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Influence of Social Media on Self-Esteem and Self-Awareness among 8th-grade Students

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this research study was to investigate and analyze the influence of social media usage on self-esteem and self-awareness among 8th-grade students at Pangasinan National High School. It utilized a quantitative research design to determine the impact of social media on self-esteem and self-awareness among the respondents. The quantitative approach used a survey questionnaire checklist to collect the numeric data from the students. The result indicates that the most common platform, Facebook, has a range of 3 to 4 hours per day, with a frequency of 33, then the least common one is Snapchat, with a range of 1 hour or less, with a frequency. Self-esteem and Self-awareness levels of 8th-grade students were analyzed using Pearson, and the results obtained were interpreted to indicate that the correlation coefficient is equal to [0.58]. Based on the summary of findings from the study, it can be concluded that the levels of self-esteem and self-awareness as perceived by the 8th-grade students are moderate. Moreover, they point to the engagement of the students in social media in a way that enhances their self-image without becoming orderly and dependent on external validation. On the other hand, the students derive a large portion of their self-worth from online interactions, which may lead to heightened self-esteem or increased vulnerability to negative feedback.

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Introduction

Social media has revolutionized how we connect and communicate in the digital age. It encompasses various online platforms that enable users to share content, interact with others, and build virtual communities. Social media has become integral to our daily lives, from popular platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat to emerging ones like TikTok. It facilitates instant communication, information sharing, networking, and entertainment, shaping how we consume news, engage with brands, and express ourselves online. However, it also raises concerns about privacy, misinformation, and the impact of excessive screen time on mental health.

The Department of Education (DepEd) spokesperson has clarified that teachers are not prohibited from using social media amid the controversy sparked by the issuance of Department Order No. 49, which was recommended by DepEd spokesman Atty. Michael Poa said the order, among others, merely asked the teachers to "avoid following" their students and uphold professionalism [1].

The creation of social media sites and applications has changed how people interact, connect, and share. Perhaps children and adolescents are the most affected by these technological advancements. Teens and pre-teens are among the highest consumers of social media. As social media sites and apps increase, children and adolescents increase their usage [2].

Youth undergo the identity development process during adolescence, and self-esteem is integral to this development. During this developmental period, adolescents' self-esteem is likely affected by the feedback they receive online through social media sites [3]. Positive feedback received online has been shown to enhance self-esteem, and negative feedback has been shown to have the reverse effect [4].

Awareness of how much time children spend on social media and the level of importance they place on social media interactions can be a telling factor in how these interactions affect children's self-esteem and self-awareness [5]. Social media's adverse effects on children may promote unhealthy behaviors like becoming isolated, irritable, experiencing a drop in grades, or loss of interest in activities [6].

In the digital age, the pervasive influence of social media has transformed the landscape of adolescent interactions and self-perceptions. Among 8th-grade students, who are in a critical stage of identity formation and self-discovery, the impact of social media on self-esteem and self-awareness is paramount. This study delves into the intricate relationship between social media usage and the development of self-esteem and self-awareness among 8th-grade students. As platforms like Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat dominate the online experiences of this demographic, understanding how these digital

environments shape their perceptions of self-worth and self-understanding becomes essential. By exploring the nuances of social media engagement and its implications on the psychological well-being of students, this research aims to shed light on the complex interplay between digital connectivity and adolescent self-concept formation.

The primary objectives of this research study were to investigate and analyze the influence of social media usage on self-esteem and self-awareness among 8th-grade students at Pangasinan National High School. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

Materials and Methods

A. Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative research design to establish cause-and-effect relationships, identify trends and patterns, and predict outcomes to determine the influence of social media on self-esteem and self-awareness among 8th-grade students of Pangasinan National High School. The quantitative approach used a questionnaire checklist on self-esteem and self-awareness to collect the numeric data from the respondents for statistical analysis and interpretation purposes.

B. Research Respondents

The study's respondents were the 8th-grade students of Pangasinan National High School. This study employed a total enumeration sampling where all students of both sections of this school were taken as respondents to provide the quantitative data for statistical analysis and interpretation purposes. Total enumeration sampling is a purposive sampling technique where the researchers examine the entire population with a particular set of characteristics. Hence, there are 60 students under each section, totaling 120 students.

C. Research Locale

The study was conducted at Pangasinan National High School at a distance of 1.0 km from MSU-TCTO's main gate, Sanga-Sanga, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi. This public school is under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education, Tawi-Tawi Division. The search results highlight MSU-TCTO’s importance as the “premier university” in the southernmost part of the Philippines, serving Tawi-Tawi and its neighboring province. The university offers various programs focused on local needs, like fisheries and oceanography. The university’s location in Bongao, the provincial capital, makes it accessible to students across Tawi-Tawi.

D. Research Instruments

The instrument used in this study was the researchers’ questionnaire, composed of 15 items. The first part concerns the respondents' personal information, including name (optional) and grade level. The second part is an instruction on what to do with the instrument. There are

five statements for each component of social media usage, five for self-esteem, and another for self-awareness. Each close-ended questions have five options. The survey questionnaire used in the study has been enhanced for validity by ensuring content validity through accurate measurement of social media usage, self-esteem, and self-awareness constructs, construct validity through factor analysis, and criterion validity through comparison with established measures. Additionally, reliability has been strengthened through internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha for each component and test-retest reliability by assessing response stability over time.

Always check the validity and reliability of any research instruments before using them in your study. Adapt the questions and checklist items to fit your specific research objectives and target population, and seek guidance from a research advisor or mentor for assistance in selecting and validating instruments.

E. Data Collection Procedure

The researchers secured all the requirements needed before data gathering. Once all forms, especially the letter seeking permission to conduct a study, were signed and approved by the Dean of COED and met the salient ethical aspects of the study, the researchers immediately proceeded to the target respondents in their respective schools. The researchers ensured the letter was handed over to the school principal as part of ethical considerations and respect. Upon approval from the school principal, the researchers will meet the respondents by informing them of the purpose of the study. The survey questionnaire was administered simultaneously to both sections of 8th-grade classes, where permission and approval from their teacher for the researchers to distribute the questionnaire checklist were given. However, it takes only 15 minutes for them to answer.

Results

A. The most and least common social media platforms used

Table 1 shows the social media platforms used by the students. Data were analyzed using SPSS to interpret the frequency, percent, and range obtained.

Table 1. The Most and Least Common Social Media Platforms Used

Social Media Platform	Frequency (Highest)	Percent (%)	Range
Facebook	33	27.5	3-4 hours
Tiktok	35	29.2	2-3 hours
Youtube	38	31.7	1 hour or less
Instagram	63	52.5	1 hour or less
Snapchat	87	72.5	1 hour or less

Table 1 presents the most and least common social media platforms used by the 8th-grade students. The result indicates that Facebook has a range of 3 to 4 hours per day with a frequency of 33. Then followed by TikTok with a range of 2 to 3 hours per day and with a

frequency of 35, then YouTube has a range of 1 hour and less with a frequency of 38, then Instagram with a range of 1 hour and less with a frequency of 63, and then Snapchat with a range of 1 hour and less with a frequency of 87. Furthermore, when the range is compared between Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat, Facebook acquired a range of 3 to 4 hours with 27.5%, TikTok has a range of 2 to 3 hours with 29%, and then YouTube has a range of 1 hour and less with 31.7%, Instagram has a range of 1 hour and less with 52.5%, and then Snapchat has a range of 1 hour and less with 72.5%. This implies that Facebook is the most commonly used social media platform and Snapchat is the least used. Facebook's status as the most used platform may stem from its longevity and familiarity among students. Many students may have been using Facebook longer than newer platforms like TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat, establishing a sense of comfort or routine.

B. The levels of students' self-esteem and self-awareness

Table 2 presents a summary of the levels of self-esteem and self-awareness of the student. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, and the mean score rating below the table was used to interpret the mean gained.

Table 2. Summary of the levels of self-esteem and self-awareness

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Self-Esteem	3.13	0.815	Moderate
Self-Awareness	3.09	0.877	Moderate

*Legend: very low (*1.00-1.79), *low (*1.80-2.59), *moderate (*2.60-3.39), *high (*3.40-4.19), *very high (*4.20-5.00).

Table 2 shows that the level of self-esteem as assessed by the student-respondents is moderate, with a mean score of X=3.13, while the level of students' self-awareness is also moderate, with a mean score of X=3.09. This implies that the student's self-esteem and self-awareness are balanced and adaptable approaches to life. This means they possess a healthy level of self-confidence while also being cognizant of their strengths and areas for improvement. This balance allows them to approach life with moderation, meaning they neither excessively diminish it. 8th-grade students may have moderate levels of self-esteem and self-awareness when using social media due to factors such as social comparison, idealized images, cyberbullying, lack of face-to-face interaction, validation seeking, and excessive social media use. These factors can impact how students perceive themselves and interact with social media platforms.

C. Relationship between the Social Media Platforms and the Level of Self-Esteem and Self-Awareness

Table 3 displays the relationship between social media use, self-esteem, and self-awareness levels of the students. Data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation to interpret the correlation between self-esteem and self-awareness.

Table 3. Relationship between Social Media Use, Self-Esteem, and Self-Awareness Levels

Variable	n	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
SocMed Usage-Self-esteem	120	0.584	0.000	Significant
SocMed-Self-awareness	120	0.556	0.000	Significant

*Significant at α≤0.05.

Legend: <0.10 - No Relationship; 0.10 - 0.2 Weak; 0.21 - 0.5 Moderate; >0.5 Strong Relationship

Table 3 presents the results of the correlational analysis on the level of self-esteem and self-awareness of the students. Data were analyzed using Pearson, and the results obtained were interpreted using the descriptor <0.10 - No Relationship; 0.10 - 0.2 Weak; 0.21 - 0.5 Moderate; >0.5 Strong Relationship. It can be gleaned from Table 3 that the correlation coefficient is equal to 0.58, which is interpreted as a strong relationship correlated at a p-value of 0.00. This result indicates a relationship between the variables, self-esteem and self-awareness, and social media platforms.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the social media usage patterns of 8th-grade students at Pangasinan National High School and their associations with self-esteem and self-awareness. The data revealed that the most commonly used social media platform was Snapchat, with 72.5% of respondents using it for an hour or less daily, followed by Instagram (52.5%) and YouTube (31.7%). Surprisingly, Facebook, although widely known and historically dominant, ranked lower in frequency of use (27.5%) but exhibited the most extended usage duration of 3 to 4 hours daily. This may indicate that while fewer students use Facebook, those who do tend to spend more extended periods on the platform. The continued use of Facebook may be attributed to its longevity and familiarity, as students may have established routines and comfort with its features [7],[8].

Interestingly, this usage trend contrasts with the perception that Facebook is becoming obsolete among younger users, implying that platform preferences may be more nuanced and influenced by user goals, such as communication versus content consumption [9]. Although used for shorter durations, Instagram and Snapchat had higher user frequency, possibly because these platforms offer quick, visual, and ephemeral content that aligns with adolescent social habits [7],[10].

Regarding self-esteem and self-awareness, the study found moderate levels in both aspects, with self-esteem at M = 3.13 (SD = 0.815) and self-awareness at M = 3.09 (SD = 0.877). These findings suggest that students possess a balanced view of themselves, displaying neither overly high nor dangerously low self-regard. Moderate self-esteem has been linked to greater psychological adaptability and resilience [11],[12]. Similarly, moderate self-awareness enables

students to recognize personal strengths and areas needing growth while avoiding hypercritical self-evaluation [13],[14].

However, these balanced levels may also be shaped by the complex interplay between adolescents' online experiences and their internal psychological development. Social media platforms often expose users to idealized portrayals and peer comparison, which can generate both motivation and insecurity [15],[16]. Adolescents, in particular, are vulnerable to external validation seeking, such as likes, comments, and follower counts, which can undermine intrinsic self-worth over time [17],[18].

Notably, the correlational analysis revealed a strong and significant positive relationship between social media usage and both self-esteem ($r = 0.584$, $p < 0.001$) and self-awareness ($r = 0.556$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that higher engagement with social media is associated with greater self-perception development. While this could point to potential benefits, it also underscores the dual-edged nature of digital interactions [19]. Social media can foster or hinder psychological well-being depending on how students engage with content and feedback.

These results align with Kayombo's [20] finding that social media plays a significant role in enhancing self-awareness among adolescents by allowing them to reflect on their digital personas. Additionally, Ackerman et al. [21] emphasized that repeated online self-presentation can reinforce personal identity and influence self-esteem, especially in the developmental stages of adolescence.

In conclusion, this study highlights that while 8th-grade students use a variety of social media platforms with varying frequencies and durations, their levels of self-esteem and self-awareness remain moderate and are strongly linked to their social media engagement. Educators and parents must acknowledge this complex relationship and guide students toward mindful social media use that promotes positive self-development rather than dependency or distortion of self-image. Future programs can emphasize digital literacy, emotional regulation, and healthy peer interactions to mitigate potential risks and enhance the developmental benefits of social media for adolescents.

Conclusions

Based on the summary of findings from the study, it can be concluded that the levels of self-esteem and self-awareness as perceived by the 8th-grade students are moderate. This points to the students' engagement in social media to enhance their self-image without becoming orderly and dependent on external validation. Additionally, they might be mindful of their online presence and how it reflects their true selves. On the other hand, the students derive a large portion of their self-worth from online interactions, which may lead to

heightened self-esteem or increased vulnerability to negative feedback. This implies that schools can implement social-emotional learning programs that address self-esteem and self-awareness development in parallel with digital well-being. By fostering a supportive environment that promotes positive self-image and self-reflection, educators can help students build resilience against the potential negative influences of social media.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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