

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Impact of Social Media Use on Adolescent Mental Health

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ABSTRACT

Information and Communication Technology has developed extremely rapidly, especially for social media. Such development can lead to increased dependence on electronic devices influencing adolescent mental health. The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship between social media usage and adolescent mental health in SMP Negeri 2 Jombang. In this study, the correlation analytic quantitative research design with the cross-sectional approach was utilized. There were 320 in total students, and 76 students were the sample by the cluster random sampling technique. Statistical tests were performed by Spearman's Rank. There were 57.9% students who experienced mild social media addiction. Simultaneously, 38.2% of students experienced mild depressive symptoms. The Spearman's Rank statistical test analysis findings revealed (ρ) = 0.000 < (α) 0.05, which confirms that teen mental health is correlated with social media use. The value of r is 0.402, and the level of correlation is moderate. Social media use and teen health were related as the more frequently one used social media, the greater the possibilities that they would be affected by seeing others' success, bodies, and lifestyles and become possible stressors leading to depression or mental illnesses. Preventive and promotive measures were needed for the early detection of mental disorders in adolescents to avert more complex mental health problems.

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Introduction

Technology has vastly evolved, especially in the domain of Information and Communication, one being even popularly known as social media. Social media does both good and bad. Positively, social media is easy to use in accessing information, communicating, cultivating interest and skills, and is even utilized as a platform for the sharing of ideas and opinions, even entertainment (Septiana, 2021). On the other hand, digital technology overuse can contribute to addiction to digital devices, internet addiction, cyber bullying, and sleeping issues are the highest priorities to watch out for in the instance of mental health (Yuhana et al., 2020).

According to data from Social (2023), active Indonesian social media users in January 2023 made up 60,4% of the total population of 276,4 million Indonesians. Some of the most used social media in 2023 include WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. The leading one was WhatsApp at 92,1% active users, then Instagram at 86,5%, Facebook at 83,8%, and TikTok at number four at 70,8% active users (Widowati et al., 2022).

Based on the Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS) in 2022, an estimated 15.5 million Indonesian adolescents experience mental health problems (WHO, 2021). Anxiety disorder, such as social phobia and generalised anxiety disorder, is the most common mental disorder experienced by adolescents and has a prevalence of 3,7%. Additionally, major depressive disorder was also 1%, conduct disorder was 0,9%, while post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) had a prevalence rate of 0,5% (Karinta, 2022).



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Reports by WHO (2021) also show that out of every 7 children aged between 10 to 19 years have psychological problems (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Jawa Timur, 2022). Based on data from Riskesdas (2018), almost 5% of school children and East Java adolescents have suffered from depressive disorders. The Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) data in 2023 reported that among active social media users, there were 64,28% in East Java and Jombang Regency only reported that there were active social media users which amounted to 68,48% of the population of 1.335.972.

Teenagers are also among the users of social media. With social media, adolescents are able to share emotions, upload personal activities in the form of videos or photos, and post opinions to other users (Rosmalina & Khaerunnisa, 2021). The freedom to post opinions sometimes makes individuals post derogatory opinions without considering the impact on others. Others reading such posts may feel hated, hence developing anxiety. If the views are disproportionate and against an individual, it can be considered cyberbullying.

Risk of mental disorder is imminent in all such groups. Mental disorders come in many forms like anxiety disorders, mood disorders, schizophrenia, narcissism, multiple personality disorder, depression, etc. (Ariasti, et al., 2020). Adolescents are at a higher risk of mental disorders. Some of the characteristics that may be apparent are personality changes, insomnia, lack of motivation, weight changes, withdrawal from society, and learning disabilities. Any one of these symptoms if exhibited by an adolescent, they should receive special help (Kemp, 2023).

Teenagers use social media most actively, but they have not been able to use it to the best of their abilities. Adolescents need to be led to be led and assisted to be more competent in taking care of themselves in using social media (Pitaloka et al., 2023). Because of this, preventive and promotional interventions to defeat mental health disorders are needed. One of these is mental health education aimed at strengthening the knowledge and competence of adolescents in recognizing mental health, and helping them adjust to varied conditions. Thus, adolescents are able to develop good physical and mental health in managing life problems. Additionally, adolescents would be capable of managing issues that arise during their development and growth period (Kroenke et al., 2023; Kroenke et al., 2021).

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Jombang with a total number of 953 students in 2023 whose age varied between 11-15 years. Based on the background explanation, the researcher is interested to conduct research with the title The Relationship between Social Media Use and Adolescent Mental Health at SMP Negeri 2 Jombang.

Methods

Quantitative study with correlation analytic research design and cross sectional design, i.e., measurements taken at the same time on 31 July 2024. The population in this study were seventh grade students in SMP Negeri 2 Jombang that consist of 320 students, and a sample of 76 students was obtained from calculation using the Slovin formula. The sampling technique employed was cluster random sampling due to the fact that the population in this study were taught in a number of classes.

The inclusion criteria in this study were seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Jombang who were accessible and willing to be research respondents, while the exclusion criteria included students who experienced sickness during the research, resigned as respondents, or lacked mobile phones or social media accounts. Data were collected using the IAT (Internet Addiction Test) and the PHQ-9 (Patient Health Questionnaire-9) questionnaires. The IAT assesses the severity of internet addiction through 20 questions rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating more severe addiction. The PHQ-9 evaluates depressive symptoms over the past two weeks using 9 questions with a total score ranging from 0 to 27. Higher scores indicate more severe depressive symptoms, with classifications of mild, moderate, and severe depression. Statistical testing was conducted using the Spearman rank test, with social media use as the independent variable and adolescent mental health as the dependent variable (Iryadi et al., 2024).



Results

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Jombang which was conducted on 31 July 2024 and the following data was obtained.

Respondent General Data

Table 1. Respondent General Data

Category		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	24	31,6%
	Female	52	38,4%
Number of Social Media	1 - 3 types	31	40,8%
	4 - 6 types	34	44,7%
Frequently Used Social Media	> 6 types	11	14,5%
	Facebook	0	0%
Tools for Social Media Access	Instagram	6	7,9%
	Youtube	1	1,3%
Duration of Access	Tiktok	68	89,5%
	Other	1	1,3%
Frequently Used Social Media	Computer	0	0%
	Smartphone	76	100%
Tools for Social Media Access	IPad	0	0%
	1-2 hours	20	26,3%
Duration of Access	3-4 hours	30	39,5%
	5-6 hours	14	18,4%
Duration of Access	> 7 hours	12	15,8%

Most of the respondents (68.4%) were female and almost half (44.7%) owned four to six types of social media accounts. The majority (89.5%) most frequently used TikTok as their preferred platform for social interaction. All respondents (100%) accessed social media using smartphones, and most of them (39.5%) spent three to four hours per day on social media.

Respondent Specific Data

Table 2. Respondent Specific Data

Category		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Social Media Usage	No Addiction	8	10,5%
	Mild	44	57,9%
Frequently Used Social Media	Moderate	23	30,3%
	Severe	1	1,3%
Frequently Used Social Media	No symptoms of depression	22	28.9%
	Mild depression symptoms	29	38.2%
Frequently Used Social Media	Mild depression	16	21.1%
	Moderate depression	7	9.2%
Frequently Used Social Media	Severe depression	2	2.6%

Most of the respondents (57.9%) were in the mild social media addiction category, while only 1.3% experienced severe addiction. In terms of mental health, the majority (38.2%) had mild depression symptoms, followed by 28.9% with no symptoms of depression. Only a small proportion (2.6%) of respondents experienced severe depression.



Cross Tabulation

Table 3. Cross Tabulation and Statistical Test Results of Social Media Use with Adolescent Mental Health at SMP Negeri 2 Jombang

Social Media Usage	Mental Health										Total	
	No symptoms of depression		Mild depression symptoms		Mild depression		Moderate depression		Severe depression			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
No Addiction	7	87,5	0	0	1	12,5	0	0	0	0	8	100
Mild	12	27,3	20	45,5	9	20,5	2	4,5	1	2,3	44	100
Moderate	3	13	9	39,1	5	21,7	5	21,7	1	4,3	23	100
Severe	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	1	100
Total	22	28,9	29	38,2	16	21,1	7	9,2	2	2,6	76	100

Spearman's Rho Correlation: Significance Value (ρ) = 0.000 (α) < 0.05 ; r : 0.402

Table 3 shows that out of 44 students who are mildly addicted to social media use, almost half of the responses (45,5%) have mental health in the mild depressive symptoms category, i.e., 20 students. Based on the result of Spearman's Rho Correlations test, it shows that the significant value (ρ) = 0,000 < (α) 0,05, so the independent variable and dependent variable are related to each other, therefore H1 is accepted or there exists a correlation between social media usage and adolescent mental health in SMP Negeri 2 Jombang. The r value or correlation coefficient is 0,402 such that the correlation between the two variables falls under the moderate level.

Discussion

Social Media Use Among Adolescents in SMP Negeri 2 Jombang

From table 2, it was shown that most of the respondents (57,9%) in their application of social media belonged to the mild addiction category, ie 44 students. The results of the research are parallel to Aprilia et al. (2020) which mentions that the prevalence rate of addiction to the use of social media for adolescents in SMAS Plus Al-Falah shows a low prevalence rate of social media addiction, i.e., 37 respondents (51,4%) from the total sample of 72 students (Aprilia et al., 2020).

Gender-wise, as can be seen from table 1, most of the respondents (68,4%) were females, 52 students. Female users outnumber men, because they are sensitive and easily carried away, so women need a site to express their thoughts and feelings. Social media provides an opportunity for women to feel comfortable in spilling their hearts. Among the explanations as to why women use the social web longer is that they are more oriented towards social integration, whereas men focus more on personal goals. Women make greater use of the social web to communicate, socialize and interact, and spend more time writing messages or emails. Men use the social web with lower frequency. This study also comes to find that there are more female interviewees than male, with 31,6%.

Looking at the age of grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 2 Jombang, it shows that this age is generally quite familiar with using social media because they are equipped with devices such as smartphones. However, even though they are skilled in the use of technology, many teenagers are not fully aware of how social media can negatively affect their mental health. This is proven in the fact that some teenagers cannot unplug from social media and they cannot help but constantly check to see how 'perfect' they appear on it. This can lead to excessive social media use, which falls under moderate to severe addiction (Singh et al., 2020).

As far as limiting the frequency of usage of social media, according to table 1, it is observed that almost half of the respondents (39,5%) use social media for a medium duration of 3-4 hours per day. This agrees with the research of Bookeral (2018), where the average usage of social media is 3 hours 33 minutes per day to look at a lot of various social media platforms (Adzradalila, 2024). Another study in the JAMA Psychiatry Journal indicated that adolescents who use more than 3 hours a day on social media are likely to experience mental illnesses, mainly internalised



ones such as body image or self-esteem (Utami & Pujiningsih, 2021). The longer the term of using social media, the higher the chance of developing negative impacts, which can eventually lead to moderate to intense levels of addiction (Rudianto, 2022).

In terms of the tools used to access social media, all respondents accessed using mobile phones. Mobile phones/smartphones are practical and easy to carry everywhere (Twenge & Campbell, 2019). So that with a mobile phone, accessing social media becomes easier. Based on these facts and theories, researchers assume that the level of social media use is influenced by several things, such as gender, age group, intensity of social media access, and the tools used to access. Some of these things are related to each other, where a person's age will show how wisdom in using a technology so that it will affect how long the intensity of social media is. Other things such as tools for accessing social media in the form of mobile phones provide convenience in access anytime and anywhere because as is known that this mobile phone is a practical technology and everything can be obtained in a grip (Cendrawan & Ajisukmo, 2020). This kind of convenience is what causes a person's use of social media to be in the moderate to heavy range.

Adolescent Mental Health at SMP Negeri 2 Jombang

According to table 1 and 2, it was found that almost half of the respondents (38.2%) had mental health in the category of mild depressive symptoms, namely 29 students. A study by Yuhana et al. (2020) revealed that a majority of the respondents had mental health issues, with 197 respondents (67.7%) having experienced mental health issues, and 94 respondents (32.3%) being noted as mentally healthy. These results differ from studies conducted by other researchers, where the number of respondents who experienced depression was greater than those who were mentally healthy, indicating a difference in the prevalence of mental disorders between the two studies.

From the results of Yuhana et al. (2020) research, it shows that respondents who experience emotional mental disorders most often report symptoms of headaches, no appetite, difficulty sleeping, easy fear, and anxiety. In addition, they also have difficulty thinking clearly, have difficulty enjoying daily activities, and are often neglected in carrying out daily activities or tasks. Some respondents also lost interest and felt worthless (Jayanti, 2022).

Teenagers with mental emotional disorders often experience excessive irritability. It can also cause stomach pains, headaches or nausea. If left untreated, emotional mental disorders can develop into more serious symptoms, such as self-isolation or even suicidal thoughts. Therefore, it is important for adolescents to get the right support and treatment to address these issues early on (Haniza, 2019). Factors that affect the role of social media use on the mental health of adolescents originate from age, usage of social media, environment, stress, social media addiction, and numerous others (Iryadi, et al., 2024)

Based on the facts and theories above, the researcher assumes that age, how social media is used, environment, stress, and social media dependence can affect adolescents' mental health. Starting from age, where adolescents are not yet able to use social media wisely, causing excessive intensity of playing social media. The high intensity of excessive gaming affects what students see on social media so that more or less it affects students' mental health.

Therefore, it is crucial for parents to monitor teenagers' social media use and help them develop healthy digital habits. Some solutions include reducing the duration of social media use, limiting online time, and directing teens to engage in more productive and rewarding activities that can support their mental health (Wulandari, 2022). In this way, teens will have a healthier balance of both their digital and real lives, and reduce the potential negative consequences of social media (Saputra et al., 2020).

Correlation Between Social Media Usage And Adolescent Mental Health In SMP Negeri 2 Jombang

As seen from Spearman's Rho correlations in Table 3, there is $(\rho) = 0.000 < (\alpha) 0.05$, which shows that the dependent and independent variables are related to each other, indicating that H1 is supported or there is a correlation between social media usage and teen mental health at SMP



Negeri 2 Jombang. The r value or correlation coefficient is +0.402, which means the correlation between the two variables is positive and moderate. This positive value indicates that as social media use increases, the likelihood or severity of mental health problems among adolescents also tends to increase. The results of research carried out by Yuhana et al. (2022) showed that most respondents who used social media with high frequency experienced mental health disorders, with 111 respondents or 92.5% reporting such conditions. Excessive use of social media has been established to harm mental well-being, with effects including depression, stress, anxiety, and loneliness. Prolonged mental distress can even lead to physical problems, such as eye health issues and sleep disturbances. Another study by Thursina (2023) found that social media had a significant impact on students' mental well-being, although the degree of mental disorders among students was in the moderate range.

Between 53% of teenage social media users developed mental illnesses, which consist of anxiety disorders, stress, depression, and loneliness. This shows how much is needed to take extra care while using social media because adolescence is a problematic age of transition, and there is a need for prevention so that the teenager can make wise use of social media (Irawati et al., 2023). Unsupervised utilization of social media will have negative impacts on the mental health of youth, such as depression, anxiety and loneliness (Woran et al., 2021). Therefore, parents and teachers need to monitor and guide youth to use social media carefully (Septiana, 2021). Although youth are provided with ease in interaction via social media, uncontrolled usage without adult supervision will lead to serious mental health disorders, such as anxiety disorders and depression (Salsabilla & Panjaitan, 2019).

Based on the facts and theories above, researchers assume that indiscretion in using social media will risk causing mental health disorders in adolescents. The more addicted to social media, the more disturbed the mental health. It can be assumed that the more often someone looks at social media, the more they tend to see how other people's achievements, other people's physiques, and so on. So this can be one of the stressors that cause someone to be depressed or experience mental health problems.

Adolescent mental health that is disturbed and not treated immediately will have an impact on several aspects of their lives, especially on adolescent focus at school, adolescent achievement at school, adolescent social interaction with peers, and other things that might affect the future of the teenager (Santo & Alfian, 2021). In addition, adolescents with mental disorders will get sick more easily due to too much thoughts, lack of sleep, and decreased appetite which affects the physical condition of adolescents. Therefore, it is important to conduct mental health screening early on so that mental health disorders can be treated immediately and minimise the risk of disrupting other aspects of the adolescent (Yasin et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Most of the students showed mild addiction in using social media, where almost half of the respondents experienced mild depressive symptoms in their mental health. This study discovered that there was a strong relationship between social media use and the mental health of teenagers whereby the more addicted one is to the use of social media, the worse the mental health condition experienced by the teenager.

Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate

This study was approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Pemkab Jombang, with reference number 0124070537/KEPK/STIKES-PEMKAB/JBG/VII/2024. The committee reviewed and approved the study to ensure it adhered to ethical, legal, social, and other applicable regulations. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their guardians, ensuring they understood the study's purpose and procedures. All participants were assured of confidentiality and their right to withdraw at any time.

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