

The Influence of Emotion Regulation on Psychological Well-Being in Adolescents Amid Exposure to Social Media Content

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Abstract. This study examined the influence of emotion regulation on adolescents' psychological well-being in the context of social media exposure. Using a quantitative method with simple linear regression, the research involved 257 nursing students from SMKN 2 Malang selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using emotion regulation and psychological well-being scales and analyzed with SPSS 25.0. The findings revealed a positive and significant effect of emotion regulation on psychological well-being, with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.740$) showed that emotion regulation contributed 74% to psychological well-being. This indicates that adolescents with better emotion regulation tend to have higher psychological well-being, while lower emotion regulation is associated with lower well-being. Overall, the study highlights the importance of emotion regulation in supporting adolescents' psychological well-being, particularly in facing the challenges of social media exposure in the digital era.

Keywords: *Emotion Regulation, Psychological Well-Being, Adolescents, Social Media*

1 Introduction

Adolescence is a developmental phase characterized by complex emotional, social, and psychological changes. According to Santrock (2012), adolescence is the phase during which a person is between the ages of 10 to 22. In the current digital era, adolescents are closely connected to social media, which provides various types of information and entertainment but may also create psychological pressure. Exposure to social media content, such as comparisons of achievements, beauty standards, and lifestyle demands, can affect adolescents' emotional conditions and have an impact on their psychological well-being. Meanwhile, adolescents must navigate various academic responsibilities and extracurricular demands at school, which may contribute to psychological stress when they lack adequate skills to manage these challenges effectively (Syafiasani & Rahayu, 2022). Psychological well-being refers to a condition in which individuals are able to accept themselves, establish positive relationships with others, have a purpose in life, and develop optimally (Ryff, 2014). Adolescents with good psychological well-being tend to be better able to cope with pressure and maintain a positive outlook on life.

According to Ryff (2014), several factors influence psychological well-being, including age, family relationships, social activities, health, resilience, and personality. The personality aspect encompasses high self-acceptance, which enables individuals to manage their emotions and themselves under various pressures (Muna, 2023). One thing that affects how people feel mentally is emotion regulation (Nurmawati & Safitri, 2023). Emotion regulation is about a person's ability to notice their feelings, handle them, and keep them in check. According to the situation at hand. Gross & Thompson (2007) state that emotion regulation includes two main ways of dealing with emotions: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Individuals with good emotion regulation skills tend to be better able to reduce stress, manage negative emotions, and maintain their psychological well-being. Conversely, poor emotion regulation may cause individuals to be more vulnerable to anxiety, stress, and emotional instability (Arjanggi & Fauziah, 2021).

Several previous studies have supported the relationship between emotion regulation and psychological well-being. Ananta et al. (2025) found a positive and significant relationship between emotion regulation and psychological well-being among high school students. Similarly, Duri et al. (2025) found that emotion regulation significantly contributes to psychological well-being among psychology students. In addition, Andini & Simanjuntak (2025) found that emotion regulation contributed 36.5% to psychological well-being among women in the sandwich generation. However, most previous studies have focused on university students or examined emotion regulation in relation to academic stress. Research involving vocational high school students, particularly nursing students who may be vulnerable to emotional pressure due to academic demands and exposure to social media content, remains limited (Refnandes et al., 2024). Therefore, the present study differs from previous research by focusing on the effect of emotion regulation on psychological well-being among adolescents in the context of exposure to social media content.

The hypothesis of this study is that emotion regulation has a positive and significant effect on psychological well-being among adolescents. This means that the higher the level of emotion regulation among adolescents, the higher their level of psychological well-being. Based on this background, this study aims to determine the effect of emotion regulation on psychological well-being among adolescents in the context of exposure to social media content.

2 Methods

This study used a quantitative method and a simple linear regression to look at how emotion regulation affects psychological well-being among adolescents in the context of exposure to social media content. A quantitative method was chosen because this study was focused on measuring numerical data and testing hypotheses through statistical analysis (Azwar, 2018).

The variables in this study consisted of the independent variable (X), namely emotion regulation, and the dependent variable (Y), namely psychological well-being. Emotion regulation was defined as an individual's ability to control, manage, and adjust emotions according to the situation at hand. Meanwhile, psychological well-being refers to a condition in which individuals are able to accept themselves, establish positive relationships with others, have a purpose in life, and develop optimally.

The research participants consisted of 257 nursing students at SMKN 2 Malang, selected using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling emphasizes the selection of respondents who meet specific characteristics or criteria. This selection process ensures that the chosen sample aligns with the research needs and objectives (Sugiyono, 2013). The characteristics of the participants included adolescents aged 15–19 years who were active social media users. The research instruments consisted of two psychological scales using a Likert-scale format: an emotion regulation scale and a psychological well-being scale. The emotion regulation scale was developed based on the aspects of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression proposed by Gross and John (2003), while the psychological well-being scale was developed based on the dimensions proposed by Ryff (1989), including self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, purpose in life, personal growth, and autonomy.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 25.0. Before testing the hypothesis, we did some checks to see if our data met certain conditions. These checks were for normality and linearity. Subsequently, the study used simple linear regression to find out how emotion regulation affects psychological well-being in teenagers.

3 Results

The participants in this study consisted of 257 nursing students at SMKN 2 Malang, aged 15–19 years. Based on the participants characteristics, the majority were 16 years old, comprising 73 students (29.4%), and most participants were female, with 206 students (80.2%). In terms of social media usage duration, the majority of participants reported using social media for 4–6 hours per day, comprising 157 students (61.1%). Furthermore, most participants reported that they were sometimes influenced by social media content, accounting for 140 students (54.5%), while entertainment content was the most frequently viewed type of content, accounting for 37.7%.

The results of the data categorization indicated that the levels of emotion regulation and psychological well-being among the participants tended to fall within the moderate to high categories. This indicates that most adolescents had relatively adequate emotion regulation abilities and relatively positive levels of psychological well-being. Before testing the hypothesis, we did some assumption checks to make sure the data meets certain conditions, like normality and linearity. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test for normality showed that the

data follows a normal distribution, since the significance level was higher than 0.05. The linearity test found that the value showing how much the relationship deviated from a straight line was higher than 0.05, which means the connection between emotion regulation and psychological well-being follows a straight line pattern. So, the data satisfied all the necessary conditions for performing a simple linear regression analysis.

Table 1. Regression analysis between emotion regulation and psychological well being

Variable	B			SE	t	P (sig.)
Constanta	12.433			1.867	6.659	.000
Emotion Regulation	1.407	.860		.052	26.934	.000
R ²			.740	8.710		
F			725.436			.000

Based on table 1, the analysis results showed a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, meaning the research hypothesis was supported. This finding demonstrates a positive and significant effect of emotion regulation on psychological well-being among adolescents in the context of exposure to social media content.

The analysis showed an R² value of 0.740, which means that emotion regulation explained 74% of the changes in psychological well-being. The other 26% of the differences was due to factors that weren't studied in this research. These findings indicate that higher levels of emotion regulation are associated with higher levels of psychological well-being among adolescents.

4 Discussion

The results of this study indicate that emotion regulation has a positive and significant effect on psychological well-being among adolescents in the context of exposure to social media content. This finding suggests that adolescents’ ability to manage and control their emotions plays an important role in maintaining their psychological well-being. Adolescents who are able to regulate their emotions effectively tend to be better equipped to cope with emotional pressures arising from social media exposure, such as social comparison, achievement-related pressure, and feelings of anxiety and low self-esteem. Conversely, adolescents with lower emotion regulation abilities may be more vulnerable to stress, anxiety, and decreased psychological well-being.

These findings are consistent with Gross & John’s (2003) theory, which conceptualizes emotion regulation as the process through which individuals regulate their emotional experiences and expressions according to the situations they encounter. This ability enables individuals to reduce the impact of negative emotions and maintain greater psychological stability. Furthermore, Ryff (1989) explained that psychological well-being is characterized by an individual’s ability to accept themselves, have a sense of purpose in life, establish positive relationships with others, and achieve personal growth. In the present study, effective emotion regulation may help adolescents attain better psychological well-being.

The findings also support earlier studies by Ananta et al. (2025) showed that being able to manage emotions is connected to better mental health among high school students. Similarly,

Dinda et al. (2024) reported that emotional abilities are closely associated with individuals' psychological well-being. The consistency of these findings further supports the role of emotion regulation as an important factor associated with psychological well-being among adolescents.

However, the present study differs from previous research in its focus on vocational high school adolescents majoring in nursing within the context of social media exposure. This group has distinctive characteristics, as they face relatively high academic and practical demands that may increase their vulnerability to emotional pressure. Therefore, the ability to regulate emotions becomes an important resource for adolescents in maintaining psychological stability while managing the demands of their academic and practical activities.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.740 indicates that emotion regulation accounted for 74% of the variance in psychological well-being. Nevertheless, other factors may also influence psychological well-being, including social support, family environment, personality, socioeconomic conditions, and the intensity of social media use (Prihartini et al., 2023). This finding highlights that psychological well-being is a multidimensional condition influenced by various psychological and environmental factors.

Overall, the findings suggest that exposure to social media does not necessarily result in negative psychological outcomes when adolescents possess adequate emotion regulation abilities. Emotion regulation may function as a protective factor that enables adolescents to process and respond to social media content in a more adaptive manner (Amaliah & Iswinarti, 2025). Therefore, efforts to enhance emotion regulation skills through education, guidance, and psychological interventions may be beneficial in helping adolescents maintain their psychological well-being in the digital era.

5 Conclusion

The findings shows that emotion regulation has a good and important impact on the mental health of teenagers who are exposed to social media. People who are better at managing their emotions tend to have better mental health. Emotion regulation accounted for 74% of the variance in psychological well-being, indicating that the ability to manage emotions is an important factor in maintaining adolescents' psychological well-being in the digital era. Adolescents who are able to regulate and adjust their emotions effectively tend to be better equipped to cope adaptively with psychological pressures arising from exposure to social media.

Future research is recommended to examine other factors that may influence psychological well-being, such as social support, parenting styles, self-esteem, and the intensity of social media use. In addition, future studies may involve broader and more diverse populations to increase the generalizability of the findings.

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