

The Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Mental Health: A Systematic Review of the Literature 2019-2024

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Abstract

Mental health is a state of prosperity when a person is able to realize his or her potential, face daily life challenges well, work productively, and make a positive contribution to the lives of others. This study aims to analyze or examine various kinds of social media impacts that occur on adolescent mental health presented in previous research articles. The method used in this study is the qualitative SLR (*Systematic Literature Review*) method and as many as 10 articles have been reviewed through this approach. The results of the research obtained include that social media can provide benefits, such as increasing creativity, expanding insights, establishing social relationships, and supporting educational and entrepreneurial activities. However, excessive use can have negative impacts such as addiction, loneliness, stress, self-esteem disorders, and the risk of depression and anxiety. Additionally, adolescents are vulnerable to cyberbullying, body shaming, and exposure to negative content that can affect emotional and cognitive development. Therefore, media literacy education, time restrictions on use, and the active role of parents and teachers in providing assistance and emotional support are needed. This study suggests the need for a holistic approach to optimize the positive impact of social media while minimizing its negative impact on adolescent mental health.

1. Introduction

Mental health is a state of prosperity when a person is able to realize his or her potential, face daily life challenges well, work productively, and make a positive contribution to the lives of others. In general, mental health is related to the psychological, emotional, and psychiatric aspects of a person. A healthy mental state is reflected in a feeling of peace, calm, and a positive attitude that allows individuals to enjoy life and appreciate others around them. Individuals with good mental health are able to maximize their potential in facing various problems, as well as fostering healthy relationships with others. On the other hand, mental health disorders can negatively impact daily activities, damage social relationships, decrease learning achievement, and interfere with work productivity. (Ernawati, 2024)

The rapid technological development of social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram has brought about major changes in the way humans interact and communicate. It is estimated that there are around three billion social media users worldwide, making this medium an important part of daily life. For teenagers, social media can strengthen social relationships, increase confidence, give a sense of belonging, and emotional support. But on the other hand, its use can also trigger problems such as depression, anxiety, feelings of loneliness and self-esteem disorders. (Gunawan et al., 2022)

It is estimated that there are around three billion people around the world who use social media, making it an important part of daily life. For teenagers, social media can provide benefits such as strengthening social relationships, increasing self-confidence, providing a sense of belonging in a group, and emotional support. However, on the other hand, social media can also have negative impacts, such as causing feelings of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and problems with self-esteem. The increasing number of adolescents experiencing mental health problems is a major challenge for education and health care systems around the world (Ernawati, 2024).

The use of social media and various digital platforms is now growing very fast. Therefore, there is strong reason to believe that scientific knowledge regarding the impact of social media on adolescent health and well-being is still widespread and not fully complete (Orben, 2020). This has prompted many researchers and academics to study how social media and digital applications affect various aspects of human life. Some recent studies show serious concern over the negative impact of social media addiction, especially on adolescent mental health. According to a literature review conducted by Schønning and his colleagues, nearly three-quarters of the studies analyzed addressed the link between social media use and mental health disorders. However, few studies have focused on the positive impact of social media. Although there are some mixed results, most studies show a link between social media use and mental health problems. (Ernawati, 2024)

Based on the above statement, mental health is a very important condition for individuals, because it affects their ability to face life's challenges, interact with others, and reach their potential optimally. The use of social media, which is growing rapidly, has a double impact, especially on teenagers. On the one hand, social media can strengthen social relationships, increase confidence, and provide emotional support.

However, systematic studies related to the positive and negative impacts of social media on adolescent mental health in a balanced manner are still minimal, excessive or unhealthy use of social media can cause mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, and decreased self-esteem, without comprehensively reviewing the potential benefits of social media. Therefore, it is important for education and health care systems to pay more attention to the negative impact of social media, as well as provide appropriate support for adolescents experiencing mental health problems. More research is needed to better understand how social media affects various aspects of human life, both positive and negative. This article aims to systematically review various previous studies to map the impact of social media on adolescent mental health, both from positive and negative sides, as well as provide relevant preventive and educational information.

2. Method

This research uses the qualitative method of SLR (*Systematic Literature Review*), which is carried out by collecting, reviewing, recording, assessing, and managing information from various journals found. Researchers use an electronic database, google scholar, to search and collect published articles. This study uses sources from existing and relevant articles according to the purpose and title of the study, namely articles that discuss the impact of social media on adolescent mental health. The articles used in this study are 10 articles obtained from search results through *google scholar* that have passed the initial, filtered and final stages (analysis). This method was

chosen to achieve the goal of researchers who wanted to obtain information and data about the impact of social media on adolescent mental health, not to test hypotheses.

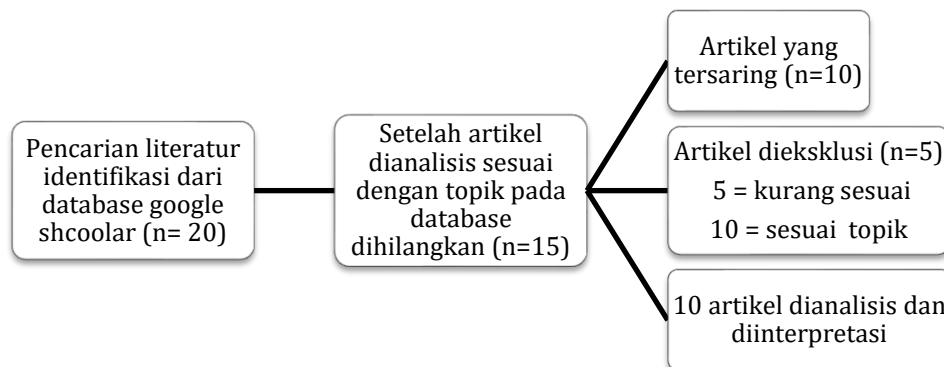


Figure 1. Step-related prism diagram *Systematic Literature Review*

3. Results and Discussion

Based on various studies, social media has a complex impact on adolescent mental health, with significant positive and negative effects. On the one hand, social media can provide significant benefits for adolescents, such as helping them build self-identity, express feelings and ideas, as well as expand social networks and gain access to information and education. Social media can also increase social awareness and encourage participation in various social movements that are collectively beneficial. (Ilat et al., nd.)

But on the other hand, research shows that uncontrolled use of social media can lead to a variety of mental health disorders. Some of the negative impacts identified include the emergence of feelings of loneliness, emotional disturbances, stress, digital addiction, and increasing cases of cyberbullying. In addition, social media can also reduce the quality of interpersonal relationships and adolescents' critical thinking skills due to the lack of direct interaction with others and exposure to misleading or social pressured content. (Agus Iryadi et al., 2023)

Table 1. Results of the Social Media Impact Review Analysis

Article	Research methods	Findings
The Impact of Social Media Use on Adolescent Mental Health. (Ilat et al.,2023)	Qualitative- systematic literature review	This article mentions that social media can also be beneficial, such as increasing creativity and access to information. However, the downside is the emergence of feelings of loneliness, addiction, and decreased critical thinking skills. The suggested solution is media literacy education and social media time control.
The Impact of Social Media Addiction on Adolescent Mental	Kuantitatif - Studi Cross Sectional	This study shows that adolescents who use social media for more than two hours per day have a higher risk of developing mental disorders. In fact, teens who are

<p>Health: A Cross Sectional Study. (Ernawati, 2024)</p>		<p>heavily addicted to social media are seven times more likely to experience depression and anxiety than those who are not addicted.</p>
<p>The Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Mental Health: Challenges and Solutions. (Afrilia, n.d.)</p>	<p>Literature Studies</p>	<p>This study explains that social media can make teenagers stressed because they compare themselves to others. Many feel less confident because they see the standard of living displayed on social media. He suggested solutions such as limiting screen time, improving digital literacy, and support from parents and schools.</p>
<p>The Influence of Social Media on Adolescent Mental Health. (Agus Iryadi et al., 2023).</p>	<p>Qualitative Descriptive</p>	<p>This article mentions that social media can also be beneficial, such as increasing creativity and access to information. However, the downside is the emergence of feelings of loneliness, addiction, and decreased critical thinking skills. The suggested solution is media literacy education and social media time control.</p>
<p>The Impact of Social Media Use on Psychosocial Disorders in Adolescents. (Gunawan et al., 2022).</p>	<p>Literature review methods</p>	<p>It was found that excessive use of social media does not directly cause depression, but adolescents who have a history or symptoms of depression tend to use social media as an escape from real-life problems. Teens who experience social rejection or emotional distress prefer to interact online rather than face-to-face.</p>
<p>The Influence of Social Media on Adolescent Attitudes. (Fronika & Education, n.d.)</p>	<p>Qualitative method</p>	<p>This article explains that social media has two sides for teenagers, namely positive and negative impacts. The positive impact includes being able to strengthen relationships with distant people, becoming a place to learn, share information, promote business, and make friends. However, if used excessively, social media can make it difficult for teenagers to socialize directly, become ignorant of the environment, lower learning achievement, and risk being exposed to online crime and negative content such as pornography.</p>
<p>The Impact of Social Media on</p>	<p>Qualitative method</p>	<p>This article explains that social media has a positive impact on adolescents, such as</p>

<p>Teenagers. (Mulyono, 2021)</p>	<p>expanding friendship networks, encouraging openness and empathy, facilitating access to information, and helping the online learning process. However, social media also has negative impacts, including addiction that reduces study time, concentration disorders, reduced interest in local culture, increased risk of cybercrime, and changes in habits to be more digital.</p>
<p>The Influence of Social Media on the Mental Health of Generation Z. (Fauzi, n.d.)</p>	<p>Qualitative method In this article, it was found that around 64% of Gen Z feel anxious if they can't access social media. In addition, more than half of respondents often compare themselves to others who look "perfect" on social media. This can make them feel inferior and stressed. This study concludes that social media can have a negative impact on mental health if used excessively, such as causing anxiety, difficulty focusing, and feeling lonely</p>
<p>The Influence of Social Media on Early Adult Mental Health in Bekasi. (Ardi Gumara et al., 2024)</p>	<p>Qualitative method It was found that excessive use of social media can reduce the quality of mental health, especially in young people. This is due to frequent viewing of negative content, comparing yourself to others, and addiction. Even so, there is no difference in impact between men and women, meaning that all can be affected by the bad effects</p>
<p>The Influence of Social Media on Mental Health in College Students. (Fitriah et al., 2023)</p>	<p>Quantitative methods It was found that social media is often a source of mental disorders such as anxiety, depression, and even self-harming behavior. They also noted that adolescents are more sensitive to social influences in the media, such as body shaming or cyberbullying. This shows that social media does have a huge effect on adolescent mental health, especially if not used wisely</p>

Based on the results of the analysis above, 8 out of 10 articles identified that a direct relationship between the duration of social media use can increase anxiety disorders and depression in

adolescents, if social media use exceeds two hours per day. And it can also be known that social media has two different side impacts for teenagers, namely the positive side impact and the negative side impact. On the positive side, social media can increase creativity because of the large number of ideas and information that can be accessed quickly. Teens can also get educational information, expand friendships, and utilize social media to promote small businesses or share experiences. Social media also helps teens stay connected with friends or family who live far away. But behind these benefits, social media also has a negative impact if used excessively. Many teens feel lonely and even addicted to social media. They can feel uncomfortable or stressed when they can't access social media. One of the main reasons this happens is because teenagers tend to compare their lives to the lives of others who look "perfect" on social media. This can raise confidence and make them feel not good enough. In fact, in some studies, it was found that teens who used social media for more than two hours per day were seven times more likely to experience depression and anxiety than those who weren't addicted.

Anxiety in social media users arises due to obsession and excessive use of the platform. Social media actually functions as a tool to share, show off activities, and share experiences. However, if you are exposed to social media too often, this can make users feel dissatisfied with their real life. Research by Cerniglia et al., (2017) also supports these findings by explaining that excessive use of social media can increase anxiety levels in users. They can experience emotional disorders such as bad mood, difficulty sleeping, irritability, and feeling anxious when they can't access social media. In addition, adolescents who used social media with above-average intensity did not show a significant increase in depressive symptoms compared to the general average. The study also highlights that it is not yet certain whether depression is a cause or a consequence of social media use, especially after gender factors and family economic conditions are taken into account, the effect becomes less significant. Meanwhile, research by Puukko et al., (2020) shows that depressive symptoms actually encourage increased social media use among adolescents. Thus, adolescents who have a history of depression tend to be more interested in interacting through social media than interacting in person (Gunawan et al., 2022).

Symptoms of anxiety and depression are known to have a positive relationship with the duration of social media use, both in active and passive users. This correlation is more strongly seen in adolescent girls. This is due to women's higher sensitivity than men's, as well as personal experiences that increase the likelihood of emotional distress, including mood swings and depression. Additionally, passive social media users are more likely to experience greater anxiety and depression. Other contributing factors are negative body image and social comparison behaviors when using social media, which also worsen anxiety and depression conditions in adolescents. This anxiety appears as a form of anticipation against the threat of beauty standards or body shape that prevails among adolescents. (Gunawan et al., 2022)

In addition, social media can also reduce critical thinking skills because teenagers are used to receiving information quickly without filtering the truth. Others use social media to escape real-world problems, especially if they are experiencing emotional distress or social rejection. In other cases, some teens are even addicted to negative content such as pornography, which can impair their brain function and emotional development. Not only that, cyberbullying and body shaming are also rampant on social media and greatly affect the mental health of adolescents (Agus Iryadi et al., 2023).

Seeing the magnitude of the negative impact, the researchers suggested several solutions, such as providing media literacy education so that adolescents can be wiser and more critical in using social media. Teens also need to limit their time on social media, for example by creating a special schedule or setting screen time. Support from parents and teachers is also very important, both to integrate the use of social media and to become a safe place to vent for teenagers.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussions that have been described, it can be concluded that the impact of social media on adolescent mental health has two different impacts on adolescents, namely positive and negative impacts. On the positive side, social media can be an effective means to increase creativity, expand insights, establish social relationships, and support educational and entrepreneurial activities. However, excessive use of social media can have various negative impacts, such as addiction, stress, decreased confidence, and even the risk of causing mental disorders such as depression and anxiety. In addition, social media can also reduce critical thinking skills and increase the likelihood of teenagers being exposed to negative content and experiencing cyberbullying or body shaming. In overcoming this impact, it can be done by providing media literacy education to adolescents so that they can be wiser and more critical in filtering information and using social media responsibly. Teens also need to limit their social media time, such as by creating a daily schedule or using the screen timer feature on their devices. In addition, the role of parents and teachers is very important in accompanying, guiding, and being a safe sharing place for adolescents. Emotional support and open communication can help teens feel more comfortable and protected.

This research contributes to mapping the influence of digitalization on adolescent welfare, especially in psychological and social aspects that are often affected by the intensity of social media use. These findings confirm the importance of combining educational and psychosocial approaches in response to adolescent developmental challenges in the digital age. Further experimental-based research is strongly recommended to empirically test cause-and-effect relationships, design interventions based on valid data, and identify protective factors that can improve adolescents' mental resilience to the pressures of the digital world.

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