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The Correlation of Tinder Social Media Use to Risky Sexual Behavior in Teens

Nawang Ayu Tiya Amanda, Heny Ekawati*  and Wahyu Retno Gumelar

Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Lamongan, East Java, Indonesia

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Co-Author

Heny Ekawati

unamubarok@gmail.com

Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Lamongan, East Java, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Risky sexual behavior among adolescents is a growing concern. In Indonesia, it is estimated that nearly 3.5 million adolescents have engaged in risky sexual behavior before the age of 18 and prior to marriage. One contributing factor is the use of dating-based social media platforms such as Tinder. This study aims to examine the relationship between the use of Tinder and risky sexual behavior among eighth-grade students.

Methods: The research adopted a correlational analytic design with a cross-sectional approach. A total of 58 respondents were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through an instrument used was a questionnaire on the use of Tinder social media and risky sexual behavior and analyzed using the Spearman Rank correlation test.

Results: The findings show that a considerable proportion of students (48.3%) demonstrated high usage of Tinder, and the majority (66.7%) exhibited risky sexual behaviors. The statistical analysis revealed a strong and significant correlation between Tinder use and risky sexual behavior ($r = 0.752$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that increased usage is associated with greater behavioral risk.

Conclusion: These results highlight the urgent need for comprehensive sexual education and digital literacy programs tailored to adolescents, particularly in junior high school settings.

Keywords: Risky Sexual Behavior, Teenagers, Tinder Usage

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical period, one of the stages where growing up rapidly, undergoing physical and psychological changes, and building a reproductive

system that controls sexual activity (Triadita et al., 2024). The problems that can arise in adolescents are very diverse, one of which is the frequent use of social media by adolescents to access websites, view content, talk, and even interact with

the opposite sex is one of the factors that contribute to their harmful sexual behavior (Yusuf & Hamdi, 2021). Online dating apps are one of the most popular social media among teenagers.

Data from the Indonesian Reproductive Health Survey (SKRI) conducted in 2020-2021 found that 3.5 million adolescents aged 13-17 years and 8.6% of unmarried adolescents aged 20-24 years had had risky sexual intercourse. In 2021 for East Java Province, it was obtained (0.02%) with details of school teenagers aged 10-19 years who had had a risky relationship. Based on the results of a research analysis in Lamongan Regency, the number of child marriages in 2022 was 433 cases with various factors, (31%) young women were pregnant, (21%) violated religious standards, (16%) had engaged in sexual activity, (8%) violated societal values, and (4%) were at risk of sexual intercourse (Wahyuni et al., 2023)

Factors that trigger sexual problems are lack of sex education, lack of supervision from parents, and exposure to sexual content, one of which is online dating applications (Zikra, 2020). The impact can result in teenagers not knowing enough to understand the dangers of having unprotected sex or a relationship with someone they just met on an app like Tinder. This ignorance can trigger risky sexual behaviors, such as having unprotected sex or even engaging in sexual intercourse outside of a healthy context. Parents who are not involved in the digital lives of teenagers are less likely to be aware of the true state of affairs in their child's cyberspace, so teens become more vulnerable to the risks posed by the use of dating apps (Fajriani et al., 2021).

One effort to stop adolescents from engaging in sexual activity is the provision of more structured sexual education by emphasizing the importance of understanding the consequences of unsafe sexual intercourse. Parents should also take a more active role in supervising their children's social media use and creating a safe environment for conversations related to sexuality. In this case, creating a safe environment requires collaboration between parents and schools to support adolescents so that they can avoid the risks that may arise from uncontrolled use of social media. According to Augusta & Putri (2023) One of the deviations in adolescent behavior in social media is formed as a result of adolescents' abnormal communication habits so that they form aggressive personalities, emotionally easy personalities, and personalities that are more daring to try new things. This can lead to adolescents becoming perpetrators and victims of sexual harassment on social media, including a decline in morals and standards of behavior that conforms to norms in public settings, a lack of knowledge about social media, and a lack of social and personal control when using social media.

The knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that adolescents engage in to satisfy their sexual desires either alone or with a partner can be categorized as risky sexual behavior. This behavior has forms ranging from fairly light to severe sexual behavior. These forms of behavior include dating, getting to know each other, expressing love or feelings, hugging, touching, kissing, groping, and even having sex. Social media exposed by teens can increase their libido. Social media is becoming more sophisticated with the

internet with features in it, and because they usually don't fully understand sexual issues, teenagers tend to be interested and want to try new things and imitate what they see and hear. The impact of adolescent reproductive health may be impaired due to increased harmful sexual behavior and the accompanying ignorance (Ungsianik & Yuliati, 2020). The aim of this study was to understand the relationship between adolescent risky sexual behavior and tinder social media use.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative research design of correlational analytics with a cross sectional approach. This study was conducted in one of the junior high schools in Lamongan Regency with a sample of 58 selected using the purposive sampling technique selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria include: Students who are willing to be respondents, use social media tinder, have problems related to sexual behavior that have been interviewe, grade VIII students and are students at Lamongan Regency Junior High School. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria are students who are not in class VIII and not students at SMP N 1 Ngimbang, students who are sick and do not attend school, students who do not have a cell phone. The independent variable in this study is the use of social media, tinder and its dependent variable, namely sexual behavior in at-risk adolescents. The measuring tool in this study used a modified questionnaire from the researcher in the form of a questionnaire related to the use of social media tinder as many as 15 questions,

consisting of 8 positive questions and 7 negative questions that showed validity and the results of the reliability test showed Alpha Cronbach 0.978 which means reliable. Meanwhile, the risky sexual behavior questionnaire had 20 questions, namely 12 positive questions and 8 negative questions indicating validity and the results of the reliability test showed Alpha Cronbach 0.763 which means reliable. This questioner adobted by Arie (2020). The data analysis in this study used the Spearman's Rho test. This research has received ethical approval from the Ethics Commission of the University of Muhammadiyah Lamongan No: 197/EC/KEPK-S1/05/2025.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that most of the students in the 14-year-old class are 37 students (63.8%) and almost all of the students are female, which is 44 students (75.9%).

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent Characteristics (n:58)

Characteristics	n	(%)
Age		
14	37	63.8%
15	21	36.2%
Total	58	100%
Gender		
Male	14	24.1%
Women	44	75.9%
Total	58	100%

Table 2. It shows that almost all students use social media tinder in the high category (48.3%) and almost all (72.4%) students have active risky sexual behavior.

Based on table 3. It can be explained that students who use Tinder social media are in the high category.

Table 2. Distribution Frequency of tinder use and risky sexual behavior (n:58)

Variable	n	(%)
Tinder Social Media Usage		
Low	5	8.6%
Medium	25	43.1%
Height	28	48.3%
Total	58	100%
Risky Sexual Behavior		
Less Active	1	1.7%
Quite Active	15	25.9%
Active	42	72.4%
Total	58	100%

Most (48.3%) students are in the category of active risky sexual behaviors and a small percentage (1.7%) of students who use Tinder social media are low. in the category of risky sexual behaviors that are less active. The results of the statistical test using the Spearman Rho test obtained a p value of 0.000 less than 0.05 so that H1 was accepted with a calculated r value of 0.752 which means that there is a significant relationship between the use of social media tinder and risky sexual behavior in adolescents in junior high school Lamongan Regency grade VIII with a strong correlation level and a positive correlation direction.

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of the Relationship between Tinder Social Media Use and Risky Sexual Behavior

Tinder Social Media Usage	Risky Sexual Behavior						Total	
	Less Active		Quite Active		Active			
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Low	1	1.7%	4	6.9%	0	0%	5	8.6%
Medium	0	0%	11	19.0%	14	24.1%	25	43.1%
Height	0	0%	0	0%	28	48.3%	28	48.3%
Total	1	1.7%	15	25.9%	42	72.4%	58	100%

Spearman 's Rho test result p: 0.000 Rs = 0.752

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study. it was found that most students use social media tinder with a high category. This is influenced by the age of teenagers who tend to use social media more often. In adolescence. individuals will do various new things to explore themselves. including on social media. so that at their immature age. they will think less about the actions and impacts they take. This is in line with research theory Paramitha et al. (2021) which confirms that the intensive use of social media can shape an individual's perception of his or her social

reality. they will tend to socialize more with acquaintances in the virtual world than with the surrounding environment. In adolescence. this can affect their mental health and social behavior.

The age group that most often and actively uses social media is teenagers. One of the applications used is Tinder which makes them bolder because of their considerable curiosity. Tinder provides a space for them to explore themselves. appear more attractive. and feel valued. However. this exploration becomes risky if it is not accompanied by proper guidance and supervision. Tinder provides

communication with a variety of high features such as visual profiles, two-way interactions, location features, and quick engagement. This kind of media greatly affects adolescents because it provides high emotional stimulation and social sensations, encouraging them to deeper engagement. Some of the factors that cause the high use of tinder social media include age, gender, and parental roles (Wardle et al., 2024).

Based on the findings, most of the Tinder social media users in this study are female. Women, especially their teenage years, tend to be more selective in choosing photos, writing self-descriptions, and interacting with other users on social media to create the desired impression and increase confidence. This is in line with research theory Aida (2022) affirms that adolescent girls are more likely to share their personal information, feelings, and experiences. This tendency makes women more active in interacting on platforms like tinder, where communication and the formation of new relationships rely heavily on self-openness.

According to Fitri & Irwansyah (2023) Tinder online dating media is a trending medium among young people, because it provides a quick and instant social and emotional experience, and provides opportunities for teenagers to express sexual attraction, even though they are not yet psychologically mature. Tinder is considered a rich medium because it provides two-way interactions, visuals (photos), text, and even voice or video. Tinder also allows users to match and instantly start a conversation, creating a more personal and quick relationship.

The availability of this feature encourages more intimate communication

and the rapid formation of emotional and even sexual closeness. Especially in adolescents who are classified as immature and still labile and easy to get carried away.

The Tinder app is often labeled as a platform for those seeking sexual partners, often referred to as hook-ups (Tisdell et al., 2025). The use of dating apps can also exacerbate social isolation, as the relationships formed are often shallow and emotionally unsatisfying (Sarah et al., 2023). The fast, instant, and anonymous nature of the app tends to open up opportunities for users to engage in impulsive and deviant behavior. Some forms of this behavior include sexting (sharing sexual messages or images), ghosting (disappearing without explanation after establishing intense communication), and spontaneous physical encounters conducted without considering the risks (David & Cambre, 2021).

If the Tinder app becomes more popular and widely used by the public, it is possible that it will shift social norms and increase the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as more people engage in sexual relations outside of marriage (Zahid, 2019). Most informants explained that this app gives them the freedom to present themselves through attractive profiles, including the use of seductive photos, utilizing the app's features to promote themselves and attract attention (Fauzi et al., 2023).

Current technological developments and advancements significantly support the search for information on sexual behavior, particularly the use of the internet and social media, which are currently popular and favored by adolescents (Yutifa, 2015). This is due to adolescents' high curiosity to

experiment with new experiences. They also explore these experiences through social media (Aulia & Fitriyana, 2021).

Before the advent of social media, mass media served as a platform for spreading metropolitan lifestyles. Only a few years ago, it was stated that mass media was one of the factors contributing to the adoption of social behavior (Aulia & Fitriyana, 2021). Television, as a mass medium, has become a commercial medium that fulfills only what viewers want, not what they need. The advent of the internet presents new challenges. While previously mass media existed in a form owned by groups, such as television, which could be accessed by one family in one household, the rapid development of the internet has made devices increasingly personal. Now, someone can easily access information through a palm-sized device, so that everyone feels the need to have an individual device. The personal nature of internet devices leads to on-demand access to information, leading adolescents, for example, to only access the information they want, including information that satisfies their curiosity. This can then trigger risky sexual behavior (Husniya et al., 2023)

Adolescents who frequently view content about romantic or sexual relationships are more likely to imitate such behavior, especially if the content is presented in an engaging manner and receives a lot of public support, such as "likes" and positive comments. In other words, social media can now act as an unofficial teacher, influencing adolescents' sexual perceptions and behaviors without proper educational support (Badaki & Adeola, 2017).

Some of the factors that encourage the emergence of risky sexual behavior in adolescents are usually caused by the lack of sexual education at home and school. the influence of social media and pornography. lack of supervision from parents and the environment. to adolescent psychological factors. such as curiosity and immature self-identity (Kasim. 2020).

According to the results of the research presented by Triadita et al.. (2024) said that adolescents' activity in sexual behavior is shaped by information received from the environment. social media. and peers. Sexual behavior is influenced by attitudes and self-control. if the individual's attitude considers premarital sex normal. then the intention to do so will increase. Risky sexual behaviors often arise due to self-exploration. high curiosity. and a lack of sex education and social control. so if adolescents feel that their peers normalize these behaviors. then they will participate in doing so even though they are aware of the risks. Silfiyah & Rofi'ah (2023) added that adolescent sexual behavior has a gradual spectrum, starting from seemingly "light" activities such as kissing and holding hands, to sexual activity. These activities are often carried out in the context of dating or close social interactions, and are generally triggered by emotional impulses, curiosity, and social environmental influences such as the use of digital media.

Based on the findings. it was shown that there was a significant relationship between the use of social media and risky sexual behavior in adolescents at one of the junior high schools in Lamongan Regency. This is evidenced by risky sexual behavior among adolescents in active groups and the high use of the social media

platform Tinder. Andayani (2022) At 1 Dawan Klungkung High School. The results of the study explained that there is a significant relationship between high use in social media and sexual behavior.

The results of this study explain that adolescents are also one of the causative factors, because their age is still vulnerable to being influenced by the environment and providing wrong information and lack of education will be more at risk of sexual behavior without knowing the possibilities that will be caused. The same research by Nafisa (2022) at SMA 3 Palu also explained that there is a relationship between social media use and sexual behavior in adolescence. Research conducted by Mulati (2023) also explains that there is a relationship between adolescent sexual activity and social media use that occurs in Pekanbaru. This certainly happens because teenagers often see indecent and negative content. This behavior encourages teenagers to imitate the content they see on social media. Adolescents who are still vulnerable to the influence of the outside world and the consumption of pornographic materials and other harmful use of social media.

Researchers argue that the Tinder app has a strong connection with adolescent sexual behavior because the Tinder app, which was originally designed as an adult partner search app, has now been accessed by underage groups without supervision or adequate understanding of the risks posed. Researchers see that features in the tinder application that are visual, instant, and interactive have easy access to the opposite sex through private chats that can trigger sexual interactions, both in the form of chats, intimate image exchanges, and risky physical encounters. The tinder application

is not only an ordinary social media, but also a tool that has the potential to accelerate the formation of risky sexual behavior patterns if used by age groups who are not mentally and educationally ready. Therefore, there needs to be serious intervention from schools, families, and the government in the form of adequate sexual education for adolescents, digital literacy for adolescents and parents, and restrictions on application access related to the age of users.

CONCLUSION

There is a link between teens' risky sexual behavior and tinder social media use. This is because teenagers do not get enough knowledge and education so that they do not know the impact that can be caused. Most adolescents have the perception that this behavior is justified for their age, so the problem is the driver of the strong relationship between the use of social media tinder and the risky sexual behavior of adolescents in one of the junior high schools in Lamongan Regency.

This research is expected to provide scientific evidence by understanding the influence of the use of social media, especially dating apps such as tinder, on the sexual behavior of at-risk adolescents. So that it can enrich the existing literature on the causes and factors that affect adolescent sexual behavior in the era of digital technology.

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