



## The Analysis of Life Experiences of High School Students in the Era of Social Media Trends How big is the impact on the world of education

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**Abstract:** This study uses a descriptive phenomenology approach to explore the lived experiences of senior high school students during the era of social media trends. The sample for this research is high school students from North Palawan who actively follow social media trends and are generally aged 15-18 years. Purposive sampling was employed to choose participants, and semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather data. The interviews were documented with consent from the participants, and the researchers determined the level of data saturation. The data were thematic, and the experiences of the senior high school students were themed as follows: perceived benefits of social media use, emotional and psychological experiences of social media use, and effects of social media trends on academic performance and well-being. The study revealed that senior high school students perceive social media use as having several benefits, such as self-expression, sharing of information, and social connectedness. Social media use also has emotional and psychological effects, which can positively and negatively impact senior high school students' well-being. Adverse effects of social media use can include cyberbullying, online harassment, and social comparison. The study also found that social media trends can significantly affect senior high school student's academic success and general well-being. Therefore, it is essential to implement strategies that encourage responsible social media use and well-being among students to help them navigate the digital world and thrive academically and emotionally.

## INTRODUCTION

The upward trend of social media has significantly altered how people connect, communicate, and disseminate information. Senior high school students use social media sites more than students of other ages and are heavily influenced by the trends emerging in these virtual communities (Sivakumar *et al.*, 2023). Social media trends, such as viral challenges, social media influencers, and web communities, affect senior high school students' cultural, social, and mental dynamics, affecting their behaviors, emotions, and values. Although senior high school students use social media frequently, there needs to be more literature about understanding what they went through in light of current social media trends. The role of social media can have two views or benefits, according to the needs and what students do when using social media. Social media can be a breakthrough or innovation in the world of education if it is done well and correctly, but if it is done

without clear controls and boundaries, it is believed that social media can cause bad effects. Control in social media becomes very important in the learning process so that there are clear directions and rules that students can obey and remember, especially in the process of getting information that can support their knowledge.

Less is known about the precise patterns that affect the lives of senior high school students on various social media platforms, even though there is a growing body of research on the general effects of social media on young people. Given that social media trends change rapidly, it is essential to determine how these developments influence senior high school students' experiences and how they navigate the virtual world. The development of the social world which is accompanied by technological developments must of course be responded to well, because technological developments will not be backwards, technology will continue to move forward, so teachers must use technology and utilize social media to improve the quality of the world of education now and in the future. Media must be directed and utilized in a positive aspect.

Although social media is typically linked with negative features, it provides practical benefits. According to Pew Research Center research, around 81% of students indicated that social media allows them to feel more connected to peers (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Other research has found that social media provides a platform for youth to share diverse ideas and engage in deeper discussions by reducing the desire for idle conversation (Rawath *et al.*, 2019). Social media does have its share of amusement and social material, but it also offers practically limitless learning opportunities. For instance, YouTube can assist students in developing new abilities, reinforcing material covered in the classroom, and finding answers to assignment-related issues (Singh & Guruprasad, 2019). Students can ask concerns about homework tasks, collect notes from missed lessons, and work together on tasks and projects using class-specific social media accounts. Students can share information on social media and see whether others have had similar situations (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016).

Given the widespread use of social media, it is critical to consider the detrimental effects of social media usage on people's emotional and psychological states. With the increased access to technology in schools (Pentang, 2021), cyberbullying, in particular, has become more prevalent and may harm young people's emotional and mental health (Barlett *et al.*, 2018). Cyberbullying has been reported to have affected around 15 percent of teenagers from 12 to 18 years of age (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016) at some point. Additionally, studies have found that excessive social media use is associated with anxiety, depression, stress, and lower life satisfaction (Seabrook *et al.*, 2020; Twenge & Campbell, 2019). Social media use can harm sleep quality, leading to increased cognitive alertness and delayed sleep onset (Lin *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, social media use has been linked to addiction and detrimental effects on users' psychological well-being (Kolek & Saunders, 2018; Kuss & Griffiths, 2018).

This study focused on the lived experiences of senior high school students from Northern Palawan within the context of prevalent social media trends. The primary objectives were to address three key questions: primarily, the study aimed to identify the perceived benefits of social media use among senior high school students during this era

of pervasive social media trends. Secondly, it sought to delve into these students' emotional and psychological experiences concerning their engagement with social media. Lastly, the research aimed to examine the effects of social media trends on both the academic performance and overall well-being of senior high school students, providing a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted impact of social media in their lives. Through qualitative inquiry and data collection methods, the study provided valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of social media use among the target group and its implications on their academic and personal spheres.

## **METHODS**

The study used a qualitative research technique, particularly a descriptive phenomenology approach, to investigate senior high school students' subjective lived experiences and views in the era of social media trends. Qualitative data was gathered using focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. The study participants were 12 senior high school students of Northern Palawan who actively engaged with social media trends, generally aged 15-18 years. These participants are deemed to share their rich experiences in the era of social media during the school year 2023-2024. The study used purposive sampling to select high school students who were actively involved in social media trends as our participants. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and prompts allowed participants to articulate their experiences and thoughts about social media trends. The interview procedure was established based on relevant literature, research questions, and objectives. A mobile phone was used to record and replay the conversation and aid in transcribing the data.

The data obtained in this study underwent a meticulous analysis following Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step process. Initially, the transcripts were encoded verbatim to preserve the authenticity of participant responses. Subsequently, codes were generated based on the data, and themes emerged from these codes. The analytical process, guided by Colaizzi's method, involved distinct steps. Firstly, familiarization was achieved by reading and rereading each transcript to understand its content comprehensively. Next, significant statements related to the phenomenon under investigation were identified and documented, including page and line numbers. Meanings were then formulated based on these significant statements, and the formed meanings were organized into categories, theme clusters, and overarching themes through clustering.

The study's findings were then utilized to develop a detailed description of the investigated phenomenon, followed by articulating its fundamental structure. Lastly, the research participants' findings were validated by comparing them with the researcher's descriptive results and their own experiences, concluding the analysis with a rigorous verification process. This approach, as outlined by Colaizzi, ensures a thorough and systematic exploration of the lived experiences of senior high school students in Northern Palawan in the context of social media trends, maintaining methodological rigor and alignment with the participants' perspectives, as highlighted by (Morrow *et al.*, 2015). In this study, the source of research subjects was chosen based on the abilities and activities of students who have time, which the researcher views as representing the use of social

media specifically for high school students. The researcher's beliefs are based on observations and also the researcher's views from the initial question about how much intensity and understanding of social media they use in their daily lives, especially in their use of the learning process.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on research findings that have been analyzed and recorded from various experiences of high school students in North Palawan in the era of social media trends, the following themes are revealed. Researchers developed the following three main themes in this study: perceived benefits of social media use, emotional and psychological experiences of social media use, and the impact of social media trends on high school students' academic performance and well-being. Each theme and subtheme provides an overview that the researcher describes in detail to see the role of social media. Education will always undergo transformation, especially in the field of digital technology developments to make it easier for students to obtain information and knowledge. changes in the educational paradigm will really depend on the teacher's response, if it can be directed well, of course technological developments will be very useful and needed for students in learning.

### ***Theme 1: Perceived Benefits of Social Media Use***

Numerous students regularly utilize social media and could have different opinions regarding its benefits. Social media platforms have significantly changed how young people engage, communicate, and share information. Based on the observations that researchers have made, it can be found that there are several real advantages identified by participants in using social media which arise based on the conditions experienced directly by students in their activities, especially in learning process activities. The impact of social media that is felt by students can be summarized from several categories which are explained as follows.

#### ***Social Connectivity***

Many participants emphasized how social media helped them keep and deepen their relationships with acquaintances and fellow students whom they might only sometimes communicate with owing to busy schedules or other limitations. Social media use is rapidly increasing among students due to globalized communication and the post-pandemic trend of utilizing multiple platforms for educational purposes in various fields of study (Chen & Xiao, 2022). This was especially true for those relationships with friends and classmates. They discussed using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok to connect with friends, exchange updates, and keep in touch. These findings are consistent with the study of (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Nugrohet *et al.*, 2023; Rawath *et al.*, 2019). The findings propose that social media plays a vital role in maintaining and enhancing interpersonal relationships among students, especially in the context of busy schedules and limitations. Given the increasing prevalence of social media use among students and the evolving trend of utilizing multiple platforms for educational purposes, educators and

institutions may consider leveraging these platforms to foster connectivity and facilitate educational engagement.

Participants also shared how social media gave them a feeling of belonging. They spoke about how they might turn to their social networks for assistance at difficult times, guidance, or venting. They described how social media platforms provided a secure environment where they could express themselves, seek approval, and get support from friends and peers. Positive conditions from social media can certainly give teachers the ability to focus and attract students' attention in learning. Students are able to be encouraged and directed to understand the material more deeply so that some external understanding can be linked to the lesson material being carried out. The teacher's ability to provide encouragement for learning is a direction that teachers must pay close attention to in order to improve the quality of their learning. Social media can certainly be a tool that can make the learning process easier and also connect existing knowledge and information. Technological developments are able to encourage students to understand a positive research view of changing circumstances. Technology will always develop rapidly and students must be able to understand and use it so that they are not left behind by changes and developments over time, especially in the learning process.

### *Information Sharing*

The participants highlighted how social media allowed them to work together on group projects, exchange study resources, and get assistance with their academic assignments. Social media for collaborative learning significantly enhanced interaction (Ansari & Khan, 2020). They claimed that social media promoted class and peer cooperation and communication, making exchanging and obtaining study-related material. These findings support the study of Siddiqui and Singh (2016). The findings underscore the transformative potential of social media in education, particularly in fostering collaboration and communication among students. These insights suggest that educators can explore innovative ways to leverage social media platforms to enhance group work and resource-sharing in the context of academic learning. Instructional modules prepared by faculty members during the pandemic (Hamora *et al.*, 2022) can also be made available to learners through social media.

The study revealed that participants used social media to remain current on the news related to what they liked to do. To get educational and entertaining material, they mentioned relevant websites, groups, and influencers about their fields of interest, such as technology, science, sports, or the arts. Participants believed social media had improved their capacity to keep updated about their interests, learn new things, and broaden their perspectives. These findings are consistent with Singh and Guruprasad (2019), which highlight the potential for incorporating social media as a valuable educational resource in modern classrooms, as it allows students to access and engage with educational content aligned with their interests. Moreover, this suggests that utilizing social media as an educational tool could be a promising strategy for enhancing learning outcomes and fostering a broader perspective among students. Social media use may be helpful in today's educational paradigm, particularly those adopting hybrid instruction (Zakaria *et al.*, 2022)

### *Self-expression*

Some participants shared how they utilized social media to self-express, posting and captioning their ideas, opinions, and feelings. They claimed that social media allowed them to discuss their experiences and provide their views. This relates to Stsiampkouskaya et al. (2021). The findings suggest that incorporating opportunities for self-expression and meaningful discussions through social media platforms in education could enhance students' engagement and self-reflective abilities. Educators can foster a more inclusive and interactive learning environment by acknowledging and leveraging these aspects.

Participants also emphasized how social media gave them a platform to display their abilities and imaginative thinking. They shared their writing, music, photography, and other creative works on social networking channels. Some participants indicated that social media gave them a platform to share their artistic pursuits and receive comments, encouragement, and acknowledgment. These underscore the potential benefits of integrating social media platforms into education, as they provide students with opportunities to showcase their creative talents and receive valuable feedback and support. Educators can consider leveraging these platforms to encourage student expression, creativity, and engagement in a digital learning environment.

### ***Theme 2: Emotional and Psychological Experiences of Social Media Use***

Social media can affect senior high school students' emotional and psychological experiences. Their body image, social comparison, cyberbullying, fear of missing out, and other psychological aspects may all be impacted. Social media may also affect how people feel emotionally, including joyful, depressed, lonely, anxious, or stressed (Bozzola *et al.*, 2022). The implications of this finding for education are essential, as educators and school administrators should be mindful of the possible impact of social media on senior high school students' emotional and psychological well-being. The researcher feels that the findings made are not too many and can be generalized to a large object, because the subjects in this research are still too small and few, but the circumstances and facts found in the field show that in fact, there are several important parts in students' lives that can be influenced by Social media, above all, is a lifestyle and can also have an impact on the way they view activities in their learning process.

They may need to incorporate programs or strategies that promote digital literacy, emotional resilience, and healthy online behaviors to help students navigate these challenges and foster a positive online environment (Mariano-Dolesh *et al.*, 2022). To address the emotional impact of social media on senior high school students, educators should implement programs promoting digital literacy and emotional resilience. Creating a supportive environment and incorporating discussions on healthy online behaviors within the curriculum are essential to fostering positive emotional well-being in students.

### *Positive Emotions*

The participants in the study expressed a genuine enjoyment of and interest in using social media platforms. They elaborated on their positive experiences, highlighting various activities that contributed to their enjoyment. Online chatting with friends and peers

emerged as a prominent feature, allowing them to engage in conversations, stay connected, and foster community (Buckley *et al.*, 2024). Additionally, participants mentioned the pleasure they derived from enjoying and sharing content, which included posting updates, photos, videos, and other media with their online networks. Reading through their social media accounts was another interesting aspect, as it allowed them to stay informed about the trends, news, and events in their social circles. These insights illustrate how social media serves as a source of enjoyment, social interaction, and information for these individuals, reflecting its multifaceted role in their lives (Nugrohet *et al.*, 2023).

### *Negative Emotions*

The participants in this study revealed the presence of negative emotional experiences linked to their use of social media platforms, particularly concerning issues like cyberbullying and online abuse. These experiences were marked by participants sharing personal accounts of being targeted and mistreated online, which in turn led to a range of adverse emotional responses, including heightened anxiety, stress, and feelings of depression. This research supports the findings of (Barlett *et al.*, 2018). These findings have significant implications for education and well-being. It underscores the importance of incorporating digital citizenship and online safety education into the curriculum to equip students with the necessary skills to address and cope with cyberbullying and online abuse. It also highlights the need for schools to establish support systems, counseling services, or initiatives to help students find the way the emotional challenges associated with their online experiences, ensuring a safer and more positive digital environment for young learners.

The participants in the study conveyed feelings of anxiety arising from their inability to access and check their social media accounts regularly. This observation underscores the growing social media dependence and its impact on individuals' emotional well-being. In an educational context, this finding highlights the importance of digital literacy and the need to teach students about healthy online habits, including managing screen time and balancing their digital and offline lives. Furthermore, educators and parents may need to foster discussions around responsible social media use and the potential emotional consequences of excessive engagement with these platforms.

### *Psychological Impact*

The participants openly discussed the psychological repercussions of social media usage, focusing on self-esteem. They shared how their use of social media platforms had a discernible impact on their self-perception and self-worth. This insight has significant implications for education and mental health support for students. It underscores the need for comprehensive digital literacy programs that teach students how to navigate the online world and address the potential psychological effects of social media use. Educational institutions can consider incorporating discussions about self-esteem, body image, and self-worth in their curriculum to help students develop a healthier and more resilient self-concept in the digital age. Additionally, schools and educators can play a vital role in

fostering a supportive and open environment where students can search for guidance and care when dealing with the emotional aspects of their online experiences.

Several participants revealed that they felt pressured to conform to the idealized body standards depicted on social media platforms, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction with their bodies and fostering a negative self-image. This observation underscores the importance of promoting body positivity and mental well-being in educational settings (Hale *et al.*, 2023). Schools can implement programs and discussions that address the influence of social media on self-esteem. Encouraging self-esteem can help students develop a more positive relationship with their bodies, mitigating the harmful impact of unrealistic beauty standards perpetuated through social media. Additionally, educators and parents can play a crucial role in supporting students in building a strong and resilient sense of self that is not overly influenced by external online pressures.

The participants noted that their use of social media often triggered comparisons with others, especially regarding appearance, achievements, and lifestyles. This finding highlights the need for education that promotes healthy self-esteem and positive social interactions. Schools can incorporate lessons on self-worth and self-acceptance, emphasizing the dangers of excessive social comparison and its potential negative impact on mental well-being. Encouraging students to focus on their personal growth and accomplishments rather than comparing themselves to others online can foster a more positive and resilient mindset (Mariano-Dolesh *et al.*, 2022). Teaching digital citizenship and responsible social media use can help students navigate these platforms with greater empowerment and self-assurance.

### ***Theme 3: Effects of Social Media Trends on Academic Performance and Well-being***

Several issues on the impact of social media trends on senior high school student's academic performance and well-being emerged from the study of participant experiences. Social media usage is surging among students, driven by globalized communication and post-pandemic education trends (Chen & Xiao, 2022). The findings from this study on the influence of social media trends on senior high school student's academic performance and well-being underscore the need for educational institutions to address these issues proactively. Educators and policymakers may consider integrating digital literacy and responsible social media use into the curriculum to help students navigate these challenges effectively.

#### ***Academic Impact***

The participants highlighted their challenges in maintaining academic focus due to excessive time spent on social media, frequent notifications, and engaging in trending topics. These distractions negatively impacted their academic performance, as they had less time to study and were more susceptible to interruptions. This observation underscores the importance of digital time management and self-discipline for students. Educational institutions can guide effective study habits and time management skills, including strategies to minimize the impact of social media on academic tasks. Teachers, parents, and the community as a whole can also play a role in helping students manage a balance

between their online activities and their academic responsibilities. Encouraging students to set boundaries, manage screen time, and create a conducive study environment can enhance their academic performance and overall well-being.

Participants reported that they often allocated a substantial portion of their time to following social media trends, which resulted in them procrastinating and needing to dedicate more time to their academic responsibilities. This finding highlights the need for time management skills and the ability to set priorities. Educational institutions can provide resources and training to help students manage their time more efficiently and create a schedule that balances social media and academic commitments. Fostering these skills, students can ensure adequate study time while enjoying online interactions and staying current with social media trends.

Participants shared how their engagement with social media trends negatively impacted their study habits, leading to a decline in study quality, focus, and motivation. Some even expressed the difficulty of balancing social media use with their academic responsibilities, which resulted in poor study habits and academic performance. These findings align with the research conducted by Kolan and Dzandza (2018). This aligns with the need for educational institutions to guide effective time management and digital literacy. By helping students develop strategies to manage their social media use and maintain a healthy balance with their academic commitments, schools can support improved study habits, focus, and academic success. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of fostering self-discipline and self-regulation skills in students to prioritize their academic goals and maintain high-quality study habits.

#### *Well-being Impact*

Participants emphasized the strong allure of following social media trends and the subsequent negative emotional consequences, such as anxiety or stress. These observations underscore the importance of promoting digital well-being and emotional resilience among students. Educational institutions can incorporate discussions and programs that help students recognize the emotional impact of social media and develop strategies to cope with these emotions healthily (Shieh & Nasongkhla, 2024). Encouraging students to take breaks from social media, practice self-care, and seek support when needed can aid in managing the emotional challenges associated with online trends, contributing to their overall well-being.

Participants noted that engaging in late-night scrolling, excessive screen time, and exposure to stimulating content on social media affected their ability to obtain sufficient sleep. They also reported that social media trends frequently interrupted their sleep patterns. These observations are consistent with the findings (Lin *et al.*, 2016), who highlighted the adverse effects of social media on sleep patterns. This emphasizes teaching students about healthy sleep hygiene and the potential consequences of extreme screen time. Educational institutions can guide the benefits of maintaining a regular sleep schedule, limiting screen exposure before bedtime, and creating a sleep-conducive environment. By helping students prioritize their sleep, schools can contribute to their overall well-being, daily alertness, and academic performance. Furthermore, recognizing

the link between sleep disruptions and social media use, as mentioned in the study by Lanaj *et al.* (2014), reinforces the need for individuals to adopt better digital habits, especially before bedtime, to ensure a sound night's rest and optimal productivity during the day.

## CONCLUSION

The study results indicate that senior high school students view social media use as having various advantages, including self-expression, sharing of information, and social connectedness. However, social media also has emotional and psychological effects, affecting positive and negative emotions. While social media may be entertaining and engaging, it can also result in unpleasant situations like cyberbullying, online harassment, and social comparison, which can have a detrimental influence on the well-being of senior high school students. Social media trends may impact senior high school students' academic success and well-being. It is recommended that students should get direction and instruction on using social media responsibly from their schools, parents, and teachers. This should cover topics like possible dangers like cyberbullying and online harassment and ways to safeguard one's mental health and well-being while using social media. Schools and teachers may promote using social media for productive activities, including group project collaboration, information exchange, and artistic self-expression. This can assist students in getting the most out of social media while limiting the unfavorable emotional reactions related to its use.

Students who encounter unpleasant feelings like cyberbullying, internet harassment, and social comparison should get help and tools from their schools and parents. This might involve getting therapy, using secure reporting channels, and developing coping methods for bad social media encounters. Schools and parents should encourage responsible social media use by highlighting the value of offline activities, in-person relationships, and self-care. The danger of unpleasant emotional experiences linked to excessive social media usage can be decreased, and students can maintain a healthy balance between online and offline activities. To fully comprehend the long-term impacts of social media use on senior high school student's academic performance and general well-being, further study is required to keep up with the always-changing social media trends. This information may benefit future interventions and attempts to encourage students to use social media responsibly and healthily. The researcher advised Alain researchers to look at other variables and focus on certain subject matter so that they could provide specific information and as additions and improvements to this research.

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