

# Social Media Engagement and Self-Esteem Among Junior High School Students of the University of Bohol

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## ABSTRACT

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**Keywords** —social media, engagement, self-esteem, junior high school students, social self-esteem, appearance self-esteem, performance self-esteem, descriptive–quantitative method

The scope of social media has advanced in all aspects, including the people who engage in different social media platforms. This research study aimed to explore the effects of social media on self-esteem among Grade 9 and Grade 10 Junior High School students at the University of Bohol. The study adopted a descriptive–quantitative research design, utilizing two standardized questionnaires to collect data from a diverse sample of junior high school students. The target respondents for this research were 14–16 years old, and the sample size was 163, computed with a 95% confidence interval and a  $\pm 5$  margin of error. A representative sample was drawn at random to ensure inclusivity and

diversity. Throughout the study, research ethics were meticulously adhered to,



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ensuring informed consent and confidentiality of participants' information. Ethical considerations were addressed to protect the well-being and rights of the participants. Moreover, the result showed no significant correlation between social media engagement and self-esteem.

## INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by digital connectivity, social media's influence in affecting the lives of adolescents is more prominent than ever. Junior high school pupils, in particular, navigate the complex environment of online relationships amid academic hallways.

However, incaution in usage and negligence in the mental health aspects of social media, one can see beneficial or detrimental effects to the adolescent age group. The accessibility and quality of self-evaluative details are influenced by social media platforms, resulting in an online-specific impact on users' self-esteem (Krause, Baum, Baumann, 2021).

The study conducted by Purnama, Darmawati, and Mulyatin (2021) stated that when teenagers are more addicted to social media, this results in low self-esteem. For instance, research shows that the Philippines ranked first among other nations in having 83.1% of its population use social media platforms. The Filipinos were also the top users who frequently shared photographs and videos on various social media platforms. A growing proportion of social media users are either students or Filipinos between the ages of 15 and 24. (Duque, San Antonio, Brazil, 2017).

As discussed by Krause et al. (2021), more time spent online leads to less communication with family and friends, which can encourage feelings of depression and loneliness. Social media can significantly impact people's lives when they are affected by posts, and social networking can provide social support but can also harm one's mental health. With increased social media usage, people may compare themselves to others or develop unreasonable expectations of themselves and others, leading to suffering due to low self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth (Iwamoto & Chun, 2019).

The researchers have noticed an extraordinary increase in how much junior high school students use social media, making it essential to investigate how it might affect their psychological well-being. This study looks into the relationship between social media usage and the self-esteem of junior high school students at the University of Bohol.

The primary objective of this study is to determine engagement in social media and its effects on self-esteem among junior high school students of the University of Bohol, S.Y. 2022-2023. The study further proposed relevant and viable recommendations based on the elucidated findings.

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of the student's engagement on social media?
2. What is the student's level of self-esteem in terms of performance,

- social, and appearance?
3. Is there a significant correlation between the engagement of social media and the self-esteem of the students?
  4. What recommendations could be proposed based on the findings of the study?

**Related Literature.** In utilizing social media, one must ensure that the connection between social media engagements and the student's self-esteem is established. Knowing the effect of social media engagement on users' self-esteem is essential. Therefore, the researchers discussed several theories that would lay the foundation for the present study.

According to the study by Daniels (2020), introducing social media sites and applications has altered how teenagers communicate, connect, and exchange information. The criticism received online through social media sites during this developmental period influences adolescents' self-esteem. The current research discovered positive and negative associations between social media use and self-esteem. Various factors, including input, social media use, and the rationale for use, influence increases and decreases in adolescent self-esteem. As social media continues to evolve, the transition allows for more inquiry into the relationship between these two.

Additionally, the study by Valkenburg (2017) defined self-esteem as the extent to which teenagers "feel accepted and liked by their friends and classmates, as well as feel successful in developing and keeping friendships." Henceforth, Turner and Onorato's (2014) Social Identity Theory emphasizes the social component of an individual's self-concept generated from knowledge, emotional attachment, and categorizations of membership in a group as distinct from other distinct groups. The theory divides the social aspect of one's self-concept into cognitive, evaluative, and emotional. Nonetheless, the emotional component of an individual's self-concept is the critical factor underpinning group identification, with group identification interrelated to improved self-esteem. A strong desire to belong and identify with a group drives adolescents who use problematic internet to boost their self-esteem.

Rosenberg's Self-esteem Theory (1965) defines self-esteem as an individual's positive or negative attitude toward oneself and an overall assessment of one's thoughts and feelings about oneself. Self-esteem entails awareness of one's value system and an emotional assessment of one's worth. Individuals with high and low self-esteem may react similarly to positive feedback but respond differently to negative stimuli. People who have low self-esteem are prone to react negatively. On the other hand, persons with high self-esteem are less likely to be influenced because they are likely to reject or limit the scope of negative input. Reduced self-esteem can lead to social maladjustment, undermining an individual's ability to adapt socially. Poor self-esteem and social adjustment create a vicious cycle that harms the overall quality of life.

**Related Studies.** According to the study of Salandanan and Zafra (2017), despite the convenience brought by social media, studies have shown that there are positive and negative effects on the self-esteem of social media users. The study's findings indicate that social media usage is not the only factor influencing respondents' self-esteem but many other spheres. Hence, the study also shows that high social media usage does not necessarily correlate with low self-esteem among social media users.

The Online Social Networking and Mental Health study found a linkage between the long-term use of social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook and depression symptoms. Furthermore, some researchers have linked social media behaviors to low self-esteem, particularly among children and adolescents. The linkage between social media use and mental health problems is still an argument and research into this topic is fraught with difficulties. Past research discovered that people with a more robust social comparison orientation had worse self-perception, self-esteem, and negative sentiments (Pantic, 2014).

Furthermore, adolescents' ability to be selective in the self-presentation on various social media platforms, such as Facebook, as well as the relationships formed as a result of this particular presentation, have the potential to affect self-evaluations positively and, as a result, the self-esteem (Pantic, 2014).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive-quantitative method with two standardized questionnaires to collect the data. The study sought to determine the relationship between the study variables: students' engagement in social media and its effects on self-esteem. The study was conducted at the University of Bohol, the first University in the Province of Bohol, which is a private, non-sectarian, higher educational institution offering elementary, secondary, undergraduate, and graduate programs. The respondents were Junior High School students in the S.Y. 2022 – 2023 of the University of Bohol of grade levels nine (9) and (10) ten, with a total population of 280. The sample size of 163 was randomly selected at a 95% confidence interval at  $\pm 5\%$  margin of error. The inclusion criteria for the participants of this research were Grade 9 or Grade 10 Junior High school students at the University of Bohol of both sexes between the ages of 14 and 16. Excluded in this research were students who were enrolled in that school year but dropped out during the conduct of this study.

The researchers utilized the Social Networking Usage Questionnaire by Bashir and Gupta in 2018 and the State Self-Esteem Scale developed by Heatherton and Polivy in 1991. The Social Networking Usage Questionnaire (SNUQ) was used to measure the social networking engagement of the respondents. The State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES) measures an individual's self-esteem at a given time, which includes the three components of self-esteem: performance, social, and appearance self-esteem.

The study underwent a standard process of obtaining approval from university officials for conducting it. The researchers secured permission from the Vice President for Academics, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Principal of the Junior High School Department. The U.B. Research Ethics Committee subsequently reviewed the paper. After an ethical review and consideration, certification was issued, indicating that data collection may begin and that the researchers can manage and conduct the study. Before distributing the questionnaires, the researchers explained the entire study’s purpose and secured the respondents’ assent and consent from their parents. Those letters were translated into the local language for better understandability. It was explained that their participation was voluntary and that research respondents could withdraw at any time without penalty. The anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents were ensured, and no identifiers will be disclosed. The privacy and confidentiality of the respondents were carefully managed at all stages of the research.

The gathered data underwent a normality test to dictate the appropriate statistical treatment of the data. Subsequently, the result of the computation becomes the basis of the research for interpretation and analysis.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In examining the extent of student engagement on social media, our research identified notable trends. The highest-rated aspects centered around practical and educational purposes. The foremost activity was the utilization of social media platforms for accessing job-related information. Following closely was a preference for social media over physical social gatherings, and thirdly, students reported utilizing these platforms to seek assistance from their teachers. Despite these top-ranking activities, it is crucial to note that these engagements were generally categorized as “Slightly High” on the scale of student involvement. Conversely, the least prioritized activities on social media were those associated with entertainment and leisure. Specifically, the lowest-rated items included the use of social media for seeking relief from academic stress, watching movies, and conducting research work. These particular engagements were collectively labeled as “Low” in terms of student involvement.

**Table 1. Level of Student Engagement on Social Media**

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
I use social media to become more sociable.	163	2.4785	1.14578	Low	8
I use social media to keep in touch with my relatives.	163	2.2209	1.29111	Low	14
I use social media to seek help from my teachers.	163	2.9018	1.18746	Slightly High	3

I use social media to get job-related information.	163	3.3865	1.44156	Slightly High	1
I use social media to share new ideas.	163	2.5706	1.21701	Low	7
I use social media to create my social identity.	163	2.8160	1.23348	Slightly High	4
I prefer using social media than attending social gatherings.	163	3.1534	1.20995	Slightly High	2
I use social media to get information regarding past and current social events.	163	2.2515	1.15119	Low	13
I use social media for online discussion in the academic area.	163	2.4663	1.24366	Low	9
I use social media for reading news.	163	2.6994	1.28205	Slightly High	5
I use social media for sharing pictures.	163	2.4294	1.37423	Low	10
I use social media to do research work	163	1.9939	1.28859	Low	17
I use social media to learn about my curricular aspect.	163	2.6564	1.05632	Slightly High	6
I communicate with my friends via social networking sites to prepare for exams.	163	2.1902	1.30787	Low	15
I use social media to get relief from academic stress.	163	1.8712	1.25288	Low	19
I use social media for watching movies.	163	1.9877	1.34709	Low	18
I use social networking sites for collaborative learning.	163	2.4294	1.15454	Low	11
I use social networking sites to solve my academic problems.	163	2.2515	1.23899	Low	12
I use social networking sites to look at funny sharing.	163	2.0613	1.41724	Low	16
<b>Composite Mean</b>			<b>2.4640</b>	<b>Low</b>	

Table 2 summarizes the respondent's self-esteem level in terms of the three (3) subcomponents: performance, social, and appearance. The subcomponent

that ranked the highest in appearance, with an accumulating composite mean of 3.0031, was interpreted as slightly high. In contrast, the performance self-esteem, which has a 2.8615 and an interpretation of slightly high, ranked 3rd or the lowest. The overall composite mean of the respondents' self-esteem is 2.9458, which connotes that, respectively, the respondents' self-esteem is slightly high.

**Table 2. Summary of the Level of Self-esteem of the Students**

Level of Self-esteem	Composite Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Performance Self-esteem	2.8615	Slightly High	3
Social Self-esteem	2.9728	Slightly High	2
Appearance Self-esteem	3.0031	Slightly High	1
<b>Overall Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.9458</b>	<b>Slightly High</b>	

Findings suggest that students primarily engage with social media for pragmatic purposes related to education and career, reflecting a moderately high level of interest. On the other hand, recreational and stress-relief activities on social media appear to be less popular among the student population, garnering lower levels of engagement. This nuanced understanding of student preferences on social media can be valuable for educators and policymakers aiming to optimize the integration of technology in academic and social contexts.

**Table 3. Significant Degree of Correlation between Social Media Engagement and the Respondents' Self-esteem**

Correlation				
			Level of Self-esteem	Level of Engagement on Social Media
<b>Spearman's rho</b>	Level of Self-esteem	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.073
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.355
		N	163	163
	Level of Engagement on Social Media	Correlation Coefficient	-.073	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.355	
		N	163	163
<b>Result:</b> Insignificant <b>Decision:</b> Failed to Reject H				

### CONCLUSION

The study highlights a predominant focus on practical and educational uses of social media, particularly in obtaining job-related information and

seeking academic support. Despite the significance of these engagements, they were generally rated as “Slightly High” in terms of student involvement. Conversely, leisure and entertainment activities on social media, such as seeking relief from academic stress, watching movies, and conducting research work, were collectively characterized by a “Low” level of student involvement.

Turning to self-esteem, the analysis of subcomponents, such as performance, social, and appearance, revealed a notable emphasis on appearance, interpreted as “Slightly High.” In contrast, performance-related self-esteem ranked third but still maintained a “Slightly High” interpretation. The overall composite mean of respondents’ self-esteem reached 2.9458, indicating a generally “Slightly High” level.

This research provides a nuanced understanding of student engagement preferences on social media and sheds light on the diverse facets influencing self-esteem perceptions. These insights are valuable for educators and policymakers aiming to effectively integrate technology into educational and social contexts, as well as for comprehensive well-being initiatives that address the multifaceted nature of self-esteem.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For the performance aspect of self-esteem, it is essential to encourage and provide opportunities for students to engage in activities where they can experience success and achievement. This process can be facilitated through challenging classroom tasks, participation in sports, the arts, or other areas of interest. Promoting a sense of accomplishment can enhance students’ performance and self-esteem. As for the social aspect, teachers should create a welcoming and accepting classroom environment where all students feel valued and respected. Encouraging participation in clubs, organizations, and group activities can facilitate social interactions with peers of similar interests. Building positive social connections can contribute to the increase of students’ social self-esteem.

Regarding the area of appearance, fostering a culture of body positivity and acceptance at home and in school is crucial. Parents and teachers should promote a healthy body image and encourage students, primarily those less active or not in good physical shape, to engage in physical activities. By emphasizing the importance of overall well-being and self-acceptance, students’ appearance aspect of self-esteem can be positively influenced.

As suggested for social media engagement, parents need to actively supervise their children’s social media activities and encourage responsible usage. Maintaining low engagement on social media platforms can help mitigate potential adverse effects on students’ self-esteem. Additionally, it is recommended that guidance counselors conduct workshops and awareness programs addressing self-esteem, self-recognition, and self-confidence. These programs should be



extended to all junior high school students at the University of Bohol to provide guidance and support in developing a positive self-image. The results of this study must be shared with the guidance center to facilitate the implementation of mental health programs in the school. These programs can address the well-being of the students and further support their self-esteem development.

By implementing these recommendations, teachers and guidance counselors, parents, and the school community can further promote positive self-esteem and overall well-being among junior high school students.

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