

# Description of Social Media Use and Self-Esteem of Adolescents in Makassar City

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## Abstract:

Adolescence is a crucial period of time and very challenging period. There is an increase concern on how social media use and mental health of teenagers. In Makassar City, there is a high number of mental health in adolescence yet still rare research has been conducted to investigate about social media use and self-esteem on teenagers. The aim of this study is to give a description on how adolescence behaviour on social media use and their level of self-esteem. This research uses a quantitative study with descriptive study design. The participant was selected based on some inclusion criteria such as teenagers' age 16-18 years old, able to speak Bahasa, stay in Makassar City and willingly to become participant. The participant was determined by using non-probability sampling using convenience sampling method. There are 118 participants on this research. Three types of instruments were used; demography questionnaire, intensity of social media use and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. From 118 participants, 19 were male and 99 were female. There are 42 respondents spend more than 6 hours on social media, and 54 respondents spend 2-6 hours on social media per day. Most of the respondents use their social media for see feed (20%), give like (14%), stalking (9%), news sharing (9%) and give comment (6%). Most of the respondents have high social media use (70 respondents) and low self-esteem (66 respondents). Social media use is quite high among teenagers in Makassar City and the self-esteem is mostly low. Thus, it is important to investigate the relationship of social media use and self-esteem so that it can give a comprehensive understanding on adolescence's mental health and wellbeing in Makassar City.

**Keywords:** Social media use; self-esteem; adolescence

## Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that 16% of mental health problems globally occur in adolescents aged 10-19 years, and half of the mental health problems occur at 14 years when this condition has not been detected and received treatment.<sup>1</sup> In addition, WHO also reported that depression is the most common mental illness in adolescents, and suicide is the third leading cause of adolescent death.<sup>2</sup> Depression and anxiety have severe consequences for adolescent growth time, such as low school attendance, dropouts, impaired social relations, increased rates of substance abuse, various mental health problems and suicide.<sup>3</sup> Mental health problems that are not resolved in adolescents can have an impact on adulthood which can affect their mental health and physical health as adults.<sup>2</sup>

Adolescence is a period that is very significant for the development of psychological, biological, and social life because, at this time, adolescents are trying to adapt and develop new skills, learn to be responsible, and build relationships with others.<sup>4</sup> Adolescence is challenging because adolescents have to deal with various personal and social challenges as well as uneven and uncertain emotional development.<sup>4,5</sup> Thus, obtaining adequate self-esteem during adolescence is crucial. Self-esteem in adolescents is recognized as a broad and hierarchical concept consisting of several different components.<sup>6</sup>

There have been many studies conducted to see how self-esteem in adolescents can have an influence on adolescent mental health. Research conducted by Kircaburun suggests that several physical, social and psychological factors can affect the incidence of depression in adolescents, one of which is

self-esteem. Individuals with inadequate self-esteem, who look down on themselves and feel not very liked by others, will feel pressure and unable to adapt to their environment.<sup>7</sup> This condition will cause teenagers to be more sensitive to various criticisms compared to focusing on how other people see themselves. As a consequence, adolescents tend to avoid taking risks, do not want to socialize, feel alone and stay away from people.<sup>7,8</sup>

Low self-esteem in adolescents causes a vulnerable condition. This vulnerability is a pattern of relationships that can describe the relationship between self-esteem and various mental illnesses in adolescents. Individuals with low self-esteem always need recognition from others, friends and family to feel worthy and valuable. This relationship causes low self-esteem and can be a vital risk factor for depression in adolescents.<sup>7</sup>

According to Kircaburun, teenagers who find it difficult to express themselves and feel alone and abandoned will see the virtual world as a way out.<sup>7</sup> This is because virtual platforms such as the internet and social media allow someone to be "anonymous" and provide opportunities for teenagers to express themselves more freely. In a study conducted in 2016, data found that out of 7.3 million people in the world, 3.4 million people use the internet, and 2.3 million of these internet users are active social media users.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, research on the impact of social media use and mental health is one of the current research topics.

According to Kim Social media can be described as a double-edged sword.<sup>10</sup> On the one hand, social media can have a positive impact, but the negative impact of social media is also significantly felt. They understood how the relationship between

social media and adolescent mental health had become a priority due to the increasing mental health problems related to social media in adolescents. Research conducted by Chen & Lee (2013) found that the use of social media can increase psychological pressure which can have an impact on decreasing a person's level of self-esteem.<sup>11</sup> Another study conducted in 2015 in Turkey found data that social media use increased in school-age adolescents and this increased use of social media had an addictive effect on adolescents.<sup>12</sup> According to Kircaburun (2016) daily use of social media has a negative impact on adolescent self-esteem.<sup>7</sup> This is because adolescents who have low self-esteem tend to avoid real social interactions and this pattern can increase the likelihood of depression in adolescents.

According to data from the 2018 Basic Health Research, cases of mental health problems in the 15-24 year age group in Indonesia are the highest with a total of 157,695 cases.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, the case for South Sulawesi province was 22,798 cases, the fourth highest after the provinces of East Java, West Java and Banten. The age range of 15-24 years in South Sulawesi occupies the first position for the number of mental health cases with 8364 cases, in Makassar City alone there are 5963 mental health cases.<sup>14</sup>

Research conducted by Mulyana & Afriani (2018) found that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and addiction to smartphone use in high school teenagers in Banda Aceh.<sup>15</sup> Another study conducted by Hardika et al (2019) in Surabaya found that self-esteem has a significant relationship with the narcissistic behavior of adolescent Instagram users.<sup>16</sup> Although research related to social media and self-esteem has been widely carried out in several

countries and regions in Indonesia, until now there has been no research conducted in Makassar City regarding self-esteem and the use of social media.

The use of social media is also increasing with the COVID-19 pandemic which requires people to work more from home. Research related to mental health regarding depression, stress, and addiction to social media has probably been done a lot in Indonesia. However, it is important to see and understand one of the factors that underlie how these mental health problems occur.

Seeing the high number of mental health cases in Makassar City and the increasing use of social media, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and seeing the importance of achieving adequate self-esteem in adolescence, it is very important to see how the description of self-esteem and the use of social media for adolescents is in Makassar City.

## **Research Method**

### **Study Design**

This research used a quantitative study with descriptive study design. The descriptive study was used to investigate the description of certain phenomenon in society.

### **Setting and Sample**

This research was conducted in Makassar City, from May to July 2021. The participant was selected based on some inclusion criteria such as teenagers' age 16-18 years old, able to speak Bahasa, stay in Makassar City and willingly to become participant. The participant was determined by using non-probability sampling using convenience sampling method. The sample size was counted using Lemeshow formula for research survey with unknown population. The sample size was estimated by using

maximal estimation proportion 0.5, alpha was 10% (0.1) and level of significance 0.05. Thus, the sample size estimated was 107 participants including 10% dropped out prediction. In this research there were 118 respondents participated.

### **Instruments**

Three types of instruments were used in this research. The first one was a demography questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of data for age, gender, parent's job and income. This questionnaire also included types of handphones, duration on social media, types of social media that teenagers have, types of activity on social media, and a monthly cost for the internet.

The second questionnaire was about the intensity of social media use. There were 24 questions on this questionnaire with four options for the answer; strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The intensity of media use consisted of 4 dimensions. For attention dimension (attention to the content) was depicted on questions number 6,8,14,17,20,23. The appreciation dimension was on numbers 1,3,11,18 and 24. For duration on media, social was represented on questions number 4,9,12,21. Last for Frequency on media social dimension was on questions number 2,7,5,10,13,15,16,19,22, and 25.

While to measure the teenagers' self-esteem, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale has been translated into Bahasa through Confirmatory Factors Analysis (CFA)(17).The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale that has been undergo a CFA test consisted of 7 questions using Likert scale. Questions number 1,2,3,5,7 have score strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), strongly agree (4). While questions number 4 and 6 were scored the opposite; strongly

disagree (4), disagree (3), agree (2), and strongly agree (1). This Rosenberg Self-Esteem consists of 2 dimensions. First is self-acceptance and second is self-respect.

### **Data Collection**

The samples were collected using the convenience sample technique. Because of the COVID-19 situation and Makassar City, which has been classified as a red zone, the questionnaire was distributed through the google form application. First, the researchers would contact teachers at some schools as well as teachers at some tutoring places. The researcher gave informed consent and asked if it was possible to distribute the questionnaire to their students. The researcher also directly contacted some students and gave informed consent. If they agreed to be a participant, the researcher then asked for their help in distributing the questionnaire to their friends.

### **Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using SPSS 26 version. The descriptive analysis was performed to investigate the sociodemographic data, self-esteem and media social use as well as to see the 4 dimensions of media social use. Not only that but also the data was expanded to see the distribution from 4 dimensions of media social use and the level of respondent's self-esteem.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Ethical consideration was approved by ethical commission from Faculty of Public Health, Universitas Hasanuddin, with referenced number 3884/UN.4.14.1/TP.01.02/2021. The informed consent was given in the first page of questionnaire on google form. Participant can only proceeded to the questions once they read and agreed with the informed consent.

## Results

There were 118 respondents participated in this research. Most of the respondents were female and aged 18 years old. The adolescent parents primarily work as civil servants with monthly payments of more than Rp. 6.000.000,-. This finding also depicted that most adolescence has android as their smartphone and spend more than six hours per day on social media. This finding also showed that adolescence only post their picture on social media once per day.

**Table 1.** Demography Table

	N	%
Gender		
Male	58	49.2
Female	60	50.8
Age (y.o)		
16	36	30.5
17	26	22.0
18	56	47.5
Parent's Job		
Civil Servant/TNI/Polri	48	40.7
Salesmen/Entrepreneur	18	15.3
Professional	4	3.4
Private Employee	33	28.0
Farmer	5	4.2
Days man	4	3.4
Retired Civil Servant	2	1.7
Fisherman	2	1.7
Housewife	2	1.7
Parent's Salary (IDR)		
<1.000.000,-	17	14.4
1.000.000,- - 2.000.000,-	15	12.7
2.500.000,- - 3.500.000,-	32	27.1
4.000.000,- - 5.500.000,-	20	16.9
> 6.000.000,-	34	28.8
Hand phone Type		
Iphone	24	20.3
Android	94	79.7
Duration on Social Media		
< 60 minutes	8	6.8
1-2 hours	14	11.9

	N	%
2-4 hours	30	25.4
4-6 hours	24	20.3
>6 hours	42	35.6
Times Upload Photos (per day)		
Once	86	72.9
2-3 times	23	19.5
4-5 times	2	1.7
>6 times	7	5.9
Online Cost		
< 50.000,-	51	43.2
50.000,- - 100.000,-	47	39.8
>100.000,-	20	16.9

**Table 2.** Frequency of type of devices, Social Media use, and Purpose on Social Media

	f	%
Type of devices		
Smartphone	118	70
Tablet PC	23	14
Computer	28	16
Types of Social Media Use		
Facebook	13	3
Line	20	4
Telegram	31	7
Instagram	97	20
TikTok	64	13
Whatsapp	110	23
Twitter	31	6
YouTube	89	19
Pintrest	26	5
Purposes on Social Media		
Seeing feed	110	20
Upload Photo/Video	32	6
Like	75	14
Status Update	33	6
News Sharing	47	9
Comment	32	6
News Update	34	6
Online Shop	37	7
Stalking	50	9
	30	6
	36	7

	f	%
Playing Game	21	4
Adding New Friend		
Writing		

Most of the adolescence have WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram. For the purpose of social media, most of the adolescences use it for seeing feed, give like, and sharing news update.

**Table 3** Description of Dimensions of Media Use and Self Esteem

	N	%
Media Use		
Low	48	40.7
High	70	59.3
Dimension of Media Use		
Attention		
Less	66	55.9
High	52	44.1
Appreciation		
Less	73	61.9
High	45	38.1
Duration		
Seldom	49	41.5
Often	69	58.5
Frequency		
Seldom	62	52.5
Often	56	47.5
Self-Esteem		
Low	66	55.9
High	52	44.1
Dimension of Self Esteem		
Self-Acceptance		
Low	65	55.1
High	53	44.9
Self-Respect		
Low	77	65.3
High	41	34.7
TOTAL	118	100

Most of the respondents use social media relatively highly (59.3%). For the dimension of

social media, this research found that teenagers often use their social media for quite a long duration (47.5% and 58.5%, respectively). Attention can be defined as how teenagers spend time and effort accessing social media. Appreciation means how teenagers understand and internalize the information from social media. Although teenagers spend more time on their social media, adolescents tend to have less appreciation and attention to what they have done on their social media. This research found that there were 66 respondents with low self-esteem, 65 respondents had low self-acceptance, but 77 respondents had high self-respects.

**Table 5:** Description of 4 Dimensions of Media Use and Self-Esteem

	Self-Esteem		
	Low	High	Total
	N	N	N
<b>Attention</b>			
Less	37	20	57
High	36	25	61
<b>Appreciation</b>			
Less	37	20	57
High	36	25	61
<b>Duration</b>			
Seldom	29	28	57
Often	20	41	61
<b>Frequency</b>			
Seldom	32	25	57
Often	30	31	61

## Discussion

This research tries to examine how adolescents and their self-esteem use social media. The first part of the questionnaire tries to depict the characteristic of respondents and their social media behaviour. Most of the respondents use smartphones to access their social media and spend 2-6 hours on their



social media. It is also found that teenagers mostly have three or more types of social media, and mostly they use their platform to see the feed, stalk, give like, share news and give comments.

The second part of this research describes adolescents' social media use and self-esteem. In general, this research finds that 70 respondents (59.3%) actively use their social media platforms, and most have low self-esteem, 55.1%. It is important to remember that this research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic; thus, the result may also influence the current condition. Secondly, although the primary purpose of this research is to describe both aspects, the finding was significant as baseline data for further research.

We investigate how teenagers' behaviour regarding their social media use in Makassar City. The researcher tries to analyse the four dimensions of social media use. We found that adolescents have less attention (55.9%) and appreciation for social media use, 61.9%. In investigating the frequency and how long adolescents use social media, this research finds that most teenagers can stay on social media long enough but less often (58.5% and 52.5%, respectively).

The pandemic COVID 19 is one reason teenagers use social media for a long time. Our research finds that 42 respondents spend more than 6 hours on social media, and 54 teenagers spend 2 – 6 hours playing on their social media. We also find that most of the respondents use their social media only to see some feeds (110 respondents), 75 respondents use it to give "Like", and 50 for stalking. There are only 4% of respondents use their platform for writing. These phenomena are probably why adolescents in this study have less appreciation of social media use.

This finding supports some previous research that also finds reasons some teenagers accessing their social media are either for social networking or to be able to communicate with their friends and classmates.<sup>6,18,19,20</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people were prohibited from meeting directly, the physical distancing policy was implemented worldwide, and people were encouraged to stay at home as long as possible. During this pandemic, social media helps us keep in touch with friends and family. They were making us still able to study online or work from home. These are the significant reasons adolescents can spend 2-6 hours on social media. Valkenburg, Koutamanis & Vossen (2017) found that adolescence using their social media primarily to keep in touch with their close friends and classmates.<sup>6</sup> This finding similar with several research that also explain that social media simply can be a platform for teenagers to communicate with their peers so it may lead to increase the duration of their social media use.<sup>21,22</sup> We should admit that the existence of social media during this COVID-19 pandemic helps us not feel so lonely during the quarantine time.

Keeping in touch with their peers is really important during adolescence. Most teenagers use social media to communicate with classmates and close friends. Thus, this interpersonal interaction may provide more chances for youth to exchange views and support to each other and give significant benefits to adolescents whom suffering from social exclusion and isolation.<sup>23</sup> This is because, in social media, people do not have real interaction and can freely shape their image of themselves. Moreover, since teenagers use their social media to interact with their peers, the more their friends use

their social media, the more they will use their platforms too.<sup>24</sup> This may underpin reason why teenagers on this research can stay on their social media long enough.

Although we recognize many benefits of social media for teenagers, the excessive use of social media can give some back class effects. Excessive use of social media can cause loneliness. This due to the fact that users invest more in online relationship rather than in the real life relationship.<sup>22</sup> This is an interesting finding since this may be one of the reasons why during COVID 19 pandemic the number of mental health cases rise drastically. Maintaining and strengthening the relationship with friends seems to be important part for gain self-confidence and indirectly contribute to their self-esteem and wellbeing.

In investigating adolescent self-esteem, this research shows that 66 respondents have low self-esteem, 65 respondents have low self-acceptance, and 77 have low self-respect. Results from cross-tabulation portray that those with low self-respect and self-acceptance highly use their social media platforms. Adolescence's social media profile is the extension of their authentic self. Thus negative and positive feedback on their social media site will impact their self-esteem.<sup>20,25</sup> Research from Paakkari, et.al (2021) found that people with low self-esteem tend to avoid direct interaction and find it comfortable in cyberspace.<sup>26</sup> The finding of this research also in line with the research conducted by Jan et.al (2017).<sup>27</sup> This research finds that most teenagers use their social media for stalking and that increasing the time used on Facebook decreases self-esteem. This is because social media users will visit others' sites and start to feel jealous of those they think are superior or better than them. This is

probably the reason why youth in this research have low self-esteem.

People with low self-esteem sometimes using their social media platforms to gain recognition. Teenagers define their self-identity on how many "like" they get on their social media or how many good comments they get.<sup>21,28</sup> Especially during this COVID 19 when you are limited to have a direct interaction, teenagers probably build their self-image through their social media platforms.<sup>21</sup> Found that the more positive feedback on young person's profile will enhance their self-esteem and well-being. On the other hand, negative feedback will decrease their self-esteem.

Although this research did not investigate the correlation between those two variables, this finding enlightens on how self-esteem may be a mediator for excessive social media use that may lead to many negative or probably positive impacts. Thus, it is encouraging to investigate the relationship between social media use and self-esteem and to see the impact of excessive social media use.

This research has several limitations. This study was conducted during the pandemic COVID 19, so it was challenging to observe the participants. Additionally, researchers believe it is essential to keep the number of female and male participants balanced to shape a better understanding of social media use and teenagers' self-esteem. There is also a particular limitation on investigating the purpose of using social media, how many times their uploaded pictures and their types of social media. The self-reported scale may only sometimes be accurate in assessing an individual's answers on that variable since the accuracy of the answer relies on the participants' honesty. This is why the



upcoming study should consider the different methods to analyse those variables.

### Conclusions

This research highlights several significant findings. This study finds that most respondents have high intensity of social media use. From the four dimensions of social media use, attention, appreciation, and frequency of social media use are low among adolescents, yet the duration of social media use was pretty high. In understanding adolescents' self-esteem, this research shows that most respondents have low self-esteem. This also reflects on the result of the dimension of self-esteem that describes how most respondents have low self-respect and self-acceptance. An interesting finding from this research was that teenagers who often use their social media platforms have low self-respect and self-acceptance.

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