

Literature Study: Building Adolescent Mental Health by Tackling Toxic Culture Among Teens on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Today's teenagers are active social media users. However, in interacting on social media, people often engage in negative behaviour on social media or toxic culture, which can interfere with adolescent mental health. If allowed to continue, it will be dangerous for the next generation. A toxic culture will cause moral decline in a nation, which will have an impact on the mental health of the community itself. Therefore, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how toxic culture on social media impacts the mental health of adolescents. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature research method. Data analysis in this research uses the content analysis method of the literature that has been collected. The results showed that toxic culture on social media has a significant impact on adolescents' mental health. Forms of toxic culture that are often found on social media are body shaming, cyberbullying, addiction, and the spread of misinformation. It can have an impact on mental health, interpersonal relationships, and academic achievement and encourage risky behavior among adolescents. Therefore, efforts have been made to educate and improve digital literacy, parental guidance and supervision, content moderation, mental support, and community collaboration. These efforts have shown some degree of success. Factors influencing success include commitment and consistency from those involved, active involvement of parents, effective digital content moderation, adequate mental support, and strong community collaboration. However, there are failure factors such as lack of resources and funding, stigma and discrimination towards mental health issues, lack of coordination between stakeholders, resistance to change, and socio-cultural and economic factors.

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INTRODUCTION

Entering the sophisticated digital era, the development of communication and information technology has brought major changes in human life. Social media, as one of the most popular digital platforms, has become an integral part of daily life, especially for the younger generation (Praditia & Yuliana, 2023). Today's teenagers, who grew up amidst these technological advancements, are active social media users, spending hours each day interacting, sharing content, and expressing themselves online.

It is undeniable that the presence of social media has brought convenience to communicating and sharing information. However, behind these benefits, there are also challenges and threats. When interacting on social media, people often do bad actions to achieve their goals (Nur Erma et al., 2022). However, people who engage in negative behaviour on social media often do not reflect their behaviour in real life. Interactions on social media, especially through comment sections, can result in good or bad communication, depending on the dynamics of the interaction. However, this is different from everyday life, where establishing stages of communication with others can be more difficult.

One phenomenon that has been gaining attention lately is the toxic culture that thrives on social media. Toxic is a new term that first emerged in online environments, particularly in the world of online gaming. The term then spread to social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Line, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, which are the fastest-spreading media (Amelia, 2021). In this case, toxic culture includes behaviours such as cyberbullying, spreading negative content, sarcastic comments, and insults that can have a detrimental impact on adolescents' mental health.

Teenagers, with their unstable psychological and emotional state, are particularly vulnerable to the influence of toxic culture on social media. Social pressure, the desire to be accepted, and the need to feel valued are often triggers for teenagers to engage in this toxic culture, both as victims and perpetrators. As a result, many adolescents experience mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and even suicidal thoughts. According to Yonemoto & Kawashima (2023), less than 30% of adolescents who experience suicidal thoughts and 40% of adolescents who experience severe depression seek help from medical professionals, and only about a third of adolescents get treatment from mental health specialists.

On the other hand, there are also efforts from various parties to overcome this toxic culture and build better mental health among adolescents. These parties include parents, friends, lovers, or other close people (Ningrum et al., 2022). Positive movements, anti-bullying campaigns, and mental health education programmes have been introduced to raise awareness of the negative impacts of a toxic culture and encourage adolescents to use social media more responsibly.

The phenomenon of a toxic culture on social media and efforts to tackle it in the context of adolescent mental health is the main focus of this research. By understanding the dynamics

surrounding the emergence of a toxic culture, as well as analysing the effectiveness of various strategies and programmes that have been launched, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how toxic culture on social media impacts adolescent mental health.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with a library research method. Library research, or what is often referred to as library research, is a research method that is carried out by utilising various literature sources such as books, notes, and research reports from previous studies (Mahmud, 2011). Library research was chosen as a research method to explore the phenomenon of toxic culture on social media and efforts to overcome it among adolescents based on previous studies that have been conducted and published.

The main data sources in this study were relevant scientific literature from the last 5 years, such as journal articles, books, research reports, and other credible sources that discuss topics related to toxic culture on social media, its impact on adolescent mental health, and strategies and efforts to overcome it. The literature search was conducted systematically through academic databases such as Google Scholar and other sources using relevant keywords. The data collection process went through several stages: searching the literature using relevant keywords, screening and selecting the literature based on title, abstract, and conformity with inclusion and exclusion criteria, and systematically collecting and organising the selected literature to facilitate data analysis and synthesis.

Table 1. Process of Data Collection

Stages of the Data Collection Process	Description
Literature Search	Use of relevant keywords to search for literature relevant to the research topic
Literature Screening and Selection	Screening based on title, abstract, inclusion, and exclusion criteria
Collection and Organisation	Systematisation of selected literature to facilitate data analysis and synthesis

The use of the literature process greatly assisted the author in solving the problems that existed in adolescents because, during the writing process, the researcher searched and carefully reviewed relevant research topics, screening studies based on titles, abstracts, inclusion criteria, and exclusivity. The data collection was also selected to facilitate data analysis and synthesis. This process certainly made the research results more relevant to the situation among teenagers. The result of using this method is that toxic culture on social media has a significant impact on adolescents' mental health, triggering negative behaviours such as body shaming, cyberbullying, addiction, and spreading misinformation. While some efforts have shown success, there are challenges in addressing these issues, such as lack of resources, stigma, and lack of coordination. Therefore, this research can be further developed by

examining parental involvement in adolescents' lives.

Data analysis in this study was carried out using the content analysis method of the collected literature. Content analysis is a research method that specifically discusses and analyses information contained in mass media (Arafat, 2019). Content analysis is a research method used to make objective and systematic conclusions from the characteristics of observed messages (Moleong, 2018). The analysis process includes coding and categorising major themes, key concepts, and important findings, synthesising data from various literature sources, and interpreting and discussing findings in relation to the context and purpose of the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Toxic culture on social media affects adolescents' mental health

The toxic culture on social media has a significant impact on adolescents' mental health. This phenomenon includes various forms of negative behaviours as well as exposure to emotionally harmful content. The adverse effects of social media will also lead to a decline in the morals and ethics of the younger generation (Aprilistya et al., 2023). Recent studies have shown that adolescents who are frequently exposed to this toxic culture tend to experience increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. According to research conducted by Damayanti & Haryanto (2019), when students feel unpleasant rejection from their peers and do not get support, it can cause problems such as anxiety and feelings of worry. They are also at risk of decreased self-esteem, social isolation, and even suicidal thoughts or actions.

According to research conducted by Nurseha (2023), social media is a real phenomenon and not just a fake reality because it affects individual behaviour and involves aspects of each individual's identity. However, the reality is that there are still many individuals who do not realise that social media is a real entity and sometimes violates the law. Social media has a significant impact on real life, and it is important to be aware of its negative potential, especially in the context of a toxic culture that can affect adolescents' mental health.

The toxic culture on social media is influenced by unwise use. Studies say that uncontrolled use of social media in accordance with its portion can have a negative impact on its users (Lewoleba et al., 2022). Social media has the potential to cause negative effects, including adverse health effects and the possibility of negative consequences due to inappropriate use of the platform.

Exposure to negative content, bullying, and toxic behaviour on social media increases the risk of adolescents experiencing depression, anxiety, and self-esteem problems. One study showed that social media use and accessing negative content with aggressiveness can increase depression levels in university students (Natsir et al., 2023). According to this theory, adolescents who are overexposed to toxic behaviours on social media may develop the perception that the online world is a threatening and dangerous environment.

Adolescents' exposure to toxic cultures on social media can have serious consequences

on their mental health. Toxic cultures such as bullying can cause feelings of shame, low self-esteem, and even psychological trauma in the adolescents affected. Some bullying incidents show that the impact is not only limited to the physical injuries suffered by the victims but also causes disruption to their mental health (Handayani et al., 2021). Unhealthy social comparison can also damage adolescents' mental health. Through social media, adolescents are often exposed to edited and curated lives designed to showcase the most favourable versions of others' lives. This can lead to feelings of underachievement, envy, and anxiety about their own self-image.

Forms of toxic culture that are often found on social media and their impact on adolescents

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, especially for teenagers. However, behind the benefits and conveniences offered, there are a number of toxic cultures that often poison the social media environment. These toxic cultures can spread quickly and have a negative impact on the mental health and development of adolescents.

One form of toxic culture often encountered on social media is body shaming, using physical appearance as an object of jokes (Fauzi et al., 2023). In a virtual world filled with perfect images and unrealistic beauty standards, adolescents often feel pressured to have an idealised appearance. They are exposed to demeaning comments and insults about their body shape, weight, or other physical appearance. Some adolescents who are exposed to body shaming comments on their social media platforms can experience psychological effects such as stress, depression, eating disorders, and even suicide (Syah & Hermawati, 2020). An obese teenage girl may feel uncomfortable with herself after seeing scathing comments about her weight on social media. Meanwhile, a skinny teenage boy may experience pressure to have bigger muscles and try to achieve unrealistic body standards.

In addition, cyberbullying is also one of the problems that often occur on social media (Rachmayanti & Candrasari, 2022). Teenagers are often subjected to online bullying, humiliation, or harassment from peers or even strangers. Forms of cyberbullying can vary, ranging from verbal abuse in text messages or online comments, spreading gossip or embarrassing content, to insults or taunts on social media platforms. In addition, it also includes defamation, identity falsification, and even threats and acts of violence in the online realm (Wahyuningrum et al., 2023). These acts can have a very serious impact on adolescents' mental health and self-esteem, even potentially leading to suicide in extreme cases. An adolescent who is a victim of cyberbullying may feel depressed, anxious, and depressed because they cannot escape the bullying. They may feel isolated and have nowhere to pour their heart out.

Another toxic culture that is often found in social media is addiction and over-dependence. Adolescents are often caught in a cycle of social media addiction, where they become so dependent that they are willing to spend long periods just to get satisfaction

(Fauziawati, 2015). This addiction can disrupt their daily routines, interpersonal relationships, and even academic performance. In addition, excessive exposure to social media can also trigger feelings of jealousy, depression, and social anxiety in adolescents. An adolescent who is addicted to social media may feel a loss of control over their life and neglect other responsibilities and activities that should be prioritised.

Another dangerous phenomenon is the spread of misinformation and negative content. Social media is often filled with false information, hoaxes, and harmful content that can influence adolescents' perceptions and behaviour (Wulandari et al., 2019). Negative content, such as the promotion of violence, radicalism, or other risky behaviours can mislead adolescents and trigger actions that harm themselves or others. An adolescent exposed to negative content on social media may be influenced and try to practice such behaviours, such as smoking, consuming alcohol, or other criminal acts.

The impact of toxic cultures on social media on adolescents is very real and worrying. Firstly, it can negatively affect adolescents' mental health (Ussolikhah et al., 2023). Constant exposure to body shaming, cyberbullying, and negative content can lead to insecurity, depression, anxiety, and even suicidal thoughts in vulnerable adolescents. The pressure and stress faced can worsen their mental health condition and hinder healthy psychological development. An adolescent who experiences depression due to body shaming may feel hopeless and lose hope in life (Murni & Ulandari, 2023).

Second, the toxic culture on social media can also impact adolescents' interpersonal relationships and social skills. Over-reliance on social media can reduce face-to-face interactions and cause adolescents to lose the ability to communicate effectively in the real world (Fitriana, 2020). In addition, cyberbullying and negative comments can lead to insecurity and fear in relationships with others. Victims of cyberbullying may feel threatened and experience emotional distress from the taunts they receive, which can lead to depression, trauma, or even suicidal thoughts (Iffat, 2023).

Third, toxic culture on social media can affect adolescents' academic achievement and performance. Social media addiction can distract them from schoolwork and learning activities, while pressure from body shaming and cyberbullying can interfere with concentration and motivation. As a result, their academic performance may decline, and their potential may not be optimally developed. An adolescent who is addicted to social media may put aside school and home obligations and possibly neglect religious practices, resulting in a lack of productivity in adolescent activities (R. Wulandari & Netrawati, 2020).

In addition, toxic culture on social media can also encourage adolescents to engage in risky behaviours, such as smoking, consuming alcohol, or unsafe sexual acts. Exposure to negative content and misinformation can influence their perception of social norms and encourage them to follow harmful trends or behaviours. This is in line with research conducted by Utari et al. (2020), which shows that exposure to smoking content on social media is widespread, with 104 out of 110 respondents (94.5%) revealing that they have seen smoking content on their social media platforms. A teenager who sees content about binge

drinking on social media may be influenced and try to consume alcohol because they think that it is normal and accepted among teenagers. These negative impacts can worsen if there is no effort to address the toxic culture on social media. Teenagers may continue to be exposed to harmful content and experience greater pressure from their social environment.

Efforts have been made to tackle toxic culture on social media, especially among teenagers

Based on the literature study that has been conducted, various efforts have been made to tackle toxic culture on social media, especially among teenagers. Education and increasing digital literacy for teenagers is one of the important efforts in tackling toxic culture on social media. Research conducted by Taryadi & Yuniarto (2022) found that improving the ability and understanding of digital literacy will reduce the danger of intolerance and radicalism that develops in cyberspace, especially social media, among the younger generation.

Parents and educators play an important role in providing guidance and supervision to adolescents when using social media. Parents can take on the role of supervisor for their children by implementing strict usage rules, sharing activities with their children on social media, setting quota restrictions, taking a personal approach, and introducing religious elements (Lembang, 2021). Parents and educators have a responsibility to guide and protect adolescents from the negative impacts of social media and help them develop a healthy awareness of its use.

Social media platform providers also play a role in tackling toxic culture through content moderation and strict rule enforcement. Online platforms have developed into important platforms for exchanging information, especially with the emergence of the Web 3.0 concept that emphasises user-generated content as one of its main characteristics. In addition, the right to freedom of information, as guaranteed in the ICCPR, affirms that every individual has the right to access information through various media, including the Internet (Hamid, 2022).

Psychological interventions and mental support are also needed to help adolescents who have been exposed to toxic culture on social media. Peer groups are a source of emotional support, sympathy, understanding, and moral guidance for adolescents. They are also environments where adolescents can experiment and seek autonomy and independence from their parents (Surasa & Murtiningsih, 2021). Adolescents who receive strong social support from peers will feel loved and accepted. In line with Saguni & Amin (2014), children who receive a lot of social support from peers tend to feel loved and cared for, which in turn boosts their self-esteem.

Tackling toxic culture on social media requires collaboration and involvement from various parties, including teenagers, parents, educators, social media platform providers, the government, and the wider community. Research conducted by Karisma et al. (2023) emphasises that active participation and cooperation from the community is a key elements in creating a beneficial transformation. The campaign aims to call on the entire community

to unite and take positive steps against cyberbullying (Prabaswara & Nurliana, 2023). Active and collaborative participation from all parties is important to create a safer and more positive online environment for adolescent development and prevent the negative impact of toxic culture on social media.

The effectiveness of efforts in building adolescent mental health and tackling toxic culture on social media

Adolescent mental health is an important aspect that affects adolescents' overall quality of life. In line with Hutasuhut et al. (2023), optimal mental well-being in adolescents can have a favourable impact on their quality of life as adults. Efforts have been made to build adolescent mental health, with a focus on education and improving digital literacy. These programmes aim to provide a better understanding of the risks and benefits of social media and improve adolescents' ability to use these platforms positively. The results show that adolescents who have high digital literacy tend to be better able to manage the risks associated with social media use and have better mental health.

In addition to digital education and literacy, parental guidance and supervision also play an important role in building adolescent mental health. Studies have shown that adolescents who receive proper support and guidance from their parents tend to have better mental health. Open communication between parents and children also helps reduce the risk of conflict and psychological problems in adolescents. Within the family, the interaction and instilment of values by parents to children through communication has a central role in the process of shaping the child's personality during growth and development (Najmudin et al., 2023). In line with R. Hermawan et al. (2024), The role of parents as the head of the family is crucial in educating their children on the appropriate and ethical use of social media and guiding them in developing maximum self-control.

Toxic culture on social media is a serious problem that can have a significant negative impact on adolescents' mental health. Therefore, efforts have been made to tackle this toxic culture. One effective effort is content moderation. Social media platform providers can play a key role in reducing potentially harmful or harmful content for adolescents. Through algorithms and strict content moderation policies, social media platforms can limit the spread of negative content and promote more positive and supportive content.

Mental support is also needed to help adolescents who have been exposed to toxic cultures on social media. Counselling, therapy, and other mental support programs can help adolescents cope with stress, anxiety, and depression that may arise from negative experiences on social media. With access to appropriate mental support, adolescents can learn how to better manage their emotions and develop strong mental resilience. Providing mental health training to adolescents is one way to improve their understanding of mental health issues. (Aryantiningsih et al., 2023).

It is undeniable that tackling toxic culture on social media requires collaboration and involvement from various parties. Collaboration between youth, parents, educators, social

media platform providers, the government, and the wider community is crucial in creating a safer and more positive online environment. Through close cooperation between various stakeholders, it is possible to raise awareness of the dangers of toxic culture and develop effective solutions to address the problem.

Overall, the efforts that have been made to build adolescent mental health and tackle toxic culture on social media have shown some degree of success. However, the challenges remain great and require closer collaboration between all relevant parties. With stronger collaboration and a holistic approach, we can hopefully create a safer, more positive, and supportive online environment for adolescent mental health development in the future. Collaboration between families, schools, and community institutions can increase the positive impact of these interventions, creating an environment that supports adolescent mental health (Rahma & Cahyani, 2023).

Factors that influence the success or failure of these efforts in building adolescent mental health

Efforts to build adolescent mental health, such as digital literacy education and improvement, parental guidance and supervision, content moderation, mental support, and community collaboration, have factors that influence their success or failure. Firstly, factors that influence the success of these efforts. One important factor is the commitment and consistency of the parties involved. Educating and improving digital literacy requires continuous efforts from the government, educational institutions, and community organisations. If these programmes are implemented incidentally or inconsistently, the impact will not be optimal. An integrated curriculum tailored to the latest technological developments is needed to ensure that adolescents gain relevant knowledge and skills.

In addition, the active involvement of parents in providing guidance and supervision is very important (M. Hermawan, 2023). Parents who are actively involved in adolescents' lives, understand their challenges and opportunities, and provide appropriate support and direction can be a key factor in maintaining adolescents' mental health. However, this also depends on parents' ability to communicate effectively with their teenagers and having adequate knowledge and skills in providing guidance.

Another factor that influences the success of such efforts is effective content moderation. In today's digital age, teenagers are particularly vulnerable to exposure to negative and harmful content on the internet. Social media platforms, websites, and apps must have strong moderation mechanisms to filter and remove content that could potentially damage adolescents' mental health. Collaboration between the government, tech industry, and civil society is needed to create a safer and healthier online environment for teenagers.

Adequate mental support is also an important factor in the success of efforts to build adolescent mental health. The availability of counselling services, support networks, mental

health workshops, and other resources that can provide psychological and emotional support to adolescents can help them overcome the problems and challenges they face (Lisiecka et al., 2023). However, access to and awareness of these services must be improved, and sufficient quality and resources must be ensured.

Finally, strong and coordinated community collaboration can be a contributing factor to the success of these efforts. The involvement of various parties, such as educational institutions, community organisations, religious communities, and other stakeholders, can create a more conducive environment for adolescent mental health. Collaboration, awareness campaigns, support programmes, and resource sharing can have a wider and more effective impact.

On the other hand, some factors can lead to the failure of efforts to build adolescent mental health. One of the main factors is the lack of adequate resources and funding. Educational programmes, mental support services, and other initiatives require significant investment in human resources, infrastructure, and budget. If these resources are not available or allocated properly, then efforts may be hampered and not achieve the expected results.

In addition, stigmatisation and discrimination against mental health issues can also be a huge barrier (Hartini et al., 2018). If adolescents and their families face stigma and discrimination, they may be reluctant to seek help or participate in available programmes. This can hamper efforts in building adolescent mental health. Wider awareness and education campaigns are needed to remove stigma and create a more open and supportive environment.

Another factor that can lead to failure is the lack of coordination and collaboration between the stakeholders involved (Muhammadiyah et al., 2023). If there is no synergy and good communication between the government, educational institutions, community organisations, and other parties, efforts may overlap or even contradict each other. This can hamper the effectiveness and impact of these efforts.

In addition, resistance to change and uncertainty can also be barriers. Changes in culture, norms, and practices related to adolescent mental health may face resistance from certain parties. This can hinder the implementation of new programmes and initiatives designed to support adolescent mental health.

Finally, socio-cultural and economic factors can also play a role in the success or failure of such efforts. Difficult economic conditions, social inequality, and unfavourable cultural norms can create an environment that is less conducive to adolescent mental health. Efforts should take these factors into account and be tailored to the local context to ensure maximum relevance and impact.

By understanding the factors that influence the success or failure of efforts to build adolescent mental health, we can take appropriate steps to improve the effectiveness and impact of these efforts. Strong commitment, adequate resources, coordinated collaboration, and a holistic and contextualised approach are required to create an environment that supports optimal adolescent mental health.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that toxic culture on social media has a significant impact on adolescent mental health. This phenomenon includes various forms of negative behaviour as well as exposure to emotionally harmful content. The toxic culture on social media is influenced by unwise use.

Forms of a toxic culture often encountered on social media are body shaming, cyberbullying, addiction, and spreading misinformation, which can impact mental health, interpersonal relationships, and academic achievement and encourage risky behaviours among adolescents.

Efforts have been made to tackle toxic culture on social media, especially among adolescents, namely education and increasing digital literacy, parental guidance and supervision, content moderation, mental support, and community collaboration.

The efforts that have been made to build adolescent mental health and tackle toxic culture on social media have shown some level of success. However, the challenges remain great and require closer collaboration between all relevant parties.

Factors that influence the success of efforts to build adolescent mental health include commitment and consistency from those involved, active involvement of parents, effective moderation of digital content, adequate mental support, and strong community collaboration. However, there are failure factors such as lack of resources and funding, stigma and discrimination towards mental health issues, lack of coordination between stakeholders, resistance to change, and socio-cultural and economic factors.

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