

## **The Influence of Social Media on Adolescent Sexual Behavior: A Retrospective Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

In this modern era, the internet has become an essential part of basic human needs. Social media, as one of the most widely used platforms, offers various benefits, such as a means of communication and self-expression. However, behind these benefits, there are various negative impacts, especially for teenagers and minors. One of them is access to pornographic content that can influence premarital sexual behavior. This study aims to analyze the influence of social media on adolescent sexual behavior. The research method used is a literature study, by collecting and reviewing theories from various relevant literatures. Based on an analysis of seven international articles, it was found that adolescents have a very high exposure to negative content on social media, including pornography. This exposure increases the risk of unhealthy sexual behavior, where the more often adolescents are exposed to information and experiences related to sexual behavior, the stronger the stimulus to imitate the behavior. One significant impact of unhealthy social media use is the increase in promiscuous sex among adolescents. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of supervision and education for adolescents in using social media to minimize these negative impacts.

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**Keywords:** social media, sexual behaviour, adolescents

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The birth of social media is one of the advances in internet technology that greatly influences society. One of the negative impacts of the use of social media is free sex. One of the groups that is significantly affected by social media is teenagers. Social media or social networks are a social structure formed from nodes (generally individuals or organizations) that are tied to one or more specific types of relationships, such as values, vision, friends, descendants, and so on (Kustiawan et al., 2022). Social networks are social structures that consist of individual or organizational elements. This network shows how they relate because of their social similarities, ranging from those they know in everyday life to their families (Astri et al., 2024).

In this era of globalization, teenagers dominate the use of social media as a means to find information, entertainment or communicate with friends and relatives (Capurso et al., 2020). Social media is also used as a means of communication and socializing with each other. It is done online, which allows humans to interact with each other without being limited by space and time (Habibi, 2018). Social media does not remove human boundaries to socialize, space and time limitations; with this social media, humans can communicate wherever they are and at any time, no matter how far away they are day or night (Onasoga et al., 2020).

One of the groups that is very affected by social media is teenagers (Pugesehan et al., 2023). For the community, especially teenagers, social media has become an addiction that makes users go a day without opening social media. Nowadays, every teenager already has their own social media. On social media, teenagers often post personal activities, vents, and photos with friends. On social media, everyone can freely comment and easily channel their opinions without any worries (Listyani & Fauzi, 2017).

One of the negative impacts of the use of social media is free sex. Most adolescents engage in premarital-time sexual behaviour for the first time at the age of high school or, equivalent, at the age of 15-18 years. Negative impacts carried out after premarital sexual behaviour include Unwanted Pregnancy (KTD) and abortion. As a fact that occurs in society, many minors are victims of crimes that originate from the use of social media. Almost every day, news about cases of immorality, sexual violence and pornography is reported. These cases certainly cannot be left alone. It is a big job for the entire community through education in the family to take preventive measures because when left unchecked, it will have an impact on mental and psychological damage in adolescents.

This sexual behaviour, of course, has adverse effects such as getting pregnant out of wedlock, contracting sexually transmitted diseases, and there will be a sense of regret. Therefore, as a teenager, you must be able to use social media well and wisely and have a sense of High curiosity, which is normal for a teenager. However, you also have to know the consequences of your actions. From now on, we use social media wisely (Jones et al., 2014).

The World Health Organization (WHO) shows that more than 500 million adolescents aged 10-14 in developing countries have had sex for the first time under the age of 15. Approximately 60% of pregnancies in adolescent girls in developing countries are unwanted pregnancies, and 15 million adolescent girls have given birth. An international survey conducted by Bayer Healthcare Pharmaceutical of 6,000 adolescents in 26 countries revealed that there was an increase in the number of adolescents who engaged in unsafe sex, such as in France, reaching 11%, 39% in the United States and 19% in the United Kingdom in 2011 (Wijayanti & Fairus, 2020). In addition, according to the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, The prevalence of pornography use among generations is 90% in men and 80% in women, with results varying depending on culture, age and social environment (Capurso et al., 2020).

The data shows that the desire to satisfy their sexual desires is by looking for information media needs. There is a strong flow of information through social media, so information that is difficult to control tends to form unhealthy sexual behaviour in adolescents. Many providers offer easy and cheap access services, which makes it easy to do so. Social media is a trend for teenagers today; in addition to bringing

positive benefits, it also negatively impacts teenagers. The positive benefits for adolescents are staying in touch and exchanging information, while the negative impact of social media is abusing the information system to convey sexual needs (Landry et al., 2017).

Internet access to pornography can be one of the sources of premaritalized sexual behaviour. Teenagers are the most vulnerable to the risks and dangers of social media because teenagers, in general, have a high sense of curiosity. Usually, adolescents who have a long duration of using social media have more significant potential to engage in sexual behaviour. In addition to social media, abaya friends can also be one of the factors where sexual behaviour occurs. Therefore, parents must be able to monitor their children's friendships so that they are not swept into free association.

It is necessary to realize that using the Internet among teenagers is considered one of the primary needs. The Internet is used by teenagers to access various information due to high curiosity in adolescence. It is undeniable that high curiosity in adolescents about sexual issues makes them seek information using mass media, the Internet, and social media. The advancement of information in the era of globalization has caused the use of the Internet to be increasingly necessary in all aspects of life and even daily life, such as social and educational activities. The use of the Internet, especially social media, results in adolescents aged 10-24 years experiencing dependence on social media so that almost every day, adolescents have to access various types of social media (Crofts et al., 2024).

Adolescents are at significant risk of developing reproductive health problems such as premarital sex, getting pregnant at too young age or unwanted pregnancies that trigger unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, acts of sexual violence, and rape. Problems that exist among adolescents can be handled with preventive efforts. Health promotion or socialization can be used to increase adolescents' knowledge and understanding of premarital sex and reproductive health through health counselling. With the socialization of reproductive health and premarital sex, it is hoped that these problems can be prevented and overcome (Listyani & Fauzi, 2017).

Based on the above background, it is clear that social media plays a significant role in shaping adolescent behavior, especially in relation to premarital sexual behavior. Increased exposure to sexual content, easy access to pornography, and peer influence contribute to this alarming trend. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of social media on adolescent sexual behavior. Thus, the benefit of this study is to provide a deeper understanding to society, especially parents, educators, and adolescents themselves, regarding the significant influence of social media on adolescent sexual behavior. This research is expected to be the basis for formulating preventive and educative policies in using social media more wisely. In addition, the results of this study can contribute to public health and education programs related to awareness of the negative impact of unhealthy social media content.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This article method uses library research, which collects data by understanding and studying theories from various literature related to research. There are four stages of literature study: preparing the necessary equipment and tools, preparing a work bibliography, organizing time and reading and recording research materials. Data collection is by searching for sources and constructing from various sources such as books, journals, and existing research. The analysis method uses content analysis and descriptive analysis. The library materials from various references are critically and in-depth analyzed to support propositions and ideas. The articles used in this writing were obtained from PubMed, Emerald Insight, Google Scholar, DOAJ and Perplexetily.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After reviewing, seven scientific articles related to social media and promiscuous sexual behavior in adolescents. were found. All seven articles are international articles published in the United Kingdom. The review of scientific articles will be outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1. Review of Scientific Articles on the Influence of Social Media on Free Sex Behavior in Adolescents**

Name	Title	Published	Result
(Landry et al., 2017)	Social Media and Sexual Behavior Among Adolescents: Is there a link?	JMIR Public Health and Surveillance, Vol 3, Issue 2.	Sexual risk behaviours significantly increased between baseline (T1) and follow-up (T2) (mean=0.432 vs mean=0.734, P<.001). Youths sending more than 100 text messages per day had significantly higher sexual risk scores (beta=1.008, PP <.001) but significantly more significant declines in sexual risk scores for higher levels of parental monitoring (beta=-.237, =.009).
(Suyanto, 2021)	Effects of social media exposure on adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviour: A systematic review	International Journal of Public Health Science (IJPHS), Vol. 10, No. 2,	These sexual contents can either have a positive or negative effect on these adolescents by either improving the knowledge they have on the sexuality of the opposite sex or leading them to risky or harmful sexual behaviours, respectively.
(Fauzi & Listyani, 2017)	Impacts of Social Media on Youth's Sexual and Social Behaviours	Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR), volume 108	This study showed a potential association between frequent social media use and increased likelihood of sexual activity among youth.

Name	Title	Published	Result
(Eleuteri et al., 2017)	Identity, relationships, sexuality, and risky behaviours of adolescents in the context of social media	Sexual and Relationship Therapy	social media and social networking services affecting and changing not only adolescent sexuality, but also the type of relationship adolescents establish in their first sexual experiences, including possible risky consequences like cyberbullying, sexting, revenge pornography, excessive use of the Internet, and risky sexual behaviours. Specifically, research will be discussed on the development and evolution of sexuality of adolescents and young adults, also illustrating the clinical consequences.
(Onasoga et al., 2020)	Influence of Social Media Use on Sexual Behaviour of Undergraduate Students in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria	Interdisciplinary Journal of Education, Vol. 3, No. 2	The findings of the study showed that there is a significant association between exposure to sexual content on social media and risky sexual behaviour among undergraduate students.
(Astri et al., 2024)	The relationship between social media use and adolescent sexual behaviour.	Indonesian Journal of Global Health Research, Vol 6, Number 3.	The results of this study show that the female gender dominates the proportion of respondents who have high levels of sexual behaviour. The results of using social media sites show a significant p-value = 0.044 with a risk of adolescent sexual behaviour of 0.138 times as a result of exposure to the use of social media sites. There are significant results on the use of social media and adolescent sexual behaviour with a p-value = 0.044, so it can be concluded that there is a relationship between social media use and adolescent sexual behaviour.
(Wijayanti & Fairus, 2020)	Religiosity, the Role of Teen Parents and the Exposure of pornography media to adolescent sexual behaviour in East	Enferm Clin; 30(S5)	The results showed there was a relationship between religiosity, the role of parents, and exposure to pornography with premarital sexual behaviour in adolescents in East Lampung.

Name	Title	Published	Result
	Lampung Region High School		

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out on seven international articles, it was found that adolescents have very high exposure to social media with adolescent sexual behaviour and unhealthy use of social media such as viewing pornographic content; adolescents will imitate and do what they see. The more experiences of hearing, seeing, and experiencing sexual behaviour, the stronger the stimulus that can encourage the emergence of sexual behaviour.

Many factors can affect sexual behaviour in adolescents, one of which is a source of information in the form of social media. Desire/interest in the media, the use of social media and the intensity of social media use can also have an impact on the sexual behaviour of adolescents. Sexual behaviour is any form of behaviour that is driven by sexual desire, both with the opposite sex and with the same sex (Chernick et al., 2022).

Abraham explained that the concept of sexuality includes not only sexual identity, sexual orientation, sexual norms, sexual practices, and sexual habits but also human feelings, desires, fantasies, and experiences related to sexual awareness, stimulation, and sexual acts, including heterosexual relationships and homosexual relationships. This includes subjective experience as well as the meaning inherent in it. The concept of sexuality encompasses not only biological and psychological but also the social and cultural dimensions of sexual identity and habits (Todaro et al., 2018).

Usually, teenagers aged 15-19 years already have a desire to have a boyfriend. Social media can also be a means for teenagers who want to find a girlfriend. Many teenagers invite people of the opposite sex to get acquainted through social media. However, again, it still requires supervision and direction by parents so that sexual behaviour that is detrimental to oneself and others does not occur (Merrill & Liang, 2019). This sexual behaviour does not only include sexual intercourse, but holding hands, kissing and having sexual intercourse is also included in sexual behaviour. This sexual behaviour includes five stages, namely touching, kissing, necking, petting and intercourse. Sexual behaviour carried out before marriage can be referred to as premarital sexual behaviour, where it is done to attract attention from the opposite sex (Jones et al., 2014).

The desire to satisfy his sexual desires by seeking information media needs. There is a strong flow of information through social media, so information that is difficult to control tends to form unhealthy sexual behaviour in adolescents. Many providers offer easy and cheap access services that make it easier for school-age children to access social media. Two things underlie sexual behaviour in adolescents, namely the expectation to get married at a young age (20 years old) and the passage of information that can cause sexual stimulation in adolescents, especially adolescents in urban areas. These stimuli encourage teenagers to have premarital sex. Factors that affect sexual behaviour in adolescents are puberty, age, gender, level of knowledge about reproductive health, parental supervision and attitudes towards various sexual behaviours (Listyani & Fauzi, 2017).

In this case, if it is associated with social media literacy, it is necessary to control individual behaviour in using social media; it can be in the form of understanding and sensitivity and even a critical attitude in receiving and sending messages on social

media. Adolescents must be able to filter various information about social relationships or changes to the equilibrium of social relationships through social media. Thus, messages that link reproductive health problems with social determinants related to premarital sexual behaviour can be packaged more attractive to adolescents. For example, from a public health perspective, premarital sexual risks and adolescent health are framed as social impacts (Ssewanyana et al., 2018).

The percentage of adolescents in men (66.6%) and women (62.3%) watch pornography through online media. As for those who are sexually involved or directly practice sexuality in boys (34.5%) and girls (25%), so that the achievement of the number of people who watch pornography in boys is more than in girls, and the sexual activities that are practised directly by boys are more than girls (Kosvianti et al., 2020). The effects of pornographic media start from the stages of addiction, escalation, desensitization, and act-out (imitation of behaviour). The level of sexual behavioural activity depends on the magnitude of the action taken, where the impact of the behaviour sex can transmit health disorders such as HIV infection, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, abortions and other health problems (Landry et al., 2017).

The activities of adolescents in their needs, such as searching for information for their use, are increasingly diverse with the existence of media, which continues to develop following its development. Information media, such as television, radio, gadgets, the Internet, and print media (books, magazines, newspapers) are available today. The availability of these media helps adolescents with their needs. These needs encourage adolescents to choose and meet their needs according to current developments (Stevens et al., 2017).

## **CONCLUSION**

The main issue formulated in this study is the dual impact of social media use on adolescents, where both positive and negative impacts are evident. While social media can enhance skills, creativity, and facilitate learning, its negative consequences, such as reduced social sensitivity, academic laziness, and engagement in harmful behaviors-such as smoking, reckless behavior, and risky sexual activities-require urgent attention. The purpose of this study is to critically analyze the influence of social media on adolescent behavior, especially focusing on the potential risks of imitating negative content and engaging in premarital sexual behavior, in order to propose prevention strategies and raise awareness among parents and educators. It can be concluded that the use of social media has both positive and negative impacts. The positive impact is that for them, the use of social media can develop skills and creativity and can help adolescents to learn because through media sharing and other means. While the negative impacts are no less important to be of concern to parents, among the negative impacts experienced by adolescents are the loss of social sensitivity in children, lazy learning, the emergence of negative behavior due to imitating what they watch on social media (youtube, google, facebook, instagram, twitter and others) for example; smoking, motorcycle racing and even doing things that should not be done by teenagers such as having free sex without taking into account the impact.

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