



Levels of Social Media Engagement and Academic Performance among Intermediate Grade Learners of Jolo Elementary School

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Abstract: The relationship between social media engagement and academic performance remains contentious in educational discourse. This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, utilizing an adapted questionnaire to examine social media engagement patterns and their impact on academic performance among elementary learners. The research encompassed a total enumeration approach involving 77 pupils from grades IV to VI at Jolo Elementary School in Palawan, Philippines. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, encompassing frequency counts, percentages, and means. The findings revealed that 51.94% of the participants operated at an instructional reading level, 28.57% at an independent level, and 19.48% at a frustration level regarding academic performance. Furthermore, a moderate level of behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement was identified in the pupils' social media usage. These insights underscore the need to develop targeted interventions to address and manage excessive social media consumption among elementary pupils within educational environments.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid progress of technology has redesigned the educational landscape, making access to various websites and social media platforms ubiquitous across mobile devices, laptops, and other digital tools. Social media, once primarily a platform for social interaction, has evolved into a central hub for modern communication, education, and information sharing (Akram & Kumar, 2017; Madarcos et al., 2024; Van Dijck & Poell, 2018). Enabled by technological innovations and the widespread availability of mobile devices, these platforms facilitate the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and information within virtual networks and communities, offering users the ability to share diverse content seamlessly, from personal data to documents, videos, and photos (Dollarhide, 2021).

While social media's role in democratizing access to education and fostering collaboration is undeniable, it also presents challenges regarding privacy, accuracy of information, and potential disruption, highlighting the need for critical evaluation and responsible use in this digital era (Haleem et al., 2022; Pentang, 2021). The digital era is actually capable of driving ease in the learning process, provided that digital skills are directed in a better positive direction by considering the impact or quality generated by the digital application. Technological developments are not only a blessing but also a big

challenge for every individual in adapting to old patterns which tend to be classical (Sivakumar, 2020). The ability of teachers, students and educational practitioners must truly be able to understand that technological development will be a breakthrough and new paradigm in the world of education in the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted shifts in the global education landscape, compelling educators to swiftly transition to alternative learning modalities to safeguard learning continuity and public health. The disruption of traditional face-to-face education has catalyzed the widespread adoption of diverse learning approaches, including online, blended, radio-based, and hybrid learning models (Sato et al., 2023; Zakaria et al., 2022). Social media was a digital tool frequently employed to navigate the COVID-19 epidemic (Cleofas et al., 2022). In this transformed educational environment, online platforms and social media have emerged as indispensable tools, empowering educators, pupils, and parents to communicate, collaborate, and share resources effectively. These emerging technological tools have driven changes in the educational arena (Haleem et al., 2022; Pentang, 2021).

While these adaptations have fostered resilience, adaptability, and innovation within the education sector, they have also challenged traditional educational paradigms. Therefore, understanding social media platforms' evolving role and impact in contemporary educational settings is crucial for navigating this dynamic landscape. However, recent studies (Chen & Xiao, 2022; Matthewson, 2020) have raised concerns about the potential adverse effects of social media on academic performance and well-being among pupils. These studies highlight a range of issues, including elevated rates of depression, self-harm, and suicidal behavior, as well as threats to personal safety, poorer sleep quality, and diminished face-to-face interpersonal skills, underscoring the need for balanced and responsible use of social media in the context of education.

In the present context, educational institutions have embraced social media to connect pupils with their instructors, peers, and various authorities. For instance, private online classrooms on social media platforms facilitate homework submission, keeping pupils engaged even during breaks and providing continuous educational support with opportunities for progress monitoring (Nanquil, 2020). Collaborative efforts on assignments, feedback on projects, and teamwork are also encouraged through these platforms. Additionally, pupils can express their ideas and concerns, fostering communication between parents, advisers, and educators (Sivakumar, 2020).

Social media engagement is associated with these adverse effects. Cook et al. (2020) liken social media engagement to the circulation of dopamine in the body. They further define it as an excessive concern and an insatiable desire to access or utilize social media. Those dependent on social media often need more time management skills and pay attention to essential aspects of life to engage with these platforms. The affordability of mobile phones and browsing capabilities, even for lower-class parents, has allowed them to provide these technologies to their children. Despite good intentions, ensuring pupils use these tools responsibly is challenging. Former DepEd Undersecretary for Administration Alain Del Pascua emphasized in an interview that social media, as a tool for collaboration and communication, may defeat its purpose if not used properly and could

lead to severe problems. Technological developments must be responded to wisely, because the impact that can occur depends on what is done and what purpose it is made for. Teachers are the front guard who must be able to direct students in using technology-assisted media. Researchers believe that a wise way of using and taking advantage of current developments will be able to encourage better and better quality of learning.

Teachers at Jolo Elementary School, serving as the second parents to pupils, have observed how pupils use social media. Recognizing their responsibility to protect pupils from the adverse effects of social media, this study aims to assess the extent of social media engagement among pupils and provide appropriate solutions or assistance to concerned stakeholders.

METHOD

A quantitative-descriptive research design was utilized to investigate social media engagement levels and academic performance among Grade IV to VI pupils at Jolo Elementary School in Roxas, Palawan, Philippines, during the 2022-2023 academic year. Through total enumeration, seventy-seven pupils participated in the study, representing a 100% participation rate from the selected grade levels. The decision to focus on these grade levels was informed by the pupils' reading and comprehension skills, which were deemed adequate for effectively understanding and responding to the questionnaire.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent was agreed upon and signed by the parents or guardians of the respondents, ensuring they were fully knowledgeable about the study's purpose, methods, potential risks, and benefits. Additionally, assent was secured directly from the young respondents, ensuring they understood the nature of the study, the activities involved, and their rights as participants. Privacy, confidentiality, and transparency were rigorously maintained, with data treated with the utmost confidentiality and any potential biases or misleading information avoided.

The researchers adopted and adapted the Social Media Engagement Scale (SMES) developed by Ni et al. (2020) to assess social media engagement. The SMES is a validated and reliable instrument designed to measure individuals' engagement with social media platforms across behavioral, affective, and cognitive dimensions. The adapted SMES questionnaire underwent rigorous validation and pilot testing to ensure its appropriateness, relevance, and reliability for assessing respondents' social media engagement levels in this study. Preliminary analyses of the adapted SMES questionnaire further confirmed its satisfactory psychometric properties, supporting its reliability and validity in assessing social media engagement among the respondents.

By employing specific and validated instruments to assess academic performance and social media engagement, the researchers aimed to ensure the data's accuracy, consistency, and credibility. This rigorous methodological approach enhances the robustness and trustworthiness of the study's findings, providing a foundation for examining the nuanced relationship between social media engagement and academic performance among the respondents and drawing meaningful conclusions based on reliable and valid measures. Fairness and validity will play a major role in the ability of

the instruments created to provide very useful information and data. The ability to provide correct and precise data can provide a more comprehensive presentation so that it can become a reference and insight for readers in determining educational policies and also new educational paradigms that can be implemented for the present and future.

The SMES comprised three factors: affective, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for affective engagement, behavioral engagement, and cognitive engagement were from 0.709 to 0.804, which ensures the questionnaire's reliability and validity (Wang et al., 2020). It consists of a set of 13 items distributed as in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of assessment items that are the aim of the research

Behavioral Engagement	Affective Engagement	Cognitive Engagement
Item 1: Using social media is my daily habit.	Item 5: I get fulfilled by the attention and comments of others on social media.	Item 10: Social media makes me feel more comfortable than the real world.
Item 2: I browse social media whenever I have time.	Item 7: Curiosity about the development of information on social media is very interesting to me.	Item 11: I feel bored when I cannot use social media.
Item 3: Even if it is late, I will look at social media before sleep.	Item 9: Using social media, I am content with my relationship with my friends.	Item 12: Compared to the real world, I am happier socializing on social media.
Item 4: I often use social media to relax		Item 13: I feel anxious when I cannot use social media.

This research uses a Likert scale, where each item is scored on a five-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = unsure, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. This scoring is used to comprehensively see how each indicator in the research is viewed. Affective engagement refers to the increase in positive or negative emotions when the individual uses social media; a high score indicates a high degree of affective engagement in social media. Behavioral engagement refers to the behavior of habitually or unconsciously using social media, especially browsing; the higher the score, the higher the degree of behavioral engagement. Cognitive engagement refers to the individual cognitive bias of positive social media use; a high degree of cognitive engagement means that the individual would be more inclined to be involved in online social interaction and avoid offline face-to-face communication; a high score indicates more cognitive engagement in social media.

In this research, the researcher made efforts to make the research subject truly comprehensive and can be considered and accounted for. All populations taken are people who the researcher considers capable of representing all student styles and indicators, so as to be able to generalize student abilities in general. Researchers hope that these findings will be able to make a huge contribution to the world of education, especially in the Philippines and other parts of the world. The data analysis used will be divided into several question items which have been adjusted to the achievement indicators.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Academic Performance of the Respondents

This research tries to conduct an investigation by paying attention to and considering the Profile of Respondents According to Reading Level which consists of Reading Level which consists of Frustration, Instructional, Independent. In this study, the data was divided into various categories of respondents, which can be seen in full in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent's Profile According to Reading Level

Reading Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frustration	15	19.48
Instructional	40	51.74
Independent	22	28.57
Total	77	100

Table 1 presents the frequency distribution of reading levels among the respondents, categorizing them into instructional, independent, and frustration levels. The data reveals that 51.94% of the respondents are reading at an instructional level, indicating they can read and understand text with some assistance; 28.57% are at an independent level, suggesting they can read and comprehend text with little to no assistance; and only 19.48% are at a frustration level, struggling to read and comprehend text even with significant support. Agreeing with Idulog et al. (2023), understanding these reading levels is crucial for assessing pupils' reading proficiency, identifying their learning needs, and determining appropriate instructional strategies and interventions. Recognizing the significance of these classifications and their implications can guide educators in implementing tailored literacy programs, developing targeted interventions, and fostering a supportive learning environment that caters to all pupils' diverse needs and abilities, ultimately promoting academic success and enhancing comprehension skills. This implies that most respondents can read with only a few amounts of assistance, have adequate knowledge, and can access text quickly with no or few errors.

This contrasts with the study of Casingal (2022), which focused on intermediate pupils in their schools and found that most were reading at the frustration level. However, it is essential to note that the sample size, location, and specific characteristics of the schools in Casingal's study should have been provided, making direct comparisons challenging. On the other hand, the findings of Cabalo et al. (2019) are more aligned with the current study, as they reported that many of their respondents, who were also intermediate pupils, were reading at the instructional level. However, the differences in sample size, geographic location, and educational context between Cabalo et al.'s study and the current one may contribute to observed reading levels. Therefore, while these comparisons provide valuable insights into the variability of reading proficiency among intermediate pupils across different studies, it is essential to consider the nuances of each study's methodology, sample characteristics, and contextual factors when interpreting the findings and drawing conclusions about reading levels among intermediate pupils.

Respondent's Level of Social Media Engagement in terms of Behavioral, Affective, and Cognitive Engagement

This research also obtained data, namely how the level of social media engagement of respondents was seen from student behavioral engagement. This data was taken using 4 question items which have been prepared in detail and are believed to be able to provide maximum information. The complete data produced can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent's Level of Social Media Engagement in terms of Behavioral Engagement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
Item 1	2.65	Moderate Engagement
Item 2	2.78	Moderate Engagement
Item 3	2.52	Moderate Engagement
Item 4	2.78	Moderate Engagement
Overall Mean	2.68	Moderate Engagement

Table 2 shows the respondents' social media engagement level regarding behavioral engagement as reflected in statements 1, 2, 3, and 4. Regarding the respondents' behavioral engagement on social media platforms, the overall mean of 2.68 indicates moderate behavioral engagement. This finding indicates that the respondents perceive the usage of social media platforms as a significant activity in their day-to-day lives, and they are moderately dependent on social media platforms. This is relative to the findings of Akram et al. (2019), who found that as children age, they utilize interactive social networking sites like Twitter, MySpace, Facebook, and Orkut more frequently, making social media an essential part of their lives. Additionally, how young people utilize technology, interact with their parents and friends, and communicate with them is significantly influenced by social networks. This research also obtained data, namely the Level of Respondents' Social Media Engagement in terms of Affective Engagement. This data was taken using 4 question items which have been prepared in detail and are believed to be able to provide maximum information. The complete data produced can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Level of Social Media Engagement of the Respondents in terms of Affective Engagement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
ITEM 5	2.57	Moderate Engagement
ITEM 7	2.39	Moderate Engagement
ITEM 9	2.65	Moderate Engagement
Overall Mean	2.55	Moderate Engagement

The research data in Table 3 shows that there are actually Items 5, 7, and 9, using UKM, which try and are believed to present the emotional changing effects of social media platforms when used, so the impact used depends on the user himself. It tells the respondents' affective engagement level. It can be noted that an overall mean of 2.55 can be perceived from the table. Data revealed that respondents have a moderate affective engagement with social media platforms. This implies that most respondents agree that they experience mood-altering effects when using social media platforms and use social media platforms to feel good. Thus, respondents are perceived to have a moderate affective

engagement in using social media platforms in terms of emotional alteration, and respondents may occasionally though currently only mildly experience different emotion-altering effects when using social media platforms.

This finding relates to Chen and Xiao (2022 and Matthewson (2020), where social media could impact users, particularly children who are impressionable and often imitate what they see without considering the consequences. Further, they said that children spend more time on social media sites than they should since they prefer to spend their time on amusing activities. Children's enthusiasm for social media is very high. If it is not done well, it will greatly influence the learning process both at school and in all children's learning environments. If the media is not controlled well, researchers believe that children will be encouraged to absorb all available information without careful consideration and analysis of the information received, ultimately children will assume that all the information provided is the truth. The attention of teachers and parents in limiting or directing better media use will be a solution and educational breakthrough in the future. Technological development cannot be stopped, it can only be utilized or maximized in various ways, especially in the world of education.

Table 4. Level of Social Media Engagement of the Respondents in terms of Cognitive Engagement

Items	Mean	Interpretation
ITEM 10	2.91	Moderate Engagement
ITEM 11	2.57	Moderate Engagement
ITEM 12	2.96	Moderate Engagement
ITEM 13	2.76	Moderate Engagement
Overall Mean	2.81	Moderate Engagement

The findings regarding items 10, 11, 12, and 13 on SMEs reflecting cognitive engagement in social media platforms, with an overall mean of 2.81 indicating moderate cognitive engagement, suggest that respondents derive pleasure from using social media platforms (Table 2.3). This aligns with Sivakumar (2020), who characterized social media engagement as an obsessive fixation with social media and an insatiable desire to access or utilize it. The notion of social media engagement as a condition of reliance leading to excessive use and difficulties in abstaining resonates with the observed moderate cognitive engagement among respondents.

This suggests that despite being aware of the potential adverse consequences associated with excessive social media use, such as interference with other vital elements of life, individuals may still experience pleasure and gratification from social media interactions. However, it is crucial to note that while moderate cognitive engagement may indicate a degree of enjoyment, it may also signify a level of dependence that warrants further investigation. Exploring the potential implications of this finding, such as its impact on academic performance, mental well-being, and overall quality of life, could shed light on the complex interplay between social media use and engagement. Additionally, examining potential explanatory factors, such as individual characteristics, environmental influences, and coping mechanisms, could provide valuable insights into

the underlying mechanisms driving cognitive engagement with social media platforms. By contextualizing these findings within the broader literature on social media engagement and its correlates, researchers can better understand the nuanced nature of social media use and its implications for individuals' lives.

Presents a comprehensive overview of the respondents' level of social media engagement across different core elements, including behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement. The mean scores for each item and the total overall mean indicate that respondents exhibit moderate levels of engagement across all assessed core elements. Specifically, regarding behavioral engagement, respondents show moderate participation in various activities on social media platforms, such as posting, sharing, and interacting with content and other users. Affective engagement is also moderate, with respondents experiencing emotional connections, positive feelings, and enjoyment when using social media. Additionally, respondents demonstrate moderate cognitive engagement, actively thinking, analyzing, and processing information while engaging with social media content. The total overall mean score of 2.64 further confirms the respondents' balanced and integrated approach to using social media platforms. Understanding these moderate levels of engagement provides valuable insights into respondents' interactions with social media and their overall digital behaviors, informing targeted interventions, educational programs, and support strategies to promote healthy and responsible social media use, enhance academic performance, and foster digital well-being among individuals.

CONCLUSION

The respondents demonstrated a moderate level of social media engagement and that it has a direct relationship with academic performance. Recognizing the adverse effects of social media on pupils' academic performance and health, it is crucial to thoroughly assess and address the issue of severe social media engagement. Comprehensive planning should be implemented to prevent severe social media engagement, regulate its usage, and enhance the benefits while minimizing the risks of this tool. Allocating research priorities to explore both positive and negative aspects of social media on individual, social, and academic levels is beneficial. Given the significance of social media engagement and its potentially harmful impact on academic performance, similar studies are recommended to achieve more conclusive results. Employing mixed methods can enhance understanding of the phenomenon and its correlation with pupils' academic achievements. While the current study offers valuable insights into the impact of social media engagement on academic performance among pupils, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations, such as the focus on a specific age group or setting and the reliance on a particular methodological approach. To build upon these findings and achieve more conclusive results, future research could explore the phenomenon across different age groups and settings, utilize a mixed-methods approach to capture its complexity, and investigate protective factors and resilience strategies that mitigate the negative impact of social media engagement on academic performance. Exploring these diverse research directions will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between social media use, engagement,

and academic achievements, informing the development of targeted interventions and support strategies for pupils, educators, and parents.

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