

## The Effect of Social Media Use on Happiness in College Students in Malang City

Nabella Achmad Syahputri<sup>1</sup>, Winda Sari<sup>2</sup>, Fahmi Zakaria<sup>3</sup>, Fitria Nur Indra Fauziah<sup>4</sup>, Ria Anggraini<sup>5</sup>, Anjarie Dharmastuti<sup>6</sup>, Nur Eva<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7</sup> Magister of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Negeri Malang

### Article Information

Submitted date 28-05-2024  
Revised date 02-12-2024  
Accepted date 28-12-2024

Keywords:  
*social media;*  
*happiness;*  
*students.*

Kata kunci:  
*sosial media;*  
*kebahagiaan;*  
*mahasiswa.*

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Anjarie Dharmastuti, Semarang Street, No. 5, Malang, East Java, Indonesia 65145.  
Email: [anjarie.dharmastuti.fpsi@um.ac.id](mailto:anjarie.dharmastuti.fpsi@um.ac.id)

### Abstract

This research aims to analyze the influence of social media use on students' happiness levels in Malang City. Considering social media's positive and negative potential on emotional well-being, this research examines how perception, self-confidence, and self-esteem influenced by social media can impact happiness. The methodology used is quantitative, with the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) to measure happiness, the Social Media Use Scale (SMUS) to measure social media use, and validity and reliability tests to ensure data reliability. Data were collected through online questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive analysis, assumption tests, and hypothesis tests. The results of a simple regression test show that social media use has a significant influence of 2.5% on happiness. It can be concluded that the impact of social media use on happiness among university students in Malang City is relatively minor despite positive. Other factors, including personality, well-being, and social support, must be considered as they may have contributed more.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh penggunaan media sosial terhadap tingkat kebahagiaan mahasiswa di Kota Malang. Dengan mempertimbangkan potensi positif dan negatif media sosial terhadap kesejahteraan emosional, penelitian ini menguji bagaimana persepsi, kepercayaan diri, dan harga diri yang dipengaruhi oleh media sosial dapat memengaruhi kebahagiaan. Metodologi yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif, dengan *Subjective Happiness Scale* (SHS) untuk mengukur kebahagiaan, *Social Media Use Scale* (SMUS) untuk mengukur penggunaan media sosial, serta uji validitas dan reliabilitas untuk memastikan keandalan data. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner online dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif, uji asumsi, dan uji hipotesis. Hasil uji regresi sederhana menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan media sosial memiliki pengaruh signifikan sebesar 2,5% terhadap kebahagiaan. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa dampak penggunaan media sosial terhadap kebahagiaan di kalangan mahasiswa di Kota Malang relatif kecil meskipun positif. Faktor-faktor lain, termasuk kepribadian, kesejahteraan, dan dukungan sosial, harus dipertimbangkan karena mungkin memiliki kontribusi lebih besar.



## INTRODUCTION

In this digital age, students are increasingly involved in using social media, a phenomenon that exists in everyday life. Social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, are not only a platform to interact and share experiences but also a window to connect with friends outside the neighborhood.

However, the impact of social media use on emotional well-being, especially the level of happiness, is a subject of concern in academic research. Happiness is considered a subjective index commonly used as a parameter to measure satisfaction and quality of life, reflecting a person's psychological and social well-being (Bila & Hoian, 2022). Subjective happiness consists of various factors that affect a person's satisfaction in living life as a whole (Griffin & Sarnataro, 2023). It is influenced by social attitudes, values, and culture, as well as general beliefs, including economic status, individual character, and social capital (Righi & Masserini, 2023).

In the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood, happiness plays an important role in shaping individual well-being. Happiness is obtained from the individual's ability to carry out developmental tasks, that individuals can achieve mature relationships, have good social roles with others, and have the ability to accept physical conditions effectively (Hurlock, 1991). This transition period occurs among college students. According to the 2015 Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS), as cited by Xu and Chen (in Liang & Sun, 2022), 62.04% of students in China felt quite happy, 18.09% were very happy, 14.12% could not determine whether they felt happy, 4.93% felt less happy, and 0.82% were very unhappy. Furthermore, Liang and Sun (2022) stated that students with positive emotions toward life tend to assess life circumstances positively and are more likely to feel happy.

The ability of individuals to carry out developmental tasks varies. Individuals often express themselves differently in cyberspace, forming an identity that is sometimes different from reality in real life. Habits of self-expression in cyberspace shape individuals' perceptions, confidence, and self-esteem, which are influenced by responses and interactions on social media. As in Indonesian studies, an individual in early adulthood feels happy when the individual can enjoy life moments, social support, and self-esteem (Harimurti, 2022). Social media influences contribute greatly to individuals' psychological dynamics, where individuals feel pressure to match themselves between the real world and social media. This process is driven by aspects of emotional involvement in individuals who are influenced by online interactions in the form of praise or criticism. Interestingly, women have a higher addiction tendency in using social media, which occurs because women have more frequent emotional changes than men, so social media is used as a coping to improve mood in women (Simsek, Elciyar, & Kizilhan, 2019). This triggers an intense emotional response. Consequently, individuals must have self-control so as not to experience dependence on social media. Therefore, the level of happiness depends on the individual's response to using social media.

According to Mulyono (2021), internet usage in Indonesia continues to experience significant growth of 25% per year. This development is specifically related to the positive role of social media in providing benefits to individuals, including expanding social networks and opening business opportunities. Social media allows individuals to establish friendly relationships, gain attention, and maintain interpersonal bonds without physical meetings. Success in gaining instant attention through social media increases individual happiness. However, the convenience offered by social media also has the potential to become a habit. Many individuals tend to rely too much on social media platforms, and when they receive negative comments, it can harm individual happiness. This is proven based on research by Keles et al. (2020) that based on social media has a relationship with depression, anxiety, and distress based on the intensity of use. In a study conducted on university students in Bandung, it was found that individuals who have a high level of social media use, which reaches the addiction stage, experience a low level of psychological well-being (Azharuddin & Qodariah, 2021).

In addition to these findings, different facts are interesting enough to be examined further where there are findings that in addition to negative effects, the use of social media also has a positive impact on increasing one's life development and well-being, such as through access to positive information,

increasing social relationships, identity formation, and success, provided that it needs to be done consciously (Gudka, 2022). This awareness control can validate research by Winata and Andangsari (2017), which was conducted on Binus University students in Indonesia. The study produced findings that the need for gratitude, which can be achieved by not doing self-comparison when using social media, can increase happiness. Then, followed by recent qualitative research by Purboningsih et al. (2023) on how adolescents and parents perceive using social media, where the findings are pretty interesting that social media can function as a fun entertainment medium, including a medium for conducting reasonably practical social activities which can influence a person's level of happiness, besides this research also highlights the vulnerability of individuals experiencing loneliness and a shift in meaningful activities when social media is used addictively.

Based on the research on the problems that have been carried out, there are limitations to research on the negative and positive potential of using social media on one's happiness. Interesting research needs to be done further on how social media not only has a negative influence but also a positive one, with the potential for how far the influence is. In addition to the limitations of research on related topics, there is also an area of research that has yet to be examined in Malang, yet it is closely related to the subject of students. Therefore, it is important to conduct a deeper examination of this subject, with the hypothesis that social media use influences university students' happiness in Malang.

## **METHODS**

### **Design**

This research uses a quantitative approach with descriptive tests and simple linear regression that emphasizes numerical data or numbers and is processed using statistical methods. This approach reveals a fact and shows the influence of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y). The variables studied in this research are social media use (X) and happiness (Y). The aim is to find out how the use of social media affects happiness in students in Malang City.

### **Respondent**

The purposive sampling technique is used based on availability and ease of obtaining it. Anyone who meets and is willing to be a respondent is selected as a sample. Therefore, this research uses the characteristics of the sample: (1) university students in Malang City; (2) male or female; and (3) active social media users, such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and Facebook. The sample in this research was 266 respondents.

### **Instrument**

This research used an adapted scale from the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) by Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999) and the Social Media Use Scale (SMUS) by Tuck et al. (2023). The SHS consists of four items to measure happiness, using a Likert scale with a score range of 1–7 for the most appropriate to the most inappropriate, while the SMUS consists of 17 items using a Likert scale with a range of answer categories of 1–9 based on the intensity of social media use over the past seven days.

Validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure data reliability. According to the instrument trial conducted on 30 students from Universitas Negeri Malang, the SHS revealed four valid items and no invalid items at a significance level of 5% or .05. Simultaneously, SMUS showed 15 valid items and two invalid ones, also at a significance level of 5% or .05. SMUS achieved a reliability coefficient of .948, considered very high in Guilford's reliability coefficient category, based on the reliability test results of 15 valid items. SHS achieved a reliability coefficient of .713, which is considered high, with four valid items. Therefore, both scales are suitable for use as research instruments.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out in several stages with the assistance of the IBM SPSS Statistic 26.0 for the Windows program. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive analysis, assumption tests, and hypothesis testing with simple linear regression analysis. Hypothesis testing was conducted using a simple linear regression test. The alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted, and the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected with the provision that the significance value was less than .05. This means that the use of social media affects happiness in students in Malang City.

## RESULTS

This research focuses on social media use's influence on happiness among students in Malang. Before conducting the test, the identification of respondents was analyzed through distributed questionnaires. The total number of respondents was 266 students (124 men, 142 women) aged 18–30. Data collection was done online using Google Forms. Based on the research results, 59% of respondents came from Malang, 20% from outside Malang but still in East Java, and 21% from outside East Java. The majority of respondents (95%) actively use Instagram, followed by TikTok (65%), Twitter (51%), Facebook (21%), and Weverse (0.01%). The majority of respondents also have more than one active social media account.

### Descriptive Analysis

The normality test results for the happiness variable (kolmogorov\_smirnov) were obtained with a significance of .057 ( $> .05$ ) and the social media variable with a significance of .063 ( $> .05$ ) using data from 266 respondents. Consequently, it can be concluded that the data from both variables are normally distributed. The linearity test for both variables obtained a significance of .49 ( $> .05$ ), meaning the data is linear. Table 1 presents the results of the categorization of social media use, while Table 2 presents the categorization of happiness.

Table 1.  
Categorization of Respondents on Social Media Usage

Variable	Categories	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Social Media Use	High	$X > 54$	45	16.9%
	Medium	$21 \leq X \leq 54$	183	68.8%
	Low	$X < 21$	38	14.3%
<b>Total</b>			<b>266</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2.  
Categorization of Respondents on Happiness

Variable	Categories	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Happiness	High	$X > 21$	36	13.5%
	Medium	$13 \leq X \leq 21$	191	71.8%
	Low	$X < 13$	39	14.7%
<b>Total</b>			<b>266</b>	<b>100%</b>

Tables 1 and 2 show that most respondents' social media use and happiness levels are moderate.

### Hypothesis Testing

The results of the hypothesis test using linear regression analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.  
Simple Linear Regression Analysis Test Results

R	R-squared	Significance
.157	.025	.010

Based on the results of the regression analysis presented in Table 3, it can be seen that the significance is .010 ( $< .05$ ), which means that H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected. In Table 3, it is also known that the R-squared value is .025, which means that the contribution of variable X (social media use) to variable Y (happiness) is 25%.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the hypothesis testing conducted, the results obtained showed that the use of social media has a significant influence on happiness. The results of this research support the findings of the influence of social media use on happiness. However, it cannot be denied that social media can also positively impact happiness, although it is relatively small. The use of social media can be a fairly enjoyable activity, although excessive use can harm happiness (Fauziah, Hacantya, Paramita, & Saliha, 2020). The development of social media allows users to enjoy many entertainment facilities. Social media can easily access various shows, which can positively impact happiness. However, the unwise use of social media among teenagers can impact an unhealthy lifestyle (Zhang et al., 2022).

In a study by Arampatzi et al. (2018), strong empirical evidence was found that there is no average relationship between the amount of time spent on social media and happiness. However, a negative relationship was found between the time spent on social media and happiness for users who feel lonely and socially disconnected. This implies that social media is not the sole contributor to an individual's happiness. One key factor that can influence an individual's happiness is the level of social capital or the pattern of social interaction or contact with others. Several studies agree that individual social capital positively correlates with subjective well-being components, including happiness and life satisfaction.

According to Twenge et al. (2019), individuals who spend time on social media also interact with others face-to-face. This can significantly impact happiness levels compared to individuals with less face-to-face social interaction. Individuals with low face-to-face interaction tend to have higher social media usage and report higher levels of loneliness. In some studies, problematic social media use tends to significantly impact an individual's happiness. Problematic social media users may experience dependence or addiction and excessive intensity. For example, prolonged duration of social media use may replace valuable time for happiness-related activities such as direct interaction, physical activity, reading, and outdoor activities (Larson et al., 2019; Twenge et al., 2019). Other research also indicates that excessive social media use can negatively impact happiness, mainly through sleep disruption and a lack of physical activity (Zhang et al., 2022).

This research's analysis only focuses on the level of social media use and happiness. It does not consider other variables or aspects that can influence the level of happiness of students who use social media. For future research, it is necessary to consider other variables related to the use of social media and variables that affect students' happiness.

## CONCLUSION

According to this research, social media use significantly impacts the happiness of university students in Malang. Social media use has been correlated to happiness, but its contribution is small. This supports prior findings that excessive social media use may lower happiness, especially in lonely or socially disconnected individuals. The respondents' moderate social media use may have contributed

to the results' insignificance. Personality, environment, social support, and face-to-face interactions additionally determined happiness. Happiness was positively related to social capital or social interaction patterns. This research emphasizes that social media use does not determine happiness alone. However, complex, interrelated factors like direct social interactions and social support also affect happiness. This research explains the complex dynamics between social media use and university student happiness.

## REFERENCES

- Arampatzi, E., Burger, M. J., & Novik, N. (2018). Social Network Sites, Individual Social Capital and Happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *19*(1), 99–122. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-016-9808-z>
- Azharuddin, N. R., & Qodariah, S. (2021). Hubungan Adiksi Media Sosial dengan Psychological Well-Being pada Mahasiswa di Kota Bandung. *Prosiding Psikologi*, *7*(2), 168–172. <https://doi.org/10.29313/.v0i0.28224>
- Bila, I., & Hoian, I. (2022). Happiness as a Psychological Formation. *Technologies of Intellect Development*, *6*(1(31)). <https://doi.org/10.31108/3.2022.6.1.8>
- Fauziah, S., Hacantya, B. B., Paramita, A. W., & Saliha, W. M. (2020). Kontribusi Penggunaan Media Sosial dalam Perbandingan Sosial pada Anak-Anak Akhir. *PSYCHO IDEA*, *18*(2), 91–103. <https://doi.org/10.30595/psychoidea.v18i2.7145>
- Griffin, P. W., & Sarnataro, N. (2023). Happiness and Subjective Well-Being. In H. S. Friedman & C. H. Markey (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Mental Health* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Academic Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-91497-0.00135-1>
- Gudka, M. (2022, December 13). How Social Media Can Add to Your Well-Being (not Detract from It). *Greater Good*. Retrieved from [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_social\\_media\\_can\\_add\\_to\\_your\\_wellbeing\\_not\\_detract\\_from\\_it](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_social_media_can_add_to_your_wellbeing_not_detract_from_it)
- Harimurti, A. (2022). Analisis Tematik Kebahagiaan pada Milenial Kelas Menengah. *Suksma: Jurnal Psikologi Universitas Sanata Dharma*, *3*(2), 49–59. <https://doi.org/10.24071/suksma.v3i2.4956>
- Hurlock, E. B. (1991). *Psikologi Perkembangan: Suatu Pendekatan Sepanjang Rentang Kehidupan* (R. M. Sijabat, Ed.; Istiwidayanti & Soedjarwo, Trans.). Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Keles, B., McCrae, N., & Grealish, A. (2020). A Systematic Review: The Influence of Social Media on Depression, Anxiety and Psychological Distress in Adolescents. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *25*(1), 79–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1590851>
- Larson, L. R., Szczytko, R., Bowers, E. P., Stephens, L. E., Stevenson, K. T., & Floyd, M. F. (2019). Outdoor Time, Screen Time, and Connection to Nature: Troubling Trends Among Rural Youth? *Environment and Behavior*, *51*(8), 966–991. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916518806686>
- Liang, C., & Sun, J. (2022). A Study of the Happiness of Chinese University Students and Its Influencing Factors—A Case Study of Beijing Universities. *Sustainability*, *14*(23), 16057. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142316057>

- Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. S. (1999). A Measure of Subjective Happiness: Preliminary Reliability and Construct Validation. *Social Indicators Research*, 46(2), 137–155. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006824100041>
- Mulyono, F. (2021). Dampak Media Sosial bagi Remaja. *Jurnal Simki Economic*, 4(1), 57–65. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29407/jse.v4i1.66>
- Purboningsih, E. R., Massar, K., Hinduan, Z. R., Agustiani, H., Ruitter, R. A. C., & Verduyn, P. (2023). Perception and Use of Social Media by Indonesian Adolescents and Parents: A Qualitative Study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.985112>
- Righi, A., & Masserini, L. (2023). Measuring Relational Factors Underlying Subjective Happiness. *Current Psychology*, 42(11), 9225–9236. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02208-2>
- Simsek, A., Elciyar, K., & Kizilhan, T. (2019). A Comparative Study on Social Media Addiction of High School and University Students. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 10(2), 106–119. <https://doi.org/10.30935/cet.554452>
- Tuck, A. B., Long, K. A., & Thompson, R. J. (2023). Social Media's Influence on Momentary Emotion Based on People's Initial Mood: An Experimental Design. *Cognition & Emotion*, 37(5), 1049–1056. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2023.2219443>
- Twenge, J. M., Spitzberg, B. H., & Campbell, W. K. (2019). Less in-Person Social Interaction with Peers Among U.S. Adolescents in the 21st Century and Links to Loneliness. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 36(6), 1892–1913. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407519836170>
- Winata, C., & Andangsari, E. W. (2017). Dispositional Gratitude and Social Comparison Orientation Among Social Media Users. *Humaniora*, 8(3), 229–237. <https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v8i3.3620>
- Zhang, J., Marino, C., Canale, N., Charrier, L., Lazzeri, G., Nardone, P., & Vieno, A. (2022). The Effect of Problematic Social Media Use on Happiness Among Adolescents: The Mediating Role of Lifestyle Habits. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(5), 2576. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19052576>