

The Influence of Hardiness on Digital Well-Being in Adolescents: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Adolescents today live in a highly digitalized environment that offers opportunities and challenges. While digital technology provides access to information, learning, and communication, unwise use can lead to stress, anxiety, and emotional distress. Therefore, managing technology use in a balanced and mindful way has become a crucial aspect of adolescent life. This ability is called digital well-being, in which individuals engage with technology in a healthy, conscious, and purposeful manner that supports their mental, emotional, and social health. To maintain and enhance digital well-being, adolescents require internal personal resources to help them adapt to and cope with digital stressors. One such resource is hardiness, which enables adolescents to stay engaged, believe in their ability to influence outcomes, and view difficulties as opportunities for growth. This research aims to understand the influence of hardiness on adolescents' digital well-being. This study uses a literature review approach, systematically collecting, reading, and analyzing various sources, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, e-books, and relevant case studies. The results of this research present a comprehensive overview of the relationship between these two constructs, which includes: 1) the "digital well-being" of adolescents, 2) the "hardiness" of adolescents, and 3) the contribution of hardiness to fostering and sustaining digital well-being among adolescents.

Key words: digital well-being, hardiness, adolescents, literature study

INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation in human life has accelerated significantly over the past two decades. The massive development of information and communication technology has influenced nearly every aspect of daily life, including how adolescents carry out their daily activities. Today's adolescents live in an intensely digital environment, where learning processes, social interactions, and entertainment are all interconnected through digital devices such as smartphones and computers. The fast and extensive access to information, along with the ease of interaction via social media, has made the digital world a primary space for adolescents to express themselves and socialize.

However, alongside these conveniences lie undeniable risks. Unbalanced and unconscious use of digital technology can lead to various psychological disturbances among adolescents, such as anxiety, stress, mental fatigue, and feelings of inferiority caused by social comparison on social media (Christina et al., 2019). Excessive social media use may also decrease academic performance and affect mental health, including an increased risk of anxiety and depression (Ningsih & Lestari, 2025). Research indicates a significant relationship between the intensity of gadget use and poor sleep quality among adolescents, with 96% of respondents reporting low sleep quality (Nafiroh et al., 2024). In the long term, dependency on digital media can impair the quality of interpersonal relationships in the real world.

These conditions highlight that adolescents require technological skills and digital well-being to live a healthy and adaptive digital life. Digital well-being refers to an individual's ability to use technology wisely, in balance, and with awareness so that it does not disrupt emotional, social, or physical conditions. The OECD (2021) emphasizes that digital well-being encompasses managing screen time, evaluating the impact of digital content, and maintaining a balance between online and offline life. For adolescents, who are still in the process of emotional development, digital well-being plays a crucial role in determining mental health, academic achievement, and the quality of social relationships.

According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), internet users in Indonesia reached 143.26 million, or about 54.68% of the total population (APJII, 2024). Studies reveal that 98% of children and adolescents are familiar with the internet, and 79.5% are active users. At least

30 million children and adolescents in Indonesia use digital media as their primary communication channel (Ningsih & Lestari, 2025). This reality underscores the need to identify factors that can help adolescents maintain their digital well-being.

Previous studies have identified several factors influencing digital well-being, such as self-regulation, mindfulness, impulse control, and digital habits (Giang & Long, 2021; Akram & Kumar, 2017). However, a more fundamental and comprehensive personality trait is required to face the digital era's complex challenges—hardiness. This personality construct consists of commitment, control, and challenge, enabling individuals to remain resilient under pressure. First introduced by Suzanne Kobasa and later developed by Maddi (2002), hardiness is defined as a combination of commitment (active involvement in meaningful activities), control (belief in one's ability to influence outcomes), and challenge (the perception of change as an opportunity for growth).

In the adolescent context, hardiness serves as a protective factor that not only aids in stress management and self-regulation but also enhances resilience against the demands of the digital world, which requires active engagement, adaptation to trends, and self-image management. Therefore, hardiness can be a key determinant in fostering optimal digital well-being among adolescents.

Previous research has shown that hardiness significantly enhances adaptive capabilities under stress across academic, social, and emotional domains. Nevertheless, within adolescent digital technology use, the relationship between hardiness and digital well-being has rarely been the primary focus of investigation, leaving an important research gap. This study examines hardiness's influence on adolescents' digital well-being through a literature review, analyzing empirical and theoretical findings from various scholarly sources. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich developmental psychology literature, particularly in understanding the role of resilient personality traits in shaping digital well-being. Practically, the findings may serve as a guide for educators, counselors, and parents in designing strategies or interventions focused on strengthening adolescents' hardiness, enabling them to adapt healthily, maintain a balanced use of technology, and engage meaningfully in the digital world.

METHODS

This article employs a library research method. Library research involves collecting literature sources, reading, processing, and reviewing various materials such as books, journals, dissertations, e-books, and several relevant case studies related to the research topic (Mirzaqon & Purwoko, 2018). The data sources used in this article consist of primary and secondary data. The primary data comprises research articles utilized in the preparation of this study, while the secondary data includes books, journals, e-books, and other relevant materials. The library research procedure, as outlined by Mirzaqon & Purwoko (2018), consists of: (a) topic selection; (b) information exploration; (c) determining the focus of the study; (d) collecting data sources; (e) preparing data presentation; and (f) compiling the report in the form of a conceptual review article.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Hardiness

Hardiness is a personality trait crucial in helping individuals remain resilient and adaptable when facing stressful situations. Riyanti and Rahmandani (2020) define hardiness as a skill that describes how individuals can endure and cope with various pressures. Zulaima et al. (2017) add that a hardy personality instills the belief that problems and burdens are unavoidable, thus requiring the ability to address them appropriately. Similarly, Kobasa (as cited in Mulawarman et al., 2024) describes hardiness as a personality characteristic that makes individuals stronger, more resistant, stable, and optimistic when facing stress while reducing its adverse effects. Individuals with high hardiness tend to be enthusiastic about planning for the future, view changes as challenges, and see them as beneficial for their lives. Maddi (2006) emphasizes that hardiness is a set of attitudes and skills that enable individuals to interpret stress as a natural part of life and use it as a means for personal growth. Bartone (2017) defines hardiness as a psychological resilience orientation consisting of three core dimensions: commitment (active involvement in meaningful activities), control (belief in one's ability to influence situations), and challenge (the perception that change is an opportunity for growth). Thus, hardiness can be understood as a psychological capacity that protects individuals from the negative impact of stress

and fosters personal development through positive attitudes, active engagement, and adaptive actions in facing life's challenges.

According to Kobasa (as cited in Mulawarman et al., 2024), the three main aspects of hardiness are:

1. Commitment

Daily activities enable individuals to determine appropriate actions when facing problems or stressful situations. People with high commitment are less likely to give up, even under pressure, as they often employ coping strategies aligned with their abilities and goals.

2. Control

The belief and acceptance that when faced with unforeseen events, individuals can regulate and influence them based on their experiences. Those with strong control tend to remain more optimistic and composed in challenging situations than those with low control.

3. Challenge

The belief that life changes are regular and manageable. With this mindset, individuals are more likely to grow and become open to diverse life situations.

From these explanations, hardiness can be summarized as comprising control (the belief in one's ability to manage and influence experiences during unforeseen events, leading to optimism and effective problem-solving), commitment (a strong tendency to engage and persist in whatever is undertaken), and challenge (viewing life's changes as beneficial opportunities for growth).

Furthermore, Kobasa (as cited in Mulawarman et al., 2024) notes that social support influences hardiness. Specifically, commitment and challenge are closely related to social support, while control is not. Social support motivates individuals to face challenges by making them feel supported, providing a space for sharing, and offering moral or emotional support. Conversely, control is more focused on an individual's internal belief in their ability to manage life events. Maddi (cited in Hasanah & Pratama, 2024) also identifies social support and parenting style as key factors influencing hardiness. Individuals who receive material, motivational, and informational support from others are better equipped to face challenges. Supportive parenting, particularly in teaching problem-solving skills, can also strengthen a child's hardiness.

In conclusion, strong social support and positive parenting are vital foundations for hardiness. Individuals who feel supported and are raised with an emphasis on independence and problem-solving tend to be more prepared to manage stress and are more motivated to achieve their goals. This highlights the significant role of familial and social environmental factors in shaping an individual's hardiness.

Digital Well-Being

Hardiness is a personality trait crucial in helping individuals remain resilient and adaptable when facing stressful situations. Riyanti & Rahmandani (2020) define hardiness as a skill that describes how individuals can endure and cope with various pressures. Zulaima et al. (2017) add that a hardy personality provides individuals with the conviction that problems and burdens are inevitable, thus requiring the ability to resolve them with appropriate strategies. Similarly, Kobasa (as cited in Mulawarman et al., 2024) describes hardiness as a personality characteristic that makes individuals stronger, more persistent, stable, and optimistic when facing stress while reducing its adverse effects. Individuals with high hardiness tend to be enthusiastic about planning for the future, viewing change as a challenge, and perceiving it as beneficial to their lives. Maddi (2006) emphasizes that hardiness is a set of attitudes and skills that enable individuals to interpret pressure as a natural part of life and use it as a means for personal growth. Bartone (2017) conceptualizes hardiness as a psychological resilience orientation consisting of three core dimensions: commitment (active engagement in meaningful activities), control (belief in one's ability to influence situations), and challenge (the perception that change is an opportunity for growth). Thus, hardiness can be understood as a psychological capacity that protects individuals from the negative impact of stress and fosters personal development through positive attitudes, active involvement, and adaptive actions in facing life challenges.

According to Kobasa (as cited in Mulawarman et al., 2024), hardiness consists of three aspects: commitment, control, and challenge, described as follows:

1. Commitment

Commitment refers to an individual's tendency to engage in daily activities actively. Individuals

can also determine the necessary actions when facing problems or stressful situations through commitment. Those with high commitment are less likely to give up, even in challenging conditions, as they tend to employ coping strategies aligned with their abilities and personal goals.

2. Control

Control reflects an individual's tendency to believe and accept that when encountering unforeseen events, they can influence and manage the situation based on prior experiences. Individuals with strong control are generally more optimistic and composed when dealing with difficulties than those with low control.

3. Challenge

The challenge is the belief that life changes are regular and manageable. With this mindset, individuals can grow and become more open to various situations.

From the above explanation, the characteristics of hardiness can be summarized as follows: control, which involves the belief in one's ability to manage and influence events, particularly in unexpected circumstances; commitment, the tendency to engage fully in any situation or task and to persist in the face of challenges; and challenge, the view that life's changes are valuable growth opportunities and are to be embraced positively.

Furthermore, Kobasa (as cited in Mulawarman et al., 2024) notes that one factor influencing hardiness is social support. Specifically, the commitment and challenge dimensions are closely associated with social support, whereas the control dimension is not. Social support motivates and encourages individuals to face challenges, as it provides a sense of not being alone in overcoming problems and offers a space for emotional and moral support. In contrast, control is less directly related to social support, as it focuses more on believing in one's agency over life events.

Maddi (cited in Hasanah & Pratama, 2024) also identifies social support and parenting style as factors influencing hardiness. Individuals receiving social support, material assistance, motivation, or information are more positively influenced in coping with problems or challenges. Parenting style also plays a significant role in fostering hardiness; parents who encourage supportive problem-solving in their children can enhance their children's hardiness.

In conclusion, strong social support and positive parenting are crucial foundations for developing hardiness. Individuals who experience support and grow up in an environment that fosters independence and problem-solving skills are generally more prepared to manage stress and remain motivated to achieve their goals. This implies that family and social environments significantly shape hardiness as a personality characteristic.

Kontribusi Hardiness terhadap Digital Well Being

Recent studies indicate that the construct of hardiness plays a significant protective factor against various psychological and academic pressures. Zhou et al. (2025) found that hardiness is significantly and positively correlated with subjective well-being among adolescents aged 12–15. Their findings suggest that, in addition to its direct effects, hardiness also enhances well-being through a sequential mediation pathway involving academic passion and academic self-efficacy, which in turn influence overall subjective well-being. As defined by Sedana (2023), psychological hardiness consists of three core traits—commitment, control, and challenge—identified as significant predictors of mental resilience. These dimensions help adolescents manage stress and reduce the risk of depression and anxiety, which is particularly relevant in the modern context of digital challenges faced by younger generations.

Supporting this, Akbari and Khalatbari (2025) explored the relationship between psychological hardiness and distress tolerance among university students, with mindfulness and social support as mediators. Their results revealed that mindfulness and social support significantly mediated this relationship, indicating that hardiness strengthens individuals' ability to cope with emotional pressure by enhancing self-regulation capacity and perceived environmental support. Hardiness and digital well-being are closely related in improving individuals' ability to handle emotional pressures through increased self-regulation capacity and heightened awareness of social support. These two variables share

aligned dimensions, forming a synergy that strengthens personal resilience in dealing with digital challenges.

Research findings also reinforce Bartone's (1999) view that hardiness is a protective mechanism in maintaining digital well-being, including moderating the relationship between social media use intensity and digital anxiety. Adolescents with high hardiness exhibit emotional stability despite increased social media use. Furthermore, hardiness mediates the relationship between hope and digital well-being, suggesting that optimism must be embodied in a resilient character to cope with digital stress. In the context of modern digital challenges, hardiness proves to be relevant in addressing issues such as problematic internet use, anxiety, and depression resulting from excessive engagement in social media or digital gaming (Sedana, 2023). The three dimensions of hardiness protect adolescents from these risks, help manage digital stress, and safeguard mental health as an effective psychological shield against the negative impacts of technology use.

1. Commitment and Digital Satisfaction

The commitment dimension of hardiness reflects an individual's tendency to fully engage in meaningful life activities and persist under pressure (Kobasa in Mulawarman et al., 2024). In digital satisfaction, adolescents with high commitment are likely to perceive technological mastery as part of their personal growth, using it to strengthen authentic social connections rather than as an escape from reality (Bhattacharya et al., 2023). Individuals with a strong commitment adapt well to new technologies, develop enjoyment in using digital tools, and display enthusiasm toward new digital experiences. They find harmony with others in digital skills, viewing technology as a means to enrich life rather than merely as a utilitarian tool.

2. Control Safe and Responsible Behavior

The control dimension reflects the belief that one can manage and influence unexpected situations through prior experience (Kobasa in Mulawarman et al., 2024). This sense of control is crucial for sustaining digital well-being, particularly by developing self-regulation strategies to prevent problematic internet use and digital addiction. Control forms the foundation for digital reputation awareness and the ability to direct technological engagement toward purposeful goals within safe and responsible behavior. Individuals with high control are attentive to their digital reputation, maintain ethical conduct by not disturbing other users on social media, use technology intentionally, and remain alert to potential risks such as fraud, cyberbullying, or personal data breaches. Control enables individuals to maintain full agency over digital interactions and develop strong ethical awareness.

3. Challenge and Digital Wellness

The challenge dimension represents the belief that change is a regular and manageable aspect of life, thus opening growth opportunities (Kobasa in Mulawarman et al., 2024). In today's dynamic digital era, challenge motivates adolescents to view technological innovations as opportunities to refine skills and adapt, rather than threats. The connection between challenge and digital wellness can be seen in the ability to feel comfortable with the visibility of social media posts, derive happiness from positive feedback, manage frustration related to technological issues, and feel safe and free to express oneself in digital spaces. Challenge serves as a driving force for positive adaptation to digital developments, helping individuals balance digital engagement with mental health.

Previous studies have also highlighted the role of socio-cultural contexts in strengthening the relationship between hardiness and digital well-being. Family support emphasizing autonomy and self-efficacy has enhanced adolescents' psychological resilience. In line with Al-Mansoori et al. (2023), users, designers, and educational institutions are responsible for creating a safe and supportive digital ecosystem. Combining individual factors, such as hardiness, and environmental factors, such as social support, is key to optimizing digital well-being. Hardiness amplifies the positive effects of cognitive factors on digital well-being, while a supportive environment provides the foundation for developing resilient character in navigating today's digital challenges.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review, hardiness is a psychological capacity encompassing active engagement (commitment), belief in self-control (control), and a positive outlook on change as an opportunity (challenge). These traits enable adolescents to endure pressure, think positively, and act adaptively, including in the face of challenges within the digital environment. In the context of digital well-being, hardiness has the potential to influence three key dimensions: digital satisfaction, by helping adolescents adapt to new technologies and maintain social harmony in digital spaces; safe and responsible behavior, by strengthening awareness of digital reputation, caution, and responsible online conduct; and digital wellness, by enhancing emotional regulation, comfort in self-expression, and resilience toward technological frustrations. The limited empirical research linking hardiness with these three dimensions of digital well-being among adolescents highlights a significant research gap. Therefore, this study analyzes the relationship between hardiness and digital well-being. Hardiness functions as a protective factor that strengthens adolescents' psychological resilience, enabling them to utilize technology positively and adaptively while avoiding adverse outcomes such as digital anxiety and social media addiction. These findings indicate that fostering hardiness in adolescents can be an effective strategy to enhance their digital well-being in an increasingly advanced technological era.

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