

OVERVIEW OF HAPPINESS IN EARLY ADULthood AMONG TIKTOK SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

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ABSTRACT

Early adulthood is a transitional phase filled with challenges, where individuals often encounter significant life changes. These changes may include identity exploration and external demands to achieve the best life outcomes. Mental health issues can be triggered by the pressures faced during this phase, and one way to alleviate stress is through the use of social media. TikTok is a social media platform whose usage has been steadily increasing, mainly among early adults aged 20–40 years. Although TikTok usage is often perceived negatively, it also offers positive impacts. One such benefit is providing a space for self-expression, allowing individuals to receive support and appreciation from other users, which can enhance their sense of happiness. Happiness, as a positive emotion, plays an essential role for individuals in preventing mental health issues. This study aims to provide an overview of happiness among early adults who use the TikTok application. The research employs a descriptive quantitative method, using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire by Hills and Argyle (2002) as the instrument. The results show that 35.1% of participants have a high level of happiness, 32.1% have a moderate level, and 23.7% have a low level of happiness. Recommendations for future research include exploring happiness dimensions in greater depth and identifying other factors contributing to happiness. Happiness is not the main factor in an individual's well-being but rather stems from having purpose and motivation. Therefore, it is essential to balance it with other productive activities to achieve happiness.

Keywords: happiness, early adulthood, TikTok

1. PREFACE

TikTok is an application launched in 2017 that gained significant popularity among users in 2020 (Sari, 2023). According to its official website, TikTok aims to serve as a platform for short videos, enabling users to express creativity and spread happiness (TikTok, n.d.).

The positive impacts of TikTok usage include enabling users to express their creativity and exhibit positive self-confidence (Novitasari & Setyawati, 2023). This is supported by research conducted by Wea et al. (2022) which found that TikTok provides a platform for adults to express their creativity and self-expression. Another study by (Reynaldo & Sari, 2023) revealed that TikTok usage influences self-esteem in early adulthood. Additionally, TikTok has become a platform for commercial transactions (Armayani et al., 2021). Its interactive features facilitate business owners in reaching potential customers, making TikTok-based transactions a low-risk option (Heng et al., 2020; Sa'adah et al., 2022).

Excessive use of TikTok can negatively impact mental health, increasing the risk of disorders such as depression, anxiety, and stress (Sha & Dong, 2021). This is supported by a statement from Anne Marie Albano, who explained that individuals spending excessive time online, particularly those experiencing social anxiety or depression, are at risk of exacerbating these conditions, leading to increased feelings of isolation and hopelessness (DBSA, n.d.). Research conducted by Hill et al. (2023) also found a correlation between depression, anxiety, and

happiness, indicating that higher levels of mental health issues like anxiety and depression are associated with lower levels of happiness in individuals.

According to data published by Data Business of Apps, in 2022, the largest group of TikTok users consisted of individuals aged 18–24, accounting for 34.9%, followed by those aged 25–34, comprising 28.2% (Santika, 2023). According to Papalia et al. (2009) individuals aged 20 to 40 years are categorized as being in the early adulthood stage. Consequently, the majority of TikTok users in Indonesia fall within this age group. Hurlock (2011) stated that early adulthood is a period when individuals undergo self-adjustment, making it a challenging phase of life.

During this stage, individuals tend to pursue a career and strive to resolve their problems independently. Maulani in 2019 stated that early adulthood is characterized by a tendency for individuals to have a heightened focus on themselves, granting them greater autonomy in making personal decisions. However, this focus may lead to a reduced level of engagement with their surrounding environment (Putri & Basaria, 2023).

Happiness is a crucial aspect that can help individuals navigate various stresses and pressures (Ekawardhani et al., 2019; Simbolon & Mangundjaya, 2023). Several factors contribute to an individual's happiness, including self-esteem and self-forgiveness (Ekawardhani et al., 2019), as well as self-efficacy (Simbolon & Mangundjaya, 2023).

Happiness is a term that carries broad and diverse meanings for different individuals. According to Seligman (2002), happiness is a feeling characterized by positive emotions, reflecting positive psychology and leading to positive outcomes. From another perspective, Diener (2000) defines happiness as synonymous with subjective well-being, which refers to an individual's cognitive and affective evaluations, as well as satisfaction with their life. Diener (2000) also highlights several components influencing happiness, including the ability of individuals to experience consistent happiness with stable levels of intensity.

Research indicates that early adults tend to exhibit high levels of happiness (Maulani, 2019; Saekoko & Arianti, 2024). Maulani (2019) found that 50.7% of women fall into the high happiness category, suggesting that as individuals grow older, their happiness tends to increase. Similarly, the happiness of social media users in early adulthood is characterized by high empathy, adaptability, contentment with life, and positive attitudes and thoughts (Saekoko & Arianti, 2024)

These findings highlight that early adulthood is a prolonged phase marked by various transitions and adjustments in life. During this stage, happiness plays a crucial role in supporting individual well-being. The absence of happiness increases the risk of mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression (Hill et al., 2023). Therefore, further research is needed to explore the happiness of social media users, particularly TikTok users, during early adulthood. Such studies aim to understand whether TikTok users experience happiness in their daily lives.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Samples

The sample used in this study was selected using a non-probability sampling method, which involves sample determination based on the researcher's discretion and expert judgment (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021). Through this method, purposive sampling was applied in the

research. The sample was subsequently determined based on criteria aligned with the principles of purposive sampling.

The characteristics of participants in this study were determined as follows: (a) TikTok users; (b) residing in the areas of Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi; (c) early adults aged 20–40 years; (d) of both male and female genders.

Measurement

This study focuses on measuring happiness using an instrument called The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, developed by Hills & Argyle (2002). The measurement tool comprises 29 statements, including 17 favorable statements and 12 unfavorable statements. These statements are answered using a 6-point Likert scale.

This measurement tool achieved a corrected item-total correlation value above 0.2, indicating that each item in the tool is correlated and valid. The reliability value of this measurement tool is 0.933, indicating that the tool is consistent.

Data collection and analysis

The data for this study were collected online using Google Forms. The questionnaire included an informed consent section and the measurement tools used in the research. A total of 333 participants were obtained during data collection. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics

	<i>Groups</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender	Male	122	36.6%
	Female	211	63.4%
Age	20-25	201	60.4%
	26-30	53	15.9%
	31-25	49	14.7%
	36-40	30	9.0%
Employment status	Student	138	41.4%
	Employed	178	53.5%
	Unemployed	17	5.1%
Highest Level of education	SMA	128	38.4%
	S1	191	57.4%
	S2/S3	14	4.2%
Income level	< 500.000	42	12.6%
	500.000 – 1.000.000	35	10.5%
	1.000.000 - 5.000.000	141	42.3%
	5.000.000 - 10.000.000	89	26.7%
	> 10.000.000	26	7.8%

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The representation of happiness in this study used categorization based Azwar (2012). According to the data obtained, the empirical mean for the study was 4.36, with a standard deviation of 0.76. Using this categorization, the frequency of participants in the study was calculated, and the results are presented in the table below.

Table 2
Frequency Categorization Happiness

<i>Categorization</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Very low	22	6.6%
Low	79	23.7%
Moderate	107	32.1%
High	117	35.1%
Very high	8	2.4%

The participants in this study showed a tendency toward the high category, with 117 participants (35.1%) falling into this group. This was followed by the moderate category, which included 107 participants (32.1%). The very high category showed that only 8 participants (2.4%) qualified for this category.

A normality test was conducted to examine the distribution of the data in this study. The One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded a significance value of < 0.01 . This result indicates that the p-value is < 0.05 , suggesting that the data does not follow a normal distribution.

To examine the overview of happiness based on gender, a cross-tabulation was performed between happiness categories and gender.

Table 3
Crosstabs Happiness and Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Very low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Very high</i>
Male	5	26	51	38	2
Female	17	53	56	79	6

Based on the cross-tabulation data between gender and happiness categories, it shows that the majority of women report happiness at a high level (37%), while the majority of men report happiness at a moderate level (42%).

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was also conducted in the data analysis of this study's participants. The results of this test were used to determine whether there were differences in happiness levels among the different groups. The findings of the test are presented in the table.

Table 4
Kruskall-Wallis H

<i>Group</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>X²</i>	<i>p</i>
Age	20-25	148.48	27.339	< 0.001
	26-30	166.19		
	31-25	208.53		
	36-40	224.68		
Employment status	Student	144.16	19.954	< 0.001
	Employed	188.67		

	Unemployed	125.47		
Highest Level of education	SMA	145.86	18.661	< 0.001
	S1	174.86		
	S2/S3	253.14		
Income level	< 500.000	121.26	17.675	0.001
	500.000 – 1.000.000	165.94		
	1.000.000 - 5.000.000	161.58		
	5.000.000 - 10.000.000	186.38		
	> 10.000.000	205.38		
Number of uploads	< 5	136.89	14.468	0.006
	5 – 10	184.03		
	10 – 15	177.24		
	15 – 20	188.30		
	> 20	165.96		
Frequency of uploads	> 3 months	153.78	11.033	0.012
	Monthly	196.00		
	Weekly	174.42		
	Every day	149.91		

Based on age groups, the results showed a value of X^2 was 27.339, with a significance value (p) < 0.001. This indicates a significant difference among the age groups. The highest mean was observed in the 36-40 age group, with a mean of 224.68.

Next, regarding the participants' employment status group, the results showed a value of X^2 was 19.954, with a significance value (p) < 0.001. This indicates a significant difference among the employment status groups. Participants in the employed group had a mean of 188.67.

For the last level of the education group, the value of X^2 was 18.661, with a significance value (p) < 0.001. This indicates a significant difference among the education groups. The highest mean was found in the S2/S3 education group, with a mean of 253.14.

The test was also conducted on income groups, and the results showed a value of X^2 was 17.675, with a significance value (p) < 0.001. This indicates a significant difference among the income groups. The highest mean was found in the income group > 10,000,000, with a mean of 205.38.

The test based on the number of uploads showed a value of X^2 was 14.468, with a significance value (p) < 0.001. This indicates a significant difference among the number of uploads. The highest mean was observed in the 15-20 number of uploads, with a mean of 188.30.

The test also showed that frequency of uploads also has a significant difference, based on a result value of X^2 was 11.033, with a significance value (p) < 0.001. The highest mean was observed in the monthly frequency uploads, with a mean of 196.00.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the study was to examine the happiness levels of early adults who are TikTok users. The results revealed that 69.6% of early adult TikTok users fall within the moderate to very high happiness categories, while 30.4% fall within the very low to low happiness categories.

Participants provided several reasons for using TikTok. These included seeking entertainment and accessing information when needed. Another common reason was following trends on social media or among peers. Additionally, some participants used TikTok as a transactional platform for selling products.

The primary content shared by most participants revolved around lifestyle, aligning with the main reason for using TikTok—following trends. Other participants focused their content on relationships or family life, using the platform as a space to preserve memories. Meanwhile, those who primarily used TikTok for business purposes shared promotional content related to the products they were selling.

Based on the cross-tabulation data between gender and happiness, the results indicate that women have higher levels of happiness. This finding is supported by Maulani (2019) research, which shows that 50.7% of women report high levels of happiness. According to the difference test, no significant difference was found between the two groups. The higher happiness levels among women may be attributed to their greater understanding and response to emotions, as well as their ability to express feelings more effectively (Fischer et al., 2018).

In the age group 20-40, significant differences were found across each class. This can be explained by Arnett (2000) theory, which suggests that emerging adulthood spans from 18 to the late 20s, typically from 18 to 29 years, depending on social and cultural contexts. Emerging adulthood is a period of transition, marked by self-exploration in various areas, social and economic changes, and uncertainty (Arnett, 2007). Meanwhile, the 30-40 age range corresponds to Erikson's theory, where the stage of intimacy vs. isolation occurs between the ages of 18 and 40. This phase is when individuals achieve stability and develop the ability to form long-term relationships with others (Arnett, 2007).

Based on the highest level of education, significant differences were also observed. A study by Yang et al. (2022) found a relationship between happiness and higher levels of education, where an individual's cognitive abilities influence their attitude in dealing with problems. Individuals with higher education tend to report better happiness, which can also be attributed to increased income levels (Yang et al., 2022).

The employment status of the participants also showed a significant difference. The results indicate that individuals who are employed have higher levels of happiness. Khat tab & Fenton (2009) stated that economic status plays an important role in an individual's happiness. Economic instability, which refers to individuals without stable employment, often leads to a lack of interest in achieving better life outcomes.

The results of the difference test also revealed a significant difference in the income group. The highest mean in the income group difference test was found in the income group > 10,000,000, with a value of 205.38. This indicates that participants with an income above 10,000,000 have higher levels of happiness. Yang et al. (2022) also stated that happiness can increase as economic income rises.

The dimensions of TikTok are illustrated by the results of the difference test in the group of posting frequency. The difference test showed that the highest mean was found in the group posting once a month. This can be explained by the motivation theory according to Ryan & Deci regarding self-determination, which posits that various factors or components underpin human

motivation. Motivation can be influenced by both internal and external factors, with external factors being affected by an individual's environment and social context (Ryan & Deci, 1985, as cited in Ferguson et al., 2015). Similarly, the use of TikTok by participants in this study can result in varying levels of happiness due to different motivations. The higher levels of happiness among users who post from once a month to daily may be attributed to the goals they wish to achieve. This is supported by research conducted by Hidayat (2023), which identified several reasons behind Generation Z's use of TikTok, revealing individual goals that they aim to fulfill.

The results of the difference test on the number of posts also show significant differences, with the highest mean value of 188.30 observed in the group with 15-20 posts. This relates to the explanation regarding posting frequency, where happiness is determined by motivation. It is explained that the fulfillment of psychological needs or motivation also leads to individual happiness and satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 1985, as cited in Ferguson et al., 2015). Therefore, individuals who have 15-20 posts experience a sense of satisfaction in themselves, as they work to achieve the goals set by their motivation.

Participants also reported that a positive impact of using TikTok is its potential as a source of income. This income can come from primary sources such as selling products, as well as additional income through affiliate marketing or earnings from high engagement. This suggests that there is happiness in early adulthood, as reflected in the use of TikTok in their lives.

It is important to note that excessive use of TikTok can trigger mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, and has a negative correlation with happiness levels (Hill et al., 2023; Sha & Dong, 2021). Therefore, each individual is responsible for setting boundaries in their use of social media, particularly TikTok. These limitations are intended to protect individuals' mental health, ensuring its well-being while allowing them to maintain productivity in other activities.

This study has several limitations, including the failure to capture the full dimensions of happiness from the participants, as well as not considering other factors that may contribute to happiness. Furthermore, this research focused solely on one social media platform, TikTok, and thus did not provide a comparison with users of other social media platforms. One of the issues encountered in this study was the disproportionate number of participants in each group, which led to unbalanced results and limited the ability to make comprehensive comparisons.

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The section is written after the Conclusions and Suggestions, before the References. In this section, Authors mention the main parties that support the research, such as funder, data provider (may be written anonymously), research assistants, and etc.

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