

DEVELOPING HEALTH COMMUNICATION MEDIA TO COUNTER THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF TIKTOK CONTENT ON ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

Putri Aulia Ramadhani ^{1*}, Tria Astrid Nabila Harahap ¹, Adillah Maharani Tanjung ¹, Dira Amnamuchlisah ¹, Annisa Putri Sucipto ¹, Miftahurrahmah El Hayatli ²

¹ Departement, Faculty of Public Health, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara
Jl. Lapangan Golf, Kampung Tengah, Desa Durian Jangak, Kecamatan Pancur Batu, Kabupaten Deli Serdang,
Sumatera Utara 20353, Indonesia

² Universitas Haji Sumatera Utara
Jl. Selamat Lurus No.73, RW.SA, Sitirejo III, Kec. Medan Amplas, Kota Medan, Sumatera Utara 20226,
Indonesia

Email: putriauliaramadhani.mione@gmail.com

Abstract

The rapid development of social media, especially TikTok, has presented new challenges for adolescent mental health due to exposure to negative content that is provocative, unrealistic, and often age-inappropriate. This study aims to identify strategies for developing effective health communication media to counteract these negative impacts. The method used is a literature review of 10 selected articles from 18,110 relevant articles on Google Scholar, with inclusion criteria including the impact of social media on adolescent mental health and strategies for developing health communication media. The results of the study show that TikTok content can trigger anxiety disorders, depression, and decreased self-esteem in adolescents. To overcome this, contextual, participatory, and user design approach-based communication media are needed. Media that is interactive, visual, and uses storytelling narratives has been shown to be more attractive to adolescents and effective in increasing awareness and mental resilience. The involvement of adolescents in the media design process also strengthens the effectiveness of the health messages conveyed. This study recommends the development of empathetic and emotionally relevant media as a promotive approach in dealing with mental health challenges in the digital era.

Keywords: Health Communication Media, Tiktok, Adolescent Mental Health, Digital Literacy

Introduction

The digital era has brought about a major transformation in the way humans communicate, seek information, and form social identities. One of the most tangible impacts of the development of information technology is the emergence of social media as a primary interaction space, particularly among teenagers. TikTok, as a short-video-based social media platform, has become a global phenomenon that is changing the way young people express themselves, consume information, and even interpret their social reality. According to a report by DataReportal (We Are Social & Meltwater, 2024), more than 60% of active TikTok users in Indonesia are from the 13–24 age group, indicating the dominance of teenagers in content consumption on this platform.

While TikTok offers a variety of benefits such as entertainment, creativity, and social opportunities, numerous studies have shown that excessive exposure to negative, provocative, or age-inappropriate TikTok content can negatively impact adolescents' mental health. Content depicting

unrealistic beauty standards, glamorous lifestyles displayed without context, and viral trends and challenges that carry physical and psychological risks have been linked to increased anxiety, mild depression, feelings of worthlessness, and body image disturbances (Nasrullah & Sari, 2023). Adolescents, who are in the process of discovering their identity, are particularly vulnerable to comparing themselves to what they see on social media, which can ultimately impact their self-perception and emotional stability (Putri et al., 2022).

This situation demands targeted preventive and promotive interventions to help adolescents build mental resilience and improve media literacy. One approach is to develop health communication media specifically designed for adolescents. Health communication media plays a crucial role as a conduit for health information and education, which can shape positive attitudes and behaviors. However, the media developed must be contextual, engaging, and tailored to the preferences and needs of the target audience. Conventional media such as leaflets or posters are often unpopular with adolescents because they are perceived as monotonous and irrelevant to their daily lives (Amalia & Widodo, 2024).

Developing health communication media for adolescents ideally involves a creative and participatory approach. Interactive, visual-based media that allows for self-expression are preferred by the younger generation. Furthermore, such media should convey messages empathetically and non-patronizingly, thereby encouraging adolescents' emotional engagement and self-awareness of the importance of maintaining their mental health amidst social media exposure. One proven effective strategy is the use of educational content packaged in storytelling formats, engaging graphic visuals, short informative videos, and reflective media that encourage adolescents to recognize and understand their own psychological conditions.

Furthermore, the challenge in developing health communication media lies not only in conveying accurate information, but also in how the media can effectively reach adolescents' emotions, perceptions, and motivations. In this regard, a user-centered design approach is crucial. The media developed must consider psychological, sociocultural, and technological aspects relevant to adolescents' lives. For example, integrating interactive elements such as mental health quizzes, digital diaries, or short educational video content based on TikTok trends can create a relevant communication bridge and be positively received by young audiences (Wijaya & Hartanti, 2023).

Furthermore, it is crucial to directly involve youth in the media development process, whether as informants, code-designers, or evaluators. This participatory approach not only increases the media's effectiveness but also strengthens their sense of ownership and involvement in maintaining mental health. The developed media should not merely be a one-way outreach tool, but rather a two-way interactive space that allows for dialogue, self-reflection, and sustainable behavior change.

Method

This research was conducted in the period of April to May 2025 through online and offline media, the type of research is a literature review. Literature search was conducted through the Google Scholar database with the keywords Development of Health Communication Media to Counteract the Negative Impact of TikTok Content Exposure on Adolescent Mental Health and keywords in English (Development of Health Communication Media to Counteract the Negative Impact of TikTok Content Exposure on Adolescent Mental Health) The inclusion criteria for this study are the negative impact of social media or TikTok on adolescent mental health, and Strategies or models for developing health communication media for adolescents.

Results

Based on a Google Scholar search using the keywords "Development of Health Communication Media to Counteract the Negative Impact of TikTok Content Exposure on Adolescent Mental Health" and the English keyword "Development of Health Communication Media to Counteract the Negative Impact of TikTok Content Exposure on Adolescent Mental Health," 18,110 Google Scholar articles were found matching these keywords. The publication years were 2015-2025, and the literature was published in both English and Indonesian. The literature search results yielded 18,110 Google Scholar articles matching these keywords. Screening based on titles matching the literature review topic yielded 25 articles (n=25).

Furthermore, 25 journals were subjected to a full-text eligibility assessment based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, yielding 10 articles (n=10). The articles were then re-screened and described in a prism diagram for in-depth analysis.

Table 1. Literature Search Results

Authors	Article Title	Year	Research methods	Results
Rizki Misbah Hidayat, Abdul Rifki, Ichsan Fauzi Rachman	The Impact of Exposure to Negative Content on TikTok and Instagram on Students' Mental Health: A Literature Review	2025	This research uses a descriptive-qualitative literature review method.	Based on the results of a literature review of various studies discussing the impact of negative content on TikTok and Instagram, it can be concluded that exposure to content such as toxic comments, body shaming, hate speech, and false images has the potential to have a significant impact on students' mental health, especially at the junior high and high school levels.
Aprilia Tasidjawa, Fatimah Sialana, Herpie Lambiombir.	Patterns of Facebook and TikTok Media Usage in the Context of Adolescent Mental Health in Grade IX Students of SMP Negeri 9 Ambon	2025	This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method because it aims to explore in depth the patterns of social media usage of Facebook and TikTok and their impact on the mental health of adolescents in the school environment.	Social media use, particularly Facebook and TikTok, has a significant impact on social interaction patterns and mental health among adolescents, particularly ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 9 Ambon. Students' social interactions tend to shift from in-person to digital communication, leading to a decline in the quality of face-to-face interactions with friends, family, and teachers. Social media also serves as a means of self-expression, but it often leads to negative impacts such as social withdrawal, anxiety due to

				negative comments, and decreased participation in direct classroom discussions.
Ema Deviana	The Impact of Social Media Use on Mental Health in Adolescents	2024	This study adopted a quantitative approach using a survey method to explore the relationship between social media use and adolescent mental health. A total of 67 adolescents aged 13–18 years old from various cities in Indonesia were randomly selected as the study sample to ensure a broader representation of the population.	This research confirms that excessive social media use can negatively impact adolescents' mental health, particularly by increasing the risk of anxiety and depression. However, these impacts can be minimized through regulation of social media use and educational approaches that encourage healthier and more positive use.
Desya syafitri, nasichah, Zahra salsabilah.	Analysis of Mental Health Content on the TikTok Account @hey.tessss.	2023	Researchers use qualitative methodology with content analysis techniques.	The results of this study indicate that the content posted on the TikTok account @hey.tessss between November 1-23, 2023, contained messages about mental health, including inner child, life motivation, and family issues. The inner child category is included in Carl Gustav Jung's theory. Furthermore, life motivation is an effort to encourage someone to do something. In short, motivation is a change in a person that arises due to the emergence of psychological symptoms, feelings, and emotions that can lead someone to act to fulfill needs, desires, and goals.
Cindy Afrilia	THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS	2024	This study uses a qualitative approach aimed at exploring in depth the impact of social media on adolescent mental health.	Overall, the impact of social media on adolescent mental health is a major concern in today's digital age. Social media provides significant opportunities for social interaction and connectivity, but it also carries the risk of negatively impacting adolescent mental health if not used wisely.

Arvin Hardian, Elisabeth Sitepu, Aria Mulyapradana, Joni Wilson Sitopu, Boby Hendro Wardono	The Impact of Social Media Use on Adolescent Mental Health in the Digital Era	2025	This study uses a qualitative approach to deeply understand the influence of social media use on adolescent mental health in the digital age.	The findings of this study indicate that social media has a significant impact on adolescent mental health in the digital age, both positively and negatively. On the one hand, social media provides a space for identity exploration, self- expression, and building social connections that can enhance self- confidence and emotional well-being.
Abdul Halim Bamazruk, Kenan Yudhistira, Kevin Yuriko Hartanto, Purwanto Putra	FLEXING CULTURE ON TIKTOK: ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND MENTAL HEALTH OF UNIVERSITY OF LAMPUNG STUDENTS	2025	The research uses qualitative research.	The results of this study indicate that the rapid development of communication and information technology has led to the emergence of social media, which has had a significant impact on people's lives. However, the presence of social media has also had complex consequences, one of which is the emergence of a culture of flexing resulting from media consumption on TikTok. This culture of flexing influences students who consume content about flexing on TikTok.
Fanesa Oktavia, Nida Nur Hanifah	Mental Health Crisis: Exploring the Causes and Strategies for Managing the FoMO Phenomenon in College Students Exposed to Suicidal Content on TikTok	2024	The research uses qualitative research.	Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that ongoing suicide cases can give rise to the FoMO phenomenon. The causes of the FoMO phenomenon among students exposed to suicide content are the characteristics of the younger generation who tend to rely on digital technology and social media, the need for sympathy, a lack of social interaction with others, continuous exposure to negative suicide content, and the failure of government regulations regarding guidelines for

				publishing suicide cases.
Jauharotul Millah, Septiana Indahwati, Havidhotul Hasanah	THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT (TIKTOK) ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS	2024	The research uses qualitative research.	The results of this study are the presence of technology as a support in the present era. As technology develops, it also impacts every aspect of students' lives. This study found that mental health is affected by students who are addicted to social media, especially TikTok. The influence of TikTok social media use on the mental health of students at SMPN 3 Songgon overall has a high level of influence obtained by the value obtained by the Social Media r-square value of 74.9% when linked to mental health and 25.1% explained by other variables not included.
Razaky Azhar Rosadi, Bramantio Risky Hamzah, Ruben Rafi Delano, Geofakta Razali.	The Influence of Social Interaction on Social Media on Cyberbullying Incidents and Its Impact on Adolescent Mental Health	2024	This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method. The sample consisted of adolescents aged 12–21 in the Cisaup area. Data were collected through a questionnaire that measured social interaction patterns on social media, levels of cyberbullying experienced, and adolescents' mental health.	Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant effect between the level of cyberbullying exposure and adolescent mental health. These results emphasize the importance of protecting adolescents from harmful cyberbullying experiences. This is because, in the large number of individuals we studied, cyberbullying has affected many.

Discussion

Research by Rizki Misbah Hidayat et al. shows that exposure to negative content on TikTok and Instagram, such as toxic comments, body shaming, cyberbullying, and false images, has a serious impact on the mental health of middle and high school students. These psychological impacts include anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, sleep disturbances, and a tendency to self-harm. Students often repeatedly receive this negative content, creating destructive thought patterns, damaging self-perception, and reinforcing social pressure. These risk factors are exacerbated by low self-control and high levels of social media addiction. During adolescence, which is the phase of identity formation,

social pressure from digital media can significantly impact emotional stability and personality development.

In a study by Aprilia Tasidjawa et al., they discussed the impact of Facebook and TikTok use on the social relationships and mental health of junior high school students. The results showed that social media serves as a platform for self-expression, but also triggers various negative impacts, such as reduced face-to-face communication, increased anxiety, low self-esteem due to social comparison, and a tendency to withdraw socially. Although schools have provided guidance and education, many students feel the approach is still general and does not address personal emotional needs. This indicates the importance of a more in-depth, sustainable, and empathetic counseling approach, as well as synergy between teachers, families, and the school environment in assisting adolescents in facing the challenges of the digital era. Social media needs to be used wisely so that it can be a source of inspiration, not a trigger for mental health problems.

A study by Deviana (2024) discussed the impact of social media use on the mental health of adolescents in Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach through a survey of 67 adolescents, the study found that high intensity of social media use correlated with increased symptoms of anxiety and depression. This risk was greater in adolescents with low levels of social interaction in the real world. This finding was reinforced by a logistic regression analysis, which showed that adolescents who used social media for more than four hours per day had a 2.3-fold higher risk of anxiety. Factors such as social comparison, cyberbullying, sleep disturbances, and pressure for social validation were cited as key contributors. However, social media is also recognized as having positive potential if used wisely, such as for education and emotional support. This study emphasized the need for increased digital literacy, the role of parents and educators, and platform regulation to create a healthier digital environment for adolescents.

In Desya Safitri et al.'s research, they conveyed mental health education through their content. Of the 45 videos uploaded between November 1–23, 2023, the content was divided into three main themes: inner child, family issues, and life motivation. The messages conveyed through the short videos often touch on deep psychological issues, such as childhood wounds, the loss of a father figure, and emotional stress in men. Inner child content was the most dominant category, depicting emotional wounds from childhood that are carried into adulthood. Meanwhile, the family issues theme highlighted the importance of the family's role in mental development, and life motivation offered positive encouragement to survive amidst life's pressures. With a simple yet touching approach, this account has succeeded in becoming an effective educational medium, especially for teenagers, in conveying mental health messages in a positive and easy-to-understand manner.

In research by Cindy Afrilla, social media has become an important part of adolescents' lives, offering benefits such as social connectivity and a space for self-expression. However, excessive exposure to negative content on social media can trigger various mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, sleep disorders, and even addiction.

Research by Arvin Hardian et al. states that adolescents are vulnerable to social pressure on social media, primarily due to the tendency to compare themselves to unrealistic ideal standards. Issues such as cyberbullying, online harassment, and content that damages self-perception exacerbate their psychological well-being. This research highlights the dual role of social media on adolescents' mental health. On the one hand, social media serves as a space for self-expression, identity building, and social and emotional support. These positive interactions can boost self-confidence and reduce loneliness. However, on the other hand, uncontrolled social media use can lead to social pressure, anxiety, feelings of worthlessness, and even psychological disorders such as depression and stress. This is triggered by exposure to unrealistic social standards and the prevalence of cyberbullying.

In a study by Abdul Halim Bamazruk et al., they examined the influence of TikTok social media content on the mental health of junior high school students in Banyuwangi. Using a

quantitative approach and simple linear regression methods, the study showed that excessive TikTok use significantly impacted adolescent mental health. As much as 74.9% of the variation in students' mental health was explained by the intensity of TikTok use, which triggered symptoms such as anxiety, stress, depression, and loneliness. These findings confirm that excessive digital interaction during adolescence can worsen their psychological condition. This study also emphasizes the importance of interventions such as social media education, time restrictions, counseling, and collaboration between schools and parents to reduce the negative impact of TikTok on students' mental well-being.

In a study by Fanesa et al., they explored the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) phenomenon among college students exposed to suicidal content on TikTok, as well as its impact on mental health crises. Through a descriptive qualitative approach and observation of social media content, they found that FoMO is triggered by technology dependency, lack of social interaction, and exposure to negative content that is not strictly regulated. This study also highlighted the impact of the Werther Effect, a phenomenon of imitation suicide due to media coverage. Suggested management strategies include increasing digital awareness, developing coping skills, and strengthening regulations on sensitive content on social media. These findings highlight the importance of a multidimensional approach to creating a safer digital space for college students' mental health.

A study by Jauharotul Millah et al. examined the influence of TikTok social media content on the mental health of junior high school students in Banyuwangi. Using a quantitative approach and simple linear regression methods, the study showed that excessive TikTok use significantly impacted adolescent mental health. As much as 74.9% of the variation in students' mental health was explained by the intensity of TikTok use, which triggered symptoms such as anxiety, stress, depression, and loneliness. These findings confirm that excessive digital interaction during adolescence can worsen their psychological well-being. The study also emphasizes the importance of interventions such as social media education, time restrictions, counseling, and collaboration between schools and parents to mitigate the negative impact of TikTok on students' mental well-being.

In a study by Razaku Azhar Rosadi et al., they highlighted the relationship between social interactions on social media and the increasing incidence of cyberbullying and its impact on adolescents' mental health. Using a quantitative approach and survey method, this study found that the higher the intensity of interactions on social media, the greater the risk of adolescents experiencing cyberbullying. The impact of exposure to cyberbullying was proven to be significant on mental health, particularly in the form of increased anxiety and depression. These findings align with Herbert Kelman's (1958) theory of Social Influence, which explains how social pressure influences individual behavior. This study emphasizes the urgency of interventions in the form of digital ethics education, stricter platform policies, and counseling support for adolescents to create a safer and psychologically healthy digital environment.

Conclusion

Exposure to negative content on social media, especially TikTok, has a significant impact on adolescents' mental health. These impacts include increased anxiety and depression, sleep disturbances, decreased self-confidence, and even the potential for self-harm. Teenagers, who are searching for their identity, are particularly vulnerable to content promoting unrealistic standards of living and beauty, as well as demeaning comments. Therefore, it is crucial to develop effective, engaging, and relevant health communication media, especially for adolescents. Such media should be interactive, visual, prioritize storytelling, and engage the emotional aspects of users. Furthermore, a user-centered design approach, which directly involves adolescents in the development process, has been shown to increase the effectiveness of the messages conveyed. Participatory media not only

serves as an educational tool but also provides a space for adolescents to reflect and increase their emotional resilience in facing the challenges of the digital world. To achieve this, collaboration between schools, parents, and health institutions is crucial. They need to work together to build a conducive ecosystem for digital health communication media. Digital and emotional literacy education must be provided from an early age, while social media platforms and government regulations must be directed towards protecting adolescents from harmful content. Cross-sector synergy is key to creating a safe, healthy, and empowering digital environment for the younger generation.

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