



**BEHIND THE SCREENS: EXPLORING YOUNG ADULT'S EXPERIENCES
WITH SOCIAL MEDIA ON SELF-IMAGE**

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Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

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Grade

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the lived experiences of young adults aged 19–25 regarding how social media influences their self-image. Grounded in Person-Centered Theory and Social Comparison Theory, the research aimed to understand (1) how young adults experience their self-image through social media interaction, (2) their perceptions of self-image shaped by digital content, and (3) the strategies they adopt to manage its emotional impact. A phenomenological approach was used, involving purposive sampling and in-depth semi-structured interviews with six active social media users. Thematic analysis revealed key themes such as upward and downward comparisons, emotional vulnerability, content curation, and coping mechanisms including digital detox and self-awareness strategies. Findings suggest that while social media can contribute to self-doubt and insecurity, it also offers opportunities for self-improvement and connection. The study contributes to counselling practices by offering culturally contextual insights into how young adults navigate social media's psychological pressures. It highlights the importance of fostering digital literacy and emotional resilience in counselling interventions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Self-image, or the way individuals perceive themselves, plays a crucial role in shaping their well-being. Nowadays, social media has a significant influence on self-image, often creating unrealistic standards of beauty, success, and lifestyle. Exposure to carefully curated and idealized content can lead individuals to compare themselves unfavorably, which may contribute to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and even anxiety or depression. This constant comparison can distort self-image, making people more vulnerable to negative emotions and self-doubt. For this chapter, I will discuss background of study, problem statement, research objective and question, research framework, definition of term, scope of study and limitation.

1.1 Background of Study

In recent years, the digital era has transformed the way people interact, access information, and perceive the world around them. Since their emergence in the early 2000s, social media platforms have continued to grow in popularity, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Social media is defined as "digital platforms, services, and apps built around the convergence of content sharing, public communication, and interpersonal connection" (Burgess et al., 2017). Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become integral parts of modern life, significantly impacting social relationships, career development, and various aspects of daily life (Sunkad, 2023). Beyond facilitating connection, social media profoundly shapes how young adults communicate, self-express, and present themselves to a global audience. It influences their behaviour, including their choice of idols, style of clothing, and even professional aspirations, while exerting substantial social, cultural, and psychological effects on society (Sobko, 2020).

The influence of social media on young adults' self-image is a growing area of research, particularly given its association with self-esteem issues, anxiety disorders, and depression (Chamsi et al., 2022). Studies have highlighted how platforms such as Instagram and Facebook shape young adults' self-

perception and mental health. Misuse or excessive use of social media has been linked to body dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, risky behaviors, and eating disorders (Vincente-Benito et al., 2023). As social media is often the first and last interaction of the day for many young adults, its constant, curated content tailored to users' interests and social circles can have profound implications for self-image and overall well-being.

Erikson's psychosocial approach emphasizes the role of community and generativity in shaping individual identity (Paul, 2023). Similarly, Rogers' (1959) theory of self-concept outlines how self-image, ideal self, and real self-interact, with incongruence between these aspects leading to discomfort and low self-esteem. Rogers also underscores the importance of unconditional positive regard for achieving congruence and positive self-image. For young adults, a developmental stage spanning late adolescence to the late twenties or early thirties (Grande-Gosende et al., 2019) these challenges are especially pronounced. During this phase, individuals explore roles, beliefs, and values, striving to understand themselves and their place in society.

Social comparison, an inherent aspect of identity development, is intensified by social media, where curated images of peers and influencers set perceived standards of beauty, success, and lifestyle. The pressure to meet these standards often exacerbates self-esteem issues, making it crucial to understand how social media impacts young adults' self-image. This understanding is vital for addressing the broader implications of the digital era on mental health and personal development.

1.2 Problem Statement

The pervasive use of social media has introduced new dynamics in self-presentation and social comparison, making it an influential factor in shaping young adults' self-image. Social media influences how young adults perceive their self-image and identity through interactions and content consumption. According to McComb et al. (2023), exposure to upward comparison targets on social media leads to negative self-evaluations and emotions, affecting body image, subjective well-being, mental health, and self-esteem. Users often curate their online personas to reflect desirable traits and achievements, which can lead to feelings of inadequacy or enhanced self-esteem depending on the alignment between their self-perception and the images they encounter online (Burnasheva & Suh, 2020).

According to Daulay et al. (2023), self-image is an individual's knowledge of self-related to mental images, personality, appearance, and abilities, and it can be positive or negative. Within the scope of self-

image, body image serves as one of its key components, focusing specifically on individuals' perceptions of their physical appearance. Despite this, a significant number of studies have concentrated primarily on body image, leaving other dimensions of self-image underexplored. This highlights the need to examine how social media can influence and potentially alter young adults' self-perceptions and life perspectives, emphasizing the broader and multifaceted aspects of self-image.

Based on a narrative review from A. Nene et al. (2023), frequent social media usage negatively impacts self-esteem, mental health, self-worth, and creates risk factors for body dissatisfaction by causing disordered eating behaviors and affecting self-image. The article highlights how platforms like Facebook and Instagram can decrease self-esteem and increase body dissatisfaction due to features such as filters and retouching tools, which contribute to unrealistic beauty standards (Kleemans et al., 2016). This pressure often results in self-objectification, negative self-evaluation, and psychological distress. Furthermore, the emotional impact of social media extends beyond self-image, influencing stress, anxiety, and depression. For instance, exposure to curated "perfect" images may exacerbate feelings of inadequacy, contributing to emotional distress (Chen et al., 2022).

Hoxhaj et al. (2023) states that social media has a significant negative impact on the self-image of teenagers. Specifically, their findings indicate that the more an individual is influenced by the number of likes received on social media, the lower their self-image regarding their body becomes. This underscores the importance of investigating the strategies young adults employ to manage or overcome the negative impacts of social media on their self-image. The research highlights that comparing oneself with others on social networks and seeking social connections through these platforms can contribute to a reduction in self-esteem and self-image.

According to the demographic distribution, Meta's advertising audience in Malaysia is engaged across different age groups. The most significant reach is among younger populations, namely those between the ages of 25 and 34, with 17.9% male and 15% female in this group of users. Close behind is the 18–24-year age group, with men making up 11.6% of the ad reach and women 12.9%. This highlights that young adults represent one of the highest user demographics actively engaging with Meta's advertising audience in Malaysia. Research indicates that problematic social media use is associated with negative mental health outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, and stress, particularly in adolescents and young adults (Shannon et al., 2021). This connection underscores the potential psychological vulnerabilities of this age group, which may be influenced by their high engagement with social media platforms and exposure to targeted content.

The study conducted in South Korea, detailed in the article *“The Influence of Social Media Usage, Self-Image Congruity, and Self-Esteem on Conspicuous Online Consumption Among Millennials”* by Burnasheva and Gu Suh (2020), explores the intricate relationships between social media usage, self-image congruity, and conspicuous online consumption. The findings reveal that South Korean millennials who engage heavily with social media experience a stronger alignment between their self-perceptions and the idealized images they encounter online, leading to heightened “self-image congruity” and online behaviors that showcase luxury or lifestyle items aligned with their desired self-image.

In contrast, research on the impact of social media on self-image in Malaysia remains limited. Although social media is widely used by Malaysian youth, existing studies often focus on broader mental health implications, such as cyberbullying or general well-being, rather than the nuanced dynamics of self-image. For instance, Che Awang and Alavi (2019) found in their study on cyberbullying among UKM students that aggressive cyberbullying can lead to emotional issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress, as well as physical effects like loss of appetite and insomnia. Psychological impacts were also observed, with victims often withdrawing from social interactions. Similarly, Kirin et al. (2023) reported that 44.7% of UTHM student respondents experienced mild insomnia, highlighting the physical toll of social media-related stressors.

Additionally, much of the existing research emphasizes aspects like body image, self-esteem, and self-appearance, without delving deeply into how social media shapes overall self-image and identity. For example, Samat et al. (2020) reported that increased social media usage positively influenced students' self-esteem, while Zainuddin et al. (2022) found no significant relationship between self-esteem and the time spent on social media. Regarding self-appearance, Che Rosli and Sheau Tsuey (2024) highlighted a significant negative relationship between body image and psychological well-being, indicating links to disordered eating behaviors.

Moreover, while many studies approach these topics from psychological or sociological perspectives, there is a noticeable gap in exploring them from a counselling viewpoint. This perspective is crucial for understanding how these issues intersect with strategies how to overcome the negative impacts of social media on their self-image. This gap highlights the need for focused research within the Malaysian context, where unique cultural values and social expectations may shape social media's impact on self-image differently than in South Korea.

Specifically, this study aims to address this gap by exploring the impact of social media on young adults' self-image, focusing on how these platforms shape self-concept. By adopting a counselling

perspective, the study seeks to provide insights into fostering emotional resilience and enhancing self-concept among young adults, with particular attention to the cultural and regional context of Sarawak.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To explore young adults' experiences of self-image through their interactions and content consumption on social media.
2. To understand young adults' perceptions of their self-image in the context of social media use.
3. To explore the strategies used by young adults in managing the challenges related to self-image while engaging with social media.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do young adults experience their self-image through their interactions and content consumption on social media?
2. What are young adults' perceptions of their self-image as influenced by content they engage with on social media?
3. What strategies do young adults use to manage challenges to their self-image associated with social media use?

1.5 Conceptual Framework

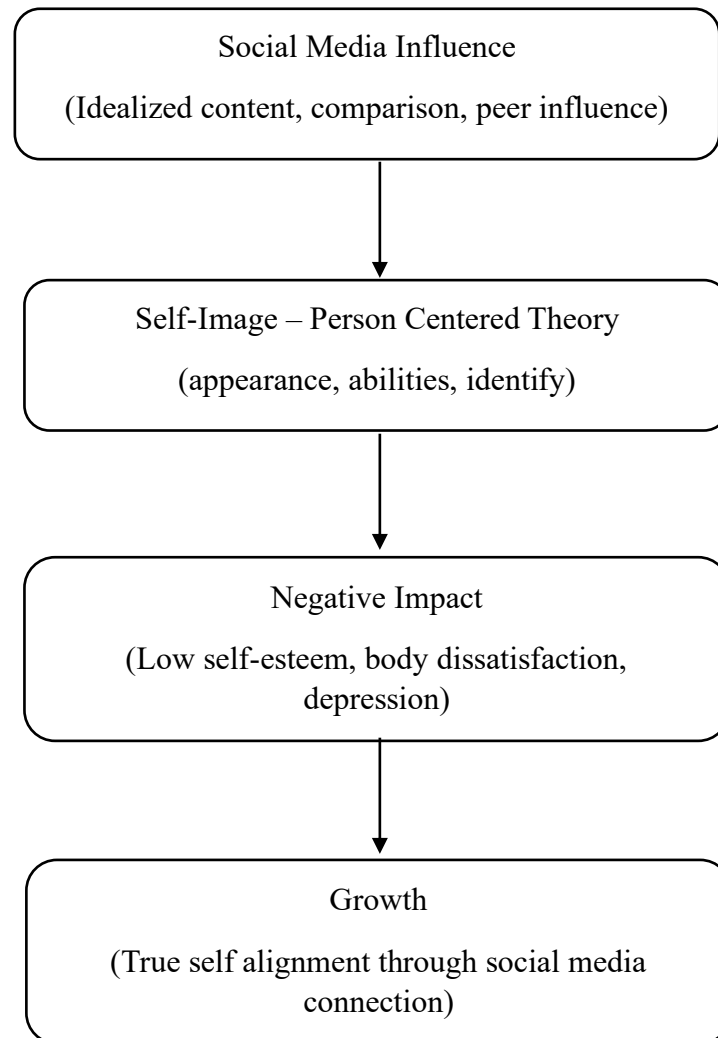


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study focuses on two main constructs: **self-image** and **social media influence**, guided by Person-Centered Theory and Social Comparison Theory. According to M. Daulay et al. (2023), **self-image** refers to how young adults see themselves, including their appearance, abilities, and identity. This stage of life is critical for self-development and is heavily influenced by social interactions (McLean et al., 2015). **Social media influence** describes how digital platforms shape perceptions and behaviours through idealized content (Pedalino & Camerini, 2022). Social Comparison

Theory explains how young adults compare themselves to others on social media, often leading to feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem. Person-Centered Theory highlights the importance of aligning one's self-image with their true self to achieve personal growth. However, social media can create a gap between the real and ideal self (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022). This framework emphasizes the interaction between self-image and social media, exploring their combined impact on the well-being of young adults.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

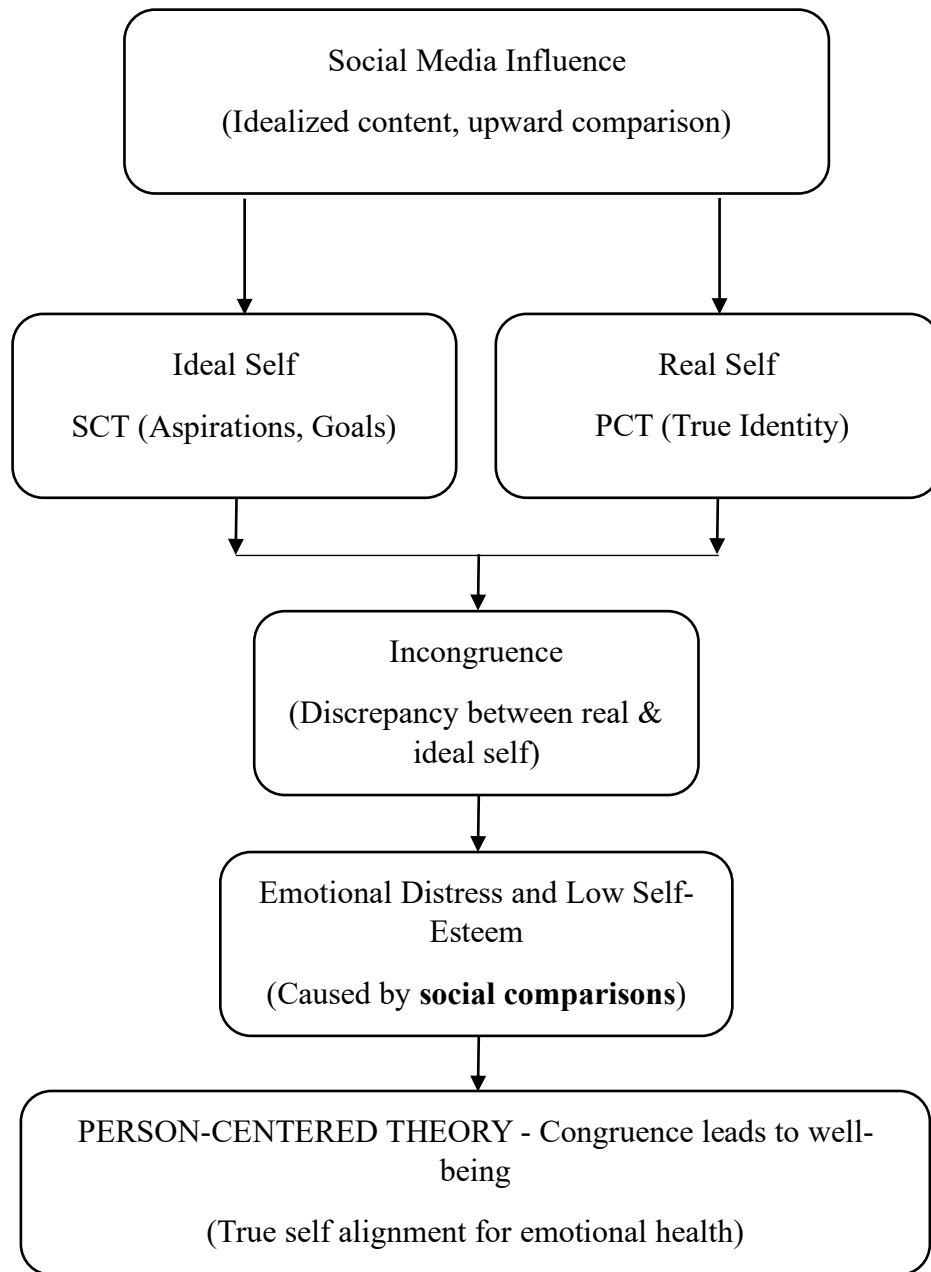


Figure 1.2: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study integrates Social Comparison Theory (SCT) by Festinger (1954) and Person-Centered Theory (PCT) by Rogers (1951) to explain how social media influences young adults' self-image. Social Comparison Theory posits that individuals determine their own social and personal worth based on how they stack up against others, especially when exposed to idealized content online (Engeln et al., 2020; Yoon et al., 2019). This is evident in the way young adults engage in upward comparisons on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, often evaluating their appearance, lifestyle, and achievements against curated portrayals of others (Pedalino & Camerini, 2022). Simultaneously, Person-Centered Theory emphasizes the importance of alignment between the real self and the ideal self in achieving emotional well-being and psychological congruence (Rogers, 1951; Ismail & Tekke, 2015). When social media content promotes unrealistic standards, it can widen the gap between how individuals see themselves and how they wish to be, resulting in incongruence and emotional distress (Monacis et al., 2021; Gil-Or et al., 2015). Therefore, this study applies both SCT and PCT to explore how these dynamics manifest in the lived experiences of young adults, revealing the complex interplay between digital comparison, identity formation, and emotional health in the context of social media use.

1.7 Significance of Study

This significant study addresses the existing gap in research concerning the impact of social media on self-image within the Malaysian context. While many studies have focused on body image and self-esteem, this research explores the broader dimensions of self-image, including self-perception, identity, and emotional well-being. By focusing on young adults in Sarawak, the study provides insights specific to Malaysia's unique cultural and regional context, offering a more localized understanding of social media's influence.

Secondly, the research holds practical significance for counselling practices and interventions. By adopting a counselling perspective, the study sheds light on how young adults navigate the challenges posed by social media and its influence on their self-image. These findings can equip mental health professionals with the knowledge needed to develop targeted strategies aimed at fostering emotional resilience, enhancing self-esteem, and promoting positive self-concept among young adults.

Finally, the study contributes to efforts aimed at promoting digital literacy and emotional resilience

among young adults. By identifying the negative impacts of social media, such as self-objectification and psychological distress, as well as the strategies employed to mitigate these effects, the research highlights the importance of healthy social media use. This can inform educational programs designed to raise awareness about the risks associated with excessive social media use and foster a supportive online environment that promotes mental well-being.

1.8 Conceptual Definition

1.8.1 Young adult

The conceptual definition for young adults is a unique developmental period that occurs between the ages of 18 to 25 years, during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. This period is characterized by key developmental tasks that allow the young adult to participate in self-exploration to cultivate a personal identity and belief system, all the while gaining independence and autonomy (Higley, 2019).

Next, the operational definition for young adults is an individual from the age of 19 till 25 years old that uses the social media platform actively.

1.8.2 Experiences

The conceptual definition for experience refers to something personally encountered, undergone, or lived through, representing an individual's evaluation of an event or process of directly perceiving reality (Mårten Kae Paulsen, 2020).

The operational definition for experiences in this research refers to the interactions, emotions, and cognitive responses that young adults (aged 19-25) encounter while engaging with social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook). These experiences include exposure to online content, engagement with digital communities, and personal reflections that may contribute to changes in their self-image, self-esteem, or identity perception. The study will explore these experiences through in-depth interviews, focusing on how repeated exposure to social media influences the way individuals view themselves over time.

1.8.3 Social media

The conceptual definition for social media can be defined as a collective of online communications channels for community-based input, interaction, content-sharing, and collaboration, with both positive

and negative outcomes (Damota, 2019)

The operational definition for social media in this research refers to online platforms, specifically TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, that have the potential to influence users positively or negatively. Social media usage will be measured through observation, focusing on an average daily engagement of over 2.48 hours, consistent with global averages of social media use reported in recent studies.

1.8.4 Self-image

The conceptual definition for self-image defined as an individual's overall perception of themselves, encompassing aspects of physical appearance, abilities, personality, and social roles. It reflects how individuals view themselves and believe they are seen by others, shaping their self-concept and self-esteem (Stinson & Fisher, 2020). As a result of my research, a book entitled "On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy" by Carl Rogers has become one of the main sources in providing valuable insights into how self-image forms a core part of one's mental health and emotional well-being. Rogers discusses the idea of self-concept, which includes self-image, the ideal self, and the real self, and emphasizes the need for congruence between these aspects for psychological health. Rogers' book provides a holistic view of self-image within the broader framework of mental health and personal development, making it an essential reference for understanding the critical role self-image plays in emotional well-being.

Next, the operational definition for self-images refers to the mental picture or overall view that an individual has of themselves, which includes aspects such as physical appearance, personality traits, abilities, and how they believe others perceive them. It encompasses both positive and negative evaluations of oneself and can significantly influence self-esteem and behavior. Self-image significantly affects mental health. A negative self-image can lead to issues such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Conversely, a healthy self-image fosters a sense of self-worth and emotional stability, allowing individuals to be more rational in their life.

1.9 Scope of Study

This study focuses on young adults aged 18-30, particularly those who are active on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. The research aims to explore how social media influences their self-image and well-being, with particular attention to the ways in which young adults

perceive and construct their self-image through social media interactions and content consumption. The study also investigates how social media may alter self- perspectives on life, examining strategies that young adults use to mitigate the negative impacts of social media on their self-image.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

Firstly, a potential limitation from a counselling perspective is the difficulty in providing tailored interventions based on individual differences in how social media impacts self-image. Since social media's influence is subjective and varies widely among young adults and designing effective counselling strategies for a diverse population may not be feasible. Counselling approaches must account for varying levels of self-awareness, cultural backgrounds, and personal coping mechanisms, making it challenging to apply a one-size-fits-all solution to address the emotional and psychological effects of social media.

Additionally, significant limitation is the potential for inaccurate or missing data due to respondents' reflective answers during the interviews. Participants may misremember or underreport the specific content they have interacted with on social media, leading to recall bias. This issue can affect the reliability of the data, as participants may not fully recall or may misrepresent the impact that certain types of content (such as idealized images or comparisons) have had on their self-image. The interview process relies heavily on the respondents' ability to accurately reflect on their social media experiences, and any discrepancies in memory could distort the findings.

Furthermore, a limitation in terms of comparison is the challenge of establishing meaningful, consistent comparisons between individuals' self-image and the idealized content they encounter on social media. Since everyone's perception of their ideal self is highly personal and influenced by numerous internal and external factors, comparing the degree of incongruence between their real and ideal self with others may not always yield valid or consistent results. Social comparison is highly subjective, and variations in the extent to which individuals engage in upward or downward comparisons with others can introduce variability in the data, affecting the study's ability to make generalized conclusions across different groups of young adults.

1.11 Conclusion

This study aims to explore young adults' experiences with social media and its influence on their self-image, focusing on Sarawak's social context. The background highlights the pervasive role of social media in shaping self-perceptions, emphasizing the challenges posed by curated content, social comparison, and idealized representations. The problem statement identifies a gap in existing research, particularly the lack of qualitative insights into how young adults in Sarawak perceive and navigate the impact of social media on their self-image. The research objectives and questions are designed to address this gap by examining young adults' experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies related to social media usage. By adopting a counselling perspective, this study seeks to provide culturally sensitive insights that can inform interventions to support emotional resilience and enhance self-concept among young adults.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The review of past studies is an important factor that motivates the researcher to undertake this study. The researcher can delve into this study properly by using previous studies as a guideline to focus on the research being conducted. Each literature review conducted represents findings from studies related to the research topic. In addition, this chapter also provides a detailed and in-depth explanation of the emotional impact of social media on young adults' self-image, which can serve as a reference for future researchers.

2.1 Who are the young adults?

Young adults are individuals aged between 18 and 30 years, a transitional life stage marked by exploration, instability, and significant growth. According to Higley, E. (2019), young adulthood is a developmental period between the ages of 18 and 25, during which individuals participate in self-exploration and identity formation. Young adult phase of life represents the new transition from adolescence to adulthood as one goes through several changes in all aspects of their lives (Schulenberg et al., 2004). Some researchers (Arnett, 2000) conceptualize young adults as those aged 18 to 25, while others (Atwood & Scholtz, 2008; Bentley, 2007) have extended the range to capture individuals in their 30 s and up to 40 years of age.

2.2 Social Media Usage Among Young Adults

A statistic conducted by datareportal.com in (2023), revealed that at the beginning of 2023, there were 122.5 million users of internet in Nigeria. In Nigeria, youths' range between the ages of 15 and 24 are the most active users of these platforms. The Internet is a major source of information for everyone, including young adults and teenagers in this century. They in fact spend most of their time scrolling through digital devices for one purpose or the other. In comparison, based on Social Media Statistics for Malaysia (Howe S, 2024), Malaysia had 33.59 million total of internet users in Jan 2024, accounting for about 97.4% of its population, the same amount of internet users from the prior year. Malaysians are also active on social media, with a reported, users still spend an average of 2 hours and 48 minutes each day

engaging with social media, up 1 minute from last year, but otherwise, it stays largely constant. Since this consistency is present, there is a well-established pattern of social media use among Malaysians. Also, among Malaysia's most popular social media sites are TikTok, which is loved by 21.9% of users for its engaging short-form video content, and Facebook, which has captured 18.8% as a mainstay of social media for its all-around uses. Instagram is also a popular social media platform in Malaysia and is the favorite app for 14% of Malaysian users. This demonstrates the high penetration and frequent usage of the internet and social media in Malaysia, especially among young people. The most significant reach is among younger populations, namely those between the ages of 25 and 34, with 17.9% male and 15% female in this group of users. Close behind is the 18–24-year age group, with men making up 11.6% of the ad reach and women 12.9%. This highlights the youth demographic's social media affinity and the possibility of influencing them. Cunningham et al. (2021) suggests that while time spent on social media can impact emotional well-being, factors such as the type of use (active vs. passive), the extent of social comparison, emotional investment, and the addictive nature of use play a more significant role in influencing self-image and well-being.

iPhone users can assess the recorded actual time use on different applications through “Screen Time” under the existing system, while Android users needed to download an application with the same function. At the end of every week, participants needed to capture the time used of social media. Common social media applications include Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. The data of total time use in social media were collected.

2.3 Self-Image in Young Adult

Self-image plays a crucial role in the development of young adults, influencing their self-esteem, body image, and overall mental well-being. M. Daulay et al. (2023) stated that self-image refers to an individual's knowledge of themselves in relation to mental images, personality, appearance, and abilities, and it can be positive or negative. According to Arnett J. (2007) in an article by Kim Rounsefell et al. (2020) discusses how the development of self-image among young adults is a complex, young adulthood (18-30 years) is a transitional phase between adolescence and adulthood that is full of challenges. From the same article, during this time, individuals develop new skills toward independence but remain vulnerable due to a lack of life experience (Wood D et al., 2018). Self-esteem and self-efficacy have a significant impact on life satisfaction in young adults (Moirangthem, S., 2023).

During this phase, individuals are particularly vulnerable to external influences, especially social media, which significantly impacts their self-esteem and self-worth. Factors such as societal pressures, identity formation, and the desire for social validation highlight the importance of cultivating a healthy self-image among young adults. For instance, a study by Rai and Sharma (2021) found a significant correlation between self-perception, body image, and self-esteem in young adults aged 18–25 years. Similarly, Pradhnani and Kaushik (2024) provide evidence that perceptions of physical appearance can strongly influence self-esteem in both adolescents and young adults, further emphasizing the critical role of self-image during this developmental stage. These findings underscore the significant correlation between self-image, self-esteem, and social media influence, highlighting the urgent need to address these factors to promote positive self-development among young adults.

A strong self-image helps them navigate these societal pressures and avoid the negative effects of comparison culture and unrealistic standards often perpetuated online. In addition, Julie Arsandaux et al. (2020) states that self-esteem difficulties in young adulthood are often associated with negative outcomes in this phase of life. This highlights the importance of having a strong self-image during young adulthood, as it plays a key role in emotional resilience and psychological well-being. By fostering positive self-perception, young adults are better equipped to protect their well-being and avoid the detrimental emotional effects of excessive exposure to idealized online people.

Building on this, experimental studies also highlight several experimental studies have underscored the behavioral significance of social image, yet little research examines how exogenous variations in self-image affect behavior. To explore this further, Falk A., in the *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* (2021), investigates self-image concerns and their behavioral consequences. The study provides compelling evidence that increased self-image awareness reduces immoral behavior, indicating that individuals with heightened self-image consciousness are less likely to engage in actions that conflict with their moral standards. Together, these findings highlight the critical role of self-image in shaping both emotional well-being and ethical behavior in young adults. A strong self-image not only fosters emotional resilience but also reinforces ethical behavior by encouraging individuals to align their actions with their values.

These studies, including the works of Rai and Sharma, and Falk A., collectively highlight the multifaceted role of self-image in navigating various challenges during young adulthood. Rai and Sharma's research demonstrates how self-image influences social interactions and the ability to manage peer pressure, while Falk A.'s study delves into how self-image is shaped by moral decision-making and

the formation of personal values. Together, these findings underscore the critical importance of cultivating a positive self-image in young adulthood, as it not only impacts individual confidence and mental well-being but also shapes the ability to make sound social and moral choices. This highlights why fostering a healthy self-image is crucial for young adults as they transition into adulthood, enabling them to successfully navigate the complexities of relationships, career choices, and personal growth.

2.4 Media influence on self-image

Social media plays a major role in shaping how people view and develop their sense of self. Through curated content, online interactions, and the personas they present, individuals often navigate both the positive and negative impacts of social media on their sense of self. According to research conducted by the National Institute of Health and Care Research, United Kingdom (2021), self-image is a complex phenomenon involving the media and individual psychology. Self-image is what a person perceives himself or herself to be. In research conducted by (Muqaddass et al.,2017) on impact of social media on self-esteem, it was revealed that there is a strong relationship between social media and self-esteem decrease. Further stating that one hour spent on Facebook daily results in a 5.574 decrease in the self-esteem score of an individual. However, self-image is a determinant of self-esteem, self-confidence, body image. It can either be positive or negative. It is worthy of note that the use of social media has become more globalized than it was.

Dollarhide (2023) stated that it is an internet-based connection that was created to facilitate information between individuals, organizations, groups and so on. It has evidently gone beyond performing this basic function as research has revealed the psychological effects it has on people. Researchers have discovered quite a few things on the impact, influence and overall relationship of social media and the psychology of humans, particularly, young people. According to studies, the frequency with which individuals use social media can have a negative impact on their self-esteem and well-being (Lee JK, 2024). Individuals are motivated to maintain a positive self-presentation on social media. However, continuous exposure to positive content posted by others may result in the distortion of perception, lack of control, and frustration in social comparisons (Turel O et al.,2018). Building on these findings, it becomes evident that social media is a double-edged sword, offering both opportunities for connection and challenges to mental health. Young people are highly susceptible to the effects of curated content and constant comparison. For instance, Smith (2023), stated that one of the primary ways social media affects youth self-image is through the propagation of an idealized and often unattainable standard

of beauty, adding that the number of likes, comments and followers have become a measure of self-worth. Similarly, when young adult social media users experience negative feedback, such as not being followed back by someone they know, this may elicit an emotional or stress response (Jackson & Luchner, 2018).

Another study conducted by (Pozharliev et al., 2022), their findings of the study showed that interactions on social media and the impact of these interactions on their users. For example, social media celebrities have been found to influence these platform users' behaviour (Lo & Peng, 2022). The relationship between celebrity endorsements and self-esteem has also been studied, with the findings showing that, when consumers believe in a product endorsed by a celebrity, they feel better about buying it and doing so increases their self-esteem (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). These consumers seek the opinions of others before making the decision to buy as they are less confident in their own decision-making capabilities. Previous studies in this area have focused on the effect of social media on individuals' self-esteem or on the role of self-esteem in individuals' perceptions of social media interactions and celebrity recommendations (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). So, social media interactions significantly influence user behaviour, particularly through the actions and endorsements of celebrities. Research highlights that celebrity endorsements not only shape purchasing decisions but also boost self-esteem when users trust the endorsed product. This behaviour reflects a broader tendency for consumers to rely on external opinions due to a lack of confidence in their own decision-making.

2.5 Person-Centered Theory

Carl Rogers' Person-Centered Theory (PCT), developed in the 1940s, emphasizes the intrinsic potential of individuals to achieve growth and self-fulfillment. Central to PCT is the concept of self-concept, which consists of the real self and the ideal self (Yazdani & Ross, 2019). This framework provides a valuable lens to explore how social media impacts young adults' self-image and emotional well-being. Based on Ismail and Tekke (2015), in their article *Rediscovering Rogers's Self Theory and Personality*, self-concept is defined in a wide way as the individual's tendency to act in ways which actualize their self, lead to the differentiation and a group of experiences, accordingly, are differentiated and symbolized in conscious awareness as self-experiences, the sum of which establishes the individual's self-concept. Similarly, Wilkins (2003) describes self-concept is the organized set of characteristics that the individual perceives unique to themselves, shaped significantly by social evaluations they have encountered.

The self-concept consists of two interrelated components: the real self and the ideal self. According to Rogers (1954), the 'real self' is initiated by the actualizing tendency, follows organismic valuing, and requires both positive regard and self-regard. It is closely tied to our inner personality, representing the self that feels most true to what and who we truly are. While it may not be perfect, the real self is the part of us that feels most authentic (Grice, 2007). In contrast, the ideal self represents the aspirations, goals, and qualities individuals strive to attain. It includes qualities and achievements we find desirable, such as being successful, kind, or confident, and serves as a motivational guide for personal growth. This ideal is dynamic, evolving with our experiences and changing priorities; for example, what is considered ideal in childhood may not align with the ideal self in adolescence or later adulthood (McLeod, 2007).

Rogers (1954) emphasized that a healthy self-concept is characterized by congruence, where the real self closely aligns with the ideal self. However, when this alignment is disrupted, individuals may experience feelings of dissatisfaction, anxiety, and emotional distress (Ismail & Tekke, 2015). According to Rogers (1961), cited by Ismail and Tekke (2015), the gap between the real self and ideal self may be influenced by factors beyond our reach, particularly when societal pressures create conditions of worth that diverge from our organismic valuing. In such cases, we develop an ideal self that is shaped by external standards rather than our authentic tendencies (Boeree, 2006). Striving for alignment between the real self and the ideal self is essential for achieving emotional well-being and authenticity, as it enables individuals to reconcile their self-image with their aspirations and values.

One of the central elements of Person-Centered Theory (PCT) is the concept of unconditional

positive regard, which refers to the acceptance and appreciation of an individual without judgment, fostering a nurturing environment that supports the development of an authentic self-concept (Ismail & Tekke, 2015). This concept is crucial for shaping self-worth and psychological well-being. Research has demonstrated its importance in various contexts, such as the findings by McHenry et al. (2020), who highlighted that perceived unconditional positive regard from coaches significantly contributed to the development of positive self-regard, trust, motivation, and confidence, which in turn enhanced sport performance. In contrast, conditions of worth arise when individuals feel valued only if they meet specific criteria or expectations imposed by others. This creates a scenario where certain self-experiences are perceived as less worthy of positive regard (Nelson-Jones, 2000), potentially distorting one's self-concept. As Rogers (1959) noted, individuals with high self-worth are better equipped to cope with life's challenges, accept failures, and maintain openness with others.

Applying Carl Rogers' self-concept theory to the realm of social media reveals its profound impact on young adults' self-image. Social media platforms often present idealized, curated portrayals of life, creating unrealistic benchmarks for success, beauty, and happiness. These portrayals influence each component of self-concept. Self-image becomes distorted through constant comparisons with influencers or peers who appear to embody perfection. The ideal self is shaped by platform-specific trends that set unattainable goals, while the real self may feel inadequate and overshadowed. This incongruence the gap between self-image and the ideal self is linked to heightened emotional distress, negative self-perception, and even mental health challenges. Rogers' theory provides a valuable framework to understand these dynamics and underscores the importance of fostering environments that promote congruence and self-acceptance in the digital age.

As evidence for this claim, Monacis et al. (2021) found that individuals who engage in false self-presentation on social media, often driven by a strong need for approval, are more likely to experience heightened levels of depression and anxiety. This effect is particularly pronounced when a significant gap exists between their ideal self and actual self-image, resulting in feelings of inadequacy and internal conflict. These findings align with Rogers' theory, demonstrating how incongruence between the ideal self and self-image, amplified by false self-presentation, contributes to emotional distress and underscores the theory's relevance in understanding the psychological impact of social media in the digital age. In some cases, the pressure to conform to idealized standards on social media can lead to a distorted self-image. This discrepancy between the ideal self and actual self can result in significant emotional distress, contributing to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. For instance, Mun and Kim (2021)

reported that a strong need for approval is associated with higher levels of false or lying self-presentation, which significantly increases depression. Similarly, Gil-Or et al. (2015) found that high levels of false or ideal self-presentation on Facebook are linked to low self-esteem and avoidant and anxious attachment styles. Additionally, Turel and Gil-Or (2019) demonstrated that false self-presentation on social media, such as through posting or sharing selfies and images of oneself, can influence self-image enhancement but also highlight the psychological discomfort and risks associated with such behaviours. These findings emphasize how the incongruence between the ideal self and the actual self, driven by social media pressures, can lead to negative emotional and psychological outcomes.

Applying Carl Rogers' self-concept theory to the realm of social media reveals the profound impact these platforms have on young adults' self-image. Social media often presents idealized, curated portrayals of life, setting unrealistic benchmarks for success, beauty, and happiness. This creates a significant gap between individuals' real selves and their idealized online personas. Constant comparisons with influencers or peers, who appear to embody perfection, lead to a distorted self-image. The ideal self is shaped by platform-specific trends that set unattainable goals, while the real self may feel inadequate and overshadowed. According to Rogers (1961), this incongruence—the gap between the self-image and the ideal self—can lead to heightened emotional distress, negative self-perception, and even mental health challenges.

Empirical studies support this claim. Monacis et al. (2021) found that individuals who engage in false self-presentation on social media, driven by a strong need for approval, experience higher levels of depression and anxiety. This effect is particularly evident when there is a significant discrepancy between their ideal self and actual self-image, resulting in feelings of inadequacy and internal conflict. Similarly, Mun and Kim (2021) reported that a strong need for approval is associated with increased false self-presentation, which significantly contributes to higher levels of depression. Gil-Or et al. (2015) also found that false self-presentation on platforms like Facebook is linked to lower self-esteem and anxious attachment styles, while Turel and Gil-Or (2019) demonstrated that behaviours like posting selfies can enhance self-image but also highlight the psychological discomfort and risks associated with such actions.

These findings underscore the relevance of Rogers' theory in understanding the psychological impact of social media. In the context of platforms like Instagram and Facebook, the principles of PCT are particularly applicable. The pressure to meet idealized standards often leads individuals to craft identities that do not reflect their true selves, further exacerbating the disconnect between the real and ideal self (Monacis et al., 2021). This false self-presentation, driven by the desire for approval, deepens

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the incongruence between self-image and the ideal self, which is linked to negative emotional and psychological outcomes. However, applying PCT to social media helps explain how incongruence between the real and ideal self, amplified by societal expectations and online portrayals, can significantly affect young adults' emotional well-being, underscoring the importance of promoting authenticity, self-acceptance, and unconditional positive regard to foster psychological health.

2.6 Social Comparison Theory

Leon Festinger's Social Comparison Theory (1954) posits that individuals compare themselves to others to evaluate their own opinions, abilities, and self-worth. This innate drive for comparison serves three key functions: self-evaluation, self-improvement, and self-enhancement (Wood, 1989). Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok intensify these tendencies by exposing users to curated content and idealized lifestyles, fostering frequent comparisons that shape self-perceptions and emotional well-being. While most studies on social comparisons in social media focus on components of self-perception, such as body image and self-esteem, the broader concept of self-image remains underexplored. Self-perception, as defined by Nobre et al. (2019), refers to individuals' judgments about their abilities to meet task requirements.

Research further highlights individual differences in social comparison tendencies, which can moderate the effects of social media on well-being. For example, Irmer and Schmiedek (2023) found that undergraduates with a stronger tendency to compare themselves to others reported lower self-esteem after viewing peers' Facebook profiles compared to those with weaker comparison orientation. Such findings underline the importance of considering social comparison orientation as a potential moderator in studies examining the impact of social media on self-image and well-being.

Social comparison theory highlights two types of comparisons that individuals make in relation to others: upward and downward comparisons. Many people compare themselves with others, but these comparisons may consist of both downward social comparisons and upward social comparisons. As evidenced, the results of studies on social media addiction and self-esteem indicate that there is a negative relationship between social media addiction and self-esteem (Błachnio et al., 2016). Similarly, Andreassen et al. (2017) stated that lower self-esteem was associated with a higher social media addiction score. Furthermore, there are studies that have detected positive relationships between social media and the need to belong (Rashid et al., 2019). Downward social comparison occurs when individuals compare themselves with those perceived as being lower in terms of traits, they consider important, while upward social comparison occurs when individuals compare themselves with those perceived as better off in these traits (Jang et al., 2016).

Upward social comparison, as described by Pedalino and Camerini (2022), takes place when people compare themselves with someone who is better off. The phrase "better off" may refer to different attributes, including physical appearance. Social media environments such as Instagram may contribute to feelings of inadequacy due to upward social comparison processes (Engeln et al., 2020). Upward social

media comparisons have been linked to negative psychological outcomes such as low self-esteem and depression (Yoon et al., 2019).

In contrast, a downward comparison can enhance subjective well-being by allowing individuals to feel better about their own situation. It is often motivated by a sense of gratitude for not being in the less fortunate position of the comparison target. This concept is supported by various studies, including those by Wills (1981) and Taylor and Lobel (1989), which highlight that individuals can derive satisfaction and a positive self-image from such comparisons. This is further evidenced by a study from Olivos et al. (2020), which found that a larger happiness gap—where an individual is significantly happier than their less fortunate reference group—is associated with increased life satisfaction. This study operationalized the happiness gap as a variable that quantifies the difference in happiness, showing that a greater gap leads to a more positive evaluation of one's own life circumstances.

2.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review reveals the complex and multifaceted relationship between social media usage and self-image among young adults, emphasizing the significant impact of digital interactions on self-concept and identity formation. Drawing on key theories such as Social Comparison Theory and Person-Centred Theory, it highlights how social media can foster both positive and negative self-perceptions, affecting self-esteem, body image, and overall emotional well-being. Notably, there exists a considerable gap in research focusing on the Malaysian context, particularly in regions like Sarawak, suggesting that existing studies often overlook unique cultural and societal influences. Thus, understanding these dynamics is crucial for informing strategies that can enhance mental health outcomes and foster a healthier relationship with social media among youth.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with social media and on Self-Image. It details the research method, population and sample, data collection techniques, data analysis, research approach, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Method

In this project *Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with social media on Self-Image*, I applied a qualitative phenomenological approach. This qualitative study adopted a phenomenological approach to explore the subjective experiences of young adults (aged 19–25) with social media in relation to their self-image. Phenomenology was ideal for understanding lived experiences, with the study focusing on active users of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. Phenomenology was most frequently employed in research projects that aimed to capture the essence of the lived experiences of a certain population (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this study consists of young adults aged 19-25 who are active users of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. This age group was selected due to their heightened exposure to digital self-presentation and the influence of social media on self-image.

The participants were required to meet specific inclusion criteria to ensure relevance to the research objectives. These criteria included being aged 19–25 and actively using social media platforms, spending at least 2.48 hours or more daily on these platforms. Additionally, participants needed to engage regularly with content that could influence self-image, such as fitness, beauty, fashion, self-improvement, or lifestyle content.

To effectively implement purposive sampling, I selected individuals who met these criteria, focusing on those who actively engaged with self-image-related content on social media and were willing

to discuss their experiences. I employed purposive sampling techniques to directly target these individuals. Criterion sampling was used to identify individuals who met the predefined criteria, particularly those with heightened exposure to digital self-presentation and social media influence. Purposive sampling enabled the selection of participants likely to provide rich, detailed insights into the phenomenon being studied (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

The final sample size was determined by data saturation, which occurred when additional interviews no longer generated new themes or insights (Damyanov, 2023). According to Sandelowski (1995), a sample size of around ten may be sufficient for qualitative studies within a homogeneous community, while Creswell (2013) suggested that an average of five to twenty-five participants was adequate for phenomenological studies. Data saturation ensured comprehensive data collection, allowing for a deeper exploration of participants' experiences during semi-structured interviews while minimizing logistical challenges for the researcher.

Saturation was identified through the repetition of themes and patterns in the data. As interviews were transcribed and coded, I looked for recurring ideas or concepts that emerged across the participants' responses. When similar themes, such as the impact of social media on self-image, were consistently mentioned, and no new insights were introduced in subsequent interviews, I considered data saturation to have been reached.

Although the study intended to interview up to six participants, data collection was concluded earlier if saturation was reached, ensuring a rich and detailed understanding of how social media impacted self-image among the participants. According to Ruslin et al. (2022), the semi-structured interview was found to be highly effective in balancing structure and adaptability, making it an ideal tool for gathering qualitative data that provided an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Survey (Google Forms)

To begin the data collection process, I created a survey using Google Forms targeting young adults who actively used social media. The survey was designed to assess participants' engagement with social media content and its potential influence on their self-image. Sample questions included:

- How often do you use social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook per day?
- On average, how many hours do you spend on social media daily?
- Do you regularly engage with content related to fitness, beauty, fashion, self-improvement, or lifestyle on social media?
- How frequently do you come across content on social media that influences your self-image?
- In your opinion, how does social media impact your self-image?
- Do you compare yourself to others on social media in terms of appearance, lifestyle, or success?
- Has engaging with social media content ever made you feel more confident, more self-conscious, or both?
- Do you primarily consume social media content, create content, or both?
- How do you feel after engaging with self-image-related content on social media?
- Have you ever taken steps to reduce the negative impact of social media on your self-image? If so, what strategies have you used?

The survey link was distributed among young adults who were active social media users, primarily through university-related social media groups and student communities. Participation was encouraged by explaining the purpose of the study and emphasizing the importance of their experiences in understanding the influence of social media on self-image.

Based on the responses, the survey primarily served as a pre-screening tool to identify potential interview candidates. Responses were analyzed qualitatively to identify participants who frequently engaged with self-image-related content, ensuring a targeted selection for

interviews. The survey results provided initial insights into participants' social media usage habits and perceptions, which later informed the qualitative data collection phase.

Sample Screening Criteria:

- Participants who regularly engaged with self-image-related content (fitness, beauty, fashion, self-improvement, or lifestyle) on Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook at least several times a week and had an average daily social media usage of more than 2.48 hours.
- Those who expressed interest in discussing how social media influences self-image and self-perception.
- Individuals who reported comparing themselves to others on social media in terms of appearance, lifestyle, or success.
- Participants who had experienced either positive or negative impacts on their self-image because of social media consumption.

Shortlisted respondents who meet the screening criteria were invited for qualitative interviews. Efforts were made to ensure diversity in experiences and perspectives to capture a broad range of insights into the relationship between social media and self-image.

The survey served as an effective tool for identifying participants whose experiences aligned with the research focus. The structured questions helped pinpoint individuals who can provide valuable insights, enabling an in-depth exploration of social media's influence on self-image among young adults.

3.3.2 Interview

Conducting qualitative interviews as part of this research involved a structured approach aimed at exploring the experiences of young adults in Sarawak regarding social media and its influence on self-image. Preparation began with obtaining necessary ethical approvals and developing an interview guide with open-ended questions to explore participants' social media engagement, self-image perceptions, and coping strategies.

Establishing rapport with participants was crucial to creating a comfortable environment that encouraged open discussion. The interview questions were designed to elicit detailed responses, prompting participants to share their experiences with self-image-related content on social media, their perceptions, and the strategies they used to navigate any challenges. Active listening, probing for deeper insights, and ensuring participant comfort throughout the interview process are essential in gathering rich narratives. Interviews will conclude with appreciation for participants' contributions and reassurance of confidentiality, ensuring a respectful closure to the discussion.

Interview Questions

Research Objective 1: To explore young adults' experiences of self-image through their interactions and content consumption on social media.

Research Question 1: How do young adults experience their self-image through their interactions and content consumption on social media?

- Can you share how long you have been actively using social media and which platforms you engage with the most?
- On average, how much time do you spend daily on Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook?
- What types of content do you regularly engage with on social media? (e.g., fitness, beauty, fashion, self-improvement, lifestyle)
- In what ways do you think social media has influenced how you perceive yourself?

Research Objective 2: To understand young adults' perceptions of their self-image in the context of social media use.

Research Question 2: What are young adults' perceptions of their self-image as influenced by content they engage with on social media?

- Do you find yourself comparing your appearance, lifestyle, or achievements to others on social media? If yes, how does this affect you?
- Have you ever felt the need to alter your behaviour, lifestyle, or physical appearance because of social media influence?
- Have you ever felt that social media has changed the way you view your body image, appearance, or overall self-worth? If so, can you share an example?
- How do you feel when you see content related to beauty, fitness, fashion, or success on social media? Does it inspire or pressure you?

Research Objective 3: To explore the strategies used by young adults in managing the challenges related to self-image while engaging with social media.

Research Question 3: What strategies do young adults use to manage challenges to their self-image associated with social media use?

- How do you manage any negative emotions that arise from social media use?
- Are there any specific strategies you use to protect your self-esteem while engaging with social media content?
- Have you ever taken breaks from social media due to concerns about its impact on your self-image? If so, how did it affect you?
- How do you differentiate between healthy inspiration and unrealistic beauty or lifestyle standards on social media?
- In your opinion, what could be done to make social media a more positive space for self-image and mental well-being?

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These interview questions were designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of young adults' experiences with social media and how it influenced their self-image. Through these discussions, the study aimed to identify key patterns, emotional responses, and coping mechanisms related to social media consumption and self-perception among young adults.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Thematic Analysis

The data analysis procedure for this qualitative study on the impact of social media on young adults' self-image involved analysing both pre-screening survey data and thematic analysis of interview transcripts. The process began with data familiarization, where researchers immersed themselves in the collected data to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences. This included reviewing pre-screening survey responses to identify participants who met the inclusion criteria based on high social media usage and engagement with self-image-related content.

Once familiarized with the data, researchers proceeded with initial coding, segmenting interview transcripts into meaningful units. This involved line-by-line coding, where each significant statement or response was assigned, a code representing an idea, perception, or theme related to self-image and social media influence. These codes served as the foundation for further analysis.

Following the initial coding phase, the next step involved identifying potential themes. I reviewed and organized the codes to discern patterns and connections across the data, grouping similar codes into preliminary themes that reflected recurring experiences, attitudes, and perceptions among participants.

The themes were then refined and reviewed to ensure they were distinct and accurately captured the essence of the data. This process included re-examining the coded data, clarifying overlapping themes, and verifying that each theme was internally coherent and contributed meaningfully to the research objectives.

Once the themes are well-defined, they are named and described, with each theme supported by direct excerpts from the interviews to illustrate key insights. These themes represent significant aspects of young adults' experiences with social media and its influence on their self-image.

Finally, the findings were synthesized into a coherent narrative, linking the identified themes to existing literature and theoretical frameworks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media influenced self-image and emotional well-being. According

to Yardley (2024), the thematic analysis process included six key steps: familiarization with the data, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and labelling themes, and creating the final report.

3.5 Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of this phenomenological study on the impact of social media on young adults' self-image, I applied the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in specific ways.

Credibility was enhanced through member checking, where participants were invited to review the findings to confirm their accuracy. Peer debriefing and the involvement of multiple coders were also used to verify emerging themes. These strategies helped ensure that the findings resonated with the participants' experiences and reduced the risk of research bias.

Transferability was achieved by providing rich, detailed descriptions of the study context, including the setting in Sarawak and the specific social media platforms involved. This enabled readers to determine whether the findings were applicable to other groups or settings.

Dependability was supported by maintaining a well-documented and consistent research process. This included keeping an audit trail and conducting inter-rater reliability checks to ensure that data collection and analysis methods remained consistent and reliable throughout the study.

Confirmability was demonstrated by maintaining transparency regarding my role as the researcher and by keeping a reflective journal to track personal biases and assumptions. Additionally, external audits were conducted, in which an independent reviewer evaluated the data and findings to ensure that the results reflected the participants' perspectives rather than my own interpretations (Creswell, 2013).

3.6 Ethics of study

Firstly, in terms of voluntary participation, a digital informed consent form was attached to the pre-screening survey. Before proceeding to answer the questionnaire, all respondents were required to review and agree to the informed consent. This step was essential to ensure that participants were fully aware of their rights as voluntary contributors to the study.

Secondly, regarding anonymity, only general demographic information was collected. This included age, gender, university, and the type of supervision process they were undergoing, whether practicum or internship training. No personally identifiable information was requested to protect the respondents' identities.

Thirdly, in terms of confidentiality, all research data were kept strictly confidential and were not shared with any unauthorized third parties without the participants' explicit consent. Access to the completed research data was limited to the research supervisor and the researcher, ensuring that data handling throughout the study remained ethical and secure.

3.7 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology for the study that examined the impact of social media on the self-image of young adults in Sarawak. The research adopted a qualitative phenomenological approach, focusing on young adults aged 19–25 who actively engaged with self-image-related content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. The sample was selected using purposive and criterion sampling to identify participants who met specific criteria, such as daily social media usage and regular engagement with content that influenced self-image.

Data collection involved both a pre-screening survey and semi-structured qualitative interviews, which aimed to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies related to social media's impact on self-image. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes across the interview transcripts.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, methods such as member checking, peer debriefing, and maintaining transparency throughout the research process were incorporated. Ethical considerations focused on informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and safeguarding the well-being of participants throughout the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The fourth chapter comprises an analysis of the data that has been collected for the purpose of this research and presenting the result of the data analysis. The focus of this research paper is to explore young adult's experiences with social media on self -image. This chapter analyses the data collected from the interview. All the informants share a mutual background.

This section is presented according to the objectives of the study. Starting with background of study, it is then followed by answering the research objectives and questions.

4.2 Background of Informants

This section presents the background of the informants involved in this study, focusing on key aspects such as age, ethnicity, place of residence, average time spent on social media per day and week, and the types of content they frequently engage with.

Informants	Age	Ethnicity	Average time spent on social media per day (hours and minutes)	Average time spent on social media per week (hours and minutes)	Types of social media usage	Types of content
1	25	Iban	8h	17h 18m	• TikTok (3h 8m) • Instagram (1h 5m)	• Beauty • Fashion • Lifestyle
2	24	Melayu	5h 50m	23h 23m	• WhatsApp (14h 23m) • Facebook (5h 51m) • Instagram (3h 19m)	• Beauty • Fashion • Lifestyle • Mental Health
3	23	Melayu	3h 17m	23h 2m	• WhatsApp (1h 58m) • Instagram (30m) • TikTok (2h 11m)	• Fashion • Beauty • Motivational
4	22	Melanau	9h 26m	11h 2m	• Instagram (2h 15m) • TikTok (5h 15m) • Twitter (30m)	• Fashion • Beauty • Entertainment • Lifestyle • Beauty
5	23	Melayu	4h 53m	10h 11m	• TikTok (3h 23m) • YouTube (26m) • WhatsApp (2h 27m)	• Fashion • Beauty • Self-awareness • Lifestyle
6	22	Melayu	3h 10m	22h 13m	• Instagram (23m) • TikTok (1h 12m) • WhatsApp (2h 35m)	• Fashion • Beauty • Lifestyle

Table 1: The demographic profile of informants

All six informants reported regular engagement with social media, with daily usage ranging from approximately 3 to 9 hours. Informant 1, a 25-year-old Iban individual, spends around 8 hours daily on TikTok and Instagram, primarily engaging with beauty, fashion, and lifestyle content. Informant 2, a 24-year-old Malay, averages 5 hours and 50 minutes per day, with the highest usage on WhatsApp, followed by Facebook and Instagram. Their content interests include beauty, fashion, lifestyle, and mental health. Informant 3, a 23-year-old Malay, spends about 3 hours and 17 minutes daily, primarily on WhatsApp and TikTok, with some use of Instagram. This informant consumes content related to fashion, beauty, and motivation. Informant 4, a 22-year-old Melanau, records the highest usage at 9 hours and 26 minutes per day, mostly on TikTok and Instagram, with some engagement on Twitter. Their preferred content includes fashion, beauty, lifestyle, entertainment, and self-presentation. Informant 5, a 23-year-old Malay, uses TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube for approximately 4 hours and 53 minutes daily, focusing on fashion, beauty, lifestyle, and self-awareness content. Lastly, Informant 6, a 22-year-old Malay, spends around 3 hours and 10 minutes daily on TikTok, WhatsApp, and Instagram, engaging with fashion, beauty, and lifestyle content. Overall, beauty and fashion emerged as the most common themes across all informants, highlighting the strong presence of appearance-related content in shaping self-image among young adults.

The findings from the informants in this study align closely with broader trends in social media usage among young adults, as documented in both Nigerian and Malaysian contexts. The high daily engagement ranging from 3 to over 9 hours mirrors the substantial average usage reported in Malaysia, where young adults spend approximately 2 hours and 48 minutes daily on social media platforms (Howe S, 2024). This consistency in usage patterns underscores the integral role that social media plays in the everyday lives of young people, particularly as a source of information, entertainment, and social interaction. The dominance of platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp among the informants is also reflective of national preferences, with TikTok and Instagram being especially popular for their visually engaging and interactive content.

Furthermore, reports from Cunningham et al. (2021), which suggest that the type of content consumed and the emotional investment in social media platforms play a crucial role

in shaping self-image. Most informants in the study demonstrated a strong preference for appearance-related content, particularly beauty, fashion, lifestyle, and self-presentation, indicating a consistent theme across users. The prominence of such content not only reflects current trends in social media engagement among young Malaysians but also reinforces the idea that these platforms serve as influential spaces where young adults frequently compare themselves with idealized representations. These patterns of use may contribute significantly to the formation and reinforcement of self-image, supporting existing claims that social media is more than just a communication tool it is a central component in identity development and emotional well-being among youth.

4.3 Findings and Discussion

The findings in this research were organized according to the three specific research objectives guiding the study. Each objective is analysed through multiple themes and subthemes that emerged from the interviews.

4.3.1 Research Objective 1: To explore young adults' experiences of self-image through their interactions and content consumption on social media.

Research Question 1: How do young adults experience their self-image through their interactions and content consumption on social media?

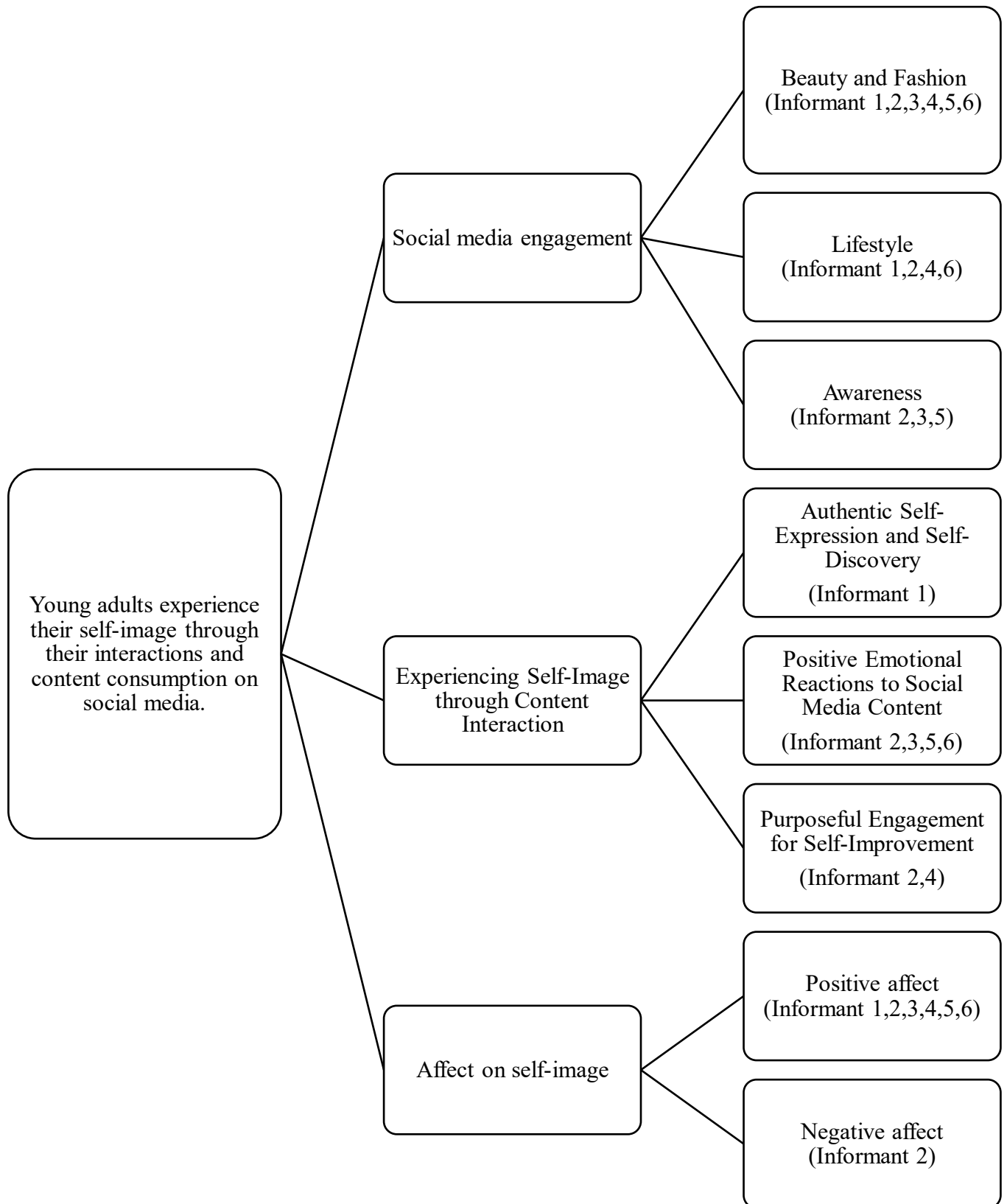


Figure 2: Young adults' experience their self-image through their interactions and content consumption on social media

4.3.1.1 Social media engagement

The informants' patterns of social media engagement reveal a strong focus on beauty and fashion content, alongside significant interest in lifestyle and awareness themes. These interactions reflect how young adults use social media as a platform for exploring and expressing their identity, particularly in relation to self-image and personal growth.

All six informants (Informants 1 to 6) reported active engagement with beauty and fashion-related content, identifying it as the most prevalent form of interaction. This aligns with Harinaiha et al. (2024), who found that media portrayals including social media influencers and fashion content significantly influence youth's fashion choices and self-image, shaping both personal and social style preferences. These interactions often serve as a means of experimenting with self-presentation, allowing users to test out new aesthetics and construct their self-image in alignment with perceived ideals.

Lifestyle content was also frequently consumed, particularly by Informants 1, 2, 4, and 6. This type of content, which often features aspirational yet relatable routines, travels, or daily vlogs, reflects a desire for inspiration and personal development. According to Dewi et al. (2021), individuals with a stronger self-image are more likely to be drawn to hedonistic lifestyle content, seeking enjoyment and alignment with aspirational goals. Furthermore, Younis (2024) highlights how influencers often promote healthy living and body positivity, contributing to the development of self-esteem and positive body image through lifestyle portrayals.

Informants 2, 3, and 5 demonstrated meaningful engagement with awareness-related content, including motivational quotes, mental health discussions, and social justice messaging. This engagement illustrates a psychological need for emotional validation and belonging, reinforcing core aspects of Person-Centered Theory, particularly unconditional positive regard and empathy (Rogers, 1959). Sullivan et al. (2024) note that supportive online communities offer spaces for emotional sharing, which helps reduce the discrepancy between the real and ideal self, contributing to a more congruent and stable self-concept. Cao et al. (2021) found that content trustworthiness and richness directly influence how users consume, contribute to, and create content, reinforcing the idea that young adults are selective in their engagement and are

influenced by the perceived credibility of the information they encounter.

In summary, the social media engagement patterns of the informants can be seen as part of an ongoing process of self-exploration and personal growth. Through their interactions with various content types, they seek to build a coherent and positive self-concept, find affirmation, and draw inspiration core elements emphasized in Person-Centered Theory (Rogers, 1951). Importantly, self-concept clarity appears to play a key role in this dynamic as Strimbu and O'Connell (2019) found, individuals with a lower self-concept tend to present greater discrepancies between their online and offline selves, suggesting that these online environments are being actively used as exploratory spaces for refining identity. Thus, social media serves as a digital space where young adults navigate identity development and pursue self-actualization in line with Rogers' humanistic principles.

4.3.1.2 Experiencing Self-Image through Content Interaction

Social media has become a powerful force in shaping how individuals view themselves, especially among young adults who are active consumers of visual and interactive content. As highlighted in previous literature, the curated nature of online platforms can both positively and negatively impact one's self-concept, influencing self-esteem, motivation, and emotional well-being. This study explores how informants experience the influence of social media on their self-image.

Authentic Self-Expression and Self-Discovery

Authenticity on social media refers to the extent to which individuals present themselves online in a way that aligns with their real-life identity. Among young adults, this form of self-presentation often reflects a conscious effort to maintain personal integrity, emotional comfort, and psychological balance in digital spaces. Recent studies have shown that users who present themselves authentically tend to experience greater emotional satisfaction and reduced pressure from social comparison (Shu et al., 2022).

Findings from the interviews support this notion, with some informants deliberately using social media to reflect their true selves rather than crafting idealized or filtered personas. This type of engagement highlights a commitment to emotional honesty and a desire for congruence between online and offline identities.

“apa yang saya post dalam instagram, itu saya juga dalam real life.” (line 33)

Informant 1

This statement illustrates the informant's intentional effort to align their digital presence with their authentic self. For this individual, authenticity appears to function as a buffer against the negative psychological effects commonly linked to performative or curated social media use. Rather than feeling pressured to conform to unrealistic standards, the informant expresses confidence and comfort in presenting a genuine version of themselves.

Authentic self-presentation on platforms like Instagram has been linked to greater subjective well-being and emotional stability, as individuals who feel aligned with their real selves tend to experience higher emotional fulfillment (Kreling et al., 2022). Supporting this trend, Duffy and Hund (2019) observed that young adults increasingly prioritize “realness”

over perfection in their digital self-image, often rejecting overly polished portrayals in favour of more genuine, relatable content. This shift toward authenticity reflects a broader recognition of the importance of emotional integrity and psychological coherence in the way young adults navigate their online identities.

Positive Emotional Reactions to Social Media Content

Social media has become more than just a platform for connection and entertainment it now plays a pivotal role in shaping emotional experiences related to self-image. Among young adults, interactions with content related to beauty, fashion, and lifestyle often evoke positive emotional responses such as admiration, inspiration, and increased motivation. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok serve as spaces for aspirational viewing, where curated content can spark personal reflection and drive self-improvement. According to Lim et al. (2022), social media interventions even those promoting health often work because they emotionally engage users through relatable, inspiring stories or visuals. These positive emotional reactions form a key part of how young adults interpret their self-image and set personal goals in response to social media content.

In this context, aspirational content related to fashion, lifestyle, and self-improvement can positively influence users by encouraging motivation, self-growth, and confidence. Several informants (Informants 2, 3, 5, and 6) shared that content encountered on social media has inspired them to improve aspects of their appearance or lifestyle.

For instance, Informant 2, who identifies as plus-size, shares how fashion-related content has helped foster confidence and creativity in self-expression:

“So bila saya dah tengok ada orang yang buat penampilan macamtu, dia akan inspirasi saya”

Informant 2

Similarly, Informant 3 describes using beauty and fashion influencers as a guide for self-enhancement, indicating a healthy comparison process:

“Maybe kalau saya rasakan diri saya tak cantik maybe saya boleh try ikut macam mana dia bermake up”

Informant 3

These responses suggest that exposure to curated yet relatable content can be empowering when interpreted constructively. Informant 5 illustrates this further by sharing how beauty tips and visual representations on TikTok influence her personal aspirations:

“sebagai contoh, shera ada macam jerawat and so on jadi bila shera tengok apa apa seperti

tips, kadang kadang kita tengok dekat wall page di tiktok semua ada orang yang cantik, kadang kadang ia mengubah lah 'oh nak jadi macam dia lah'."

Informant 5

Likewise, Informant 6 reinforces this theme by emphasizing the generally positive impact of social media on self-perception and self-improvement:

"Err setakat ini ada, dia memang mempengaruhi cara saya melihat diri saya sendiri which is that dia kebanyakannya err lebih kepada positif lah, it helps me to improve myself to be better."

Informant 6

The experiences of the informants regarding inspiration and positive motivation align closely with existing research on the influence of social media celebrities and endorsements on user behaviour and self-esteem. Informants 2, 3, 5, and 6 described how they draw inspiration from fashion and beauty influencers, using this content to guide improvements in self-image and lifestyle. This mirrors findings by Pozharliev et al. (2022) and Lo and Peng (2022), who emphasize the powerful role of social media celebrities in shaping users' attitudes, confidence, and behavioural intentions. The informants' use of curated influencer content as a tool for self-enhancement highlights how social media serves not only as a space for consumption but also as a catalyst for aspirational thinking. This is further supported by Djafarova and Rushworth (2017), who found that trust in celebrity-endorsed content contributes to enhanced self-esteem among users.

Purposeful Engagement for Self-Improvement

Self-improvement is a self-driven process influenced by an individual's motivation for personal development, belief in their ability to change (self-efficacy), and autonomy in setting goals (Onofrei et al., 2022). In the digital age, social media has become a convenient and influential space for users to access guidance related to appearance, health, and well-being. Young adults often turn to platforms like TikTok and Instagram to follow skincare routines, lifestyle hacks, or health-related content that they can incorporate into their daily lives. Rather than serving as a space solely for entertainment or comparison, social media in this context functions as a practical resource for users seeking to improve themselves in achievable and meaningful ways. This type of content, when interpreted constructively, may help support self-regulation and promote confidence-building behaviours (Liu et al., 2025).

For example, Informant 4 explained how beauty content on social media influences her skincare routine:

“Tapi thats why la rajin nak tengok tips tips skincare dekat tiktok insta supaya kulit lebih terjaga”

Informant 4

This quote demonstrates how the informant actively seeks out skincare tips on social media as part of her self-care practice. Rather than passively consuming content, she engages with information that aligns with her personal goals for appearance and wellness. This kind of engagement reflects a constructive use of digital media for self-improvement.

Similarly, Informant 2 mentioned following diet and supplement content to support her fitness goals:

kalau mereka post tentang suplimen, saya akan nak cuba. kalau mereka post pasal menu diet, saya akan cuba.” (line 52)

Informant 2

This reveals how social media content can guide behavioural decisions in everyday life. The informant treats digital platforms as learning environments, selectively adopting practices that resonate with her health aspirations. These examples suggest that young adults are not merely influenced by social media passively but use it as a source of inspiration and practical advice. Their engagement with these platforms often revolves around actionable content, enabling

them to make informed decisions and changes that support self-care and personal growth.

4.3.1.3 Affect on self-image

Self-image plays a pivotal role in the development of young adults, profoundly influencing their self-esteem, body image, and overall mental well-being. According to M. Daulay et al. (2023), self-image encompasses an individual's awareness of their mental images, personality, appearance, and abilities, which can be either positive or negative.

Positive Affects of Social Media on Self-Image

Social media is often seen as a double-edged sword in shaping self-image, but for many young adults, it can serve as a source of motivation, inspiration, and self-improvement. Rather than merely consuming content passively, individuals may actively engage with uplifting, informative, and empowering posts that align with their personal goals and values. The responses from all six informants in this study demonstrate how social media, when used constructively, can contribute positively to self-perception, particularly in the areas of appearance, self-care, and emotional growth.

Informant 1 expresses a balanced and light-hearted approach to social media use, emphasizing the importance of not taking it too seriously. This mindset appears to protect the individual from negative emotional impact, allowing for a more confident and positive self-image, especially in terms of appearance. This supports research that shows social media can help reinforce self-perception when users engage with content in a healthy and intentional way (Smith, 2023).

"More to positive. sebab taknak ambil ia sebagai suatu benda yang telampau serius. jadi semua positif terutama berkaitan dengan appearance." (lines 55-56)

Informant 1

Informant 2 shares how content related to health and nutrition inspires behavioural change. The proactive engagement with posts about supplements and diet plans illustrates the motivational influence of social media, aligning with studies that show how exposure to health-oriented content can encourage self-improvement and well-being (Pradhnani & Kaushik, 2024).

"Lebih kepada kesan positif lah sebab kadang-kadang kalau mereka post tentang suplimen, saya akan nak cuba. kalau mereka post pasal menu diet, saya akan cuba." (lines 52-56)

Informant 2

Informant 3 explicitly describes how upward social comparison acts as a form of motivation rather than discouragement. Rather than feeling inadequate, the individual sees others' success as a benchmark and channel for personal progress. This reflects the findings by Turel et al. (2018), who noted that constructive comparisons on social media can promote goal-setting behaviors when individuals interpret them positively.

"Which is saya try to ambil dia punya side positive biar saya rasa 'kalau dia boleh, kenapa aku sik boleh', 'kenak nya boleh, aku sik boleh polah macam ya'" (lines 79-80)

Informant 3

Informant 4's statement reveals a sense of internal validation. By following trends based on personal appreciation rather than external approval, this individual demonstrates autonomy in content engagement. This resonates with findings from the National Institute of Health and Care Research (2021), which suggest that self-image is heavily influenced by personal and psychological perceptions shaped through media interaction.

"Tak perlu orang yang cakap kita cantik tapi kita sendiri rasa benda tu cantik so saya follow." (lines 44–47)

Informant 4

For Informant 5, social media serves as a learning tool. The content seen online becomes a guide for self-improvement, showing how social platforms can serve educational and motivational purposes. According to Moirangthem (2023), self-efficacy and motivation are important components of life satisfaction, and constructive media use can support these outcomes.

"Kita boleh ambil benda itu sebagai motivasi ataupun contoh untuk kita perbaiki diri." (lines 56)

Informant 5

Informant 6 focuses on how social media provides practical advice on appearance and fashion, aiding self-enhancement and building confidence. This engagement reflects what Kim Rounsefell et al. (2020) describe as a typical pattern in young adults using digital content to shape their self-concept during transitional developmental phases.

"Tapi emm so far dia more to positive sebab dia tolong saya macam untuk bagi saya idea cara

untuk cantikkan diri, cara nak berfashion.” (lines 55–56)

Informant 6

The informants' responses reveal that social media can positively influence young adults' self-image by serving as a source of motivation, inspiration, and practical ideas for self-improvement. They demonstrate agency by selectively engaging with content that aligns with their values, fostering self-acceptance and internal validation. This reflects key concepts from Person-Centered Theory, such as authenticity and congruence between the self and self-image. Additionally, their constructive use of social comparison supports Social Comparison Theory's view that upward comparisons can encourage growth and goal setting rather than negative feelings. Overall, social media, when approached mindfully, can enhance young adults' self-perception and support their personal development.

Negative Affects of Social Media on Self-Image

Although most informants reported positive impacts from social media, several also acknowledged its downsides particularly the emotional toll it can take when expectations or comparisons become overwhelming. Informant 2 shared a candid reflection on how certain content related to fitness and weight loss led to feelings of insecurity and self-blame when personal goals were not met. This response illustrates how social media can create unrealistic pressures and reinforce self-criticism, especially when users engage with aspirational content without achieving similar outcomes.

“Contoh saya insecure, saya tengok content-content pasal loss weight, tapi kadang-kadang saya tak buat. Macam bagi kesan negatif la untuk diri sendiri sebab saya menghukum diri saya sendiri sebab saya sendiri tahu saya yang tak disiplin.” (lines 52–56)

Informant 2

This aligns with existing research that highlights how exposure to idealized body images and lifestyle portrayals on social media may lead to distorted self-perceptions and lowered self-esteem. For instance, Rai and Sharma (2021) found a strong correlation between self-perception, body image, and self-esteem in young adults, while Pradhnani and Kaushik (2024) emphasized how dissatisfaction with physical appearance can diminish self-worth. Similarly, Lee (2024) pointed out that frequent social media use may negatively impact self-

esteem and well-being due to constant comparisons. These findings support the idea that social media, while inspirational for some, can be emotionally challenging for others—especially when users internalize idealized portrayals as personal shortcomings.

The response from Informant 2 reflects this dual reality, showing how social media engagement can encourage self-improvement but also trigger self-judgment. This highlights the need for young adults to critically evaluate online content and protect their mental well-being by setting realistic expectations for themselves.

4.3.2 Research Objective 2: To understand young adults' perceptions of their self-image in the context of social media use.

Research Question 2: What are young adults' perceptions of their self-image as influenced by content they engage with on social media?

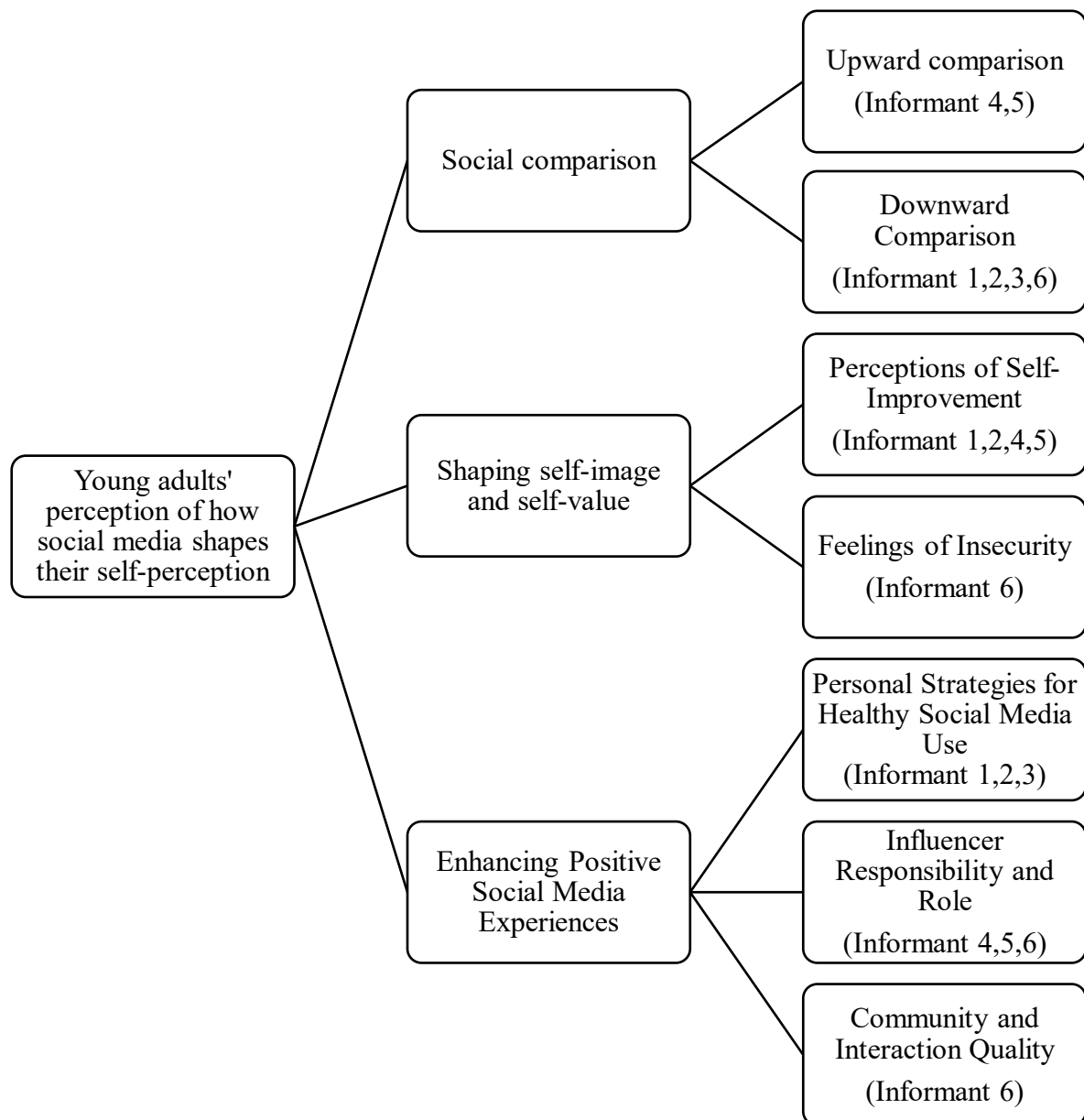


Figure 3: Young adults' perception of how social media shapes their self-perception

4.3.2.1 Social comparison

Social media provides constant exposure to curated images, lifestyles, and achievements, which naturally invites users to compare themselves with others. These comparisons can significantly shape how young adults view their self-image, sometimes motivating them toward self-improvement, while at other times contributing to feelings of inadequacy or self-doubt. According to Festinger's Social Comparison Theory (1954), individuals evaluate themselves based on comparisons with others, and this process becomes even more pronounced in digital spaces like Instagram or TikTok where idealized portrayals are frequent. As young adults engage in upward or downward comparisons, their emotional responses and self-perceptions vary depending on how they interpret those comparisons.

Upward comparison

Upward social comparison occurs when individuals evaluate themselves against others they perceive as more successful, attractive, or capable. This type of comparison can inspire motivation and goal setting when the individual believes they can realistically achieve a similar standard. However, upward comparisons can also trigger insecurity, frustration, or feelings of inferiority, especially when individuals feel the comparison target is unattainably "better" (Pedalino & Camerini, 2022).

In this study, Informants 4 and 5 provided examples of upward comparison that were primarily interpreted in a constructive way. Informant 4 admired student influencers who manage both academic and extracurricular responsibilities, viewing them as inspiration to improve her own balance and performance:

"Kalau lifestyle as student macam akademik. kan di tiktok ramai orang tunjuk journey mereka dekat universiti. Macam mana mereka menyeimbangkan akademik dan aktiviti luar. Macam kokurikulum semua tu. Yang tu boleh dikira membandingkan jugaklah. Dia buat saya rasa saya nak jadi aktif macam mereka juga tapi dalam masa yang sama akademik masih terjaga seperti dapat keputusan dekan apa semua tapi still aktif sertai program, di kolej atau peringkat universiti. Tapi dalam masa yang sama membandingkan, saya nak jadi seperti mereka. Dia jadi inspirasi supaya saya mampu jadi seperti mereka." (line 58-65)

Informant 4

Similarly, Informant 5 described admiration for an influencer who is bold, stylish, athletic, and confident, and how this admiration translated into motivation to develop similar confidence:

“kalau contoh influencer iaitu Ain Ramli, kalau tengok di titkok, dia sangat aktif, bold. Kira dia sangat pandai berfashion kalau nak di bandingkan dengan typical dengan perempuan biasa. Dia ada tubuh yang macam yang a bit tinggi, lepastu dia aktif bersukan. Jadi dia akan sedikit berotot, tough. Tapi pada masa yang sama, dia sangat funny dan dia punya content bukan sekadar funny tapi cari dia berpakaian sangat slay. Jadi shera ambil konfident dia.”
(lines 73-78)

Informant 5

These accounts demonstrate that upward social comparison on platforms like TikTok can serve as a powerful source of motivation and contribute positively to self-image development when engaged with a constructive mindset. While upward comparisons often carry the risk of fostering feelings of inadequacy, research by Engeln et al. (2020) suggests that such comparisons can also facilitate aspirational goal setting and personal growth if approached healthily. This perspective is consistent with Rai and Sharma's (2021) findings, which highlight the significant influence of body image and self-perception on self-esteem and life satisfaction among young adults. Therefore, the outcome of upward comparison depends largely on the individual's interpretation either as motivation or as a threat to self-worth.

Downward comparison

Downward social comparison occurs when individuals evaluate themselves against others they perceive as worse off in terms of appearance, achievement, or lifestyle. This comparison can sometimes boost self-esteem or provide reassurance ("at least I'm not doing as badly"), but in social media contexts, especially those dominated by idealized content, the intended direction of comparison may backfire, leading to jealousy, inadequacy, or negative self-talk (Lee, 2024; Smith, 2023).

Informant 1 described feeling jealous when comparing themselves to peers who had already achieved major milestones such as owning a car or having a stable job:

“adalah, kesan. terutama dari segi lifestlye. macam umur sekarang kan yang seperti 25 ke bawah dah ada anak, dah ada kereta sendiri, ada pekerjaan. macam ala bestla bestla bestla. membandingkan tu like something more la kan. so adalah memberi kesan seperti jealous. more kepada cemburu lah” (lines 60-63)

Informant 1

Informant 2 shared more intense emotional reactions when comparing herself to plus-size influencers who appeared more fashionable and confident, despite sharing similar body types:

“kalau dari segi ini, yes memang banyak kesan sebab saya kan membandingkan diri saya macam saya cakap tadi, pada akhirnya saya akan hukum diri saya sebab tak disiplin. saya yang tak konsisten. contohnya macam saya tengok content influencer plus size untuk fashion, saya akan bandingkan dengan dia “kenapa dia plus size, aku pun plus size. tapi kenapa dia macam cantik dari aku? kenapa dia lebih fashionable dari aku? kenapa kulit dia lebih cantik dari aku? sedangkan aku pun plus size”. sedangkan orang cakap kalau plus size selalunya kulit akan jadi kusam sebab tak jaga makan, pengambilan gula tak jaga. jadi kenapa kulit dia flawless, kulit aku tak flawless. sedangkan dia plus size, aku pun plus size.” (lines 64-72)

Informant 2

While Informant 3 acknowledged making comparisons, she also demonstrated a level of self-acceptance and reframed the comparison positively:

“mmmm membandingkan diri, emm kalau saya nak cakap tak macam bulak gilak lah sebab kalau macam dekat FYP saya pun, selalu macam najiha , sofea shra , so saya macam “ih

kenak aku sik kacak mcmya?”, macamtu tapi aaaaa tapi walaupun saya membandingkan diri saya dengan dorang, influencer, tapi saya pun rasa macam why not saya terima diri saya sendiri. saya punya kelebihan, saya punya kecantikan, so that saya pun boleh shine in my own way. Aaa” (lines 93-98)

Informant 3

Informant 6, meanwhile, mentioned comparing herself to fitness influencers and feeling pressured to change her body and appearance to feel valuable:

“emm ya sebab kalau dari segi imej badan saya suka tengok yang emm girl girl yang main gym, jadi badan mereka memang cantik. and saya pernah lah nak badan macamtu and penampilan pun dari segi pemakaian, dari segi muka skincare semuanya. harga diri, pun mengubah cara saya melihat diri saya sendiri. contohnya, yang harga diri ni, macam dia buat saya fikir macam saya perlu jadi better haa macam tu la” (lines 44-48)

Informant 6

These examples show how downward comparison in social media environments doesn't always follow the expected pattern of boosting self-esteem. Instead, the curated perfection of influencers often leads users to feel worse about themselves, particularly when comparisons are made within similar identity categories (e.g., same body type, same age group). Muqaddas et al. (2017) found that just one hour of Facebook use per day could significantly lower self-esteem, and Smith (2023) argued that unrealistic beauty standards amplified by engagement metrics (likes, comments) foster unhealthy comparisons and distorted self-worth.

This is particularly critical during young adulthood, a developmental stage marked by identity formation and heightened social sensitivity. As shown by the emotional responses of jealousy, insecurity, and self-criticism among the informants, internalizing idealized portrayals whether through upward or downward comparison may foster unrealistic expectations and erode self-worth. Research by Arsandaux et al. (2020) highlights that persistent self-esteem difficulties during this period can lead to long-term mental health impacts, including anxiety and dissatisfaction.

Thus, both upward and downward comparisons on social media platforms can significantly influence perceptions of self-image. Their impact depends on how the individual interprets the comparison either as motivation for growth or as a threat to their self-worth. These findings emphasize the importance of critical digital literacy and self-compassion to help young adults engage more healthily with social media and protect their self-concept.

Shaping Self-Image and Self-Value

Social media plays a significant role in shaping how young adults perceive their self-image and self-worth. As they interact with various content online, they often reflect on their abilities, appearance, and overall personal development. For some, this leads to feelings of motivation and improvement, while for others, it can create doubt, insecurity, or pressure to meet unrealistic standards. This duality highlights the complex emotional experiences young adults face in the digital landscape. According to Rounsefell et al. (2020), young adulthood is a vulnerable phase of life, where individuals are forming their identities and are highly susceptible to external factors such as social media content. Rai and Sharma (2021) further found that there is a strong relationship between body image, self-perception, and self-esteem in young adults, underlining how online exposure can either uplift or damage one's sense of value.

Perceptions of Self-Improvement

Social media is often associated with negative psychological effects, but for many young adults, it also serves as a valuable tool for personal development. When used constructively, it provides access to information, positive role models, and practical strategies for lifestyle enhancement. Exposure to content related to health, financial literacy, self-care, and organization can encourage users to make meaningful changes in their daily routines. According to Paljug (2025), social media has moved beyond its original purpose of communication to become a key medium influencing psychological behaviour and lifestyle decisions. This influence is especially strong during young adulthood, a transitional phase where individuals are forming their identities and navigating responsibilities. As shown by Pradhnani and Kaushik (2024), self-image is closely linked to confidence and behavior, and content that model's self-improvement can strengthen this connection.

Informant 1 highlights a more positive interpretation, viewing social media as a practical guide for self-improvement in organization, financial management, and appearance. This suggests that social media can provide constructive frameworks that support personal development when engaged with positively.

“kalau positif, bagi kesan macam. dia more kepada positif lah sebenarnya sebab ia macam how to belajar untuk mengemas semua tu and then ada juga belajar untuk mengurus duit, mengurus penampilan sendiri. social media ini seperti guideline” (lines 72-74)

Informant 1

Informants 2, 4, and 5 illustrate how social media can act as a catalyst for personal growth and positive change.

Informant 2 acknowledges feelings of insecurity but also a desire to improve by emulating others, though with an understanding of their own unique identity.

“Yaa pernah sebab saya rasa macam saya ni terlalu insecure. mungkin sebab saya terlampau insecure dengan diri sendir sampaikan saya membanding-bandingkan diri dan saya rasa saya mesti berubah. saya mesti sama macam dia. tapi pada akhirnya, saya tak dapat menjadi orang lain. afiyah is afiyah. tapi saya nak juga jadi macam dia.” (lines 81-85)

Informant 2

Informant 4 recognizes the need for change but struggles with motivation, highlighting the internal challenge of translating influence into action.

“perlu tu ada, tapi motivasi untuk buat itu tiada.” (lines 71)

Informant 4

Informant 5 emphasizes the importance of critical engagement with content, selectively adopting positive influences to foster maturity and growth.

“kalau nak ubah sebab kebanyakannya di sosial media sekarang, kita sebagai penonton pun, kita perlu tapis jugak apa yang kita tengok. Sebab kebanyakan content yang mereka buat, kadang-kadang content influencer banyak buat sekarang, kadang kadang ada yang berfaedah dan ada yang tidak berfaedah. Jadi kita ambil yang berfaedah. Jadi benda tu perlu ubah dan influencer boleh influence kita ke arah lebih positif dan matang. Kalau ada content atau

influencer yang macam meriah , tapi content macam kosong. Shera tak ikut. Jadi paling paling pun shera akan ambil benda yang positif lah. Sama juga macam tadi. ” (lines 81-88)

Informant 5

The responses illustrate how young adults use social media not only for entertainment but also as a practical resource for learning and growth. Informant 1's experience reflects how content related to daily habits such as organizing, budgeting, and appearance can serve as a digital "guidebook" for self-improvement. This practical engagement mirrors findings by Rounsefell et al. (2020), who highlighted how social media can expose users to health-promoting behaviours and influence personal routines.

Informant 2 shows a complex mix of insecurity and inspiration acknowledging that comparison exists but also recognizing their personal identity. This shows how motivation drawn from others online does not always lead to harmful self-judgment, instead, it can foster self-awareness. Informant 4 struggles with translating influence into action, reflecting the gap between intention and behavioural change a common challenge identified in self-regulation literature (Arsandaux et al., 2020).

Finally, Informant 5 demonstrates digital discernment consciously filtering content and selectively adopting behaviours that align with their values. This mindful use of social media supports Pradhnani and Kaushik's (2024) findings that positive perceptions of appearance and online content can increase self-confidence and maturity. The ability to critically engage with content empowers users to maintain control over their digital influence and encourages the development of a healthier self-image.

Feeling of Insecurity

Social media often presents highly curated versions of individuals' lives, which can create unrealistic expectations about beauty, behaviour, and lifestyle. For young adults who are still developing their identities, such exposure may trigger insecurities, especially when they feel they fall short of these online ideals. Constant exposure to polished appearances and ideal behaviours can lead to internal pressure to change oneself to be socially accepted or to meet trending norms. Molina Ruiz et al. (2022) stated that the frequency of social media use has a strong correlation with declining self-esteem and emotional well-being, especially among young users who engage in appearance-related comparisons.

“Seperti contohla mengubah tingkah laku pun, saya tengok orang yang macam sopan- sopan, ayu-ayu, saya jadi saya rasa saya perlu ubah tingkah laku saya tu jadi seperti itu. dalam gaya hidup ni tak sangat, saya tak kesah sangat. kalau penampilan saya memang, saya rasa macam perlu ubah sebab , penampilan fizikal ni memang tak lah cantik sangat, tapi sebabtu saya rasa saya perlu ubah untuk jadi lebih baik macam orang yang dekat social media.” (lines 85-90)

Informant 6

The response from Informant 6 reflects a personal struggle with insecurity triggered by comparisons to others seen on social media. The desire to change one's behaviour and appearance to resemble those who appear more graceful or physically attractive highlights how internalized beauty and behavioural standards can distort self-perception. This aligns Kaminsky (2016), who explained that the portrayal of idealized aesthetics and personality traits online often serves as a benchmark against which young people evaluate their own worth. The emphasis on physical perfection and feminine norms, in this case, influences how the participant views their own adequacy.

Additionally, research by Turel et al. (2018) found that exposure to positive posts from others may distort perception and generate a lack of control over personal self-worth. Informant 6's statement also shows how these comparisons are not limited to physical traits but extend to emotional expression and mannerisms, such as being "sopan" (graceful) or "ayu" (sweet), which are common social ideals in Malaysian culture. These observations emphasize the emotional weight of seemingly minor online content and how it contributes to pressure around identity and self-value among young adults. These findings illustrate the complex perceptions

young adults form about themselves through their interaction with social media content, highlighting both the constructive pathways toward self-growth and the emotional challenges of internalized comparison.

Enhancing Positive Social Media Experiences

Personal Strategies for Healthy Social Media Use

Many young adults are becoming more conscious of the impact that social media can have on their self-image and mental well-being. As a result, they adopt personal strategies to protect themselves emotionally, such as limiting screen time, curating their feed, taking breaks from online activity, and not taking social media too seriously. These approaches reflect an intentional effort to create a healthier digital space and reduce exposure to negative comparisons or pressures. Research has shown that such self-regulatory practices are effective in maintaining emotional balance and can significantly reduce the negative effects of social media consumption (Turel et al., 2018).

The narratives shared by the informants in this study illustrate these protective behaviours. Informant 1 described viewing social media as a platform for casual expression—likening it to both a source of entertainment and a personal diary. This relaxed perspective indicates a healthy detachment from external validation and helps buffer against the emotional strain of social comparison: *“Okay untuk yang itu, jangan ambil serius sebab macam saya cakap. social media adalah tempat kita meraih lerhatian orang lain. dalam masa yang sama ia diari.” (lines 110-111)*

Informant 1

Informant 2 emphasized the importance of limiting screen time and recognizing emotional triggers as cues to step back and reconnect with real-life relationships. Their reflection on “healing” before re-engaging with social media suggests a high degree of emotional intelligence and self-regulation:

“Pada pandangan saya, apa yang kita boleh lakukan adalah, limitkan screen time. setiap kali kita rasa terlampau banyak, atau kita rasa terlalu overwhelm, kita terlalu banyak compare diri kita dengan orang lain. ketika itu kita mesti kurangkan screen time dan kita mesti be nature

dengan kawan-kawan, orang sekeliling. kalau nak ambik gambar pun, gambarlah tapi untuk post gambar tu kita kena fikir balik, adakah kalau kita post gambar. akan buat kita insecure atau tidak. jadi ambil masa untuk heal kan diri dulu baru kita activekan diri balik dalam media sosial.” (lines 119-125)

Informant 2

Similarly, Informant 3 discussed filtering their social media feed to follow only motivational or positive content creators, illustrating a conscious effort to shape a more supportive online space:

“Bagi saya maybe, macam contohla macam kita punya ig, kita maybe kita just buat following kita tu kepada orang orang yang kita memang betul-betul buat kita rasa motivate untuk tengok, contoh macam saya. saya suka tengok najiha, sofea, azfar. so dari segi following tu, boleh try tukar saya punya following tu kepada orang orang yang saya rasakan macam takkan bagi influence yang buruk kepada saya.” (lines 137-141)

Informant 3

These strategies can be interpreted as proactive efforts to avoid the emotional dysregulation and compulsive patterns often associated with excessive social media use. Zahrai et al. (2022) argue that such excessive use is often driven by implicit attitudes and automatic behaviours rather than conscious, rational decision-making. In line with this, Turel and Bechara (2016) highlight that impulsive social media behaviours frequently reflect a lack of inhibitory control, suggesting the importance of deliberate behavioural interventions.

By setting boundaries and curating their experiences, the informants in this study demonstrate not only behavioural regulation but also resistance to the emotionally charged and often addictive nature of social media. These insights highlight the significance of media literacy and emotional regulation in helping young adults navigate digital platforms in healthier, more intentional ways. Ultimately, such strategies may serve as key protective factors in fostering resilience, enhancing self-image, and promoting long-term mental well-being in the age of social media.

Influencer Responsibility and Role

In today's digital culture, influencers play an increasingly vital role in shaping public opinion and young adults' self-perception. With the rapid growth of the influencer marketing industry valued at USD 16.4 billion as of 2022 (Jayasinghe, 2021), influencers are no longer just content creators; they are trendsetters and opinion leaders whose messages often influence how individuals perceive themselves. As such, the responsibility of influencers to promote authentic, positive, and inclusive messages has become a subject of increasing concern. Informants in this study emphasized that influencers should be mindful of their large platforms and the influence they wield, particularly in promoting realistic and empowering messages.

Informant 4 believes influencers should embrace body diversity and use their platform to spread positivity, stating that content reflecting self-acceptance can help followers feel confident in their own appearance.

“selalunya, sebab social media banyak influencer. jadi tanggungjawab influencer untuk promote benda yang lebih positif tentang contoh kalau dia jenis yang berat badan, jenis pendek atau sedikit gemuk. dia patutnya tunjukkan secara positif, cakap benda yang positif tentang diri dia supaya orang yang tengok pun rasa macam aku ni cantik je sebenarnya. Jadi, cara influencer promote content mereka. Sebab mereka dah ada platform yang besar, jadi kalau mereka guna kelebihan untuk bagi information yang baik, jadi pengguna pun dapat ikut. Sebab selalunya pengguna akan ikut apa yang influencer cakap sebab dia macam trend. Jadi saya rasa role influencer itu sendiri memang penting.” (lines 109-117)

Informant 4

Similarly, Informant 5 highlights the importance of content creators being educated and responsible, especially when sharing opinions or advice. They stressed that uninformed or misleading posts can lead to harmful consequences for impressionable audiences.

“Pada zaman ni, memang banyak pengaruh dan kadang-kadang orang yang biasa pun layak juga nak gunakan sosial media seperti tiktok dan sebagainya. Jadi, kadang kadang mereka akan memberi apa-apa pendapatlah yang mereka suka dan akan post di tiktok. Jadi ini perlu dititik beratkan daripada pengaruh atau pengguna yang post apa apa di sosial media. Sebab bila mereka post, kalau ilmu kita kurang, orang jadi senang pengaruh. Jadi penting influencer itu sendiri perlu belajar dulu. Macam mana dia nak buat content yang positif. Sebab kadang-

kadang bila pengikut dah ramai, mereka senang-senang boleh mempengaruhi mereka. Jadi pengikut pun mudah terikut-ikut. Jadi pentingnya untuk ada influencer yang bijak, yang ada value yang tinggi.” (lines 135-144)

Informant 5

Informant 6 also echoes this sentiment by stressing the need for honesty, particularly in sponsored or promotional content.

“bagi saya, influencer kalau boleh kalau nak promote sesuatu benda janganlah menipu, biar jujur.” (lines 128)

Informant 6:

These responses reflect findings from Casaló et al. (2020), who argue that influencer marketing effectiveness depends not only on follower count but on the perceived authenticity and ethical behaviour of the influencer. When influencers maintain honesty and align their content with socially responsible values, they are more likely to earn the trust of their audience and promote healthier self-concepts. Additionally, De Veirman et al. (2017) emphasize that credibility and value-driven content play a key role in how followers relate to influencers. This aligns with informants' perspectives that the way influencers choose to represent themselves especially when it comes to appearance and lifestyle can either reinforce harmful norms or inspire positive self-image.

Overall, the findings underscore the crucial role of influencers in fostering more positive digital environments. With influence comes responsibility, and as young adults continue to turn to social media for inspiration and validation, the messages they receive from trusted figures online can have a lasting impact on their emotional well-being and self-perception

Community and Interaction Quality

Beyond the content shared by influencers or users themselves, the nature of interactions in the comment sections plays a critical role in shaping the emotional experiences of young adults on social media. Positive and respectful online communities can promote self-

confidence and a sense of belonging, whereas toxic comment sections filled with criticism or cyberbullying can lead to emotional harm. Encouraging respectful engagement and creating safer digital spaces has become an important area of concern for both users and researchers.

Informant 6 expressed concern about the damaging effects of negative comments, even when the content itself is harmless. They highlighted that while content creators may post with good intentions, the responses they receive especially hurtful or bullying remarks can cause significant harm to mental health. This observation reflects the broader issue of how digital interactions influence user well-being and the need for collective responsibility in creating supportive online environments.

“lepastu kadang kadang orang yang post di tiktok tiada masalah sangat, tapi komen di tiktok bermasalah. jadi kalau boleh, orang yang komen dekat content tu cuba untuk jadi lebih positif supaya orang pun lebih positif juga. Sebab kebanyakannya orang yang komen tu lebih menyakitkan, ada yang buli jadi bahaya untuk kesejahteraan mental.” (lines 129-133)

Informant 6

These concerns are strongly supported by previous findings Suriana binti Che Awang and Khadijah Alavi (2019), who reported that cyberbullying among university students in Malaysia led to emotional issues such as anxiety and depression. Victims also experienced social withdrawal and physical symptoms such as insomnia. Additionally, Kirin et al. (2023) found that 44.7% of UTHM student respondents experienced mild insomnia an indication of how social media stressors, including hostile interactions, can negatively impact mental and physical health. These findings reinforce the importance of promoting kindness and empathy in comment sections to protect users' emotional well-being.

In summary, fostering healthy interactions on social media is essential for a more positive user experience. As platforms grow and users become more connected, promoting respectful dialogue and discouraging harmful comments is not just a platform responsibility but a shared one among all users.

4.3.3 Research Objective 3: To explore the strategies used by young adults in managing the challenges related to self-image while engaging with social media.

Research Question 3: What strategies do young adults use to manage challenges to their self-image associated with social media use?

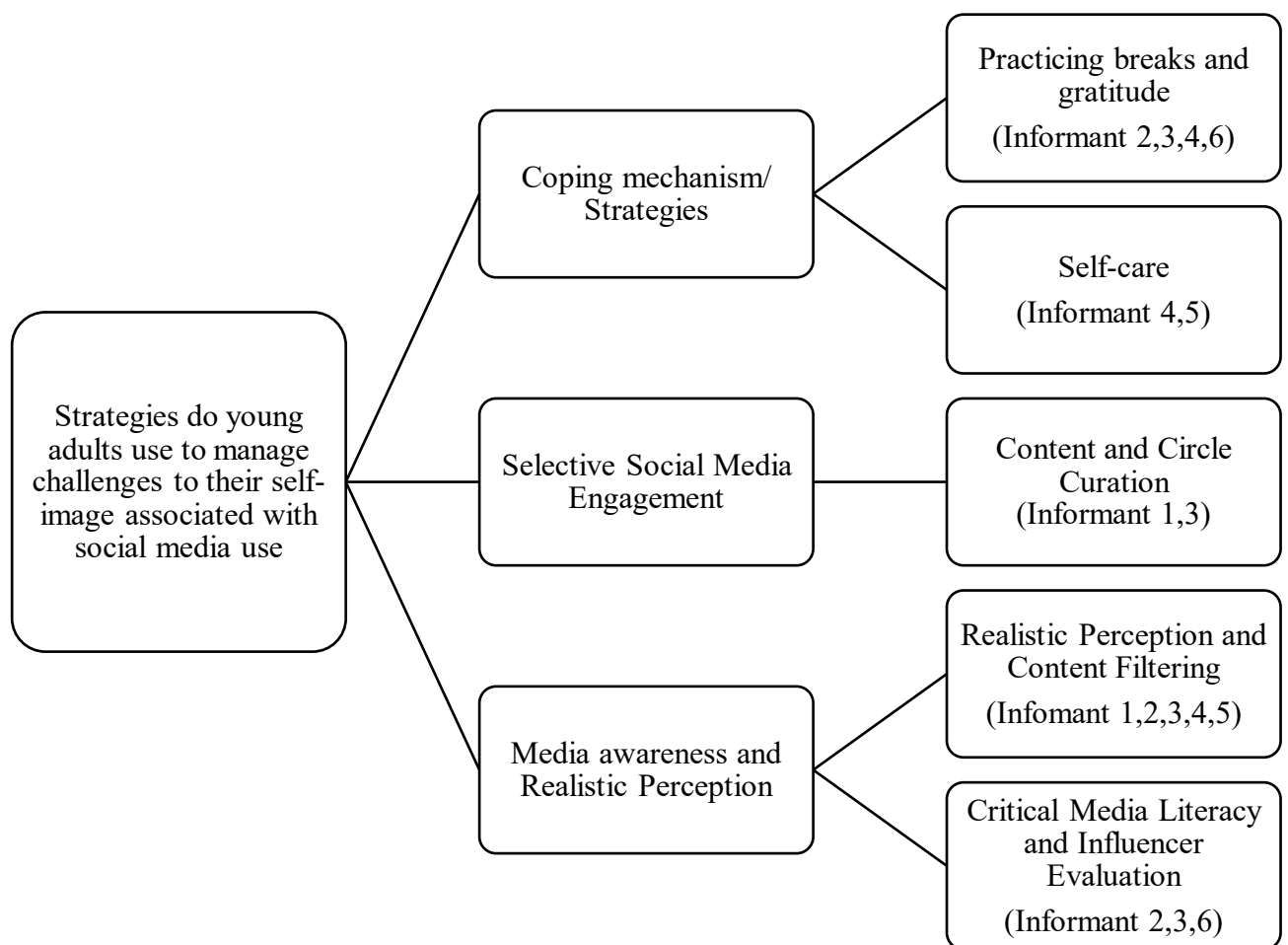


Figure 4: Strategies do young adults use to manage challenges to their self-image associated with social media use

Strategies young adult use to navigate the negative impact of social media on their self-image

In the face of growing awareness around the emotional challenges linked to social media use, young adults are increasingly turning to personal strategies that prioritize emotional regulation and mental well-being. Among the most common methods are taking intentional breaks from social media, engaging in gratitude practices, and adopting self-care routines to prevent emotional burnout. These self-initiated coping strategies reflect a growing emphasis on digital boundaries and emotional mindfulness in managing self-image.

Coping mechanism/ Strategies

As social media continues to shape the way young adults perceive themselves, many are learning to implement personal coping strategies to reduce its negative psychological effects. One of the most reported methods is taking intentional breaks from digital platforms to avoid emotional overwhelm or comparison fatigue. This form of disengagement allows individuals to pause, reflect, and reset their mental state. Research shows that taking digital breaks is becoming a common technique to promote emotional well-being and reduce exposure to triggering content (O'Reilly et al., 2020). Informants in this study shared their efforts to manage social media use through purposeful disengagement when feelings of comparison or stress arise.

Informant 2 noted that they avoid frequently used apps like TikTok and do not feel pressured to maintain trends such as streaks, instead choosing to distance themselves for emotional preservation.

“Saya akan limitkan diri daripada melihat social media sebab kadang-kadang saya pun jarang buka tiktok. contoh macam kalau kawan kawan saya yang selalu menjaga streak. saya sangat tidak menjaga streak sebab saya taknak tengok content tiktok sangat.”

Informant 2

Informant 3 described taking short breaks as a method to "reset" after experiencing comparison-related stress. Informant 4 shared using positive self-talk to manage feelings triggered by beauty-related posts, sometimes choosing to turn off the app entirely.

“Bila saya rasa macam terlalu comparing, saya akan take a break, so that bila saya take a break dalam 5 minit ka 10 minit ka, saya akan back to normal.”

Informant 3

Informant 4 shared using positive self-talk to manage feelings triggered by beauty-related posts, sometimes choosing to turn off the app entirely.

“Selalunya saya guna positive self-talk yang pasal kulit tu tadi. memang selalu saya down kalau tengok orang post clear skin”

“ada masa, saya tutup tiktok”

Informant 4

Similarly, Informant 6 reported withdrawing from their phone when experiencing negative emotions.

“Okay kalau timbulnya emosi negatif, shera akan buat keputusan untuk tak tengok handphone.”

Informant 6

These responses suggest a growing awareness among young adults about the emotional toll of prolonged online engagement and the need to protect their well-being through short-term disengagement and mental reframing.

Such practices are supported by existing literature that emphasizes the importance of conscious social media usage. According to Homan et al. (2020), taking breaks from platforms like Instagram can reduce appearance-based anxiety and promote healthier self-perceptions, especially among younger users. Additionally, gratitude and self-talk strategies have been linked to improvements in emotional resilience and life satisfaction in digital contexts (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2022). These findings indicate that young adults are not only aware of the negative impact social media can have on their self-image but are also actively developing coping mechanisms that encourage self-regulation and emotional balance.

Self-Care

In response to the emotional strain triggered by social media content, young adults are increasingly turning to self-care practices to regulate their emotions and protect their self-

image. These practices, which range from positive self-talk to creative outlets such as journaling and music, allow users to maintain emotional balance amidst constant exposure to idealized images and lifestyle portrayals online. Research by Holland and Tiggeman (2016) found that when young individuals engage in self-affirming practices like journaling and reframing negative thoughts, they report higher self-compassion and are better able to resist negative comparisons, especially on appearance-focused platforms.

In this study, Informant 4 shared that practicing positive self-talk has become a key strategy when feeling disheartened by flawless skin posts. By reminding themselves that achieving clear skin takes time and varies from person to person, the informant creates a more realistic and compassionate narrative.

“Selalunya saya guna positive self-talk yang pasal kulit tu tadi. memang selalu saya down kalau tengok orang post clear skin. last-last saya cakap “nak clear skin ni bukan ambil masa yang sekejap, ada orang ambil masa sampai bertahun, memang lama.”

Informant 4

Informant 5 also emphasized journaling and listening to music as their go-to self-care methods, both of which help manage emotional lows brought on by social media comparisons. These insights show that self-care is not limited to physical routines but also includes cognitive and emotional strategies that promote self-acceptance and reduce digital stress.

“Kalau self-care, mungkin shera akan journaling atau pun shera akan dengar lagu.”

Informant 5

Such personal care approaches reflect a conscious effort to maintain well-being in an online environment that often magnifies insecurities. As noted by O'Reilly et al. (2020), self-care strategies that involve reflection and creative expression can be especially effective in combating the emotional toll of social comparison. These practices also support resilience, offering young adults' practical tools to navigate online pressures without internalizing negative messages.

Selective Social Media Engagement

Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

In a digital environment where content is constantly flowing, young adults are learning to be more intentional in their social media habits. Rather than passively consuming content, they exercise control over what and who they engage with online. This approach reflects a growing awareness of how digital environments can influence emotions, behaviours, and self-perception. As highlighted by Tandoc et al. (2018), individuals increasingly curate their online experiences to protect their emotional well-being and maintain a balanced self-image.

Informant 1 shared that she is quick to block or unfollow accounts that do not align with her values, and she maintains a small, close social media circle. This practice allows her to preserve her mental and emotional boundaries, keeping her feed aligned with her personal comfort zone.

“Okay emm scroll atau just block.”

Informant 1

Meanwhile, Informant 3 selectively follows individuals like Najiha, Sofea, and Azfar figures she considers personally motivating. By choosing to follow only those who uplift or inspire, she minimizes exposure to content that could trigger negative feelings.

“We should only follow people who truly motivate us to watch. For example, I like to follow Najiha, Sofea, Azfar. So, regarding who I follow, I try to change my following list to people who I feel won't have a bad influence on me.”

Informant 3

These findings support previous studies showing that selective engagement with social media such as unfollowing triggering accounts or limiting online circles can significantly influence how individuals feel about themselves (Fardouly et al., 2015). By taking control of their online environments, young adults demonstrate agency and digital maturity, actively reducing the risk of emotional distress and fostering a more positive sense of self.

Media awareness and Realistic Perception

In the face of growing media saturation, young adults are increasingly aware that what they see online may not reflect reality. Media awareness involves understanding that the content

consumed through social platforms is often curated, filtered, or even altered for presentation (Bucher, 2021). This awareness allows users to distinguish between authentic and idealized representations, which helps buffer against the emotional impact of unrealistic comparisons. As social media users grow more media literate, they begin to apply filters both technologically and cognitively to manage exposure to content that may negatively affect their self-image. According to Tandoc and Maitra (2022), cultivating a realistic perception of online content helps users moderate their emotional responses and develop healthier digital habits.

Realistic Perception and Content Filtering

In today's highly curated digital environment, young adults are becoming more aware of the contrast between online portrayals and real-life experiences. Social media often presents filtered snapshots of people's lives that may not reflect reality, leading to skewed perceptions and potential self-image issues. However, many users are learning to manage their exposure by filtering out unrealistic or misleading content. According to Tandoc et al. (2021), developing media literacy helps individuals recognize staged or exaggerated representations online, allowing them to maintain a more grounded sense of self. This awareness is essential in helping young adults protect their mental well-being and self-image by promoting healthier and more realistic engagement with content.

Informant 1 demonstrates this awareness clearly:

“Macam kalau nak tahu perbezaan realiti media sosial. kita letak diri sendiri lah. sebab kalau kita posting, tak bermakna kehidupan terlampau bahagia . jadi begitu juga orang lain. macam tu sajalah. oh, tahu mereka ni dalam real life pun ada masalah juga. social media ni just satu tempat meraih perhatian orang lain.”

Informant 1

This self-reflective approach shows that young adults can contextualize online content by drawing parallels with their own posting behaviours, helping them resist internalizing unrealistic portrayals.

Financial limitations also serve as a filter for content relevance, especially when evaluating influencer lifestyles:

Cara saya membezakan adalah dengan, okay cuba katakan content tersebut tentang self-care, pasal beauty atau loss weight. tapi penggunaannya untuk loss weight, untuk beauty so on skincare semua tu terlalu mahal. jadi saya kena fikirlah, benda ni tidak realistik untuk saya, sebab saya student. jadi saya tak dapat saya ikut 100% versi influencer tu. Jadi saya kena bandingkan benda tu dapat diikuti ataupun tidak untuk saya tahu dia realistik ataupun tidak.

Informant 2

Here, Informant 2 exercises critical thinking by acknowledging that not all influencer-endorsed content aligns with her current reality, highlighting a practical application of media awareness.

Informant 3 adds that emotional and psychological effects also influence content selection:

"Kalau saya, saya rasakan kalau saya applykan dalam everyday life saya, pastu saya rasa saya boleh cope dengan benda tu, and then bagi saya benda tu healthy pastu kalau dia sampai tak affectkan saya punya mental health, then it's okay. Sebabkan ada certain lifestyle kan dia terpaksa berpura pura untuk menjadi perfectionist dalam social media. kalau dari segi macam tu saya takkan follow sebab dari situ saya dah memang tahu tu memang unhealthy punya lifestyle."

Informant 3

This highlights the use of emotional boundaries as a filtering tool, allowing users to prioritize their mental well-being over curated aesthetics.

In a similar vein, Informant 4 points out the subjectivity of beauty standards promoted on social media:

sebab contoh kalau, kita kena putih instead of tan, tapi ramai je yang content lain yang influencer tan skin cantik. So kadang-kadang benda yang macam tu, that for me tiada realistik lah sebab memang beauty subjektif. ada orang cakap cantik ada orang cakap tak. So kita tak boleh ikut sangat standard yang macam awak kena clear skin, awak kena putih. Benda tu membuatkan self-image kita lebih down instead of positif. (lines 96-100)

Informant 4

This response shows how users rely on their personal values to assess what content aligns with their beliefs, actively resisting harmful societal standards.

Finally, Informant 5 reinforces the need to remain aware of the disconnection between online portrayals and reality:

“jadi saya cuba untuk fikir “ini rezeki dia”, kalau benda tu real. Jadi itu mungkin rezeki dia. Mungkin dia akan ada kekurangan yang lain. Yang mungkin kekurangan dia adalah kelebihan aku.” (*lines 125-127*)

Informant 5

These insights collectively reveal that young adults are not passive consumers but rather conscious navigators who assess, filter, and disengage from content they deem unrealistic or unrelatable. This active engagement helps them maintain emotional stability and reinforces the importance of media awareness as a self-protective strategy.

Critical Media Literacy and Influencer Evaluation

As social media becomes increasingly commercialized, young adults are developing critical media literacy to evaluate content and influencers more thoughtfully. They no longer accept online content at face value, especially when it comes to influencer promotions or idealized lifestyles. Instead, they assess whether the information presented is applicable, honest, and realistic within the context of their own lives. This shift reflects a growing understanding that social media messages are often constructed with commercial motives, and not always aligned with authenticity or personal relevance (Mihailidis, 2018). Such awareness is crucial for protecting users' self-image and emotional well-being in the face of curated perfection and consumer-driven influence.

Informant 2 illustrates this awareness by critically evaluating influencers' lifestyles in relation to her own context:

Cara saya membezakan adalah dengan, okay cuba katakan content tersebut tentang self-care, pasal beauty atau loss weight. tapi penggunaannya untuk loss weight, untuk beauty so on skincare semua tu terlalu mahal. jadi saya kena fikirlah, benda ni tidak realistik untuk saya, sebab saya student. jadi saya tak dapat saya ikut 100% versi influencer tu. Jadi saya kena bandingkan benda tu dapat diikuti ataupun tidak untuk saya tahu dia realistik ataupun tidak.

.

Informant 2

This comment shows the importance of financial and situational realism in assessing whether influencer content is truly relevant or aspirational in a harmful way.

Informant 3 further adds that self-reflection plays a key role in this process: *“Kalau saya, saya rasakan kalau saya applykan dalam everyday life saya, pastu saya rasa saya boleh cope dengan benda tu, and then bagi saya benda tu healthy pastu kalau dia sampai tak affectkan saya punya mental health, then it’s okay. Sebabkan ada certain lifestyle kan dia terpaksa berpura pura untuk menjadi perfectionist dalam social media. kalau dari segi macam tu saya takkan follow sebab dari situ saya dah memang tahu tu memang unhealthy punya lifestyle.” (lines 126-131)*

Informant 3

Here, the informant reveals a strategy of evaluating content based on personal emotional responses and practicality choosing not to engage with content that promotes perfectionism or unrealistic ideals.

Informant 6 demonstrates a more analytical approach by evaluating influencer credibility and product honesty:

kadang kadang benda ini bergantung dengan influencer juga. sebab ada influencer yang tends to menipu, dan ada yang memang jujur cakap pasal kecantikan. maksudnya kan contoh kalau influencer tu breakout, bila nya breakout, nya guna satu produk ni, and produk tu bagus untuk diri dia. ada beberapa influencer, yang macam mukanya okay je bersih, tapi dia guna satu produk tu, and dia promote dekat orang yang produk tu bagus. contohla. jadi macam benda tu ada menipu juga sikit and dari situ ia bergantung dengan influencer juga kalau dari segi

unrealistic beauty dengan lifestyle ni. saya kaji background influencer seperti content yang dia buat.

Informant 6

This level of scrutiny indicates that young adults are aware of potential deception in sponsored posts and understand the need to evaluate influencers' transparency and values before trusting their content.

These examples support the growing importance of critical media literacy in enabling young users to filter what they consume, assess credibility, and protect themselves from harmful comparisons or false ideals. By questioning influencer content and making decisions based on personal relevance and emotional health, young adults demonstrate a higher level of digital empowerment and media autonomy.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of conclusion regarding the research and recommendations to assist and solve the challenges that were discovered in the findings.

5.1 Research Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore young adults lived experiences with social media on their self-image. Guided by three main research questions, the study aimed to explore young adults' experiences of self-image through their interactions and content consumption on social media, to understand young adults' perceptions of their self-image in the context of social media use and to explore the strategies used by young adults in managing the challenges related to self-image while engaging with social media. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed, utilizing semi-structured interviews with young adults aged 19 to 25 in Sarawak. Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed three central themes: (1) young adult's experiences of self-image through social media, (2) Perception on self-image, and (3) Strategies to navigate social media's effects. The findings highlighted that participants generally viewed social media as a double-edged sword serving both as a platform for connection, inspiration, and self-expression, while simultaneously exposing them to unrealistic comparisons and emotional strain. These experiences were strongly linked to upward social comparison and a sense of incongruence between their real selves and the idealized personas often portrayed online.

5.2 Conclusion

This study reveals that social media significantly influences how young adults perceive themselves, often triggering emotional and cognitive responses that impact their self-worth. The findings support Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) by demonstrating that young adults frequently engage in upward comparisons with influencers or peers, which often leads to dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and distorted self-perceptions (Engeln et al., 2020; Yoon et al., 2019).

Moreover, the study confirms Person-Centered Theory (Rogers, 1951), showing that the incongruence between real self and ideal self—as shaped by idealized social media content results in emotional distress. Participants who perceived a large gap between who they are and who they want to be (the ideal self-promoted on social media) experienced anxiety, sadness, and even self-doubt.

Nonetheless, the study also uncovered that many young adults adopt conscious coping strategies such as limiting screen time, curating their feed, and avoiding content that triggers negative emotions which aligns with a growing sense of media literacy and self-protective behavior.

5.3 Implication of the study

5.3.1 Theoretical Implications

This study extends the understanding of self-image beyond body image by incorporating broader dimensions such as identity, confidence, and self-worth. It supports and contextualizes Social Comparison Theory and Person-Centered Theory within the digital environment, emphasizing their relevance in the Malaysian context. The study also suggests that congruence (Rogers, 1951) can be achieved when young adults are aware of media influence and use self-regulation strategies.

5.3.2 Practical Implications

From a counselling perspective, these findings are essential for developing intervention programs. Counsellors can help young adults identify and challenge negative self-perceptions shaped by social media, promote unconditional self-regard, and teach healthy coping strategies. Furthermore, this study contributes to digital literacy education by highlighting the need for workshops on mindful social media use and emotional regulation.

5.4 Limitation of the study

Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. First, the data relied on self-reported responses, which are inherently subjective and may have been influenced by memory bias or the desire to present oneself favourably, potentially affecting the authenticity of the

accounts. Second, the study sample consisted solely of young adults residing in Sarawak, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other cultural, regional, or demographic groups across Malaysia. Third, the scope of the study was confined to popular platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, excluding emerging platforms like BeReal or X (formerly Twitter), which may host different dynamics in terms of self-image influence. Lastly, the study did not incorporate quantitative measures such as screen time tracking or psychometric assessments of self-image, which could have strengthened the findings through methodological triangulation.

5.5 Recommendation

5.5.1 For Practice

Counselling programs should integrate modules that address the psychological effects of social media, particularly in relation to identity formation and emotional well-being. Additionally, educational institutions are encouraged to implement workshops that promote digital self-awareness, media literacy, and mental health management among students.

5.5.2 For Policy

Government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should collaborate to design and implement awareness campaigns that highlight the potential risks associated with excessive social media use. These initiatives should promote healthier and more mindful engagement, particularly among youth who are highly active on digital platforms.

5.5.3 For Future Research

Future studies should consider expanding the sample to include participants from various geographic regions and cultural backgrounds across Malaysia to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. Employing a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with quantitative tools such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale may also provide deeper insights and more robust data. Additionally, further research is needed to explore how variables such as gender, socioeconomic status, and specific types of social media use influence the relationship between digital engagement and self-image.

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APPENDIXES

Respondent 1

Age: 25

Race: Iban

Average time spent on social media per day: 8 hours

Average time spent on social media per week: 17 hours 18 minutes

Types of social media usage: TikTok, Instagram

Types of content: Beauty, fashion and lifestyle

Researcher	Selamat petang. Sebelum saya mulakan, saya perkenalkan diri saya terlebih dahulu,	1
	saya Al-Nur Alia Binti Yazir pelajar tahun 3 kaunseling yang akan menjalankan	2
	temu bual untuk projek tahun akhir saya yang bertajuk "Behind the screens:	3
	Exploring young adult's experiences with social media on self-image". Jadi saya	4
	akan teruskan dengan soalan yang pertama, bolehkah anda berkongsi berapa lama	5
	anda telah aktif menggunakan sosial media dan platform yang manakah paling	6
	sering anda gunakan?	7
Respondent	kalau sosial media, kalau nak lihat entertainment, more to tiktok. tapi kalau nak post	8
	something, lebih kepada instagram.	9
Researcher	Berapa lama tempoh yang telah anda aktif menggunakan tiktok dan instagram?	10
Respondent	kalau instagram, 2000 berapa eh. mula pakai instagram bila instagram dah ada.	11
	kiranya dah lama. kalau tiktok, saya mula semasa covid, 2022 atau 2021.	12
Researcher	Antara instagram atau tiktok, mana paling sering aivi guna?	13
Respondent	TikTok sebab nak tengok entertainment.	14
Researcher	Jadi secara purata, berapa banyak masa yang anda habiskan setiap hari di social	15
	media?	16
Respondent	mungkin 8 jam lebih secara total dalam satu hari	17
Researcher	Jadi apakah jenis kandungan yang kerap terlibat di sosial media?	18
Respondent	kalau instagram, saya more to life. seperti post pasal life pastu pasal bussiness,	19
	kecantikan kuku. kalau tiktok, saya tiada post, kalau post pun pasal makanan	20
	macamtu je.	21
Researcher	Mostly aivi engage dengan content yang macam mana? aivi tengok content jenis	22

	yang macam mana?	23
Respondent	kalau saya, more to kecantikan.	24
Researcher	fashion, lifestyle, self-development ada tengok tak?	25
Respondent	ya, ada.	26
Researcher	jadi dalam cara apakah, sosial media ini telah mempengaruhi cara anda melihat diri anda sendiri?	27 28
Respondent	aaa, boleh ulang balik soalan?	29
Researcher	dalam cara apakah, sosial media ini telah mempengaruhi cara anda melihat diri anda sendiri?	30 31
Respondent	hmm, let me think. aaa saya melihat diri saya sendiri dalam sosial media, begitu? rasanya, apa yang saya post dalam ig , itu saya dalam real life juga. So macam, how to say. cerminan diri	32 33 34
Researcher	kiranya, aivi tak fake, macam mana aivi post begitu juga diri aivi yang sebenar?	35
Respondent	yes	36
Researcher	jadi, adakah anda rasa social media ini memberi kesan terhadap apa yang anda post di social media?	37 38
Respondent	Tak juga. sebab saya taknak social media ni mempengaruhi la, taknak bagi kesan. social media is tempat untuk satu diari, hanya untuk kita. macam tu ja.	39 40
Researcher	Jadi apa yang saya dapat simpulkan adalah, social media ini tidak mempengaruhi cara kehidupan aivi?	41 42
Respondent	Yes betul.	43
Researcher	jadi adakah anda pernah merasa bahawa social media ini telah mengubah cara anda melihat imej badan, penampilan atau harga diri anda sendiri?	44 45
Respondent	ada, ada juga. lebih kepada upgrade personaliti. seperti dress up,	46
Researcher	appereance?	47
Respondent	aa yess lah terutamanya. sebab dekat social media kan kita banyak belajar pasal make up, how to style. mostly banyak pasal kecantikan kuku. macamtu lah.	48 49
Researcher	jadi social media ini memberi perubahan lah kepda diri aivi?	50
Respondent	yaa	51
Researcher	jadi bagaimana perasaan aivi apabila melihat kandungan yang berkaitan fashion, lifestyle, kejaayaan dalam social media ini? adalah ia memberi kesan positif atau negatif?	52 53 54
Respondent	emm more to positive. sebab taknak ambil ia sebagai suatu benda yang terlampau	55

	serius. jadi semua positif terutama berkaitan dengan appereance.	56
Researcher	jadi anda mendapati bahawa anda telah membandingkan diri anda dengan orang	57
	lain dari segi penampilan, pencapaian atau gaya hidup dan kejayaan? bagaimana	58
	ia memberi kesan kepada diri anda dan apa content nya?	59
Respondent	adalah, kesan. terutama dari segi lifestyle. macam umur sekarang kan yang seperti	60
	25 ke bawah dah ada anak, dah ada kereta sendiri, ada pekerjaan. macam ala bestla	61
	bestla bestla. membandingkan tu like something more la kan. so adalah memberi	62
	kesan seperti jealous. more kepada cemburu lah	63
Researcher	so, adalah ia boleh dikatakan kesan itu dari segi pencapaian?	64
Respondent	yes betul.	65
Researcher	aivi ada spesifik content or influencer yang aivi tengok?	66
Respondent	tiada, just random fyp.	67
Researcher	okay baik, jadi pernah tak anda merasa anda perlu mengubah tingkah laku, gaya	68
	hidup atau penampilan di sebabkan pengaruh sosial media ni?	69
Respondent	aaaa yang more kepada negatif or positif?	70
Researcher	kedua dua pun boleh	71
Respondent	kalau positif, bagi kesan macam. dia more kepada positif lah sebenarnya sebab ia	72
	macam how to belajar untuk mengemas semua tu and then ada juga belajar untuk	73
	mengurus duit, mengurus penampilan sendiri. social media ini seperti guideline	74
Researcher	jadi social media ini mengubah aivi, tapi lebih kepada kesan positif?	75
Respondent	yaa betul	76
Researcher	jadi bagaiman aivi menguruskan emosi sekiranya emosi negatif timbul disebabkan	77
	social media itu?	78
Respondent	okay emm scroll atau just block.	79
Researcher	jadi sepanjang aivi bermain social media ini , adakah aivi pernah terkesan?	80
Respondent	hmmm let me think. rasanya tiada	81
Researcher	mostly you akan scroll and block?	82
Respondent	yes	83
Researcher	adakah anda mempunyai sebarang strategi khusus yang anda gunakan untuk	84
	melindungi diri anda ketika menggunakan social media?	85
Respondent	rasanya macam, kalau ig, kalau dulu followers hampir mencecah 1k. lepas tu	86
	unfollow buang buang apa yang tak pautu sebab tak kemal. jadi kecilkan circle.	87
	bukan in real life, tapi ini social media ada circle circle kecil je, ibarat semua close	88

	friend	89
Researcher	kiranya dalam social media pun, aivi akan tentukan siapa yang dapat lihat posting aivi? so itu cara aivi pretend diri aivi?	90 91
Respondent	yaa betul.	92
Researcher	jadi pernahkah, anda mengambil rehat daripada social media ini disebabkan kebimbangan terhadap kesan social media ini terhadap imej diri aivi?	93 94
Respondent	tidak pernah.	95
Researcher	adakah sebab aivi tidak pernah terkesan oleh itu aivi tidak pernah mengambil langkah?	96 97
Respondent	yaa betul	98
Researcher	Jadi, bagaimanakah anda membezakan antara perkara realistik atau tidak realistic di dalam social media?	99 100
Respondent	macam kalau nak tahu perbezaan realiti media sosial. kita letak diri sendiri lah. sebab kalau kita posting, tak bermakna kehidupan terlampau bahagia . jadi begitu juga orang lain. macam tu sajalah. oh, tahu mereka ni dalam real life pun ada masalah juga. social media ni just satu tempat meraih perhatian orang lain.	101 102 103 104
Researcher	Jadi cara aivi membezakan adalah dengan meletakkan diri sendiri di tempat orang lain	105 106
Respondent	ya betul	107
Researcher	Jadi pada pandangan anda , apalah yang boleh dilakukan, untuk social media ini boleh dijadikan tempat yang lebih positif untuk imej diri dan kesejahteraan mental?	108 109
Respondent	Okay untuk yang itu, jangan ambil serius sebab macam saya cakap . social media adalah tempat kita meraih perhatian orang lain. dalam masa yang sama ia diari.	110 111
Researcher	soalan terakhir , bagaimana social media ini sebenarnya membentuk diri kita?	112
Respondent	anggap sahaja social media ini satu garis panduan. guideline untuk kita improve diri kita sendiri . macam contoh , kalau kita insecure, kita boleh tengok social media untuk cantikkan diri , naikkan self-confidence. anggap social media is satu guideline untuk improve self-image	113 114 115 116
Researcher	okay itu sahaja. terima kasih atas kerjasama.	117

Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

Respondent 2 -epi

Age: 24

Race: Melayu

Average time spent on social media per day: 5 hours 50 minutes

Average time spent on social media per week: 23 hours 23 minutes

Types of social media usage: WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram

Types of content: Beauty, fashion, mental health and lifestyle

Researcher	okay assalamualaikum, sebelum kita mula interview. saya minta untuk isi borang persetujuan termaklum terlebih dahulu.	1
		2
Respondent	dah siap.	3
Researcher	jadi saya mulakan dengan soalan yang pertama . bolehkah anda berkongsi berapa lama anda telah aktif menggunakan sosial media dan platform manakah yang paling	4
	sering anda gunakan?	5
		6
Respondent	em sebenarnya saya telah lama gunakan media sosial sebab saya gunakan media sosial daripada saya umur darjah-darjah. Dari umur darjah 3 kot. Ketika itu, terkenal	7
	dengan facebook . dan saya aktif masa darjah 4 dan darjah 5 untuk facebook. Untuk	8
	tingkatan, saya mula aktif dengan instagram dan sekarang aktif dengan tiktok , tapi	9
	saya tak post di tiktok , cuma buat posting orang je di tiktok every day.	10
Researcher	Jadi antara facebook, tiktok dan instagram , media sosial yang manakan paling	11
	sering afiyah gunakan?	12
		13
Respondent	rasanya instagram.	14
Researcher	secara purata, berapa banyak masa yang anda habiskan setiap hari di instagram, tiktok atau facebook?	15
		16
	kalau di tiktok, yang saya tengok purata untuk harini 9 jam.	17
Researcher	kalau purata dalam minggu?	18
Respondent	6jam 45 minit	19
Researcher	okay baiklah, apakah jenis kandungan yang anda kerap terlibat dalam social media?	20
	yang sering afiyah tengok.	21
Respondent	mostly saya tengok pasal beauty, fashion, lifestyle dan mental health.	22

Researcher	dalam cara apakah, media sosial ini atau content yang anda lihat mempengaruhi cara	23
	afiyah melihat diri afiyah sendiri?	24
Respondent	dia ada kelebihan dan kekurangan juga sebenarnya. sebab untuk positifnya saya akan dapat memotivasikan diri saya sendiri. contohnya pada masa itu, saya tengah down, then tiba-tiba lalu di FYP saya tentang ayat ayat al-quran yang memotivasikan diri atau mental health punya sharing, jadi saya dapat memotivasikan diri. tapi kalau in negative, saya mudah terpengaruh dan mudah insecure dengan orang lebih cantik, lebih pandai. Lagi-lagi saya ada insecurity dari segi berat badan, jadi bila saya dengan orang cantik saya akan rasa “kan best kalau saya macam dia”, macamtulah.	25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32
Researcher	Jadi dia akan buat afiyah ada perbandingan lah?	33
Respondent	yaa.	34
Researcher	soalan sererusnya, adalah anda pernah merasa bahawa media sosial ini telah mengubah cara anda melihat imej diri, imej badan, penampilan atau harga diri keseluruhan afiyah?	35 36 37
Respondent	untuk perubahan, kalau untuk imej badan lebih kepada penampilan , saya akan mudah tertarik dengan penampilan, outfit, fashion seseorang. lagi lagi kan saya jenis yang berbadan besar, plus size girl, so bila saya tengok posting pasal fashion plus size, saya akan jadi senang nak ikut mereka punya penampilan sebab saya jenis susah nak cari outfit. so bila saya dah tengok ada orang yang buat penampilan macamtu, dia akan inspirasi kepada saya.	38 39 40 41 42 43
Researcher	jadi dia memberi inspirasi yang positif kepada afiyah seperti afiyah boleh meniru apa yang mereka buat?	44 45
	yaa	46
	baiklah. soalan seterusnya, bagaimana perasaan anda apabila melihat kandungan yang berkaitan kecantikan, kecegrasan, fashion atau kejayaan di sosial media? adakah ia memberi kesan positif atau negatif?	47 48 49
	Lebih kepada kesan positif lah sebab kadang-kadang kalau mereka post tentang suplimen, saya akan nak cuba. kalau mereka post pasal menu diet, saya akan cuba. tapi dalam masa yang sama, saya akan rasa negatif tu sikit sebab saya rasa saya tak lakukan yang terbaik untuk ubah diri saya ke arah lebih positif. contoh saya	50 51 52 53

	insecure, saya tengok content-content pasal loss weight, tapi kadang-kadang saya	54
	tak buat.macam bagi kesan negatif la untuk diri sendiri sebab saya menghukum	55
	diri saya sendiri sebab saya sendiri tahu saya yang tak disiplin.	56
Researcher	dalam erti kata lain, afiyah dapat benda yang positif, tapi dalam masa yang sama	57
	juga afiyah dapat benda yang negatif. so tu dari segi fitness. kalau dari segi beauty	58
	atau fashion?	59
Respondent	kalau beauty and fashion, lebih kepada positif la sebab setakat ni ada negatif side.	60
Researcher	Okay, jadi adakah anda mendapati bahawa anda telah membandingkan diri anda	61
	anda dari segi penampilan, gaya hidup, pencapaian dengan orang lain di sosial	62
	media?	63
Respondent	kalau dari segi ini, yes memang banyak kesan sebab saya kan membandingkan diri	64
	saya macam saya cakap tadi, pada akhirnya saya akan hukum diri saya sebab	65
	tak	
	disiplin. saya yang tak konsisten. contohnya macam saya tengok content influencer	66
	plus size untuk fashion, saya akan bandingkan dengan dia “kenapa dia plus size,	67
	aku pun plus size. tapi kenapa dia macam cantik dari aku? kenapa dia lebih	68
	fashionable dari aku? kenapa kulit dia lebih cantik dari aku? sedangkan aku pun	69
	plus	
	size”. sedangkan orang cakap kalau plus size selalunya kulit akan jadi kusam sebab	70
	tak jaga makan, pengambilan gula tak jaga. jadi kenapa kulit dia flawless, kulit aku	71
	tak flawless. sedangkan dia plus size, aku pun plus size.	72
Researcher	okay faham. jadi siapa influencer yang afiyah tengok?	73
	nama dia shakira.	74
	mostly apa content dia?	75
	Pasal beauty, fashion, self-care.	76
	jadi afiyah akan rasa perbandingan dengan shakira tu lah?	77
	yaa betul	78
	jadi soalan seterusnya, adakah anda pernah merasa bahawa anda perlu mengubah	79
	gaya hidup, penampilan disebabkan pengaruh sosial media ini?	80
	Yaa pernah sebab saya rasa macam saya ni terlalu insecure. mungkin sebab saya	81
	terlampau insecure dengan diri sendiri sampaikan saya membanding-bandingkan	82
	diri dan saya rasa saya mesti berubah. saya mesti sama macam dia. tapi pada	83
	akhirnya, saya tak dapat menjadi orang lain. afiyah is afiyah. tapi saya nak juga	84

	jadi macam dia.	85
	jadi bagaimana afiyah mengurus emosi negatif yang timbul disebabkan social media tersebut?	86
		87
	saya akan pujuk diri. saya akan cakap macam “saya ada cara saya tersendiri untuk be a better version of myself in steadof saya copy version orang lain”.	88
		89
	jadi dari segi untuk stopkan afiyah terlalu compare, apa yang afiyah buat?	90
	Saya akan limitkan diri daripada melihat social media sebab kadang-kadang saya pun jarang buka tiktok. contoh macam kalau kawan kawan saya yang selalu menjaga	91
	streak. saya sangat tidak menjaga streak sebab saya taknak tengok content tiktok sangat.	92
		93
	sekaligus afiyah menjawab soalan di bawah. seterusnya adakah anda pernah mengambil rehat? tapi tadi afiyah dah nyatakan afiyah pernah mengambil rehat yang	94
	mana jarang buka tiktok?	95
		96
Respondent	yaa betul	97
Researcher	apa kesan daripada afiyah mengambil rehat tu?	98
Respondent	Kesannya saya aka rasa lebih positif. saya rasa at least pada ketika itu, saya tidak membandingkan diri saya dengan orang lain. walaupun saya tak buat any kind of action untuk saya lost weight or apa. tapi sekurangnya saya tak bandingkan diri saya dengan orang bila saya tengok dalam social media.	99
		100
		101
		102
Researcher	jadi afiyah sendiri tidak membandingkan lah?	103
Respondent	yaa	104
Researcher	okay. seterusnya, bagaimana afiyah dapat membezakan content yang anda lihat adalah realistik atau tidak realistik?	105
		106
Respondent	Cara saya membezakan adalah dengan, okay cuba katakan content tersebut tentang self-care, pasal beauty atau loss weight. tapi penggunaannya untuk loss weight, untuk beauty so on skincare semua tu terlalu mahal. jadi saya kena fikirlah, benda ni tidak realistik untuk saya, sebab saya student. jadi saya tak dapat saya ikut 100% versi influencer tu. Jadi saya kena bandingkan benda tu dapat diikut ataupun tidak untuk saya tahu dia realistik ataupun tidak.	107
		108
		109
		110
		111
		112
Researcher	jadi sekiranya afiyah rasa afiyah mampu, benda tu realistik. kalau tak mampu, tak realistik. tu cara afiyah membezakan.	113
		114
		115

Respondent	haah	116
Researcher	seterusnya, pada pandangan anda, apakah yang boleh dilakukan untuk menjadikan	117
	social media ini lebih positif untuk imej diri dan kesejahteraan mental?	118
Respondent	Pada pandangan saya, apa yang kita boleh lakukan adalah, limitkan screen time.	119
	setiap kali kita rasa terlampau banyak, atau kita rasa terlalu overwhelm, kita terlalu	120
	banyak compare diri kita dengan orang lain. ketika itu kita mesti kurangkan screen	121
	time dan kita mesti be nature dengan kawan-kawan, orang sekeliling. kalau nak	122
	ambik gambar pun, gambarlah tapi untuk post gambar tu kita kena fikir balik,	123
	adakah kalau kita post gambar. akan buat kita insecure atau tidak. jadi ambil masa	124
	untuk healkan diri dulu baru kita activekan diri balik dalam media sosial.	125
Researcher	Okey afiyah	126

Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

Respondent 3-ipah

Age: 23

Race: Melayu

Average time spent on social media per day: 3hours 50minutes

Average time spent on social media per week: 23hours 2minutes

Types of social media usage: Whatsapp, TikTok, Instagram

Types of content: Beauty, fashion and motivational

Researcher	Selamat petang. Sebelum saya mulakan, saya perkenalkan diri saya terlebih dahulu, saya Al-Nur Alia Binti Yazir pelajar tahun 3 kaunseling yang akan menjalankan temu bual untuk projek tahun akhir saya yang bertajuk "Behind the screens: Exploring young adult's experiences with social media on self-image". Jadi saya akan teruskan dengan soalan yang pertama, bolehkah anda berkongsi berapa lama anda telah aktif menggunakan sosial media dan platform yang manakah paling sering anda gunakan?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Respondent	em kalau dari segi berapa lama yang saya aktif menggunakan media sosial, kalau dari segi instagram saya memang dah selalu guna dari saya sekolah which is dari around form 1, tapi kalau dari segi entertainment lain, macam tiktok saya baru start macam average waktu saya umur 19. sebab saya rasa em dua tu yang paling saya guna. instagram and tiktok. kalau dari segi twitter, saya dah start dari sekolah menengah juga, waktu tu dari saya form 1 tapi kurang aktif di twitter la sebab saya aktif di ig dan tiktok jak.	8 9 10 11 12 13 14
Researcher	okay so mostly yang paling afifah guna ialah tiktok and Instagram?	15
Respondent	yaa	16
Researcher	okay so soalan seterusnya. secara purata berapa banyak masa yang anda habiskan setiap hari di instagram tiktok atau facebook. secara overall.	17 18
Respondent	kalau secara overall, em tiktok saya dalam 6 jam lebih, kalau instagram dalam 30 minit ke 1 jam. okay, so kiranya kalau campur application untuk media sosial ni average dia lebih dari 6 jam lah.	19 20 21 22
Researcher	okay, so soalan seterusnya , apakah jenis kandungan yang anda kerap terlibat, dengan sorry, apakah jenis kandungan yang kerap anda terlibat di sosial media?	23 24
Respondent	kalau dari diri saya sendiri, dia berubah mengikut peredaran masa, sebab ada masa	25

	saya berminat dari segi fashion, ada masa saya minat dari segi beauty, dari segi	26
	kadang-kadang saya more kepada motivational, jadi saya punya em content ni dia	27
	berubah-rubah mengikut saya punya mood and peredaran masa.	28
Researcher	okay tapi so far, em paling banyak afifah engage?	29
Respondent	em kalau so far, dari segi 2025 ni saya lebih banyak kepada fashion and beauty.	30
Researcher	okay soalan seterusnya dalam cara apakah media sosial ni , telah mempengaruhi	31
	cara afifah melihat diri sendiri?	32
Respondent	okay kalau dari segi saya , saya akan try to tengok benda tu dari segi positif side	33
	walaupun kadang-kadang orang bagitahu kalau kita guna terlalu banyak sosial	34
	media, dia akan bagi influence yang buruk which is akan selalu compare diri kita	35
	dengan influencer-influencer dekat luar. so kan macam kita tahukan , influencer luar	36
	banyak yang cantik banyak yang kita boleh katakan kehidupan dia perfect, tapi	37
	kalau bagi saya , saya try to tengok dari segi positive side dia , maybe kalau saya	38
	rasakan diri saya tak cantik maybe saya boleh try ikut macam mana dia bermake up,	39
	macam mana dia buat dia punya fashion, kalau saya , saya tengok dia dari situ.	40
	kalau tak dari fashion pun saya akan tengok dari dia punya lifestyle. sebab kadang-	41
	kadang lifestyle influencer ni pun ada baiknya yang kita boleh follow, ada certain	42
	influencer kan dia suka macam buat journal daily, benda macamtu saya memang	43
	suka ikut. aaa macam tu lah.	44
Researcher	so far influencer ni memberi benda yang positif lah?	45
	yaa	46
Researcher	okay, seterusnya adakah anda pernah merasa bahawa media sosial ini telah	47
	mengubah cara anda melihat self imej, atau penampilan atau harga diri anda? jika	48
Researcher	ya, bolehkah anda beri contoh?	49
Respondent	em kalau saya , saya semestinya akan bagitahu yaa , sebab sebelum ni , em sebab	50
	lately ni kan , saya selalu tengok pasal beauty, jadi saya akan err, contoh pasal	51
	beauty lah , sebab em macam saya , muka saya macam selalu break out, macam	52
	sampai sekarang pun masih ada jerawat apa semua , tapi bila saya tengok influencer	53
	macam eima safuan, yang macam eima safuan tulah, dia kan macam badan dia	54
	berisi, badan dia macam plus size, and dia pun macam kulit dia tak smooth tak	55
	flawless pun masih boleh cantik, masih boleh jadi influencer, jadi bila saya tengok	56
	dia tu, saya sendiri pun terinfluence jugak untuk jadi macam dia walaupun tak cantik	57
	sangat, walaupun tak flawless pun boleh cantik.	58

Researcher	okay so nampak di situ dia memberi benda yang positif lah ya. okay, soalan seterusnya adakah anda pernah menyedari mana mana trend atau jenis kandungan yang memberi kesan yang positif atau negatif pada imej diri anda ? macam eima safuan tadi, posting dia yang macam mana?	59 60 61 62
Respondent	emmmm kalau yang saya tengok sekarang emm trend sekarang , trend sekarang, kejap aa sebab sekarang yang trend yang paling banyak saya tengok sekarang , emm apa oh? trend sekarang, selain daripada make up tu memang dari positif la, kalau macam saya sekarang, saya memang suka trend, yang kan start daripada awal tahun ni memang ada trend aa ada lot of perempuan start pakai tudung labuh, so saya suka tengok trend macamtu sebab even kawan saya sendiri pun sebelum ni jenis Nampak tudung nampak leher, pakai tudung pendek, dia pun memang sekarang jadi rasa pakai tudung labuh sampai dia rasa bila dia tengok gambar dia yang lama dulu, dia jadi hairan macam mana dia boleh pakai tudung pendek. aa macam tula saya try to tengok dari kawan saya sendiri.	63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72
Researcher	faham. aa soalan seterusnya, bagaimana perasaan anda apabila melihat kandungan yang berkaitan dengan kecantikan, fashion atau kejayaan di sosial media? Adakah ia memberi inspirasi atau memberi tekanan? kalu bagi saya, kalau dari segi pencapaian lah, at first dia memang rasa overwhelm tengok orang lain macam dia ber- dekat umur yang sama macam saya pun dia dah boleh Berjaya, tapi saya try to untuk taknak terlalu terikat dengan rasa overwhelm which is saya try to ambil dia punya side positive biar saya rasa “kalau dia boleh, kenapa aku sik boleh”, “kenak nya boleh, aku sik boleh polah macam ya”, “kenak aku sik berjaya macam ya”, kalau tu sayalah, kalau macam dari segi beauty pun, “kenapa orang tu boleh pande bermake up macam ya, why not aku try belajar macam ne cara cara bermake up, so that aku pun boleh berjaya macam nya , aku pun boleh kacak macam nya.” haa macamtula.	73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
Researcher	so secara kesimpulannya, afifah rasa dia memberi inspirasi atau tekanan?	85
Respondent	Yaa	86
Researcher	Inspirasi?	87
Respondent	aaaa, kalau saya, maybe at first tu tekanan sekejaplah, tapi dia more kepada inspirasi lah.	88 89
Researcher	okayy soalan seterusnya , adakah anda pernah mendapati bahawa diri anda sering membandingkan diri anda dari segi penampilan , gaya hidup , pencapaian di sosial	90 91

	media. kalau ya macam mana ia memberi kesan kepada diri anda?	92
Respondent	mmmm membandingkan diri, emm kalau saya nak cakap tak macam bulak gilak lah	93
	sebab kalau macam dekat FYP saya pun, selalu macam najiha , sofea shra , so saya	94
	macam “ih kenak aku sik kakak mcmya?” , macamtu tapi aaaaa tapi walaupun saya	95
	membandingkan diri saya dengan dorang, influencer, tapi saya pun rasa macam	96
	why not saya terima diri saya sendiri. saya punya kelebihan, saya punya kecantikan,	97
	so that saya pun boleh shine in my own way. aaa	98
Researcher	so sekiranya walaupun afifah rasa macam pressure dekat situ, tapi still dapat cope?	99
Respondent	yaa	100
Researcher	okayy seterusnya , adakah anda pernah merasa , anda perlu mengubah tingkah laku,	101
	gaya hidup , penampilan disebabkan oleh pengaruh sosial media?	102
Respondent	ohh yang ni saya rasa tak , tak , adalah pernah , tapi emm bagi saya tu perasaan saya	103
	waktu tu jak. tapi saya tak pernah berubah.	104
Researcher	yang betul-betul ada perubahan?	105
Respondent	aaa yang betul, contohla macam maybe waktu tu trend orang pake contoh baju	106
	macam macam tok ka, tapi saya rasa macam sekdalam aku perlu ikut gilak	107
	sebenarnya, segal nya it just trend, nya akan hilang juak nanti. so saya rasa	108
	macamtulah.	109
Researcher	okay seterusnya , bagaimana anda mengurus emosi yang negatif yang timbul	110
	disebabkan penggunaan media sosial ini?	111
Respondent	em kalau saya, er bila saya dah rasa macam saya dah terlalu comparing myself	112
	dengan influencer2, saya akan err stay away dari social media for a moment.	113
	contohla macam saya tengok “ahh kakak ehh najihaa” dahlah sikkomoklah tengok.	114
Researcher	So take a break lah?	115
Respondent	yaa	116
Researcher	okay. seterusnya adakah terdapat sebarang strategi khusus, yang anda gunakan	117
	untuk melindungi harga diri anda ketika terlibat dengan kandungan social media?	118
Respondent	em macam self-esteem saya kah?	119
Researcher	yaa	120
Respondent	ooo kalau self-esteem, saya just selalu macam sama hampir sama macam first tadi	121
	tu, bila saya rasa macam terlalu comparing, saya akan take a break, so that bila	122
	saya take a break dalam 5 minit ka 10 minit ka, saya akan back to normal.	123
Researcher	seterusnya bagaimana anda membezakan antara inspirasi yang sihat atau standard	124

	kecantikan, atau gaya hidup yang tidak realistik dalam sosial media tu?	125
Respondent	Kalau saya, saya rasakan kalau saya apply dalam everyday life saya, pastu saya	126
	rasa saya boleh cope dengan benda tu, and then bagi saya benda tu healthy pastu	127
	kalau dia sampai tak affectkan saya punya mental health, then it's okay. Sebabkan	128
	ada certain lifestyle kan dia terpaksa berpura pura untuk menjadi perfectionist dalam	129
	social media. kalau dari segi macam tu saya takkan follow sebab dari situ saya dah	130
	memang tahu tu memang unhealthy punya lifestyle.	131
Researcher	so kiranya afifah aware lah dengan apa yang afifah tengok?	132
Respondent	yaa	133
Researcher	okay seterusnya, pada pandangan anda, apakah yang boleh dilakukan, untuk	134
	menjadikan media sosial ni, lebih positif untuk self-image atau untuk kesihatan	135
	mental?	136
Respondent	Bagi saya maybe, macam contohla macam kita punya ig, kita maybe kita just buat	137
	following kita tu kepada orang orang yang kita memang betul-betul buat kita rasa	138
	motivate untuk tengok, contoh macam saya. saya suka tengok najiha, sofea, azfar.	139
	so dari segi following tu, boleh try tukar saya punya following tu kepada orang	140
	orang yang saya rasakan macam takkan bagi influence yang buruk kepada saya.	141
Researcher	okay. soalan terakhir, adakah terdapat apa-apa lagi, yang anda ingin kongsi	142
	bagaimana social media ini, membentuk persepsi kepada diri anda?	143
Respondent	kalau saya , jap ah saya fikir jap, kalau saya macam mana social media ni shape saya	144
	punya self-perception, dia sebenarnya pun ikut peredaran masa, bagi saya sebab	145
	ada satu masa tu maybe saya akan lebih fokus kepada contoh satu period tu saya nak	146
	lebih confident terhadap saya punya body, jadi saya akan lebih fokus kepada content	147
	yang orang yang plus size, orang yang tak terlampau langsing, and then ada satu	148
	masa tu, saya macam rasa insecure dengan saya punya muka , jadi saya akan focus	149
	kepada content yang orang yang muka dia flawless, muka tak perfect, jadi dari situ,	150
	saya akan dapat tingkatkan lagi saya punya self-esteem tu toward diri saya sendiri.	151
Researcher	so sekiranya afifah aware how to cope and then macam kalau benda ni boleh	152
	membuatkan comparison, try to cari content-content yang tidak boleh rasa	153
	Dibandingkan?	154
Respondent	Yaa macam tu.	155
Researcher	Okay itu sahaja, terima kasih kerana sudi untuk di temu bual.	156
Respondent	Sama-sama	157

Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

Respondent 4 -ell

Age: 22

Race: Melanau

Average time spent on social media per day: 9 hours 26 minutes

Average time spent on social media per week: 11 hours 2 minutes

Types of social media usage: Twitter, TikTok, Instagram

Types of content: Beauty, fashion, lifestyle and entertainment

Researcher	Selamat petang. Sebelum saya mulakan, saya perkenalkan diri saya terlebih dahulu, saya Al-Nur Alia Binti Yazir pelajar tahun 3 kaunseling yang akan menjalankan temu bual untuk projek tahun akhir saya yang bertajuk "Behind the screens: Exploring young adult's experiences with social media on self-image". Jadi saya akan teruskan dengan soalan yang pertama, bolehkah anda berkongsi berapa lama anda telah aktif menggunakan sosial media dan platform yang manakah paling sering anda gunakan?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Respondent	saya start aktif form 3 waktu umur 15 tahun and usually saya bermain instagram, twitter dan Tiktok.	8 9
Researcher	Antara paling platform tersebut, aplikasi manakah yang paling sering anda gunakan?	10
Respondent	Tiktok lah sekarang	11
Researcher	Secara purata, berapa banyak masa yang telah anda habiskan setiap hari di aplikasi social media?	12 13
Respondent	kalau screentime, untuk Tiktok 5 jam 15 minit.	14
Researcher	Selain tiktok?	15
Respondent	Instagram. kurang. 2 jam 15 minit.	16
Researcher	Dekat situ dia ada tulis tak overall untuk social media berapa lama aktif?	17
Respondent	9 jam 26 minit	18
Researcher	Jadi, apakah jenis kandungan yang anda sering terlibat di social media? type of content do you engage?	19 20
Respondent	selalunya tentang fashion, hiburan seperti music. lifestyle macam tengok gaya hidup yang mereka buat blog.	21 22
Researcher	kalau untuk fashion, apa yang ell tengok? skin care, make up, get ready with me atau apa?	23 24
Respondent	yaa semua tu saya minat tengok	25

Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

Researcher	so, ell ada tiktokers yang khas tak yang biasa ell tengok?	26
Respondent	yang beauty selalunya saya tengok ekaa dengan nana tajudin	27
Researcher	jadi dalam cara apakah social media ini telah mempengaruhi cara anda melihat diri anda sendiri?	28 29
Respondent	kalau saya more to lebih positive lah macam i try to improve myself dari segi Nampak lebih cantik nampak lebih kemas depan orang.	30 31
Researcher	so dia lebih kepada penampilan ell lah?	32
Respondent	Yaa.	33
Researcher	jadi adakah anda pernah merasa bahawa media sosial ini telah mengubah cara anda melihat self-image, body image atau penampilan diri anda?	34 35
Respondent	kalau lately ni dia macam positive la kalau kita nak improve diri kitakan. tapi kalua dari segi negative probably bahagian penjagaan kulit skincare, usually dia buat macam, kalau banyak jerawat ataupun bekas bekas muka nampak tak cantik. kalau benda tu dia agak impact secara negativelah. tapi thats why la rajin nak tengok tips tips skincare dekat tiktok, insta supaya kulit lebih terjaga.	36 37 38 39 40
Rsearcher	jadi, bagaimana perasaan anda apabila melihat kandungan yang berkaitan dengan kecantikan, atau apa-apa yang anda sebutkan tadi. adakah ia memberi kesan positif atau negatif? macam yang ell cakap ada yang positif, boleh explain lebih lagi.	41 42 43
Respondent	inspirasi dan benda yang lebih positif lah banyak sebab saya tak suka fokus kepada negative side sangat. kalau positive macam kita suka nak ikut trend and nak Nampak cantik. tak perlu orang yang cakap kita cantik tapi kita sendiri rasa benda tu cantik so saya follow. and bendatu pun, kalau mereka puji, betullah memang accepted mereka terima apa yang saya buat. Tapi negatif tu, sekarang ni dah kurang kalau pasal kulit tak terjaga, saya fikir benda ini take time. Bukannya sehari dah boleh hilang. Jadi saya try nak guna positive self-talk.	44 45 46 47 48 49 50
Researcher	Macam yang ell cakap, social media sebelum ini , dia mempengaruhi dan mengubah kehidupan dan cara ell sendiri. Tapi dia memberi kesan lebih kepada positif instead of negatif. sebab kerana ell cuba untuk self-talk ataupun sebenarnya ell ada kesedaran tentang diri ell. macamtu ke?	51 52 53 54
Respondent	Betul	55
Researcher	jadi anda mendapati bahawa diri anda sering membandingkan penampilan, gaya hidup, pencapaian dengan orang lain di social media?	56 57
Respondent	Kalau lifestlye as student macam akademik. kan di tiktok ramai orang tunjuk journey	58

	mereka dekat universiti. Macam mana mereka menyeimbangkan akademik dan	59
	aktiviti luar. Macam kokurikulum semua tu. Yang tu boleh dikira membandingkan	60
	jugaklah. Dia buat saya rasa saya nak jadi aktif macam mereka juga tapi dalam masa	61
	yang sama akademik masih terjaga seperti dapat keputusan dekan apa semua tapi still	62
	aktif sertai program, di kolej atau peringkat universiti. Tapi dalam masa yang sama	63
	membandingkan, saya nak jadi seperti mereka. Dia jadi inspirasi supaya saya mampu	64
	jadi seperti mereka.	65
Researcher	Jadi, kiranya ia dari segi pencapaian dan walaupun ell membandingkan tapi dia dikira	66
	perbandingan positif lah sebab dia buat ell rasa nak berusaha?	67
Respondent	Yaa betul	68
Researcher	jadi, adakah anda pernah merasa, anda perlu mengubah tingkahlaku, gaya hidup	69
	atau penampilan disebabkan media sosial?	70
Respondent	perlu tu ada, tapi motivasi untuk buat itu tiada.	71
Researcher	jadi perubahan yang di buat adakah disebabkan positif kan?	72
Respondent	yaa	73
Researcher	Jadi bagaimana anda menguruskan emosi yang negatif yang timbul daripada	74
	penggunaan social media?	75
Respondent	Selalunya saya guna positive self-talk yang pasal kulit tu tadi. memang selalu saya	76
	down kalau tengok orang post clear skin. last-last saya cakap “nak clear skin ni bukan	77
	ambil masa yang sekejap, ada orang ambil masa sampai bertahun, memang lama.”	78
	jadi saya tak boleh nak down sebab benda tu sahaja. at least saya ada cuba try skincare	79
	baru. dan saya pun ada mindset saya tak kesah apa orang cakap. yang penting saya	80
	suka buat. macam tu.	81
Researcher	jadi kebanyakannya ell buat self-talk Sahaja?	82
Respondent	ada masa, saya tutup tiktok.	83
Researcher	adakah terdapat sebarang strategi khusus yang anda guna untuk melindungi harga	84
	diri anda? jadi ell guna self-talk dan tutup tiktok sebagai strategi?	85
Respondent	Yaa.	86
Researcher	pernahkan anda mengambil rehat daripada social media disebabkan kebimbangan	87
	terhadap kesan terhadap imej diri?	88
Respondent	pernah sekali tu	89
Researcher	macam mana ia memberi kesan?	90
Respondent	lepas cut sosial media, ia membuatkan saya lebih tenang tak terfikir fikir sangat apa	91

	yang media sosial dah post and cakap pasal benda benda. Lepastu okay lah tak down tak sedih.	92 93
Researcher	Jadi bagaimana anda membezakan antara gaya hidup yang realistik atau tidak di dalam media sosial?	94 95
Respondent	sebab contoh kalau, kita kena putih instead of tan, tapi ramai je yang content lain yang influencer tan skin cantik. So kadang-kadang benda yang macamtu, that for me tiada realistik lah sebab memang beauty subjektif. ada orang cakap cantik ada orang cakap tak. So kita tak boleh ikut sangat standard yang macam awak kena clear skin, awak kena putih. Benda tu membuatkan self-image kita lebih down instead of positif.	96 97 98 99 100
Researcher	Jadi macam ell bezakan?	101
Respondent	memang benda macamtu memang kita ada value sendiri. mana yang cantik mana yang tak. So kalau mana yang rasa tak sama dengan value kita, kita ingnore jela sebab tak realistik.	102 103 104
Researcher	Jadi ell membezakan dengan cara value ell?	105
Respondent	Yaa	106
Researcher	Jadi, pada pandangan anda, apakah yang boleh dilakukan untuk menjadikan media sosial ini lebih positif untuk imej diri dan kesejahteraan mental?	107 108
Respondent	selalunya, sebab social media banyak influencer. jadi tanggungjawab influencer untuk promote benda yang lebih positif tentang contoh kalau dia jenis yang berat badan, jenis pendek atau sedikit gemuk. dia patutnya tunjukkan secara positif, cakap benda yang positif tentang diri dia supaya orang yang tengok pun rasa macam aku ni cantik je sebenarnya. Jadi, cara influencer promote content mereka. Sebab mereka dah ada platform yang besar, jadi kalau mereka guna kelebihan untuk bagi information yang baik, jadi pengguna pun dapat ikut. Sebab selalunya pengguna akan ikut apa yang influencer cakap sebab dia macam trend. Jadi saya rasa role influencer itu sendiri memang penting.	109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117
Researcher	Baiklah faham. untuk soalan terakhir, adakah terdapat apa apa lagi yang anda ingin kongsi bagaimana social media ini membentuk persepsi imej diri?	118 119
Respondent	Tiada, sama je. Social media mengajar saya lebih menerima apa yang ada pada diri saya, dan kalau saya benda tu tak sihat. biasanya kalau tak sihat baru berubah. Tapi, kalau benda tu take time takpe. so memang media social banyak mengajar saya banyak untuk jadi lebih positif dan menerima diri saya seadanya.	120 121 122 123
Researcher	okay baiklah itu sahaja soalan dari saya. terima kasih sudi meluangkan masa untuk	124

Respondent	jadi participant saya.	125
	sama sama	126

Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

Respondent 5 - shera

Age: 23

Race: Melayu

Average time spent on social media per day: 4 hours 53 minutes

Average time spent on social media per week: 10 hours 11 minutes

Types of social media usage: TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp

Types of content: Beauty, fashion and lifestyle

Researcher	Selamat petang. Sebelum saya mulakan, saya perkenalkan diri saya terlebih dahulu, saya Al-Nur Alia Binti Yazir pelajar tahun 3 kaunseling yang akan menjalankan	1
	temu bual untuk projek tahun akhir saya yang bertajuk "Behind the screens: Exploring young adult's experiences with social media on self-image". Jadi saya	2
	akan teruskan dengan soalan yang pertama, bolehkah anda berkongsi berapa lama	3
	anda telah aktif menggunakan sosial media dan platform yang manakah paling	4
	sering anda gunakan?	5
Respondent	okay, kejap. kalau saya, social media paling lama yang saya boleh stay dekat satu	6
	social media contoh dekat tiktok, paling lama dalam boleh sampai 2 jam. jadi antara	7
	social media paling banyak tengok adalah tiktok. sampai ada masa untuk	8
	menyeimbangkan saya punya kehidupan di luar dengan saya punya handphone, saya	9
	akan set time. limit masa lah untuk setiap social media.	10
Researcher	shera start aktif social media dari bila?	11
Respondent	kalau diikutkan, macam orang lain, start daripada whatsapp. mereka start dari	12
	mereka sekolah menengah. macam shera dari tingkatan 1, okay masa tu shera belum	13
	ada handphone yang touch screen. so shera start desember 2015.	14
Researcher	secara purata, berapa banyak masa yang anda habiskan setiap hari di social media?	15
Respondent	jadi yang paling lama aplikasi adalah tiktok , youtube and whatsapp. kalau untuk	16
	aplikasi titkok, lebih kurang 4 jam sebab dia more kepada fashion. dia melibatkan	17
	fashion beauty and self-awareness. shera punya content engage banyak benda macam	18
	tu. untuk youtube music macam biasalah, and whatsapp untuk shera berkomunikasi	19
	dengan orang.	20
Researcher	soalan seterusnya, apa jenis kandungan yang shera anda kerap terlibat di social	21
	media?	22
Respondent	selain daripada yang shera dah sebut, shera ada juga banyaklah sebab kita selalu	23
		24
		25

	tengok, macam outfit harian ataupun kalau shera nak pergi keluarlah , shera nak	26
	pergi mana mana, shera akan cari dulu idea, style tudung, baju, kombinasi warna.	27
	shera akan tengok lepastu shera akan tengok baju baju yang mana yang sesuai.	28
Researcher	jadi di boleh di kategorikan sebagai lifestyle?	29
Respondent	Yaa betul.	30
Researcher	dalam cara apakah, social media ini telah mempengaruhi cara shera melihat diri	31
	shera sendiri?	32
Respondent	untuk itu, apa yang boleh saya cakap berdasarkan apa yang telah saya tengok di	33
	tiktok, benda itu sebenarnya memberi kesan positif juga kepada diri saya sebab	34
	dengan apa yang saya tengok, saya aplikasikan dalam diri saya. dari segi cara kita	35
	berpakaian ataupun self-awareness, dari situ saya belajar macam mana nak observe	36
	atau nak melakukan sesuatu.	37
Researcher	Adakah yang di maksudkan shera seperti membina interaction yang lebih baik untuk	38
	diri shera dengan orang lain?	39
Respondent	yaa betul	40
Researcher	jadi, soalan seterusnya, adakah pernah merasa bahawa media sosial ini telah	41
	mengubah cara anda melihat self-image? contohnya, dari segi imej badan,	42
	penampilah atau harga diri shera.	43
Respondent	jadi , bila kita dah bantak tengok terutamanya dari segi beauty yang boleh kita kaitkan	44
	dengan self-image, sebenarnta ia memberi pengaruh dan mengubah cara shera.	45
	sebagai contoh , shera ada macam jerawat and so on jadi bila shera tengok apa apa	46
	seperti tips, kadang kadang kita tengok dekat wall page di tiktok semua ada orang	47
	yang cantik, kadang kadang ia mengubah lah “oh nak jadi macam dia lah”.	48
Researcher	contohnya apa yang shera dah ubah ?	49
Respondent	salah satu nya cara shera berpakaian, cara shera pilih ap yang shera nak pakai,	50
	lifestlye shera dan macam mana cara shera jadikan diri shera cuba untuk berdisiplin	51
Researcher	jadi bagaimanakan perasaan shera apabila melihat kandungan yang berkaitan	52
	kecantikan, kecergasan, fashion, lifestyle atau kejayaan di sosial media? adakah ia	53
	memberi impak yang positif atau negatif?	54
Respondent	untuk kedua dua positif dan negatif ada. dari segi positif kita boleh ambil benda itu	55
	sebagai motivasi ataupun contoh untuk kita perbaiki diri. dan benda itu banyaklah	56
	sebenarnya lebih kepada negatif. tapi negatifnya, tipulah kalau kita tengok-tengok	57
	kita tak ada rasa macam “eee bestnya kulit macam bersih” atau apa-apa, tapi benda	58

	tu kalau kita nak fokuskan kepada negatif, benda itu akan beri impak yang negatif	59
	kepada kita juga. Dan benda itu mebuatkan kita jadi down sedih. Jadi bendatu shera	60
	cuba ubah dan shera fokuskan kepada positif.	61
Researcher	so kalau nak diikuti , lebih banyak kepada positif atau negatif?	62
Respondent	kalau diikuti, lebih banyak kepada positif	63
Researcher	jadi , adakah anda mendapati bahawa diri anda sering membandingkan dari segi	64
	penampilan , gaya hidup atau pencapaian anda dengan orang lain di sosial media?	65
	adakah ia memberi kesan terhadap anda?	66
Respondent	macam kalau benda tu , kalau nak membandingkan, ada. Tapi lebih kepada positif,	67
	dia tak negatif tak macam pandangan yang negatif la , tidak. So shera ambik kalau	68
	benda tu okay benda tu memberi inspirasi, shera akan ambil benda tu untuk diri shera	69
	sendiri. Dan shera akan ikutlah. Kalau benda tu okay dan baik, shera akan ikut	70
	influencer itu buat.	71
Researcher	boleh bagi contoh content influencer?	72
Respondent	kalau contoh influencer iaitu Ain Ramli, kalau tengok di titkok, dia sangat aktif,	73
	bold. Kira dia sangat pandai berfashion kalau nak di bandingkan dengan typical	74
	dengan perempuan biasa. Dia ada tubuh yang macam yang a bit tinggi, lepastu dia	75
	aktif bersukan. Jadi dia akan sedikit berotot, tough. Tapi pada masa yang sama, dia	76
	sangat funny dan dia punya content bukan sekadar funny tapi cari dia berpakaian	77
	sangat slay. Jadi shera ambil konfident dia.	78
Researcher	Adakah anda pernah merasa , anda perlu mengubah tingkah laku, gaya hidup,	79
	penampilan disebabkan pengaruh sosial media?	80
Respondent	kalau nak ubah sebab kebanyakannya di sosial media sekarang, kita sebagai	81
	penonton pun, kita perlu tapis jugak apa yang kita tengok. Sebab kebanyakan	82
	content yang mereka buat, kadang-kadang content influencer banyak buat sekarang,	83
	kadang kadang ada yang berfaedah dan ada yang tidak berfaedah. Jadi kita ambil	84
	yang berfaedah. Jadi benda tu perlu ubah dan influencer boleh influence kita ke arah	85
	lebih positif dan matang. Kalau ada content atau influencer yang macam meriah , tapi	86
	content macam kosong. Shera tak ikut. Jadi paling paling pun shera akan ambil	87
	benda yang positif lah. Sama juga macam tadi.	88
Researcher	Jadi bagaimana shera menguruskan emosi negatif yang timbul disebabkan	89
	penggunaan sosial media ni?	90
Respondent	okay kalau timbulnya emosi negatif, shera akan buat keputusan untuk tak tengok	91

	handphone. Dan shera akan try untuk meminimumkan masa penggunaan telefon.	92
	Dan shera akan perbaiki diri atau refleksi diri, ataupun buat something yang boleh	93
	shera boleh boost mood, keyakinan shera. Mungkin kalau shera rasa insecure, atau	94
	apa-apa, paling paling pun, kalau insecure bab fashion so on, first thing first shera	95
	akan tinggalkan handphone dan shera akan cuba fokus terhadap diri sendiri. Paling	96
	paling pun belajar lagi, contoh tengok outfitnya cantik, kita biasa-biasa sahaja, jadi	97
	kita akan down. Sebab tengok cara nya ok tapi kita biasa-biasa je. Paling paling pun	98
	mula-mula down, tapi after dah cool sikit, shera akan macam “why not aku macam	99
	yakinkah diri lah berpakaian lebih kurang macam dia tapi better”	100
Researcher	okay kalau dari segi self-care, self-care apa yang anda buat untuk coping?	101
Respondent	kalau self-care, mungkin shera akan journaling atau pun shera akan dengar lagu.	102
	Ataupun shera akan cari someone yang shera boleh cerita, comfort zone saya.	103
Researcher	Jadi adakah terdapat sebarang strategi khusus yang shera gunakan untuk melindungi	104
	harga diri anda ketika anda terlibat dengan kandungan sosial media?	105
Respondent	shera akan fikir yang shera is perfect, dan tak ada orang pun yang, sebab sebenarnya	106
	bukan nak menaikkan diri, tapi sedikit sebanyak ia membantu diri kita. Macam shera	107
	rasa kalau shera down, shera akan fikrikan dalam diri shera, shera pun boleh jadi	108
	macam dorang juga. shera akan pujuk diri sendiri dan kalau macam jerawat apa	109
	“sekpaa benda boleh diubah” dan cuba untuk yakinkan diri yang kita pun perfect juga.	110
Researcher	So adakah shera seperti meletakkan value untuk diri shera sendiri?	111
Respondent	yaa	112
Researcher	jadi kalau ikut soalan ni, adakah anda pernah mengambil rehat?	113
Respondent	yaa shera pernah mengambil rehat daripada sosial media disebabkan kebimbangan	114
	terhadap kesan self-image shera. tadi dah dikira shera dah jawablah kan kesan dari	115
	segi comparing.	116
Researcher	Soalan seterusnya lagi, bagaimana anda membezakan antara content yang dilihat	117
	anda adalah realistik atau tidak realistik, negatif atau positif dalam sosial media?	118
Respondent	jadi untuk saya, yang membezakan unrealistiknya adalah lebih kepada seperti orang	119
	tunjukkan kemewahan, dia punya fashion so on. Dan untuk realistiknya, dia akan	120
	fokus kepada self-awareness. Jadi kadang-kadang yang tidak realistik tu, dia tidak	121
	mengganggu pun saya punya keyakinan. Sebab saya dapat membezakanlah antara	122
	realistik ataupun tidak. Sekarang pun ada orang yang menayangkan benda yang just	123
	for fun. Jadi kadang-kadang bila dia tunjuk ada barang itu ini, saya kan ada belajar	124

	self-awareness, jadi saya cuba untuk fikir “ini rezeki dia”, kalau benda tu real. Jadi	125
	itu mungkin rezeki dia. Mungkin dia akan ada kekurangan yang lain. Yang mungkin	126
	kekurangan dia adalah kelebihan aku. Jadi benda tu , saya cuba untuk tak	127
	membandingkan benda tu . sebab benda tu pun tidak bagi kesan negatif.	128
Researcher	Jadi cara membezakan adalah dengan cara dia apa yang dia suka suka untuk	129
	pertontonkan tapi tiada dalam kehidupan realiti , dan dari segi kesedaran lah seperti	130
	rezeki masing-masing apa yang kurang dan lebih.	131
Respondent	yaa	132
Researcher	Jadi soalan terakhir, apakah yang anda boleh lakukan untuk menjadikan media sosial	133
	ini, lebih positif untuk self-image dan kesejahteraan mental?	134
Respondent	Pada zaman ni , memang banyak pengaruh dan kadang-kadang orang yang biasa pun	135
	layak juga nak gunakan sosial media seperti tiktok dan sebagainya. Jadi, kadang	136
	kadang mereka akan memberi apa-apa pendapatlah yang mereka suka dan akan post	137
	di tiktok. Jadi ini perlu dititik beratkan daripada pengaruh atau pengguna yang post	138
	apa apa di sosial media. Sebab bila mereka post, kalau ilmu kita kurang , orang jadi	139
	senang pengaruh. Jadi penting influencer itu sendiri perlu belajar dulu . Macam	140
	mana dia nak buat content yang positif. Sebab kadang-kadang bila pengikut dah	141
	ramai, mereka senang-senang boleh mempengaruhi mereka. Jadi pengikut pun	142
	mudah terikut-ikut. Jadi pentingnya untuk ada influencer yang bijak , yang ada value	143
	yang tinggi.	144
Researcher	okay itu sahaja terima kasih.	145
Respondent	Sama-sama	146

Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

Respondent 6 - qilah

Age: 22

Race: Melayu

Average time spent on social media per day: 4 hours 53 minutes

Average time spent on social media per week: 10 hours 11 minutes

Types of social media usage: TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp

Types of content: Beauty, fashion and lifestyle

Researcher	Selamat petang. Sebelum saya mulakan, saya perkenalkan diri saya terlebih dahulu, saya Al-Nur Alia Binti Yazir pelajar tahun 3 kaunseling yang akan menjalankan temu bual untuk projek tahun akhir saya yang bertajuk "Behind the screens: Exploring young adult's experiences with social media on self-image". Jadi saya akan teruskan dengan soalan yang pertama, bolehkah anda berkongsi berapa lama anda telah aktif menggunakan sosial media dan platform yang manakah paling sering anda gunakan?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Respondent	emm saya dah aktif menggunakan media sosial sejak saya form 2, dan masa form 2 tu saya start guna wechat and instagram and sekarang platfrom yang sering saya gunakan adalah instagram, tiktok and whatsapp.	8 9 10
Researcher	Okay, antara ketiga tiga tu platform yang manakah paling sering guna, paling major?	11
Respondent	em saya rasa whatsapp sebab em memang banyak communicate dengan orang dekat whatsapp.	12 13
Researcher	okay, so secara purata, berapa banyak masa yang telah anda habiskan setiap hari di instagram, tiktok atau facebook? ataupun mana mana application social media	14 15
Respondent	em kalau berdasarkan screen time dekat saya punya phone whatsapp err purata dalam mingguan adalah 4 jam 39 minutes, and tiktok 3 jam 50 minit. jadi untuk keseluruhan sosial 5 jam 23 minit.	16 17 18
Researcher	okay em apakah jenis kandungan yang anda kerap terlibat di sosial media, content yang selalu anda tengok di sosial media?	19 20
Respondent	em selalunya saya tengok make up, em fashion, em aa tu la yang banyak	21
Researcher	so, make up tu under fashion atau under lifestyle?	22
Respondent	em make up under lifestyle	23
Researcher	so include beauty jugak lah? kecantikan?	24
Respondent	yes kecantikan	25

Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

Researcher	soalan seterusnya dalam cara apakah media sosial ini telah mempengaruhi cara anda melihat diri anda sendiri?	26 27
Respondent	emm apa maksudnya?	28
Researcher	contohnya, adakah bila aqilah terlampau tengok sosial media kan, adakah ia mempengaruhi aqilah seperti dia dapat menukar value aqilah terhadap sesuatu benda.	29 30
Respondent	err setakat ini ada , dia memang mempengaruhi cara saya melihat diri saya sendiri which is that dia kebanyakannya err lebih kepada positif lah , it helps me to improve myself to be better.	31 32 33
Researcher	sebagai contoh?	34
Respondent	sebagai contoh , kan saya cakap saya suka tengok make up, fashion and dari situ dia buat saya macam emmm jadi pandai nak bermake up, belajar nak make up, belajar nak berfashion macam tu	35 36 37
Researcher	so kiranya dia menaikkan value standard aqilah lah?	38
Respondent	yaa	39
Researcher	okay, soalan seterusnya, adalah anda pernah merasa bahawa sosial media ini telah mengubah cara anda melihat diri anda , dari segi imej badan, penampilan, atau harga diri keseluruhan anda? jika ya, bolehkan anda berkongsi contoh?	40 41 42
Respondent	emm ya sebab kalau dari segi imej badan saya suka tengok yang emm girl girl yang main gym, jadi badan mereka memang cantik. and saya pernah lah nak badan macamtu and penampilan pun dari segi pemakaian, dari segi muka skincare semuatulah. harga diri, pun mengubah cara saya melihat diri saya sendiri. contohnya, yang harga diri ni, macam dia buat saya fikir macam saya perlu jadi better haa macam tu la	43 44 45 46 47 48
Researcher	so aqilah akan membuat comparison antara aqilah dengan orang yang aqilah tengok?	49
Respondent	Iyaa	50
Researcher	okay, bagaimana perasaan anda apabila melihat kandungan yang berkaitan dengan kecantikan, kecergasan, fashion atau kejayaan di media sosial? adakah ia memberi inspirasi atau memberi tekanan kepada aqilah, atau dalam kata lain memberi Kesan yang positif atau negatif?	51 52 53 54
Respondent	saya boleh cakap dua dua, tapi emm so far dia more to positive sebab dia tolong saya macam untuk bagi saya idea cara untuk cantikkan diri , cara nak berfashion, cara nak majukan diri saya. and kalau dari segi negatif tu, macam saya ada insecure sikit lah dengan orang yang macam lifestyle dia better, yang sangatlah better. macamtu	55 56 57 58

Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

Researcher	okay tetapi aqilah memberi pendapat bahawa kesan positif lah yang lebih Aqilah dapat?	59 60
Respondent	mmmmmm	61
Researcher	okay, soalan seterusnya adakah anda pernah mendapati bahawa diri anda , eh sorry. adakah anda mendapati anda membandingkan penampilan , gaya hidup atau pencapaian orang lain di sosial media?	62 63 64
Respondent	Yaa, ada.	65
Researcher	sebagai contoh? apa kesan dia? dan apa content or influencer yang aqilah tengok tu.	66
Respondent	Emm Kesan?	67
Researcher	contohkan aqilah cakap tadi , aqilah memang ada buat comparison kan? so apa Kesan kepada diri aqilah? adakah aqilah rasa down or stress atau macam mana?	68 69
Respondent	errr down or stress tu takdalah tapi dia macam more to err i have to do this. i have to follow this person, macamtulah.	70 71
	and ee content influencer takda yang spesifik sebab , sebab bagi saya memang tak penting sangat dorang punya background, saya just tengok any content yang menarik minat saya jak	72 73 74
Researcher	kalau saya cakap kesan kepada diri aqilah itu sometimes dia boleh bagi low self-esteem, adakah aqilah setuju?	75 76
Respondent	setuju , sometimes	77
Researcher	okay, so dari segi content tiada influencer yang spesifik, tapi content dari segi beauty dan lain lain?	78 79
Respondent	tiada	80
Researcher	jadi soalan seterusnya, adakah pernah merasa anda perlu untuk mengubah tingkah laku, gaya hidup atau penampilan di sebabkan oleh pengaruh media sosial?	81 82
Respondent	pernah selalu	83
Researcher	seperti?	84
Respondent	seperti contohla mengubah tingkah laku pun, saya tengok orang yang macam sopan-sopan, ayu-ayu, saya jadi saya rasa saya perlu ubah tingkah laku saya tu jadi seperti itu. dalam gaya hidup ni tak sangat, saya tak kesah sangat. kalau penampilan saya memang, saya rasa macam perlu ubah sebab, penampilan fizikal ni memang tak lah cantik sangat, tapi sebabtu saya rasa saya perlu ubah untuk jadi lebih baik macam orang yang dekat social media.	85 86 87 88 89 90
Researcher	apakah perasaan aqilah yang aqilah rasakan itu positif atau negatif?	91

Respondent	dua dua sebab , kalau dari segi positif , dia bantu saya untuk saya jadi lebih baik.	92
	maksud saya lebih baik macam dia bantu saya untuk improve diri saya sendiri , kalau	93
	dari segi negatifnya , insecure lah.	94
Researcher	faham, jadi bagaimana aqilah mengurus emosi negatif yang timbul daripada	95
	penggunaan social media?	96
Respondent	cara saya untuk mengurus emosi megatif ini adalah dengan selalunya saya macam	97
	saya akan stop dulu tengok social media.	98
Researcher	jadi adakah terdapat sebarang strategi yang khusus yang anda gunakan untuk	99
	melindungi harga diri anda jika anda terlibat dengan kandungan social media yang	100
	memberi kesan negatif tu.	101
Respondent	selepas saya stop tu , kan most of saya punya more kepada beauty kan . jadi saya	102
	cuba untuk lebih banyak bersyukur. kan saya stop tadi , saya selalunya saya akan	103
	cuba untuk bersyukur. and everytime bersyukur tu , perasaan bersyukur tu memang	104
	akan membantu saya sebab kadang-kadang bila saya tengok social media saya akan	105
	cemburu, dan nak jadi macamtu, nak benda tu . jadi bila saya cakap dekat diri saya,	106
	saya perlu bersyukur , hargai apa yang ada. jadi memang tu membantu diri saya untuk	107
	melindungi harga diri saya.	108
Researcher	okay. soalan seterusnya, adakah pernah mengambil rehat daripada social media	109
	disebabkan kebimbangan terhadap kesan imej diri anda?	110
Respondent	yaa. bagaimana dia beri kesan contohnya instagram, kalau masa itu saya ada negative	111
	thought, jadi saya akan stop dulu post gambar , gambar gambar sebelum ni yang dah	112
	saya post dulu pun saya akan archive dulu.	113
Researcher	jadi bagaimana anda membezakan antara inspirasi yang sihat dan standard	114
	kecantikan atau gaya hidup yang tidak realistik?	115
Respondent	kadang kadang benda ini bergantung dengan influencer juga. sebab ada influencer	116
	yang tends to menipu, dan ada yang memang jujur cakap pasal kecantikan.	117
	maksudnya kan contoh kalau influencer tu breakout, bila nya breakout, nya guna satu	118
	produk ni, and produk tu bagus untuk diri dia. ada beberapa influencer, yang macam	119
	mukanya okay je bersih , tapi dia guna satu produk tu , and dia promote dekat orang	120
	yang produk tu bagus. contohla. jadi macam benda tu ada menipu juga sikit and dari	121
	situ ia bergantung dengan influencer juga kalau dari segi unrealisitic beauty dengan	122
	lifestyle ni.	123
Researcher	jadi bagaimana aqilah tahu untuk bezakan benda tu realistik atau tidak?	124

Behind the Screens: Exploring Young Adults' Experiences with Social Media on Self-Image

Respondent	saya kaji background influencer seperti content yang dia buat	125
Researcher	jadi pada pandangan aqilah, apakah yang boleh dilakukan untuk menjadikan media	126
	sosial ini lebih positif untuk self-image dan kesejahteraan mental?	127
Respondent	bagi saya, influencer kalau boleh kalau nak promote sesuatu benda janganlah	128
	menipu, biar jujur. lepastu kadang kadang orang yang post di tiktok tiada masalah	129
	sangat, tapi komen di tiktok bermasalah. jadi kalau boleh, orang yang komen dekat	130
	content tu cuba untuk jadi lebih positif supaya orang pun lebih positif juga. Sebab	131
	kebanyakannya orang yang komen tu lebih menyakitkan, ada yang buli jadi bahaya	132
	untuk kesejahteraan mental.	133
Researcher	okay jadi itu sahaja terima kasih sebab beri kerjasama.	134
Respondent	sama sama	135