

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA EXPOSURE AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AMONG FEMALE ADOLESCENTS AT MAN 1 INOVASI SUBULUSSALAM IN 2025

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ABSTRACT

Background: Social media has become an inseparable part of adolescents' daily lives. The ease of access to information through social media provides numerous benefits; however, it also increases exposure to sexual content that may influence adolescents' sexual behavior. Female adolescents constitute a particularly vulnerable group to the adverse consequences of risky sexual behavior. **Objectives:** This study aimed to analyze the relationship between social media exposure and sexual behavior among female adolescents at MAN 1 Inovasi Subulussalam in 2025. **Methods:** This study employed a correlational analytical design with a cross-sectional approach. The research was conducted in August 2025 at MAN 1 Inovasi Subulussalam. The study population consisted of all female students in Grade X, totaling 47 individuals. A purposive sampling technique was used, resulting in a sample of 47 respondents. Data were collected using a social media exposure questionnaire and an adolescent sexual behavior questionnaire. Data analysis was performed using the Chi-Square statistical test with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. **Results:** The analysis revealed a p-value of < 0.05 , indicating that adolescents with high levels of social media exposure were more likely to exhibit riskier sexual behaviors compared to those with lower levels of social media exposure. **Conclusion:** The findings demonstrate a significant relationship between social media exposure and sexual behavior among female adolescents at MAN 1 Inovasi Subulussalam in 2025. Uncontrolled use of social media may increase the risk of engaging in sexual behavior among adolescents. Therefore, reproductive health education, digital literacy programs, and supervision from parents and schools are essential to minimize the negative impacts of social media use.

Keywords: Social media, Sexual behavior, Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by identity exploration and a heightened sense of curiosity, including curiosity regarding sexuality. Adolescent sexual behavior emerges as a response to sexual drives originating from both internal and external influences. Such behavior may arise when adolescents interact with individuals of the opposite sex or the same sex as a result of sexual stimulation (Nuraeni & Nainar, 2021). Several factors contribute to adolescent sexual behavior, including knowledge, increased libido, media exposure, religious norms, parental influence, and peer association (Sarwono, 2019).

Internet users worldwide have reached approximately 31.7 billion, and the number of internet users continues to grow annually at a rate of 7.6% (Nesi et al., 2021). Similarly, the number of social media users in Indonesia has continued to increase from year to year (Wijayanti et al., 2020). In the era of globalization, social media has become an integral component of adolescents' lives. However, the use of social media that is not properly regulated may generate negative consequences, particularly given the widespread availability of pornographic websites that can be accessed with ease.

According to the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, adolescents aged 15–19 years constitute approximately 80% of internet users in the country (Anderson et al., 2020). Adolescents utilize the internet to access a wide range of information due to their high level of curiosity during this developmental period. It is undeniable that adolescents' curiosity regarding sexual matters often motivates them to seek information through mass media, the internet, and social media platforms (Rettob & Murtiningsih, 2021). There are approximately 143 million social media users, representing 50.2% of the total population (Kaplan, 2025).

Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) provide adolescents with unrestricted access to various forms of information regardless of time and place. On one hand, social media offers substantial benefits by facilitating access to educational resources, health information, and opportunities for personal development. On the other hand, it also exposes adolescents to content containing sexual elements, pornography, and sexual behaviors that may be inconsistent with social norms and their developmental stage. Such exposure can influence adolescents' perceptions, attitudes, and sexual behaviors through social learning processes and imitation of the content they consume (Bukit et al., 2025).

Research conducted in Indonesia has demonstrated that adolescents with higher levels of social media exposure are more likely to engage in sexual behavior than those with lower levels of exposure (Mooduto et al., 2021). Both the quantity and quality of social media use have been assessed to examine the relationship between sources of reproductive health information and adolescent sexual behavior. The analysis of these variables aims to explore the potential of technology utilization in reducing the risk of sexual behavior among adolescents (Anastario et al., 2020).

Findings from several studies on the impact of social media indicate that, while social media offers positive benefits, it may also produce adverse effects among adolescents. Positive impacts include maintaining social relationships and facilitating information exchange,

whereas negative impacts involve the misuse of information systems to satisfy sexual needs (Junawan & Laugu, 2020).

A preliminary study conducted among students at MAN 1 Inovasi revealed that 45 female students used social media, while only 2 did not. Several students were also reported to spend their free periods gathering together to access videos or photographs that were inappropriate for viewing. Furthermore, nearly all of these adolescents were involved in romantic relationships. Based on this background, the researcher was interested in conducting a study aimed at analyzing the relationship between social media exposure and sexual behavior among adolescents.

METHODS

This study employed a correlational analytical research design, as it aimed to examine the relationship between two variables and subsequently determine the correlation coefficient between them. The study utilized a cross-sectional approach, meaning that each research subject was observed only once, and measurements were conducted at a single point in time to assess the characteristics under investigation, including data collection related to the independent variable (Notoatmodjo, 2019).

The study was conducted in August 2025 at MAN 1 Inovasi Subulussalam. The study population consisted of all female students in Grade X, totaling 47 individuals. The sampling technique employed was total sampling, whereby the entire population was included as the research sample. The instruments used in this study were a social media usage questionnaire and an adolescent sexual behavior questionnaire. Data were analyzed using the Chi-Square statistical test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Univariate Analysis

a. Social Media Exposure

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Social Media Exposure Among Female Adolescents at MAN 1 Inovasi Subulussalam in 2025

Social Media Exposure	f	%
High	42	89,4
Low	5	10,6
Total	47	100

Based on Table 1, it was found that the majority of respondents had a high level of social media use or exposure, comprising 42 respondents (89.4%).

b. Sexual Behavior

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Sexual Behavior Among Female Adolescents at MAN 1 Inovasi Subulussalam in 2025

Sexual Behavior	f	%
Positive	18	38,3
Negative	29	61,7
Total	47	100

Based on Table 2, it was found that the majority of respondents exhibited sexual behavior categorized as negative, comprising 29 respondents (61.7%).

2. Bivariate Analysis

Table 3. The Relationship Between Social Media Use and Sexual Behavior Among Female Adolescents at MAN 1 Inovasi Subulussalam in 2025

Sexual Behavior								
Social Exposure	Media	Negative		Positive		Total		P- Value
		f	%	f	%	f	%	
High		1	2,1	4	8,5	5	10,6	0,000
Low		28	59,6	14	29,8	42	89,4	
Total		29	61,7	18	38,3	47	100	

Based on Table 3, it was found that among the 47 respondents, the majority exhibited social media use in conjunction with negative sexual behavior, accounting for 28 respondents (59.6%).

The results of the statistical analysis revealed that the value of p was less than $\alpha(0.05)$, indicating a statistically significant relationship between social media exposure and sexual behavior among female adolescents. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Katharina and Yuliana (2020), which reported that adolescents with a high intensity of social media use tend to pay greater attention to and become more immersed in the content they access through their social media platforms.

Additional findings further support the results of the present study, demonstrating that unhealthy social media use may increase the risk of premarital sexual behavior among adolescents. Exposure to pornographic content on social media not only accelerates premature psychological sexual maturation but also diminishes adolescents' ability to critically evaluate and filter information. Respondents in that study reported initiating romantic relationships at the age of 14 and engaging in various forms of sexual activity, ranging from hugging to kissing their partners (Aulia & Fitriyana, 2021).

In practice, adolescents utilize the internet not only for educational purposes but also for entertainment, online shopping, social networking, and various other activities (Davies et al., 2020). The relationship between social media use and adolescent sexual behavior can be explained through Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals acquire behaviors through observation and imitation of models they perceive as relevant. Within the context of social media, adolescents may imitate behaviors exhibited by their peers or public figures, including behaviors related to sexual activities. Furthermore, Media Effects Theory (Bryant & Thompson) suggests that exposure to sexually explicit content on social media can shape adolescents' attitudes, norms, and perceptions regarding sexuality, thereby encouraging them to engage in sexual behaviors that they perceive as normal based on what they observe.

The researcher is of the opinion that the level of sexual behavior among adolescents is influenced by the extent to which they use social media wisely. Adolescents who use social media without adequate control or guidance are more likely to be influenced by trends and behaviors that deviate from prevailing social norms. Conversely, adolescents who are able to critically select content and utilize social media for constructive purposes, such as education or healthy communication, tend to exhibit more responsible sexual behavior. The researcher further assumes that the high prevalence of sexual behavior among adolescents is largely attributable to the initiation of romantic relationships and frequent exposure to romantic-genre films, which may stimulate a desire to engage in such behaviors.

CONCLUSIONS

A significant relationship was found between social media use and sexual behavior among female adolescents at MAN 1 Inovasi Subulussalam, Subulussalam City, in 2025. It is expected that the findings of this study will serve as valuable input and a basis for self-reflection regarding the use of social media, encourage adolescents to critically evaluate and filter the information sources they access, and help them avoid engaging in negative sexual behaviors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sincere appreciation is extended to the principal, administrative staff, and teachers at MAN 1 Inovasi Subulussalam for granting permission and providing an accommodating environment for data collection conducted in August 2025. The authors are immensely grateful to all the grade X female students who willingly participated as respondents, sharing their valuable insights for this study.

Finally, the authors thank the research supervisors, healthcare practitioners, and field assistants whose professional guidance, critical feedback, and operational assistance significantly enriched the quality of this manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND FUNDING DISCLOSURE

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

NRNN: conceptualization, data curation, investigation, methodology, formal analysis, validation, visualization, writing original draft, writing review and editing.

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