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Facebook Usage and its Association with Psychological Well-being among Malaysian Adolescents

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Abstract

Previous studies investigated possible effects of Facebook mostly on hedonic well-being but not focusing on individuals fully function of psychological well-being. This study tries to fill the gap by using Ryff's scale of psychological well-being. The respondents of this study were 401 adolescents aged between 13-16 years old, internet user, who lived in Selangor, Malaysia. Structural Equation Modelling was used to analyse the data. The results revealed that connectivity and organizing events on Facebook had a positive association with psychological well-being and information seeking has negative association with psychological well-being. This study offers two determinant factors on Facebook usage that can predict adolescents' psychological well-being in Malaysian cultural context.

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Keywords: Facebook; adolescents; psychological well-being

1. Introduction

Nowadays adolescents are surrounded by new media such as computers, Internet, video games and mobile phones. Using new devices become an epidemic habit among teens. In the past, movies and television were as a serious threat for new generation. In fact, there was a suspicion about television, which introduced it as a real treatment for youth. Now, it has replaced with new media and viewed as a new risk in adolescents' daily life (Subrahmanyam & Smahel, 2011). In addition, the extensive use of Internet can increase the problematic effect of

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new media on adolescents' psychological well-being (Markovitzky, Anholt, & Lipsitz, 2012). In the same manner, Facebook as one of the most visited online social networks provides massive opportunities and risk for users. For example, adolescents can present themselves in different ways, including explaining hobbies, interests, showing albums, interaction with friends or sending private messages. Facebook users can introduce themselves with a real name (Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin, 2008). Previous studies widely investigated general effects of Internet and social networks on psychosocial well-being. The results revealed that two contradictory outcomes: First, the displacement hypothesis highlighted that adolescents loose face to face communication with friends because they spend more time on social network sites (e.g. Facebook). This hypothesis emphasized that it is not impossible to find new friendship in social network sites, but unreal relationship weakens social and family connections (Knnibbe & Luchies, 2013).

Moreover, this hypothesis mentioned that social network sites waste individuals' time to do other activities. It does not let them do all daily tasks and also participate in social programs (Endestad, Heim, Kaare, Torgersen, & Brandtzæg, 2011). Some scholars found that Internet with non-communicative purpose influences psychological well-being negatively while communicative purpose has a positive effect. Furthermore, the result of these studies supports the stimulation hypothesis (Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris, 2011). For example, some scholars reported that individuals extend their relationship with friends by using social networks; thereby the overall well-being is enhanced (Kalpidou et al., 2011; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007).

In addition, the stimulation hypothesis supported positive Facebook effect on adolescents' well-being. To clarified adolescents feel that they are in a community when they receive positive feedback from viewers and when they contact with others. Consequently, this feeling indirectly effect adolescents' psychological well-being (Knnibbe & Luchies, 2013). The contradictory findings of previous studies on social network effects indicated that some researchers support displacement hypothesis while others believe in stimulation hypothesis. Previous studies showed that the majority of research studies considers psychological well-being as self- esteem, loneliness (e.g., Kalpidou et al., 2011; Schwartz, 2012; Steinfield, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008), subjective well-being, life satisfaction (e.g., Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Kim & Lee, 2011; Manago, Taylor, & Greenfield, 2012) and happiness (e.g., Kim & Lee, 2011).

It seems that no studies conducted to examine the effect of Facebook on all aspects of adolescents' psychological well-being, especially their self- realization. The current study attempts to fill this gap by looking into the role of Facebook in all aspects of psychological well-being. Therefore, the model of Ryff's psychological well-being was used. Based on the model, the concept of psychological well-being is used as eudaimonic approach that clearly showed individuals' development and self-realization. It is emphasized that psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept in people's daily life. The psychological well-being includes all aspects of individual's life (Ryff & Singer, 2006). Ryff and Burton (1996), followed philosophical roots of well-being and defined six dimensions of individual's actualization in terms of psychological well-being including autonomy, environmental mastery, self-acceptance, positive relation with others, personal growth, and purpose in life. In addition, well-being is not only limited to happiness and life satisfaction, instead it includes all activities that are necessary for human attitude, behavior or virtue (Ryff, 2014). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated based on stimulated hypothesis and Ryff model of psychological well-being:

H₁: There is significant positive relationship between Information seeking on Facebook with psychological well-being.

H₂: There is significant positive relationship between connectivity on Facebook with psychological well-being.

H₃: There is significant positive relationship between organizing events on Facebook with psychological well-being.

2. Method and materials

The participants of the study were adolescents' age of 13, 14 and 16 years old who study in Selangor state of Malaysia. Selangor was chosen based on Annual Household use of the Internet MCMC in Malaysia as one of the highest Internet users. Two districts of Selangor were selected randomly. In addition, by cluster sampling one school in urban and one in rural area was chosen.

The instrument used in this research study was included three components: The demographic information, scale of 'Facebook frequency by purpose', and the scale of 'psychological well-being'. The demographic information included age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and location.

2.1. Facebook frequency by purpose

The current scale was measured by three related constructs of Facebook including, ‘information seeking’, ‘connectivity’ and ‘organizing events’. Respondents valued their agreement on five point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Information seeking (M= 13.23, SD= 3.71) was measured by four items from Ellison et al. (2011). The items of ‘information seeking’ included (I use Facebook to check out someone I met socially, I use Facebook to learn more about other people in my classes, I use Facebook to learn more other people living near me, I use Facebook to meet new people) ($\alpha=.71$).

Connectivity (M= 11.75, SD= 2.63) was measured by three items of Tosun (2012). It included (I use Facebook to keep in touch with my old friends, I use FB to reconnect with friends that I lost contact with them, I use FB to keep in touch with friends living far away) ($\alpha=.76$).

Organizing events (M= 8.51, SD= 2.81) was measured by three items of Tosun (2012). The items included (I use FB to organize activities, I use FB to become inform about events and activities that my friends have organized, and I use FB to make meeting arrangements with my friends) ($\alpha=.70$).

Psychological well-being was measured by six sub-dimensions from Ryff (1996). The subscales included ‘autonomy’ (M=20.67, SD=4.20), ‘environmental mastery’ (M=23.09, SD=3.75), ‘personal growth’ (M=23.76, SD= 4.96), ‘self-acceptance’ (M=23, SD= 5.05), ‘purpose in life’ (M=23.04, SD= 4.57), and ‘positive relation with others’ (M= 23.85, SD= 5.35). These Likert type scale totally consist of 42 items and 7 items in each sub-dimensions. The statements were valued from 1= “strongly disagree” to 5= “strongly agree” and the negative items reversed as 1= “strongly agree” to 5= “strongly disagree”. The internal consistency in six sub-dimension of psychological well-being was assessed. The result showed ‘autonomy’ ($\alpha=.69$), ‘environmental mastery’ ($\alpha=.71$), ‘personal growth’ ($\alpha=.83$), ‘positive relation with others’ ($\alpha=.85$), ‘self- acceptance’ ($\alpha=.82$), and ‘purpose in life’ ($\alpha=.69$).

3. Results

Descriptive analysis indicated that 52 percent of participants were boys and 47 percent were girls. From total of 401 contributors 34 percent were 13 years old, 35 percent were 14 years old and 30 percent were 16 years old. Participants who lived in urban and rural were 59 and 40 percent respectively. Half of the adolescents reported being Muslim and 33 percent Buddhist and the rest of them were Hindu and Christian. The ethnicity in Malaysia contributed in three major groups. Fifty percent of adolescents were Malay, 37 percent Chinese and 9.5 percent were Indian. In addition, the average time of using Facebook by participants is 60 minutes per day. Forty percent of participants reported that they spend 60 minutes on Facebook and 26 and 16 percent of them approximately spent 120 and 180 minutes per day on Facebook respectively. Twenty six percent of adolescents declared that they have 50-250 friends in their friend list, 22 percent of them had 251- 500 friends, and 18 percent had 1000-2000 friends. The sample of study was sufficient to address research hypothesis. The data analysed by SPSS and AMOSS version of 22.

The result of fit indices showed that CFI = 0.972, IFI = 0.972, GFI=0.952 and RMSEA= 0.042. Hair (2010) mentioned that the possible range of Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit index (CFI) between 0 and 1 and values above 0.90 shows the model is fit. He also emphasized that lower Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) values indicate better fit. Indeed, REMSEA between 0.03 and 0.08 is acceptable with 95% confidence.

The current results revealed the path from ‘connectivity’ ($\beta=0.40, p= 0.000$), ‘organizing events’ ($\beta=0.21, p= 0.002$) were significant relationship with ‘psychological well-being’ while the path from ‘information seeking’ with ‘psychological well-being’ was negative relationship with psychological well-being ($\beta=-0.29, p= 0.000$), (Figure 1). The result showed that the H1 rejected since the relationship between information seeking in Facebook and psychological well-being was negative. It means that information seeking had negative effect on adolescents’ psychological well-being. In addition, H2 and H3 accepted because the relationship between connectivity and organizing events on Facebook was significant. To clarified, respondents who use Facebook to communicate with

friends have better psychological well-being. In addition, organizing events on Facebook can predict better psychological well-being among adolescents.

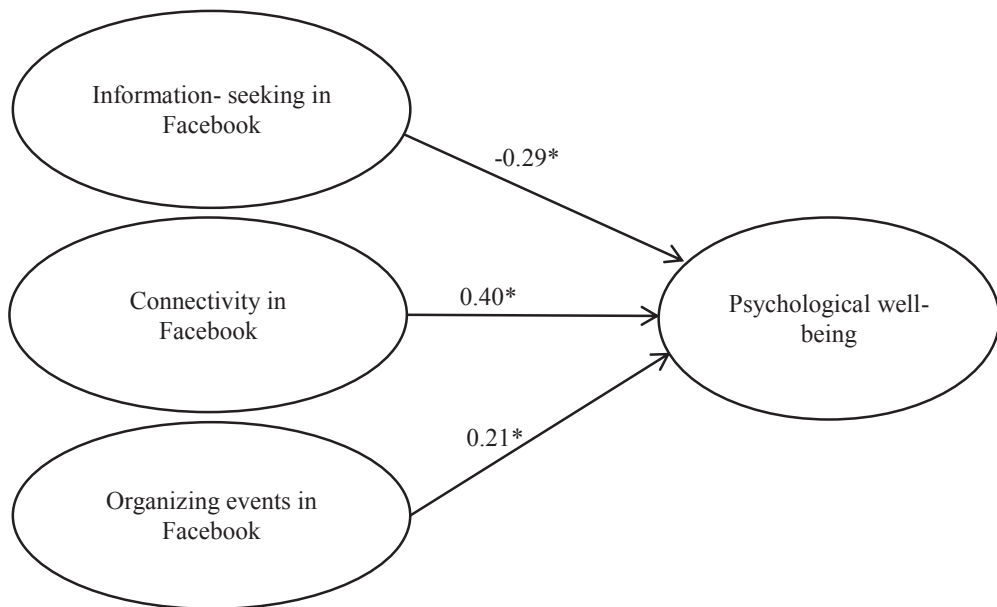


Figure. 1. Hypothesized Results – the relationships between information seeking, connectivity and organizing events with psychological well-being. (* $p < 0.05$)

4. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this study examines the effect of Facebook usage (information-seeking, connectivity and organizing events) on adolescents' psychological well-being. The importance of this study is because of the lack of eastern literature on the relationship of Facebook usage and psychological well-being in terms of eudiamonic well-being among age group 13-16 years old. The result of this study shows that purposive use of Facebook is positively correlated with psychological well-being. This finding is consistent with stimulation hypothesis. To clarify, on Facebook adolescents tend to communicate with their friends who are in long-distance with them. They want to keep their relationship so through Facebook adolescents can maintain friendship with those who live far from them and meet each other rarely, and even they find new friendship with strangers who never see them before. The result of this study reveals that adolescents look for communicative purpose via Facebook rather than other activities. It means that although adolescents do other action such as uploading photos, videos or post text on Facebook wall, they mostly connect Facebook to be in touch with old friends or find lost friends.

This study confirms that the extension of social communication as the main function of Facebook has positive effect on adolescents' psychological well-being. Indeed, the research study supports the previous findings in western countries (e.g., Ellison et al., 2007; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007), and expresses that communicative use of Facebook provide positive psychological well-being outcomes because it facilitates communication for those who are not in face to face connection (Grieve, Indian, Witteveen, Anne Tolan, & Marrington, 2013). In addition, 'organizing event' – arrange the meetings, inform the friends about friendship gathering, plans or events - as another aspect of Facebook usage has positive relationship with psychological well-being. Consequently, the result of current research shows that frequency of Facebook usage can have positive effect in adolescents' psychological well-being if they look communicative purpose and not surfing and wasting time. To clarify, make connection

with family, friends or acquaintances, organizing daily activities in Facebook and not only wandering in Facebook will help adolescents' well-being.

5. Limitations

This study did not include the students of 15 years old. The ministry of education did not allow involving this age group of adolescents because of students schedule to take a major national examination.

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