



## The Impact of Social Media Use on Adolescent Mental Health: A Scoping Review

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Adolescents are an age group highly exposed to social media in their daily lives. The high intensity of social media use has raised concerns about its negative impact on adolescent mental health.

**Purpose:** This review aims to map the scientific evidence related to the impact of social media on mental health in adolescents.

**Methods:** Using the Arksey and O'Malley scoping review framework, this study followed five key stages: formulating the research question, identifying relevant literature, selecting appropriate studies, organizing the data, and reporting the findings. Articles were searched through the PubMed database and the Google Scholar search engine, covering publication years 2021–2025. A total of 80 articles were screened using the PRISMA flowchart and critical appraisal, following the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) guidelines, resulting in eight articles meeting the inclusion criteria.

**Results:** Three main themes emerged: intensity of social media use, disturbed sleep quality, and mental health disorders such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Most adolescents use social media for more than three hours per day, with *TikTok* and *WhatsApp* being the dominant platforms. High usage correlates with increased sleep disturbances and the risk of depressive symptoms and stress.

**Conclusion:** Social media has a significant impact on adolescent mental health. Digital literacy education and parental supervision are crucial to prevent these negative impacts.

**Keywords:** Adolescents; Mental Health; Social Media

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## BACKGROUND

Humans are social creatures who depend on friendship with others to thrive in life. In the last decade, access to social media has exploded, creating an unprecedented landscape of peer-to-peer interaction for teens and leading to concerns about the risk of mental health problems that come with it. Previous studies have shown that 97% of teens regularly use at least one of the dominant social media platforms (*Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram*) and more than 90% use social media multiple times per day. As many as 45% of adolescents have reported that they are online almost continuously. In addition, the average adolescent has spent 7.7 hours per day in front of screens outside of school hours (interactive effect) (Twenge et al., 2019).

Adolescence represents a critical developmental stage that significantly influences an individual's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. In addition, various risk factors such as family problems, bullying, and social isolation often emerge during this period and play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' social and emotional development. Technological advancements have profoundly impacted many aspects of adolescents' lives. Today, the use of social media among adolescents has become a common phenomenon, whether at home, at school, or during social gatherings. Adolescents are constantly connected with peers through various social media platforms. Social networking is particularly appealing to adolescents because it allows them to upload photos, videos, and other content, while also providing opportunities to make new friends, exchange ideas, explore interests, and express themselves freely. This aligns with the deep biopsychosocial development that occurs during adolescence, particularly in the social domain, where peer relationships play a central role. In this context, social media serves as a prevalent medium for peer interaction and relationship building (Orben & Przybylski, 2019).

Simultaneously, one of the main triggers of neurobiological changes and reorientation towards peers during puberty that coincides with an increase in most mental health disorders. In addition to the ubiquitous use of screens and social media, studies have found that there is a link between social media use and a wide range of physical impacts and mental health problems including anxiety, depression, sleep problems and substance abuse (Keles et al., 2020).

Mental health is a condition of individual well-being who is able to realize his potential, be able to face daily challenges well, be able to work effectively and be able to have a meaningful impact on the lives of others. Social media is an important part of maintaining mental health. Mental health, health behaviors, physical health, and mortality risk are all influenced by the quality and quantity of social contact (Faqihi et al., 2024; Petro et al., 2025).

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## OBJECTIVE

Based on the background, the author is interested in conducting a scoping review to map scientific evidence related to the impact of social media on mental health in adolescents.

## METHODS

The method used in this scoping review refers to the framework developed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005). This process consists of five main stages, namely: (1) formulating research questions that are the focus of scoping review, (2) tracing and collecting relevant studies, (3) selecting studies that meet the criteria, (4) organizing and recording important data (data charting), and (5) compiling, summarizing, and presenting findings systematically (Westphaln et al., 2021).

### Identify Review questions

The review used is to use the PEOs framework to help identify key concepts in the planning focus in the question and develop terms in the search that are appropriate for the purpose of describing the problem and determining inclusion and exclusion criteria. PEOs is an abbreviation for Population which describes the patient or group to be studied, Exposure is something that has been owned or exposed to or experienced by the group being studied, Outcomes (results) are the results of research which is usually used in the term literature search.

Review questions

Table 1. Review Question

P (population)	E (Exposure)	Outcomes
Adolescents aged 10-24 years (based on BKKBN)	Social Media	Anxiety, impact of social media use on adolescent mental health.

### Identify Relevant Articles

The articles searched and used for scoping review sources are based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion Criteria in this study an article published using Indonesian and English, published from 2021 to 2025, discusses adolescent mental health with social media, discusses factors that affect adolescent mental health, original article. The exclusion criteria in this review are articles in the form of opinions, comments, documents or draft policies, guidelines from the WHO or certain formal organizations, review articles, articles that discuss the impact of social media on adolescent behavior, as well as review books and letters.

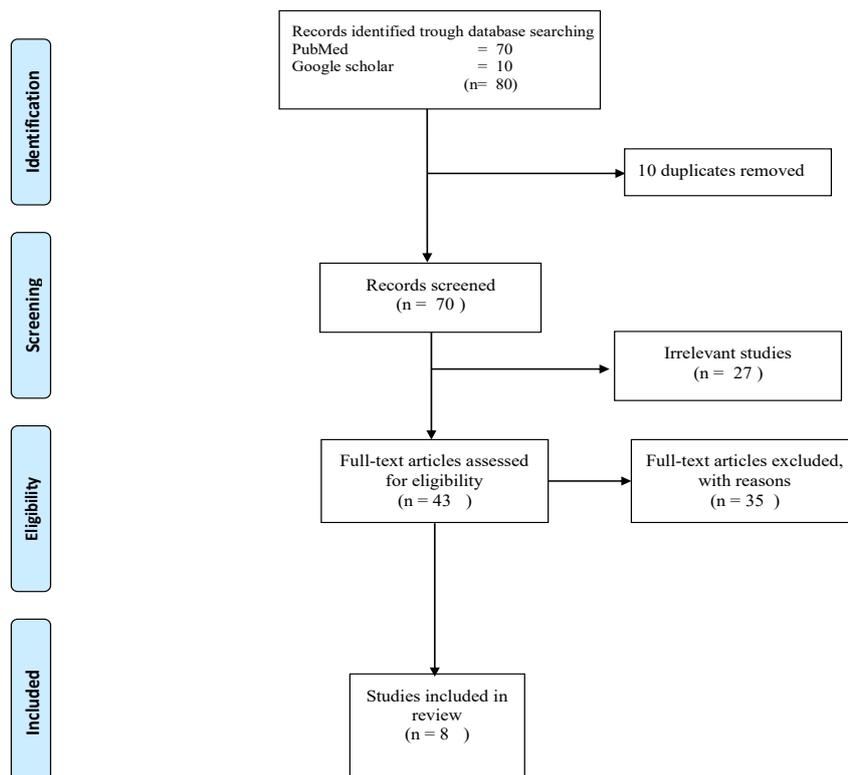


Literature search used two main sources, including 1 database, namely PubMed and the google scholar as search engine. The literature search strategy was carried out using specific keywords, namely (Adolescents\*OR Teen\*OR Teenager\*OR Tenage\*), (Anxiety\*OR Depression\*OR Mental Health\*OR Psychology), ("Adolescents" OR "Teen" OR "Tenager" OR "Tenage") AND ("Anxiety" OR "MentaHealth" OR "Psychology" OR "Depression") AND ("social media").

### Article Selection

The data screening process uses PRISMA which describes the stages of information by going through various phases of systematic review, mapping the number of records identified, included and excluded and the reasons for exclusion (PRISMA, 2015). Article searches were obtained as many as 1,414 articles, then a quick selection of articles was carried out from each data-based 70 articles out of 1,364 search articles found in PubMed, and from Google Scholar 10 articles were obtained from 50 articles. Then 80 articles were obtained which were then filtered for data including duplicate articles, abstract and full text screening. A total of 10 duplicate articles, 70 articles were screened abstract and 27 articles were irrelevant, 43 articles were screened full text and 35 articles were excluded. Eight articles that fit the criteria were obtained in this review. The following is a PRISMA flowchart illustrating the process of the literature search.

Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart



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Furthermore, the final results were obtained with 8 articles which were then conducted a critical appraisal. Quality assessments were conducted using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Checklist for cross-sectional studies. All articles rated are of good quality (Grade A) with a score of 30–32 points out of a maximum of 32.

Table 2. Data Charting

No.	Title/Author/ Year/Value	Country	Purpose	Type of Research	Data Collection	Participa nts/ Sample Size	Result
1.	Quality of life and mental health of adolescents: Relationship with social media addiction, fear of missing out and stress associated with neglect and negative reactions by online peers / (Dam et al., 2023)	Vietnam	To identify the relationship between social media use and examine risk factors on social media use and overall quality of life and mental health among individuals who actively use social media networks	Cross-sectional	Questionnaire	1898 Teenagers aged 14-21	Of the 1891 respondents, 56.7% were female and the average age was 17 years. Most are college students (92.9%) and live in urban areas (91.5%). Most use smartphones to access social media (98.4%). 36.4% and 31.1% spend between 3-5 hours and less than 2 hours each day using social media. Based on the results of the study, 56.7% of the respondents were women. And there are significant differences between genders regarding social media use patterns on a person's mental health. Men tend to spend less than 2 hours on social media compared to women, while women spend more than 2 hours on social media.

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2.	Social media and the mental health of university students in sub-saharan Africa / (Kituyi & Kyeyune, 2024)	Africa	To understand how adolescents learn new Health behaviors that affect mental health through the use of social media.	Cross-sectional study	Questionnaire	453 teenagers	28.5% of respondents experienced stress, 33.3% anxiety, 46.92% depression from mild to severe, according to DASS 21 and 69.31% had specific events. Pressure ranges from mild to severe in terms of severity according to IES. In addition, fear of infection, financial uncertainty, inadequate food supply, absence of physical exercise, and limited or no recreational activities have significance and cannot be associated with stress, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic symptoms.
3.	Social media use and sleep quality among secondary school students in aseer region/ (Al-Garni et al., 2024)	Arab saudi	To assess the relationship between social media platform use and sleep quality among public high school students	Cross-sectional study	Questionnaire	961 students in aseer, Saudi Arabia.	The results of the study showed that the age of students ranged from 15 to 20 years with an average age of 16.7-21 years. A total of 570 (59.3%) students were women. The most frequently used social media platforms are TikTok 769 (80%), Snapchat (29.4%), Instagram (16.5%), and you tube (5.9%) are the most widely used platforms. Regarding sleep quality, as many as 34.7% of students are sleep deprived. Regarding the duration of use, 389 (40.5%) used social media platforms for 5 hours or more every day. Only 28 (2.9%) use social media platforms for less than 1 hour. In multivariate analysts, tiktok use (OR 1,669.95%), hours spent on social media (OR1.26.95%) and having symptoms of moderate to severe depression (OR1.69.95%) were

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<p>4. The Effect of the Intensity of Social Media Use on Mental Health at SMPN 3 Muna Regency/ (Kartika Adyani1, Alfiah Rahmawati, 2021)</p>	<p>Indonesia</p>	<p>To ascertain how the use of social media affects adolescent mental health</p>	<p>Cross-sectional study</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p>	<p>116 SMPN 3 Parigi students who are active in using social media</p>	<p>significant independent predictors of sleep deprivation among those studied.  The results showed that there was a negative relationship between mental health and the intensity of social media use which varied with a significant value of 0.020 with a correlation coefficient of 0.216.</p>
<p>5. Intensity of social media use with adolescent mental health (Diva et al., 2023)</p>	<p>Indonesia</p>	<p>To determine the relationship between the intensity of social media use and mental health in adolescents at SMP x Glenmore</p>	<p>Cross-sectional study</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p>	<p>216 junior high school students used a random sample and 82 students became respondents aged 12-16 years</p>	<p>Based on the results of the study, it was shown that the use of social media was dominated by 14 years old, namely 75 students with low intensity of social media use, 26 students in the high category and 4 students in the very high category. Based on gender, female students in the category of low intensity of social media use were obtained and 35 students in the normal category and 4 students in the very high category. Based on mental health disorders, as many as 87 female students experienced mental health disorders and as many as 39 female students did not experience mental disorders and 41 male students experienced mental health disorders, 49 students did not experience mental health</p>

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<p>6. The relationship between social media use and the problem of emotional mental adolescents in Muhammadiyah Junior High School 5 Bandung city (John et al., 2019)</p>	<p>Indonesia</p>	<p>To find out the relationship between the use of social media and the mental and emotional problems of adolescents in Bandung City Junior High School</p>	<p>Cross-sectional study</p>	<p>questionnaire</p>	<p>76 respondents were junior high school teenagers</p>	<p>disorders. Based on the 0.05 test, it can be concluded that there is no relationship between the intensity of social media use and adolescent mental health.</p> <p>The results showed that of the 76 respondents, 43 (56.6%) were females aged &lt;14 years and used &gt;3 social media as many as 56 (73.3%). Based on the frequency of social media use, 46 students (60.5%) of social media users were in the alert category. Most of the 53 respondents (69.7%) included abnormal emotional symptoms, 37 respondents (48.7%) had abnormal behavioral problems, 49 respondents (64.5%) had abnormal hyperactivity, 52 (68.4%) peer respondents. abnormal category. Based on the results of the correlation of social media use with the problem of adolescent emotional symptoms, there was a p-value of 0.610, there was a significant relationship between social media use and adolescent emotional symptoms at SMP Muhammadiyah 5 Bandung. And the p-value of 0.711 there was a significant relationship between social media use and behavioral problems in adolescents, based on the spearman test, the result of p was 0.704 which means that there is a relationship between social media use and adolescent hyperactivity. And the p-value of 0.606 was</p>
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7. The social impact of the intensity of social media use on mental health in the form of apathy (Huang, 2023)	Indonesia	To find out the social impact of social media use on apathy in the surrounding environment	Cross-sectional study	questionnaire	120 junior high school students aged 12-15 years	<p>obtained as a result of the relationship between social media use and peer problems.</p> <p>As many as 60.8% of respondents were female and 39.2% were male and 56.7% were 13 years old. Social media that is often used is <i>Whatsapp</i>, which is 94.2%. Based on the frequency of social media use, adolescents are at the level of frequent (51.7%) and old category (53.3%). Most respondents: 80% spend a lot of time on the internet, 20% use access their favorite social media more than 10 times. Based on activities carried out by adolescents, it is included in the positive category (52.5%). In friendship activities, many teenagers add to the friend list without seeing if the person is known or not. Most adolescents have apathy (53.3%). Based on the results of the kolmogrov-spirnov test, a p-value of &lt;0.05 was obtained, which means that the higher the use of social media, the more apathetic the attitude of adolescents.</p>
8. Examining the Effects of Social Media on Mental Health Among Adolescents in Saudi Arabia/ (Cunningham et al., 2020)	Arab Saudi	Exploring the impact of social media on adolescent mental health in Saudi Arabia	Cross-sectional study	questionnaire	2856 respondents aged 10-24 years.	<p>The results showed that most of the respondents (53.9%) were aged 21-24 years old and the majority were single women (77%). As many as (30.3%) respondents use social media Twitter, and Most respondents (52.5%) use social media before the age of 10, and (37.7%) use social media</p>

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platforms for 4-6 hours per day. Most respondents (77.4%) tried to reduce their use of social media for mental health reasons. Around (69.9%) stated that they felt comfortable. As many as (94.5%) stated that respondents were aware of privacy and the importance of protecting personal information on social media. As many as (71%) respondents felt that excessive use of asocial media had negatively affected sleep patterns, (66.1%) respondents often slept late at night due to the use of social media. Most (58.3%) of respondents checked social media accounts before going to bed at night.

## RESULTS

Based on the 8 articles obtained, all of them used the Cross-sectional research method. Six articles came from developing countries, namely Vietnam, Africa, Indonesia and 2 articles from developed countries, namely Saudi Arabia. All articles selected according to good quality received an A grade. In this mapping step, the author classifies interesting study findings from the reviews in these articles:

Table 2.4 Mapping themes

THEMES	SUBTHEMES	Article Number
1. Intensity of social media use	1. The length of time teenagers use social media	(1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8)
	2. Media platforms used	(1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8)

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	3. Gender	(1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8)
2. Quality of sleep	1. Adolescent rest intensity	(3)
3. Adolescent mental health disorders	1. Anxiety	(5)
	2. Depression	(1,3,4,8)
	3. Mental-emotional	(6,7)
	4. Sleep disorders	(2)

## DISCUSSION

### Intensity of Social Media Use in Adolescents

The results of the study have shown that there are differences between the sexes related to the use of social media. Teenage girls tend to use social media more than teenage boys, because social media networks allow women to connect socially, and women tend to value relationships more than men. In addition, there are differences in the use of social media between the two sexes, women tend to seek information and use social media to facilitate interpersonal relationships, while men tend to use social media only for recreational activities or fun (Hussin, 2024; Montag et al., 2024).

The intensity of social media use is the involvement of adolescents related to social media use activities, namely, frequency, length of access and the number of friendships formed. Teenagers who frequently access social media are driven by social motives. Unwise use of social media can reduce adolescents' social interaction skills which leads to apathy, namely adolescent apathy, where adolescents do not have interest in certain aspects such as social life as well as physical and emotional aspects (Khalaf et al., 2023; Kituyi & Kyeyune, 2024).

### Sleep Quality

Studies have found that the use of social media is an unstructured form of activity and has no clear beginning or end. Thus, this activity tends to last a long time, in addition to the use of social media is an entertaining and easy activity, which can change the duration and quality of sleep. Staying up late in social media use (uploading photos or watching videos) can delay or reduce time for sleep. In addition, engaging in bedtime discussions

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can delay bedtime and shorten the duration of rest, and further light from screen use can disrupt the body's normal sleep rhythm, resulting in difficulty falling asleep. This is in line with previous research that sleep-deprived people use more social media platforms than respondents who sleep well and longer duration of social media use is one of the independent predictors of sleep deprivation (EBSCO Health, 2018).

Regarding social media platforms and sleep disorders, TikTok and Snapchat are the most frequently used platforms. TikTok and Snapchat are the most popular short video platforms that are ranked 4th and 5th most used globally. TikTok is widely used by teenagers to browse, watch and create short video content. Based on research (Al-Garni et al., 2024), the results of logistic regression revealed that depressive conditions were found to be independently related to lack of sleep. In general, both sleep and mental health are considered challenges in public health globally where the two are interrelated. The unlimited use of social media can affect the quality and quantity of sleep of adolescents. Smartphone use is an important factor that interferes with adolescent sleep quality. Light radiation emitted from smartphone screens interferes with the release of melatonin and the regulation of circadian rhythms that affect sleep quality. In addition, the electromagnetic field related to smartphones affects brain activity and disrupts sleep patterns (Dienlin & Johannes, 2020).

## **Mental Health Disorders**

Rapid technological changes in social media have had a negative impact on teenagers, namely in the form of anxiety, depression, mental emotional and sleep disorders. The low knowledge of adolescents about awareness to maintain mental health makes adolescents often not realize that the actions or behaviors that adolescents do are one of the symptoms of mental health disorders. Teenagers can easily use social media to share information, interact with anyone and anytime, but this social media also has a negative impact on their mental health. Excessive use of social media, i.e. the use of social media for more than 3 hours a day is often unsupervised (Montag et al., 2024).

Adolescence is a very important time in a person's life. In addition, risk factors such as family problems, bullying, and social isolation have been around since this time, and are essential for maintaining social and emotional growth. The growth of digital technology has affected many aspects of adolescents' lives (John et al., 2019). Connecting socially

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with others is a common phenomenon, whether at home, school, or social gatherings, and teens are always in touch with their classmates through social media accounts. Teens are attracted to social networking sites because they allow teens to upload pictures, photos, and videos on their platform. The site also allows teens to make friends, discuss ideas, discover new interests, and try new forms of self-expression. Teens also often engage in trolling for entertainment without realizing the potentially harmful consequences. Trolling focuses on body shaming, individual abilities, language and lifestyle among others. The effects of trolling can lead to anxiety, depressive symptoms, stress, feelings of isolation, and suicidal thoughts (Petro et al., 2025).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the intensity of social media use among adolescents shows clear gender differences, with girls engaging more actively than boys due to their stronger orientation toward social relationships. Although social media provides opportunities for connection and self-expression, excessive and unregulated use negatively affects sleep quality and mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, and decreased social interaction. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to further investigate the long-term effects of social media use and develop effective interventions to promote healthy usage. Policymakers and educators should also strengthen digital literacy and mental health education programs to encourage responsible, balanced, and mindful social media use among adolescents.

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