

Social Media Use and Its Psychological Impact on Adolescents in Indonesia: A Review from the Perspective of Social Education and Public Awareness

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Abstract. This literature review explores the psychological impact of social media use on adolescents in Indonesia through the lens of social education and public awareness. Adolescents, as the dominant users of social media, are highly vulnerable to its influence, both positively and negatively. The review analyzes studies from the past five years to identify patterns that reflect the role of social media in shaping adolescent behavior and mental health within a broader sociocultural and educational context. The findings indicate that social media serves as an educational platform that enhances access to information, fosters social connectedness, and supports identity development. However, it also poses risks such as increased anxiety and depression, body image issues, unhealthy social comparison, and exposure to cyberbullying and addictive behaviors. These implications underline the urgent need for integrated social education strategies and public awareness initiatives to promote responsible social media use among adolescents in Indonesia.

Keywords: Social Media; Adolescents; Psychological Impact; Social Education; Public Awareness

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Introduction

Social media has become a vital aspect of people's lives in the current digital era. The development of digital technology and the internet has triggered a new media revolution, which has not only changed the way humans communicate but also the way they interact socially. (Shidiqie et.al, 2023). Rapid and real-time information distribution, made possible by new media such as the internet, creates interaction areas unrestricted by time or location (Putri & Pratiwi, 2022). People can now actively generate and share content in addition to consuming information, thanks to the remarkable transformation of social media from basic discussion forums to sophisticated video-sharing platforms.

The most recent poll conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJI) in 2024 indicates that internet usage has significantly increased nationwide in Indonesia. To paint a more detailed picture of the adolescent population, however, data from We Are Social and Meltwater (2023) reveal that over 98% of Indonesian teenagers between 13 to 18 years old use the internet regularly, logging on for more than 8 hours a day on average. They primarily use it to access social media, entertainment content, and digital communication. Up to 221.5 million Indonesians, or 79.5% of the country's total population—which is predicted to reach 278.7 million by 2023—have been documented as active internet users (Hidayatullah & Winduwati, 2023).

The rapid development of the internet has expanded the reach of social media, influencing various aspects of life, including people's productivity. People's everyday lives now revolve around platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and e-commerce sites such as Shopee and Tokopedia (Wulan & Hidayat, 2024). The existence of these platforms creates opportunities for knowledge sharing and the growth of economic potential, in addition to serving as a means of communication.

Social media has become a platform that has attracted global attention, allowing every individual, especially teenagers, to interact, share information, and participate actively without limits (Yuwita & Nurdiana, 2022). Teenagers are the most active group using social media. Psychologically, adolescence, spanning the ages of 12 to 22, is a developmental phase characterised by the search for self-identity, exploration of values, and the formation of broader social relationships. (Novianti, 2020). Although social media offers ease of

communication and expanding social networks, it is undeniable that its use also presents various challenges.

For teenagers, social media has become an inseparable part of everyday life, offering ease of communication, access to information and expansion of social networks. Teenagers' activities on social media often give rise to content that does not represent reality, and in many cases, teenagers become victims or perpetrators of cyberbullying.(Mulyono, 2021). This illustrates the effect social media has on their mental growth. Mustaqim and Hendriani (2025) note that adolescents' mental health can be significantly impacted by social pressure, social comparison, and exposure to harmful information.

In Permatasari et al. (2021), Jones and Davis demonstrate how the concept of the interplay between action and effect can be applied to understand the psychological effects of social media use. Individual reactions or behaviours that have particular impacts on the environment are referred to as actions, and the actual changes brought about by those actions are referred to as effects. Rizaldi et al. (2024) stated that social media has both beneficial and harmful effects on teenagers' psychological health. Meanwhile, Yadnya and Warastuti (2023) found a link between social media use and adolescents' self-esteem and body image in Jakarta.

While social media can be fun and educational, Iryadi et al. (2023) discovered that excessive use of the platform might lead to mental health issues, including melancholy. In support of this, Suryaningrum (2022) found that teenagers who exhibit early signs of psychological illnesses, including personality changes, sleep issues, and social disengagement, require prompt professional therapy. If neglected, mental health problems that adolescents are susceptible to can seriously affect their lives.

A survey of earlier research suggests that there is a range of conclusions about the psychological effects of teen social media use. This study aims to conduct a systematic assessment of the literature addressing the psychological impact of social media usage on adolescents in Indonesia, given the high intensity of social media use among this demographic and the potential hazards associated with it. Finding patterns of effects—both sound and adverse—and summarising the pertinent implications for therapies and policy development in adolescent mental health are the main goals of this study.

Methods

This study examines the psychological impacts of social media use on Indonesian teenagers using a literature review methodology. This approach was employed because all information sources originated from secondary literature that was thoroughly examined, eliminating the need for direct fieldwork (Socrates & Mufit, 2022). To provide a thorough understanding of the topic being studied, this method aims to uncover, assess, and synthesise pertinent research findings.

The information used in this study was gathered by searching the literature for a variety of scientific sources, including scholarly books, research papers, certified journal articles, and seminar proceedings. To ensure the originality and applicability of the data, the literature search focused on works published in the previous five years (2019–2024) (Adlini et al., 2022).

The literature sources were gathered using keywords such as "social media," "adolescents," "psychological," and "mental health" from various national and international scientific databases, including Google Scholar, DOAJ, SINTA, and ScienceDirect. Relevance to the study goals, full-text accessibility, and topic fit were the primary factors used to select articles that met the inclusion criteria.

Every work of literature underwent a critical and thematic study after it was collected. The research examined the parallels and differences in the findings, the theoretical frameworks applied, and the implications of each study for Indonesia's adolescent population. Developing a thorough understanding and identifying research gaps that can be used as references for additional study are the goals of this analysis technique. (Sari & Asmendri, 2021).

Results

The majority of Indonesian research on the psychological effects of social media use often employs a literature review methodology. The results of numerous previous studies are frequently synthesised using this method, which offers a thorough picture of how social media use affects teenagers in Indonesia. The results of the literature review on the subject of the study are as follows:

Table 1.
Literature References

No	Writer	Title	Objective	Analysis	Results
1	Inneke Rizky Widowati, Muhammad Syafiq	Analysis of Psychological Impact on Social Media Users	To analyze the psychological impact on social media users	Systematic review/Literature study	Social media has two effects: it fosters interpersonal relationships but also runs the danger of triggering psychological issues and anxiety.
2	Melani Nur Cahya, Widia Ningsih, Ayu Lestari	The Impact of Social Media on Adolescents' Psychological Well-being: Objectives The Influence of Social Media Use on Adolescents' Anxiety and Depression	To investigate the impact of social media use on adolescents' psychological well-being with a focus on anxiety and depression.	Qualitative	Social support is crucial for protection because excessive use and cyberbullying exacerbate anxiety and sadness.
3	I Dewa Gede Sayang Adi Yadnya and Diah Warastuti	The Impact of Social Media Use on Adolescents' Consumptive Behavior and Self- Perception: A Study of Online Interaction, Endorsement Influence and Psychological Impact	To investigate the impact of social media use on adolescents in Jakarta with a focus on online interactions, the influence of support, psychological impacts, consumer behavior and	Quantitative	Teenagers' self-esteem and physical image are adversely impacted by social media due to cyberbullying and social comparison.

			self-perception.		
4	M. Revikasya Rizaldi, Abdul Muhid, Zuardin Arif	Social Media Use and Its Implications for Psychological Well-Being: A Literature Review	To explore the impact of social media use on psychological well-being.	Literature Review	Double impact: promotes social well-being but, if overused, may cause psychiatric issues.
5	Mohammad Fajar Rifqi and Aji Prasetya Wibawa	Facing the Psychological Impact of Social Media in the Era of Society 5.0	To find out the psychological impact of social media in the 5.0 era.	Literature Review	Although social media is helpful for fostering relationships with others, if used carelessly, it can lead to anxiety and depression.
6	Febyan Aprilia Putra, Ahmad Wahyu, Muhammad Azka Naufal Fauzan, Zacky Arlana, Ersan Raditrian	The Influence of Social Media Use on Adolescent Psychology	To determine the influence of social media use on adolescent psychology.	Literature Review	Social media abuse triggers social comparison, depression, anxiety, and the risk of trauma due to cyberbullying.
7	Irene Preisilia Ilat, Jufita Tapada, Claudia Durandt, Febrianti Koyongian	The Impact of Social Media Use on Adolescent Mental Health	To find out what impacts social media use has on adolescent mental health.	Literature Study	Social media helps shape identity, but it also leads to addiction, cyberbullying, and mental health problems.
8	Shinta Alifiana Rachmawati, Armina Nur Rohmawati,	The Influence of Social Media Use on Adolescent	To determine the influence of social media use on	Literature Review	The duration and frequency of social media use

	Dwi Dianita Irwan, Elia Ika Rahmawati and Risya Secha Primandari	Mental Health: A Literature Review	adolescent mental health.		have a negative impact on adolescent mental health.
9	Arvian Hardian, Elisabeth Sitepu, Aria Mulyapradana, Joni Wilson Sitopu, Bobby Hendro Wardono	The Impact of Social Media Use on Adolescent Mental Health in the Digital Era	To examine the influence of social media use on adolescent mental health in the digital era.	Qualitative	Although social media encourages self- exploration, it also raises the risk of anxiety and low self- esteem in adolescents.
10	Rini Risnawita Suminta, Tatik Imadatus Sa'adati	Psychological Dynamics of Teenagers Using Social Media	To reveal and describe the psychological dynamics of social media users in early adolescence.	Qualitative	Early adolescents use social media for entertainment, friendship, self- expression, and the pursuit of popularity.
11	Febyan Aprilia Putra, Ahmad Wahyu, Muhammad Azka Naufal Fauzan, Zacky Arlana, Ersan Raditrian	The Influence of Social Media Use on Adolescent Psychology	To investigate the influence of social media on adolescent psychology.	Observative	Social media affects teenagers' psychological well-being by encouraging self- comparison and cyberbullying.

The table above includes data from numerous studies examining the impact of social media on the psychology and health of teenagers. To investigate the effects of social media use on psychology and mental health, several writers have conducted observational studies and qualitative research. Shinta Alifiana and associates, for instance, reviewed the literature on how social media affects teenage mental health. The impact of social media use on teenage

mental health in the digital age was also investigated by Arvian Hardian and his colleagues. In a separate study, Rini Risnawita Suminta and her colleagues examined the psychological impact of social media use on early adolescence.

A number of different techniques for comprehending how social media might affect mental health, including the risk of depression, anxiety, and negative phenomena like cyberbullying, are demonstrated by other notations in the table, such as systematic analysis and observation. Additionally, the significance of regulating social media use to promote the mental well-being of teenagers is emphasised. These research findings show that although social media can have beneficial societal effects, its possible drawbacks must also be taken into account and properly handled.

Discussion

As members of a broad demographic, teenagers typically use social media to engage and communicate with others, unrestricted by time or location. Nonetheless, social media significantly affects teenagers' lives, especially their mental health.

Positive Psychological Impact of Social Media Use on Teenagers

1. Educational and information facilities

Teenagers now rely heavily on social media to readily access knowledge and education at any time and from any location. Teenagers' access to real-time information has been dramatically increased by social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, which also enable them to follow news and trends, broadening their understanding of the world (Rohmatillah et al., 2024). Social media is the primary way people stay informed about the latest events due to the speed at which information is shared and the timeliness of concerns. Social media provides teens with quick access to a variety of educational materials, in addition to news, such as information on mental health that can help them understand and manage their emotions (Hasha, 2022).

2. Social Connections

Teenagers primarily use social media to network and establish connections with their peers. In addition to being a rich source of information, social media platforms facilitate information sharing and offer helpful support and guidance (Widowati & Syafiq, 2022). A

study by Masriyudin et al. (2024) suggests that social media facilitates easier interaction between individuals. As a result, people can broaden their social network without being constrained by time or location. Teenagers' tendency to send birthday greetings, leave comments on friends' posts, and maintain connections even when they are unable to meet in person is proof that social media interactions can also shape their personalities, making them kinder, more considerate, and more sympathetic (Mulyono, 2021).

3. Social Support

Teenagers are increasingly using social media as their primary means of communication, and this has several benefits, particularly in fostering social support (Hastuti et al., 2023). One significant psychological benefit of teens' use of social media is the provision of social support. Through social support, social media contributes to a greater psychological impact, according to the results of several studies, including those of Luo & Hancock (2020). This supports the idea that social media interactions can create supportive relationships and favourable perceptions, both of which have a direct effect on mental health. When this support is present, people feel that life is predictable and stable, which boosts their self-esteem and reduces psychological stress.

4. Identity Assistance

Adolescents who use social media can benefit psychologically, particularly in terms of developing their sense of self. The concept of self-perception has a significant impact on a person's psychological aspects, particularly their self-ideas and feelings, according to Chandra Kusuma & Oktavia (Regita et al., 2022). Teenagers can actively create and convey their identities to the world by using social media as a platform to express their ideals and explore a variety of interests. Accordingly, through conversations and shared material, social media helps teenagers better comprehend and define who they are.

Ismi Kamalia Fitri's earlier studies have shown that self-identity theory is applicable to understanding how social media, especially Instagram, significantly influences teenagers' sense of self. An individual's distinct perception of oneself, including their personal traits, values, and social roles, is known as their self-identity. Teenagers often compare themselves to people they see on social media, which has a profound impact on their identity

development. Adolescents create their identities through experiences, social interactions, and investigation of their potential and interests (Fitri, 2020).

5. Pride

Social media plays a crucial role in enhancing self-esteem in various ways. Users can engage with, communicate with, and find entertainment on these platforms. According to McName et al. (2021), users often feel more connected to others when they engage in meaningful interactions and communication, which can ultimately promote positive self-esteem. Additionally, social media provides teenagers with a wide range of opportunities to express themselves. Increased self-acceptance may result from the display of their identities and passions on these platforms. Adolescents who embrace who they are tend to feel better about themselves, which also leads to greater overall happiness (Meilana, 2021).

Negative Psychological Impacts of Social Media Use on Teenagers

However, literature study findings also consistently show various negative psychological impacts of social media use that warrant monitoring.

1. Anxiety and Depression

Adolescents who use social media are more likely to experience anxiety and depression. Obsession and overuse of social media are typically the causes of anxiety among teenagers. Sharing accomplishments and experiences can be facilitated by social media. However, when teenagers are exposed to too much material that tends to portray an idealised version of themselves, it can also cause them to feel disconnected from reality. This overexposure may cause anxiety levels to rise (Gunawan & Salahuddin, 2022).

A number of studies, however, indicate that teenagers with a history of depression are more likely to communicate via social media than in person (Prajiniti et al., 2022). Because of this, using social media puts pressure on people to project a positive picture of themselves, which in turn contributes to adolescent depression. According to studies, the degree of social media use and depressed symptoms are positively correlated. People who use social media more often are more likely to encounter social comparison scenarios, which can elicit unfavourable emotions. These destructive emotions can build up to the point where depression may result (Al Aziz, 2020). Another factor that contributes to the explanation of the connection between sadness and the extent of social media use is gender. In addition to using

social media more regularly, women are more likely to have depressed symptoms. This is because social media use tends to make women more emotional, more active, and more sensitive to other people's opinions, which makes them prone to jealousy. This stressor can lead to melancholy (Zulaikha & Pulungan, 2023).

2. Body image

The term "body image" refers to an individual's perception of their physical appearance. Stated differently, one's subjective assessment of their physical attributes is known as their body image (Dianningrum & Satwika, 2021). Audrey et al. (2020) claim that social media frequently presents or communicates messages that highlight the value of physical appearance, beauty standards, or ideal body shapes—all of which are typically unattainable. Teenagers may already be sensitive to their bodies, particularly during puberty, when significant physical changes occur. When adolescents are exposed to these ideals, they may constantly compare their appearance to them, which could cause them to feel less confident and unsatisfied with themselves.

Research indicates that the psychological influence on women's social functioning is closely linked to body image. People with a poor body image are less confident in social situations because they are more afraid of being criticised by others for their appearance, which is more common in women than in men (Roinina, 2021). Adolescents who experience poor body image issues untreated may develop serious illnesses like depression or, in the worst situations, may away. Fortunately, it's not too difficult to address and mitigate these detrimental effects. The secret is for the person to cultivate and reinforce a favourable body image (Azzahra, 2024).

3. Social Comparison

Social media has emerged as the main venue for social comparison, with users frequently perusing the accounts of others without intending to engage. According to this phenomenon, social comparison is a subconscious activity that people engage in on social media platforms, particularly when viewing pictures and status updates. An individual is more exposed to this social comparison mechanism the more often they utilise social media (Fauziah et al., 2020).

According to social comparison theory, teenagers often assess themselves and their lives by comparing information about other people's appearances or lifestyles on social media. Body dissatisfaction, social anxiety, and extravagant lifestyles or a concentration on personal pleasure (hedonism) can all be exacerbated by easy access to social media. In contrast, this can also lower adolescents' subjective well-being, body image, self-esteem, happiness, and quality of life. (Swari & Tobing, 2024).

4. Social Media Abuse

Social media abuse can have a number of detrimental psychological effects on teenagers, especially when it comes to cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is one of the damaging habits that are common on social media, according to Rusyidi (2020). Unhealthy communication, exposure to pornography, and other cybercrimes can all result from social media misuse. Teenagers are particularly susceptible to hate speech, which can cause emotional instability. A lack of physical exercise resulting from excessive screen time may lead to suboptimal physical development, in addition to the risk of privacy loss due to a lack of awareness about online data protection (Parwitasari et al., 2024).

Social media abuse can interfere with learning outcomes. This result aligns with a study by Safitri et al. (2025), which found that excessive social media use can harm academic achievement. Manurung et al. (2025) noted that if social media is not managed correctly, it may negatively impact academic performance.

5. Addictive Behavior

Adolescents who use social media excessively may develop addictive behaviours, where they become absorbed in it and struggle to set time limits. Addiction, according to Marjorsy (in Arifin et al., 2021), is a disorder in which a person loses self-control when participating in enjoyable activities because they have developed a habit that is hard to quit. Jokes, entertainment, Korean dramas, and viral events that have gained widespread attention are just a few examples of the fascinating content that frequently causes this attachment. Muna (in Widowati & Syafiq, 2022) claims that certain teenagers tend to disregard their environment and the people in it, even to the point where they no longer tolerate face-to-face communication. Teenagers with this disorder become obsessed with technology, particularly social media, and eventually become caught in a destructive cycle of addiction.

In line with research conducted by Lay et al (2023), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a significant effect of social media addiction that can deteriorate people's psychological health, especially in teenagers. Teenagers who are addicted to social media and suffer from the stress of excessive use are the cause of this phenomenon, which has an adverse effect on their mental health.

6. Validation Search

The search for self-existence and the need for approval from others are hallmarks of adolescence, a critical time of transformation. Adolescents now primarily use social media to satisfy these demands in this digital age (Andary & Khairullah, 2023). Teenagers often create or distort their identities on social media to attract attention and validation. Uploading photographs that have been altered with filters or effects, so that the final product differs significantly from the original, in order to garner attention and notice from others, is a specific example. (Prawiro et al., 2021).

Teenagers often use social media as their primary source of self-validation, as likes, comments, and follower numbers are perceived as indicators of social acceptance. They are under a lot of pressure due to this inclination, as they may experience melancholy and feelings of worthlessness if they don't receive the desired peer evaluation. (Dahlia et al., 2024).

Conclusion

Social media affects Indonesian teenagers psychologically in two ways. Positive psychological effects include its vital role as a source of knowledge and education, the development of stronger social bonds and support networks, the facilitation of identity formation, and the improvement of self-esteem. However, teens who use social media excessively run the risk of developing psychological disorders, including anxiety and sadness. In addition to causing addictive behaviours and validation-seeking, it can also result in unhealthy social comparisons, body image disorders, and social media misuse.

Author's Declaration

Authors' contributions and responsibilities

- ☒ The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study.
- ☒ The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results.

 The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Availability of data and materials

 All data are available from the authors.

Competing interests

 The authors declare no competing interests.

Additional information

No additional information is provided for this research.

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