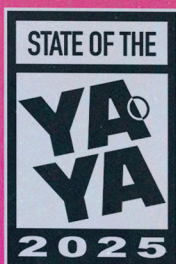


 **MOJO AD**



REPLICA





WHAT IS SUCCESS?



When our team set out to determine what success meant to 18- to 24-year-olds, or the youth and young adult (YAYA) market, the word encapsulated everything, so it started to mean nothing. To Google, it was the act of accomplishing a goal. But experts found YAYA audiences associated success with the word “personal.” Each member of our team even described it differently. So we embarked on a semester-long research process to find out for ourselves what this vague term means to the YAYA demographic. We surveyed YAYAs across the nation, interviewed them to uncover underlying emotions and compared notes with our parents and grandparents.

At first, we only understood success at a superficial level. Many YAYAs told us success was “happiness” or “peace.” Everything felt a little too...perfect. So we paused, careful to see the bigger picture. We knew there were deeper feelings buried beneath the surface informing this audience’s attitudes. Our research and social listening revealed an unmet need we couldn’t ignore. Once we discovered a new lens on success, it was everywhere. Our teammates flooded our group chat with relevant TikToks and shared spot-on Instagram posts. But what really gave us confidence was sharing our insight with our friends in the YAYA market. Their excitement confirmed our research had legs. YAYAs are playing with the idea of success in an unexpected way. With this book, our goal is to articulate YAYAs’ relationship with success to help you understand and connect with this market. Welcome to the conversation.

Sincerely,

the gamemakers

WHAT IS

mojo ad?

MOJO Ad is a full-service agency at the University of Missouri that not only specializes in all things young but is also staffed entirely by young adults. Specializing in the 18- to 24-year-old market, also known as the youth and young adult (YAYA) market, we are certified experts because we are them. Our unique position in this sought-after demographic grants us the ability to act as a liaison between YAYAs and the professionals seeking to reach them.

a yaya?

Originally coined by MOJO Ad, "YAYA" refers to 18- to 24-year-olds. These consumers are at a pivotal life stage in which they are developing their identities and embracing their reality. At 31 million strong in the United States with \$9.8 trillion in spending power, these consumers are choosing whether to stick with the brands they know or try new ones. If marketers fail to reach them, they might never catch up.

state of the yaya?

The State of the YAYA is an annual report that provides marketers with an in-depth look at the trends and activities of the 18- to 24-year-old market. Created by MOJO Ad staff, the report presents exclusive data on the YAYA demographic to help marketers connect with them on a deeper level. The report not only highlights who they are as consumers, but individuals as well, by providing an extensive look at their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

our methodology?

To best understand the YAYA market, we crafted a 66-question survey that was distributed nationwide. This resulted in 807 completed responses from YAYA consumers. The sample was representative of the U.S. Census Bureau data for 18- to 24-year-olds related to race, ethnicity and gender.

Our qualitative research consisted of seven focus groups, six paired-depth interviews and 16 in-depth interviews with a total of 61 participants across the United States. In addition to our extensive primary research, we utilized a variety of secondary sources, including Forbes, Mintel, Yahoo Finance, NBC News and UCLA, as well as previous State of the YAYA reports to get a complete understanding of the ever-evolving YAYA market.

YAYAS' DREAMS ARE NOTHING NEW, BUT THEIR REALITIES ARE.

YAYAs are redefining success. For this market, **success is a feeling of security**. YAYAs still dream of finding that feeling from traditional milestones like marrying their perfect match, owning a house and having exactly 2.5 kids. But they're 18- to 24-year-olds. The future seems too scary and too expensive. Between the COVID-19 pandemic, soaring inflation

and turbulent politics, YAYAs need a new way to feel successful. Sixty-three percent of YAYAs agree they set short-term goals because it's the only part of their lives that they can control. For this market, playing for the smaller wins now is more feasible than betting on a distant pipe dream. Think less white-picket fence, more white-chocolate mocha.

player 32

“The reason I wouldn't want to get married or buy a house right now isn't because I don't want those things. It's because I feel like the **risk of it not working out** is scarier to me than just waiting.”

OVER 80% agree the current economy, political climate and job market makes it **harder** to achieve success

68% agree that their idea of success includes **traditional milestones** like marriage, home ownership and having kids



SUCCESS IS A GAME

of avoiding risks and playing into the delusion
that *they can do it all.*

YAYAs play success like a game where they strive to feel like they win each morning. They're not giving up on success — they're leveling up by seeking security in their social, professional, financial and personal lives. This may sound like a tall order, but

YAYAs are delusionally confident they can do it all right now. When the YAYA market is constantly flooded with images of their peers Après-skiing and Aperol spritzing on social media, why wouldn't they shoot for the stars?

player 31

“Why would I waste my life saving for a house that I might not even be in for five years when I can have a sh*tty apartment, a cool closet, my nails done and go out. **You can have the little things now** and enjoy them...”

82%

worry about taking the *right steps* toward success



INTRODUCING REPLICA:

A 24-hour success simulation



70% agree success is just *making it through the day*

LET'S PLAY

Enter Replica, where players have 24 hours to game their way toward success. With infinite possibilities and limited time, play for the security YAYAs seek in their day-to-day lives. The clock is ticking...let's play.

gameplay

Players must pay close attention to various user interface elements, which represent key gameplay mechanics that connect to the YAYA market's view of success.

24:00:00

The 24-hour clock mimics how YAYAs measure success within each day. Time is YAYAs' currency to success, so players must use it wisely to maximize their performance before the clock runs out.

95% say time is the *ultimate luxury*



60% identify themselves as *ambitious*

Players must allocate their energy to foster social, financial and professional stability. But YAYAs are ambitious. Replica's energy mechanics simulate how this market's aspirations create a sense they can do it all.

PLAY AGAIN

Replica functions as a simulation because for YAYAs, success isn't necessarily about the endgame. It's about facing each day like a new level, adjusting strategies and trying again to test out new paths to find the feeling of success.

97% agree that there are *many paths* that lead to success

UNLOCKING SUCCESS

how yayas measure up

98% agree *personal happiness* is important to their success

88% agree they often think about their *long-term goals*

94% agree *money* is important to their success



player 22

“ I think my generation is the kind that is like, ‘**Success is doing something you’re passionate about.**’ I think people care more about their passions than their financials now. ”

player 16

“ It sounds bad, but **money does play a big role** in how I feel successful. ”

While all YAYAs hope to find the same sense of security that defines their success, they evaluate the feeling using different metrics. Happiness, long-term goal progress and financial stability all ranked as important factors to YAYAs' success. In Replica, players can analyze their performance in each of these areas after completing a simulation. In their efforts to “do it all,” YAYAs believe maximizing their potential in all three categories will unlock the feeling of success they crave each day. Easy enough, right?

MEET THE

REPLICAS

Each Replica personifies a key priority in the YAYA market's quest toward success. The Social Butterfly fosters relationships. The Corporate Climber is locked in on LinkedIn. The Bag Chaser looks out for checking accounts. Hanging out with friends, finding a job and putting money in the bank all proved to be important factors to YAYAs' success. But juggling them all at once proves to be the ultimate challenge. In the game of success, what will YAYAs sacrifice? Replica simulates the absurdity of YAYAs' daily ambitions to do it all.



player 15

“ [I'm motivated by] making an impact in my career, but also maintaining my own personal life, like being successful in my work-life balance, and kind of... that aspect of stability as well. ”

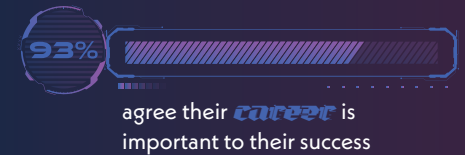
BAG-CHASER



SOCIAL BUTTERFLY



CORPORATE CLIMBER



BAG CHASER, BIG SPENDER

The YAYA market recognizes money as a cheat code for success. However, when YAYAs are focused on finding security now, their financial decision-making doesn't keep money in their savings accounts for long. Faced with the fear of future economic uncertainty, YAYA spenders prefer to splurge now rather than save for later. According to NBC News, older Gen Z shoppers are engaging in "doom spending" to soothe anxieties and "revenge spending" to

emotionally compensate for not being able to afford larger purchases.¹ To make up for these spending habits, 79% of YAYAs feel like they need to have a side hustle in order to support themselves. Forgoing traditional saving norms may seem reckless. But in the eyes of this market, spending money on quick fixes such as TikTok Shop supplements and Chegg subscriptions allows them to play with the possibility that success can be achieved sooner rather than later.

player 31

“We need money to fulfill our needs, but if there's any moment with friends to bring us that happiness or gratification, **it's a necessity sometimes.**”

70%
say money is a **barrier**
to their success, yet

68%
say following their passions
is **more important**
than earning the most money



ENTER: the delusional yaya

In Replica, every player navigates the simulation differently, but YAYA players are equipped with a special skill: delusional confidence. Their delusion gets a bad rap, but it's really a way for YAYAs to cope with the uncertainty of their lives. YAYAs are confident they'll reach their financial goals, even though

Yahoo Finance found 61% of 18- to 24-year-olds have less than \$1,000 in their savings accounts.² Their dreams for an epic European vacation stand in stark contrast with their empty bank accounts. But for YAYAs, splurging on that \$7 vanilla latte brings more peace than contributing to their 401(k).

82%
feel confident they'll
reach their **personal
happiness goals**

75%
feel confident
they'll reach their
financial goals



77%
feel confident
they'll reach their
career goals

PLAYING THE GAME

their way

In life, YAYAs are playing for the same feeling. But when players enter Replica, they all have their own gaming styles. Our survey data identified three groups of gamers which represent how YAYAs may play: the Dreamers, the Hustlers and the

Manifesters. Whether YAYAs see themselves as one of the gamers we discovered, someone who prefers a speed run or plays like a completionist, Replica forces all players to examine what it really takes to show up for every version of yourself.

THE DREAMER

The Dreamers are career-focused, employed students who yearn for a seat at the table. When they play Replica, their Corporate Climber dominates every client pitch in the boardroom. But this gives them little time to keep up with

their group chat notifications, leaving their Social Butterfly with a severe case of FOMO after missing wine night with the girls. They perform well in long-term goal progress and financial stability, yet fall behind in the happiness category.

demographics

18- to 21-year-old
Female
Black/African American
First-generation American
Employed student

attributes

Ambitious
Career-focused
Wishes she had more time in the day

gameplay



THE HUSTLER

The Hustlers are gamers who work hard for their paycheck at a full-time job they don't really love. They're looking to fill their wallets with quick cash grabs to live in the moment. When they play Replica, their Bag

Chaser is on a heater, while their Corporate Climber lacks direction on what comes next. For the Hustler, maximizing their financial stability comes at the cost of their happiness and long-term goal progress.

demographics

22- to 24-year-old
Nonbinary
Multiethnic/multiracial
Second-generation American
Full-time employed

attributes

Hardworking
Money-focused
Feels intimidated by all the potential paths to success

gameplay



THE MANIFESTER

The Manifesters feel strapped for cash as they face unemployment, turning to mental health content to support them each day. When they play Replica, they devote their energy equally among each of their priorities. Their Bag Chaser earns a pretty penny from their Depop side hustle, while their Corporate Climber scours LinkedIn for job opportunities

and their Social Butterfly crashes out after endless hours of doomscrolling on social media. It looks like the odds are stacked against them, but they still feel confident they can game the system. By the end of the simulation, they are unable to achieve a top performance in their happiness, financial stability and long-term goal progress.

demographics

18- to 21-year-old
Female
Hispanic/Latinx
First-generation American
Unemployed

attributes

Feels successful
Prioritizes mental health
Struggles with her spending habits

gameplay





CONTENT WARNING

player discretion is advised

Replica may contain scenes of internal pressure, comparison and imposter syndrome. Content is generally suitable for players between the ages of 18 and 24. Employing a shield of delusional confidence is advised.

65% say the pressure to succeed comes from *themselves*

Replica is a single-player game. For this market, feeling successful isn't necessarily about beating others. It's about outpacing themselves.

76% *compare* their success to *others*

Despite the solo play in Replica, it's difficult to ignore the success of other players. Sixty-nine percent of YAYAs say they at least sometimes compare their successes to what they see on social media.

52% feel *imposter syndrome*

When players run the simulation again and again and again, they may still remain unsatisfied with their performance. It's difficult for YAYAs to feel successful when there's always someone doing better.

player 16

“ We're not meant to see this many people's lives. Like, we're really only wired to see our close family and friends' lives. So I think when there's more room for comparison, that's when the imposter syndrome comes in because **you can always compare yourself to someone that you think is doing better.** ”

player 32

“ I've convinced myself everything I do is meaningless because I feel like **I'm still not doing enough.** It's imposter syndrome. ”



TIME'S UP!

play again or exit?

So, with all its complexities, why should YAYAs continue to play a game trying to find success in a day? Because without the short-term simulation, success is either a picture frame of nostalgia or a future blur. Replica is rated Y for YAYA because it's complex, idealistic, chaotic and yes, slightly irrational.

But so are 18- to 24-year-olds. YAYAs don't play Animal Crossing or Grand Theft Auto because

they think they'll always win. They play because it's more fun than watching. They play because if they don't try, they'll never win. They play because they crave the feeling of success. And when that winning feeling seems like it could slip out of this market's fingers at any time, they could easily put down the controller and give up. But YAYAs choose to play like it's possible.

player 32

“ [Success is] **feeling so content in your own purpose**, whatever it is. [You] have that inner peace or whatever telling [you], ‘I know I’m on the right track’. ”

90%
agree success is
freedom



MEET THE TEAM

team reverie



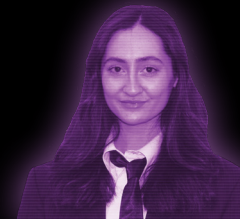
ABIGAIL KLAPATAUSKAS
account manager



NYAH EVANS
art director



FIONA WILTON
art director



PHOEBE HENDON
copywriter



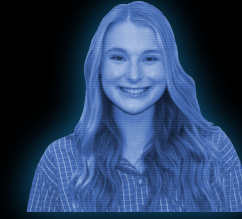
LEAH BROKAW
digital strategist



HALEY GEBAUER
media planner



JULIA FRANKEL
public relations account
manager - content



AVERY HOLTON
public relations account
manager - strategy



LOLA SHIPMAN
qualitative strategist



CINTHIA MARTINEZ-CERNA
quantitative strategist



THOMAS HAND
video producer

works cited

¹ McCorvey, J. J., & Cheung, B. (2024, February 18). Young adults are getting used to living on a financial cliff. NBCNews.com. <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/economy/millennials-gen-z-financial-cliff-saving-less-spending-rcna138004>

² Lisa, A. (2023, March 20). Here's How Much Money Gen Z vs. Millennials Have in Their Savings Accounts. Yahoo! Finance. <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/much-money-gen-z-vs-110016664.html>

special thanks

Team Reverie would like to thank Piper Molins for serving as our model and playing Replica with us. We could not be more grateful for her time and support.

REPLICA

play like it's possible

Forget future dreams. What if success is just getting through the day? Welcome to Replica, a 24-hour success simulation. Replica is a game of avoiding risks and playing into delusion. Each Replica sparks opportunity and sacrifice. YAYAs think they can game the system. But will they succeed?



“ You’ll never think of success the same way. 10/10 would play again. ”



“ This game is perfect for anyone who has ever thought, ‘OK... but like... what if I COULD do it all?’ ”



“ Replica is so relatable. This video game is literally a day in my life. ”



Missouri School of Journalism
University of Missouri



MOJO AD

Reverie

MATURE 18+



Idealistic
Chaotic
Slightly Irrational