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Perceived social support and psychological well-being as mediators in the relationship between social media use and quality of life among older adults in nursing homes in Istanbul

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: This cross-sectional study investigates the mediating role of perceived social support and psychological well-being in the relationship between social media use and quality of life among older adults residing in nursing homes.

Method: The sample comprised 302 individuals aged 60 and above living in six official nursing homes in İstanbul. Data were collected using a socio-demographic questionnaire, the Psychological Well-Being Scale, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and the Quality of Life Scale for the Elderly. Analyses were conducted using SPSS 25, and mediation hypotheses were tested using the PROCESS Macro (Model 4) with 5,000 bootstrap samples.

Results: The mediation analyses revealed a significant complete mediation association between social media use and quality of life through perceived social support ($B = -0.5417$, $SE = 0.2588$, 95% CI $[-1.1030, -0.0867]$) and psychological well-being ($B = -3.2602$, $SE = 0.5360$, 95% CI $[-4.3560, -2.2456]$).

Conclusion: These findings suggest that social media use affects quality of life not only directly but also indirectly by enhancing social support and psychological well-being, highlighting the importance of digital connectivity for older adults in institutional care settings.

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Old age; social media; perceived social support; psychological well-being; quality of life; nursing home

Introduction

In recent years, the increasing use of social media platforms among older adults has garnered significant attention from researchers. Contrary to the prevailing stereotype of technological resistance in later life, recent evidence indicates that older adults are increasingly embracing digital platforms to stay connected, informed, and engaged (Anderson & Perrin, 2017; Guzman et al., 2023). This trend has become particularly pronounced in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which digital tools proved essential for maintaining social ties and accessing services (Seifert, 2020). However, it is important to recognize that such patterns may vary significantly between developed and developing countries. In developing contexts, such as the one in which this study was conducted, older adults may face considerable barriers—such as limited digital infrastructure, lower digital literacy, and socioeconomic inequalities—that hinder their access to and effective use of social media. Therefore, understanding social media engagement among older adults requires a contextualized approach that considers broader socio-cultural and economic factors.

Social media is widely regarded as a valuable means of fostering social connectedness—a key determinant of well-being in older adulthood. However, the relationship between social media use and quality of life among older individuals is complex and multifaceted. This relationship is influenced by a variety of factors, including socio-economic status, digital literacy, access to technology, physical and mental health, and psychological

factors such as attitudes toward technology. Additionally, cultural and environmental contexts, as well as individual differences, further shape how older adults engage with social media and how this engagement impacts their quality of life. While some studies have highlighted positive outcomes such as reduced loneliness and improved psychological functioning (Cotten et al., 2022), others have drawn attention to potential downsides, including increased social comparison, exposure to misinformation, and digital fatigue (Lei, 2022). These mixed findings underscore the need to examine the mechanisms through which social media impacts the well-being of older adults. Acknowledging these diverse factors is crucial to understanding the full scope of social media's effects on older individuals' well-being.

One such mechanism is perceived social support. Social media platforms provide opportunities to maintain contact with family members, friends, and peers, which can enhance the perceived availability of emotional and instrumental support (Yue et al., 2024). Perceived support, in turn, has been strongly associated with outcomes such as reduced depression and greater life satisfaction (Wu & Chiou, 2020). Therefore, social media may influence quality of life indirectly by reinforcing individuals' sense of being supported.

Psychological well-being is another key mediator in this relationship, encompassing life satisfaction, self-esteem, and emotional regulation (Choi & Noh, 2020). A supportive digital environment may contribute positively to older adults'

emotional functioning, helping to alleviate distress and promote a sense of purpose and engagement (Chen et al., 2023). Despite these theoretical links, empirical research on these mediating mechanisms remains limited, particularly among institutionalized older adults, who often face distinctive social and emotional challenges.

In Istanbul, demographic shifts have led to a growing population of older adults, many of whom reside in institutional care facilities due to factors such as urban migration, evolving family structures, and limited caregiving resources. These individuals are at heightened risk of social isolation and may especially benefit from digital social interaction. However, there remains a paucity of research exploring the psychological pathways through which social media use influences their quality of life.

Accordingly, the present study investigates the mediating roles of perceived social support and psychological well-being in the relationship between social media use and quality of life among older adults living in nursing homes in Istanbul. By focusing on this specific and understudied population, the study contributes to the growing literature on digital aging and provides insights into how social media may serve as a tool to promote well-being in institutional care settings.

H1: Social media use in older adults is associated with quality of life, perceived social support, and psychological well-being.

H2: Perceived social support and psychological well-being mediate the relationship between social media use and quality of life.

Materials and methods

Population and sampling

The population of this study consists of older adults aged 60 and above residing in official nursing homes in Istanbul. Despite efforts to locate written records specifying the number of older adults in these nursing homes, no such data was found. Therefore, consultations were conducted with the Ministry of Family and Social Services Istanbul Provincial Directorate Elderly Service Units. Based on these consultations, it was reported that there are nine official nursing homes in Istanbul, housing 1,383 older adults. Accordingly, the study population comprises 1,383 older adults residing in these official nursing homes.

The term *official nursing homes* refers to publicly funded facilities operated under the authority of the Ministry of Family and Social Services in Turkey. These institutions primarily serve older adults who lack sufficient income, housing, or family support. Admission is generally prioritized for individuals with limited socioeconomic resources or those experiencing social isolation. Services provided include basic health care, social activities, and accommodation, aiming to support residents' physical and psychosocial well-being.

A purposive (judgmental) sampling method was employed for this study. This non-probabilistic approach involves the selection of participants based on the researcher's judgment regarding their relevance to the study objectives (Coşkun et al., 2017). The sample consisted of 302 older adults, including 151 social media users and 151 nonusers, residing in six of the nine official nursing homes in Istanbul. Including both users and nonusers allowed for a comparative analysis to better understand how social media use relates to perceived social support, psychological well-being, and quality of life. Although the study's primary focus was on the impact of social media use, examining nonusers provided a broader perspective on the

potential advantages and limitations of digital engagement among this population.

The participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: being 60 years or older, having no psychiatric disorders, no cognitive impairments such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease, no hearing problems, and being able to communicate and voluntarily participate in the research. The exclusion criteria were as follows: participants diagnosed with severe cognitive impairments (e.g. advanced Alzheimer's disease), those unable to understand or respond meaningfully to interview questions due to significant physical illness or injury, and individuals who were unwilling or unable to provide informed consent.

Clinical assessments regarding participants' capacity to engage in the research were conducted by licensed healthcare professionals at the nursing homes. These professionals routinely evaluated residents' cognitive and physical functioning. In addition, the research team confirmed participants' ability to provide informed consent by privately discussing the study with each individual, ensuring comprehension, and consulting with staff when necessary. Only those who provided written informed consent were included in the final sample.

Data collection process

The researchers collected the data for this study through face-to-face interviews conducted between 24 January 2022 and 24 April 2022. The researchers utilized the Personal Information Form, the Psychological Well-Being Scale, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Quality of Life Scale for Older People. All data were gathered exclusively for research purposes and were not part of any routine care or administrative procedures within the nursing homes.

Before data collection, the study protocol received ethical approval from the relevant ethics committee, and institutional permission was obtained from the General Directorate of Services for the Elderly. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants after providing a clear explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and the voluntary nature of participation. The participants were given a detailed written consent form outlining the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time without consequence, and the confidentiality measures in place to protect their personal information. Furthermore, the research team verbally explained the study content to ensure participants' full understanding.

All interviews were conducted in private settings within the institutions to ensure confidentiality and participant comfort. Only those participants who provided written consent proceeded to participate in the interviews.

Personal Information Form

The Personal Information Form consists of two main sections. In the first part, there are a total of 18 questions to determine the sociodemographic characteristics of the elderly (age, gender, marital status, educational status, etc.), and in the second part, there are a total of 18 questions to determine the characteristics of the older adults related to social media use. Social media use was assessed through a set of questions developed by the researchers to capture platform preferences and usage frequency. Participants were asked whether they use any social media platforms, and if so, which ones (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook,

YouTube, Instagram). They were also asked how frequently they use these platforms. Additionally, this section includes questions aimed at understanding the purposes and perceived reasons for using social media, such as staying in touch with family and friends, accessing news, entertainment, or seeking social support. Including such questions is intended to provide deeper insight into the motivational context of social media engagement among older adults.

The Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB)

Developed by Diener et al. in 2009, the SPWB defines the important functions of an individual's functioning, from positive relationships and feelings of competence to living a purposeful and meaningful life. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was conducted by Telef (2013). The scale consists of 8 items, and all items are expressed positively. The items of the scale are scored using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 8, and the highest score is 56. A low score indicates a low level of psychological well-being, while a high score indicates that the person has many psychological strengths and resources. The item factor loadings of the scale were found to vary between 0.54 and 0.76. As a result of the reliability study of the scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.80 (Telef, 2013, pp. 376–381).

The MSPSS

The SPSS was developed by Zimet et al. (1988) to measure the perception of social support, adapted into Turkish by Eker and Arkar (1995) and revised in 2001 (Eker et al., 2001). The reason for the revision of the scale was that the concept of a special person was misunderstood and was exemplified as "dating, oral, fiancé, relative, neighbor, doctor." It is a 7-point Likert-type scale with a minimum score of 12 and a maximum score of 84. This 12-item scale has three subcategories: family (3,4,8,11), friend (6,7,9,12), and special person (1,2,5,10). The subscale score is obtained by summing the scores of the items in each subscale, and the total scale score is obtained by summing the subscale scores of family, friends, and special persons. A high score on the scale indicates that the perceived social support is also high. The Cronbach alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.89, the Cronbach alpha value of the family subscale was 0.85, the Cronbach alpha value of the friends subscale was 0.88, and the Cronbach alpha value of the special person subscale was 0.92 (Eker et al., 2001).

Quality of life scale in older People (CASP-19)

The scale developed by Hyde et al. (2003) to measure the quality of life of the elderly was adapted into Turkish by Türkoğlu and Adıbelli (2014). The scale consists of 19 items and has four sub-dimensions: "control," "autonomy," "pleasure," and "self-actualization." Each item on the scale is scored using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "never" (0 points) to "always" (3 points). Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 of the scale are reverse-coded. In the 19-item scale, as a result of repeated factor analyses, items with factor loadings below 0.35 were removed, and a scale with 13 items and 2 factors was obtained. In the statistical evaluation of whether the items of the scale measure the same concept or not, it was found that the scale was collected in 2 factors. Items

3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19, which contain positive meaning, constitute factor 1, while items 1, 2, and 8, which contain negative meaning, constitute factor 2. The sub-dimensions of the original scale were changed by shifting the items between factors and the questions in factor 1 were named "perception of autonomy and satisfaction" since the questions in factor 1 were generally about the elderly people's satisfaction with the past, freedom, and hopefulness for the future, and the questions in factor 2 were named as "perception of obstacle" since the questions in factor 2 mentioned an obstacle to what the elderly people wanted to do. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.91, factor 1 was 0.93, and factor 2 was 0.75 (Türkoğlu & Adıbelli, 2014, p. 101).

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 25 and the PROCESS MacroPlug-in. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each scale to assess internal consistency. Demographic and variable data were summarized using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, percentage, and frequencies. The analytical phase comprised correlation and mediation analyses. The direct and indirect effects of the proposed model were tested using PROCESS-Macro Model 4. All statistical tests were conducted at a significance level of .05.

Study limitation

This study is based on a cross-sectional design and relies exclusively on self-reported quantitative data. As such, it does not permit causal interpretations of the relationships between social media use, perceived social support, psychological well-being, and quality of life. Additionally, the lack of qualitative insights limits the depth of understanding regarding participants' lived experiences with social media. Future studies should consider mixed-method or longitudinal designs to explore these dynamics more comprehensively.

Another key limitation is the homogeneity of the sample, as the participants were primarily from nursing homes in Istanbul. This may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations, especially those who are not institutionalized or who live in different geographical or cultural settings. Future research should consider expanding the sample to include a more diverse range of older adults, such as those living independently or in rural areas, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how social media affects different subgroups within the aging population.

Ethical aspects of the research

Before commencing the data collection process, ethical approval was obtained from [Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University Rectorate Graduate Education Institute Ethics Committee], with the approval dated [28.01.2022] and numbered [2022/01]. The study was conducted by the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Data protection and security

All collected data were anonymized immediately upon entry. Digital data were stored on password-protected computers, while physical documents were secured in locked cabinets at

the principal investigator's institution. Access to both digital and physical data was strictly limited to members of the research team. All data handling procedures complied with the data protection policies of [Institution Name] and adhered to relevant national privacy regulations.

Results

Demographic characteristics of respondents

The sociodemographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

The participants comprised 49% women and 51% men, with 20.6% aged 60–70, 48.7% aged 71–80, and 30.8% aged 81 and above. Marital status showed that 15.2% were married, 13.9% were single, 47.4% were divorced, and 23.5% were widowed. Regarding education, 30.1% had primary school education, 24.2% had high school education, and 25.5% were university graduates. Income sources were primarily from SGK (46.4%), followed by the Pension Fund (38.4%) and Bağ-Kur (9.3%). Regarding income levels, 47.7% earned between 2001 and 4000 Turkish Lira (TL).

Among the 302 participants, 71.5% reported using at least one social media platform. The most commonly used platforms were WhatsApp (68.2%), Facebook (41.7%), and YouTube (35.4%). A smaller proportion of participants reported using Instagram (18.9%). Regarding frequency, 56.8% reported daily use, 28.2% used social media several times a week, and the remaining participants used it less frequently. An independent samples *t*-test showed no significant difference in social media use frequency between men and women ($t(300) = 0.83, p = .41$). However, chi-square tests revealed minor age-related differences in platform preferences: participants aged 60–69 were more likely to use Facebook and YouTube compared to those aged 70 and above ($\chi^2(1) = 6.17, p < .05$). On the other hand, WhatsApp usage was common across all age groups.

Correlation analyze

For individuals who use social media, there is a statistically significant and positive relationship between Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB) and CASP-19 ($r = 0.424, p = .000$). Similarly, a strong positive relationship was observed between MSPSS and CASP-19 ($r = .472, p = .000$). For individuals who do not use social media, the relationship between SPWB and CASP-19 was weaker but significant ($r = .247, p = .002$). A stronger positive relationship was found between MSPSS and CASP-19 ($r = .407, p = .000$). These results suggest that the level of relationship between the scales may differ according to the level of social media use (Table 2). As a result, the relationships between SPWB, MSPSS, and CASP-19 are generally stronger in

individuals who use social media. This suggests that social media use may play a role as a factor that strengthens individuals' perception of social support and quality of life.

Mediation analysis

The results of mediating effects are presented in Table 3. Separate regression analyses were conducted on the proposed conceptual model at each step. Initially, the influence of independent variables on the mediator variables, perceived social support, and psychological resilience was determined, followed by their link to the dependent variable, quality of life.

Social media use (independent variable) had a significant and negative effect on both perceived social support (mediating variable) ($B = -8.298, SE = 1.7823, t = -4.66, p < .001$) and psychological well-being (mediating variable) ($B = -7.894, SE = 0.9019, t = -8.75, p < .001$). These findings indicate that increased

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of participants.

Variables	Categories	<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Female	148	49.0
	Male	154	51.0
Age groups	60–70 age group	62	20.6
	71–80 age group	147	48.7
	81+ age group	93	30.8
Marital status	Married	46	15.2
	Single	42	13.9
	Divorced	71	47.4
	Widow	143	23.5
Education	Illiterate	10	3.3
	Literate	12	4.0
Source of income	Primary school graduate	91	30.1
	Secondary school graduate	39	12.9
	High school graduate	73	24.2
	University graduate	77	25.5
	SGK	140	46.4
Income status	Pension fund	116	38.4
	Bağ-kur	28	9.3
	Other	18	5.9
	0–2000	32	10.6
	2001–4000	144	47.7
	4001–6000	102	33.8
	6001+	24	7.9

The income levels are presented in Turkish Lira (TL). For international readers, 2000 TL is approximately 100 Euros, based on current exchange rates (exchange rates may vary).

Table 2. Correlation analysis between scale scores in older adults who use and do not use social media.

		Use of social media			Not using social media		
		SPWB	MSPSS	CASP-19	SPWB	MSPSS	CASP-19
CASP-19	<i>r</i>	.247	.517		.424	.472	
	<i>p</i>	.002	.000		.000	.000	
	<i>N</i>	151	151	151	150	150	150
SPWB	<i>r</i>		.407	.247		.521	.424
	<i>p</i>		.000	.000		.000	.000
	<i>N</i>	151	151	151	151	151	151

Table 3. The mediating effect of perceived social support and psychological resilience in the relationship between the use of social media and quality of life.

Predictors	Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>F</i>	Adj <i>R</i> ²
Step 1	Perceived social support	−8.298	1.7823	−0.518	−4.6558*	21.6765*	.0674
Use of social media							
Step 2	Psychological well-being	−7.894	0.9019	−0.901	−8.7531*	76.6161*	.2034
Use of social media							
Step 3	Quality of life	−3.404	0.8607	−0.445	−3.9548*	15.6401*	.0496
Use of social media							
Step 4	Quality of life	0.065	0.0271	0.136	2.4094*	41.7399*	.2959
Perceived social support		0.413	0.0535	0.473	7.7129*		
Psychological well-being		0.398	0.8334	0.052	0.4774		
Use of social media							

* $p < .000$.

social media use in elderly individuals living in nursing homes is associated with decreased levels of both perceived social support and psychological well-being.

When the model for the quality of life variable is examined, both perceived social support ($B=0.065$, $SE=0.0271$, $t=2.41$, $p<.05$) and psychological well-being ($B=0.413$, $SE=0.0535$, $t=7.71$, $p<.001$) have a significant and positive effect on quality of life (dependent variable). These findings suggest that higher levels of perceived social support and psychological well-being contribute to an increase in quality of life in older individuals.

The direct effect of social media use on quality of life lost its significance after the mediating variables were included in the model ($B=0.398$, $SE=0.8334$, $t=0.477$, $p>.05$). This result shows that the effect of social media use on quality of life is realized indirectly through perceived social support and psychological well-being, and the direct effect disappears with the inclusion of these variables in the model. This shows that there is full mediation in the model. In addition, while the explained variance of social media use on quality of life alone was 4.96% ($F=15.64$; $p<.001$), when perceived social support and psychological well-being were added to the model, the explained variance increased to 29.59% ($F=41.74$; $p<.001$). This shows that the mediating variables made a significant contribution to the model. Additionally, the use of social media had a very low variance explained for quality of life (4.9%; $F=15.6401$, $p<.001$), but with the inclusion of perceived social support and psychological well-being, the variance explained considerably increased to 29.5% ($F=41.7399$, $p<.001$). The results of the proposed model are shown in Figure 1.

Indirect effects

The total, direct, and indirect effects at each step are shown in Table 4.

The total effect of non-social media users on quality of life was significant and negative compared to users ($B=-3.4040$, $SE=0.8607$, 95% CI $[-5.0978, -1.7101]$). This finding suggests that older people who do not use social media tend to have a lower quality of life compared to those who do.

Looking at the indirect effects, the effect of nonusers on quality of life was significant and negative through both perceived social support ($B=-0.5417$, $SE=0.2588$, 95% CI $[-1.1030, -0.0867]$) and psychological well-being ($B=-3.2602$, $SE=0.5360$, 95% CI $[-4.3560, -2.2456]$). In contrast, the direct effect was not statistically significant ($B=0.3979$, $SE=0.8334$, 95% CI $[-1.2422, 2.0381]$). This suggests that the effect of social media use on quality of life is mainly mediated indirectly through mediating variables. These findings suggest that social media use may indirectly affect quality of life by increasing perceived social support and psychological well-being levels.

Discussion

This study explored the relationship between social media use and quality of life, perceived social support, and psychological well-being among older adults, with particular focus on the mediating roles of perceived social support and psychological well-being. The results of this study strongly support the

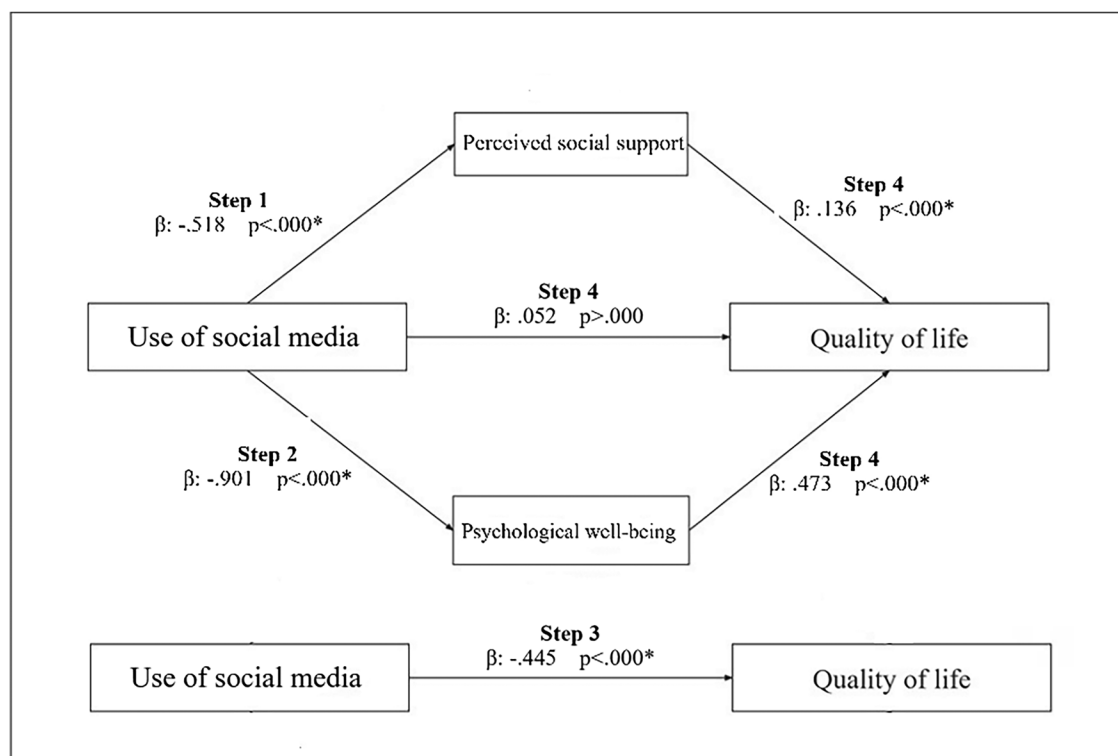


Figure 1. The results of the proposed model. (* $p<.001$).

Table 4. Total, direct, and indirect effects of social media use on quality of life.

	Uns. effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI	
The total effect of the use of social media on quality of life	-3.4040	0.8607	-5.0978	-1.7101	Sig.
The direct effect of the use of social media on quality of life	0.3979	0.8334	-1.2422	2.0381	N.S.
Indirect path					
Quality of life > Perceived social support > Use of social media	-0.5417	0.2588	-1.1030	-0.0867	Sig.
Quality of life > Psychological well-being > Use of social media	-3.2602	0.5360	-4.3560	-2.2456	Sig.

LLCI: Lower Level Confidence Interval, ULCI: Upper Level Confidence Interval.

hypothesis that social media use in older adults is positively associated with quality of life, perceived social support, and psychological well-being. These findings add to the growing body of research suggesting that digital platforms can have beneficial effects on emotional and social well-being, especially for aging populations.

The study found that older adults who engaged with social media reported higher levels of quality of life. Social media provides older individuals with opportunities to connect with others, participate in social activities, and access emotional support, all of which are crucial for maintaining well-being in later life. These results are consistent with previous research that shows how social media can reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation, which are often exacerbated in older adults due to mobility limitations or living in institutional settings like nursing homes (Kivi et al., 2021). Social media platforms offer a means of fostering virtual social interactions, thus improving the emotional health of individuals who may otherwise experience social isolation.

In terms of perceived social support, the study confirmed that social media use is positively associated with higher levels of perceived social support. Older adults who used social media platforms reported a stronger sense of being supported emotionally, particularly from family and friends, compared to those who did not engage with these platforms. This aligns with existing studies that highlight the role of social media in facilitating social connections and providing older adults with easier access to emotional support (Maqbool & Ullah, 2021; Wu & Chiou, 2020). As social support is crucial for reducing stress, improving mental health, and enhancing life satisfaction, these findings underscore the importance of virtual interactions in supporting the emotional well-being of older adults.

Furthermore, the relationship between social media use and psychological well-being was also positive. Older adults who actively engaged with social media reported higher psychological well-being scores, which aligns with studies suggesting that social media can reduce loneliness and foster feelings of belonging (Chopik, 2016). These platforms not only enable individuals to stay connected with others but also provide them with opportunities to share positive experiences, thus enhancing overall psychological health. Social media offers a platform for older adults to engage with the outside world, share their experiences, and receive positive feedback, which can buffer against negative emotions like depression and anxiety.

Importantly, the study also revealed that perceived social support and psychological well-being mediate the relationship between social media use and quality of life in older adults. This highlights the importance of both emotional support and psychological health in improving life satisfaction. Social media serves as a key tool in providing older individuals with opportunities for connection and support, which in turn leads to improved life satisfaction. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that social support can mediate the relationship between social media use and well-being outcomes, as well as the idea that maintaining strong social networks is integral to healthy aging (Erfani & Abedin, 2018; Paknejad et al., 2021).

The results of this study are in line with previous research highlighting the positive impact of social media on older adults. Studies have consistently shown that social media can enhance life satisfaction, reduce loneliness, and foster social connectedness (Kircaburun et al., 2020; Kivi et al., 2021). Additionally, the finding that perceived social support mediates the relationship between social media use and quality of life is supported by research showing that older adults who perceive high levels of

social support through digital interactions report better mental health outcomes (Han et al., 2021; Paknejad et al., 2021).

However, it is important to acknowledge the dual nature of social media's effects. While the majority of research supports the positive impact of social media on well-being, some studies highlight the potential negative effects, especially in cases of excessive use or when social media becomes a substitute for face-to-face interactions. Prolonged exposure to social media can sometimes lead to negative outcomes such as social comparison, anxiety, or depression (Zhang et al., 2021). In this study, while social media use was generally associated with positive outcomes, the potential for negative effects should not be overlooked, and a balanced approach to social media engagement is critical.

Conclusion

In conclusion, perceived social support and psychological well-being play critical mediating roles in the relationship between social media use and quality of life among older adults. Social media serves as a valuable tool for maintaining existing relationships, fostering new connections, and enhancing emotional support, which collectively contribute to improved psychological well-being and overall quality of life. However, the quality of social interactions on these platforms is paramount, emphasizing the need to encourage meaningful and positive engagement.

As social media increasingly becomes integral to communication, its role in promoting a healthier and more satisfying aging process deserves greater attention. These findings highlight the importance of facilitating older adults' access to technology and providing education on effective and purposeful social media use. Future research should delve deeper into these dynamics, exploring strategies to optimize the benefits of social media for enhancing perceived social support, psychological well-being, and quality of life in aging populations.

While the findings suggest significant associations, it is important to interpret these results with caution due to the study's cross-sectional nature. Future research should incorporate qualitative approaches to gain deeper insight into the subjective meanings older adults assign to their social media use and its perceived link to their well-being. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to explore the directionality and long-term implications of these relationships.

Future research could explore the specific types of social media platforms that are most beneficial for older adults. For example, platforms that facilitate more intimate or visual communication (such as Instagram or video calls) may have stronger emotional benefits than text-based platforms like Twitter or Facebook. Additionally, examining the negative aspects of social media use, such as its potential to exacerbate feelings of social comparison or cause digital fatigue, would provide a more balanced view of its role in aging populations.

Consent to participate

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

IRB protocol/human subjects approval numbers

Ethics committee approval was received from Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University Rectorate Graduate Education Institute Ethics Committee (Ethics committee no: 2022/01 dated 28.01.2022).

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Data availability statement

Data available on request from the corresponding author.

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