

## **SOCIAL MEDIA AS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD**

**(Analysis of the Impact on Adolescent Mental Health in Indonesia)**

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### **Abstrak**

Era digital telah membawa transformasi besar dalam interaksi sosial, terutama di kalangan remaja, dengan media sosial memainkan peran sentral. Fenomena ini menimbulkan pertanyaan penting mengenai dampak media sosial terhadap kesehatan mental remaja. Penelitian ini menggali kedua sisi pengaruh media sosial, menganggapnya sebagai pedang bermata dua yang memiliki potensi baik positif maupun negatif terhadap kesehatan mental remaja di Indonesia. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif, studi ini mengeksplorasi persepsi, pengalaman, dan respons remaja terhadap berbagai aspek media sosial, termasuk eksposur terhadap cyberbullying, tekanan peer, dan ekspektasi sosial. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menyoroti strategi coping yang dikembangkan oleh remaja dalam menghadapi dampak negatif tersebut. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa meskipun media sosial memberikan platform untuk ekspresi diri dan dukungan sosial, eksposur berlebihan dan penggunaan tidak kritis dapat menyebabkan peningkatan kecemasan, depresi, dan gangguan citra tubuh. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya literasi digital dan pembinaan kesehatan mental yang proaktif di kalangan remaja, serta peran penting orang tua dan pendidik dalam mengawasi penggunaan media sosial. Studi ini menawarkan wawasan baru tentang dinamika kompleks pengaruh media sosial terhadap remaja dan mendorong pengembangan kebijakan dan program yang mendukung kesehatan mental yang lebih baik.

**Kata kunci:** Media Sosial, Kesehatan Mental Remaja, Literasi Digital

### **Abstract**

The digital age has brought a major transformation in social interaction, especially among teenagers, with social media playing a central role. This phenomenon raises important questions about the impact of social media on adolescent mental health. This study delves into both sides of the influence of social media, considering it a double-edged sword that has both positive and negative potential for adolescent mental health in Indonesia. Through a qualitative approach, the study explores adolescents' perceptions, experiences, and responses to various aspects of social media, including exposure to cyberbullying, peer pressure, and social expectations. In addition, this study also highlights coping strategies developed by adolescents in

dealing with these negative impacts. Results show that although social media provides a platform for self-expression and social support, overexposure and uncritical use can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and body image disorders. The findings underscore the importance of digital literacy and proactive mental health coaching among adolescents, as well as the important role parents and educators play in monitoring social media use. The study offers new insights into the complex dynamics of social media's influence on adolescents and drives the development of policies and programs that support better mental health.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Adolescent Mental Health, Digital Literacy

## INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has developed into one of the important components in everyday life, especially for teenagers (Putri & Yanzi, 2020). The platform not only serves as a means of communication and entertainment but also affects various aspects of its users' lives, including mental health. The impact of social media on mental health has been a subject widely discussed by academics and practitioners. However, the nature of such impacts is often debated, given that social media has the ability to impact both positively and negatively. The phenomenon of social media as a "double-edged sword" raises important questions about how adolescents in Indonesia experience and perceive its effects on their mental health. Adolescent mental health is a critical issue that requires attention, considering that adolescence is an important period for emotional and social development. Therefore, understanding the impact of social media on adolescent mental health is not only relevant but also urgent (Nayla, 2024).

Increased access and use of social media by adolescents in Indonesia has given rise to new social dynamics that affect the way they interact, learn, and grow. Social media, with all its interactive features, offers opportunities for learning, self-expression, and identity formation (NURYANTO, n.d.). However, excessive or negative use can trigger mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, and body image disorders. The debate over the influence of social media on adolescent mental health demands a more in-depth analysis to understand the nuances and contributing

factors. Previous studies have shown that not all social media experiences are detrimental; there are positive aspects that adolescents can gain from responsible and regular use of social media (Dewi et al., 2021). Therefore, this study seeks to explore both sides of social media use.

In analyzing the impact of social media on adolescent mental health, it is important to consider various factors, such as frequency of use, type of content consumed, and quality of social interactions that occur on digital platforms. The influence of social media on mental health cannot be fully understood without considering the social, cultural, and individual context of its users (Nayla, 2024). This study takes a holistic approach by looking at how adolescents in Indonesia use social media and how that use affects their mental health. By focusing on adolescents aged 13-18, the study sought to map patterns of social media use and identify its specific impact on aspects of mental health such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem.

The data collected through the survey provide an empirical basis for understanding the relationship between social media use and adolescent mental health. This analysis is important for determining the extent to which social media contributes to mental health problems and the way adolescents manage those influences. Through a quantitative approach, this research uncovers important patterns that can help in formulating intervention and education strategies. Understanding these dynamics is also important in the Indonesian context, where cultural and social factors play an important role in shaping adolescent experiences. Indonesia, with its cultural diversity, offers a unique context to explore how social and cultural factors influence the use and influence of social media on adolescents (Sehabudin, 2023).

Finally, the study aims to provide insights that can inform the development of policies, educational programs, and other initiatives aimed at promoting healthy and responsible use of social media. With a focus on adolescents in Indonesia, this study makes an important contribution to the global understanding of the influence of social media on mental health and offers guidance for effective interventions (Leuwol et al., 2023).

## **METHODS**

This study uses a quantitative approach to investigate the influence of social media on adolescent mental health in Indonesia. To collect the necessary data, researchers designed a survey distributed to adolescents aged 13-18 years in various regions in Indonesia. The survey was designed to measure the frequency of social media use, the type of content consumed by teens, as well as their perceptions of social interactions in a digital environment. The survey questions were developed based on an in-depth literature review of the impact of social media on mental health, with the aim of identifying the aspects of social media use that most influence adolescent anxiety, depression, and self-esteem.

In the process of data collection, researchers ensure that all respondents are given complete information regarding the purpose of the study and the treatment of the data collected. This study adheres to the principles of research ethics, including confidentiality and anonymity of respondents (PRASETYA & KGA, n.d.). Respondents were selected using a stratification random sampling method to ensure a broad representation of the adolescent population in Indonesia, given the wide geographical and sociocultural variations. This is done to increase the validity and reliability of research results, with the aim of obtaining an accurate picture of the influence of social media on adolescent mental health in Indonesia.

Data analysis is carried out using statistical techniques to identify relationships between the variables studied. This statistical analysis technique allowed researchers to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationship between social media use and adolescent mental health indicators, such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem. By applying regression models, researchers can control for other variables that might influence this relationship, such as respondents' demographics and environmental factors. This analysis process provides a deeper understanding of the dynamics of social media's influence on adolescent mental health, as well as the factors that mediate or moderate those relationships.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis conducted by researchers revealed that there is a significant relationship between social media use and levels of anxiety and depression among adolescents in Indonesia (Triandini & Kurniasari, 2021). Respondents who reported high frequency of social media use tended to show higher scores on indicators of anxiety and depression. The findings are consistent with previous studies that found that excessive exposure to social media can contribute to increased anxiety and depression, especially if social media use involves social comparison or cyberbullying. In addition, the study also found that the type of content teens consume on social media has a different impact on their mental health. Content that is negative or causes social comparison tends to be associated with increased anxiety and depression (Handikasari et al., 2018). Conversely, content that is educative or supports self-development correlates with increased adolescent self-esteem. This shows the importance of understanding the type of content teens consume on social media and how that content affects their mental health.

In terms of social interactions on social media, the study shows that teens who have positive social interactions on social media tend to have higher self-esteem. These positive interactions include getting social support from friends or peer groups (Wijayanti et al., 2020). This confirms that social media is not only potentially negative for adolescent mental health, but can also be an important source of social support, which in turn can improve their psychological well-being. The use of social media by adolescents in Indonesia is also influenced by demographic factors such as age, gender, and socioeconomic background. This study found that adolescent girls are more likely to experience negative impacts from social media use compared to adolescent boys (Aprilia et al., 2020). This may be related to the way girls use social media and the type of interaction or content they are exposed to.

Further analysis showed that adolescents from low socioeconomic backgrounds tend to be more vulnerable to the negative impacts of social media (Fadillah et al.,

2022). This may be due to a lack of access to resources or support to manage healthy social media use. These findings demonstrate the importance of targeted interventions for vulnerable groups in society. The discussion of these findings emphasized the importance of digital literacy among adolescents and their parents. Digital literacy involves not only an understanding of how to use technology, but also an understanding of how social media can affect mental health and how to manage social media use healthily. This digital literacy education can help teens develop the skills needed to navigate social media more wisely and reduce the risk of negative impacts (Mistortoify et al., n.d.).

This study also discusses the importance of parental supervision in the use of social media by adolescents. Positive and constructive supervision from parents can help adolescents make healthier choices in using social media (Widodo, 2023). Parents can play an active role in discussing social media content, helping teens understand and critique the messages they receive, and supporting them in dealing with issues that may arise from social media use. Furthermore, researchers suggest the need for social media platforms to be more responsible in creating a safe and supportive environment for adolescents (Harahap et al., 2023). This includes developing algorithms that can identify and minimize teens' exposure to harmful content, as well as providing resources that can support users' mental health.

Finally, the study's findings provide important insights for policymakers, mental health practitioners, and the education community in designing and implementing programs that support healthy social media use among adolescents. These programs can include awareness campaigns, digital literacy training, and policy development that supports adolescent well-being in digital spaces (Juhandi et al., 2023). Thus, this study highlights the complexity of the influence of social media on adolescent mental health in Indonesia. While social media has the potential to have a negative impact, there are also significant opportunities to use it as a tool that supports adolescent mental health and self-development. Therefore, a balanced and multifaceted

approach is needed to maximize benefits and minimize the risks of social media use among adolescents (Syaifullah, n.d.).

## CONCLUSION

This research has revealed that social media does play a double-edged sword in the context of adolescent mental health in Indonesia. On the one hand, excessive social media use and interaction with negative content have been shown to increase the risk of anxiety and depression among adolescents. On the other hand, social media also offers opportunities for social support, self-expression, and positive self-development, which can contribute to improved self-esteem and psychological well-being of adolescents. These findings affirm the importance of understanding and acknowledging the duality of social media's influence, which can vary depending on the context in which it is used and the individual characteristics of users.

Based on the results of the study, it became clear that digital literacy and parental supervision play a crucial role in mediating the impact of social media on adolescents. Education about healthy and constructive use of social media can help adolescents and their parents to better understand and manage risks and take advantage of the opportunities offered by social media. This points to the need for educational programmes aimed at raising awareness and digital literacy skills among adolescents and their families, as part of wider efforts to support good mental health in the digital age.

Finally, the study calls for shared responsibility between stakeholders, including policymakers, mental health practitioners, educators, parents, and social media platforms themselves, in creating safe and supportive digital environments for adolescents. These collaborative efforts are important for developing effective strategies and policies to optimize the benefits of social media while minimizing its negative impact on adolescent mental health. With a comprehensive and evidence-based approach, we can hope to strengthen the resilience of adolescents in Indonesia to mental health challenges related to social media use.

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