



Analysis of Emotions in #BLM Tweets on Twitter

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INTRODUCTION

- The Black Lives Matter movement has a strong social media presence
- A Pew Research Center survey found 48% of Black social media users surveyed made at least one post in solidarity with Black Lives Matter.
- Tweets pertaining to Black Lives Matter are known to carry no correlation to childhood trauma, though previous studies indicate traumatic events can negatively affect mental health in young adults.
- However, aspects of adolescent mental health in regards to the movement are unknown.

The purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence of references to certain emotions associated with the Black Lives Matter movement on Twitter

METHODS

Design:

- The study employed content analysis of 100 tweets using the codebook below.

Search Strategy:

- The latest tweets containing the phrases “I feel” or “Makes me feel” and the hashtag “BLM” were collected over the course of approximately one week in July 2021

Codebook

Variable	Definition
Happiness	Tweet contains the words “happy, glad, grateful” or close synonyms in a literal sense pertaining to the writer
Security	Tweet contains the words “safe, protected” or close synonyms in a literal sense pertaining to the writer
Depression	Tweet contains the words or phrases “depressed, suicide, kill myself, hopeless” or close synonyms in a literal sense pertaining to the writer
Anxiety	Tweet contains the words or phrases “afraid, scared, panic” or close synonyms in a literal sense pertaining to the writer
Discomfort	Tweet contains the words or phrases “disgusted or sick” or close synonyms in a literal sense pertaining to the writer
Anger	Tweet contains the words or phrases “Mad, angry, furious” or close synonyms in a literal sense pertaining to the writer

Data Collection:

- 100 suitable tweets were identified using the criteria under “Search Strategy”.
- Twitter demographic information (amount of retweets, likes, comments, verified status), and the following open codebook was compiled

Data Analysis:

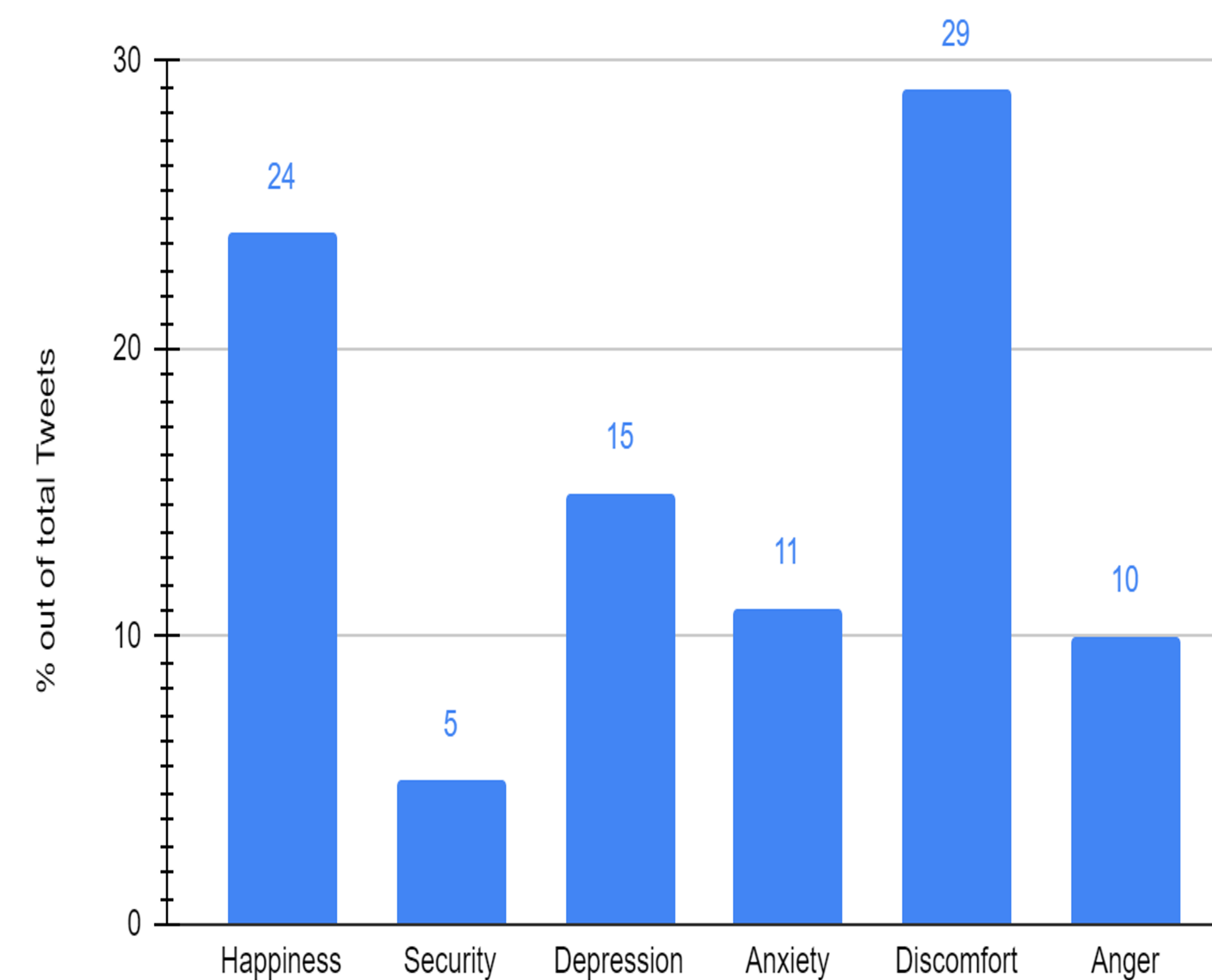
- Descriptive statistics was used to calculate the percentage of tweets that fell under each codebook variable.
- Median likes, retweets, and comments were calculated per tweet for each codebook variable.

RESULTS

	All tweets (n = 100)	Happiness (n = 24)	Security (n = 5)	Depression (n = 15)	Anxiety (n = 11)	Discomfort (n = 29)	Anger (n = 10)
Median Likes	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Median Retweets	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Median Comments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% Verified Users	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3.45%	0%

100 tweets were collected. Of the collected tweets, 82% referenced a codebook variable. 11% of tweets met more than one codebook variable.

% of Tweets with codebook variables



* Some tweets met multiple variables

Example codebook tweets:

Happiness:

It **makes me feel good** to see all the young people i know and follow standing for what they believe in and doing what they can to help. #BLM

Security:

It absolutely **makes me feel more secure** if more people said it and believed it. Thank you. U have to realize there are people who label people who tweet #BLM or protest for the cause as terrorists if a Target burns, but a literal terrorist who blows up a block is just “depressed”

Depression:

It **makes me feel so sad** when ppl are making justice for floyd it's amazing and it's amazing to see ppl do this and that cop that killed him he deserves to die I can't believe **I'm tearing rn** If u want to support go to #BLM at pb-resources.com With ur help it's better

Anxiety:

#BLM wants to cause division and push a far left marxist agenda under the camouflage not anti racism. f anything #BLM **makes me feel more fearful and worried** about the future and race relations that I ever have done.

Anger:

The fact that I never get mail and the first time I do, it's a letter from the army national guard and now I'm only getting ads on Snapchat for the national guard, makes me feel like they're trying to draft people for these protests and **I hate it!** #blm

Discomfort:

Legit shocked at how many racists there are to have funded \$1million to bail one of the officers involved in George Floyd's death! **Makes me feel so sick!** That money should be sent to a #BLM charity! Not given to an indefensible man so he gets the privilege to have some freedom!

CONCLUSIONS

Findings:

- The most referenced emotion was “Discomfort” (29%), followed by “Happiness” (24%), while 26% referenced either “Depression” or “Anxiety”
- The least referenced emotions were “Security” (5%) and Anger (10%).
- These findings indicate the variety of emotions referenced on Twitter in regard to the #BLM.
- The median number of likes across all tweets was one and the median number of retweets across all tweets was one, demonstrating little interaction with these tweets.

Limitations:

- Small sample size may affect experimental accuracy
- User age cannot be determined, leaving room for error in assuming the sample applies to the larger teenage demographic
- Tweets do not provide conclusive information regarding user's mental health
- Timing may affect emotional responses to #BLM, since as the movement matures, different attitudes may arise, e.g. more widespread support or distrust

Implications:

- Greater awareness of how BLM affects those with depression and anxiety should be promoted, since demographic findings suggest little interaction with the collected tweets.
- Since 26% of tweets referenced depression or anxiety, Twitter may be a potential platform to identify user's needing mental health support.
- Future research should use a larger sample size and more comprehensive methods, e.g. interviews

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