



THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MIZORAM

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Abstract

In today's digital scene, the widespread usage of social networks covers all age groups, with a noticeable spike among the younger generation and students, driven by the COVID-19 epidemic. This tendency, bolstered by growing mobile connections, dramatically influences everyday activities, especially in distant learning. Researchers conducted a quantitative analysis employing simple random sampling on Aizawl High School pupils. Through a unique questionnaire, the study investigated the effects of social networks. Results identified Instagram as the leading platform, welcomed by over half of respondents, followed closely by WhatsApp, YouTube, and video games. Most students confessed to spending over two hours every day on social media, largely for interacting with friends and also for educational objectives. The platforms not only promoted social contact but also altered fashion trends and entertainment choices through peer influence. This study underlines Instagram's dominance, shedding light on students' major social media activity for numerous objectives like socializing, learning, and personal interests.

Keywords: Social Network, High school Students, and Impact

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Introduction:

Based on the study done by Kepios, it was reported that as of October 2022, there were 4.74 billion social media users globally, accounting for about 59.3 percent of the global population. Over the last year, the number of social media users has continued to climb, with an extra 190 million people joining since the previous year. This amounts to an annualised growth rate of 4.2 percent, comparable to an average of six new users per second. It is crucial to remember that the estimates for social media users may not reflect distinct individuals owing to issues like multiple accounts, which can lead to exaggerated numbers. Similarly, comparing social media user counts with total population data may not completely represent the breadth of social media usage since many sites restrict access to people aged 13 and above. Providing extra perspective, the newest statistics reveals that social media users now represent for over 75 percent of the eligible worldwide population. According to data from GWI, the average social media user actively engages with or visits approximately 7.2 different social platforms each month and spends close to 2.5 hours per day on social media. Assuming an average of 7 to 8 hours of sleep per day, these figures indicate that people spend approximately 15 percent of their waking lives using social media. In total, the world collectively spends over 10 billion hours on social platforms every day, which is equivalent to nearly 1.2 million years of human existence.

Regarding the age distribution of Facebook users, a significant concentration is observed among younger demographics. Approximately 300 million users fall within the 18-24 age range, while 120 million users are between the ages of 13 and 17, as reported by www.datareportal.com.

Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to investigate the influence of social media networks on high school students.

Specific objectives

1. Finding out how much time students spend on social media
2. The purpose of this study is to determine which social networks are the most popular and frequently used.
3. An examination of the reasons students log onto social media

Research Questions**In this study, the following questions are asked:**

- I. Social media use among students: how much time do they spend on them?

- II. How frequently do people use social media networks?

- III. Social media networks are used by students for a variety of reasons. What are these reasons?

The rationale of the study

This study is driven by the demand to know the effects of social networks on high school pupils in Mizoram. Given that social networks have become an indispensable component of young individuals' everyday lives, it is crucial to acknowledge their influence on various aspects of students' lives. By exploring the impact of social networks, this study seeks to enhance our understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with their usage, thereby contributing to a broader knowledge base in this area.

A key purpose of this research is to explore the effect of social networks on the academic performance of high school students. As technology continues to play a growing role in education, it is imperative to understand the effects of social networks on students' concentration, productivity, and overall academic achievement. By examining these factors, this study aims to shed light on the relationship between social networks and educational outcomes, contributing to our understanding of the potential impact and implications for students' academic success. Understanding these effects can help educators and policymakers develop strategies to maximize the benefits and mitigate the potential drawbacks of social network usage.

Another crucial issue to consider is the social and emotional effect. Social networks provide venues for socialising, communication, and self-expression. However, excessive usage or negative experiences on these platforms can lead to social isolation, cyberbullying, and negative effects on mental well-being. By investigating these aspects, the study aims to provide insights into promoting healthy social interactions and addressing potential risks associated with social network usage among high school students.

Furthermore, researching the influence of social networks can give information on the function of these platforms in changing students' attitudes, beliefs, and actions. Social networks have the power to influence students' opinions, interests, and choices, including their perspectives on social issues, consumer behavior, and cultural trends. Understanding these influences can help educators and parents guide students toward critical thinking, digital literacy, and responsible use of social networks.

Research Design

The research focuses on high school pupils residing in the Aizawl District as the target group. To ensure representative sampling, a sample size of 60 students was selected, with 20 students chosen from each school. This approach aimed to minimize the possibility of sampling errors and provide a comprehensive representation of the population.

Data analysis and presentation involves the involvement of 150 students from two high

schools, namely Government Chawnpui and Ephraim. The selected sample of students completed the questionnaires provided by the investigator as per the study requirements.

In terms of the gender composition of the participants, out of the 150 self-administered questionnaires, 79 (51%) were completed by female students, while 71 (49%) were completed by male students. This distribution accurately reflects the gender representation among the respondents in the study.

1. Social media networks that are frequently used

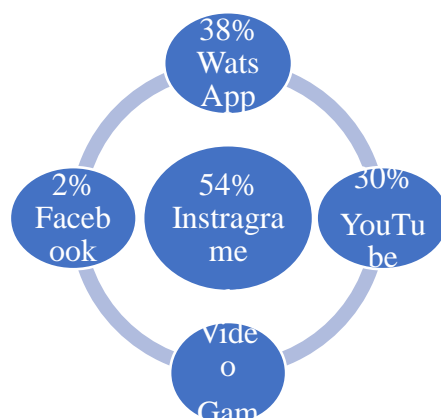


Figure 1: Percentage of use of social media Networks

The data displayed in Figure 1 underlines the popularity of different social media sites among users. The statistics indicate that Instagram is the most favored platform, with 54% of users frequently utilizing it. WhatsApp closely follows with a usage rate of 38%, while YouTube is used by 30% of the users. Video games exhibit a usage rate of 26%, while Facebook trails behind with only 2% usage. These figures indicate that learners predominantly utilize Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, video games, and to a lesser extent, Facebook and other social networks. It suggests

that if learners encounter any issues or challenges, WhatsApp might be the most suitable platform for resolving those problems due to its higher usage rate compared to other social networks.

It is worth noting that these numbers only represent a glimpse of social media usage among learners and may vary across different demographics and areas. Additionally, the popularity of social media platforms can fluctuate over time as new platforms emerge and user preferences change.

2. Hours spent on social media by students per day

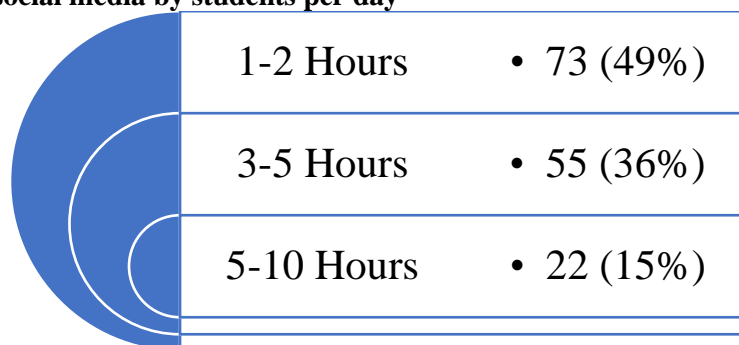


Figure 2: Average Hours per Day on Social media networks

Figure 2 provides insights into the daily time allocation of students on social media platforms. The results indicate that a considerable proportion of learners dedicate more than two hours per day to engaging with social networks. Specifically, 50% of the total participants, which amounts to 75 learners, spend approximately one to two hours on social media.

Furthermore, 53 learners, representing 22% of the total, commit three to five hours every day to social media sites. Lastly, 22 learners, comprising 47% of the sample, spend over five to ten hours on social networks.

These data indicate the large amount of time that a substantial fraction of students devote in social media activity. It indicates the prominent role that social media platforms play in the daily lives of these learners, as they dedicate several hours to engaging with online content, communicating with

others, and participating in various online activities.

It is crucial to note that excessive usage of social media can have both beneficial and bad effects for students' well-being and academic achievement. While social media can facilitate communication, provide access to information, and offer opportunities for self-expression, spending an excessive amount of time on these platforms can lead to distractions, reduced productivity, and potential negative effects on mental health.

Educational institutions and parents/guardians have a key role to play in creating a good balance between social media usage and other elements of students' life. Emphasizing the importance of time management, setting limits on screen time, and encouraging offline activities can contribute to students' overall well-being and enhance their academic success.

3. Reasons that push students to use social media networks

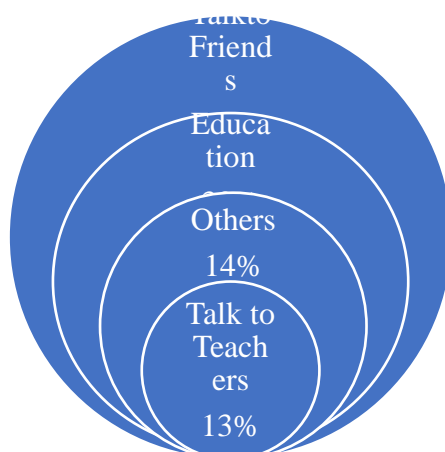


Figure 3: Reasons for Using Social Media Networks

Figure 3 offers valuable insights into the motivations driving students' use of social media networks. The data reveals that the majority of respondents, comprising 65 students or 43%, indicated that their primary reason for using social media is to communicate and socialize with friends. This finding underscores the social nature of social media platforms, as they provide avenues for students to connect and engage with their peers. Around 30% of the students, approximately 45 respondents, acknowledged utilising social media for educational purposes. This indicates that students recognize the potential of social media as a tool for learning and accessing educational resources. It could involve joining educational groups, following educational pages or channels, or engaging in discussions related to their studies.

Moreover, 14% of the students said that they employ social media to contact with their instructors. This suggests that social media platforms can serve as additional channels of communication between students and teachers, providing a convenient and accessible means for academic discussions and clarifications.

Another 13% of the students responded that they use social media for various additional purposes. These reasons include staying updated on fashion trends, seeking entertainment and relaxation, being influenced by their friends' social media activities, gaining new experiences, understanding different perspectives, and discovering new groups and friends.

In summary, the data demonstrates that students employ social media networks for a varied array of goals. These include socializing, education,

communicating with teachers, staying informed about trends, and exploring new experiences. This finding underscores the multifaceted nature of social media platforms and their substantial influence in the lives of students. It signifies the wide range of functions and opportunities that social media provides to cater to various aspects of students' lives.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the data shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 gives significant insights into the usage patterns, time spent, and motives for utilizing social media networks among students. Instagram emerges as the most popular platform, followed closely by WhatsApp and YouTube. This suggests that these platforms are the primary channels through which students connect, communicate, and engage with online content.

Additionally, the numbers reveal that a large proportion of students devotes a big amount of time to social media, with a notable percentage spending more than two hours every day. This emphasizes the pervasive influence of social media in the lives of students and emphasizes the importance of promoting responsible usage and achieving a balance between online activities and other essential aspects of life. It underscores the need for individuals, educational institutions, and other relevant stakeholders to prioritize digital well-being and advocate for mindful engagement with social media platforms. Encouraging healthy habits and time management strategies can help students navigate the digital landscape effectively and ensure their overall well-being.

The research given underlines the vast variety of reasons why students utilize social media sites. The majority of students utilize these platforms as a means to socialize and communicate with friends, highlighting the social aspect of social media. However, a significant portion of students also acknowledges the educational value of these platforms and utilizes them for academic purposes. Furthermore, social media serves as a platform for students to connect with their teachers, explore current fashion trends, seek entertainment, gain new experiences, and expand their social networks. This data reveals the multifaceted nature of social media's role in students' lives, catering to various needs and offering a wide array of opportunities for engagement.

It is of greatest significance for educators, parents, and students themselves to have a full awareness of the possible advantages and problems that come with social media usage. While social media platforms have the ability to enhance communication, facilitate learning, and promote

personal growth, it is essential to acknowledge that excessive and unregulated use can lead to negative consequences on mental health, productivity, and overall well-being. Awareness of both the positive and negative impacts of social media is crucial in fostering responsible and balanced usage, ensuring that students can harness the benefits while mitigating potential risks. By promoting digital literacy, mental health support, and effective time management strategies, stakeholders can empower students to navigate the digital landscape in a healthy and informed manner. Promoting digital literacy, encouraging healthy habits, and fostering open discussions about responsible social media use are essential for maximizing the benefits while minimizing the risks.

As social media continues to change, it is vital to continually analyse use patterns, monitor the impact on students, and modify measures to promote a healthy and balanced

Educational implications

1. Communication and Socialization: The fact that is a vital section of pupils utilizes social media primarily for communicating and socializing underscores the need of strengthening digital communication skills. Educators can leverage social media platforms to encourage collaborative learning, group discussions, and peer-to-peer interactions. It can create opportunities for students to engage in meaningful discussions, share ideas, and collaborate on projects, both within and beyond the classroom.

2. Educational Purposes: The research demonstrates that a considerable percentage of students employ social media sites for educational reasons, showing the potential for incorporating these platforms as effective instructional tools. Educators can actively explore and encourage the use of social media for accessing educational resources, participating in online courses or webinars, and engaging with educational communities. Leveraging social media in this way can enhance students' access to a wealth of information, create opportunities for sharing knowledge, and facilitate self-directed learning. By embracing social media as an educational tool, educators can harness its capabilities to enhance the learning experience and promote digital literacy skills among students.

3. Communication with Teachers: The observation that some students utilize social media to connect with professors emphasizes the need of having alternate communication channels between educators and students. Teachers can leverage

social media platforms that allow private messaging or dedicated educational groups to address students' queries, provide feedback, and facilitate academic discussions outside of traditional classroom settings. It can promote personalized learning experiences and foster a supportive learning environment.

4. Diverse Experiences and Perspectives: The research reveals that students utilize social media to obtain new experiences, grasp diverse ideas, and discover new organizations and relationships. Educators can encourage students to engage with diverse online communities and platforms that align with their interests and academic goals. It can foster cultural awareness, critical thinking, and exposure to different viewpoints, contributing to a well-rounded education.

4. Awareness of Potential Risks: Recognizing the potential hazards connected with excessive usage and inappropriate behavior on social media platforms, it is vital to teach kids about responsible and thoughtful interaction. Schools have the opportunity to integrate digital literacy and responsible social media usage into their curriculum, equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills. This education should cover topics such as online safety, privacy concerns, digital citizenship, and the significance of maintaining a healthy balance between online and offline activities. By incorporating these teachings, schools can empower students to make informed decisions, develop strong digital citizenship principles, and navigate social media responsibly. Promoting a culture of responsible social media use ensures that students are equipped to protect their well-being, respect others' privacy, and maintain a positive digital presence.

1. Digital Literacy and Responsible Social Media Use: To empower students with the required skills and information, it is vital to integrate digital literacy instruction within the curriculum. This inclusion would enable students to comprehend the potential benefits and risks associated with social media usage. By teaching responsible social media use, critical thinking skills, the ability to evaluate online information, and the importance of maintaining online privacy and safety, students can develop a strong foundation in navigating the digital landscape. Incorporating these lessons into the curriculum ensures that students are equipped with the tools needed to make informed decisions, protect their online identities, and engage responsibly with social media platforms.

2. Engage on social media for Educational Purposes: Encourage instructors to embrace social media platforms as extra outlets for educational engagement. They can create educational content, share resources, and communicate with students in a way that complements traditional teaching methods.

3. Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing: Promote the use of social media platforms for collaborative learning and information exchange among students. Encourage the formation of online study groups, discussion forums, and platforms for exchanging educational content and thoughts.

4. Engage with Students on Popular Platforms: Recognize the popularity of Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and video games among students. Consider establishing official educational accounts or channels on these platforms to provide educational content, address student queries, and foster engagement with academic topics.

3. Teach Digital Citizenship: Emphasize the significance of good digital citizenship and online etiquette. Educate students on respecting others' opinions, avoiding cyberbullying, and promoting positive online interactions.

4. Time Management and Balanced Usage: Educating kids about the value of time management and striking a good balance between social media use and other activities is vital. It is important to encourage students to set limits on their social media usage and allocate dedicated time for offline activities. This can include engaging in physical exercise, pursuing hobbies, and fostering face-to-face interactions. By promoting the value of time management and encouraging a balanced lifestyle, students can develop self-discipline and prioritize their overall well-being. By striking a harmonious equilibrium between online and offline engagements, students can experience the benefits of social media while also nurturing their physical, mental, and social development.

5. Parent and Guardian Involvement: Collaborating with parents and guardians is vital in teaching them about social media platforms and their influence on children's lives. It is crucial to provide resources and guidance on effectively monitoring their children's social media use and promoting healthy digital habits. By fostering open communication and offering support, parents and guardians can play an active role in guiding their

children's online behavior, ensuring their safety, and encouraging responsible social media use.

8. Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation:

Monitor social media platforms, student patterns, and their influence on well-being, mental health, and academic achievement. Adapt policies and education based on the evolving landscape.

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