

The Intersection of Personality Traits and Social Media Use: Implications for Adolescent Happiness

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of Big Five personality traits and social media use on the happiness of adolescent users of platform X (Twitter). Platform X was chosen due to its high level of toxicity compared to other platforms (Norton, 2022), making it especially relevant for exploring digital well-being in adolescents. A total of 282 adolescents aged 12 to 21 years were selected using purposive sampling. Instruments used included the IPIP-BFM-25 Indonesia, the Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS), and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ). Data were analysed using multiple linear regression to examine both joint and partial effects. The results indicated that the independent variables jointly have a significant impact on happiness. Partially, Neuroticism and social media use had adverse effects, while Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Openness had positive effects. Conscientiousness showed no significant influence. These findings suggest the need for school-based interventions to strengthen adolescents' emotional regulation and digital literacy.

Keywords: personality, social media use, happiness, adolescents

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh trait kepribadian Big Five dan penggunaan media sosial terhadap kebahagiaan remaja pengguna platform X (Twitter). Platform X dipilih karena memiliki tingkat toksisitas yang tinggi dibandingkan dengan platform lainnya (Norton, 2022), sehingga relevan untuk mengeksplorasi kesejahteraan digital pada remaja. Sebanyak 282 remaja berusia 12 hingga 21 tahun dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Instrumen yang digunakan meliputi IPIP-BFM-25 versi Indonesia, Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS), dan Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ). Data dianalisis menggunakan regresi linear berganda untuk melihat pengaruh gabungan dan parsial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa variabel independen secara bersama-sama memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap kebahagiaan. Secara parsial, Neuroticism dan penggunaan media sosial memiliki pengaruh negatif, sementara Extraversion, Agreeableness, dan Openness memberikan pengaruh positif. Conscientiousness tidak menunjukkan pengaruh yang signifikan. Temuan ini menunjukkan perlunya intervensi berbasis sekolah untuk memperkuat regulasi emosi dan literasi digital pada remaja.

Keywords: kepribadian, penggunaan media sosial, kebahagiaan, remaja

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INTRODUCTION

Toxic content has become prevalent with the rise of social media. Thomas et al. (2021) state that 48% of internet users encounter online hate and harassment. X, formerly known as Twitter, is recognized as a particularly toxic platform. A survey by SimpleTexting (Norton, 2022) rated it 7.82 in toxicity, the highest among social media. This is troubling, especially as there are 27 million users in Indonesia as of October 2023, according to Databoks (Annur, 2023). The platform's growth partly stems from its 'community' feature, with groups like "*Komunitas Marah-Marah*," created by @musyihab, which allows users to express their frustration.

Excessive exposure to toxic tweets negatively impacts users' mental well-being and happiness. Argyle et al. (1989) highlight that happiness, characterized by satisfaction and joy, is vital for individuals, particularly adolescents. Research by Arslan and Coşkun (2020) demonstrates the impact of happiness on academic satisfaction and prosocial behavior. Conversely, low levels of happiness can lead to problematic behaviors, as indicated by Jiang et al. (2022).

Seligman (2002) identifies five factors influencing happiness in his PERMA theory: a) Positive Emotions, b) Engagement, c) Relationships, d) Meaning, and e) Accomplishment. Extroverted personalities are often associated with positive feelings, whereas neurotic personalities tend to experience more negative emotions.

Kim et al. (2020) highlight that positive social relationships are a key factor in achieving high levels of happiness. Yow et al. (2020) found that adolescents feel happier when they use social media to connect with others who share similar interests. Social media has become essential for interpersonal interaction (Kross et al., 2021), as it facilitates meaningful connections and helps expand social networks, thereby contributing to overall happiness.

However, Naslund et al. (2020) note that the rapid dissemination of news on social media can hurt happiness. Exposure to troubling news about friends and family can lead to anxiety, sadness, and stress (Yow et al., 2020). Studies show that adolescents spending over five hours daily on social media face a higher risk of self-harm and lower happiness levels (Lung et al., 2020). With 27 million users in Indonesia as of October 2023, X poses potential risks for adolescents (Databoks, 2023).

In Indonesia, the cultural values inherent in local communities shape how adolescents engage with social media. A qualitative study conducted in Carangrejo Village reveals that adolescents frequently exhibit hedonistic and consumptive behaviors influenced by social media, prioritizing entertainment and making impulsive purchases to satisfy social expectations (Al-Annur, 2023). These results indicate that digital behavior is influenced not only by personal characteristics but also by cultural and social norms that emphasize conformity, group acceptance, and a contemporary lifestyle. Such cultural settings may amplify the psychological effects of social media on adolescent well-being, mainly when their online interactions focus on appearance, status, or material wealth.

Recent studies have highlighted critical mechanisms through which social media toxicity affects adolescent happiness. Passive use, characterized by scrolling without interaction, has been consistently linked to increased symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood, even when controlling for overall usage time (Thorisdottir et al., 2019). In contrast, active engagement such as posting or messaging often mitigates distress by fostering



social connection; however, the results are mixed due to individual differences (Valkenburg et al., 2022). One key mechanism identified is upward social comparison, where passive users compare themselves unfavorably to curated content, leading to increased envy and reduced life satisfaction (Verduyn et al., 2022).

In contrast, personality traits may wield a more substantial influence on happiness. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) claim that personality plays a crucial role in determining happiness levels. Research by Kroencke et al. (2019) found that adolescents with high extraversion and low neuroticism report greater happiness. Similarly, Kanen et al. (2021) demonstrate that certain personality traits influence serotonin production, which is related to feelings of happiness. Thus, personality is a fundamental factor influencing adolescent happiness.

Research generally suggests that social media impacts happiness, but Shensa et al. (2020) found that face-to-face interactions, which provide emotional support, enhance happiness by approximately 43% more than social media. Sun et al. (2020) further emphasize that the quality of social interactions, including the depth of conversations and the extent of self-disclosure, has a significant influence on happiness. Their findings suggest that introverts experience greater social connectedness from deeper conversations compared to extroverts. Additionally, Zhang et al. (2021) argue that psychological harmony plays a more significant role in happiness than personality traits, such as extraversion or introversion.

The rising adolescent suicide rate in Indonesia reflects a concerning lack of happiness, potentially exacerbated by social media use. While internal factors, such as personality, affect happiness, some studies argue that neither social media nor personality significantly influences it. Thus, it is essential to explore how personality and social media use intersect and affect adolescent happiness, providing deeper insights into this population in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study aims to examine how Big Five personality traits and the intensity of social media use specifically on platform X influence happiness among Indonesian adolescents. This study is one of the few that simultaneously examines the relationship between Big Five personality traits and social media use (specifically on platform X) in predicting adolescent happiness within the Indonesian cultural context. Given the platform's high toxicity, its popularity among Indonesian adolescents, and the scarcity of local studies that integrate personality and digital behavior, this research offers novel insights into digital well-being in Southeast Asia.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational approach, using multiple linear regression, to investigate the predictive relationship among Big Five personality traits (X1), social media use (X2), and adolescent happiness (Y). Multiple linear regression was chosen to assess both simultaneous and partial effects of the independent variables on happiness.

Participants

The population consisted of Indonesian adolescents aged 12 to 21 who actively used the social media platform X (Twitter). Based on Hurlock's (1991) classification of adolescence, a total of 282 participants were selected using purposive sampling. The



sample size was determined with a 95% confidence level, a 5.84% margin of error, and a population proportion of 50%. Inclusion criteria included: (1) active Twitter users (using the platform for at least one hour per day), (2) no history of diagnosed mental disorders, and (3) willingness to voluntarily complete the online questionnaire. The online survey was distributed via Twitter user communities and school group chats.

Instruments

Personality was assessed using the IPIP-BFM-25 Indonesia, developed by Akhtar and Azwar (2018). This tool evaluates five traits Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism with 25 items on a 5-point Likert scale. Although the IPIP-BFM-25 was developed for adults, the Indonesian version has been used in adolescent studies (e.g., Akhtar & Azwar, 2018). Additionally, the items were reviewed by psychologists experienced in working with adolescent populations. Social media use was assessed using the Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS), developed by Olufadi (2016). This scale consists of 29 items across five dimensions: relaxation, academic use, public settings, stress-related use, and motives. The Indonesian version of SONTUS has shown strong internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.85$) in a pilot study involving 50 participants. Happiness was measured using the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) by Hills and Argyle (2002), which consists of 29 items that cover aspects such as life satisfaction, efficacy, sociability, optimism, well-being, cheerfulness, self-esteem, and happy memories, all rated on a 6-point Likert scale.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was assessed by two faculty members from the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana. Both hold doctoral degrees in psychology and have expertise in psychometrics and adolescent development. Internal consistency reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, and all instruments exceeded the acceptable threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$. Item discrimination was examined through item-total correlations, with all items demonstrating acceptable values ($r \geq 0.30$). Specifically, the IPIP-BFM-25 showed $\alpha = 0.79$ with item-total correlations ≥ 0.32 ; the SONTUS scale yielded $\alpha = 0.85$ with item-total correlations ≥ 0.34 ; and the OHQ demonstrated $\alpha = 0.91$ with item-total correlations ≥ 0.41 .

Data Screening

All responses were collected using a mandatory-response Google Form, ensuring that no data was missing. Before analysis, data were screened for outliers using the ± 3 standard deviation rule. No extreme outliers were detected, and all data were retained for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression. Before analysis, assumption tests were conducted, including normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov, $p > 0.05$), homogeneity (Levene's test, $p > 0.05$), multicollinearity ($VIF < 10$, Tolerance > 0.1), and linearity (ANOVA Linearity Test, $p < 0.05$). Hypothesis testing was performed using the F-test to assess the overall model and t-tests for partial effects. Significance was determined at $p < 0.05$.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before hypothesis testing, regression assumptions were evaluated to ensure the validity of the multiple linear regression analysis.

Normality

Normality was tested using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The results indicated that all variables had significance values less than 0.05, suggesting non-normal distribution. However, given the large sample size ($n = 282$), the Central Limit Theorem was applied, and the data were considered acceptable for parametric analysis.

Homogeneity

Levene's test was used to assess the homogeneity of variances. Only the variable Agreeableness met the assumption ($p = 0.226$), while others showed $p < 0.05$, indicating variance heterogeneity. Despite this, linear regression is considered robust to violations of homogeneity with large samples.

Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity was tested using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). All predictor variables had Tolerance values ranging from 0.517 to 0.809 and VIF values between 1.236 and 1.935, indicating no multicollinearity issues.

Linearity

Linearity was assessed using ANOVA's Test for Linearity. All predictors showed significant linear components ($p < 0.05$), confirming linear relationships with the dependent variable. However, deviations from linearity were also found in some variables, such as Extraversion ($p = 0.000$), Conscientiousness ($p = 0.001$), and Agreeableness ($p = 0.019$), which were acknowledged in the discussion as a limitation.

Hypothesis

This section outlines the distribution of respondents across three primary variables: personality traits, social media usage, and happiness. The Big Five personality traits are Neuroticism, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience. The descriptive results indicate the number of adolescents categorized as low, moderate, or high for each trait.

These classifications illustrate the general tendencies of the adolescent sample regarding personality characteristics, intensity of social media use, and subjective well-being. Complete distributions are presented in the following tables.



Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics of Big Five Personality

Traits	Interval	Category	Frequency	%
Neuroticism	5-14	Low	55	19.5
	15-21	Moderate	175	62.1
	22-25	High	52	18.4
SUM			282	100
Min= 5; Max = 25; Mean = 17.67; SD = 3.65				
Extraversion	3-7	Low	46	16.3
	8-12	Moderate	193	68.4
	13-15	High	43	15.2
SUM			282	100
Min= 3; Max = 15; Mean = 9.87; SD = 2.39				
Conscientiousness	10-14	Low	44	15.6
	15-20	Moderate	179	63.5
	21-25	High	59	20.9
SUM			282	100
Min= 10; Max = 25; Mean = 17.67; SD = 3.23				
Agreeableness	10-15	Low	55	19.5
	16-21	Moderate	181	64.2
	22-25	High	52	18.4
SUM			282	100
Min= 10 ; Max = 25 ; Mean = 18.56; SD = 3.01				
Openness to Experience	4-8	Low	49	17.4
	9-12	Moderate	173	61.3
	13-15	High	60	21.3
SUM			282	100
Min= 4; Max = 15 ; Mean = 10.50; SD = 2.29				

Most adolescents in this study exhibited moderate levels across all five Big Five personality traits. For Neuroticism, 62.1% of participants fell into the moderate category, indicating emotional stability that is generally balanced but may still be vulnerable to stress in certain situations. A smaller percentage was categorized as high (18.4%) and low (19.5%).

In terms of Extraversion, 68.4% of participants fell within the moderate range, suggesting a balanced sociability and interaction style. The high and low categories were nearly equal, at 15.2% and 16.3%, respectively. Conscientiousness was also mostly moderate (63.5%), reflecting average levels of self-discipline and responsibility. Meanwhile, 20.9% displayed high conscientiousness, and 15.6% scored low.

The distribution of Agreeableness was similar, with 64.2% in the moderate category. This indicates average tendencies in empathy, friendliness, and cooperativeness. The remaining participants were relatively evenly split between low (19.5%) and high (18.4%) levels.



Lastly, regarding Openness to Experience, 61.3% of respondents were moderately open to new ideas and experiences. About 21.3% were highly open, while 17.4% demonstrated low openness.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics of Social Media Usage

Interval	Category	Frequency	%
5-9	Low	36	12.8
10-14	Moderate	125	44.3
15-19	High	65	23
19 <	Very High	56	19.9
SUM		282	100
Min= 5 ; Max = 23 ; Mean = 14.42; SD = 4.62			

Based on the categorization of social media usage levels, most participants fell into the Moderate category, with 125 individuals (44.3%). A total of 65 participants (23%) were in the High category, and 56 participants (19.9%) were classified as Very High. Meanwhile, 36 participants (12.8%) were categorized as having Low social media usage. These results suggest that the majority of adolescent users of platform X in this study engaged in social media with moderate to high intensity, with only a small proportion reporting low usage. This indicates that social media usage is a common and relatively intense activity among adolescents.

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics of Happiness

Interval	Category	Frequency	%
< 3.29	Low	37	13.1
$3.29 \leq x \leq 4.51$	Moderate	201	71.3
$4.51 <$	High	44	15.6
Jumlah		282	100
Min= 2; Max = 5.64; Mean = 3.90; SD = 0.61			

According to the table above, the data indicate that 201 participants (71.3%) reported a moderate level of happiness, followed by 44 participants (15.6%) in the high category and 37 participants (13.1%) in the low category. These findings suggest that most adolescents in this study experienced a moderate level of happiness, with a smaller portion reporting either high or low levels of well-being.

To examine the influence of Big Five personality traits and social media use on adolescent happiness, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed. The results are presented in the following tables.



Table 4.
Model Summary

R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error of Estimate	F	p
.564	.318	.303	.513	21.328	.000

The model explained 31.8% of the variance in adolescent happiness ($R^2 = .318$), indicating a moderate relationship. The regression model was significant, $F(6, 275) = 21.328$, $p < .001$. The following table presents the regression coefficients, standard errors, beta values, and significance levels for each independent variable.

Table 5.
Coefficients of Multiple Regression

Predictor	B	β	t	p
(Constant)	2.765	-	12.739	.000
Neuroticism	-.056	-.334	-6.030	.000
Extraversion	.032	.127	2.075	.039
Conscientiousness	.023	.124	1.787	.075
Agreeableness	.062	.305	4.404	.000
Openness to Experiences	.058	.218	3.280	.001
Social Media Use	-.026	-.190	-3.430	.001

The results indicate that Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, and Social Media Use significantly predict happiness ($p < .05$). Conscientiousness did not show a significant effect in the multiple regression model ($p = .075$).

The present study examined the influence of Big Five personality traits and social media use on adolescent happiness. The results showed that the combined model was significant, indicating that personality traits and social media use collectively predict happiness among adolescents. However, only Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Social Media Use indicated significant partial effects.

Neuroticism had a significant adverse effect on happiness, supporting prior research suggesting that individuals high in neuroticism tend to experience emotional instability, anxiety, and negative affect, which in turn reduce overall well-being (Abdel-Khalek et al., 2022; Shdaifat et al., 2024). This finding aligns with studies conducted across diverse populations, including healthcare professionals and recreational athletes, which have shown that lower neuroticism is associated with greater life satisfaction.

Extraversion showed a significant positive effect, consistent with theoretical frameworks linking sociability and energy to positive emotional experiences and life satisfaction. Extraverted individuals tend to seek social stimulation and engagement, enhancing their subjective well-being (Živković et al., 2022; Reizer et al., 2023).

Social media use had a significant adverse effect on happiness, echoing findings by Zhang et al. (2022) and others. Excessive engagement with social networking platforms has been linked to problematic behaviors such as cyberbullying, reduced academic performance, poor sleep hygiene, and psychological distress, all of which may impair adolescents' happiness.



Interestingly, Openness and Agreeableness were not aligned with the hypothesized direction. Both traits exhibited positive relationships with happiness, contrary to initial assumptions of a negative link. This suggests that openness to experience, characterized by curiosity and appreciation for new ideas, and agreeableness, defined by empathy and social harmony, contribute to enhanced well-being. These results are supported by Abdel-Khalek et al. (2022), who found that individuals high in openness reported greater life meaning and satisfaction.

Although the initial hypothesis assumed a negative or non-significant link, the positive associations between Openness and Agreeableness with happiness can be explained by their adaptive social and emotional functions. Openness involves curiosity, cognitive flexibility, and appreciation for new experiences—all of which may enhance adolescents' engagement with life and foster personal growth, contributing to subjective well-being (Dong & Ni, 2020). Similarly, Agreeableness reflects empathy, cooperation, and a tendency to maintain harmonious relationships, which can increase perceived social support and emotional satisfaction, both key components of happiness (Jovanović, 2019).

Conscientiousness did not significantly predict happiness in the multiple regression model, although it demonstrated significance in simple regression analysis. This inconsistency may stem from interaction effects with other personality traits or overlapping variance. This discrepancy aligns with prior research. For example, a large-scale study of Serbian adolescents (N = 500) found that Conscientiousness contributed little to life satisfaction once adverse life events were considered, indicating that its impact may be overshadowed by situational stressors (Jovanović, 2019).

More complex models suggest that the importance of Conscientiousness may depend on the developmental stage. Longitudinal research among Chinese undergraduates (N= 365) indicated that Conscientiousness predicted later life satisfaction, but only when combined with emotional stability and health variables—not directly in adolescence (Hu et al., 2022). Taken together, these findings suggest that during adolescence, the benefits of being conscientious—such as organization and self-control may be diminished by external pressures, age-related developmental tasks, or stronger influences from emotional and social traits.

Overall, these findings indicate that not all personality traits equally influence adolescent happiness. Emotional stability and social engagement (represented by Neuroticism and Extraversion) are more salient, while the role of conscientious behavior may be context dependent. Additionally, the negative impact of social media use reinforces the growing concern regarding digital well-being in adolescents.

This study makes a meaningful contribution to the literature by addressing a timely topic with a substantial adolescent sample (n = 282), utilizing validated instruments (IPIP-BFM-25, SONTUS, OHQ), and employing rigorous statistical procedures. The focus on adolescents in the context of social media use provides valuable insights into digital-era psychological well-being.

Nonetheless, several limitations are acknowledged. First, some variables exhibited statistical non-normality; however, the large sample size justifies the use of parametric analysis, as supported by the Central Limit Theorem. Second, inconsistencies between simple and multiple regression results—particularly for Conscientiousness—suggest potential multicollinearity or suppression effects. Third, the use of a single social media platform limits the generalizability of findings to broader digital behaviors. Fourth,



the use of self-report measures may introduce social desirability bias, which can potentially affect the accuracy of responses. Future studies may consider incorporating behavioral data, such as screen time tracking, for more objective assessments. Lastly, the correlational design prevents causal conclusions; future longitudinal or experimental studies are recommended to establish directionality.

Despite these limitations, the study offers practical implications for mental health practitioners, educators, and parents, emphasizing the importance of understanding personality dynamics and responsible social media use in promoting adolescent well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the Big Five personality traits and social media use significantly predicted adolescent happiness. Neuroticism and Extraversion emerged as the strongest predictors, while social media use had a negative impact. Although Openness and Agreeableness showed effects contrary to expectations, both positively contributed to the overall results. Conscientiousness was not a significant predictor. These findings underscore the importance of emotional stability, social engagement, and mindful digital habits in promoting adolescent well-being. Parents and educators are encouraged to support adolescents in developing self-awareness and healthy coping strategies. Schools are also advised to integrate digital literacy modules that include time management and critical thinking regarding toxic content. One notable limitation of this study is the reliance on self-reported data, which may be affected by social desirability bias. Future studies are encouraged to incorporate behavioral measures, such as screen time tracking, to provide more objective assessments. Additionally, further research may explore additional psychological factors and include a broader range of social media platforms to enhance generalizability.

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