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Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health Among the Students' of Noveleta National High School

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of social media on the mental health of students at Noveleta National High School. With the increasing use of social media platforms, students are continuously exposed to various forms of online interaction that may significantly influence their emotional and psychological well-being. The study specifically investigates key mental health concerns, including anxiety, stress, and self-esteem, in order to determine both the positive and negative impacts of social media usage. It also explores how prolonged exposure and frequent engagement with online content may contribute to emotional distress and decreased self-confidence among students. Additionally, the research highlights the importance of

establishing appropriate limitations on social media use to prevent adverse effects on students' academic performance and overall well-being. Responsible usage, including effective time management and self-regulation, is emphasized as essential in maintaining a healthy balance between digital and real-life activities. Despite its potential risks, social media can also serve as a valuable tool for communication, information dissemination, and the development of critical thinking skills when used appropriately. Therefore, the study concludes that disciplined and responsible use of social media is necessary to minimize its negative effects while maximizing its benefits on students' mental health.

Keywords: Social Media, Noveleta National High School, TikTok

1. Introduction

The Problem and its Background

Social media is a big part of our daily lives today, especially for students of Noveleta National High School. Apps like Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, and TikTok are commonly used to chat with friends, watch videos, and stay updated with school activities. Because these platforms are easy to access, many students spend a lot of their time online. As Grade 8 and Grade 9 presidents, we can clearly see how often students rely on social media in their everyday routines.

In some ways, social media is helpful. It allows students to communicate easily, share information, and express themselves. It can also make students feel connected and entertained, especially during stressful school days. However, we also notice that too much use can become a problem. Some students get distracted from their studies or spend too much time scrolling instead of doing important tasks.

At the same time, social media can affect students' mental health. Many students compare themselves to others online, which can lead to insecurity, stress, and anxiety. There are also cases of cyberbullying and pressure to look or act "perfect," which can make students feel worse about themselves. As student leaders, we believe it is important to explore this issue so we can better understand its impact and help students learn how to use social media in a healthier and more balanced way.

Background of the Study

The Philippines is not left behind when it comes to social media use. By 2022, around 67 million Filipinos were already active on different platforms (Hootsuite, 2022), which is a huge number. It is easy to understand why, since social media makes it convenient to connect with others, share updates, and find people with the same interests. However, there is also a negative side that cannot be ignored. Studies show that spending too much time on social media can affect mental health, leading to stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). Teenagers are especially affected because high school is already a challenging stage where students are still figuring out themselves while dealing with academic pressure and relationships.

One common issue is comparison. Students often see posts that show only the “best moments” of others, which can make them feel insecure or not good enough. This can lead to fear of missing out or FOMO, which affects confidence and emotional well-being. As Grade 8 and Grade 9 presidents, we observe that many students spend a lot of time online, and this sometimes affects their focus, mood, and self-esteem. While social media can be entertaining and useful, too much use can become overwhelming for students.

This study, “Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health among the Students of Noveleta National High School,” focuses specifically on the experiences of Grade 8 and Grade 9 presidents as the respondents. These student leaders are active both academically and socially, making them suitable participants to share insights about social media use and its effects.

Most existing studies come from other countries, and the situation of Filipino students may be different. In addition, mental health has become an important concern in the Philippines, especially after the implementation of the Mental Health Act. This study aims to provide a clearer understanding of how social media affects student leaders' mental health and promote responsible and balanced use of these platforms.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to examine the impact of social media on students' daily life, school performance, and mental health. Specially, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What platforms of social media are the most used by the students of Noveleta National High School that cause lack of sleep?
2. What are the main reasons why students use social media?
3. How does social media affect students' sleep, focus in class and school performance?
4. What experiences do students have with comparing themselves to others and with cyberbullying on social media?
5. How does social media affect students' confidence, emotions, and sense of connection with friends?

Hypothesis

Null (H₀): There is no significant effect of social media on the mental health of the students of Noveleta National High School.

Alternative (H₁): There is a significant effect of social media on the mental health of the students of Noveleta National High School.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objectives of the following:

1. Determine what platforms caused the lack of sleep of the students at Noveleta National High School.
2. Identify the main reasons students use social media, such as communication, entertainment, school work, or stress relief.
3. Examine the effects of social media on students' sleep, focus in class, and school performance.
4. Explore students' experiences with comparing themselves to others on social media and encountering cyberbullying or hate comments.
5. Understand how social media affects students' confidence, emotions and connection with friends.

Theoretical Framework

Social Comparison Theory (Leon Festinger, 1954) asserts that individuals possess an intrinsic motivation to assess themselves through the comparison of their abilities and opinions with those of others. In study: Students at Noveleta National High School frequently encounter “curated” or idealized representations of their peers' lives online.

The Mental Health Impact Regularly comparing oneself to someone is strongly linked to being low self-esteem and feelings of insufficiency and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) posits that media consumers are not passive; rather, they actively select media to fulfill particular needs, including entertainment, social engagement, or identity affirmation. In your study, a student may utilize Facebook to maintain connections with classmates (positive satisfaction) or to look for approval through comments and likes (possibly negative). Impact on Mental Health: If social approval is the main source of satisfaction, a lack of interaction (few likes or comments) can lead to social distress and anxiety. According to the Social Development Hypothesis, time spent on social media takes the place of time that would otherwise be spent sleeping, exercising, or interacting with people in person. According to our research. Noveleta National High School and who scroll too much may spend less time studying or spending time with their families in person.

Significance of the Study

The results of this research would be beneficial to the following:

Students: This study's findings can make students more aware of how social media use impacts their mental health and emotional well-being and stress levels and self-esteem.

Teachers: This study will be a lesson to teachers because it gives them insight into students' mental health issues that are related to using social media. This will help them identify such students and guide them on how to offer them much needed assistance both academically and emotionally.

Parents and Guardians: Parents and guardians would be able to use the findings of the study to understand the possible effects that social media could have on the mental health of the children.

They could then use this information to guide the behavior of the children on social media.

School Administrators: The results of the research can be used by the school administrators to formulate a program in the school that aims to promote mental health awareness and social media use among students.

Future Researchers: This research paper could also be considered as a source for future researchers that would like to conduct research on the same subject that deals with social media and its connections for association with issues concerning mental health.

Scope and Delimitations

This study aims to explore the impact of social media on the mental health of students at Noveleta National High School. The study is only open to junior high school, specifically the presidents of Grades 8 and Grade 9. The study examines the effects of social media on students' emotions, stress levels, self-esteem, sleep patterns, and academic focus. It also looks at how social media affects students' mental health, both positively and negatively. The main techniques used to gather information for this study, which examined social media-related experiences, attitudes, and behaviors, were surveys and interviews.

Regarding their emotions or social media usage, some respondents might not be completely honest. Additionally, the study ignores all current online applications and only considers well known social media platforms.

The short duration of the study makes it impossible to discuss social media's long term effects on mental health. This study is limited to students at Noveleta National High School; students from other schools or communities are not included. Because of this, the results may not fully represent every student's experience in every circumstance. The study is also impacted by how truthful and accurate the students' responses are.

Definition of Terms

To make this study easier to navigate, we have defined the following unfamiliar words based on how they specially impact a students' daily life.

Emotional Exhaustion: That heavy feeling of being done or burnt out. It's the mental fatigue that comes from the non-stop pressure to keep up an online persona or the weight processing an endless stream of social media updates.

Cognitive Overload: The "brain fog" that happens when social media throws more information at a student than their mind can handle. This leads to a scattered brain, making it nearly impossible to focus on a single assignment or lecture.

Fear of Missing Out (FoMo): That nagging anxiety that everyone else is having a better time, at a better party, or in a better conversation. The students are also forced to constantly check their phone for notifications so they don't feel behind.

Sleeping Displacement: The habit of stealing time from sleep to spend it on a screen. This usually looks like staying up until the early hours of the morning scrolling through feeds, directly cutting into the rest needed for the next school day.

Technological Alienation: The irony of feeling "lonely in the crowd". It is being socially disconnected from peers in the real world, even when you are technically "connected" to them 24/7 through group chats and apps.

Curated Representation: Carefully selected and edited content posted online to show only the best or most attractive parts of a person's life.

Self-Esteem: A person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value.

Depressive Symptoms: Emotional and physical signs related to depression, such as sadness, loss of interest, low energy, or hopelessness.

Anxiety: A feeling of worry, nervousness, or fear about situations or outcomes.

Social Validation: Approval or recognition received from others, often through likes, comments, or positive feedback on social media.

2. Review of Related Literature and Studies

In the contemporary digital era, social media has become an integral component of students' daily lives. With the widespread availability of smartphones and internet connectivity, platforms such as Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, and TikTok are commonly utilized for communication, information sharing, entertainment, and self-expression. Among junior high school students, especially grade 8 and grade 9 presidents, these platforms serve as primary tools for maintaining social connections and engaging in online activities. However, the increasing duration and frequency of social media use have raised concerns regarding its potential implications for students' mental health.

Mental health is a vital aspect of an individual's overall well-being, encompassing emotional, psychological, and social functioning. It influences how students think, feel, and behave, particularly in managing stress, maintaining relationships, and making decisions. For junior high school students, especially the grade 8 and grade 9 presidents, maintaining good mental health is essential for academic success and personal development. Nevertheless, students are often exposed to multiple stressors, including academic pressures, peer relationships, and family expectations. The integration of excessive social media use into their daily routines may further intensify these challenges.

In line with this, the present study, titled "Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health among the Students of Noveleta National High School," aims to examine how social media usage influences the mental well-being of students within a specific educational context. This chapter presents relevant foreign and local literature and studies to establish a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between social media use and mental health, as well as to provide a foundation for the current research.

International

Numerous international studies have investigated the relationship between social media use and the mental health of adolescents. Keles, McCrae, and Grealish (2020) ^[3] conducted a systematic review which revealed a significant association between excessive social media use and increased levels of anxiety and depression among young individuals. The study emphasized that social comparison plays a critical role, as adolescents tend to evaluate themselves against idealized representations of others presented online, leading to negative self-perceptions.

Similarly, Vannucci and McCauley Ohannessian (2020) ^[13] found that frequent engagement with social media platforms

contributes to heightened stress levels. Adolescents often feel compelled to remain constantly active and responsive online, which creates psychological pressure and emotional strain. This constant connectivity may interfere with students' ability to focus on academic responsibilities and maintain emotional balance.

Furthermore, Twenge, Martin, and Campbell (2021) [12] reported that increased social media usage is correlated with higher levels of loneliness among adolescents. Despite its purpose of fostering connection, excessive reliance on digital interaction may reduce opportunities for meaningful face-to-face communication, which is essential for emotional support and social development.

In addition, Scott, Biello, and Woods (2021) [9] highlighted the negative impact of nighttime social media use on sleep quality. Adolescents who engage in prolonged screen time before bedtime often experience sleep disturbances, which can result in fatigue, reduced cognitive performance, and emotional instability. These outcomes further contribute to the deterioration of mental health.

O'Reilly *et al.* (2022) [6] also noted that while social media can provide emotional support and a sense of belonging, excessive usage may still lead to adverse effects such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. These findings suggest that the impact of social media on mental health is multifaceted and largely dependent on the extent and manner of its use.

Overall, international literature indicates that excessive social media engagement poses significant risks to adolescents' mental health, particularly in terms of emotional well-being, self-perception, and social interaction.

Local

In the Philippine context, several studies have examined the effects of social media on the mental health of students, particularly among senior high school populations. Labrague (2021) found that Filipino students who spend prolonged periods on social media are more likely to experience increased levels of stress and anxiety. This suggests that excessive engagement in online activities may contribute to emotional distress within the local student population.

Tuliao and Velasquez (2021) [11] emphasized the detrimental effects of cyberbullying and exposure to negative online interactions. Their study revealed that students who encounter harmful comments and online harassment tend to develop lower self-esteem and heightened emotional vulnerability. These experiences may lead to social withdrawal and decreased confidence, which negatively affect students' mental well-being.

Moreover, Dela Peña and Atienza (2021) [2] identified that exposure to unrealistic beauty standards and edited images on social media platforms contributes to body dissatisfaction among students. This constant exposure often leads to negative self-image and reduced self-worth, which are critical factors in the development of mental health issues.

Reyes, Dizon, and Santos (2022) [8] further reported that excessive social media use is associated with emotional exhaustion and decreased academic motivation. Students who allocate substantial time to online activities may experience difficulty concentrating on their studies, ultimately affecting their academic performance and overall productivity.

Conversely, De Luna *et al.* (2024) highlighted the importance of mental health literacy among students. Their

findings suggest that students who possess adequate knowledge about mental health are better equipped to manage stress, regulate emotions, and seek appropriate support when needed. This indicates that awareness and education can serve as protective factors against the negative effects of social media.

These local studies demonstrate that the challenges associated with social media use are also prevalent among Filipino students, thereby emphasizing the relevance of examining this issue within specific school settings, such as Noveleta National High School.

Synthesis of the Reviewed Literature and Studies

The reviewed foreign and local literature consistently demonstrate that social media has a significant influence on the mental health of students. Both bodies of research reveal that excessive use of social media is associated with various negative psychological outcomes, including stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, low self-esteem, and emotional exhaustion.

Foreign studies provide a comprehensive and generalized perspective on the global impact of social media, identifying key contributing factors such as social comparison, sleep disruption, and reduced face-to-face interaction. In contrast, local studies validate these findings within the Philippine context and further highlight specific concerns such as cyberbullying, academic distraction, and cultural influences on self-image.

The convergence of these findings indicates that the effects of social media on mental health are not limited by geographical boundaries but are widely experienced by adolescents, including Filipino students. This connection strengthens the relevance of the present study, as it seeks to explore how these global and local patterns manifest among the students of Noveleta National High School.

Despite the availability of related literature, there remains a gap in research focusing on the specific experiences of students within this institution. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap by providing a focused analysis of how social media usage impacts the mental health of students in Noveleta National High School. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of effective school-based interventions, policies, and support systems that promote responsible social media use and enhance students' mental well-being.

3. Methodology

This chapter will address the research methodologies and processes employed by the researcher to address the specific issue raised in the study. This chapter will cover the research design, locale, participants, how the researcher analyzed the data and the procedure on gathering the data.

Research Design

This study will use a qualitative research design, specifically a phenomenological approach, to explore the impact of social media on the mental health of students at Noveleta National High School. This design is appropriate because it focuses on understanding the personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings of the respondents regarding their use of social media and how it affects their mental well-being.

The researchers will use interviews as the main method of data collection. A semi-structured interview guide will be prepared to allow flexibility, so respondents can freely share

their experiences while still focusing on the topic. The interview will include open-ended questions about social media usage, emotions, behaviors, and observed effects on mental health. This method will help gather in-depth and detailed responses from the participants.

The respondents of the study will be the Grade 8 and Grade 9 presidents of Noveleta National High School. They are chosen because they are student leaders who are actively engaged in school activities and social interactions, making them capable of providing relevant insights. The data gathered from the interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis, where common themes and patterns related to social media use and mental health will be identified and interpreted.

Research Locale

This study will be conducted at Noveleta National High School, a public secondary school located in Noveleta, Cavite. The school provides education to students from different grade levels, including Grade 8 and Grade 9, who are the focus of this research. It is a suitable location for the study because students in this school are actively engaged in using social media as part of their daily lives.

The respondents of the study will be the Grade 8 and Grade 9 presidents of the school. As student leaders, they are actively involved in both academic and social activities, making them capable of sharing meaningful insights about social media usage and its effects on mental health. Their experiences and observations are relevant to the purpose of the study.

The interviews will be conducted within the school premises, such as in a classroom or any quiet area, to ensure a comfortable and distraction-free environment. This setting will help the respondents express their thoughts openly and honestly, allowing the researchers to gather reliable and in-depth information for the study.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study consists of the student leaders of Noveleta National High School, particularly the Grade 8 and Grade 9 presidents. These students are selected because they are actively involved in school activities and are more likely to have meaningful experiences related to social media use and its impact on mental health.

The study will use purposive sampling, where respondents are chosen based on specific characteristics relevant to the research. A total of 10 respondents will participate in the study, composed of 5 Grade 8 presidents and 5 Grade 9 presidents. This sampling method ensures that the participants can provide reliable and insightful information needed for the interview-based research.

Research Instruments

In this study titled "Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health Among the Students of Noveleta National High School," the researchers used a semi-structured interview guide as the main research instrument. This instrument was chosen to allow the respondents to freely express their thoughts and experiences while still guiding the discussion based on the objectives of the study.

The interview guide consisted of 10 open-ended questions. These questions were designed to gather detailed information from the 5 Grade 8 presidents and 5 Grade 9 presidents regarding their use of social media and its effects

on their mental health.

The questions covered several key topics, including: (1) frequency and purpose of social media use, (2) experiences and feelings while using social media, (3) effects of social media on emotions such as stress, anxiety, and self-esteem, (4) experiences with comparison, pressure, or cyberbullying, and (5) ways students manage or cope with the effects of social media. These topics helped the researchers gain a deeper understanding of how social media influences the mental well-being of the respondents.

Data Gathering Procedure

In conducting the study titled "Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health Among the Students of Noveleta National High School," the researchers will first seek permission from the school administration to conduct the study. After approval, a formal request will also be given to the selected respondents, which are the Grade 8 and Grade 9 presidents, to ask for their participation in the interview.

Next, the researchers will prepare a semi-structured interview guide containing open-ended questions related to social media usage and its effects on mental health. The schedule of the interview will be arranged based on the availability of the respondents to ensure convenience and proper participation. Before the interview begins, the purpose of the study will be explained clearly, and consent will be obtained to ensure that participation is voluntary.

The interviews will then be conducted in a quiet and comfortable place within the school to allow the respondents to express their thoughts freely. With permission, the researchers may take notes or record the conversation to ensure accurate data collection.

After the interviews, the responses will be organized, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and insights regarding the impact of social media on students' mental health.

Data Analysis Procedure

In this study titled "Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health Among the Students of Noveleta National High School," the researchers analyzed the data using thematic analysis. After conducting the interviews with the 5 Grade 8 presidents and 5 Grade 9 presidents, all recorded responses were carefully transcribed to ensure accuracy and completeness of the data.

After transcription, the researchers assigned codes or aliases to each respondent to maintain confidentiality. The transcribed data were then reviewed multiple times to identify important statements and recurring ideas. These responses were grouped and labeled through a coding process to organize similar answers.

Finally, the coded data were categorized into broader themes that represent common patterns in the responses. These themes were analyzed and interpreted to better understand how social media affects the mental health of the respondents. This process helped the researchers present clear and meaningful findings based on the participants' experiences.

Ethical Considerations

In this study titled "Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health Among the Students of Noveleta National High School," the researchers ensured that all ethical

standards were followed.

The 5 Grade 8 presidents and 5 Grade 9 presidents were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was completely voluntary. Consent was obtained before conducting the interviews, and respondents were allowed to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

To protect the identity of the participants, the researchers used codes or aliases instead of real names. All information gathered during the interviews was kept strictly confidential and used only for academic purposes. The recorded data and transcripts were stored securely and were not shared with anyone outside the research.

The researchers also ensured respect and sensitivity during the interview process. Respondents were not forced to answer any questions they were uncomfortable with, and care was taken to avoid causing any emotional distress. The study aimed to prioritize the well-being, privacy, and dignity of all participants throughout the research process.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the data gathered from respondents, the information collected through questionnaires was carefully done, analyzed and interpreted of findings. The results are presented in tables, followed by analysis and interpretation to provide clearer understanding of the findings. The purpose of this chapter is to present this result of study, on how social media affects the mental health of the students especially the presidents. The findings presented in this chapter will help provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of these students regarding social media use and its potential effect on their mental health. The result will also serve as a basis for the conclusion and recommendations.

Research Question 1:

What are the main reasons you use social media? For example: communication, entertainment, schoolwork, or stress relief?

Theme 1: Social Media as a Tool for Communication and Schoolwork

Most of the respondents stated that the primary reason they use social media is for communication and school-related purposes.

“Ahh, for communication and for updates on our surroundings and for entertainment.”

(Totoy)

“For me po kasi yung social media nakakahelp po talaga siya saatin, especially mga student po. Nakakahelp po siya saatin, kunyari po sa google, na he-help po tayo non na makapag research kapag may mga kailangan po tayong i-search tungkol sa education.”

(Meanne)

These responses indicate that social media plays a significant role in students' daily lives, particularly in maintaining communication and supporting their academic needs. It highlights how digital platforms have become essential tools for both social interaction and learning.

Theme 2: Social Media for Entertainment and Stress Relief

Some respondents also mentioned that they use social media for entertainment and as a way to relieve stress.

“Stress relief po, usually then sometimes po for school activities.”

(Wel)

“Ahh, for communication and for updates on our surroundings and for entertainment.”

(Totoy)

These responses suggest that social media functions not only as a communication and academic tool but also as a source of enjoyment and relaxation. It helps students manage stress and take breaks from their responsibilities, making it an important part of their overall well-being.

Research Question 2:

How does social media affect your confidence or how you see yourself?

Theme 1: Social Media Influence on Self-Confidence

Participants revealed that social media has a significant influence on how students perceive themselves and their level of confidence.

“There are sometimes po na may videos po sa social media that have confidence... Many times po kasi na like, diba may insecurities po ako then nakikita ko po sa social media na may other girls po na nagpo-post po non... then it actually boosts my confidence whenever I see them posting themselves even with insecurities.”

(Wel)

“Ahhh... there are times that social media affects my confidence in a way that I compare myself with others...”

(Zhey)

“Para sakín po kasi kapag may nakikita po akong magagandang babae, matatalino po parang wala lang po sakín. Ite-take ko po as a motivation and inspiration.”

(Meanne)

These responses indicate that social media can have both positive and negative effects on students' self-confidence. While some feel inspired and empowered, others may experience self-comparison, which can affect how they view themselves.

Theme 2: Social Media as a Source of Motivation

Some respondents emphasized that instead of negatively affecting their confidence, social media serves as a source of motivation and inspiration.

“Para sakín po kasi kapag may nakikita akong magagandang babae, matatalino po parang wala lang po sakín. Ite-take ko po siya as motivation and inspiration.”

(Meanne)

This response suggests that social media can encourage personal growth among students. By seeing others succeed or express confidence, students may feel motivated to improve themselves, develop their skills, and build their own confidence.

Research Question 3:

What do you usually do when you're on social media- scrolling, chatting, posting, or just watching videos?

Theme 1: Common Social Media Activities Among Students

Participants indicated the common activities they engage in when using social media. "Just watching videos po."

(Wel)

"Scrolling, chatting, posting."

(Jm)

"Watching po"

(Zek)

These responses suggest that students tend to engage more in passive social media activities such as browsing and viewing content. This indicates that social media is commonly used as a source of entertainment, where users consume information rather than actively create or share content.

Theme 2: Social Media for Interaction with Friends and Family

Respondent also highlighted that they use social media as a means of communication with their friends and family.

"Ahmm, when I open my social media, ahhh I only use for scrolling and chatting my friends or my family."

(Totoy)

This response suggests that social media is not only utilized for entertainment purposes but also plays an important role in communication. It allows students to easily interact with others, strengthen relationships, and stay updated with their social circles.

Research Question 4:

When do you compare yourself to other people you see on social media? How does that make you feel?

Theme 1: Social Comparison and Emotional Reactions

Some respondents admitted that they experience social comparison when using social media, which can affect their emotions and thinking. While some try to avoid comparing themselves with others, there are still instances where exposure to online content leads to overthinking or feelings of pressure.

"Usually, hindi ko kino-compare yung sarili ko kasi may sarili naman akong buhay."

(Zel)

"It makes me overthink anything."

(Totoy)

These responses suggest that social comparison is a common experience among students who use social media. Even if some attempt to avoid it, the constant exposure to others' lives online can still influence their thoughts and emotions, sometimes leading to negative feelings such as overthinking and pressure.

Theme 2: Acceptance of Individual Differences

Respondents expressed a more positive perspective by emphasizing the importance of self-acceptance and individuality. Instead of comparing themselves with others, they choose to focus on their own uniqueness and personal qualities.

"I don't usually compare myself to others because I believe po na everyone is beautiful on their own ways and their uniqueness po."

(Wel)

This response indicates that some students maintain a healthy mindset by recognizing individual differences. By valuing their own uniqueness, they are able to avoid negative comparisons and develop a more positive sense of self, even while using social media.

Research Question 5:

Theme 1: Effects of Social Media on Sleep and Academic Focus

Respondent mentioned that excessive use of social media can negatively affect their sleep, focus, and overall academic performance.

"Ahmm...it affects on how I manage my time especially in class or school performance"

(Totoy)

This response suggests that social media can interfere with students' ability to concentrate and manage their responsibilities effectively. When overused, it may lead to reduced focus in class, lower productivity, and possible disruptions in sleep patterns, which can ultimately impact academic performance.

Theme 2: Social Media as a Helpful Tool for Learning

On the other hand, some respondents highlighted that social media can also serve as a helpful tool in their studies.

"May good terms din po sa pag-aaral kasi may nakakatulong din po sa pag-aaral."

(Hannah)

This response indicates that despite its potential negative effects, social media can also contribute positively to students' academic performance. When used properly, it can enhance learning by making information more accessible and by supporting students in completing their school-related tasks.

Research Question 6:

What platform did you use the most?

Theme 1: Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

The respondents identified several social media platforms that they commonly use in their daily lives.

- “Facebook.”
(Hannah)
- “Instagram.”
(Key)
- “Tiktok po.”
(Wel)

These responses indicate that these platforms are frequently used by students because they offer various features such as communication, entertainment, and easy access to trending content. This makes them highly relevant and appealing to the younger generation.

Theme 2: Preference for Visual and Video Content

Respondent also emphasized their preference for platforms that focus on visual content and short videos. Students tend to engage more with platforms that provide interactive and visually appealing content, which captures their attention more effectively.

- “Ahmm... Instagram and Tiktok.”
(Totoy)

This response suggests that students are more inclined to use social media platforms that highlight photos and short-form videos. These types of content are not only entertaining but also easier to consume, making them more attractive and engaging for users.

Research Question 7:

How do you balance social media use with schoolwork and other activities?

Theme 1: Time Management in Balancing Social Media and Schoolwork

Respondents mentioned that they manage their use of social media through proper time management.

- Several respondents clearly stated, “Time management lang po.”
(Meanne)
- “Time management lang. Time management lang po.”
(Key)
- “Time management lang.”
(Zel)

These responses indicate that students are aware of the importance of managing their time effectively. By practicing time management, they are able to limit distractions from social media and maintain focus on their priorities.

Theme 2: Prioritizing School Responsibilities

Some respondents also shared that they prioritize their schoolwork before using social media. They choose to engage in online activities only after completing their academic tasks, showing discipline and responsibility.

- “Usually po I use social media kapag tapos nako sa school activities or assignments.”
(Wel)

- “I use social media after schoolwork.”
(Jm)

These responses suggest that some students are able to balance their time effectively by putting their academic responsibilities first. This practice helps them stay productive and avoid the negative effects of excessive social media use.

Research Question 8:

What advice would you give to peers about using social media in a way that supports mental health?

Theme 1: Advice for Responsible Social Media Use

Respondents emphasized the importance of using social media responsibly in order to support mental health.

- “Be responsible lang sa paggamit ng social media.”
(Zel)
- “Huwag lang po abusuhin yung paggamit ng social media or gadgets po upang maging balanse sa health po nila para maiwasan po yung sakit na nararanasan ng iba.”
(Key)
- “Ahmm... support other people and don't make every people ahmm... bad about how they see themselves.”
(Totoy)

These responses highlight the importance of responsible social media behavior. By practicing moderation and showing support to others, students can create a healthier and more positive online environment.

Theme 2: Awareness of Mental Health Protection

Some respondents also advised their peers to be mindful of how social media content can affect “Wag lang po magpapaapekto po sa mga nakikita po sa social media.”
(Meanne)

- “Be responsible and watch what you want.”
(Jm)

These responses suggest that students are aware of the need to protect their mental well-being while using social media. By being conscious of their online experiences and avoiding negative influences, they can maintain a healthier mindset.

Research Question 9:

What is the most challenging thing about using social media as a student?

Theme 1: Challenges of Social Media Use Among Students

Respondents mentioned several challenges they encounter when using social media as students. These include exposure to fake news, misleading information, and negative content that can influence their thoughts and feelings.

- “Yung ano po... may times na e-encounter fake news.”
(Wel)

“Ahmm... negative post or negative matter posting or yung mga lumabas sa social media.”

(Totoy)

These responses suggest that students face difficulties in identifying reliable information and avoiding harmful content online. Such challenges may affect their perception, mood, and overall experience when using social media.

Theme 2: Exposure to Negative Content

Respondents also emphasized the emotional impact of being exposed to negative posts on social media. Seeing harmful or unpleasant content can directly affect their emotional well-being.

“Kapag nakakakita po ako ng negative post, nakakaapekto siya saakin.”

(Zel)

This response indicates that exposure to negative content can influence students' emotions and mental state. It highlights the importance of being mindful of the content they consume and developing strategies to protect their well-being while using social media.

Research Question 10:

What is one thing you'd change about social media if you could?

Theme 1: Reducing Harmful Content on Social Media

Respondents expressed that they would like to reduce or eliminate harmful posts and negative comments on social media.

“Wag mag post ng kung ano ang nakakasira sa ibang tao.”

(Totoy)

This response suggests that students are aware of the impact of harmful content on others. By minimizing negative posts, social media can become a safer and more positive space for users.

Theme 2: Promoting a Healthier Online Environment

Respondents suggested improving the overall social media environment by limiting the presence of people or content that do not contribute positively.

“Ahhh... matanggal ko yung mga taong hindi naman nakakatulong sa social media.”

(Zel)

This response indicates that students value a more positive and supportive digital environment. By encouraging better online behavior and interactions, social media can become more beneficial to users' well-being.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study were organized into several themes that describe the experiences of students regarding the use of social media and its effects on their mental health. The first theme, Social Media as a Tool for Communication and Entertainment, shows that most respondents use social media to communicate with friends and family and to access

entertainment. This indicates that social media plays an important role in maintaining social connections among students. However, frequent exposure to online content may also influence their emotional well-being.

The second theme, Social Media Influence on Self-Confidence, revealed that some respondents experience self-comparison when viewing posts from others on social media. Some participants admitted that seeing other people's posts sometimes causes them to overthink or feel insecure. This finding supports the study of Keles, McCrae, and Grealish (2020) [3], which states that excessive exposure to social media can lead to anxiety and emotional distress among adolescents. Their research explains that social comparison on online platforms may negatively affect young people's self-esteem and mental health.

Another theme identified in the study is Common Social Media Activities Among Students, where most respondents stated that they usually spend their time scrolling, chatting, and watching videos. These activities often lead to extended screen time, which may contribute to distraction and reduced productivity.

The theme Social Comparison and Emotional Reactions highlights how students emotionally respond to the content they see online. While some respondents said they try to avoid comparing themselves to others, others admitted that social media sometimes makes them overthink. This indicates that social media can affect students' emotions depending on how they perceive and interpret the content they encounter.

The theme Effects of Social Media on Sleep and Academic Focus was also evident in the responses of the participants. Several respondents shared that spending too much time on social media can affect their sleep patterns and concentration in school. This finding is consistent with the studies of Reyes, Dizon, and Santos (2022) [8] and Scott, Biello, and Woods (2021) [9], which found that excessive use of social media may decrease students' academic motivation and disrupt their sleeping habits. These studies explain that prolonged online activity may cause distractions that interfere with school responsibilities.

Another theme that emerged is Time Management in Balancing Social Media and Schoolwork. Many respondents mentioned that they try to balance their use of social media by managing their time effectively. Some students said that they only use social media after completing their academic tasks. This suggests that students are aware of the potential negative effects of excessive social media use.

The theme Advice for Responsible Social Media Use reflects the respondents' awareness of the importance of using social media responsibly. Some participants advised others to avoid spreading negative content and to support people instead of making harmful comments online. This idea aligns with the research conducted by De Luna *et al.* (2024), which emphasizes the importance of awareness and understanding of mental health. According to their findings, awareness can help individuals develop healthier habits in using social media.

Another theme identified in the study is Challenges of Social Media Use Among Students, where respondents mentioned encountering negative posts, fake news, and harmful comments online. These challenges may affect students' emotions and mental well-being, especially when they are frequently exposed to negative online environments.

Lastly, the theme Desired Changes in Social Media highlights the respondents' suggestions for improving the social media environment. Many participants expressed the need to reduce negative content and promote responsible posting. This shows that students recognize the potential risks of social media and believe that positive online behavior can help create a healthier digital space.

Overall, the themes identified in this study demonstrate that social media has a significant influence on students' mental health, emotional well-being, and academic behavior. While social media provides communication and entertainment, excessive use may lead to emotional distress, distractions, and sleep problems. However, awareness and proper time management can help students minimize these negative effects and use social media in a more balanced and responsible manner.

5. Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter presents the summary and conclusion derived from the conduct of the study, which aims to explore the impact of social media on mental health among the students of Noveleta National High School. The recommendations that students, teachers, and school administrators may consider are also presented in this chapter.

The study was conducted at Noveleta National High School. The respondents were students currently enrolled in the school. They were selected using convenience sampling since it was the most accessible and practical method for gathering participants. Only the students who were available and willing to participate were included as respondents of the study. In the qualitative phase of the research, the researchers used thematic analysis to analyze the data gathered from the respondents in order to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding the effects of social media on their mental health.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study were summarized according to the statement of the problem presented in Chapter 1.

1. What are the most used Social Media Platforms by Students?

According to the report, students regularly use a variety of social media platforms in their daily lives. These platforms are frequently used for updates, and communication.

2. What are the main reasons students use Social Media?

Students mostly use social media for communication, school-related activities, and stress release. According to some participants, social media makes it easier for them to stay connected with friends and family and keeps them informed about their current situation. Others said that because social media allows them to conduct research, look up material, and discuss assignments and projects with peers, it also helps them with their academic performance.

3. Can Social Media affect the students' focuses and school performance?

The results show that social media can impact students' study habits and ability to concentrate. While it can be helpful for gathering information for schoolwork, excessive use often leads to distractions. Students who spend too much time online may lose focus on studying and completing their

assignments, which can negatively affect their academic performance.

4. Students' Experiences with Comparing Themselves to Others

Some interviewees said that they experienced comparing themselves to other people online due to social media. They may feel insecure when they encounter posts from people who appear more attractive, successful, or self-assured. Students' experiences differ, though. Some people just see these posts without allowing them to negatively impact themselves, while others experience pressure.

5. Advice for Mental Health by using Social Media

The findings of the study show that many students believe that managing their social media use can help improve their mental health. Most respondents suggested limiting screen time, taking breaks from social media, and focusing more on personal activities such as studying, hobbies, and spending time with family and friends.

The participants also emphasized the importance of talking to trusted people like friends, parents, or teachers when they feel stressed or overwhelmed. Overall, the students believe that maintaining a balance between online and offline activities is important to protect and improve their mental health.

In addition, students shared that using social media in a positive way can also help improve mental health. They suggested following pages that inspire and motivate them, and unfollowing accounts that make them feel insecure or stressed. Some students also mentioned being mindful of how they feel while using social media, so they can stop when it starts to affect their mood. Setting limits, like not using social media before sleeping or while studying, was also recommended. Overall, students believe that being responsible and aware of their social media use can help them stay mentally healthy.

Conclusions

Based on the finding, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Based on the findings, social media platforms are widely used by students for communication and updates. While these platforms help maintain connections, excessive use, especially at night, may affect students' sleep and daily routines.

2. Students mainly use social media for communication, school-related tasks, and stress relief. It helps them stay informed and connected, and it can also support their academic activities through research and collaboration.

3. Social media can affect students' focus and school performance. Although it can be useful for learning, too much time spent online often leads to distractions, which may negatively impact their ability to concentrate and complete tasks.

Social comparison is a common experience among students. Some feel insecure or pressured when comparing themselves to others online, while others are less affected. This shows that social media can influence students' emotional well-being in different ways.

4. Students believe that proper management of social media use can help improve their mental health. Limiting screen time, taking breaks, and focusing on offline activities are seen as effective ways to maintain balance. Seeking support from trusted individuals is also important in handling stress.

5. The study concludes that social media has both positive and negative effects on students' mental health. Responsible and balanced use is important to ensure better well-being and academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Students: Students are encouraged to practice proper time management, especially during nighttime, to prevent negative effects on sleep and daily functioning. They should use social media responsibly and productively for communication, academic purposes, and stress relief. Developing self-discipline by setting limits on usage and creating structured study schedules can help reduce distractions and improve academic performance. Students are also advised to be mindful when interpreting online content to avoid the negative effects of social comparison and to promote self-awareness and self-acceptance.

For Teachers: Teachers are encouraged to guide students in the responsible use of social media by integrating it as a supplementary tool for learning and collaboration. They may also provide guidance on time management and digital discipline to help students balance academic responsibilities and online activities.

For Parents: Parents are encouraged to monitor and guide their children's social media use by setting appropriate rules and limitations at home. Open communication and support can help students manage stress, avoid excessive usage, and maintain emotional well-being.

For School Administrators: School administrators are encouraged to implement programs and policies that promote awareness of responsible social media use. They may also organize seminars, workshops, or campaigns that focus on digital well-being and mental health among students.

For Future Researchers: Future researchers are encouraged to expand this study by exploring additional variables related to social media use and mental health. Further research may contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic and the development of more effective interventions.

6. Dedication

With the collective hard work and effort of the student researchers, this study is dedicated to:

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Future Researchers, may this study serve as a useful reference and guide. It is hoped that this research will contribute to a better understanding of similar topics and assist them in conducting their own studies.

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