

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Perceived Social Support and Psychological Distress as the Mediating and Moderating Factors on Individuals' Well-being and Life Satisfaction

Yan-Li Siaw<sup>1</sup>, Mei-Yui Law<sup>2</sup>, Joanne Sau-Ching Yim<sup>2</sup>, Pui-Kuan How<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Social Science, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology, 53300 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Life satisfaction constitutes a crucial aspect of an individual's health and well-being. It is a worldwide concern due to the significant impact on individuals' psychological development. The current quantitative study aims to bridge the literature gap by proposing a research model to assess the mediating effect of perceived social support on the relationship between well-being and life satisfaction. Simultaneously, the moderating impact of psychological distress on the model was appraised among Malaysian adults. **Materials and methods:** A questionnaire was administered to collect data from a total of 201 adults through four measurement scales. The data were analysed on both SPSS 21.0 and AMOS 23.0 software. **Results:** The results discovered that 62.7% of the participants achieved a high well-being level, followed by 58.2% with a high perceived social support, 53.7% with psychological distress, and 51.7% with high life satisfaction. Significant impacts of well-being and perceived social support were also revealed on life satisfaction, with perceived social support mediating the association between well-being and life satisfaction and psychological distress moderating the model. Total 51% variance of adults' life satisfaction was explained by the proposed model. A direct effect of adults' well-being (0.56) higher than the indirect effect (0.11) with the total model effect as 0.67. **Conclusion:** The proposed model was corroborated by indicating the importance of well-being, perceived social support, and psychological distress in Malaysian adults' life satisfaction. The study recommended effective strategies to increase individuals' life satisfaction and demonstrated the significance of improving public well-being, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic.

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## Corresponding Author:

Law Mei-Yui, PhD  
Email: lawmy@tarc.edu.my  
Tel : +6016-3324569

## INTRODUCTION

Adults' well-being and life satisfaction are essential for sustainable national development as human capital quality produces numerous positive outcomes, including economic growth and productivity, social stability, reduced healthcare costs, and a longer lifespan. The Dictionary of Developmental Psychology defines life satisfaction as the extent to which individuals are content with personal lives (1). Life satisfaction is also conceptualised as individuals' cognitive judgement of overall life satisfaction (2), which includes not only fulfilling life necessities but also attaining desired

life goals. Moreover, life satisfaction is a subjective judgmental process of individuals evaluating life quality with corresponding perceptions of quality standards (2). Factors contributing to life satisfaction constantly change across an individual's lifespan (3), with multiple factors providing respective influences at different life stages.

Young adults encounter various challenges and changes during the developmental and transitional phases (4). Comparatively, adults tend to focus more on the future related to careers and interpersonal relationships. Existing studies demonstrate that life events, including work achievement, academic excellence, and positive relationships, will lead to a higher life satisfaction level (4, 5). Subsequently, the pursuit of personal growth, health, and purposes by engaging in activities aligned with personal passions becomes more dominant in determining life satisfaction in the later life stages.

While life satisfaction, which is a representation of well-being, attracted significant researchers' interests, certain scholars pinpointed the scarcity of research on overall satisfaction and well-being, especially on how life was impacted by the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic (6). The present study employed a bottom-up framework to explicate life satisfaction by integrating the human flourishing concept to delineate well-being (7,8). The bottom-up theory (9) postulates that individuals satisfied with various life aspects would also be satisfied with overall life. Particularly, the theory investigates how individuals place different weights on each life aspect, which allows for examining more life domains for a more holistic understanding. In daily life, the social support received contributes not only to specific aspects but also to overall life satisfaction (10). Furthermore, negative appraisals of experiences can perpetuate psychological distress, which in turn affects overall life satisfaction.

The current well-being literature is highly extensive. Specifically, several scholars perceive well-being as the presence of positive emotions, including happiness, instead of overall life satisfaction (11). Other academicians posited that the subjective experience of well-being encompasses both affective and human-functioning dimensions. Ryff's model of well-being describes six dimensions of personal and social functioning, namely environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, life purpose, self-acceptance, and positive relationships (12). Although well-being and life satisfaction are frequently used interchangeably, research had also differentiated between these concepts and demonstrated significant correlation between well-being and life satisfaction (13,14). Existing empirical evidence also demonstrates other aspects that potentially impact life satisfaction and well-being, such as income levels, family status, health, and physical activities (15). In addition, a more holistic approach apart from the psychological or affective dimensions will also thoroughly reflect the definition of the World Health Organisation by considering physical and mental health. A comprehensive measurement of well-being includes emotional health, physical health, meaning and purpose, character strengths, social connectedness, and financial security, which propounds well-being as achieving all positive aspects of human functioning (16). Thus, the present study included the aforementioned dimensions to holistically examine well-being.

Social support is generally regarded as reciprocal relationships for individuals to obtain emotional, physical, and informational support. Social support is vital to the communication network, which promotes encouraging relationships for individuals to feel valued, cared for, or assisted when needed (17). Several study types, including systematic reviews, underscored the positive impact of social support, with life satisfaction and well-being as the primary outcomes (18-21).

Based on Ryff's model of wellbeing, perceived social support is crucial component of positive relationship, as individuals who have positive connection with others are more likely to experience social support. Nonetheless, increasing individualism due to modernisation or lifestyle commitment might prohibit social interactions when individuals are self-occupied or self-centred (19). Social support also becomes more pivotal as previous researchers revealed a more positive impact than other factors in alleviating the negative impacts of physical and psychological illnesses (22). Furthermore, perceived social support was discovered to significantly mediate the negative impact of psychological distress on life satisfaction (3), which demonstrated the mediation effect in contributing to life satisfaction. Therefore, this study evaluated perceived social support as an exogenous variable and a mediating variable in the post-pandemic context.

Psychological distress is generally manifested through negative psychological symptoms, such as stress, fear, anxiety, and mental fatigue, amidst life difficulties (23). Prior researchers highlighted the significant negative association of psychological distress with life satisfaction and perceived social support from family, friends and other significant individuals (3,19). Research based on Ryff's wellbeing model had also supported the theoretical relationships between psychological distress, wellbeing and life satisfaction (24). Nevertheless, certain academicians posited that psychological distress might produce a positive impact as psychological distress might elevate a sense of escapism and engender individuals to exhibit coping behaviours and resilience (25,26). Psychological distress could also motivate individuals to mitigate negative encounters. Accordingly, existing research has demonstrated the potential to moderate the strength of relationships between various psychological and attitudinal constructs aside from the potential to alter the strength of perceptions and feelings (27, 28).

Past studies revealed significant relationships between well-being, perceived social support, psychological distress, and life satisfaction. A more comprehensive investigation will integrate the variables into a mediation and moderation model for discovering more nuanced associations of the variables. The model could also provide opportunities to simultaneously investigate the contingent and indirect effects of the variables. Accordingly, the present study developed a model to assess the mediating effect of perceived social support on the relationship between well-being and life satisfaction moderated by psychological distress.

The current study sought to comprehend adults' life satisfaction by focusing on the four study objectives, namely (a) to identify the levels of Malaysian adults' life satisfaction, well-being, psychological distress, and perceived social support, (b) to examine the influences of perceived social support and well-being on adults'

life satisfaction, (c) to determine the mediating effect of perceived social support on the association between Malaysian adults' well-being and life satisfaction, (d) to assess the moderating effect of psychological distress on the proposed model. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the present study.

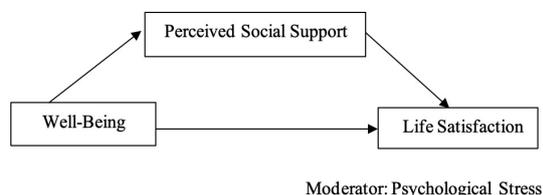


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Research Design**

The current cross-sectional quantitative study examined the mediating effect of perceived social support and the moderating effect of psychological distress on the relationship between Malaysian adults' well-being and life satisfaction. The response options of the study instruments were measured through a Likert scale, which enabled the researchers to quantify and compute the global score. The data related to life satisfaction, well-being, psychological distress, and perceived social support were collected concurrently by employing Google Forms from August to October 2022.

**Participants**

A total of 201 Malaysian adults with 50 male and 151 female participants completed the questionnaires via Google Forms. The location and participants were recruited through combining of multiple sampling techniques to ensure more accurate and reliable research outcomes. A majority of the participants were Chinese (n = 144; 71.6%). Approximately 45% (n = 91) of the participants were married while approximately 44% (n = 88) of the participants were single. Table I presents the details of the participants' profiles.

Table I: Profile of the Participants

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	50	24.8
Female	151	75.2
<b>Age</b>		
18 - 39 years old	124	61.7
40 years old and above	77	38.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Malay	25	12.4
Chinese	144	71.6
Indian	23	11.4
Others	9	4.6
<b>Religion</b>		
Muslim	28	14.0

CONTINUE

Table I: Profile of the Participants (CONT.)

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Religion</b>		
Buddhist	105	52.2
Christian	42	20.9
Hindu	19	9.4
Atheist	7	3.5
<b>Relationship</b>		
Single	88	43.8
In a relationship	22	10.9
Married	91	45.3
<b>Educational Level</b>		
Secondary/ High school	8	4.0
Diploma/ Degree	104	51.7
Master/ Doctoral	89	44.3

N = 201

**Instruments**

This study utilised the well-being assessment with 40 items developed through the human flourishing programme at Harvard University (29) to measure six dimensions of well-being, namely (a) emotional health, (b) physical health, (c) purpose, (d) character strengths, (e) social connectedness, and (f) financial security. Each item was measured on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 0 as strongly disagree to 10 as strongly agree. Six items (Items 4, 5, 20, 31, 38, and 40) were required to be reverse-coded due to containing negatively worded items. The global score was acquired by summing the responses, with a higher score indicating a higher well-being level. Cronbach's alpha scores for the six dimensions were also satisfactory, which ranged between .759 and .950 (Emotional Health = .829, Physical Health = .759, Purpose = .950, Character Strengths = .852, Social Connectedness = .891, and Financial Security = .870). The Cronbach's alpha score for overall well-being was .949.

The current study adopted the satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) with five items to appraise the cognitive judgments of life satisfaction (2). Each item was assessed on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly Agree. No item was required to be reverse-coded. The overall life satisfaction score was obtained by summing all responses of an individual, with a higher score suggesting a higher life satisfaction degree. The Cronbach's alpha score ( $\alpha = .911$ ) was satisfactory. Meanwhile, the multidimensional scale of perceived social support (MSPSS; Zimet et al., 1988) was utilised to evaluate three dimensions of perceived social support (30), namely (a) family, (b) friends, and (c) significant others. The MSPSS comprises 12 items. Each item was measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 7 as strongly agree. No item was reverse-coded. The global score was acquired by summing all responses of an individual, with a higher score positing higher perceived social support. The Cronbach's alpha scores for the three dimensions

ranging between .922 and .937 (Family = .922, Friends = .937, Significant Others = .937) were satisfactory. The Cronbach's alpha score of overall perceived social support was .932.

The Kessler psychological distress scale (K10; Kessler et al., 2002) was employed to assess adults' psychological distress (31). The self-reported screening instrument was initially developed for the redesigned United States National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). The instrument contains 10 items, with each item measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 as none of the time to 5 as all of the time. No item was reverse-coded. The total score was calculated by summing all responses of a respondent. Scores below 20 are considered well, scores between 20 and 24 are considered to possess a mild mental disorder, scores between 25 and 29 are considered to possess a moderate mental disorder, and scores 30 and above are considered to possess a severe mental disorder (31). The Cronbach's alpha score of = .936 in this study was satisfactory.

**Procedures**

This study received ethical approval (Reference number: TAR UC/ED/2022/03-2) from the Research Development and Management Committee of the researchers' university on 15 June 2022. Subsequently, the questionnaire in the format of Google Forms was distributed to Malaysian adults through social media platforms, including WhatsApp and Facebook. Participants' informed consent was obtained to ensure confidentiality before collecting data. The participants were also allowed to ask relevant questions through email.

**Data Analysis**

Both SPSS 21.0 and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) 23.0 software were utilised to analyse the collected data. Descriptive analysis was conducted to report the level of each variable (construct). Three levels of mean scores were utilised in the current study to identify the degrees of adults' life satisfaction, well-being, and perceived social support. Particularly, the composite mean was divided into three levels, namely low, moderate, and high, with equal intervals to interpret the mean scores recommended in Pallant's mean score interpretation (2016) (32). Meanwhile, the present study divided the participants into two groups according to the psychological distress scores (31), namely (a) psychologically well individuals and (b) individuals with mild-to-severe mental disorders. A path analysis was performed to determine the model fit degree for the measurement model, the structural model, and mediation and moderation analyses through structural equation modelling (SEM). The model fit level serves to affirm the acceptance level of the proposed model via the fit indices of the measurement model (33, 34). Hair et al. (2017) recommended a minimum of three to four fit indices to test the model fit. Simultaneously, the

structural model measured the effects of the exogenous construct (well-being and perceived social support) on the endogenous construct (life satisfaction) (34). The proposed model also appraised the mediation and moderation impacts.

**RESULTS**

**The Levels of Malaysian Adults' Life Satisfaction, Well-Being, Psychological Distress, and Perceived Social Support**

The results of all well-being dimensions demonstrated a high level of well-being among the participants except for financial security (see Table II). Specifically, 46.8% of the participants reported a moderate financial security degree and less than 50% reported high financial security (n = 80). While 58.2% of the participants exhibited a high perceived social support level with an overall mean score of 5.10 (SD = 1.16), most participants reported a moderate degree of overall life satisfaction (M = 4.63; SD = 1.34). The results also revealed that 53.7% of the participants possessed mental issues with mild symptoms (n = 39; 19.4%), followed by moderate (n = 21; 10.4% ) and severe (n = 48; 23.9%).

**Table II : Level of Adults' Well-Being, Perceived Social Support, Life Satisfaction, and Psychological Distress**

	Level Frequency (%)		
	Low	Middle	High
<b>Well-Being</b> (M=6.96; SD=1.30)			
Emotional Health	1 (0.5%)	82 (40.8%)	118 (58.7%)
Physical Health	1 (0.5%)	60 (29.8%)	140 (69.7%)
Purpose	8 (4.0%)	40 (19.9%)	153 (76.1%)
Character Strengths	2 (1.0%)	52 (25.9%)	147 (73.1%)
Social Connectedness	9 (4.5%)	79 (39.3%)	113 (56.2%)
Financial Security	27 (13.4%)	94 (46.8%)	80 (39.8%)
<b>Perceived Social Support</b> (M=5.10; SD=1.16)			
Family	17 (8.5%)	62 (30.8%)	122 (60.7%)
Friends	19 (9.5%)	60 (29.8%)	122 (60.7%)
Significant others	15 (7.5%)	51 (25.4%)	135 (67.2%)
<b>Life Satisfaction</b> (M=4.63; SD=1.34)			
	26 (13%)	71 (35.3%)	104 (51.7%)
	<b>Well</b>	<b>Risk on Mental Problem</b>	
<b>Psychological Distress</b> (M=22.17; SD=8.54)	93 (46.3%)	108 (53.7%)	

Note: (1) Level of Well-Being: Low 0.00 - 3.32; Middle 3.33 - 6.65; High 6.66 -10.00; (2) Level of Perceived Social Support and Life Satisfaction: Low 1.00-2.99; Middle 3.00-4.99; High 5.00-7.00; (3) Psychological Distress: Well Less than 20 scores; Mental Problem 20 and above

**Measurement Model: Model Fit**

The model fit indices determine the suitability of data modelling. Table III depicts the threshold values for model fit indices, wherein all values of the proposed research framework fit the threshold values. Hence, the

proposed research framework was statistically accepted.

**Table III : Fit Indices**

Fit Indices	Recommended Value	Proposed Model Value
Relative Chi- square	≤5.00	3.25
AGFI	≥0.90	0.855
GFI	≥0.90	0.913
CFI	≥0.90	0.922
IFI	≥0.90	0.923
RMSEA	≤0.80	0.106

**Path Analysis: Impacts of Well-being and Perceived Social Support on Adults’ Life Satisfaction**

The current study discovered the significant impacts of adults’ well-being on life satisfaction ( $\beta = .56; p < 0.001$ ) and perceived social support ( $\beta = .48; p < 0.001$ ) and the significant impact of perceived social support on life satisfaction ( $\beta = .24; p < 0.001$ ). The path analysis demonstrated that a 51% variance of adults’ life satisfaction was explained by the proposed model, which propounded that adults’ well-being contributed the highest to life satisfaction. A direct effect of adults’ well-being (0.56) on life satisfaction was also higher than the indirect effect (0.11), with the total model effect as 0.67.

The Mediating Effect of Perceived Social Support on the Relationship between Life Satisfaction and Well-being  
 A mediating effect exists when the third construct intervenes in the significant association between two other related constructs (35). The inter-correlations between constructs were corroborated before performing mediation analysis in this study, in which significant correlations were discovered between all constructs (see Table IV). Subsequently, the mediation analysis revealed that the standardised direct impact of adults’ well-being on life satisfaction was statistically significant in the direct and mediation models ( $\beta = 0.679; p < 0.000$ ) and ( $\beta = 0.564; p < 0.000$ ) respectively. In addition, Table V portrays the statistically significant standardised direct impacts of adults’ well-being on perceived social support ( $\beta = 0.483; p < 0.000$ ) and perceived social support on life satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.241; p < 0.000$ ). Resultantly, perceived social support partially mediated the association between adults’ well-being and life satisfaction.

**Table IV : Correlation between the Constructs**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Well-Being	-	-	-	-
(2) Perceived Social Support	.433**	-	-	-
(3) Life Satisfaction	.643**	.452**	-	-
(4) Psychological distress	-.649**	-.264**	-.433**	-

**Table V: Results of Mediating Effect**

Model	
Direct Model	
Well-Being ---> Life Satisfaction	$\beta = 0.679 (P<0.000)$
Mediation Model	
Well-Being ---> Life Satisfaction	$\beta = 0.564 (P<0.000)$
Well-Being ---> Perceived Social Support	$\beta = 0.483 (P<0.000)$
Perceived SS ---> Life Satisfaction	$\beta = 0.241 (P<0.000)$

**Moderating Effect of Psychological Distress**

Table VI illustrates a moderating effect of psychological distress on the proposed model, with significant values smaller than measurement residuals in the CMIN model fit ( $p < .001$ ). The results revealed a significant moderating role of type psychological distress on the relationship between well-being and life satisfaction. Mild to severe mental problem (.722) have a stronger influence on the individual life satisfaction compare with well psychological (.395). While, finding indicated that only well psychological significant moderating the relationship between perceived social support on life satisfaction for the present study.

**Table VI: Results of Moderation Effect**

Model fit	
CMIN	
Unconstrained	131.75 (P<0.000)
Measurement Residuals	214.07 (P<0.000)
Moderation effect	
Well-being	
Well Psychological	.395 (P<.000)
Mild to Severe Mental Problem	.722 (P<.000)
Perceived Social Support	
Well Psychological	.398 (P<.000)
Mild to Severe Mental Problem	.052 (P=.591)

Note: (Unconstrained better than MR, CMIN smaller); Assuming Model Unconstrained to be correct with Measurement residuals significant

**DISCUSSION**

**Level and Relationship of Variables**

The present study discovered that Malaysian adults enjoyed higher well-being levels through different dimensions. Notably, financial security reported only moderate well-being degrees, which contributed to a moderate life satisfaction level among Malaysian adults. The findings suggested that Malaysian adults possessed positive sentiments and a strong sense of gratitude in current lives. Weziak-Bialowolska et al. (2019) also revealed that Mexicans perceived the lowest degrees of financial and material stability, although Mexicans

primarily focused on the value of life meaning and purpose (16). Simultaneously, resilience serves as a vital positive emotion to promote and protect Malaysian adults' mental health when experiencing difficult life events (20). The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) demonstrated that the Malaysia Happiness Index (MHI) in 2021 was 6.48, which posited a higher happiness level (36) despite challenging situations, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and economic crisis.

Most Malaysian adults perceived a high social support level in the present study via families, friends and significant others with equal importance. The results propounded that Malaysian adults were more inclined to discuss personal issues with respective families, friends, or intimate partners. Gan et al. (2020) demonstrated that perceived social support was significantly associated with lower solitude levels that potentially contributed to higher life satisfaction among Malaysian young adults (10). Perceived social support contains subjective roles that provide emotional benefits (37), which might assist individuals in elevating self-esteem, optimism, and psychological well-being to effectively manage life stressors and negative life events. As such, Malaysian adults possess an effective coping strategy with a full support source. Li et al. (2021) also revealed that social support and resilience were the significant protective factors of mental health in three different age groups comprising emerging adults, adults, and older adults during the Covid-19 pandemic in China (38).

#### **Path Analysis: Mediation and Moderation**

The study outcomes revealed that 53.7% of Malaysian adults experienced mental health risks at mild (19.4%), moderate (10.4%), and severe (23.9%) levels. The results are consistent with Chua et al. (2021) demonstrating that Malaysian couples perceived significantly higher degrees of depression, anxiety, and stress during the Covid-19 pandemic compared to before the crisis (39). The findings postulated that the fear of losing jobs due to unpredictable circumstances resulted in Malaysian adults reporting higher psychological distress, which negatively impacted psychological well-being in terms of financial and material security. Moreover, the Malaysian unemployment rate was recorded at 4.7% in November 2021 by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) (36). Malaysians also constantly encounter other negative factors over the years, such as economic uncertainty, climate issues, and global conflicts (40). Similarly, Indian ophthalmologists discovered higher psychological distress owing to the Covid-19 pandemic (41). Nonetheless, Denche-Zamorano et al. (2022) demonstrated higher physical activity and perceived social support were significantly associated with psychological distress among Spanish adults with depression (42). Lebanese adults could also reduce psychological distress with higher cognitive reappraisal levels and lower or moderate degrees of expressive suppression, aside from receiving social support (43).

This study discovered significant impacts of adults' well-being on life satisfaction and adults' well-being on perceived social support and a significant impact of perceived social support on life satisfaction. The results also demonstrated the highest direct effect of adults' well-being on life satisfaction. The findings correspond to Egcas et al. (2021), wherein mental well-being significantly predicted life satisfaction among college students in the Philippines (13). Moreover, social support was demonstrated to be one of the most crucial predictors of physical health and well-being (44). Meanwhile, perceived social support partially mediated the relationship between well-being and life satisfaction among Malaysian adults. The results are consistent with the study in Taian City, China, which demonstrated that perceived social support partially mediated the association between mental health and satisfaction while significantly and positively predicting life satisfaction (45). Another study also demonstrated that mental well-being was significantly and positively correlated to social connectedness (3). Cohen (1985) delineated that different forms of social support could assist an individual in reducing stress by serving as a buffer (46). Individuals with more social companionship would receive more assistance and emotional support. Therefore, social support could effectively decrease depressive symptoms while improving emerging adults' perceived social support levels (47), apart from well-being and life satisfaction.

The present study revealed a significant moderating effect of psychological distress on the relationship between perceived social support and life satisfaction and the mediating impact of perceived social support. Past studies in Turkey demonstrated that psychological distress significantly mediated the correlation between social support and life satisfaction among university students (48), which suggested a significant positive direct relationship between social support and life satisfaction. Perceived social support was also negatively associated with psychological distress while being positively associated with life satisfaction (18). Existing research also supports that perceived social support significantly improves an individual's well-being and life satisfaction (45,49), which underscores the role of protecting against the negative impacts of psychological distress while increasing life satisfaction. In addition, higher awareness and usage of mental health support services and resources were discovered to be significantly correlated to Malaysian employees' reduced psychological distress (50). The findings indicated that higher levels of mental health and well-being information would tend to exhibit less psychological distress. Specifically, higher awareness of psychological distress positively influences the perception of received social support, which subsequently enhances life satisfaction. Contrarily, individuals encountering psychological distress without adequate social support would achieve lower life satisfaction.

### Implications and recommendations

Regarding the implication of this study, the results can be valuable in guiding psychologists and policymakers to develop a practical and multifaceted intervention programme that aims to enhance the life satisfaction of adults. Instead of merely focusing on well-being, the intervention programme should take into consideration the psychological distress and social support received by the individuals from the community. Additionally, considering this study revealed that more than half of the adults experienced psychological distress to a certain extent, actions to be taken to reduce psychological distress may include psychoeducation, affordable counselling services, and increasing accessibility to resources. In terms of the recommendation for future researchers, longitudinal research could be conducted to thoroughly comprehend the long-term trend of life satisfaction, in relation to well-being, perceived social support, and psychological distress. Moreover, future research might consider the interplay of cultural, societal, and personal factors to obtain a comprehensive understanding of life satisfaction.

### Limitations

Several limitations exist in the present study. Particularly, convenience sampling led to a non-normal distribution of demographics, wherein the study samples might not fully represent the Malaysian adult population. Furthermore, the quantitative method did not encompass participants' subjective perspectives, which might neglect the underlying factors and participants' personal experiences. Certain participants might also tend to provide socially desirable responses related to life satisfaction, well-being, psychological distress, and perceived social support to depict a positive image. The accuracy level of the responses might be decreased, and the limitation frequently presents in self-reported studies. Future studies could employ an experimental approach to reduce the bias.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the current study revealed that Malaysian adults experienced a high level of well-being except for the dimension of financial security and a moderate level of life satisfaction. Additionally, more than half of them reported a high level of perceived social support. However, there are also more than half of the respondents reported experiencing psychological distress. Furthermore, this study uncovered the direct effect of well-being on life satisfaction, the indirect effect of perceived social support in the relationship between well-being and life satisfaction, and the interaction effect of psychological distress in the relationship between well-being and life satisfaction which is mediated by perceived social support. This is original as no past study ascertained the interaction effect of psychological distress and indirect effect of perceived social support simultaneously, in the relationship between well-

being and life satisfaction. Hence, these findings hold substantial value for psychologists, policymakers, and researchers when designing interventions to improve the overall life satisfaction of adults

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