Elucidating the Influence of TikTok Gratification on Psychological Well-Being and Life Satisfaction among Young Muslim Users

Siti Hasnah Hassan[1]*, Low Eve Chee[1], Norizan Mat Saad[2], Nabil Hasan Al-Kumaim[3]

[1]School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 USM Gelugor, Penang, Malaysia, [2]UCSI Graduate Business School, UCSI University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, [3]Department of Information System, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor, Malaysia. *Email: siti.hassan@usm.my

ABSTRACT

TikTok usage trends are continually evolving, and young Muslims' experiences and preferences on the platform may vary across different countries, cultures, and individual contexts. This study examines the impact of TikTok gratification on the psychological well-being and life satisfaction of Malaysian Muslims aged 18-24. Utilizing survey methods and purposive snowballing, data from 350 participants were analyzed via SmartPLS 4.0. The findings indicate that socially rewarding self-presentation, trendiness, and escapist addiction significantly influenced self-gratification, positively contributing to psychological well-being and life satisfaction within this demographic. The research highlights TikTok's potential for young Muslims to express creativity, embrace cultural identity, and promote positive Islamic representations. These insights are valuable for policymakers, psychologists, NGOs, educators, and content creators seeking to enhance the well-being and empowerment of young Muslim users in the digital era. This study offers new insights into TikTok gratification and its effects on psychological well-being and life satisfaction in the Muslim-majority nations.

Keywords: TikTok, Self-Gratification, Personal Needs, Trendiness, Escapist Addiction, Social Rewards, Life Satisfaction, Psychological Well-Being
JEL Classifications: I30, Z13, D12

1. INTRODUCTION

The popularity of short video sharing in social media has surged in recent years, transforming the way people consume and engage with content (Chu et al., 2024; Gabbiadini et al., 2021; Miranda et al., 2023). The trend has gained significant popularity in recent years, driven by the widespread use of smartphones and the increasing demand for bite-sized video content. Short-video social platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and Snapchat allow users to record essential remembrances by producing short videos targeted explicitly at young mobile-first generations (Guinaudeau et al., 2021). TikTok has emerged as a popular social media platform that permits users to create personalized profiles featuring their content while receiving algorithmically selected content from fellow users (Chu et al., 2024; Ma et al., 2019; Miranda et al., 2023; Scherr and Wang, 2021; Zhang et al., 2019). TikTok originated in China and was launched globally in 2017; within a year, TikTok was ranked the #1 photo and video application in the Apple App Store (Zhang et al., 2019). TikTok video also rapidly surpasses existing short video applications in the market share, owing to the ability to fulfill younger users' frequently altering demands and requirements (Ma et al., 2019).

TikTok, known initially as Musical.ly, is one of the fastest-growing Chinese social networking applications owned by Byte Dance. Currently, TikTok has over one billion active users worldwide from 154 countries communicating in 75 different languages, with over 70% of TikTok users being the trendsetters of Millennials and

Gen Z (Datareportal, 2022). The statistics suggest that the youth, particularly those aged 18-24, make up a substantial majority of TikTok users, with nearly 43.7% falling within this age group. Furthermore, the data on TikTok usage in Malaysia, a country with a significant Muslim population, reveals a similar trend. Specifically, about 35.49% of TikTok users in Malaysia are youth users (Statista, 2023). This trend suggests that young Muslim users, likely to be represented in these age groups, are also active on the platform. This highlights the study's relevance to focus on this demographic group. Meanwhile, TikTok's 60-s video length was extended to 3 min in July 2021 and ten minutes in 2022. According to Kirchhoff (2021), a TikTok product manager, longer videos would enable the global community to express personal creativity via richer storytelling and entertainment on TikTok. Longer videos with various available features could unleash users' creativity and fascinate their belonging communities with personal artistic expression before assisting in uniting individuals across the globe.

TikTok has pioneered a prevalent trend amongst younger individuals by encouraging users to create and share videos containing popular music, soundbites, humor, dancing, singing, cooking, physical activity, and other activities, such as video challenges and imitations. The mobile-centric design and seamless user experience align well with Gen Z's mobile-first habits. Content creation could acquire higher attention levels, creating an endless chain of likes, responses, and followers worldwide. However, TikTok helps young people create, post, and share entertaining videos using effortless methods, minimal production costs, fast propagation approaches, and simple video editing tools (Jaffar et al., 2019; Miranda et al., 2023). The young generation, especially Gen Z, was born in the digital age, and they are often technologically savvy and more adept than previous generations. Gen Z is young adults and youth, the youngest customers, students, colleagues, voters, residents, and neighbors (Stylos et al., 2021). Gen Z, comprising digital natives born in the mid-1990s through the late 2010s, grew up accompanied by rapid technological advancements. This generation has been exposed to technology since childhood (Turner, 2015). According to Kirchhoff (2021), Gen Z has different hobbies than older generations. Young people aged 16-24 place less importance on cultural activities than other activities. Therefore, to establish a connection with this generation in terms of entertainment, it is essential to aim at the desire of young people to create social relationships and share experiences in the virtual world (Kılıç et al., 2021). In Malaysia, the definition of youth is broad, encompassing a wide age range as per the Youth Society and Youth Development Act 2007 defines youth as individuals aged between 15 and 40. However, the Malaysian national youth policy primarily focuses on individuals aged between 15 and 25 (Mustaffa et al., 2011). In brief, the youth demographic is a multifaceted group comprising early and middle youth within Gen Z (Mustafa Din et al., 2022). Notably, this study narrows its focus to a specific segment of this demographic, specifically young people aged 18-24, a critical transitional phase of life marked by significant physical, emotional, and social changes. Young people in Malaysia frequently utilize the Internet for various purposes, including acquiring knowledge, sharing information, connecting with friends and family, engaging in leisure activities, and participating in online shopping (Hassan et al., 2021; Upadhayay and Guragain, 2017).

As such, the accurate TikTok market positioning addresses the audience's psychological demands, including social engagement, transformation, and respect, from the combination of effective online and offline promotion techniques (Ma et al., 2019). Malaysian youths also proposed that the government employ TikTok to communicate with the younger generation regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination campaign. The top popularity of TikTok could assist in guaranteeing that the message is effectively communicated to Millennials and Gen Z (Hassim et al., 2022). Meanwhile, technological advancement and increasing smartphone usage have rendered social media a vital aspect of living for younger generations. Nevertheless, unrestrained smartphone utilization could engender various psychological problems, such as distraction, inefficiently managing time, and reduced learning time (Hong et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2019). Previous studies also found the negative impact of social media addiction on academic well-being. Similarly, the impact of social media usage on life satisfaction was also investigated (Ponnusamy et al., 2020; Satici, 2019; Satici and Uysal, 2015). In addition, social media usage has also been investigated in terms of its impact on shyness and loneliness. Research has found that individuals relying heavily on social media for social interactions may experience heightened feelings of shyness and increased loneliness (Błachnio et al., 2016; Busch and McCarthy, 2021; Han et al., 2017; MacDonald and Schermer, 2021).

Muslims, like individuals from other religious and cultural backgrounds, actively share short videos on social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and Snapchat. It has become a prominent mode of self-expression, entertainment, cultural representation, and community building. While a growing body of literature examines social media usage among young people, including Gen Z, the focus on young Muslims' usage of TikTok may still be relatively limited. TikTok as a platform is relatively new, and research on its usage and effects is still emerging. However, studies and research articles explore the broader topic of social media usage among Muslims (Bahfen, 2018; Baulch and Pramiyanti, 2018; Husni, 2019; Islam, 2019; Mokhtar and Bahari, 2021; Oktarini et al., 2022). The young generation has grown up in a "connected at all times" environment (Turner, 2015, p. 104). With young individuals as ardent users of various social media platforms, the generation emerges as a significant driver behind social transformation (Reinikainen et al., 2020), such as facilitating the development of Gen Z's self-identity. Despite the growing popularity of TikTok usage among young people in Malaysia, there is a notable gap in existing literature regarding the key dimensions of TikTok gratification and its impact on psychological well-being. Specifically, the relationships between various gratification dimensions, such as personal need, socially rewarded self-presentation, trendiness, and escapist addiction, with their effects on the psychological well-being of young Muslim users, remain underexplored. There remains a glaring gap in understanding TikTok's impact on the psychological well-being and life satisfaction of young Muslims in Malaysia.

Any tool or technology can positively and negatively impact its users. The issue is not in the platforms per se but in how they have been utilized. Thus, it will be more beneficial to concentrate on exploring which social media platforms have the most significant impact on this generation rather than focusing on the negative effects of these platforms. Through social media usage, Gen Z acquired sufficient access to a community that allows them to socialize and interact with peers while receiving pertinent feedback apropos of personal development (Oktarini et al., 2022). Therefore, this study employs the Uses and Gratifications (U and G) theory to examine the consequences of TikTok usage among Malaysian Muslim Gen Z.

This study significantly contributes to the body of knowledge by understanding TikTok's role in shaping young Muslim users' psychological well-being and life satisfaction, a demographic often underrepresented in social media research. The findings will provide valuable insights into how TikTok fulfils this community's unique personal and social needs, such as cultural expression, social validation, and mental reprieve. These insights not only expand the U&G framework by contextualizing it for young Muslims in Malaysia but also offer practical implications for digital engagement strategies that are culturally and religiously attuned. This research has potential applications for policymakers, educators, and content creators aiming to promote healthier and more supportive digital environments that align with Islamic values, thereby fostering psychological well-being and life satisfaction among young Muslims in the digital era.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratification Theory is a communication theory that explores why and how individuals use media to fulfill their specific needs and desires. The U and G theory approach may be most suitable for explaining individual motives for media consumption, attitude, and access (Stafford et al., 2004). The U and G theory, established in 1940, is a mass communication theory that perceives the mass audience as a group of active users employing the media to fulfill personal requirements. After applying the media for personal usage, ultimate gratification would be achieved by satisfying psychological and social needs (Fachri Mirza, 2018; Ponnusamy et al., 2020).

Individual social media dependence is primarily elucidated by media usage gratifications, specifically cognitive gratification (Lee and Choi, 2018). Several studies applying the U and G theory discovered that the theory was pertinent to delineating media consumption, including social media applications (Bae, 2018; Dolan et al., 2016; Ponnusamy et al., 2020; Yaqi et al., 2021). For example, Ponnusamy et al. (2020) investigated Instagram addiction by focusing on four primary needs: recognition, information, social, and entertainment, and the relevant influences of every specific medium in satisfying personal psychological and social needs. Moreover, evaluating the U and G theory on users' social media engagement behavior depends on the technical environment, distinctive features, and content (Papacharissi and Mendelson, 2010; Sundar and Limperos, 2013). Specifically,

while TikTok serves as a platform for individuals' broader motivations, the application also fulfills gratifications due to its high popularity compared to other social media platforms. Thus, the U&G theory is highly relevant in delineating the phenomena and motivation of TikTok usage. The theory was incorporated into the current conceptual framework development by appraising motivational factors, such as individual requirements, trendiness, escapist addiction, and rewarding self-gratification presentations. The theory could sufficiently describe individuals' rationales for preferring a communication mode over another while determining the benefits to their psychological and social needs.

2.2. Well-being

Well-being is a dynamic, complex condition of health that must be contextualized due to vast discrepancies and conflicting standards of life in various countries (Diener et al., 2015; Hassan et al., 2023). Although happiness represents a pillar of the good life that may indicate pleasure, positive emotion, life satisfaction, and a sense of meaningful life, the concept of happiness is not uniformly defined. The link between religion and well-being can be seen from two viewpoints. First, well-being is founded on human perspectives, and second, based on religious scriptures (Eryilmaz and Kula, 2020). In the Western world, well-being has always been examined and measured from life satisfaction (hedonism) and psychological well-being (eudaimonism) (Diener et al., 2015; Diener et al., 2009; Hidayah Wan and Abdelaziz, 2024; Koydemir et al., 2020). The hedonic approach defines well-being as the ability to experience pleasure while avoiding pain (Hidayah Wan and Abdelaziz, 2024; Koburtay et al., 2022; Ryan and Deci, 2001). In addition, the eudaimonic approach implies that realizing one's potential leads to psychological well-being, even during challenging times (Koburtay et al., 2022; Turban and Yan, 2016). The eudaimonic approach emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the actualization of human potential and meeting actual human needs (Hidayah Wan and Abdelaziz, 2024; Joshanloo, 2013). The theoretical justification for distinguishing between hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to well-being is evident from Islamic and Western perspectives (Hidayah Wan and Abdelaziz, 2024; Joshanloo, 2013; Koburtay et al., 2022). Even though both approaches evaluate well-being, each focuses on distinct aspects of what it means to have a good life. Nevertheless, modern psychology offers broader perspectives on well-being across religions and without cultural prejudice, especially in understanding well-being among the young generation.

In Islam, well-being is not solely about physical health or emotional satisfaction but is deeply intertwined with spiritual practices and beliefs. It emphasizes maintaining a moderate lifestyle balance that includes physical and spiritual balance as guided by the Quran (words of God, Allah (SWT) and the Hadiths (a collection of narratives about the Prophet Muhammad) teachings. In Islam, well-being is inextricably linked to faith, including happiness and a deep sense of contentment and peace (Hassan, 2014). This comprehensive viewpoint requires Muslims to diligently pursue their life's purpose while putting their trust in The Creators, Allah (SWT). True well-being is the most profound spiritual delight, which is only possible hereafter through the faith and worship of

Allah (SWT) (Hidayah Wan and Abdelaziz, 2024; Joshanloo and Weijers, 2019; Koburtay et al., 2022).

2.3. Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is an affective component of well-being that reflects individuals' ongoing judgments of their living conditions and refers to "a cognitive, judgmental process" (Diener et al., 1985, p. 71). Life satisfaction constitutes a hedonic point of view, defined as the cognitive-emotional aspects of subjective well-being (SWB) that includes the individual's assessments of various areas of life (Diener et al., 2009). Subjective well-being is an individual's long-term level of positive emotions with fewer negative emotions and a high level of life satisfaction in various areas such as marriage, work, health, and success. Emotions like excitement, honor, interest, joy, and trust are positive, while feelings like shame, guilt, hatred, rage, and hatred are negative. The notion of subjective well-being reflected via assessments of an individual's life, is widely utilized to examine life satisfaction (Wang et al., 2018). For relationship maintenance, TikTok usage has been shown to predict life satisfaction (Dong and Xie, 2022).

2.4. Personal Need

The emergence of social media platforms is contingent on the capacity to gratify users' diverse needs, including the desire for recognition and social interaction needs (Ponnusamy et al., 2020). The need for recognition involves seeking admiration from other individuals when using social media (Leung, 2013). On the other hand, social needs encompass employing social media to express sentiments, exchange opinions, thoughts, and experiences, and constantly connect with other users (Chan et al., 2012). Concurrently, short-video applications enable users to expand interpersonal communication by acquiring other users, thereby increasing personal attachment to the applications due to the provision of significant social values (Zhang et al., 2019). Social value refers to the interpersonal communication value and social promotion users obtain from continuously utilizing TikTok (Ma et al., 2019). Younger generations are inclined to form their identities by seeking the approval of others. Self-expression and sharing visuals on social media may help develop social connections by fostering honest, enjoyable dialogues with others (Scherr and Wang, 2021). According to Foroughi et al. (2022), getting "likes" and "comments" from peers is a sign of approval when they routinely post live streams, videos, and photos to social media platforms like Instagram. There was a correlation between the need for social recognition and addictions among Instagram users of Gen Z, who focused more on self-promotion and self-identity to fulfill their recognition needs (Kırcaburun and Griffiths, 2019). Some form of engagement is required to get social recognition, and young people tend to construct visual identities via content creation and sharing, which is measured by the number of followers and likes (Bossen and Kottasz, 2020; Foroughi et al., 2022; Khan, 2017; Sheldon and Bryant, 2016). Social media platforms can fulfill the need for social recognition, providing a sense of approval and validation (Foroughi et al., 2022). However, it can also lead to addiction behavior and further consequences if not appropriately managed (Kırcaburun and Griffiths, 2019). Hence, given the discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H$_1$: There is a significant link between personal needs and psychological well-being.

2.5. Socially Rewarding Self-Presentation

Self-presentation is the process through which individuals govern and manage the impressions of others by expressing and behaving in a specific manner (Leary, 1996). According to Kim and Ko (2007, p. 326), self-expression was defined as "expressing one's thoughts and feelings, and these expressions can be accomplished through words, choices or actions," which could manifest an individual's distinctive identity and individuality. Social media platforms entice users by providing opportunities for self-expression, creative outlets, and positive social reinforcement (Bailey et al., 2020; Chu et al., 2024). TikTok is an inspiring platform for creativity and self-expression, notably through aesthetically appealing videos, allowing for socially rewarding self-presentation chances (Chu et al., 2024; Dhir et al., 2016; Scherr and Wang, 2021). Self-generating and posting on TikTok elicit positive reactions from other users, boosting connections, interactions with diverse individuals, and admiration for innovative videos as important social advantages. This approach helps build a good reputation by bridging the gap between one's realistic and ideal self-identity by drawing culturally diverse audiences to form supportive network connections (Bossen and Kottasz, 2020; Scherr and Wang, 2021). The instant feedback and validation received on TikTok can also significantly shape an individual's self-worth. Likes, comments, and followers serve as tangible measures of social approval (Foroughi et al., 2022), enhancing an individual's sense of self-worth and motivation to continue creating content.

Moreover, the platform's algorithm, which prioritizes content that generates high engagement, motivates users to create content that resonates with others, fostering a sense of community and social connection. As a result, showcasing personal skills and talents on TikTok can lead to increased psychological well-being, as individuals experience a sense of pride, accomplishment, and social recognition. This can create a positive feedback loop, where individuals feel motivated to continue presenting themselves in a socially rewarding manner, further reinforcing their self-image and psychological well-being. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H$_2$: There is a significant link between socially rewarding self-presentation and psychological well-being.

2.6. Trendiness

Trendiness and excitement can be regarded as a manifestation of gratification, reminiscent of other visually-oriented social media platforms (Sheldon and Bryant, 2016). Short-video applications enable users to relax and relish by alleviating negative emotions regardless of current locations and periods, thus establishing a powerful bond between the applications and users (Zhang et al., 2019). A one-minute TikTok video is ubiquitous trendiness that displays its widespread appeal among younger generations, placing it as the current vogue and eliciting significant user engagement (Scherr and Wang, 2021). While many young individuals utilize Instagram due to the perceived coolness and trendiness (Choi et al., 2021), users also favor TikTok for similar reasons aside from entertainment needs, which would elevate the personal sense of connection with one another. Consequently, online

short video streaming service providers, including TikTok, offer a wide range of entertainment content to cater to users' diverse preferences and ensure continuous engagement. For example, TikTok's dance challenges and viral trends encourage creativity and community, while personalized video streams based on algorithmic recommendations and user data improve the user experience and encourage repeat usage. The trendiness is often driven by the desire to stay up-to-date with the latest trends and challenges (Scherr and Wang, 2021; Zhang et al., 2019), which can provide a sense of belonging and social identity among users. As a result, the trendiness of TikTok can have a positive impact on users' psychological well-being, as it provides a sense of excitement, social connection, and community, which can be particularly beneficial for younger people, leading to the following hypothesis:

H$_3$: There is a significant relationship between trendiness and psychological well-being.

2.7. Escapist Addiction

Baumeister's escape theory defines escapism as a means of evasion dealing with one's feelings and thoughts (Baumeister, 1991). Escapist behavior is how individuals engage in activities or adopt behaviors that temporarily allow them to escape reality. It liberates people from constant self-evaluation, analysis, comparison, and judgment. Stenseng et al. (2012) noted that escaping from a task causes absorption, momentary detachment, and lower self-evaluation. However, without caution, the coping technique with selected mechanisms might lead to long-term psychological issues, such as addiction. Addiction to the Internet is a broad term that refers to a wide range of addictive behaviors that occur on digital platforms. Most studies on the effects of using social media have concentrated on the adverse outcomes, such as compulsive and problematic usage of social networking platforms (Cash et al., 2012; Miranda et al., 2023; Rajesh and Rangaiah, 2020; Ryan et al., 2014). Kuo et al. (2016) contrasted active escapism, which involves physical enactment or mental engagement through imagining from passive escapism immersion to escape a difficult reality. Escapism can be a constructive or adaptive use of online settings to relax and manage stress, although it can be experienced by avoiding negative usage behaviors. However, excessive reliance on escapist behaviors can lead to a vicious cycle of avoidance, where individuals become increasingly dependent on these behaviors to cope with stress and anxiety (Deleuze et al., 2019; Kuo et al., 2016), ultimately exacerbating underlying psychological issues. During the COVID-19 epidemic, various digital platforms were employed as an escape strategy to cope with induced stress and anxiety (Bae, 2023). This study focuses on passive escapist addiction, which refers to how users of TikTok utilize the application to temporarily distract themselves from their stressful daily lives or forget unpleasant things around them. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H$_4$: There is a significant correlation between escapist addiction and psychological well-being.

2.8. Psychological Well-Being as Mediator for Life Satisfaction

Psychological well-being is concerned with optimal human functioning in dealing with everyday challenges and is often referred to as the eudaimonia perspective (Diener et al., 2009).

Psychological well-being, as assessed by hedonic well-being, which is associated with happiness and pleasure, and eudaimonic well-being, which is associated with reaching one's full potential, affect life satisfaction (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Individuals scoring better on psychological well-being assessments are more satisfied with their lives across different cultures and societies (Diener et al., 2015; Friman et al., 2017; Helliwell et al., 2020). Although the platforms could boost users' psychological well-being through social media usage through virtual social support, a prior study demonstrated a negative relationship between detrimental internet utilization and psychological well-being. Nonetheless, individuals with adequate psychological well-being would possess the necessary self-discipline to prevent internet addiction and concentrate on satisfying personal needs through prolonged social media usage (Casale et al., 2015; Ponnusamy et al., 2020). Therefore, it is postulated that psychological well-being mediated by personal needs, trendiness, socially rewarding self-presentation, and escapist addiction could directly or indirectly affect life satisfaction. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H$_5$: Psychological well-being is directly significantly linked to life satisfaction.

H$_5$a: Psychological well-being acts as a mediator between personal needs and life satisfaction.

H$_5$b: Psychological well-being acts as a mediator between socially rewarding self-presentation and life satisfaction.

H$_5$c: Psychological well-being acts as a mediator between trendiness and life satisfaction.

H$_5$d: Psychological well-being acts as a mediator between escapist addiction and life satisfaction.

3. METHODOLOGY

A survey instrument was developed to collect data from young Malaysian Muslims between 18 and 24 years old. The sample consists of individuals aged 18-24 who are familiar with the digital platform - TikTok. Specifically, the cross-sectional research design was adopted by distributing online surveys as a deductive technique. The respective links to self-administered online survey forms were disseminated on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Telegram through non-probability judgmental sampling techniques. The online questionnaire can be completed within just 5-8 min. The consent statement was included in the survey form, and respondents were required to declare personal agreement to participate in the study and that their privacy would be protected. Following the agreement, screening questions were used to ensure that chosen Muslim respondents aged 18-24 and with a TikTok account were actively creating and posting content on the platform. Only respondents who match the criteria will be qualified to answer the questions on the antecedents and consequences of using TikTok.

The measurement items for each construct were selected based on their reliability and validity in previous studies and measured using 6-point Likert scales. Specifically, the construct consisted of personal needs (Chan et al., 2012), trendiness (Chan et al., 2012; Scherr and Wang, 2021), socially rewarding self-presentation (Scherr and Wang, 2021), escapist addiction (Scherr and Wang, 2021), psychological well-being (Diener et al., 2009), and life

satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985). Table 1 summarises the items used in the final model.

4. RESULTS

The initial sample consisted of (x) young Muslim respondents invited to participate in the study. However, (x) responses were incomplete as respondents did not meet the study's criteria based on the results of screening questions. Additionally, (x) responses were not usable due to missing or inconsistent information. Thus, the final sample of 338 young Muslim respondents was used for data analysis. The sample comprises respondents aged 18 to 24, with 60.9% females and 39.1% males. Most of the respondents (67.2%) were still enrolled in university degree programs, followed by diploma programs (10.9%) and high school levels (21.9%). The respondents originated from different states in Malaysia, such as Penang (22.3%), Melaka (15.1%), Perak (11.7%), Johor (11.1%), Selangor (10.9%), Kedah (8.9%), Kelantan (6.0%) and various other states. For the average time spent online, the result shows that 33.1% spent an average of 2-4 h online, 33.7 % spent

an average of 5-7 h online, and 27.4% spent 8 h or more online. Only around 5.7% of those polled spent less than an hour.

4.1. Measurement Model

The SmartPLS version 4.0 software was employed to analyze and verify the measurement model by evaluating its structural components. The reliability and validity evaluations were based on the respective thresholds of internal composite reliability (CR) above 0.7, Cronbach's Alpha (α) above 0.7, factor loadings above 0.7, and convergent validity via average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.5 (Hair Jr. et al., 2014). Table 1 depicts that all factors possessed factor loading values larger than 0.7, α values >0.7, and the CR >0.7, confirming the measurement model with satisfactory reliability levels at the item and construct levels.

Fornell and Larcker cross-loading assessment criterion is inadequately sensitive to detect discriminant validity compared with the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion (Henseler et al., 2015). The HTMT was employed to measure discriminant validity with the HTMT criterion to quantify the Fornell-Larcker

Table 1: Measurement items for the study

Construct	Items	Loadings	α	CR	AVE
Personal Needs (Chan et al., 2012)	I use TikTok to…		0.868	0.871	0.657
	PN1: establish personal identity.	0.826			
	PN2: build up confidence.	0.842			
	PN3: express my feelings.	0.823			
	PN4: share views, thoughts, and experiences.	0.841			
	PN5: stay in touch with people I know.	0.713			
Trendiness (Chan et al., 2012; Scherr and Wang, 2021)	TikTok application is…		0.883	0.886	0.634
	TRN1: is cool.	0.820			
	TRN2: is exciting.	0.865			
	TRN3: is exhilarating.	0.788			
	TRN5: is entertaining.	0.733			
	TRN7: it is funny.	0.829			
	TRN8: it is trendy.	0.730			
	I use TikTok because I can…				
Socially Rewarding Self-Presentation (Scherr and Wang, 2021)	SRP1: get the attention from others.	0.803	0.929	0.934	0.701
	SRP2: feel enjoyment seeing my posting	0.817			
	SRP3: get to know new people.	0.799			
	SRP6: enhance interactions with families and friends	0.827			
	SRP7: present myself to others.	0.889			
	SRP8: feels an accomplishment when receiving "likes."	0.885			
	SRP9: feel great using a range of tools and functions	0.839			
Escapist addiction (Scherr and Wang, 2021).	I use TikTok…		0.874	0.883	0.725
	EA1: to get a break from what I am doing.	0.869			
	EA2: when I don't want to work/study.	0.816			
	EA3: to forget unpleasant things.	0.864			
	EA5: to occupy my time.	0.857			
Life Satisfaction	LFS1: My life is close to ideal	0.833	0.884	0.887	0.742
	LFS2: The conditions of my life are excellent.	0.894			
	LFS3: I'm satisfied with my life	0.887			
	LFS4: I got the important things I want in life.	0.830			
Psychological well-being (Diener et al., 2009)	PWB2: I have to support and satisfy social relations.	0.847	0.928	0.929	0.737
	PWB3: I participate in daily activities and am interested in them.	0.877			
	PWB4: I'm actively contributing to the happiness of others.	0.872			
	PWB5: I'm competent and skilled in the activities that are important to me.	0.865			
	PWB6: I'm a good person and live a good life.	0.856			
	PWB7: I'm optimistic about my future.	0.832			

Some items with low loading were deleted

criterion insensitivity by stipulating two distinct cut-off values at 0.85 and 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2016; Henseler et al., 2015). Notably, the 0.85 HTMT criterion was applied to investigate the discriminant validity. Table 2 portrays that the highest HTMT criterion value in the study was 0.837, which was smaller than the 0.85 critical value, suggesting adequate discriminant validity among the constructs.

4.2. Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

The Partial Least Square (PLS) algorithm and bootstrapping technique in the SmartPLS version 4 software were administered to appraise the hypothetical relationships between the constructs. The collinearity among the predictors was checked using the variance inflation factor (VIF). The results show that VIF values of path coefficients were less than 0.5, indicating no collinearity issues. The R^2 value, which is the proportion of the determination coefficient to determine the predictive relevance of the theoretical model, was at acceptable levels. Hair Jr. et al. (2017) suggested 0.25 was the weak R^2 value, 0.50 the moderate, and 0.75 the substantial.

Conversely, R^2 values larger than 0.10 were considered by Falk and Miller (1992) as sufficient for an endogenous construct to be acceptable in explaining variance. Figure 1 depicts the construct path coefficients and t-values, wherein the R^2 value of

psychological well-being from TikTok usage was approximately 0.287. The findings thus postulated that 28.7% of the psychological well-being variance could be explained moderately by personal needs, trendiness, and escapist addiction. Meanwhile, the R^2 value of life satisfaction was 0.581, which propounded that psychological well-being moderately explained 58.1% of life satisfaction.

Moreover, cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) was evaluated to assess the predicted relevancy of the blindfolding technique. Fornell and Cha (1994) suggested that the Q^2 values must be greater than zero to determine whether the model possessed considerable predictive power. As manifested in Figure 1, all Q^2 values were above zero, thus suggesting that the proposed model exhibited appropriate predictive significance for both psychological well-being and life satisfaction at 0.255 and 0.261, respectively.

Further, the bootstrap procedure with 10,000 subsamples was conducted to determine the path analysis significance level for hypothesis testing, in which a t-statistic value >1.96 would reveal the relationship significance between the variables (Hair Jr. et al., 2017). Table 3 and Figure 1 display the path coefficients and hypothesis p-values. Specifically, personal need (H_1) has no impact on psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.109$, $t = 1.435$), whereas socially rewarding self-presentation (H_2) has a

**Table 2: Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT)**

Construct	EA	LFS	PN	PWB	SRP	TRN
Escapist Addiction (EA)						
Life Satisfaction (LFS)	0.435					
Personal Need (PN)	0.481	0.552				
Psychological Well-Being (PWB)	0.490	0.839	0.445			
Socially Rewarding Self Presentation (SRP)	0.383	0.569	0.832	0.419		
Trendiness	0.839	0.441	0.470	0.495	0.414	

EA: Escapist Addiction, PN: Personal Need, SRP: Socially Rewarding Self Presentation, TRN: Trendiness, PWB: Psychological Well-Being and LS: Life Satisfaction

Table 3: Structural model

Hypotheses	Path coefficient	T-value	P-value	f^2	Decision
H_1: PN → PWB	0.109	1.435	0.151	0.007	Not Supported
H_2: SRP → PWB	0.173	2.143	0.032	0.022	Supported
H_3: TRN → PWB	0.197	2.394	0.017	0.018	Supported
H_4: EA → PWB	0.192	2.461	0.014	0.023	Supported
H_5: PWB → LFS	0.763	29.386	0.000	1.389	Supported

Figure 1: Structural model. Ns: Not significant; *P < 0.05; **P < 0.01
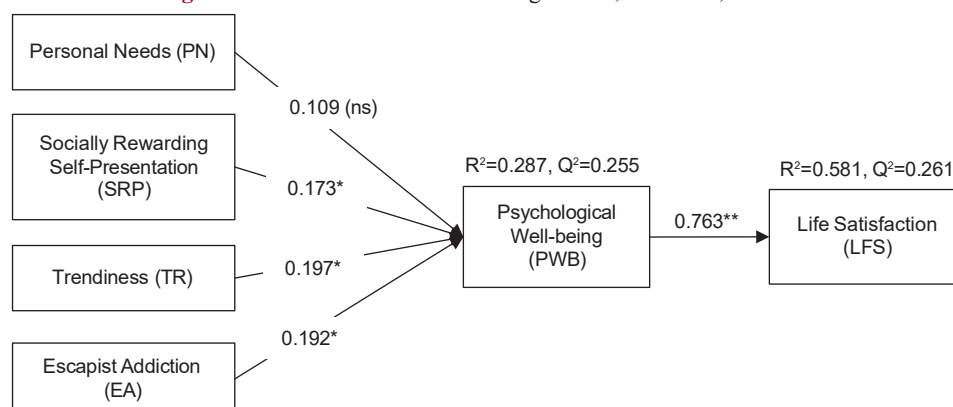
positive impact on psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.173$, t = 2.143). Trendiness (H$_3$) also positively influences psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.197$, t = 2.394). In addition, escapist addiction (H$_4$) positively impacts psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.192$, t = 2.461). Finally, psychological well-being (H$_5$) positively influences life satisfaction ($\beta = 0.763$, t = 29.386). Therefore, the present study rejected H$_1$ and accepted H$_2$, H$_3$, H$_4$, and H$_5$ based on the results and interpretation.

4.3. Mediation Analysis

A bootstrapping indirect effect technique is used to examine specific indirect effects (Preacher and Hayes, 2004; 2008). According to Hayes and Scharkow (2013), the bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval is the best approach to detect mediating effects when mediation is present. Thus, based on the bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval, mediating analysis shows that psychological well-being (PWB) mediates the relationships between socially rewarding self-presentation ($\beta = 0.132$, t = 2.104, P = 0.035) and life satisfaction (LFS), trendiness (TRN) ($\beta = 0.150$, t = 2.353, P = 0.019) and life satisfaction (LFS) and finally escapist addiction (EA) ($\beta = -0.147$, t = 2.440, P = 0.015) and life satisfaction (LFS). However, psychological well-being (PWB) does not mediate the relationship between personal needs (PN) ($\beta = 0.083$, t = 1.430, P = 0.153) and life satisfaction (LFS). Therefore, results support mediator analysis for hypotheses H$_5$b, H$_5$c, and H$_5$d and reject H$_5$a. Table 4 demonstrates the mediator analysis results.

5. DISCUSSION

Based on the uses and gratification theory, individuals can liberally select and employ social media platforms based on personal and social needs. The findings revealed that socially rewarding self-expression, trendiness, and escapist addiction significantly contribute to young Muslim users' self-gratification, thereby impacting psychological well-being. Similarly, psychological well-being was positively correlated with life satisfaction and also mediated life satisfaction. On the other hand, personal needs appear to have a relatively insignificant effect on psychological well-being, indicating that young TikTok users primarily use the site to meet their social needs (Dhir and Tsai, 2017; Scherr and Wang, 2021).

Consistent with past research, the present study demonstrates socially rewarding self-presentation and TikTok users' psychological well-being (Dong and Xie, 2022; Scherr and Wang, 2021; Wang et al., 2018). Users gratify social needs by expressing feelings, sharing perspectives, notions, and experiences, and remaining connected on social media (Bossen and Kottasz, 2020; Khan, 2017; Sheldon and Bryant, 2016). In TikTok usage, young

Muslim individuals are regularly constructed visually on social media platforms, determined by the number of followers and likes, which serves as a success metric. Receiving validation and positive responses to their content can enhance their self-esteem. When young Muslims feel accepted and valued for their creative expression and cultural representation, it positively impacts their overall self-perception and psychological well-being. TikTok continuously highlights life's creative and positive aspects by displaying a brief real-life moment without excessively filtering or manipulating the videos to generate numerous user interactions. Concurrently, short video applications allow young users to expand interpersonal communication and establish alternative friendships, enabling the user to develop a significant attachment to the application.

Similarly, the trendiness factor reflects TikTok as an innovative and entertaining application. It motivates users to continue employing TikTok (Scherr and Wang, 2021), thereby tremendously increasing TikTok's popularity among users' social circles. In addition, perceived coolness, trendiness, and entertainment allow applications or social networking sites to receive positive user feedback (Chu et al., 2024; Dhir and Tsai, 2017; Ponnusamy et al., 2020; Scherr and Wang, 2021). As such, the short video-sharing function on TikTok assists in retaining users by appealing to a wide variety of young users' requirements with engaging content. For example, memes, catchphrase remixes and reinterpretations, narratives, songs, and other rhythmic components are regularly created to represent users' beliefs and cultures, allowing maximal creativity and self-identity expression to obtain social rewards (Chu et al., 2024; Dhir and Tsai, 2017; Khan, 2017; Moreno and Uhls, 2019; Scherr and Wang, 2021). The experience of sharing content, receiving positive feedback, and entertaining others can increase positive affect, enhancing psychological well-being and life satisfaction.

Nonetheless, the motive for TikTok among young Muslim users appears to be relatively strong for escapist addictions. Conceptually, it is essential to note that the addictive character of using TikTok, as indicated by Muslim users, was not negatively connoted but rather the passive escapism addictive. It was driven by escaping or forgetting unpleasant things, getting a break from work, and occupying time. These findings align with previous studies, which discovered that users exploited TikTok to escape quotidian exasperating and stressful aspects. TikTok is a straightforward, user-friendly, and visually appealing application that instantly contributes to positive mood research (Scherr and Wang, 2021; Seo and Ray, 2019). Although young individuals would be young individuals may be susceptible to social media addiction, numerous applications, including TikTok, are specifically designed to cater to the young generation. Gen Z

Table 4: Mediator analysis results

Hypotheses	Path coefficient	T-value	P-value	Decision
H$_5$a: PN → PWB → LFS	0.083	1.430	0.153	Not Supported
H$_5$b: SRP → PWB → LFS	0.132	2.104	0.035	Supported
H$_5$c: TRN → PWB → LFS	0.150	2.353	0.019	Supported
H$_5$d: EA → PWB → LFS	0.147	2.440	0.015	Supported

EA: Escapist Addiction, PN: Personal Need, SRP: Socially Rewarding Self Presentation, TRN: Trendiness, PWB: Psychological Well-Being and LFS: Life Satisfaction

is called "growing up digital" Tapscott (1998) and is adept at acquiring new technology quickly.

This study has elucidated the psychological well-being construct that mediates the relationship between socially rewarding self-presentation, trendiness, and escapist addiction in TikTok use and life satisfaction. Psychological well-being often bridges various life factors to overall satisfaction with life (Friman et al., 2017). As documented in earlier studies, socially rewarding self-presentation indirectly impacts life satisfaction (Bailey et al., 2020; Dhir and Tsai, 2017). Variations in personal well-being can lead to shifts in life satisfaction for people who regularly engage in socially desirable self-presentation, especially on social media platforms. Trendiness as a modern societal pressure to remain trendy may affect people's judgments of their life satisfaction directly or indirectly. Escapist addiction has been found to have an indirect effect on life satisfaction, which resonates with the previous finding, which stated that spending time online can help alleviate a problematic situation and fulfill specific needs (Bae, 2023; Deleuze et al., 2019). The significance of social media escape was notably highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the platforms played a dual role for young people as a source of stress relief and tools for social support.

The mediating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between TikTok use and life satisfaction is critical to this study. Specifically, the study proposed that psychological well-being mediates the relationship between socially rewarding self-presentation, trendiness, and escapist addiction with life satisfaction. This means that the impact of these TikTok gratification dimensions on life satisfaction is not direct but is influenced by the individual's psychological well-being. For instance, individuals who experience high levels of psychological well-being as a result of engaging in socially rewarding self-presentation on TikTok may be more likely to experience increased life satisfaction. Similarly, individuals who experience high levels of psychological well-being due to the pressure to remain trendy may be more likely to experience increased life satisfaction. However, individuals who experience low levels of psychological well-being as a result of escapist addiction may be more likely to experience decreased life satisfaction. By examining the mediating role of psychological well-being, this study aims to better understand the complex relationships between TikTok use, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction.

6. CONCLUSION

This study enriches the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory by showing how TikTok usage among young Muslims satisfies personal and social needs, influencing their social participation and psychological well-being. As TikTok's popularity continuously progresses among the younger population, understanding the nuanced experiences and individual differences among young Muslims is crucial. The findings provide valuable insights into TikTok usage, helping to promote awareness and bridge the gap between young Muslim generations and other stakeholders instead of solely focusing on the possible negative repercussions. Practically, grasping various underlying TikTok usage factors can

be used to develop targeted, tailored strategies to maximize the positive implications and assist user retention while encouraging young individuals' psychological well-being and life satisfaction. Young Muslims need to maintain a healthy balance in their online engagement, set boundaries, and be mindful of TikTok's potential impact on their overall well-being. Notably, further research is needed to understand better the complex experiences and individual diversity of young Muslims on TikTok to enhance beneficial outcomes and minimize the potential risk.

6.1. Implications
The findings of this study have important theoretical and practical implications. The present study enhances the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory, originally developed by Blumler and McQuail (1969). Although U&G research has mainly focused on seeking gratification, there has been a lag in understanding the gratification obtained. This study expands the U&G theory by investigating how TikTok usage fulfills young Muslim users' distinct personal and social needs. This study explicitly appraises TikTok usage gratification, emphasizing personal needs, trendiness, socially rewarding self-presentation, and escapist addiction, thus enriching the U&G framework with contemporary social media behaviors and motivations.

Moreover, identifying socially rewarding self-presentation and trendiness as key gratifications influencing well-being underscores the unique social dynamics at play in this community. For young Muslims, TikTok satisfies entertainment needs and serves as a vehicle for social validation and cultural representation. These findings enhance our understanding of how social media can serve as a tool for individual and collective identity formation, particularly within Muslim communities that might face challenges balancing modern digital practices with traditional values. Theoretical implications suggest that Islamic principles can guide digital behavior, particularly in reframing "escapist addiction." While often seen negatively, in the Islamic context, seeking mental peace through escapism can align with spiritual practices. The main challenge is ensuring this behavior does not lead to excessive escapism that interferes with real-life responsibilities, a key focus in Islamic teachings. This highlights the importance of moderation and balance in social media use, aligning with core Islamic values.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study have significant practical implications for various stakeholders involved in the well-being of young Muslim TikTok users, such as policymakers, psychologists, NGOs, and parents. First, the study reveals that TikTok, while often associated with entertainment and social connectivity, also serves as a platform where young Muslims can express their cultural identity and seek social validation. This opens up new possibilities for educators, content creators, and policymakers to engage with young Muslim users more effectively. By recognizing TikTok's potential as a space for creative self-expression and identity formation, stakeholders can promote content that aligns with Islamic values, encouraging a balance between the platform's entertainment aspects and the community's values. Such an approach fosters a healthier relationship with social media, where users are not merely passive consumers but active participants in shaping their own narratives.

Second, the findings of this study also call attention to the importance of guiding young Muslim users toward responsible social media practices. Escapist addiction was identified as a significant factor influencing psychological well-being, suggesting that while TikTok offers an escape from daily stressors, it also has the potential to foster unhealthy usage patterns. Therefore, initiatives from NGOs, parents, and educators could focus on digital literacy programs that teach young people to set boundaries and be mindful of their digital consumption. By fostering an awareness of moderation—an essential Islamic principle—young users can maintain a healthier balance between online and offline activities, ultimately improving their psychological well-being and life satisfaction.

Besides that, TikTok can be utilized to spread Islamic values to today's youth. In the Internet era, the dissemination of Islamic teachings and values (da'wah) expanded beyond traditional channels, allowing the message of Islam to be more diversified and covering a greater variety of themes (Islam, 2019). This is in line with Islam teaching where in the Quran Chapter 16, verse 16: "Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious" (16:125). According to the hadith (word of Prophet Muhamad), Prophet Muhamad (SAW) said: "Convey (my teachings) to the people even if it were a single sentence" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3461). It is already advent that a rising number of Muslims use social media platforms like TikTok to spread Islamic ideas, insights, and thoughts to a worldwide audience.

In conclusion, this research provides a nuanced understanding of TikTok's impact on young Muslim users' psychological well-being and life satisfaction. It highlights the need for a culturally tailored approach to digital engagement. This study opens new avenues for creating engaging digital spaces that support users' mental and emotional well-being by aligning the findings with Islamic values of moderation, responsibility, and community welfare.

6.2. Limitations

The current study possessed several limitations that should be addressed in future research. Due to the narrow geographic scope, the findings could be extrapolated extensively to different Muslim regions. Simultaneously, the study sample was restricted to young Malaysian Muslims aged between 18 and 24, who were recruited via a snowball sampling technique, which may limit the findings' representativeness. Moreover, this study only examined a subset of variables, and future studies should broaden the research scope by including additional elements to identify the obscured TikTok usage limitations amongst individual differences among young Muslim users. Future research should also replicate the findings with a sizeable sample of Muslims across various Muslim regions. By understanding the limitations, more appropriate actions could be implemented to determine the consequences of usage on young Muslim users' well-being.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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