding of an online-communication environment among young people and eventually improve their well-being.

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