



## THE USAGE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING AND MENTAL HEALTH OF BACHELOR OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINDANAO, PHILIPPINES

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### **Abstract:**

This study examined the usage of social networking sites and mental health issues of the BPE students in the University of Mindanao. In determining the association between the two variables (social networking sites and mental health), a survey questionnaire was used to collect data. The results of the two variables were revealed using mean and Pearson r analysis. Hence, this study revealed that the use of social networking sites, especially for education, informativeness, and socialization, as well as in mental health (digital care sentiment and acceptance), were acknowledged by the BPE students in the school. The socialization of the BPE students was determined as the most collected and aware in using social networking sites based on the result from the survey. It was followed by education, digital care sentiment, and acceptance. Furthermore, BPE students used social networking sites to connect with other people around the world to search and gather information for their academic tasks and to find online support groups to get relief from stress through sharing their stories or problems in life. Also, this study suggests that students minimize and should be responsible enough in using social networking sites to avoid mental health issues such as stress, depression, and anxiety.

**SDG Indicator:** #3 (Good Health and Well-being) and #4 (Quality Education)

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## 1. Introduction and Review of Literature

The mental health of students is a common problem in society, as shown by recent figures revealing an increase in the number of affected students. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) estimates that students worldwide suffer from mental health problems, including stress, depression, and anxiety. 264 million students are affected as of 2021. Despite all the mental health awareness and efforts of the WHO to address mental health issues, they are still affected, especially the people who lack access to mental health services, particularly in low and middle-income countries (Patel *et al.*, 2018). Thus, the study of Charlie (2022) reveals that the biggest issue facing university students is expanding mental health issues. First- to fourth-year students going to college and want to build good communication with their new peers, are most affected by this issue.

Studying mental health is essential in promoting both social advancement and individual well-being. It allows us to create effective solutions to lessen the problem of mental health (Mukherjee *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, students can access a proper support system and create an environment that will help them handle their emotional wellness, especially those who have encountered mental health problems (Patel *et al.*, 2018). It is crucial to comprehend how social networking sites influence students' mental health so that suitable support systems and interventions may be created to lessen any detrimental effects on mental health (Macht, 2022). Concerns about the amount of time spent on social networking sites have been raised because of their adverse negative effects. The average worldwide internet user spends 2 hours and 27 minutes each day on social networking sites, according to Twenge and Campbell (2019).

Additionally, by facilitating social connections, social networking sites may offer an opportunity to improve users' mental health. (Naslund, Bondre, Torous, & Aschbrenner, 2020). Social networking sites have become an important part of many people's lives while dealing with the challenges of mental health issues. It encompasses online and mobile platforms that connect people to one another where they can interact (Ahmed *et al.*, 2019). However, the risks and potential harm to mental health from using social networking sites are not yet well understood, nor is it clear how to balance these concerns with any potential benefits they may offer (Orben & Przybylski, 2019).

Furthermore, mental health is a condition of mental wellness that allows individuals to manage life's pressures, develop their potential, study, work effectively, and give back to their environments. It is important to know that our emotional, social and psychological well-being are all parts of our mental health. It can influence our thoughts, behaviors, and interpersonal interactions. The interaction of social networking sites with students is now an important source of communication (Asghar *et al.*, 2020). In this generation, students are using different social networking sites every day, and they can be used for many benefits. They can improve belonging, boost self-esteem, and

improve connection. According to one of the recent reports, in the world's population, there are 2.27 billion, or 40%, who are actively using the Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter apps. This process of interactive learning can help and guide them in searching for information and discussing their learning with other people or doubts using social networking sites (Alshuaibi *et al.*, 2018).

As explained by Vygotsky's mediational theory in 1896–1934, the connection between mental health and social networking sites can act as a mediator between students and the outside world. Students' perception of others on these sites can be influenced by comparing images to reality, which may lead to an irrational perception of themselves. This can result in mental health issues such as anxiety, distress, stress, and depression. Freud's Displaced Behavior Theory (1904) states that spending more time on sedentary activities on social networking sites reduces social connections and is detrimental to mental health. The usage of social networking sites can negatively impact mental health by changing how users view, handle, and interact with their social network. In connection with Edward Tolman's Cognitive Learning Theory in 1932, frequent social media use may affect attitudes, feelings, ideas, and thoughts, leading to mental health problems and altered values. Furthermore, Festinger's Social Comparison Theory in 1954 highlights the importance of comparing oneself with peers for identity construction. However, utilizing social networking sites for comparison negatively affects students' self-worth, self-image, judgment, and overall well-being.

Despite the widespread usage of social networking sites, there remain many unexplored impacts on a wide range of individuals. It is necessary to examine the extensive potential factors contributing to anxiety and unhappiness (Nawab, 2022). This was developed to look at the impact of social networking sites on many factors. Measuring social networking sites' use during a disaster, health crisis, natural disaster, or pandemic is useful for researchers. The benefit that we can get from using social networking sites is the ability to communicate with people around the world (Naeem, 2021). It is also feasible to exchange large amounts of information, education sites, shopping, entertainment, and socialization and enable global connections. It's complicated to understand that these impacts may vary from individual to individual and that different people will feel them differently (Brown & Michinov, 2019). Positive effects of social media platforms include enabling students to find and join online communities that share their interests, hobbies, or struggles, which fosters a sense of community and support.

On the other hand, Sadagheyani & Tatari (2021) state that the adverse effect is that continuous exposure to carefully curated, admiring pictures, other ways of living, and posting on any social networking sites can result in having insecurities, self-doubt, and incapability. Additionally, being afraid of not engaging in social networking sites events or any experiences can result in anxiety and stress among students, and it can cause mental health issues due to overthinking or stress and depression (Stadtfield *et al.*, 2019). It's difficult to acknowledge the meaning and complicated relationship between social networking sites and mental health issues. Some kids may profit from social media's

advantages, and not all students may encounter its drawbacks. It's critical for children to use any social networking sites responsibly, establish limits, and ask for assistance, when necessary, in order to minimize any potential bad consequences (Greijdanus, 2020). Encouraging the students to balance their time on online and offline activities, and also practicing self-care or self-respect can, as well as practicing self-care, can help to lessen the negative impact of social networking sites on a student's mental health.

Protecting our mental health requires maintaining a positive internet profile. We may create a positive online environment for others and ourselves by adopting mindful behaviors and establishing limits (Brown & Michinov, 2019). The use of social networking sites has an effect on mental health; it also increases the bond between individuals and their self-respect, and despite this, social networking sites can lead to depression and pressure to compare themselves to everyone else, resulting in unhappiness and loneliness. The usage of social networking sites in connection to mental health issues has proven challenging in the current study, and there has been a shortage of evidence. (Chung-Ying Lin *et al.*, 2020). A study based on 2017 data found that the level of social networking sites use among mental health populations has recently increased. These percentages are similar (around 70%) across students receiving care for a major mental illness and low-income groups in the wider community (Brunette *et al.*, 2019).

There are 98% of the students who were selected in local mental health clinics admitted to using social networking sites. the most common platform was YouTube, which was then followed by Instagram and other sites (Aschbrenner *et al.*, 2019). However, numerous studies have highlighted the possible implications of social networking sites' use for mental health. Worries about social networking sites could result in negative body image (Harriger, Thompson, & Tiggemann, 2021). On the other hand, teaching students how to be social networking sites literate as well as giving them a chance to receive a quality experience on some platform (American Psychological Association, 2023).

This study examines the complex interplay between social networking sites and the mental health issues of Bachelor of Physical Education (BPE) students, a group that is particularly relevant due to their unique educational and lifestyle circumstances. Likewise, it attempts to look into the difficult relationship between social networking sites and BPE students' mental health. This study aims to give formative information on the possible risks and advantages that social networking sites may bring to their life by investigating the types of content consumed, motivations, and psychological effects connected with social networking sites participation within this particular BPE student. This research focuses on how social networking sites impact the health of BPE students and highlights the benefits it brings to their learning. The study specifically targets BPE students as its participants, aiming to provide insights into the effects of social networking sites on their mental health issues. By identifying stressors and challenges associated with platforms, this research equips BPE students with the knowledge to navigate their online activities more responsibly. Additionally, it offers strategies and recommendations for promoting health, enabling them to manage their digital

experiences. The findings of this study are not relevant to BPE students. Also, it has broader implications for young adults in various academic fields who face similar challenges related to social networking sites' impact on their mental health.

In this study, the researchers sought to determine the level of social networking sites and the level of mental health among BPE students. Additionally, it sought to assess if there is a significant relationship between the level of the usage of social networking sites and the level of mental health of BPE students. The researcher would collect data using a questionnaire about the social networking sites and mental health issues of the students from the group of BPE students to test their hypothesis.

The researcher's aim is to contribute to the current literature, quantitatively analyzing the effect of using social networking sites on mental health among students by analyzing patterns of usage habits, content consumption and perceived impact on the mental health of BPE students and standardized scales to assess mental health indicators. This research sought to provide a clearer understanding of how social networking sites influence students' mental health. This study will not only clarify the advantages and disadvantages of using social networking sites but also inform strategies for promoting responsible and mindful digital behavior among students. Encouraging students to develop digital literacy skills, practice self-care, and seek support when needed can contribute to a healthier relationship with social networking sites and improved mental health.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Research Respondents**

The respondents of this study were the students from the Bachelor of Physical Education (BPE) program within the College of Teacher Education (CTE) of the University of Mindanao's Main Campus, located at Matina, Davao City, Philippines. The presumed participants were all year levels of BPE students who were currently enrolled in 2023-2024. There were 376 BPE students currently enrolled in the University of Mindanao. Using the Raosoft online calculator, it suggested a total of 213 respondents as the study's sample size. Thus, the researchers made use of simple random sampling to conduct the data gathering. Simple random sampling will be utilized to categorized the respondents based on their shared attributes and interests. This sampling involved the population having an equal chance to become a respondent (McCombes, 2023). The respondents' responses were to be entirely voluntary. However, the exclusion criteria were for those who were dropped-out, who were sick and who were absent during the administration of the questionnaires. Respondents were also free to withdraw anytime during the conduct of the study.

### **2.2 Research Instruments**

The main method used to obtain data is a survey questionnaire. The researcher will be using an adapted and modified questionnaire for the purpose of this study. The first part

of the questionnaire is the social networking sites questionnaire (SNSQ) developed by (Khan *et al.*, 2022) with 20 items. The indicators are informativeness four items, education four items, shopping three items, social cause three items, entertainment three items, and socialization three items comprises this part where the options are “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” this evaluates if the social networking sites contributed to their life. The second part is the mental health questionnaire (MHQ) developed by Hegazi *et al.* (2022) with 15 items. The indicators are intolerance six items, acceptance four items, and digital care sentiment five items where the options are “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The questionnaire was validated by experts and will undergo pilot testing upon approval to ensure the validity and reliability.

The instrument was a 35-item survey questionnaire with a 5-point Likert Scale following descriptive equivalent; (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree. The range of means used to interpret the stance of the respondents regarding the usage of social networking sites and the mental health are the following: 4.20-5.00, which is interpreted as very high, it means that the characteristics of a students are extremely collected and aware in using social networking sites; 3.40-4.19, which is interpreted as high, it means that the characteristics of the students are very collected and aware in using social networking sites; 2.60-3.39, which is interpreted as moderate, it means that the characteristics of the students are moderately collected and aware in using social networking sites; 1.80-2.59, which is interpreted as low, it means that the characteristics of the students are slightly collected and aware in using social networking sites; and 1.00-1.79, which is interpreted as very low, it means that the characteristics of the students are not all collected and aware in using social networking sites.

The researchers conducted a pilot test on 30 CTE students to evaluate the reliability and validity of the adopted questionnaires. Thereby, the independent variable's Cronbach alpha provided findings of 0.91 or 0.908, indicating the reliability of the survey questionnaire. Meanwhile, the dependent variable's Cronbach alpha score is 0.96 or 0.955 which is better than 0.70, indicating that the survey questionnaire is also dependable.

### **2.3 Research Design and Procedure**

This research employed a quantitative research design, specifically a descriptive-correlational approach, to illustrate the impact of social media on the mental health of BPE students. It aims to ascertain the nature and extent of this relationship, if one exists. The choice of the descriptive correlation method is based on its suitability for investigating the effects of social media, as it enables us to observe variables in their natural state during the study period without any manipulation (Dergi, 2021). In order to obtain approval to conduct the study, the researchers will submit a letter to the Dean of the College of Teacher Education. Upon approval, the researchers will give a hard copy of the questionnaire to the respondents and ask for their consent to use the data to determine if there are possible results in the correlation between social media and mental health. Collection will commence as soon as the respondents are done answering the

instrument. Data will then be tabulated and analyzed. Respondents will be assured of the confidentiality of the information they will be giving in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Presented in Table 1 is the level of Social Networking Sites among BPE students as measured in the indicators: informativeness, education, shopping, social cause, entertainment, and socialization.

**Table 1:** Level of Usage of Social Networking Sites

| Indicators      | Mean | S.D. |
|-----------------|------|------|
| Informativeness | 4.33 | .547 |
| Education       | 4.20 | .557 |
| Shopping        | 3.98 | .856 |
| Social Cause    | 3.75 | .795 |
| Entertainment   | 4.37 | .581 |
| Socialization   | 4.42 | .996 |
| Overall         | 4.17 | .474 |

Table 1 shows the level of social networking sites with an overall mean of 4.17 and a standard deviation of .474, which is interpreted as high level and the students agreed that they are very collected and aware in using social networking sites.

The indicator with the very high mean score is socialization, with a mean of 4.42 and a standard deviation of .996, which means that the students strongly agreed that they are extremely collected and aware in using social networking sites. The indicator with the lowest mean score is social cause, with a mean of 3.75 and a standard deviation of .795, which is interpreted as high level, which means that the students agreed that they are very collected and aware in using social networking sites.

The benefits that we can get from using social networking sites are to communicate with people around the world and also to be updated on what is happening in our environment (Naeem, 2021).

The result revealed that the students in the University of Mindanao use social networking sites not for education but for socialization to strengthen their interpersonal relationships and to keep in touch with their family and friends, and also, they use social networking sites to get information regarding the current issues. Additionally, the psychological implications of excessive use of social networking sites display a characteristic of social awareness and connectivity (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). Considering the current trend toward greater connectedness and involvement in social networking sites, the high mean score attained in this study indicates the significant influence of socialization indicators on students' behaviors and attitudes in using social networking sites (Sampasa-Kanyinga, 2019).

### 3.1 Level of Mental Health Issues

Presented in Table 2 is the level of Mental Health among Bachelor of Physical Education (BPE) students as measured in the indicators, intolerance, acceptance, and digital care sentiment.

**Table 2:** Level of Mental Health

| Indicators             | Mean        | S.D.        |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Intolerance            | 3.84        | .807        |
| Acceptance             | 3.83        | .716        |
| Digital Care Sentiment | 4.08        | .748        |
| <b>Overall</b>         | <b>3.92</b> | <b>.603</b> |

Table 2 shows the level of mental health with an overall mean of 3.92 and a standard deviation of .603, which is interpreted as high level and the students agreed that they are very collected and aware of using social networking sites.

The indicator with the very high mean score is digital care sentiment, with a mean of 4.08 and a standard deviation of .748, which means that the students agreed that they are extremely collected and aware in using social networking sites. Following is the intolerance with a high mean score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of .807, which means that the students agreed that they are very collected and aware in using social networking sites. The indicator with the lowest mean score is acceptance, with a mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of .716, which is interpreted as high level, which means that the students agreed that they are very collected and aware in using social networking sites. Based on the result, it shows that there is a strong connection between students' knowledge in using social networking sites and their digital care sentiment. This indicates that students are very aware and mindful of their online interactions, activities, and other people's online safety. This implication aligns with the previous study about the importance of being a digital citizen and responsible online behavior, especially for students (Livingstone *et al.*, 2017).

### 3.2 The Correlation Matrix of Usage of Social Networking Sites and Mental Health

Table 3 shows the correlation coefficient of the two variables, social networking sites and mental health. The independent variable, social networking sites, has six indicators: informativeness, education, shopping, social cause, entertainment, and socialization. The dependent variable, mental health, has three indicators: intolerance, acceptance, and digital care sentiment.



**Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Usage of Social Networking Sites and Mental Health**

| Social Networking Sites | Intolerance   | Acceptance    | Digital Care  | Overall       |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Informativeness         | .295**        | .245**        | .285**        | .346**        |
| Education               | .736**        | .223**        | .302**        | .397**        |
| Shopping                | .742**        | .286**        | .288**        | .412**        |
| Social Cause            | .755**        | .324**        | .377**        | .466**        |
| Entertainment           | .465**        | .043          | .218**        | .235**        |
| <b>Overall</b>          | <b>.465**</b> | <b>.808**</b> | <b>.777**</b> | <b>.804**</b> |

The overall finding of correlation between social networking sites and mental health of Bachelor of Physical Education (BPE) students at the University of Mindanao, with a correlation coefficient of .804\*\* demonstrates a substantial association between these factors. Social cause revealed a storing correlation to mental health with the overall coefficient of .465\*\*, shopping with the overall coefficient of .412\*\*, and education with .397\*\* as its coefficient, both showed a positive correlation to mental health; it also revealed that informativeness with the coefficient value of .346\*\*, and entertainment with the coefficient value of .235\*\* both have a moderate positive correlation. Additionally, all indicators of mental health displayed a positive correlation to social networking sites, intolerance with an overall coefficient of .465\*\*, acceptance with .808\*\* as its coefficient, and digital care with a coefficient value of .777\*\*. The relationship between the variables is strong, which means the independent variables can positively affect the dependent variables

This result agrees with the Social Identity Theory of Tajfel and Turner (1979), which emphasized the potential outcome and positive outline communities that can enhance the mental health of individuals and the Social Support Theory of Cohen and Wills (1985), that with strong social support have a fewer mental health problem. Social networking sites have changed the way individuals communicate and interact with peers (Khan *et al.*, 2019).

Additionally, the table shows the significant positive correlation between the total score of the social networking sites and the overall score of mental health indicators. The entertainment indicator has the lowest overall coefficient compared to other indicators of social networking sites since the result of correlation indicated exists between social networking sites and perceived mental health of BPE students, individual constantly evaluate themselves by comparing themselves to others using the Social Comparison Theory by Festinger 1954. The research study of Alshuaibi *et al.* (2018) aligns with this study's findings that there is a significant relationship between social networking sites and mental health, especially in the process of interactive learning that can help and guide them using the social networking sites.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The usage of social networking sites has truly impacted learners in many ways. It has impacted their mental health and life. The findings gathered from the study have shown

a significant relationship between the social networking sites and the mental health of the BPE students at the University of Mindanao. The level of social networking sites gives a high overall mean rating with the indicator of socialization interpreted as very high. This shows that BPE students strongly agree that they use social networking sites to socialise where they can enhance their interpersonal relationship skills and to gather information and so on. Meanwhile, the indicator in social cause shows the lowest mean score that they didn't agree with the statement "I use social networking sites for civil campaigns" and "I use social networking sites for crowd funding."

On the other hand, the level of mental health shows a high overall mean rating. All indicators have a high mean interpretation. The results show the BPE students agree that their mental health was affected by using social networking sites. Particularly on the digital care sentiment indicator, which has a statement like "Online support groups have a meaningful impact on one's mental health.", and "I would be comfortable sharing personal stories with members of an online support group." this statement tells us that BPE students are more confident to tell who they are in online rather than in personal interaction.

This finding supports the Vygotsky Mediation Theory, which states that social networking sites can serve as a mediation between students and the outside world. Therefore, students use social networking sites to reach the outside world. The other theory that supports the findings of the study is the Displaced Theory by Freud. People spend more time on social networking sites and have less time to communicate with people in person because they are more comfortable sharing personal stories with the members of an online support group where they feel accepted. Overall, the study findings provide an understanding of how social networking sites affect BPE students.

The researchers thought of the following recommendation to elaborate the benefit of this study to the students and society. First, the researchers recommend that the students and the UMUPHED organization organize and conduct seminars relating to the proper use of social networking sites embedded in the AOP. The researcher further recommends that the teachers should include activities such as the proper use of technology and social networking sites in the BPE 325L – Technology for Teaching Physical Education and Health course. Furthermore, students should be monitored by teachers and parents on how they use these sites to create a balance between social networking sites and academic activities to avoid poor academic performance.

The study's findings and the theory that are being used will open them to think about how social networking sites should be used, especially in communicating, gathering information, social causes such as distributing essential items, civil campaigns and other school purposes. Through this they can promote and maintain collaboration and socialization among students and teachers to easily connect and communicate and also to enhance their interpersonal relationship skills. The findings of the study may serve as the source of data to aid the need to conduct seminars such as understanding the impact of social networking sites on BPE student's mental health, forums about

acceptance of mental health and conducting programs seminars through University of Mindanao-Guidance Services and Testing Center (UM-GSTC).

Future researchers can use this study about the usage of social networking sites and mental health as a reference and delve into deeper context, such as focusing on one indicator used from either of the two variables. Additionally, it can serve as a basis for determining the impact of social networking sites and mental health of other courses offered in the University of Mindanao. Lastly, set limits and take breaks (GS Bocci, 2019). For instance, refrain from using social networking sites while doing homework, turn off the phone during sleeping hours, and establish “technology-free” rules with peers and family members. Excessive use of social networking sites can disrupt sleep patterns, which would lead to adverse effects on the mental health of people. Additionally, families should encourage social networking site users to engage in activities beyond technology to ensure they have sufficient quality time for other interests and necessities.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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