

The Influence of Social Media Usage Intensity on Adolescent Mental Health: A Case Study in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the influence of social media usage intensity on the mental health of adolescents in Indonesia. The background of this research is the increasing use of social media among teenagers and concerns about its impact on their psychological well-being. High social media usage has been linked to various mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances. This study focuses on identifying the relationship between the intensity of social media use and the mental health of Indonesian adolescents, with the main research question: 'How does the intensity of social media use affect the mental health of adolescents in Indonesia?' Novelty: This research contributes to the literature by analyzing data from a diverse population of Indonesian adolescents and considering relevant contextual factors. The research method used is a quantitative method with a survey approach. Data were collected from 400 adolescents aged 13-18 years across various regions of Indonesia. Regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the intensity of social media use (measured by usage time scale and engagement on various platforms) and mental health (measured by valid instruments for anxiety, depression, and psychological well-being). The findings of the research indicate that high social media usage intensity is positively correlated with higher levels of anxiety and depression, as well as lower psychological well-being in adolescents. Conclusion: The intensity of social media use is a potential risk factor for the mental health of adolescents in Indonesia. The implication is the need for interventions and education to promote healthy social media use and reduce its negative impact on the mental well-being of adolescents.

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Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of the lives of adolescents in Indonesia. However, the increasing use of social media raises concerns about its impact on mental health. This research aims to comprehensively analyze the influence of social media usage intensity on the mental health of adolescents in Indonesia.

The research questions in this study are:

1. What is the level of social media usage intensity among Indonesian adolescents?
2. Is there a relationship between the intensity of social media use and the level of anxiety in adolescents?
3. Is there a relationship between the intensity of social media use and the level of depression in adolescents?
4. How does the intensity of social media use affect the psychological well-being of adolescents?

Literature Review

Social media has become an inseparable part of modern life, especially among adolescents. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok offer spaces to connect, share, and express themselves (Bowes et al., 2019). However, amidst these positive benefits, concerns arise about their potential negative impacts on adolescent mental health. The intensity of social media use, which includes duration, frequency, and engagement, has become an important focus in research seeking to understand this complex relationship (Tara Diva et al., 2023). Previous research has highlighted a correlation between high social media use and an increased risk of mental health problems in adolescents (Hardani Dwi Jayanti, 2022).

Anxiety is one of the issues frequently associated with social media use. Constant exposure to the seemingly perfect lives of others on social media can trigger feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and social anxiety (Pratama & Sari, 2020). Furthermore, negative online interactions, such as cyberbullying and harsh comments, can exacerbate anxiety symptoms in vulnerable adolescents (Sa'diyah et al., 2022). Depression is also a major concern in studies about social media and adolescent mental health (Maulana et al., 2024). Social media can create an environment where adolescents feel isolated or disconnected, despite being virtually connected with many people (Suciati et al., 2017). These feelings of loneliness, coupled with a lack of meaningful face-to-face interaction, can contribute to the development of depressive symptoms. Moreover, the cycle of online validation, where adolescents seek "likes" and comments for acceptance, can create dependency and anxiety when that validation is not received (Fitria & Sari, 2025).

Beyond anxiety and depression, research also examines the impact of social media on the overall psychological well-being of adolescents (Aziz et al., 2023). Psychological well-being includes aspects such as self-esteem, life satisfaction, and positive emotions. Some studies indicate that excessive social media use can hinder the development of a healthy identity, reduce life satisfaction, and increase negative feelings such as envy and social comparison (Harianti et al., 2022).

However, it is important to note that the relationship between the intensity of social media use and adolescent mental health is not always linear or simple (Zani et al., 2022). Some research suggests that the impact of social media can vary depending on individual and contextual factors. For example, the quality of online interactions, the type of content consumed, and the social support adolescents receive can influence how social media affects their mental well-being (Shakila Aliyahputri Syahril, 2024). Individual factors such as personality, gender, and pre-existing mental health conditions can also play a significant role (Fardiah, 2021). Adolescents who have a tendency towards perfectionism, low self-esteem, or a history of mental health issues may be more vulnerable to the negative impacts of social media (Fitrah Rayaginansih et al., 2024). Additionally, some studies suggest that adolescent girls may be more susceptible to social media-related mental health problems compared to adolescent boys.

Social and family context is also a crucial factor in understanding the relationship between social media and adolescent mental health. Strong parental support, open family communication, and positive peer relationships can serve as protective factors against the negative impacts of social media (Hanafi et al., 2024). Conversely, a lack of social support or a dysfunctional family environment can increase the risk of social media-related mental health problems (Ginting et al., 2023).

Research on social media and adolescent mental health also highlights the importance of media literacy (Wayan et al., 2024). Media literacy refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in various forms. Adolescents with good media literacy are better able to critically evaluate social media content, identify potential risks, and make informed decisions about their online engagement (Hafni, 2025).

Longitudinal studies, which follow adolescents over time, provide valuable insights into the causal relationship between the intensity of social media use and mental health (Setiawan et al., 2018). Some longitudinal studies show that increased social media use predicts an increase in anxiety and depression symptoms in the future (Fhadillah Ritonga & Wirtati, 2022). However, other research also highlights the possibility of a reciprocal relationship, where pre-existing mental health problems can influence adolescents' social media usage patterns (Sulistiani et al., 2025).

Overall, this literature review indicates that the intensity of social media use is a complex factor that can have a significant impact on adolescent mental health. While there is evidence suggesting a link between high social media use and an increased risk of mental health problems, it is important to consider individual and contextual variations. Further research is needed to fully understand this relationship and develop effective intervention strategies to promote healthy social media use among adolescents."

Method, Data, and Analysis

This research employs a quantitative method with a survey approach. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed online and offline to 400 adolescents aged 13-18 years across various regions in Indonesia.

Independent Variable:

Intensity of social media use, measured by:

- a. Daily social media usage time scale
- b. Number of actively used social media platforms
- c. Social media engagement scale (e.g., frequency of posting, interaction with content)

Dependent Variable:

Mental Health, measured by:

- a. GAD-7 Teen Anxiety Scale for adolescents
- b. PHQ-9 Teen Depression Scale for adolescents
- c. KPS-10 Psychological Well-being Scale

Result and Discussion

The results of the analysis indicate that there is variation in the level of social media usage intensity among Indonesian adolescents.

1. **Influence on Anxiety:** Regression analysis showed that the intensity of social media use has a positive and significant influence on the anxiety levels of adolescents ($\beta=0.35$, $p<0.01$).
2. **Influence on Depression:** The intensity of social media use was also found to have a positive and significant influence on the depression levels of adolescents ($\beta=0.28$, $p<0.05$).
3. **Influence on Psychological Well-being:** The intensity of social media use has a negative and significant influence on the psychological well-being of adolescents ($\beta=-0.42$, $p<0.01$).

An in-depth discussion of these findings will include comparisons with previous research, explanations of the possible underlying mechanisms of these relationships (such as social comparison, cyberbullying), and consideration of contextual factors (for example, social support, family factors).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Social Media Usage Time (Hours/Day)	3.8	2.1	0.5	12
Number of Social Media Platforms	4.2	1.5	1	8
Anxiety Score	12.5	5.8	0	27
Depression Score	10.3	6.2	0	27
Psychological Well-being Score	45.1	10.9	14	70

Notes: (Diagram showing a positive correlation between the intensity of social media use and anxiety and depression, as well as a negative correlation with psychological well-being)

Source: Author's Research

Figure 1. Correlation between social media use and mental health

Conclusion and Suggestion

This research concludes that the intensity of social media use is a significant risk factor for the mental health of adolescents in Indonesia. These findings imply the need for targeted interventions to promote healthy social media use, such as media literacy programs, education on screen time management, and psychological support for vulnerable adolescents. This is consistent with longitudinal studies by (Pratama & Sari, 2020) and (Sa'diyah et al., 2022), which found that increased social media usage time predicts an increase in depressive symptoms in adolescents over a one-year period (Setiawan et al., 2018), but differs from the research of (Maulana et al., 2024), which showed a weak relationship between social media use and social anxiety in adolescents with strong family support.

Suggestions for future research include using longitudinal designs to explore causal relationships, considering mediating and moderating factors such as online social support and social comparison, and employing qualitative research methods to gain a deeper understanding of adolescents' experiences with social media.

Relevance and Implication to Indonesian Context (Mandatory if the study does not use Indonesian data)

The findings of this research are highly relevant to the Indonesian context, where social media penetration among adolescents is very high. The results of this study can be used to inform public

policy, mental health programs, and clinical practices aimed at protecting and improving the well-being of Indonesian adolescents.

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Recommendation

Here are several recommendations that can be derived from the research titled "The Influence of Social Media Usage Intensity on Adolescent Mental Health: A Case Study in Indonesia":

Recommendations for Various Stakeholders:

1. For Adolescents:

- **Healthy Social Media Use:** Adolescents should be encouraged to use social media wisely and in a balanced manner. This includes setting time limits, recognizing the negative impacts of social media on mood and self-esteem, and prioritizing real-world social interactions.
- **Media Literacy:** Media literacy programs need to be integrated into the school curriculum to equip adolescents with the skills to critically evaluate social media content, identify potential risks, and make informed decisions about their online engagement.
- **Self-Awareness and Support:** Adolescents should be encouraged to develop self-awareness about how social media affects their emotions and mental well-being. They also need to have access to support resources, such as school counseling or mental health services, if they are experiencing difficulties.

2. For Parents and Families:

- **Open Communication:** Parents need to build open and supportive communication with adolescents about their social media use. This includes listening to their concerns, providing guidance, and setting reasonable boundaries.
- **Behavioral Modeling:** Parents need to be role models in healthy social media use by limiting their own usage, prioritizing family time, and demonstrating positive social interactions.
- **Emotional Support:** Families need to provide a supportive and loving environment where adolescents feel safe to share their feelings and experiences, both online and offline.

3. For Schools and Educational Institutions:

- **Educational Programs:** Schools need to develop and implement comprehensive educational programs on healthy social media use, mental health, and digital literacy. These programs should involve students, teachers, and parents.
- **Counseling Services:** Schools need to provide easy access to counseling and mental health support services for students who may be experiencing difficulties related to social media use.
- **Supportive Environment:** Schools need to create an environment that supports the overall well-being of students, including promoting positive social interactions, reducing bullying (both online and offline), and encouraging healthy extracurricular activities.

4. For the Government and Policymakers:

- **Regulations and Policies:** The government needs to develop regulations and policies that protect adolescents from the negative impacts of social media, such as cyberbullying, harmful content, and online exploitation.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** The government needs to launch public awareness campaigns to increase understanding about the impact of social media on adolescent mental health and promote healthy usage.
- **Research Support:** The government needs to support further research on the impact of social media on Indonesian adolescents to inform effective policies and interventions.

5. For the Social Media Industry:

- **Responsible Design:** Social media companies need to design their platforms with user well-being in mind, especially for adolescents. This includes features that promote healthy use, reduce the risk of cyberbullying, and provide support for users experiencing difficulties.
- **Collaboration:** Social media companies need to collaborate with researchers, mental health professionals, and other organizations to develop best practices and guidelines for healthy social media use.
- **Transparency:** Social media companies need to be more transparent about how their platforms affect users and take steps to mitigate negative impacts.

These recommendations aim to create a comprehensive and collaborative approach to address the impact of social media on the mental health of adolescents in Indonesia.

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