

How is Mental Health Discussed in Relation to the TikTok Ban?

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Introduction

BACKGROUND

- Many studies show social media, such as TikTok, can have both negative and positive effects on adolescent mental health
- Recently, US government has been trying to ban TikTok in America
- In April, a bill was passed requiring Bytedance, the company that owns TikTok, to sell TikTok to a US government-approved buyer within 9 months, or the app would be banned
- As of now, how users discuss mental health in comments under TikTok posts about the TikTok ban has not been addressed, along with whether users support or are against the TikTok ban

PURPOSE

Analyze how users discuss the TikTok ban in comments under posts about the ban, including mental health and their support or lack of support surrounding the decision to ban TikTok.

Methods

DESIGN

Content analysis study on TikTok

MEASURES

VARIABLE	DEFINITION
User engagement	Number of likes on comment
Mental Health Benefits	Whether users reference mental health benefits in comments
Mental Health Drawbacks	Whether users reference mental health drawbacks in comments
Pro-ban	Whether user expresses support for ban
Anti-ban	Whether users express lack of support for ban

SUBJECTS

Top 10 comments that fit inclusion criteria under each of the top 10 videos that fit inclusion criteria under search "tiktok ban"

VIDEO INCLUSION CRITERIA	COMMENTS INCLUSION CRITERIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentions TikTok ban - In English - At least 10 comments - At least 1k views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes at least 5 words - At least 10 likes - In English

ANALYSIS

- Percentage of:
- comments mentioning mental health benefits
 - comments mentioning mental health drawbacks
 - comments expressing support for ban
 - comments expressing lack of support for ban
- Average of:
- # of likes on comments

Results

- Out of the 100 comments analyzed, 30% mentioned the mental health benefits of TikTok, and 3% mentioned mental health drawbacks of TikTok
- In total, 33% of comments mentioned mental health effects of TikTok in general
- Out of the 100 comments, 88% were against the TikTok ban while 3% were in support of the ban
- The **average** number of likes among the 100 comments was 14,174 likes

EXAMPLE OF COMMENT MENTIONING MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS:

"tiktok made my life amazing. i made online friends and i met people who actually listen and are there for me. i really cant fight atp. im so upset because of this. i really don't wanna lose tiktok."

EXAMPLE OF COMMENT MENTIONING MENTAL HEALTH DRAWBACKS:

"Please ban TikTok it's corrupting people's mind"

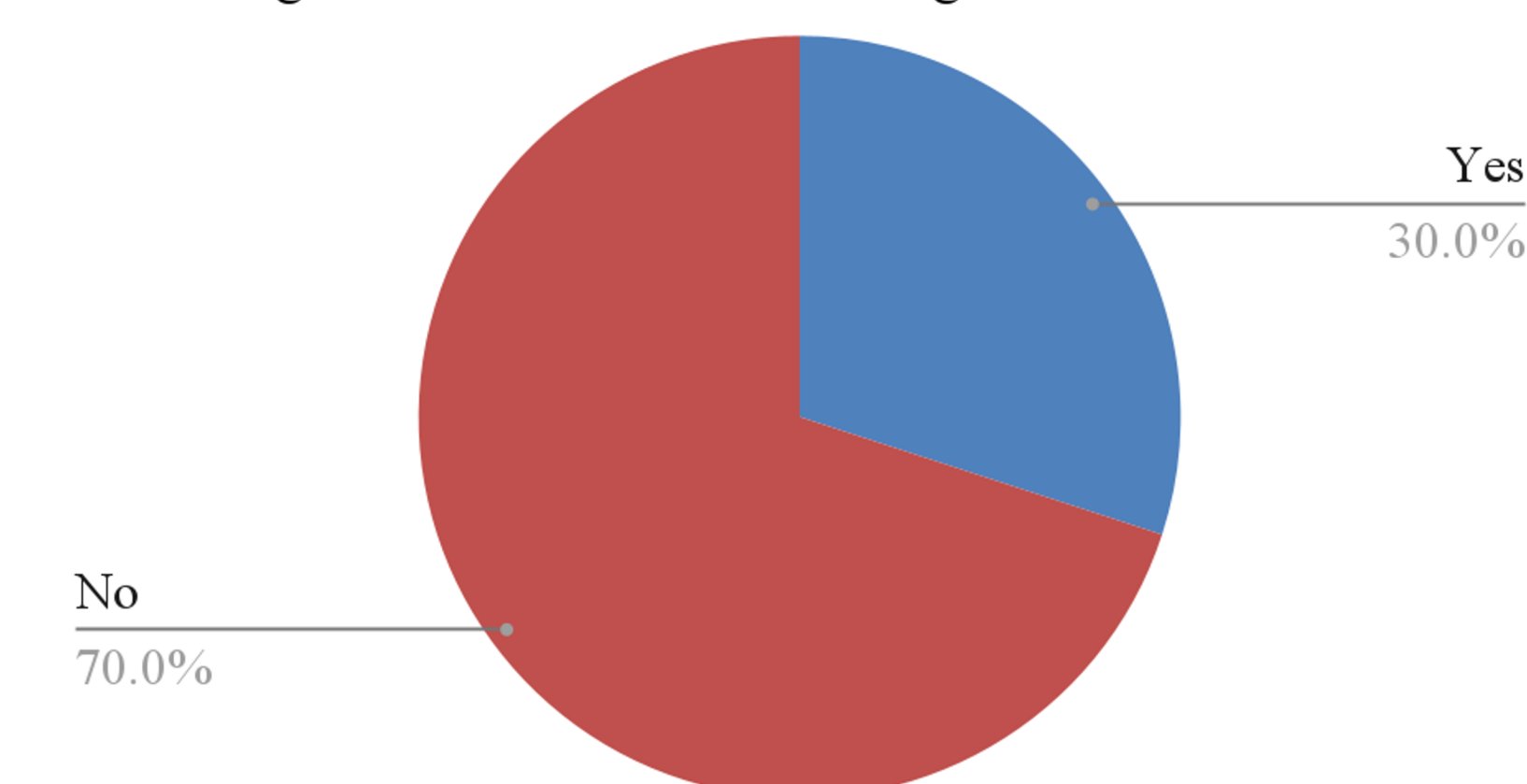
EXAMPLE OF COMMENT AGAINST THE BAN:

"What makes the ban even more ridiculous is that many government officials including those who voted for the ban, still continue to use TikTok even after the bill banning it passed."

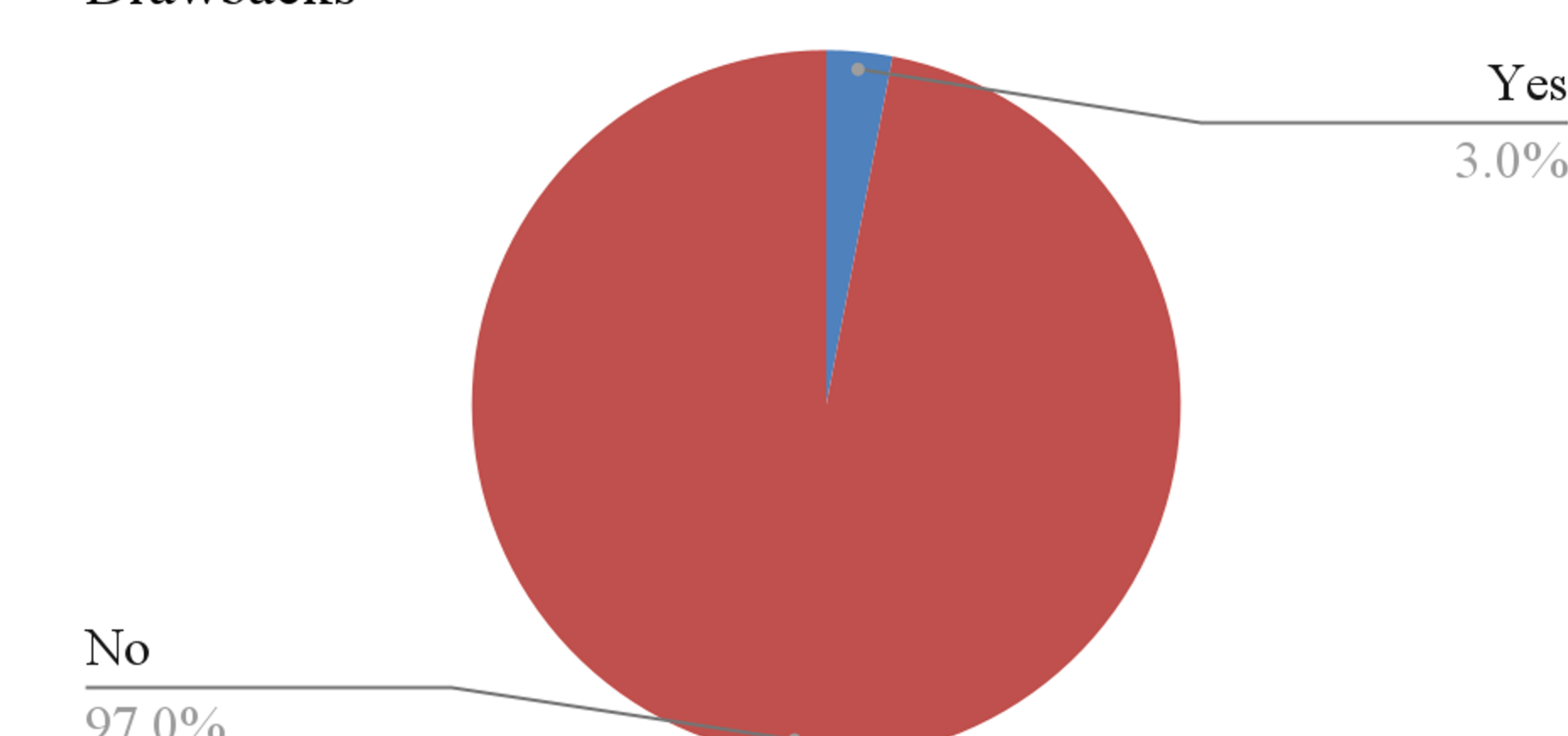
EXAMPLE OF COMMENT SUPPORTING THE BAN:

"honestly maybe it should be banned.. seeing some of these comments people are very uneducated."

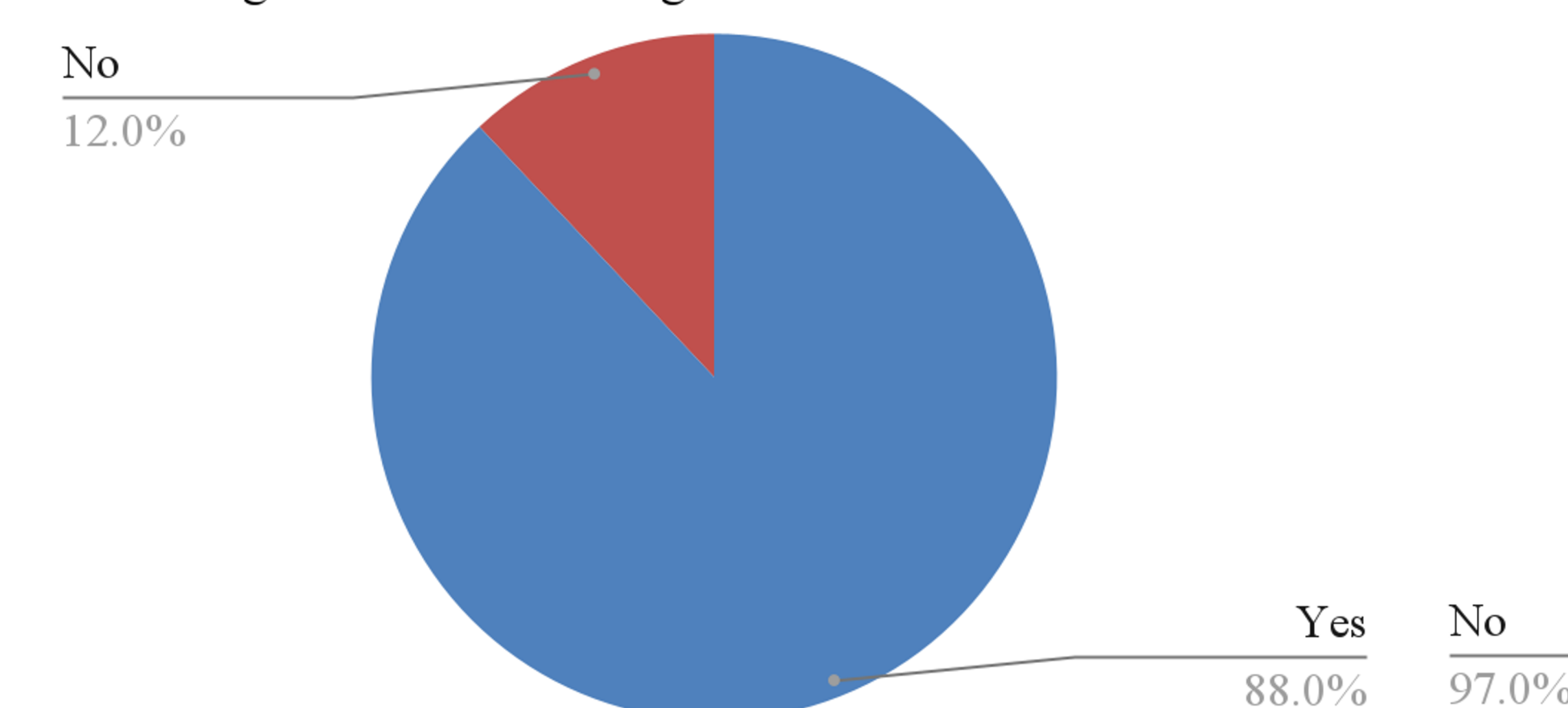
Percentages of Comments Mentioning Mental Health Benefits



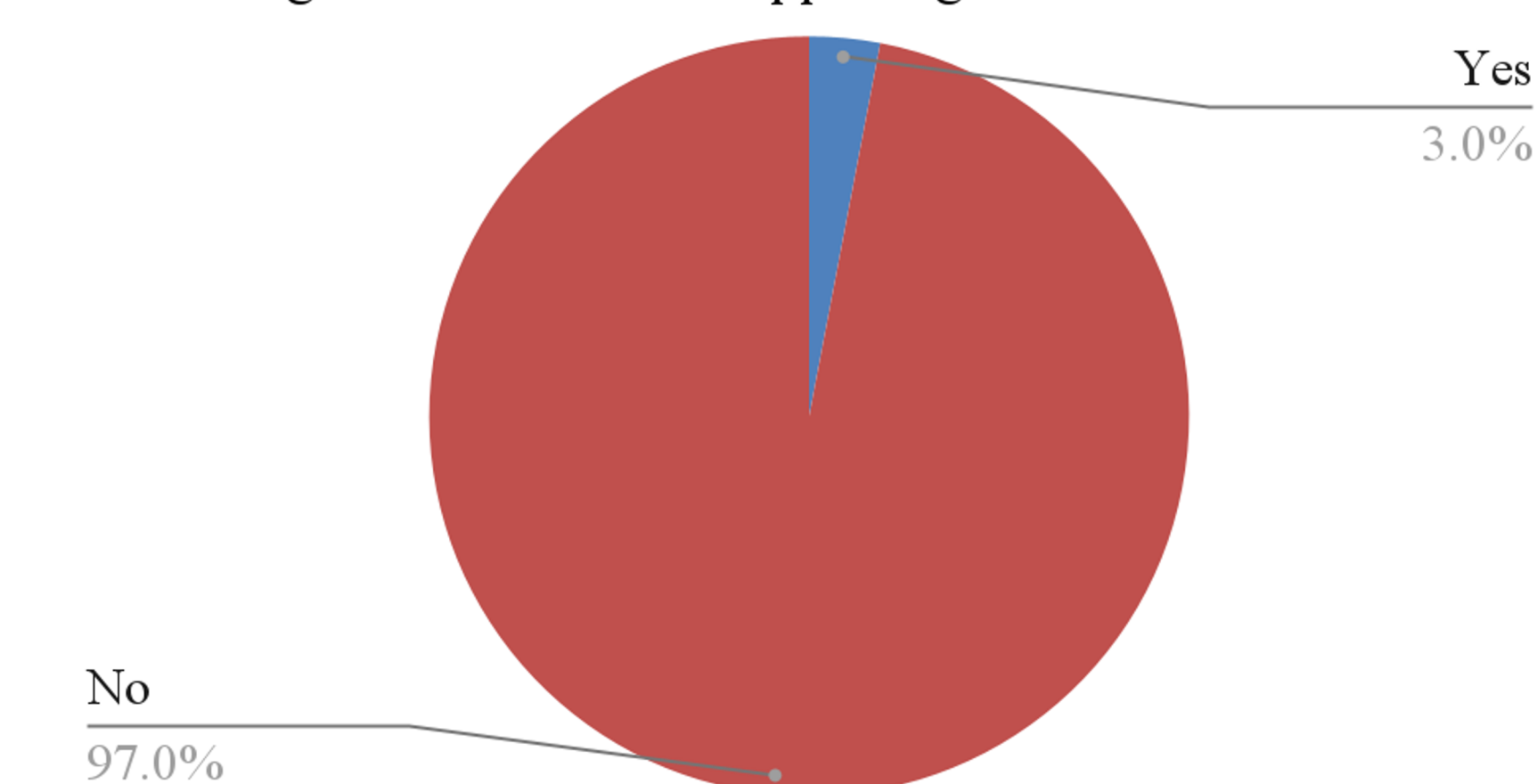
Percentages of Comments Mentioning Mental Health Drawbacks



Percentages of Comments Against Ban



Percentages of Comments Supporting Ban



Conclusions

- Even though TikTok's effects on mental health have been widely discussed, the majority of users on TikTok do not discuss mental health in relation to the TikTok ban
- A majority of comments in this study were against the ban
 - As TikTok has not officially been banned yet, and people are still able to use TikTok, perhaps the effects of the app being banned have not fully appeared

LIMITATIONS

A limitation to my study would be that only users on TikTok were analyzed; the only setting for the data was TikTok. Because of this, the data may be biased in certain ways because those that use TikTok are much more likely to be against the app being taken down.

FUTURE STUDIES

If TikTok is banned from the US or sold to a different company in the future, a content analysis could be conducted again in the same fashion and the results could be compared to see if the effects may change after the ban actually happens.

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