
How Social Factors Shape the Mental Health Impact of Social Media Among High School Students: Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Adolescent mental health has emerged as a pressing global concern, particularly in light of the growing and intensive use of social media among high school students. While social media platforms offer avenues for communication and self-expression, they also contribute to adverse psychological outcomes, including anxiety, stress, and depression. This study explores the role of social determinants—such as socioeconomic status, family dynamics, peer support, and digital literacy—in shaping the mental health effects of social media use among adolescents. Employing a literature review methodology, the study analyzed 25 relevant national and international journal articles sourced via Google Scholar using the keywords: “social determinants,” “social media,” “mental health,” and “adolescents.” The findings reveal a strong correlation between frequent social media engagement and heightened mental health disorders, exacerbated by contextual factors such as inadequate parental supervision, limited emotional support, and peer norms that prioritize online validation. These insights underscore the urgent need for integrated, cross-sectoral interventions involving families, schools, and community stakeholders. Strengthening adolescents’ psychosocial resilience through targeted digital literacy education and robust social support systems is essential to mitigate the negative impacts of social media and promote overall mental well-being.

Keywords: social determinants, social media, mental health, adolescents

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescent mental health is currently a global concern as the prevalence of disorders such as anxiety, depression, and psychosocial stress increases. One factor that has been widely linked to this phenomenon is the increasingly intense use of social media among high school students. While social media offers benefits such as communication and self-expression, it also poses potential risks, including cyberbullying, body image pressure, and social anxiety stemming from the fear of missing out (FOMO) phenomenon⁽¹⁾.

Mental health is an important aspect of adolescent development that affects quality of life, academic achievement, and social adaptability. Adolescence is a complex period of transition, marked by rapid biological, psychological, and social changes. These changes make adolescents more vulnerable to emotional distress and various psychological problems than other age groups. The⁽²⁾ estimates that one in seven adolescents aged 10–19 years experience mental disorders, with depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders being the main causes of distress in this age group. Suicide is even the third leading cause of death among adolescents aged 15–29 years worldwide.

The most common disorders are anxiety (3.7%), followed by depression, behavioral disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These data show that the burden of mental health problems in adolescents is quite significant and can have a long-term impact on individual well-being and future productivity in society. In Indonesia, the low rate of seeking help is caused by various factors, such as a lack of knowledge about mental health, social stigma, and limited access to psychological services in schools and communities. This worsens the condition of adolescents who actually need help.

Based on these issues, it is important to explain and compare data on mental health cases among adolescents with other age groups to determine whether the prevalence among high school adolescents and their peers is indeed high and requires further investigation. Thus, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mental health conditions of adolescents and serve as a basis for more effective prevention and treatment efforts in the future.

The impact of social media on adolescents' mental health does not occur in a vacuum. Social factors such as family economic status, the quality of relationships with parents, peer support, school environment, and exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) also shape adolescents' vulnerability or resilience in responding to the influence of social media. These factors are known as social determinants of health, which are social conditions that influence an individual's opportunity to achieve optimal health⁽³⁾.

In the context of adolescents, social determinants such as poverty, limited access to mental health services, and weak social support play a significant role in strengthening or weakening the negative impact of social media use. Therefore, understanding the relationship between social media and adolescent mental health must be accompanied by a comprehensive analysis of the accompanying social determinants⁽⁴⁾.

This review aims to systematically examine the current literature on how social determinants interact with social media use in influencing the mental health of secondary school adolescents. This understanding is expected to form the basis for developing more equitable and contextual interventions for adolescent mental health in the digital age.

METHOD

In this study, the researcher applied a literature review method, in which the researcher reviewed several national and international journals. The journals used for the review were obtained by the researcher through Google Scholar. The researcher entered the keywords “social determinants,” “social media,” “mental health,” and “adolescents” into the search bar. From the various journals that appeared, the researcher selected those that aligned with the focus of the study to be conducted. Figure 1 illustrates the literature search

flowchart with PRISMA method. It is showing the process of identifying, screening, and selecting relevant articles for the review.

The search for articles in this literature review was conducted using Google Scholar. Google Scholar was chosen because of its ability to provide broad access to various scientific publications across disciplines, both nationally and internationally, as well as its ease of access to open access articles. Unlike paid databases such as PubMed, Scopus, or Wiley, Google Scholar allows researchers to access relevant sources without institutional access restrictions.

The articles included in this study are scientific publications that have undergone peer review, are fully accessible, and are published in Indonesian or English. The publication year was limited to the period 2019–2024 so that the information reviewed remains up-to-date and relevant to the research context. These criteria were applied to ensure that the literature used was relevant, credible, and supported the analysis in this review.

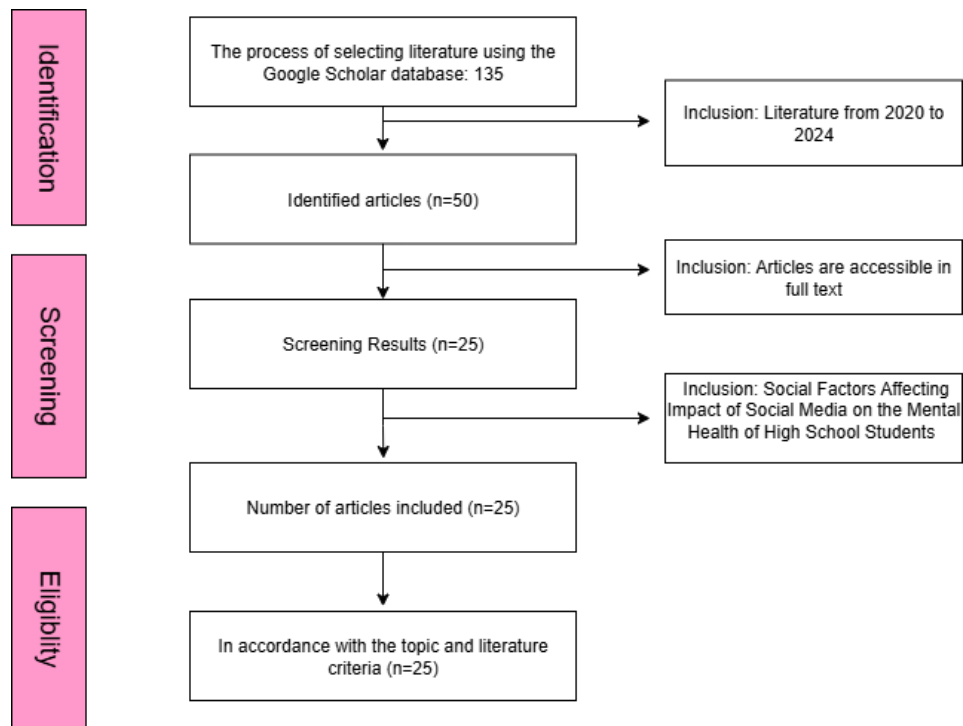


Figure 1. Literature search flowchart

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 describes the key articles cited and reviewed in the literature review conducted by the researcher. These studies focus on various aspects of social media use and its impact on adolescent mental health, highlighting both positive and negative effects, determinants, and potential interventions.

Table 1. Articles cited and reviewed in the researcher's literature review

No	Title	Author (Year)	Result
1	Level of Social Media Addiction in	(3)	Showing that social media usage among

No	Title	Author (Year)	Result
	Adolescents		Indonesian teenagers is very high, with 51.4% of teenagers experiencing low levels of social media addiction and 48.6% experiencing high levels.
2	Social Media Use in Adolescent Mental Health	⁽¹⁾	A p-value of 0.000 confirms that the higher the frequency of use, the more problematic the mental health of the adolescents concerned.
3	The Effect of social media on Adolescent Mental Health	⁽⁵⁾	Cyberbullying, social comparison, and exposure to negative content on digital platforms are believed to exacerbate the risk of psychological disorders.
4	Social Media Use and Adolescent Mental Health	⁽⁴⁾	A p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) indicates a significant and positive relationship between social media use and mental health issues. The more frequently social media is used, the higher the prevalence of mental health issues among adolescents.
5	Literature Review: The Impact of Social Media Use on Adolescent Mental Health	⁽⁶⁾	Lack of parental control and education exacerbates the risk of negative impacts, especially regarding the time and manner of social media use
6	The Influence of Social Media on Mental Health of College Students	⁽⁷⁾	Academic performance issues and a decline in quality of life due to prolonged digital pressure
7	Social Media Addiction in Early Adults: Is It an Effect of Loneliness?	⁽⁸⁾	Social media is used as an escape and an attempt to fulfill unmet connection needs in the real world
8	Impact of Social Media Use on Social Interaction in Society: A Literature Study	⁽⁹⁾	Dependence on online communication leads to a decrease in the quality and frequency of direct (face-to-face) interactions between individuals, potentially weakening emotional closeness and empathy
9	Impact of Internet Addiction on Adolescents	⁽¹⁰⁾	The internet has more harmful effects on adolescents, particularly in social, psychological, academic, and moral aspects.
10	Social Media Addiction (FOMO) Among Millennials	⁽¹¹⁾	Social determinants such as group norms, online validation culture, and weak digital literacy increase the vulnerability of the younger generation.
11	Impact of Social Media on Psychological Well-being of Adolescents: Review of Effects on Anxiety and Depression	⁽¹²⁾	Uncontrolled use of social media is significantly associated with increased anxiety and depression in adolescents.
12	Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media on Social, Psychological, and Behavioral Development of Adolescents Unfamiliar with Social Media Technology in Indonesia	⁽¹³⁾	Adolescents need a mentoring system to build self-confidence and cope with pressure from both online and offline environments
13	Influence of Social Media on Psychological Well-being of Indonesian High School Adolescents	⁽¹⁴⁾	79.5% of adolescents in Indonesia are internet and social media users. Adolescents who frequently experience cyberbullying tend to experience increased psychological distress, including feelings of insecurity, low self-esteem, and emotional stress
14	Impact of Social Media Use on	⁽¹⁵⁾	Interventions through digital literacy education,

No	Title	Author (Year)	Result
	Consumptive Behavior and Self-Perception of Adolescents in Jakarta: A Study on Online Interaction, Endorsement Influence, and Psychological Impact		supervision, and regulation of promotions are considered crucial to supporting the healthy psychological and social development of teenagers in today's digital age
15	Role of Social Media in Psychological Development of Children and Adolescents	⁽¹⁶⁾	High exposure to social media increases the risk of consumptive behavior and shapes self-perceptions that are vulnerable to anxiety, social comparison, and identity crises
16	Analysis of Psychological Impact on Social Media Users	⁽¹⁷⁾	Social media impacts users' psychological aspects by providing positive external support and opportunities, yet simultaneously increases the risk of anxiety, depression, and self-regulation disorders if used excessively or without direction
17	Developmental Psychology in Adolescents on the Impact of Social Media Use on Emotional Development and Anxiety	⁽¹⁸⁾	Adolescents with high levels of online interaction are more prone to emotional fluctuations, psychological stress, and anxiety
18	Determinants of Social Media Addiction Among Public Health Faculty Students at Muhammadiyah University Jakarta	⁽¹⁹⁾	Holistic and collaborative prevention strategies through digital literacy, strengthening offline support, and campus-based interventions are needed to reduce addiction risk.
19	Influence of Religiosity, Understanding of Puberty, and Social Media Use on Adolescent Sexual Behavior	⁽²⁰⁾	Collective efforts to strengthen religious values, reproductive health education, and digital supervision are crucial to protect adolescents from unhealthy sexual behaviors in the digital era.
20	Determinants of Interest and Behavior Among Adolescents in Accessing Reproductive Health Services through Social Media Platforms: A Study of Health Students in Cirebon City	⁽²¹⁾	Adolescents' interest and behavior in accessing reproductive health services via social media are influenced by knowledge, attitudes, social support, and digital platform characteristics.
21	Social media use and its impact on adolescent mental Health: An umbrella review of the evidence	⁽²²⁾	Adolescents frequently exposed to negative news content tend to experience more negative emotions and internal stress.
22	Social networking sites and mental health problems in adolescents: The mediating role of cyberbullying victimization	⁽²³⁾	Mental health problems among high school adolescents are closely related to social media use, especially when accompanied by experiences of being cyberbullying victims.
23	Adolescent social media use and mental health from adolescent and parent perspectives	⁽²⁴⁾	The potential risks of anxiety and depression due to FOMO and excessive use, social media can also be a source of emotional support, self-expression, and social network strengthening if used appropriately.
24	Social determinants of mental health and adolescent anxiety and depression: Findings from the 2018 to 2019 National Survey of Children's Health	⁽²⁵⁾	A holistic and interprofessional approach involving schools, families, and communities is needed to address simultaneously the various social and psychosocial determinants that influence adolescents' mental health
25	Social Media Use and Serious Psychological Distress Among	⁽²⁶⁾	The near-constant use of social media among adolescents, especially among those who are

No	Title	Author (Year)	Result
	Adolescents		socially and family-wise vulnerable, is closely associated with an increased risk

The use of social media among Indonesian teenagers has increased significantly in recent years. Data indicates that 79.5% of adolescents in Indonesia are active users of the internet and social media, with 51.4% experiencing low-level social media addiction and 48.6% at a high level. These findings suggest that social media has become an integral part of the social and emotional lives of adolescents today⁽²⁰⁾.

Intensive social media use has been proven to have a significant correlation with the mental health of teenagers. Statistical analysis results show a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the higher the frequency of social media use, the greater the likelihood of teenagers experiencing psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, emotional stress, and a decline in quality of life. This problem is exacerbated by exposure to negative content, social comparisons, and the phenomenon of cyberbullying that is prevalent on digital platforms. Cyberbullying, in particular, contributes greatly to feelings of low self-esteem, insecurity, and psychological distress in adolescents⁽¹⁶⁾.

Social determinants play a key role in amplifying or mitigating the negative impact of social media on adolescents. Factors such as group norms, online validation culture, weak digital literacy, lack of parental supervision, and minimal social support from the surrounding environment contribute to increased psychological vulnerability. On the other hand, teenagers' need to feel connected, acknowledged, and accepted makes social media an emotional escape and a compensation for the lack of closeness in real-life social relationships. This dependence then reduces the quality of face-to-face interaction, which leads to a decline in empathy, social skills, and emotional closeness between individuals⁽¹⁷⁾.

Factors such as parental supervision, digital literacy, and emotional support influence how teenagers use social media and the psychological impact they experience. Parental supervision acts as an external control that helps teenagers limit their exposure to negative content, prevent risky behavior, and steer their social media use in a more positive direction. Teens with consistent supervision tend to have more balanced media usage patterns and are less susceptible to online social pressure. Meanwhile, digital literacy affects teenagers' ability to select, understand, and verify information in the virtual world. Teenagers with high levels of digital literacy are better able to distinguish between true and false information and reject provocative or misleading content, thereby avoiding social media abuse and negative impacts such as hoaxes and cyberbullying.

In addition, emotional support from parents, peers, and the surrounding environment plays an important role in maintaining the psychological balance of adolescents when interacting on social media. This support helps adolescents develop self-confidence, reduce stress due to online social pressure, and increase their sense of security and acceptance. Conversely, a lack of emotional support can cause adolescents to seek excessive validation through social media, which has the potential to lead to addiction or mental health disorders. Overall, these three factors interact with each other in shaping adolescents' behavior and experiences on social

media. Good supervision, high digital literacy, and adequate emotional support can protect against the negative effects of social media use, while strengthening its benefits as a means of communication and self-development.

Exposure to age-inappropriate or negative content also contributes to identity crises, internal pressure, and extreme emotional fluctuations. In some cases, academic health is also affected, as evidenced by a decline in academic performance and concentration disorders. Additionally, uncontrolled use of social media can trigger consumerist behavior, altering self-perception based on false standards formed from media imagery. However, social media also has the potential to serve as a source of emotional support, healthy self-expression, and expanded social networks, if used appropriately. Therefore, a holistic and collaborative intervention is needed. This approach needs to involve schools, families, and communities to build strong digital literacy, strengthen offline social support, and monitor social media use. On the other hand, education about mental health and moral values, including strengthening religious values and reproductive education, is very important in shaping the psychosocial resilience of adolescents in the digital age⁽²⁷⁾.

Overall, the use of social media without adequate social control, digital literacy, and emotional support is closely related to an increase in mental health problems among adolescents. Therefore, evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies that consider the social and psychological context of adolescents are needed.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to science by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between the intensity of social media use and adolescent mental health, as well as the role of social factors such as parental supervision, digital literacy, and emotional support. These findings enrich the literature in the fields of public health and adolescent psychology in the Indonesian context, while also providing a basis for the development of educational interventions, counselling services, and adolescent protection policies in the digital age.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that social media use among adolescents be regulated through a holistic and collaborative approach involving parents, schools, and the community. Parents need to provide supervision and emotional support, while schools can strengthen digital literacy, mental health education, and moral and reproductive values education. The government is also advised to develop policies to protect adolescents in the digital world and provide easily accessible online counseling services. In addition, researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies with longitudinal or intervention designs to explore the mechanisms of the relationship between social media use, social factors, and mental health in greater depth. This approach is expected to minimize the mental health risks to adolescents while increasing the social and emotional benefits of social media use.

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