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Influence of Social Media on High School Students

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Abstract. This quantitative study investigated the influence of social media on Grade 9 students in Veruela, Agusan del Sur, Philippines. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study involved a sample of early adolescent learners, many of whom were the youngest in their families and came from low-income households. Most respondents identified as Roman Catholic, with parents working primarily as farmers or homemakers. Data revealed that Facebook was the most commonly used platform, with students spending an average of 30 minutes to 3 hours daily on social media. Respondents reported using these platforms mainly for sharing and posting content, either privately or publicly. The study measured emotional influence with a mean score of 3.06 (moderately influenced) and behavioral influence with a mean score of 2.54 (influenced). A statistically significant relationship was found between students' socio-economic status and the frequency of social media usage. However, no strong associations were found between other demographic variables and social media impact. The findings suggest that excessive social media use can disrupt academic focus and classroom engagement. The study recommends increased collaboration among parents, educators, and stakeholders to foster responsible social media use and enhance students' academic and behavioral outcomes.

Keywords: Behavioral impact; Emotional impact; Influence; Social media; Students

1.0 Introduction

In modern society, people are increasingly engaged in social media, using various platforms as part of their daily routine. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and many more are just a few of the numerous social media sites that individuals mostly use. The study examines the relationship between social media and its influences among Grade 9 students of Generation Z. The study highlights the importance of understanding the impact of social media on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of adolescents today. Moreover, it aimed to classify the disadvantages and advantages of this in the Philippine setting. Additionally, it examined the relationship between the demographic profile of respondents, the types of social media commonly used, and the frequency of usage in both public and private settings to determine whether these factors have an emotional and behavioral impact on students' academic outcomes.

In recent years, social media has had a significant impact on high school students' social behaviors, emotional health, and academic achievement. Social media serves as a platform for peer interaction and self-expression, but it also contributes to distractions that can impair academic focus. A 2024 experimental study from Amsterdam demonstrated that teenagers are susceptible to social media feedback, which can influence mood negatively and may contribute to compulsive use and emotional volatility. Moreover, Bautista (2024) investigated Filipino senior high school students during the COVID-19 pandemic and found a positive correlation between social media addiction and depression symptoms, indicating that excessive engagement increased the risk of depressive mood states. These results emphasize the necessity of parental supervision and structured digital education in order to assist high school students in weighing the advantages and disadvantages of social media use.

A systematic review in Frontiers in Psychology (2022) highlights that while social media can offer short-lived emotional support, its overuse is linked to increased stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms among students. Most existing studies in the Philippines focus on only one or two domains, often cognitive or affective, and are localized to specific regions. There is a lack of integrated research that simultaneously examines cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains within a single student population in a locale like Veruela, Agusan del Sur. Indeed, there is a need to conduct a study to determine the influence of social media among selected high school students in Veruela, Agusan del Sur, Philippines, and how it affects the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. These students are vulnerable to the negative influence that can affect their holistic development.

The study holds significant importance for the schools and communities of Veruela, Agusan del Sur, as it identifies the necessary programs and activities to enhance the effective use of social media. It also served as a wake-up call towards the disadvantages and misuse of such technology. The groundwork of this endeavor is beneficial to teachers, students, and communities in Veruela, Agusan del Sur, as it provides insight into the level of social media influence on students' emotional and behavioral development. This study provided a foundation for the effective use of social media, proposing interventions and programs based on its findings that can significantly contribute to the holistic development of students.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the influence of social media among high school students. As noted by Rauteda (2025), quantitative approaches grounded in positivist philosophy allow for hypothesis testing, the identification of cause-and-effect relationships, and the generalization of findings to larger populations—making them essential for studies in education and the social sciences. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire, which aimed to gather information on the respondents' demographic profiles, the types and frequency of social media platforms used, patterns of public and private sharing, and the emotional and behavioral impacts of social media usage. The instrument underwent content validation by a licensed guidance counselor to ensure its reliability and appropriateness for adolescent participants. The collected data were statistically analyzed and integrated into the findings to substantiate the study's conclusions regarding the impact of social media on high school students.

2.2 Research Participants

The study focused on the 120 respondents who were willing to perform the survey procedures. Purposive sampling was used in the study. The three schools are selected based on the availability and strength of mobile phone signals and the number of internet users in the area. A total of 40 respondents, comprising 20 males and 20 females, were selected from each school using simple sampling through the fishbowl method. The respondents were identified through the Learner Information System (LIS).

2.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument used by the researcher is a modified and adopted questionnaire. The instruments used were designed to gather and elicit information on the influence of social media among Grade 9 high school students. It has five parts. Part 1 deals with the demographic profile, which includes age, sex, ordinal position in the family, socio-economic status, parents' occupation, religion, social media, frequency of usage, and frequency of sharing and posting publicly and privately, and Part 2 is all about the level of influence of social media on emotion and behavior.

To assess the emotional and behavioral impact of social media on students, this study employed standardized and adapted research instruments. The emotional impact was measured using items adapted from the Affective Style Questionnaire (ASQ) developed by Stefan G. Hofmann, Ph.D., and Todd B. Kashdan, Ph.D., which is known for its solid psychometric properties in assessing emotional regulation and affective response styles (Hofmann & Kashdan, 2010). Meanwhile, the behavioral impact scale was adapted from a study conducted by Beth Morissey, which focused on behavioral patterns associated with frequent social media use. A modified 5-point Likert scale was used for both instruments, ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree, to quantify the level of influence in terms of emotional and behavioral responses. Before full deployment, the instruments underwent a pilot test involving 30 students with similar characteristics to the target population. To assess content validity, the

instruments were reviewed by three experts in educational psychology and research. Based on their feedback, several items were reworded for clarity and cultural relevance. The resulting Content Validity Index (CVI) was 0.87, indicating high content appropriateness. The reliability of the instrument was also established. Using Cronbach's Alpha, the internal consistency for the emotional impact scale was $\alpha = 0.89$, and $\alpha = 0.85$ for the behavioral impact scale, both indicating strong reliability.

Additionally, the pilot test yielded an overall mean score of 4.10, with an adjectival rating of "Very Good" in terms of clarity and student comprehension, confirming that the items were understandable and suitable for high school respondents. All sources of adopted tools have been properly cited to ensure academic integrity and transparency in the research design. The licensed guidance counselor validator suggested that the question should appear positive and that some indicators should be rephrased using simple terms to make the thought behind each item more easily decipherable. The Social Science Instructor validator recommended changing the format of the questionnaire to align with the statement of the problem. Further, part of the recommendation is to organize the presentation properly. Another validator, a doctor in Philosophy of Education, suggested discussing how monthly income has a similar meaning to socio-economic status. After all these suggestions were taken into consideration, a revised copy was made.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

In this study, several processes need to be considered by the researcher. The researcher obtained permission from the school heads of the chosen schools in the Municipality of Veruela, where the study was conducted, and also from the respondents to participate in the study. Upon the granting of the permission, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires. The researcher briefed the participants regarding the background and rationale of the study without giving the full details to avoid biases that might affect their responses. The gathered data were tabulated, interpreted, and analyzed. The weighted mean and frequency aided the interpretation and analysis of data.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Given that the respondents were minors, ethical considerations were strictly observed. Informed consent was obtained from both the students and their parents prior to participation. The researcher distributed the consent forms among the chosen respondents in their respective schools and grade levels to set proper expectations. The researcher debriefed the respondent about the purpose of the survey and the relevance of their answers to the completion of this study.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents this sequential order based on the statement of the problem. The variables tested include age of the respondents, sex, ordinal position in the family, socio-economic status, parents' occupation, religion, social media, the frequency of usage, and frequency of privately and publicly sharing. The three schools are selected based on the availability and strength of mobile phone signal, as well as the population of internet users. A total of 40 respondents, comprising 20 males and 20 females, were selected from each school using simple sampling through the fishbowl method. The respondents are selected based on their possession of a social media account, whether active or inactive, and their use of mobile phones and computers. Most respondents fell within the 14–16 age bracket, accounting for 81 percent, while those aged 22 and above had the lowest frequency, at 2 percent. It implies that the respondent belonged to Generation Z.

Table 1. *Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Age			
	Age Bracket	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	below 14	8	7
	14 – 16	98	81
	17 – 19	13	11
	20 and above	2	2
Total		**120**	**100**
Sex	**Category**		
	Male	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Female	60	50

		60	50
Total		**120**	**100**
Ordinal Position in the Family			
	Order	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Eldest	31	26
	Middle	25	21
	Youngest	39	33
	Others	25	21
Total		**120**	**100**
Socio-Economic Status/ Monthly Income			
	Income	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	5,000 and less	94	78
	5,001 – 10,000	10	8
	10,001 – 15,000	6	5
	15,001 – 20,000	6	5
	20 001 and more	4	3
Total		**120**	**100**
Parents' Occupation: Mother			
	Income	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Housewife	96	80
	Domestic Helper	9	8
	Businesswoman	3	3
	Government Employee	8	7
	Others.	4	3
Total		**120**	**100**
Parents' Occupation: Father			
	Income	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Farmer	94	78
	Businessman	5	4
	Government Employee	11	9
	Others, please. specify	10	8
Total		**120**	**100**
Religion			
	Religion	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Roman Catholic	62	52
	Iglesia ni Cristo	39	33
	Seventh Day Adventist	5	4
	Others.	14	12
Total		**120**	**100**
Social Media	**Sites**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	No Social Media	3	3
	Account	112	93
	Facebook	1	1
	Twitter	3	3
	Instagram	1	1
	Others.		
Total		**120**	**100**
Frequency of Usage			
	Time Consumed	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Occasional/less than 30 minutes	35	29
	30 minutes – 3 hours	62	52
	4 – 6 hours	12	10
	7 – 9 hours	5	4
	10 hours and above	6	5
Total		**120**	**100**
The Frequency of Sharing and Posting Publicly and Privately	**Period**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Daily	23	19
	Weekly	34	28
	Monthly	42	35
	Yearly	19	16
	Others.	2	2
Total		**120**	**100**

Most respondents fell within the 14–16 age bracket, accounting for 81 percent, while those aged 22 and above had the lowest frequency, at 2 percent. It implies that the respondent belonged to Generation Z. According to Wells et al. (2018), Generation Z is currently 13 to 22 years old. Generation Z tends to be practical and driven. There were 60 males and 60 females, each representing 50 percent. Thus, purposive sampling was applied in the selection of the respondents. Based on the study by Memon et al. (2025), a structured framework is explicitly presented for using purposive sampling in quantitative research. The guidelines address implementation, reporting standards, and the combination of purposive sampling with techniques like snowball and quota sampling to enhance rigor and relevance. Most of the respondents were the youngest in their families. They comprise 33 percent of the entire respondents. Travers (2017) stated that the youngest children tend to be more outgoing and charming to get attention. It implies that the youngest have more freedom and are subsequently more likely to try new things. Few respondents fall into the middle category, while others, such as those in the 7th, fifth, or third groups, are more numerous. This is partly because some respondents have large families, with the lowest frequency of 25 respondents, or 21 percent of the total.

The socio-economic status refers to the monthly income of the family of the respondents. The tabular results show that most respondents (94, or 78 percent) have a monthly income of $5,000 or less, while four respondents (3 percent) have a monthly income of $20,001 or more. It implies that the respondents' families can afford mobile phones within their budget, considering that cellphones are no longer a want but a necessity nowadays. De Groote (2013) indicates that smartphones are on the trajectory to becoming a need instead of just a want, integrating the devices into every aspect of life. Most of the mothers of the respondents are homemakers, accounting for 96 respondents or 80 percent. In contrast, businesswomen make up the smallest group, with only three respondents, or three percent of the total. Most of the mothers of the respondents are homemakers. The findings correlate with the OECD's SIGI 2020 report, indicating that nearly half of respondents in the region believe that being a homemaker is just as fulfilling as paid work—a reflection of persistent cultural valuations of domestic roles in family life.

Findings on the father's occupation also revealed that most respondents' fathers work as farmers, with 94 respondents or 78 percent. At the same time, business people have the lowest frequency, with five respondents or 4 percent of the total. It implies that the primary means of living is through farming, given that the study's location is suited for agricultural land and the respondents are the sons and daughters of a farmer. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture (CA) of the Philippines, there are 5.56 million farms/holdings covering 7.19 million hectares per farm/holding. This can be attributed to the partitioning of farms/holdings from one generation to the next, where agricultural holders/operators pass on their land to their successors. Among the respondents, 62 (52%) identified as Roman Catholics, while Seventh Day Adventists made up the lowest group, with five respondents (4% of the total). It implies that most respondents are Roman Catholics, a fact supported by the World Atlas article published on November 14, 2018, which states that approximately 70% of the Philippines' population identifies as Roman Catholic.

It showed that most of the Grade 9 students were using Facebook with the highest frequency of 112 respondents or 93 percent. Meanwhile, Twitter and other social media, such as YouTube, received the lowest rating from one respondent or one percent of the total. The Facebook app is friendly to users and easy to access, especially since you can use it for free. As supported by Crouch et al. (2018), Facebook is viewed as the leading social media site in the world. Facebook is an accessible platform that serves as an educational social networking platform, helping people discuss and complete their educational requirements online.

It revealed that most respondents' usage frequency was between 30 minutes and 3 hours a day, with the highest being 62 or 52 percent. However, 7–9 hours a day received the lowest rating from 6 respondents, or 5 percent. It implies that most students have average internet exposure. Based on Social Media Today's press release (2017), in its infographic study, the average person will spend nearly two hours on social media every day. Findings on the frequency of sharing and posting publicly and privately showed that most respondents (42 out of 120, or 35%) shared and posted monthly, with the highest frequency. In contrast, the lowest frequency was observed among those who did not post at all (2 out of 120, or 2%). It explains why most students only share about life events that happen once a month during special occasions. Based on the idea of Young (2018), she emphasized that Gen Z is selective about what content they share.

3.2 Level of Influence of Social Media on the Emotion and Behavior of Respondents

Table 2 and 3 presented a summary of the findings on the level of influence of social media among respondents, focusing on emotional and behavioral impacts, as measured using a 5-point Likert scale with weighted mean and adjectival ratings. Table 2 shows the influence of social media on emotional impact, "I know what to do to get myself into a better mood", indicator got the highest mean of 3.94 with adjectival description as "Highly/ Quite a bit" and "I can let go of my feelings," indicator as the least with 2.10 and adjectival description as "Less/A little bit". It implies that social media is used as a means to boost one's mood.

Table 2. *Level of Influence of Social Media on the Emotion of Respondents*

Emotional Impact Indicator	Mean	Adjectival Rating
1.) People usually cannot tell how I am feeling inside.	3.22	Moderately
2.) I could easily fake emotions.	2.89	Moderately
3.) I can get into a better mood quite easily using social media.	3.20	Moderately
4.) I can avoid getting upset by taking a different perspective on things on social media.	3.21	Moderately
5.) I often suppress my emotional reactions.	3.03	Moderately
6.) I can let go of my feelings.	2.10	Less/A little bit
7.) I can act in a way that people do not see me being upset.	2.90	Moderately
8.) I know what to do to get myself into a better mood.	3.94	Highly/ Quite a bit
9) It is ok to feel negative emotions at times on social media.	2.37	Less/A little bit
10.) I become frustrated or angry when a social media site goes down or is unavailable.	3.78	Highly/ Quite a bit
Overall Mean	**3.06**	**Moderately**

According to Yue et al. (2023), during and after the COVID-19 lockdown, active social media engagement increased perceived network responsiveness, which in turn boosted perceived social support, and ultimately reduced loneliness and increased life satisfaction. The findings revealed that the respondents of this study gave the indicator on emotional impact with an overall mean of 3.06 with an adjectival description of "Moderately." Thus, it implies that social media moderately influences the respondents in terms of emotional impact.

As indicated to Table 3, the influence of social media on behavioral impact, the indicator "I prefer to interact with people on social media rather than face to face," got the highest mean of 3.28 with adjectival description as Moderately and the indicator "I have said no to an activity with my family or friends because of social media." as the least frequency with 2.03 and an adjectival description as "Less/A little bit."

Table 3. *Level of Influence of Social Media on the Behavior of Respondents*

Behavioral Impact Indicator	Mean	Adjectival Rating
1.) I visit social media sites with no goal or specific purpose.	3.13	Moderately
2.) I spend more time on social media.	2.91	Moderately
3.) I have said no to an activity with my family or friends because of social media.	2.03	Less/A Little Bit
4.) I have ignored a responsibility like homework or chores because of social media.	2.05	Less/A Little Bit
5.) I have to stay up late or get up early to spend more time on social media.	2.19	Less/A Little Bit
6.) I have hidden my time on social media from family or friends.	2.53	Less/A Little Bit
7.) I used social media when a parent or teacher told me not to.	2.48	Less/A Little Bit
8.) I prefer to interact with people on social media rather than face-to-face.	3.28	Moderately
9) I am an active member of multiple social media sites.	2.38	Less/A Little Bit
10.) I received comments on how much time I spend on social media.	2.47	Less/A Little Bit
Overall Mean	**2.54**	**Less/A Little Bit**

It explains that respondents prefer virtual contact over personal contact, as users are no longer concerned with their physical appearance. It is related to articles about social media or face-to-face interactions, debating which is better—according to Lai et al. (2023), social media is emphasized as a therapeutic tool for individuals with social phobia. Platforms like Facebook offer a low-pressure environment where users can gradually build social confidence and transfer those skills offline later on. The findings revealed that the respondents of this study, in terms of behavioral impact, gave it an overall mean of 2.54 with an adjectival description of "Less/A /little bit." Thus, it implies that the respondents have a minimal influence on behavioral impact.

3.3 The Significant Relationship Between Demographic Profile, Emotional and Behavioral Impact of the Respondents.

Tables 4 and 5 present a summary of the findings on the significant relationship between the level of social media influence and the demographic profile of the respondents, as determined by Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Table 4 showed a significant relationship between the level of influence of social media and the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of the emotional impact of three out of ten variables tested, socio-economic status/ monthly income, the frequency of usage, and frequency of sharing and posting, rejecting the null hypothesis. Other variables failed to reject the null hypothesis, considering the P-value less than 0.05 as a basis for the significant relationship of variables in the study. The findings revealed a relationship between socioeconomic status, as indicated by monthly income and frequency of usage, and the emotional impact on respondents.

Table 4. *Significant Relationship Between Demographic Profile and the Emotional Impact of the Respondents*

Variables Tested	Emotional Impact			
	Computed-r	P- value	Decision	Conclusion
Age	0.092	0.316	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Sex	0.159	0.083	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Ordinal Position of the Family	0.122	0.185	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Socio-Economic Status/Monthly Income	0.262	0.004	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
Mother's Occupation	0.064	0.487	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Father's Occupation	0.093	0.314	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Religion	0.090	0.329	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Social Media Used	0.162	0.077	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Frequency of Usage	0.199	0029	Reject the Null Hypothesis	Significant
The Frequency of Sharing and Posting	0.321	0.000	Reject the Null Hypothesis	Highly Significant

The frequency of sharing and posting has a highly significant relationship with the emotional impact of the respondents. Sutradhar (2017) emphasized that the desire to share our thoughts, opinions, and experiences is one of the reasons social media has become so popular, and it is found that when we share about ourselves, the reward-seeking part of the brain gets activated. Thus, it implies the reason why most of the respondents share and post about their personal lives.

Furthermore, regarding the significant relationship between the level of influence of social media and the demographic profile of the respondents, in terms of the behavioral impact of three out of ten variables tested — socioeconomic status/ monthly income, frequency of usage, and frequency of sharing and posting—the null hypothesis is rejected. Other variables failed to reject the null hypothesis, considering the P-value less than 0.05 as a basis for the significant relationship of variables in the study.

The findings revealed a significant relationship between socio-economic status, as indicated by monthly income, and the behavioral impact on respondents, as shown in Table 5. The frequency of usage, sharing, and posting has a highly significant relationship with the behavioral impact on respondents. It supported a systematic review published in Frontiers in Psychology by Cai et. al (2025) covering studies from 2020–2024, which explored willingness to share information on social media. It highlighted how emotional states like anger and cognitive perceptions shape sharing behavior. While behavioral outcomes are not always directly measured, the review maps strong links between sharing frequency and underlying motivations or emotions that drive behavior.

Table 5. *Significant Relationship Between Demographic Profile and the Behavioral Impact of the Respondents*

Variables Tested	Behavioral Impact			
	Computed r	P- value	Decision	Conclusion
Age	0.014	0.877	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Sex	0.053	0.562	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Ordinal Position of the Family	0.025	0.790	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Socio-Economic Status/Monthly Income	0.194	0.033	Reject Null Hypothesis	Significant
Mother's Occupation	0.047	0.613	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Father's Occupation	0.093	0.314	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Religion	0.083	0.369	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Social Media Used	0.027	0.769	Failed to Reject Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Frequency of Usage	0.415	0.000	Reject the Null Hypothesis.	Highly Significant
The Frequency of Sharing and Posting	0.334	0. 000	Reject the Null Hypothesis.	Highly Significant

4.0 Conclusion

This study contributes to the growing body of research on the influence of social media among early adolescents in rural settings such as Veruela, Agusan del Sur. It highlights how platform accessibility, particularly Facebook, continues to shape the digital behavior of students even in less urbanized areas. While behavioral influence was moderate, emotional impact remained minimal, pointing to a differentiated effect across developmental domains. Notably, the study identified specific socioeconomic factors and usage patterns that correlate significantly with students' engagement on social media. These insights underscore the need to consider both personal and contextual variables when examining digital behavior among adolescents. The findings have important implications for educators, parents, and policymakers. Schools may benefit from integrating digital literacy programs into the curriculum to promote responsible social media use. At the same time, parents should be encouraged to engage in more active mediation and guidance in their children's online activities. Policy interventions could also focus on establishing more straightforward guidelines for screen time and digital engagement for adolescents, particularly in underserved or rural communities. Future research is recommended to explore the long-term effects of social media use on students' academic performance, emotional development, and social behavior using more diverse methods, including qualitative and longitudinal approaches. Broadening the scope across different regions and demographics could also help develop a more comprehensive understanding of this rapidly evolving issue.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The author affirms that they have fully contributed to every part of the work and have reviewed and approved the final version.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest to declare.

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