



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIKTOK USAGE AND YOUTH WELL-BEING  
INVOLVING PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS***

**TANG LIAN**

**FBMK 2022 22**



**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIKTOK USAGE AND YOUTH WELL-BEING  
INVOLVING PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS**

By

**TANG LIAN**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**April 2022**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIKTOK USAGE AND YOUTH WELL-BEING INVOLVING PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS**

By

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**April 2022**

**Chairman : Associate Professor Siti Zobidah binti Omar, PhD**  
**Faculty : Modern Languages and Communication**

TikTok, as one of several social media applications, has attracted numerous users, particularly youths, due to its short and fast video features. By creating a content ecology and recommendation power through algorithms, TikTok enables users with similar interests to expand their social relationships through content sharing, becoming a key trend in social media video applications in China. However, the findings of some past studies have revealed problematic TikTok usage patterns, which have impaired positive emotions and relationships among youth. Moreover, other issues have also been present on TikTok, and these have reduced the level of well-being from using TikTok. Nevertheless, there are limited studies on the relationship between TikTok usage and well-being in China, as TikTok is an emerging social media platform. Therefore, the current study examines how TikTok usage correlates with well-being among youth. The general objective of this study is to examine users' personality characteristics as a moderating factor toward the relationship between TikTok usage and youth well-being in China. Under the umbrella of TikTok usage, the research has applied the technology acceptance model to study attitudes toward TikTok, and adopted uses and gratifications theory to examine the need for using TikTok. Meanwhile, the PERMA model of well-being theory has been employed to evaluate youths' overall well-being. This study used a quantitative approach via survey design, collecting a total of 596 self-administered questionnaires from TikTok users in Xi'an, China through four-stage cluster sampling, simple random sampling, and purposive sampling techniques. Data analysis was performed in accordance with structural equation modelling via Smart-PLS software and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software. The study found that attitudes toward TikTok and needs for using TikTok significantly contributed 71.1% of variance in overall PERMA well-being among youth in China in general. The findings revealed that perceived usefulness and entertainment needs were the main factors that significantly and positively associated with youths' well-being, followed by social needs, tension release needs, perceived ease of use,

and cognitive needs, respectively. This study also found that there was a significant moderating role of personality characteristics on the relationship between perceived ease of use, entertainment needs, and well-being among youth in China. In light of the theoretical contribution, this study illustrated the influence of TikTok usage on youths' well-being based on the technology acceptance model, uses and gratifications theory, and PERMA model of well-being. In terms of practical aspects, the findings of this research could be helpful for youth development practitioners, families, youths themselves, and TikTok operators. It is recommended that TikTok users (youth) should pay attention to the negative impacts of TikTok usage and exercise caution accordingly when using TikTok in the future.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

## HUBUNGAN DI ANTARA PENGGUNAAN TIKTOK DAN KESEJAHTERAAN BELIA MELIBATKAN CIRI-CIRI PERSONALITI

Oleh

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TikTok, adalah salah satu daripada beberapa aplikasi media sosial yang telah menarik ramai pengguna terutamanya golongan belia kerana memiliki ciri video pendek dan pantas. Dengan mencipta ekologi kandungan dan kuasa cadangan melalui algoritma, TikTok membolehkan pengguna yang mempunyai minat sama mengembangkan hubungan sosial mereka melalui perkongsian kandungan dan ia telah menjadi trend utama dalam aplikasi video media sosial di China. Walau bagaimanapun, beberapa kajian sebelum ini telah mendapati bahawa corak penggunaan TikTok yang bermasalah menjejaskan emosi dan hubungan positif dalam kalangan belia. Selain itu, pembulian dan gangguan siber juga terdapat di TikTok dan ini mengurangkan tahap kesejahteraan penggunaan TikTok. Namun begitu, kajian mengenai hubungan antara penggunaan TikTok dan kesejahteraan di China adalah terhad, kerana TikTok ialah platform media sosial yang baru berkembang pesat. Oleh itu, kajian ini mengenal pasti bagaimana penggunaan TikTok berkorelasi dengan kesejahteraan dalam kalangan belia. Objektif umum kajian adalah untuk mengkaji ciri-ciri personaliti pengguna sebagai faktor penyederhana terhadap hubungan antara penggunaan TikTok dan kesejahteraan belia di China. Di bawah kajian penggunaan TikTok, kajian ini menggunakan model penerimaan teknologi untuk mengkaji sikap terhadap TikTok dan menerima pakai teori kegunaan dan kepuasan untuk mengkaji keperluan menggunakan TikTok. Sementara itu, model teori kesejahteraan PERMA digunakan untuk menilai kesejahteraan keseluruhan pengguna belia. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif melalui kaedah tinjauan dengan mengumpulkan sebanyak 596 soal selidik yang ditadbir sendiri daripada pengguna belia TikTok di Xi'an, China melalui teknik persampelan kluster empat peringkat, persampelan rawak mudah dan persampelan bertujuan. Analisis data dilaksanakan dengan *structural equation modelling* melalui perisian Smart-PLS dan perisian *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*. Secara amnya, kajian mendapati sikap terhadap TikTok dan keperluan untuk menggunakan TikTok

menyumbang secara signifikan iaitu 71.1% varians dalam keseluruhan kesejahteraan PERMA bagi pengguna belia di China. Penemuan ini mendedahkan bahawa persepsi kegunaan dan keperluan hiburan adalah faktor utama yang signifikan dan positif mempengaruhi kesejahteraan pengguna belia, diikuti dengan keperluan sosial, keperluan pelepasan ketegangan, persepsi kemudahan penggunaan, dan keperluan kognitif. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa terdapat peranan penyederhanaan yang signifikan oleh ciri personaliti terhadap hubungan antara persepsi kemudahan penggunaan, keperluan hiburan dan kesejahteraan dalam kalangan pengguna belia di China. Berdasarkan sumbangan teori, kajian ini menggambarkan pengaruh penggunaan TikTok terhadap kesejahteraan belia berdasarkan model penerimaan teknologi, teori kegunaan dan kepuasan, dan model kesejahteraan PERMA. Dari segi aspek praktikal, dapatan kajian ini dapat membantu pengamal pembangunan belia, keluarga, golongan belia dan pengendali TikTok. Adalah disyorkan bahawa pengguna belia TikTok memberi perhatian kepada kesan negatif penggunaan TikTok dan berwaspadadengan sewajarnya apabila menggunakan TikTok pada masa hadapan.

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Regards,

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICT	Information and Communication Technology
SMVA	Social Media Video Application
AI	Artificial Intelligence
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
UGT	Uses and Gratifications Theory
PU	Perceived Usefulness
PEOU	Perceived Ease of Use
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SNS	Social Networking Site
PRISMA	Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews
AU	Attitude Toward Using Technology
BI	Behavioural Intention to Use
ASU	Actual System Use
TRA	Theory of Reasonable Action
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
UTAUT	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology
5G	5th Generation Wireless Systems
CNY	Chinese Yuan
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CR	Composite Reliability
PC	Personality Characteristics
HTMT	Heterotrait–Monotrait

CB-SEM	Covariance-based Structural Equation Modelling
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
VIF	Variance Inflated Factor
TOL	Tolerance
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
d_ULS	Squared Euclidean Distance
d_G	Geodesic Distance
GB	Gigabytes



## CHAPTER 1

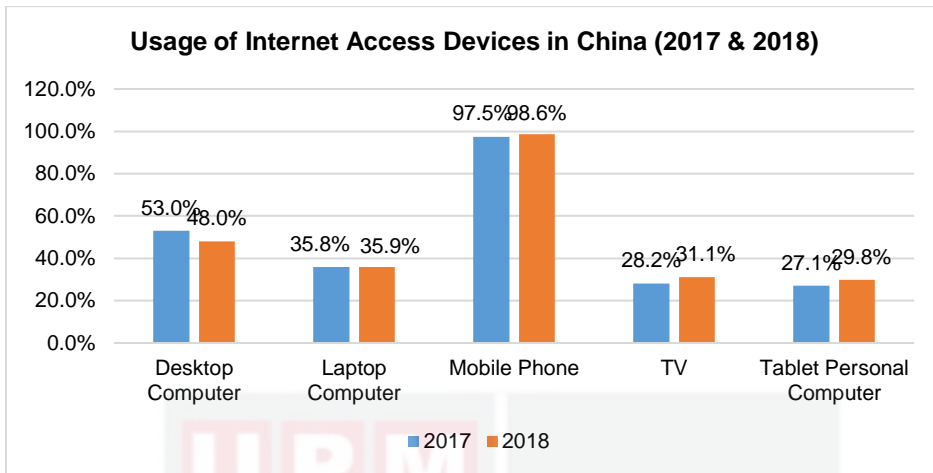
### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Understanding information and communication technology (ICT) usage and the well-being of users has always been an important issue, especially in social media and communication studies. With the rapid development of the internet and technology, there is an increasing number of pattern usages of social media on the internet. Individuals in numerous countries or regions around the world are widely using many kinds of social media. For example, Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat, Twitter, Instagram, Weibo, and other social media have an enormous number of users from all over the world. Social media is becoming increasingly competitive. As a result, the academic field has given growing attention to focus on the usage and well-being among users, and social media's different behavioural effects, particularly in meeting the needs of individuals in different regions or countries.

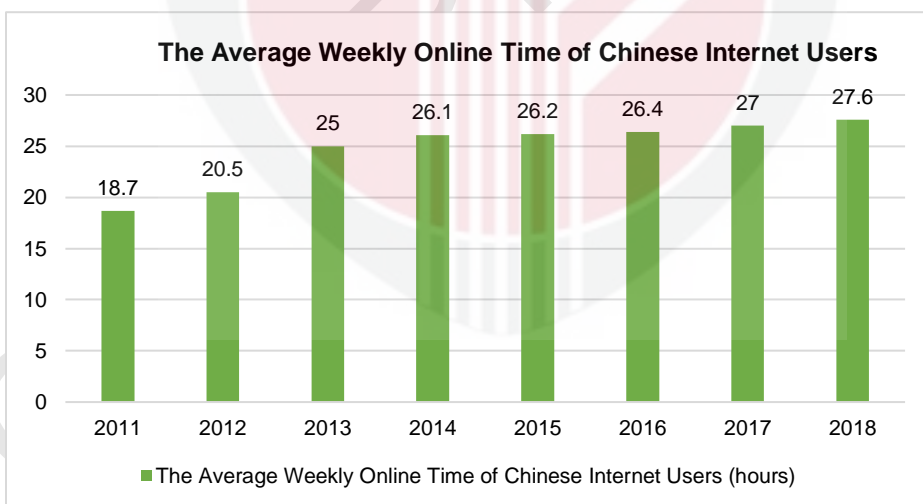
##### 1.1.1 Internet Usage and Mobile Internet Usage in China

According to the 43rd statistical report on the development of internet in China – released by the China Internet Network Information Center (2019) on 28 February, 2019 – at the end of December 2018, the number of internet users in China had reached 829 million and the penetration rate had reached 59.6%, which is 3.8 percentage points higher than that at the end of 2017. The number of mobile internet users in China had reached 817 million, and the proportion of internet users accessing the internet through mobile phones accounted for 98.6%, which was 1.1 percentage points higher than that of 2017. The proportion of internet users using TV networks had reached 31.1%, 2.9 percentage points higher than that at the end of 2017. Meanwhile, the percentage of internet users using desktop computers was 48.0%, down 5% compared with the end of 2017 (China Internet Network Information Center, 2019). According to Figure 1.1, the proportion of the usage of all internet access devices had increased except for desktop computer use, and mobile phone usage made up the largest share.



**Figure 1.1 : Usage of Internet Access Devices in China (2017 & 2018)**  
 (Source: China Internet Network Information Center, 2019)

In 2018, the average weekly online time spent by Chinese internet users was 27.6 hours, up 0.6 hours from the end of 2017. Between 2011 and 2018, the average weekly time spent online in China continued to grow steadily (see Figure 1.2).



**Figure 1.2 : The Average Weekly Online Time of Chinese Internet Users**  
 (Source: China Internet Network Information Center, 2019)

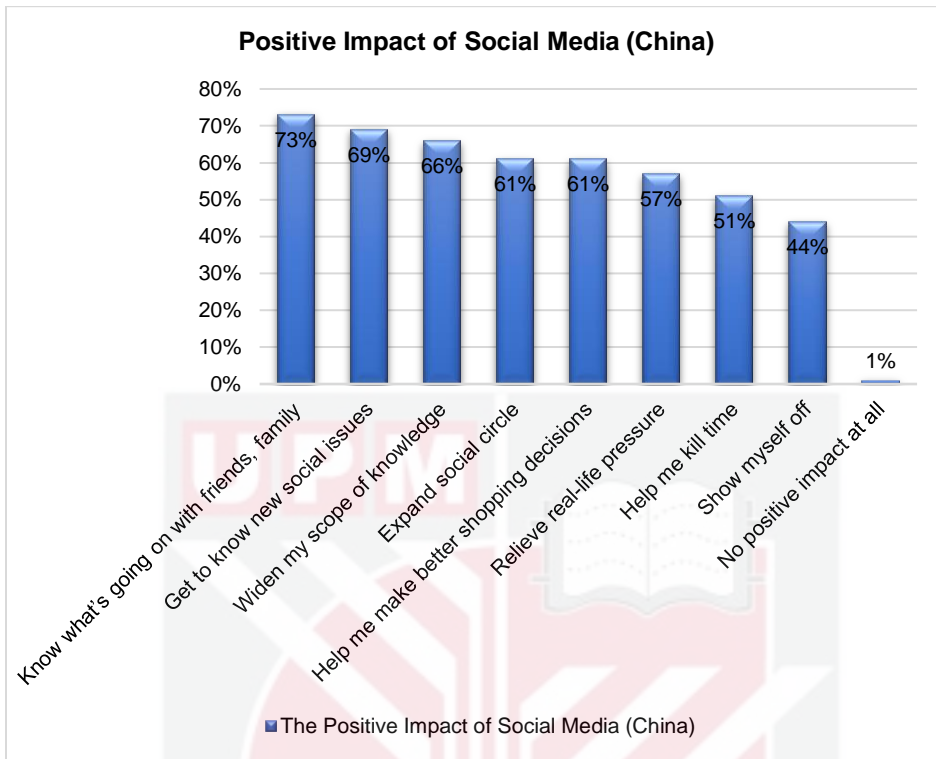


As the figures show, the use of smartphones to access the internet has become the main factor driving a massive growth in internet users and time online. This phenomenon reflects not only the success of the internet's popularization, but also the progress of the era. Using the internet through smartphones has been integrated into every aspect of daily life and become a common phenomenon. People use smartphones to connect to the internet for online food ordering, shopping, transportation, etc., while some people also use smartphones for work, business negotiations, the electronic office, etc. Additionally, some use mobile internet via smartphones to watch videos, play games, and enjoy other recreational activities (Bruhn et al., 2012; Gökerik et al., 2018; Greenhow et al., 2011; Jermsittiparsert et al., 2019; Jin, 2012; Montag et al., 2019).

In rural Malaysia, individuals have adopted e-government services via smartphone (Kamarudin et al., 2021). Moreover, mobile payment has gradually become a prevalent trend in many areas (Handarkho et al., 2021; Kwabena et al., 2021; Liébana-Cabanillas et al., 2021; Loh et al., 2021; Lui et al., 2021; Purohit & Arora, 2021). Finally, social media is widely used on smartphones to make friends, chat, learn about friends' statuses, and enhance emotional communication (Ainin et al., 2015; Vasalou et al., 2010). The biggest advantage of connecting to the internet through smartphones is that it is not limited by time and space, and the operation is simple and convenient. More importantly, smartphones are easy to carry and store. These reasons have contributed to the fact that most recently in China, the main way to connect to the internet is via mobile devices, accompanied by a steady increase in the average weekly time spent online.

### **1.1.2 Social Media and Social Media Video Applications Usage in China**

Internet and mobile technologies provide the basic conditions for the development and popularization of social media. Social media provides a variety of service functions, such as social contact, relationship maintenance and emotional communication, etc. These features have resulted in the continued growth in users of social media platforms. People usually use social media for instant communication, to learn about current social and political news, obtain information, increase knowledge, expand their social circle, relieve the pressure from real life, occupy leisure time, etc. Based on the 2018 Kantar China Social Media Impact Report, 99% of Chinese social media users agreed that social media brought many positive effects to their lives so that they could achieve well-being from social media usage. The most recognized functions of social media were communication with friends and learning about new social issues, as shown in Figure 1.3 (KANTAR, 2018a, 2018b).













**Figure 1.3 : Positive Impact of Social Media in China (Base: N=2,200)**  
 (Source: KANTAR, 2018a, 2018b)

The development of mobile terminals has spawned a new kind of social media, social media video applications (SMVAs) – which take abundant forms, have intuitive and efficient content, quickly update and spread information, and bring many other advantages – have stimulated steady user growth and the participation of numerous organizations during the beginning period of social media. SMVAs have attracted a large number of users for their convenient functions regarding information transmission, communication, and sharing. SMVAs on mobile devices have become a new star in the social media field, with their novel communication mode, which is a kind of streaming media transmitting not texts or pictures but videos. With the development of society, the fast pace of people's work and life has led to the fragmentation of time. Hence, people are focusing on how to get information in a shorter time. SMVAs take seconds as their unit of time, while their feature of displaying short, fast, and fresh content exactly caters to the fragmentation of users' time. Therefore, SMVAs naturally have a strong attraction for users with long working hours and under tremendous pressure.

According to a 2020 Social Media Video White Paper, young adults aged 18–30 still comprised the majority of SMVA active users, with an average of 1.65 usage hours per day. Additionally, the results showed that young people (18–30 years old) used 3.5 applications on average (Ipsos, 2021). Similarly, iResearch (2020) revealed that, among 2,040 SMVA users, 58.0% were youths aged 18–35. In addition, 56.4% of users reported that they used an SMVA many times a day (i.e., more than once a day on average). On the basis of these data, it could be concluded that SMVA are extremely popular in China, with a high-frequency usage for a long time per day, especially among youths. As a result, a study on SMVA usage in current Chinese society has feasibility and practical significance.

**Table 1.1 : Chinese social media application ranking (June 2020)**

Ranking	Applications	Monthly active users (million)	Month-on-Month changes (%)
1	 WeChat	988.361	0.26
2	 QQ	771.813	-2.61
3	 TikTok (Douyin)	613.339	4.65
4	 Kwai (Kuaishou)	466.782	-2.15
5	 Sina Weibo	443.165	1.09
6	 Watermelon Video	148.219	0.01
7	 RED (Xiaohongshu)	133.527	1.35
8	 Volcano Video	128.754	1.09
9	 Bilibili	124.463	3.06
10	 Haokan Video	83.128	-5.14

(Source: Analysys Qianfan, 2020)

Analysys Qianfan, a statistical institution, released a Chinese social media application ranking for June 2020, which listed the top 10 social media ranked by monthly active users in mainland China (see Table 1.1). WeChat and QQ ranked at the first and second leading positions respectively because of their famous instant messaging functions. In terms of SMVA, TikTok, Kwai, and Watermelon video ranked close behind. Furthermore, there were six SMVAs (i.e., TikTok, Kwai, Watermelon Video, Volcano Video, Bilibili and Haokan Video) in this ranking, accounting for more than half of the social media market. This showed the popularity of SMVAs in China (Analysys Qianfan, 2020) and that Chinese people have been surrounded by social media and SMVAs in contemporary society. This is a very important phenomenon, indicating that people frequently use ICT in their daily life. This phenomenon is also very conducive to research on social media. Furthermore, the large number of users shown in the figures provide convenience for this study to find research subjects and improve the operability of the research project.

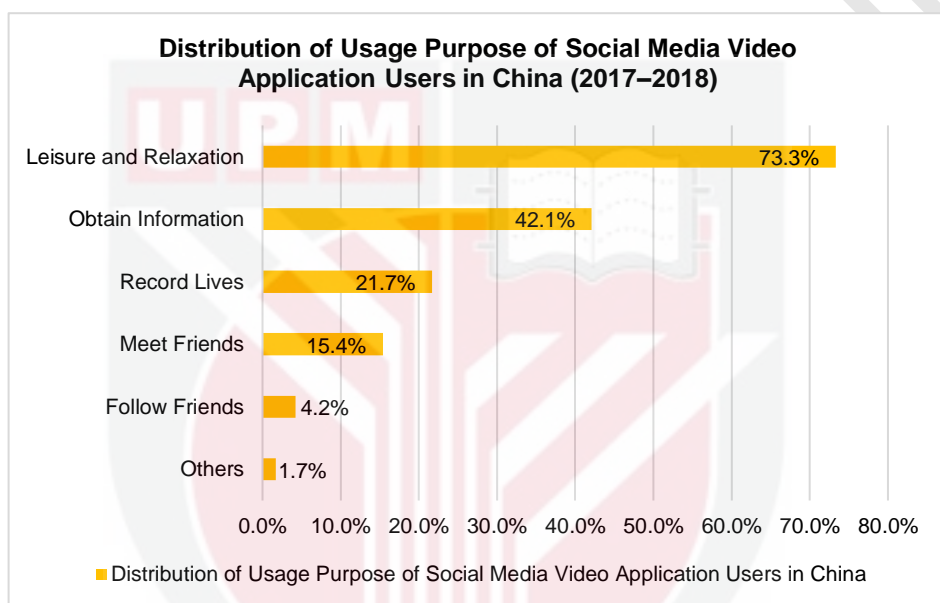
SMVAs could be able to harvest so many active users in mainland China and open up the prosperous situation of the development because of the distinctive characteristics and advantages of SMVAs. This following section then mainly discusses about the characteristics and use of SMVAs in mainland China. The discussion will first focus on the characteristics of SMVAs.

To begin with, SMVAs contain many shooting templates of video products for users to choose, and there is no need to handle professional technical knowledge or have the ability or spend lots of time and energy to use the applications. Users can easily shoot, make, and upload videos to share with others on the platforms. More importantly, the applications' interface and function settings are simple and easily operated by swiping the smartphone screen. Furthermore, the functional diversity of SMVAs is an important factor. SMVAs have multiple functions, including instant messaging and social contacting functions which are the same as traditional social media, as well as many other new functions. For example, these include, firstly, video shooting, production, and uploading functions, and even the mass release of videos. Secondly, users can give a thumbs-up, comment on, and forward others' videos, and specify a comment below videos to send personal messages one-by-one. Thirdly, users can easily save all videos in their mobile media files or albums. Fourthly, SMVAs can connect with the mobile phone address book, so users can also contact friends in real life through the applications.

Fifthly, users can conduct online live video broadcasts or live streaming activities. Many users, merchants, or enterprises use this function to sell goods and products on these platforms to promote sales (Ge et al., 2021; Luo et al., 2021). Sixthly, the applications can automatically locate users' location, then giving priority to play videos near the city. The merits of SMVAs are another crucial element to attract users. The information contained in SMVAs is more intuitive and vivid than that in simple pictures and words. Compared with traditional video communication, the video content is more concise and efficient. In addition, the SMVAs installed on a mobile terminal have the advantage of being able to be viewed anytime and anywhere. Finally, there are a variety of video subjects on SMVAs, involving music dubbing, funny stories, traditional culture, basic education, life wisdom, popularization of science, and so on (Feng et al., 2019; Zhang, 2020), which are all related to daily life and captivate users from different industries and occupations. Due to these advantages and convenience, SMVA has spellbound a mass of active users. The existing circumstances of SMVAs use in China will be discussed next.

SMVAs can be used in a very simple way. It is easy to log in and use them by linking a mobile phone number or associating other social media accounts. SMVA contents are dynamic videos, so people can easily browse videos even if some users are illiterate or not well educated. According to the research report 2017–2018 China Social Media Video Industry Trend and User Behaviour, released by the Iimedia Research Institute (2018), 73.3% of respondents

reported that they used SMVAs mainly for leisure and relaxation. 42.1% of respondents expressed that they used SMVAs to obtain the latest information, while 21.7% aimed to record their lives and keep their videos as memorials. Meanwhile, the respondents who use SMVAs to meet people who share common interests and to expand social circle also accounted for a large proportion, namely 15.4%, as shown in Figure 1.4. SMVAs can meet users' entertainment needs. At the same time, compared with text and pictures, users can obtain simpler and more vivid information through SMVAs. From what has been discussed above, these are all reasons why people use TikTok.



**Figure 1.4 : Distribution of Usage Purpose of Social Media Video Application Users in China (2017–2018)**

(Source: Iimedia Research Institute, 2018)

Note: N=2,072

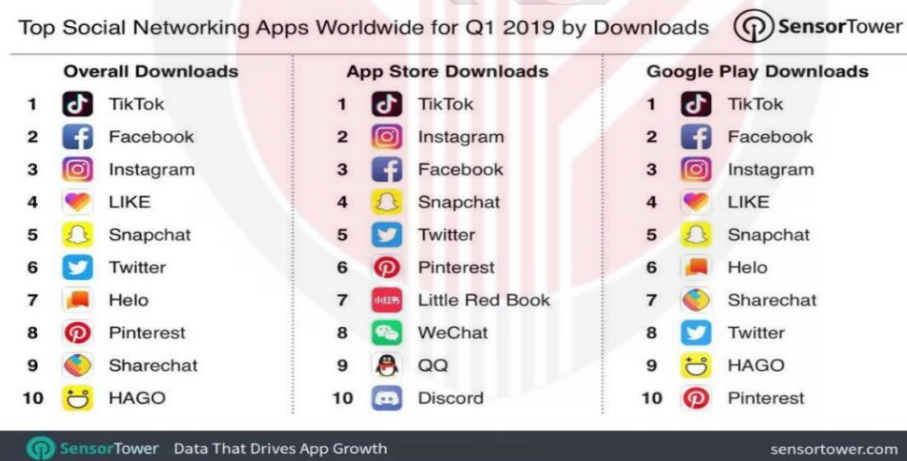
### 1.1.3 Use of TikTok in China

As aforementioned, SMVAs is democratic and fashionable in China and TikTok is the first leading SMVA with the largest number of monthly active users in China (Analysys Qianfan, 2020). Likewise, Statista (2021) has shown the most popular social media platforms worldwide as of July 2021, in which TikTok (international version) and Douyin (Chinese version) had a combined 1,332 million active users (Statista, 2021). This result indicated that TikTok is very prevalent all around the world as well.



TikTok, one of the widely used SMVAs, has developed rapidly from 2018. By creating a content ecology and recommendation power through algorithms, TikTok enabled users with similar interests to expand their social relationships through content sharing, becoming a SMVA key trend in China in 2018. Furthermore, TikTok entered a period of explosive growth, and its overall coverage among internet users increased dramatically in 2018. The application of artificial intelligence (AI) technology has won the technical support of TikTok, so that the platform distributes high-quality video content according to users' interests. In the interim, AI technology has also posted through human-like behaviours, interacted with users, drawn internet users' attention, and even become an "opinion leader" and a new "user" on social media. This has brought more attention to TikTok, whose monthly active coverage rate has continued to rise in mainland China since 2018 (KANTAR, 2018a, 2018b).

According to the statistical results from Sensor Tower data platform Store Intelligence, TikTok was downloaded more than 188 million times in the first quarter of 2019, making it the most downloaded social media application in the world (SensorTower, 2019). TikTok was also the most downloaded social media application in Apple's App Store and Google Play in Q1 2019 (see Figure 1.5). Obviously, TikTok has gained many users in the non-Chinese cultural circle and is increasingly on the rise.



**Figure 1.5 : Top Social Media Applications Worldwide for Q1 2019 by Downloads**  
(Source: SensorTower, 2019)

TikTok has not only the basic characteristics of an SMVA, but also its own unique functions, such as its powerful video special effects library and paid promotion function. TikTok can also determine the length of videos which users can shoot and share in light of their number of followers. Users with more than 1,000

followers can share videos up to 60 seconds long, and new users only 15 seconds long. This feature attracts many users to continually create and post novel videos to gain more followers.

As a mass media, TikTok embodies the characteristics of mass communication in many aspects. Specifically, first, as a new digital technology, TikTok effectively leverages many modern technologies to enrich and expand its capabilities. Unlike other SMVAs, it allows users to quickly create and upload videos, and provides recording, editing, and other video production functions. TikTok offers a number of advanced editing features to create videos, “including in-camera speed controls, image tracking composites, collaborative split-screen, camera motion, and visual effects” (Meng & Leung, 2021, p. 2). These functions transfer some of the traditional features of games to electronic mobile devices (Potter & Cowan, 2020).

In addition, TikTok also provides video production functions with speed effects or special effects and assists users to produce highly innovative and novel videos through image tracking technology and augmented reality effects, which greatly enriches its functions and enhances interest. Besides these capabilities, TikTok provides the functions of improving video quality and visual art design by using, for example, the beauty camera, beauty filter, background music library, and special effects subtitles (Meng & Leung, 2021). The above functions relying on new technologies help TikTok capture the attention of many users, and some even become addicted to it (Ke & Moon, 2018).

Another technical feature of TikTok is to continuously optimize its crucial technologies and algorithms, so as to deeply analyse users’ interests and hobbies, usage habits, information sources and channels, geographical location, and surrounding overview of TikTok users with the help of big data technology, and finally distribute more relevant videos according to users’ content preferences and basic personal information (Meng & Leung, 2021).

Second, another characteristic of mass media is that its purpose is to reach more people. The audience of mass media is regarded as a large aggregate of anonymous consumers (McQuail, 1983). As a mass media, TikTok also reflects this characteristic. TikTok’s user base scale has been expanding since its launch. The number of active TikTok users exceeded 400 million on 5 January, 2020 (Meng & Leung, 2021); as of July 2021, the number of active users has reached 732 million (Statista, 2021), showing a trend of steady growth. Moreover, TikTok users have a wide age range. Haenlein et al. (2020) pointed out that approximately 40% of TikTok users were adolescents aged 10–19. Similarly, according to Huang (2021), TikTok users ranged in age from 15–64, and about half of them were under 34.

Third, as a mass media, TikTok can quickly convey information and opinions to the entire audience and has a significant influence. This is in line with another feature of mass media proposed by McQuail (1983): mass media has the capacity to rapidly reach the whole population with information, views, and entertainment. The content transmitted on TikTok platform takes video as the carrier. TikTok users can make and post videos to the platform anytime and anywhere. Once a video is posted to the platform, other users can view, share, and download the video immediately. Furthermore, TikTok also offers a live broadcasting function, which some TikTok influencers use regularly, allowing other users to watch in real time and communicate with streamers by sending comments or virtual gifts during the live broadcast (Meng & Leung, 2021). A group of influencers may have thousands of followers, and their influence is huge. Of course, a video can also be spread without promotion by influencers (Castillo et al., 2021).

On the other side, as a mass tool used for audience communication, TikTok also plays the significant roles of mass media. First, users can make new friends and maintain social relationships by sharing and watching videos on TikTok (Meng & Leung, 2021). Users widely disseminate videos from different regions of the world and all-inclusive video theme content (i.e., food features, regional customs, folk customs, architectural features, natural scenery, music and dance, fine arts, etc.) on the TikTok platform, effectively promoting the integration and penetration of cultures around the world (Dekhil & Sarnou, 2021; Feng, 2020; Kaye et al., 2020).

Second, TikTok plays the role of spreading public information as a mass media. Since TikTok became popular in mainland China, the different levels of Chinese government have started to register and operate official TikTok accounts, which have become one of the important channels for Chinese governments to display public information and notifications. Chinese government agencies have begun to use TikTok to interact with citizens, and they run official accounts on TikTok to post statements or announcements to clarify public concerns (Chen et al., 2021; Gong et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021).

Third, TikTok also acts the crucial part of mass educator. TikTok makes a great contribution to spread information, ideas, and knowledge. For instance, the Provincial Health Committees and other health authorities of China have registered official accounts on TikTok to spread public information and health knowledge (Zhu et al., 2020). Even the National Health Commission of China also used TikTok account to release information and announcements (Chen et al., 2021). Similarly, Zhang et al. (2021) stated that the public hospitals in China also operated official accounts on TikTok to disseminate health knowledge and information. Li et al. (2021) have clearly shown that, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, the TikTok platform and public health experts jointly established an information hub to provide users with professional and authoritative COVID-19 information and scientific epidemic prevention



knowledge. Apart from public health experts, scholars from other disciplines have also run TikTok accounts to share disciplinary expertise in fields such as chemistry (Hayes et al., 2020) and dermatology (Zheng, Mulligan, et al., 2021; Zheng, Ning, et al., 2021).

Fourth, TikTok provides a platform for users to quickly browse current news and events happening across the world. Due to the rapid development of new media technologies and the current situation of media convergence, traditional mass media (i.e., newspapers, magazines, and televisions) are actively integrating into new digital mass media, such as TikTok, and striving to achieve integrated development. China Central Television, the People's Daily, and Phoenix News have registered on the TikTok platform and run official accounts to continue operating their media industry. This enables TikTok to effectively play its function as a mass media (Shi, 2020; Wang, 2020). Meanwhile, users can quickly obtain news and learn of new social trends through the TikTok platform.

Fifth, another social function of mass media is to provide entertainment for the public (McQuail, 1983). Many scholars have proven that entertainment is one of the needs for using TikTok among users based on empirical studies. Respondents have reported that the variety of theme-rich and interesting videos on TikTok platform can meet their entertainment needs (Bucknell Bossen & Kottasz, 2020; Meng & Leung, 2021; Scherr & Wang, 2021).

To summarize, as a mass media, strong technical strength and good product experience enable TikTok to harvest many users. TikTok provides a platform for many users to express themselves and expand their social contacts (Omar & Dequan, 2020), and an advertising base for entrepreneurs and merchants to promote their goods and services (Mhalla et al., 2020; Yang & Ha, 2021; Yuan et al., 2021). A previous study reported that music dubbing, funny stories, relaxing the mind, being easy to switch between videos, imitation performance, making it easy to learn, broadened vision, sharing and liking, and powerful effects editing were the main appealing factors attracting users of TikTok. Music dubbing made up 26.98%, while the proportions of people appreciating funny stories and relaxing the mind were 17.00% and 16.41%, respectively (Feng et al., 2019). Thus, the user base of TikTok has gained rapid and stable growth. This session has stated the reason why this present study focuses on TikTok.

## **1.2 Statement of Research Problem**

In contemporary society, social media has become completely integrated into people's daily lives, with a high-frequency usage by individuals all around the world (Statista, 2021). TikTok is one of the most popular social media platforms in China and has made users dependent on it as a mass media (Su et al., 2021; Wang & Scherr, 2021). Inevitably, issues on TikTok usage have also appeared, particularly among youths (Su et al., 2021). Scherr and Wang (2021) mentioned

that the TikTok platform itself has admonished users for excessive use. Wang and Scherr (2021) stated that the interface of TikTok hid the mobile phone clock, which made many users completely forget the time while using TikTok. This issue has increased the risk of TikTok overuse.

Based on a cross-sectional survey of 1,092 Chinese TikTok users, Wang and Scherr (2021) found that automatically using TikTok at night exacerbated daytime fatigue. Su et al. (2021) also stated that approximately 5.9% of young adults in their study presented problematic usage patterns toward TikTok. Likewise, in an empirical study among 3,036 Chinese senior-high-school students, the findings revealed the issue on TikTok usage disorder among the high-school students (Sha & Dong, 2021).

Researchers have reported some negative aspects of TikTok usage specifically. A series of videos on TikTok showed destructive information to teenagers. This has led many concerned parents to worry about the risk of decreasing the youths' level of well-being (Cox, 2018; Perez, 2019; Phillips, 2018; Weimann & Masri, 2020). The literature has addressed many other issues on problematic and excessive TikTok usage. Jaffar et al. (2019) reported that TikTok contained pornographic, nude, and shocking videos accompanied by offensive songs. In addition, TikTok was reported to lead to depression and suicide among users, showing its harm to youths' well-being (Jaffar et al., 2019). Research has also shown a reciprocal relationship between the high usage of social media (i.e., TikTok) and negative emotion (Wang et al., 2018), which has indicated that high-frequency social media (i.e., TikTok) usage had a significant impact on well-being in terms of emotional problems.

Primack et al. (2017) stated that high-frequency social media usage would damage users' well-being in terms of interpersonal relationships in real life. This could cause serious problems for positive relationships (Ahmed, 2001). All these scenarios could cause serious issues related to maintaining positive relationships among individuals. When the relationships between people start to break down, the communication also decreases, resulting in people becoming more indifferent. Behind these scenarios, TikTok usage has some issues that cannot currently be ignored. Given these issues, study of TikTok usage and its association with well-being is crucial.

Unfortunately, limited studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between TikTok usage and comprehensive well-being. Taking all these issues into consideration, more studies should be conducted to address the issue on TikTok usage patterns and the level of well-being in using TikTok among youth. Furthermore, as TikTok is a new type of social media, there is an insufficient understanding on how TikTok usage would be related to comprehensive well-being. To fill in these gaps, this current study aims to examine how TikTok usage

would correlate with well-being among youths. To address these problems, the researcher carried out this study.

Furthermore, other researchers also found that attitudes toward social media (i.e., Facebook) would affect their acceptance of the particular social media and continued usage intention (Pietro & Pantano, 2012). In fact, several studies revealed that some users still perceived negative attitudes toward the internet and social media because of their low degree of exposure to these platforms and difficulty operating the new technologies (Madell & Muncer, 2005; Nachmias et al., 2000; Sherman et al., 2000).

Nonetheless, there is still a research gap on the study and understanding of the acceptance of TikTok's technology. To the best knowledge of the researcher, the empirical research with regards to attitudes toward TikTok among users and how they would affect users' TikTok usage is still considered inadequate (Meng & Leung, 2021; Omar & Dequan, 2020; Roth et al., 2021). Therefore, the researcher has designed this current study to evaluate the relationship between attitudes toward TikTok and users' well-being by applying technology acceptance model (TAM).

Additionally, whether people can ensure well-being by using social media is also related to people's need to use social media. One study reported that participants would go on social media (i.e., Tumblr) to have fun when they were very depressed. Many participants admitted that stress and escapism were the crucial factors triggering usage of social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Tumblr) (Lissak, 2018). Users who felt more depressed and lonelier tended to have higher social media use (Wang et al., 2018). As social media has become a predominant tool for communication in current society, there is an increasing tendency for academic institutions and schools to use social media, like Facebook and LinkedIn, as teaching aids. These phenomena could also impact people's well-being in terms of achievement on work or study.

Lissak (2018) indicated that different needs and desires for internet usage were based on emotion and mood. Using Facebook as an educational aid could reduce students' concentration, because the degree to which students use Facebook varied depending on their emotions and mood (Kaya & Bicen, 2016). One study investigated the relationship between students' social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace) usage and their achievement in terms of academic performance. Sadly, the findings revealed that students who spent more time on social media achieved worse academic performance, because they focused too much time on social media, ignoring their studies (Paul et al., 2012). The poorer accomplishment of study and work could lead to a decrease in the level of well-being among individuals (Seligman, 2011). Therefore, the needs for using social media also bring about some issues on the well-being of users.

Numerous social notions – such as information seeking, relatedness need, entertainment and amusement, social utility, public affairs engagement, social support, sociability, and relationship maintenance, and others – are broadly used as motivations for or purposes of using social media (Chen, 2017; Chen et al., 2019; Chen & Chan, 2017; Huang et al., 2016; Pang, 2018a, 2018b, 2018d; Zhang et al., 2016). Nevertheless, all the studies have focused on the motivations and gratifications on Weibo, WeChat and TikTok usage, but not on the well-being of users. There are limited studies conducted on addressing the factors that predict the level of youths' well-being in using TikTok. To bridge the gaps, this study attempts to utilize uses and gratifications theory (UGT) to identify the association between needs for using TikTok and well-being among youth in China.

In terms of well-being, Seligman proposed the PERMA model of well-being, which defined that overall well-being was in terms of positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). As claimed by the discussion in the preceding text, social media usage has a direct or indirect relationship with emotion, relationships, and achievement; this reasonably implies that social media usage is relevant to users' well-being. As of yet, there has been virtually no comprehensive study on overall well-being in using TikTok based on the researcher's best knowledge. Hence, to mitigate this gap, this study seeks to employ the PERMA model of well-being to examine the relationship between TikTok usage and youths' well-being.

Finally, there are many dimensions of human personality characteristics, and the main factors are: "I: Extraversion/introversion (or Surgency), II: Friendliness/hostility (or Agreeableness), III: Conscientiousness (or Will), IV: Neuroticism/emotional stability (or Emotional Stability), and V: Intellect (or Openness)" (Digman, 1990, p. 426). These five personality traits have had a significant impact on the behaviour and intention of social media users; therefore, research has often adapted them as factors to predict users' social media usage styles or patterns (Chen et al., 2019; Hou et al., 2018). Such studies often use personality characteristics as an independent variable to predict different social media usage outcomes, as there are a wide variety of personality characteristic types among people, such as extraversion, introversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, etc., and these characteristics result in different behaviours, attitudes, and perceptions in the adoption of social media.

One study stated that there was a positive relationship between neuroticism, loneliness, external locus of control, and excessive WeChat usage (Hwang & Choi, 2016). Chen et al.'s (2019) study used three types of personality characteristics – openness, neuroticism, and extraversion – as the moderating variables to examine the relationship between relatedness need frustration and WeChat users' passive engagement; the result showed that where there was



high openness among users, there was high passive engagement, whereas low neuroticism predicted high passive engagement (Chen et al., 2019). Lee et al. (2011) reported that introverted individuals using the internet could experience more negative effects when interacting with the outside world compared to extroverts. Additionally, introverts did not prefer social interactions, so they found less social support on the internet; in consequence, internet use would end up hurting introverts more than extroverts.

What's more, research has found that personality characteristics have an indirect effect on well-being among adults (Marrero-Quevedo et al., 2019). Sun et al. (2018) elucidated that the relationship between personality characteristics and well-being varied respectively across different types of personality characteristics. Omar and Dequan (2020) gauged whether personality characteristics including neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness, and consciousness would influence TikTok usage behaviours; however, the results showed that none of the personality characteristics were salient indicators contributing to TikTok usage behaviours. Some previous studies have reported the influence of personality characteristics on social media usage, while others emphasized that different personality characteristics affected the level of well-being directly. However, the research did not consider the influence of personality characteristics toward the relationship between TikTok usage and youths' well-being indirectly. To enrich this gap, therefore, the last goal of this study is to determine whether personality characteristics have a moderating effect on the relationship between TikTok usage and well-being among youth in China.

In conclusion, this study is of great significance and novelty. In relation to well-being and TikTok usage, it is crucial to have knowledge about TikTok and identify youths' TikTok usage patterns, attitudes toward TikTok, and needs for using TikTok. Apart from this, this study took users' personality characteristics as a key factor. The high-frequency TikTok usage among youth in China raised six questions for this research.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This research raises the following questions:

- 1) What are the TikTok usage patterns among youth in China?
- 2) What is the level of well-being among youth in China?
- 3) What are the personality characteristics of youth in China?
- 4) What are the relationships between TikTok usage and youth well-being in China?

- 5) Would personality characteristics have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between attitudes of using TikTok and youth well-being in China?
- 6) How would personality characteristics moderate the relationship between needs for using TikTok and youth well-being in China?

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

##### **General Objective:**

The general objective of this study is to identify personality characteristics as a moderating variable toward the relationship between TikTok usage and youth well-being in China.

##### **Specific Objectives:**

- 1) To identify TikTok usage patterns among youth in China.
- 2) To examine the level of well-being among youth in China.
- 3) To determine personality characteristics of youth in China.
- 4) To find out the relationship between TikTok usage and youth well-being in China.
- 5) To examine the moderating effect of personality characteristics on the relationship between attitudes of using TikTok and youth well-being in China.
- 6) To know the moderating effect of personality characteristics on the relationship between needs for using TikTok and youth well-being in China.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study will benefit not only Chinese youth, but also the Chinese government, youth development practitioners and TikTok operators. This session has discussed the significance of the study from four different perspectives involving theoretical, methodological, practical and policy significance.

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Significance**

This study uses the TAM, UGT, and PERMA model of well-being. TAM is an information systems theory that models how users come to accept and use a new technology. At its conception, the model suggested that when users were facing a new technology, there were two notable factors influencing their intention to use it: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) (Davis, 1989). In this study, TikTok is a new technology, and TAM provides insight into how TikTok users perceive this new communication technology.

Furthermore, UGT focuses on “what do people do with media” (Katz, 1959, p. 2). Modern applications of UGT used is to show the motivations and needs of using internet and media. This study adapts UGT to measure the needs for using TikTok.

Seligman, a positive psychologist, created the PERMA theory of well-being, also called the PERMA model, in 2011. PERMA is an acronym for five key terms, which are positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishments (Seligman, 2011). Seligman (2011) emphasized that these five terms constitute the core elements of comprehensive human well-being. This study employed the PERMA model to measure the level of well-being among youth in China.

Applying these three theories in this study could identify the relationship between youths' personality characteristics and well-being, explore youths' attitudes toward TikTok, and also examine whether youth could obtain well-being from TikTok usage. The empirical application of the three theories contributes to a better understanding of them. The findings of this study could be significant, as they may support the theories. Eventually, it is hoped that the findings could enrich the existing research theories in this academic field and achieve some new perspectives.

### **1.5.2 Methodological Significance**

This study used a quantitative research method by survey approach to measure the well-being of youth in China caused by different TikTok usages, involving attitudes toward TikTok and needs for using TikTok. The study effectively collected data through face-to-face survey questionnaires. A total of 700 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to TikTok users in China and a total number of 596 questionnaires were valid after collection. Later, the researcher analysed data with structural equation modelling (SEM) through Smart-PLS software to measure the moderating variable of users' personality characteristics.



Apart from this, descriptive analysis was performed via IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 25. After exploring the relationship between TikTok usage and youths' well-being, this current study provided relevant analysis of results and findings to future research under the field of social media usage and users' well-being in China. Researchers who are focusing on the influence of social media draw attention to TikTok, as it is a new type of SMVA which could broaden the perception and understanding of mass communication. It is hoped that this study could offer up a new research method to study the influence of SMVA usage toward youths' well-being, and a novel instrument for measuring the study variables.

### **1.5.3 Practical Significance**

This study will be helpful in several aspects. Firstly, based on the analysis of the personality characteristics of youth and the underlying study on youths' TikTok usage patterns, it is hoped that this study could guide youths in China to use TikTok reasonably and rationally. Secondly, as TikTok is the first leading SMVA in China (Analysys Qianfan, 2020), and the Chinese government has banned several western social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Twitter, etc.), the young generation is keen to use TikTok frequently. Besides, Chinese youths' attitudes toward and needs for using TikTok are also unique. Within this context and due to the specific Chinese media culture, identifying the Chinese youths' attitudes toward TikTok could allow better understanding of how young people perceive this new social media.

Additionally, after exploring the needs for using TikTok among youth in China, it will be possible to know why they use TikTok. Based on the predominance of TikTok usage in China, this could identify how TikTok usage would affect the level of well-being in relation to positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment among Chinese youth. Moreover, it is hoped that this study will provide practical references and strategic schemes for TikTok's operator to enhance the level of well-being for users especially youths. Finally, the findings will provide useful guidance and suggestions for the future development of TikTok after understanding the internal regulations and associations of TikTok usage and users' well-being.

### **1.5.4 Policy Significance**

It is hoped that this study could provide a reference for the government to formulate policies on a TikTok video content classification system. Since viewable videos are divided according to users' age, this policy will be helpful for TikTok usage among youth in China. Moreover, because of different media culture between China and other countries, many Chinese youth prefer to use TikTok. Therefore, TikTok has been an important channel for the Chinese government to interact with and understand the young generation. By

investigating TikTok use among Chinese youths, it will help the Chinese government and the youth development practitioners to better implement youth development strategies.

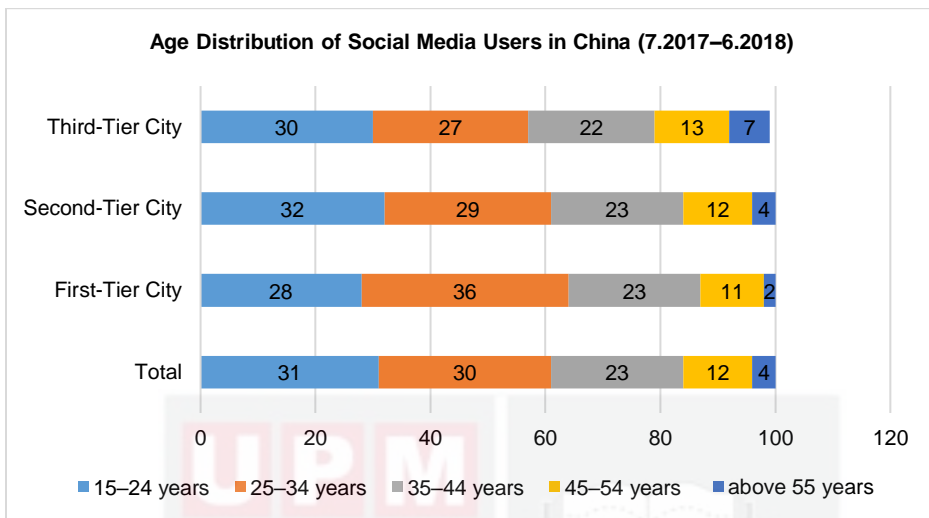
It is also hoped that this detailed analysis and research on TikTok usage could be extended to the whole SMVA industry, and the government could implement specific laws related to these new kinds of social media to strengthen supervision. Moreover, through the analysis of the duration and frequency of youths' usage of TikTok, especially minors' use of TikTok, this study will provide a reference for the government to introduce relevant measures or strategies to limit the daily online time of minors and manage the healthy and safe internet usage patterns of youths.

In addition, the results will be helpful for specialists and scholars to discover the consequences of TikTok usage on youths' well-being. Hence, it is hoped that policy makers in China could provide guidance on SMVA usage for Chinese youth. Ultimately, this study aims to bring more attention from the government to youths' online activities, particularly those related to network security and well-being. Thus, this study could encourage the Chinese government to manage and guide the online activities of youth on SMVAs.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

First of all, it should be emphasized that this study is based on the context of Chinese media culture and targeted at the use of TikTok by Chinese youth. Therefore, the discussions and findings of this current study only focus on the scope of mainland China, and do not comprise other countries or regions in the world.

Secondly, although there are many other types of social media in China, this study only focused on TikTok. The reasons why TikTok was selected for this research were as follows: firstly, TikTok is the first leading SMVA with the largest number of monthly active users in mainland China at present (Analysys Qianfan, 2020), and there is a wide distribution of age groups and a wide user coverage of TikTok (KANTAR, 2018a, 2018b), which is the most significant reason for the choice. The second reason is that TikTok is typical and representative in the mobile SMVA industry because of its simple operation and easy usage. However, changes in TikTok's functionality and the extent to which the number of TikTok users changes over time are likely to have a dramatic impact on the results.



**Figure 1.6 : Age Distribution of Social Media Users in China (7.2017–6.2018)**

(Source: KANTAR, 2018a, 2018b)

Note: First-tier cities are Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen. Second-tier cities are developed capital cities or more developed non-capital cities, such as Hangzhou, Xi’an, Changsha, Chengdu, Wuxi, Dalian, Wenzhou, etc. Third-tier cities include other provincial capitals or larger non-provincial capitals, such as Xi’ning, Yinchuan, Jiangmen, Leshan, Weihai, Anshan, etc.

As can be seen from Figure 1.6, according to reports by the Kantar research institute, people aged between 15 and 34 make up the majority of social media users in China, the total percentage of which was 61%. Therefore, this study only selected youths who are 15–34 years old and use TikTok as the respondents. More importantly, the youth sector is very proficient in using TikTok and has a high degree of understanding and frequency of using TikTok, which is conducive to in-depth investigation for this study. Nevertheless, this could lead to the limitation that the results may not be generalized to all TikTok users. Another limitation of this study is the hazard of bias appearance, when the respondents answered the questions because of social desirability. Sometimes, it is possible for participants to underestimate their responses, which would affect the accuracy of the findings.

Based on TAM and UGT, this study examined the TikTok usage of youth, particularly their usage patterns, attitudes toward TikTok, and needs for using TikTok. Moreover, this study measured youth well-being by the overall well-being in terms of the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011). This research does not take psychological well-being, subjective well-being, or other types of well-being into consideration. Additionally, this study only concentrated on the two major types of personality characteristics, comprising introverted and extroverted personalities.

Moreover, this research adopted quantitative method by using a survey approach and chose a self-administered questionnaire as its research instrument. A four-stage cluster sampling technique, simple random sampling technique, and purposive sampling technique were employed to select the respondents of this study. Data analysis was performed on the basis of SEM via Smart-PLS software and IBM SPSS software.

The research location concentrated in urban, rural, and suburban areas in Xi'an, China. Due to the limitations of distance and the given period of time, this study could not cover the whole of China owing to its vast geographical area. Therefore, this study selected Xi'an as the research area for a four-stage cluster sampling survey. Consequently, this sample only represented the youth living in Xi'an, but ignored the youth living in other cities of China. Hence, the generalizability of research results must be treated with caution.

## **1.7 Keywords' Definition**

This section has illustrated a series of definitions of the keywords in this present study, comprising TikTok usage, well-being, personality characteristics, and youth.

### **1.7.1 TikTok Usage**

TikTok is a creative music social media that can shoot and diffuse videos. Launched in September 2016, it is a community platform focusing on young people. Users can select songs through this application and shoot video to form their own products. Through the TikTok SMVA, users can share their lives, and at the same time they can meet more friends and view a range of anecdotes. With its success overseas, TikTok has become another outstanding representative of the global success of Chinese products, and it is regarded as a new mode for Chinese mobile products to enter the overseas market. "Usage" is a general way something is used by more than one person. In the terms of TikTok usage in this study, it contains three aspects: TikTok usage patterns, attitudes toward TikTok, and needs for using TikTok.

#### **1.7.1.1 TikTok Usage Patterns**

TikTok usage patterns in this study refer to the duration and frequency of using TikTok each week. The duration of using TikTok consists of how long the respondent has been using TikTok, the average hours of TikTok usage per day, and number of days using TikTok in a week. TikTok usage frequency indicates how often the respondents watch videos, comment on videos, like videos, post videos, follow their favourite vloggers, watch a live stream, purchase goods,

share, save or download videos, browse video comments, and obtain coupons on TikTok each week.

### **1.7.1.2 Attitudes toward TikTok**

Attitudes toward TikTok is the core reason for TikTok usage. Attitude is related to mental and emotional entity that is inherent or characteristic of a person in terms of the psychological field (Perloff, 2020). Huang (2005) proposed that attitude means that people evaluate things to be favourable or unfavourable. According to Davis, attitudes toward technology involved two major aspects: PU and PEOU (Davis, 1989). This study adopted Davis's concept, and hence, attitudes toward TikTok refer to perceived TikTok ease of use and perceived TikTok usefulness.

### **1.7.1.3 Needs for Using TikTok**

Katz et al. (1973) regarded mass media as a channel to communicate with others, and they integrated overall five categories of needs for using media: cognitive, entertainment, recognition, social, and tension release needs. This study uses these five categories of needs as the major variables to measure needs for using TikTok.

## **1.7.2 Well-being**

Generally, a person's well-being is what is "good for" them. "Happiness" is often used in ordinary life; nevertheless, it is preferable to use the term well-being instead of happiness when discussing the notion of what makes life good for the individual living that life (Crisp, 2002). Sumner (1996) advocated a theory of well-being based on the idea of life satisfaction. There is no consensus on the definition of well-being, but most definitions of well-being imply general health and happiness and at least include emotional, physical, and psychological well-being. The review by Linton et al. (2016) referred to well-being through multidimensional themes, including mental well-being, social well-being, physical well-being, spiritual well-being, personal circumstances, and activities and functioning. In addition, they stated that well-being could be defined in terms of health condition (Linton et al., 2016).

In fact, researchers from various disciplines have studied different aspects of well-being. From the perspective of social media usage, well-being refers to the sense of pleasure that social media users feel after meeting their needs. The pleasure stems from the matching degree between users' expectation and the actual result of using social media, which is a reciprocal relationship. In simple



terms, well-being is a kind of psychological state of users, which is the result of comparing the effect of social media usage with its expected value.

Well-being refers to both hedonic and eudemonic well-being which encompasses five essential components, namely positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (achievement). This conceptualization of well-being was called as the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011). This definition of well-being was adopted in this current study. These five factors were the major decisive constructs of well-being among youth in China.

### **1.7.3 Personality Characteristics**

Personality characteristics can also be called personality psychological characteristics or personality traits, and the phrase refers to a unique combination of a variety of psychological characteristics which individuals perform usually and stably. Personality characteristics reflect the uniqueness and individuality of people's mental outlook and mainly include people's ability, temperament, and character. Among them, ability marks the characteristics of the potential possibility of a person completing a certain activity; temperament marks the individual difference of the unique combination of strength, speed, stability, flexibility, and other dynamic properties in psychological activities, while character more clearly shows the personal traits in the attitude toward reality and the way of behaviour.

In accordance with Seekhiew (2009), personality characteristics are generally divided into two major types: introverted and extroverted. An introverted personality reveals that people have some difficulty in expressing themselves very well. On the contrary, an extroverted personality shows that people can express themselves fluently and freely. In general, people who are introverts regard social interaction as more boring and sophisticated, while people who are extroverts usually feel the lack of social interaction more irritating and dispiriting.

### **1.7.4 Youth**

There are different classifications and definitions for the "youth" age group in different regions or fields. In accordance with the National Bureau of Statistics of China, youth is defined as people aged 15–34 years old (Qin et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2011). The present study adopted this age criteria to define youth. As a result, in this study, youth refer to persons who are aged 15–34 and live in Xi'an, China.



## 1.8 Summary

This chapter has described the background of this present study and its significance to China and Chinese youths. The related and critical problems were discussed in this chapter and in order to address these problems, several research questions were raised up as well. This chapter also covered the scope of the study and the key terms' definition. The following chapter is about to discuss the related literatures and theories used in this current study.



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