

### **Abstract**

Social support is well-recognized as influential to the mental well-being of individuals including older adults. The rise of online social media platforms has provided a new instrument for accessing social support within older adults' social network. Therefore, this study predicted that social support received from social media was positively associated with older adults' mental well-being, while such effect was expected to be weaker than traditional form of social support received through face-to-face contact. We surveyed 64 older adults aged 45 or above online. Participants completed the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (WEMWBS) for assessing their mental well-being status. Two popular social media platforms, Facebook and Whatsapp were chosen for this study. Together with face-to-face contact, Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors (ISSB) was applied to these three channels to measure social support received by participants. Pearson correlation and regression analyses were used to test our hypotheses. Positive association was found between social support received from all the three channels and mental well-being of older adults, confirming our first hypothesis. Regression analysis demonstrated that face-to-face contact had the highest strength as predictor of mental well-being among the three sources of social support, providing further support to our second hypothesis. The results provided insight on the importance of providing education to older adults on social media usage, as well as designing social media platforms targeting senior users, as ways to increase the chance for older adults to receive social support online and produce positive influence to their mental well-being.

*Keywords:* Social Media, Social Support, Mental Well-being, Older Adults