
Dual Effects of Social Media on Adolescent Mental Health: A Systematic Review on Philippine Context

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Abstract: This systematic review investigates the dual impact of social media on the mental health of adolescents and young adults at global, national, and local levels—the Philippines and Davao City—using the Social Comparison Theory, the Uses and Gratification Theory, and the Behavioural Addiction Model, hence the identification of five major themes: patterns of engagement, consuming content, social comparisons, FOMO, and supportive online communities. In a nutshell, findings have documented the excessive use of social media and aspirational content breed growing anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, whereas therapeutic online communities and empowering content enhance emotional resilience and connectedness. There remains a lack of longitudinal studies in general and particularly localized to Davao City. Some recommendations would involve integrating digital literacy into education, algorithm transparency, and the need for mental health campaigns to foster a healthy digital ecosystem for young minds.

Keywords: Social media, Mental health, Filipino Youth, Social Comparison, Media Literacy

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become a central communication hub in modern society, with approximately 4.9 billion active users worldwide (We Are Social, 2023). The youth, particularly in the Philippines—referred to as the 'social media capital of the world'—spend an average of 4 hours and 15 minutes daily on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. While these platforms provide opportunities for self-expression and access to mental health resources, they also raise concerns regarding their potential to induce anxiety, depression, and self-esteem issues. This study explores the mechanisms through which social media influences mental health, including content consumption, social comparison, and coping strategies. The findings aim to provide actionable recommendations for educators,

policymakers, and mental health professionals, emphasizing the need for a culturally contextualized approach in the Philippine setting.

With social media engagement serving as a double-edged sword in terms of frequency, time spent, and type of contact, it is high time to closely scrutinize the way it influences Filipino youth (Datu *et al.*, 2018).

This study investigates how social media shapes mental health through several mechanisms, including content consumption-the process of viewing and interacting with media-and social comparison, where individuals evaluate themselves relative to others' curated online lives.

While these factors may nurture connectedness and support, they also contribute to risks like increased anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression. In dealing with these, Filipino youth use coping mechanisms or strategies directed toward stress management and emotional distress that should be studied to provide a framework for effective interventions. Among others, the objectives of the study include the identification of engagement patterns, examination of the psychological effects of consumption of content, analysis of the role of social comparison in shaping mental health outcomes, and exploration of coping mechanisms utilized by Filipino youth. It has focused on urban and semi-urban areas where digital platforms are more accessible, but it also highlights that the data will be based on self-reporting and hence may contain social desirability bias, while excluding niche sites like Discord or Reddit. Despite these limitations, the findings are supposed to provide actionable recommendations for educators, parents, policy framers, and mental health professionals that may contribute valuable insights into the culturally contextualized interplay between social media and mental health in the Philippine setting.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study specifically aimed at systematically investigating the dual impacts of social media on the mental health of adolescents, in terms of the patterns of engagement, content consumption, and coping mechanisms within a culturally contextualized Philippine setting.

Primary Objectives

1. Explore the dual impacts of social media:

Discuss the positive and negative impacts of social media on mental health in various levels of jurisdiction, global, national, and local contexts - Philippines and Davao City.

2. Identify Behavioural Patterns/Psychological Effects:

Analyze the patterns of use and consumption and their relationship with measures of mental health such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem.

3. Examine the Role of Social Comparison:

Consider how social media make upward and downward social comparisons likely to affect psychological outcomes in terms of either self-doubt or emotional resilience.

4. Evaluate Coping Mechanisms:

This study will look into the strategies used by Filipino youth in managing stress and emotional distress arising from social media interactions.

5. Assess Cultural and Socio-Contextual Mediators:

Situate social media behaviors in the context of prevailing Filipino cultural milieus of collectivism and peer/familial validation in Davao City.

Secondary Objectives

1. Understand the Place of Supportive Online Communities

Positive contributions of online spaces in nurturing emotional resilience and promoting mental health should be underlined.

2. Analyze Platform-Specific Features:

Analyze how algorithms and content curation on platforms like TikTok and Facebook contribute to aspirational or empowering narratives.

3. Address research gaps:

Gaps in longitudinal studies and localized research specific to the Philippine setting.

Applied Objectives

1. Inform Policy and Educational Practices: Provide evidence-based recommendations for digital literacy programs, algorithmic transparency, and mental health advocacy campaigns.

2. Develop Intervention Frameworks: Suggest some pragmatic interventions to balance the risk and benefits of social media regarding adolescent mental health in frameworks that are culturally contextual.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Social media have increasingly become important in shaping mental health outcomes—a fact that has raised considerable scholarly interest as social media platforms become part and parcel of everyday living. This chapter reviews the literature on engagement patterns, content consumption, social comparison, FOMO, and social media addiction, and the positive effects of supportive online communities. These discussions are also framed by theoretical perspectives, such as the Social Comparison Theory by Festinger (1954), Uses and Gratifications Theory by Blumler & Katz (1974), and the Behavioral Addiction Model by Griffiths (1996). This conceptual framing places social media both as a source of stress and as a resource, its dual nature in shaping mental health.

Patterns of Engagement

The Use and Gratification Theory has continued to frame social media use as an active role of the user, seeking content to satisfy psychological needs. On the other hand, excessive engagement or compulsive use has always contributed to adverse mental health effects. Adolescents reported emotional instability and loneliness who spent more than five hours daily on social media, as stated by Fioravanti *et al.* (2022). This finding is in concert

with the work of Wang *et al.* (2023), who found emotional fatigue and a decline in academics among Asian high school students who overused social media. These patterns, therefore, go to show how a paradigm that was meant to connect has grossly been used as the very means through which disconnect and emotional stress come when overused.

Cleofas and Rocha (2023) extend the explanation, in the local Philippine setting, of how Filipino youths have adopted social media as their coping mechanisms, particularly through post-pandemic situations. This trend is also manifested by ongoing informal surveys within universities in Davao City, where late-night scrolling into social networking sites like TikTok and Facebook has brought down academic performance and even productivity.

Despite these findings, significant research gaps are still evident. Most point to short-term effects, while the long-term psychological influence of social media engagement has remained under-investigated. These call for longitudinal research that can clearly outline evolving behavioral patterns and eventual changes in mental health. It would also be important to consider treatment programs based on the behavioral addiction model, as first developed by Griffiths, that views compulsive behavior emanating from psychological reinforcement mechanisms as a way to reduce these adverse effects of over-engagement. This mindfulness, screen-time awareness, and balanced engagement program might be more appropriate in developing better results among youths, especially in a culturally specific context such as Davao City.

Content Consumption

According to the Social Comparison Theory, individuals judge themselves by putting their lives in perspective with others. Social media catalyzes this process through curated content. There is evidence from around the world of aspirational displays on Instagram and TikTok being linked to negative self-perceptions. Twenge *et al.* (2023) wrote that idealized images of one's body significantly result in heightened body dissatisfaction and anxiety among adolescents. Uhls *et al.* (2022) added that algorithm-driven feeds amplify such comparisons, perpetuating feelings of inadequacy.

In the Philippines, Velasco, 2020, noted that in most Filipino adolescents, more so girls, self-esteem has taken nose-diving proportions amidst aspirational content that promotes thin-ideal body images, which the cultural norms have equally overemphasized on the importance of physical appearance and success. Locally, anecdotal evidence suggests that youths in Davao City who engage in viral trends and with influencers often feel inadequate compared to unrealistic lifestyles. Contrarily, Santos *et al.* (2023) found that contact with body-positive campaigns and mental health advocacy significantly improved self-acceptance and emotional well-being among Filipino youth.

The conceptual framework emphasizes how such consumption in this domain can be seen in dual light: while idealized, curated portrayals deteriorate mental health struggles, the empowering use of content in a similar domain can lead to resilience and self-acceptance. Research on algorithms used on different platforms, for example, might assess which shows aspirational vs. empowering content. Actually, politicians and educators are bound to be called upon to insist that transparency be demanded regarding the algorithms behind the working of social media, utilizing media literacy as one channel for education in order to enable youth to make good decisions when they create media in their representation and

when they stumble upon improper images. Mindful use learned with educators leading youth to responsible content, on the other hand, lessens harmful portrayals of character.

Social Comparison

Social media makes this significantly easier: upward social comparison, comparing the self to the idealized presentation of others and usually coming off feeling worse as a consequence, is performed. He attains this in the Social Comparison Theory, documented the world over. Yang *et al.*, in their 2020 paper, find that "higher levels of passive social media use lead to greater state social comparison, which positively associates with state inadequacy and anxiety.". On a related note, Primack *et al.* (2021) discovered a rise in depressive symptoms specifically related to aspirational content upon presenting such comparisons.

This is exacerbated by those cultural norms that demand family and peer approval, achievement pressure from the Philippines. Reyes *et al.*, 2018 discuss that due to these comparisons among Filipino teenagers, anxiety and self-doubt are significantly enhanced. This is concurred with Balhara *et al.* (2023), when they find that young people with more frequent compare behaviors have lower self-esteem. At a more specific, local scale, it seems like in Davao City, high school- and college-level students simply take in so much exposure by often comparing their academic and extra-curricular achievement or physical looks with a similar student population through their use on either TikTok or Instagram. Such a culture of comparing creates more impact among women respondents, who were quite particular in citing greater stress driven by unreachable societal expectations for a perfect woman.

These findings really bring to light the need for targeted interventions. Programs on critical media literacy could help young people place into context and question idealized portrayals, thereby reducing the emotional toll of social comparisons. A study like this would assume that such interventions may mitigate the negative effects of social media and, therefore, points toward integrating the latter into school curricula, especially in areas like Davao City where these behaviors are prevalent.

FOMO and Social Media Addiction

FOMO is one of the major drivers of compulsive use of social media. It is also perfectly explained within the framework of the Behavioral Addiction Model by Griffiths (1996), where psychological reinforcements are identified as crucial in the development of addiction. According to Elhai *et al.* (2021) and Wegmann *et al.* (2017), FOMO leads to increased stress, disrupted routines, and emotional exhaustion. According to Cleofas, the Filipino youth is most prone to such situations; excess screen time means there is an excessive connection of this habit with FOMO when viral challenges or any kind of national event come into order, disrupting sleeping patterns that affect their academic performance. All that only further worsens the psychological pressure.

A similar pattern emerges in the city of Davao, too. Adolescents reason out that they have to be in every TikTok challenge and current trend on Facebook just to keep themselves from being left behind. The emotional dependence of FOMO triggers addictive behavior-the routines of adolescents are significantly interrupted, while their level of stress increases a lot. Theoretically, the conceptual framework assumes cultural factors mediate the level of FOMO,

hypothesizing that the more collectivist values in Philippine society will heighten such an effect.

In addressing FOMO, multi-layered intervention approaches are important. Mindfulness-based approaches and screen-time management tools should be included in school and community programs. These interventions might enable young people to set better limits on themselves and decrease the emotional attachment to social network sites. Further research into the effects of cultural influences on FOMO-related behavior should help the development of more appropriate localized interventions.

Positive Effects of Supportive Online Communities

On the other hand, social media also creates venues for connectivity and emotional resilience. Seligman's Positive Psychology Framework has focused on how much peer support and community participation add to well-being. Indeed, an online study conducted by Naslund *et al.*, in 2020, observed that online communities reduce loneliness and provide easier ways to reach out for mental health. Again, Lim *et al.*, in 2022, have also echoed the role of platforms like TikTok and Facebook in fostering mental health advocacy and awareness campaigns.

Santos *et al.* discussed how body-positive movements and mental health advocacy content in the Philippines have provided young people with healthier coping mechanisms against the psychological burden. Youth locally in Davao City are engaging more with supportive online spaces such as Facebook groups, advocacy-driven TikTok communities promoting mental health awareness campaigns, schools, and local organizations are in turn leveraging these channels to offer counseling services and educational resources.

In other words, the conceptual framework assumes that supportive online communities cushion the negative impacts of social media on mental health by creating emotional resilience. This is one consideration for further studies: how the communities maintain positivity over time. Scaling up in the partnership between the local organization and the social media platform could give room to amplify such efforts to make the potential for positive contribution to social media use maximized.

Integrated Implications

The reviewed literature underlines the dual nature of social media-a risk factor and a resource for mental health. The patterns of engagement and consumption of content, processes of social comparison, which create vulnerabilities, are framed in a theoretical and conceptual way. Supportive communities afford opportunities for building resilience. Of course, such research is driven by perhaps two assumptions: first, that these interventions-media literacy, algorithmic transparency, and mindfulness-based strategies-will reduce the aforementioned risks while enhancing the benefits;.

Policymakers should collaborate with platforms to reduce toxic content, making algorithms favor uplifting, informative content. Schools and community organizations should include digital literacy curricula that prepare young people with the critical content evaluation and self-regulation skills. Finally, it will be necessary to conduct further conceptualization

and build longitudinal research into cultural influences along with long-term intervention effects.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study will adopt an integrated mixed-methods design that offers the comprehensive approach needed in looking into the dual impacts of social media on the Filipino youth's mental health. The integrated quantitative and qualitative approaches involve this design, enabling an integration of measurable patterns with rich and contextual narratives that better inform and deepen the understanding of the phenomenon being studied. While the quantitative part captures the trend and relationship from variables such as engagement patterns and content consumption, social comparison delves deep into individual-level experiences and coping mechanisms; therefore, integrating these methods will ensure that the study covers the breadth and depth of the research questions being addressed.

The rationale for using the mixed-methods approach thus rests on its triangulating function, enhancing validity through the cross-referencing of statistical trends with personal insights. It will be particularly useful in this study, given the complexity of the relationships between social media engagement and mental health outcomes, and the need to explore both the objective and subjective dimensions of the issue.

Sources of Data

The study will be based on both primary and secondary sources of data in order to ensure sound findings:

Primary Data:

Quantitative data will be collected by applying standardized questionnaires to a sample of 300 Filipino youth aged 15-24 years. The questionnaires will capture the pattern of use, content preferences, and the relationship between social media behaviors and mental health indicators such as anxiety, depression, and self-esteem.

Qualitative: Semi-structured in-depth interviews will be conducted with 15 participants from the survey pool in order to delve into personal experiences, emotional responses, and coping strategies related to the use of social media.

Secondary Data:

The findings from the primary data will be supported contextually and theoretically by literature, reports, and case studies from recent publications. These will help in locating the study within the current research context with a view to addressing the knowledge gaps in the Philippine and Davao contexts.

Procedure

The research process consists of three important phases:

Preparation Phase:

Ethical clearance will be sought from the various review boards to ascertain that research ethics, such as confidentiality of the participant and informed consent, are adhered to.

Survey instruments will be pre-tested on small samples in order to appraise clarity, reliability, and validity. This is a very important stage that makes sure the tool gets refined prior to its full deployment.

Data Collection Phase:

Quantitative Data: The online distribution of the survey will be done through Google Forms, which will ensure access to a wide demographic of Filipino youth across the urban, semi-urban, and local contexts like Davao City. Qualitative data will be collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted either in person or via Zoom, depending on participants' preferences and other logistical concerns. In this way, interviews provide an in-depth perspective of the experiences of youth by drawing on a nuanced understanding of young people's mental health challenges and their coping mechanisms.

Analysis Phase:

Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and regression analysis will be performed to analyze quantitative data. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize demographic characteristics, social media use patterns, and content preferences. The Pearson correlation will compute the strengths of relationships between variables that include social comparison behaviors and mental health outcomes. Regression analysis will predict the effects of engagement patterns and content consumption on mental health indicators.

Qualitative Data: Thematic analysis, supported by the NVivo software package, shall be conducted to identify the recurring themes and patterns within the interview transcripts. This will really unmask the emotional and psychic dimensions of social media engagement and provide a richer contextual layer to the quantitative findings.

Mixed-Methods Integration

The mixed-methods design will provide a full and three-dimensional understanding concerning the chosen research issue: quantitative results will present statistical relationships and other measurable tendencies, while qualitative insights will add such depth in a way that will illustrate the "why" and "how" behind these patterns. For instance, quantitative data may show how upward social comparisons are associated with anxiety, which would then be explored by qualitative narrative descriptions on how social comparison changes the mood of participants. This triangulation enhances the validities and robustness of the findings.

Statistical Treatment

The following statistical techniques apply to the analysis of quantitative data in the study:

Descriptive Statistics: Summarizes participant demographics and key variables such as social media engagement patterns and content preferences. **Pearson's Correlation:** The strength and direction of the relationship between social comparison variables with the indicators of mental health, which are anxiety, depression, and self-esteem. **Regression**

Analysis: Projects the effects of social media engagement and consumption of its content on mental health outcomes, and gives insight into what is more likely to be causal. These are indeed indispensable statistical tools that ensure rigorous quantitative data analysis, while from interviews, qualitative themes set the contextual backdrop to complement these findings.

Data Analysis: Integration will be done through triangulation, thereby cross-referencing across more than one data source has been done to ensure consistency and reliability. Where quantitative data point out general trends and correlations, qualitative data provide very rich, descriptive accounts that place these trends within context. For instance, in cases where surveys will reveal that time spent by teenagers on social media is greatly associated with increasing anxiety, interviews will dig deep to understand what changes in participants' emotions and how to cope with them. It thus provides a complete two-layer approach to understanding the dual impacts of social media on the mental health of Filipino youth.

V. RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

The present systematic review explores the complex, multifaceted nature of how social media influences mental health outcomes in global, national, and local contexts among adolescents and young adults. This review thus focuses on the psychological consequences of using social media related to the engagement patterns, the content consumed, social comparisons, FOMO, and supportive online communities. Theoretically underpinning the Social Comparison Theory by Festinger, 1954; Uses and Gratification Theory by Blumler & Katz, 1974; and Behavioural Addiction Model by Griffiths, 1996, the current study lays a firm foundation on how social media both escalates mental health risk and acts to promote emotional resilience. Further, these frameworks have highlighted how the interrelationships among individual behaviors, cultural influences, and the platform-specific features build a nuanced perspective on the phenomenon.

Themes Identified

The scoping review has highlighted five major themes representing the impact of social media on mental health, showing the risks but also the opportunities associated with digital engagement.

Patterns of Engagement: Social media engagement became a critical determinant in the outcome of mental health. Indeed, excessive or compulsive use of the platforms has been associated consistently with anxiety, emotional instability, and a decline in academic performance. Fioravanti *et al.* (2022) and Wang *et al.* (2023) have established that adolescents who spend a lot of time on social media, mostly more than five hours a day, experience increased emotional exhaustion and disconnection, as global studies have shown. In the Philippines, Cleofas and Rocha (2023) noted that compulsive engagement among college students leads to disrupted sleep and heightened stress levels, especially in the post-pandemic period. Local evidence from Davao City also suggests that late-night scrolling on platforms like TikTok and Facebook contributes to greatly reduced productivity and increased procrastination in students.

The results are in line with the Uses and Gratification Theory, which describes active users in their quest for gratification through social media but instead getting negative unintended consequences in the process. Inasmuch as social media is used to socialize and release stress, there is a paradox when, beyond a limit, over-engagement with it can turn the very tool meant for connectivity to emotional fatigue and isolation. This paradox binds the

two together and calls for a balanced use of social media. Interventions such as digital literacy programs, which would enable self-regulation, could support the goal of mindfulness-based treatment.

Content Consumption:Such a factor as the type of content consumed through social media influences the outcome of mental health. In line with this, curated or aspirational images of ideal lives give rise to feelings of inadequacy or body dissatisfaction, as stated in various studies by Twenge et al. (2023) and Uhls et al. (2022). Platforms like Instagram and TikTok also draw criticism for their unattainable beauty expectations or material aspirations, which catalyze social comparison behaviors and their damaging effects on self-esteem.

The same trends were recorded by Velasco, 2020, in the Philippines, where he cited the effects on self-perception, particularly among adolescent females, due to thin-ideal body images of influencers. Nonetheless, positive content, including body-positive campaigns and the advocacy of mental health, has also been hopeful in the reduction of such effects. Santos et al., 2023 found in their results that exposure to empowering narratives on platforms such as TikTok has translated to an improvement of self-acceptance and emotional well-being among Filipino youth. This perhaps flags the duality of the contents of social media as one involving risks and resources, and reinforces calls for programs in media literacy that will teach users critical ways to evaluate the information being consumed.

Anecdotal evidence in Davao City reveals that locally, the youth who engage in viral trends and influencer content often feel inadequate, but some benefit from educational and advocacy-focused material. For example, campaigns focusing on mental health awareness have hit close to home for adolescents in Davao City—a positive use of social media. Policymakers and educators have to keep advocating for content moderation and algorithmic transparency to ensure the promotion of empowering and educational content.

Social Comparison: Nowadays, social comparison has been one of the most common characteristics, most especially among teenagers and youthful adults. With the Social Comparison Theory, there is a probability that people would compare themselves with idealized performances of others. The results have shown that upward comparisons, states where users perceive feeling worse than others, have triggered anxiety and depressive symptoms. Particularly, these have become notorious in contexts characterized by passive rather than interactive scrolling through content.

Reyes et al. (2018) pointed out that in the Philippine setting, the cultural values of familial approval and peer validation increase the psychological impact of social comparisons, hence making Filipino adolescents most vulnerable. Local findings in Davao City have also brought into light the prevalence of comparison culture, especially among young women striving to live up to the standards set by society for beauty and success. According to counselors, such comparisons typically result in a loss of self-confidence and heightened stress, particularly among those students who start to perceive these unrealistic role models as achievable.

These are challenges that are going to require targeted interventions, including integration into the school curriculum, with critical media literacy that would help youth place idealized portrayals into perspective and challenge them. These may provide young people with a better repertoire of skills for using social media in ways that are healthier, less emotionally taxing, and more fostering of self-acceptance.

FOMO and Social Media Addiction: FOMO and social media addiction have been considered major forces behind compulsive behaviors on digital platforms. According to the Behavioral Addiction Model, habitual use arises as an outcome of psychological reinforcements-the perceived rewards for being constantly connected and up-to-date-are important. In regard to FOMO, Elhai *et al.* (2021) and Wegmann *et al.* (2017) showed how it leads to emotional exhaustion, disrupted routines, and reduced functioning in the real world.

According to Cleofas (2022), Filipino youth are more prone to FOMO, in which excessive screen time is associated with increased anxiety during viral challenges and national events. This is further exacerbated by the collectivist nature of the culture, wherein keeping connected means keeping relevant. In Davao City, adolescents often engage in TikTok challenges and trending activities on Facebook, creating emotional dependence on these social networking sites. This addiction disrupts routines and increases levels of stress; therefore, it requires interventions that can increase mindfulness, self-awareness, and screen-time management.

Online supportive communities: While the use of social media brings risks, it at the same time opens opportunities for connection and emotional support that people can use to enhance their resilience. According to the Positive Psychology Framework developed by Seligman in 2002, peers are supposed to be very supportive, and this could also include the provision of various advocacy campaigns as ways to increase well-being. Indeed, various studies conducted around the world by Naslund *et al.* (2020) have reported that online communities reduce feelings of loneliness and provide increased access to resources related to mental health. In the Philippines, Santos *et al.* (2023) underscored how movements toward body positivity and campaigns for mental health enable youth to develop healthier ways of coping.

On the local scene, youths in Davao City reach out to supportive Facebook groups and advocacy-based communities on TikTok for counseling and educational resources. These are examples that social media can be a very positive force. With a little more collaboration between local organizations and social media platforms, such initiatives could go a long way.

a. GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

While the reviewed studies provided different valuable insights, there is still a number of gaps and inconsistencies. First, the general dearth of the longitudinal data-in most cases, capturing the effects only in the short run-means that full understanding of the long-term psychological consequences occurring as a result of social media use among Filipino adolescents remains limited. This is because much of the evidence drawn in this work is based on surveys of the nature of anecdotes. Third, there has not been enough exploration in terms of how platform algorithms, such as those of TikTok, make prioritizing aspirational

content over empowering narratives. Fourth, alongside all emphasis that so many works place on the risks of social media, very limited emphasis has been placed on its potential to enhance emotional resilience and community support. Finally, there is very little research considering how social media behaviors are mediated through norms, for example, how the need to belong due to high levels of collectivism should affect FOMO or how it affects social comparison.

b. IMPLICATIONS

These findings have many practical, theoretical, and policy implications: integrating the school and university levels by the inclusion of digital literacy programs may help the youth develop their critical evaluation skills of content in order to form healthier habits online. These initiatives in the community can create awareness campaigns and social support networks with the help of social networking sites like Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat, and Reddit. Theoretically, findings reinstate the applicability of both Social Comparison Theory and the Behavioral Addiction Model. It further indicates the need for integrated models, which should include cultural and platform-specific variables. Policymakers will seek to engage social media platforms themselves in helping regulate noxious content, ensure the transparency of algorithms, while promoting more empowering narratives. Longitudinal studies, cultural norms interacting with the use of social media, and the benefits derived from supportive online communities are aspects on which further research should be directed.

VI. CONCLUSION

This review of the related literature puts into focus how social media plays a very intricate role in influencing mental health; it can be viewed both as a resource and as a risk factor for one's mental health. Different themes that emerged from these include patterns of engagement, the theme of consumption, social comparison, FOMO, or Fear of Missing Out, and supportive online communities. The excessive engagement coupled with curated content often results in heightened anxiety, depression, and a low level of self-esteem. Social comparison and FOMO are emerging as important stressors, magnified by both cultural norms and platform-specific algorithm functions. On the other extreme of the spectrum, accepting online communities and enabling content illustrate social media use that promotes resilience and fosters self-acceptance and staying in touch.

Social Comparison Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and the Behavioral Addiction Model are frameworks of immense theoretical insight into elucidating these underlying mechanisms, each bringing perspective on how the behaviors of persons interface with culture and platform in complicated ways that demand sensitivity. However, there is a general lack of longitudinal studies and localized research, including the context of Davao City, which will fully capture the sustained and culturally specific effects of social media use. These findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive, targeted interventions that mitigate risks while leveraging the positive potential of digital platforms.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations represent some ways to address challenges as well as maximize opportunities spotted in this review:

1. Practical Interventions:

- o Digital Literacy Programs: Schools and universities should focus on integrating digital literacy within the curriculum, which may be directed at critical assessment of content, healthy engagement habits, and self-regulation techniques. There is a particular need to help students learn skills of recognizing risks from social comparisons and FOMO.
- o Community-Based Initiatives: The local organizations should develop campaigns that promote positive digital practices through the provision of resources for support from peers. The various advocacy campaigns on TikTok and Facebook can thus be used to share awareness regarding mental health.

2. Policy Recommendations:

- o Algorithmic Transparency: Policymakers should work with social media platforms to ensure transparency in content recommendation algorithms, prioritizing empowering and educational material over harmful aspirational portrayals.
- o Content Regulation: National and local governments need to collaborate with providers of the platforms to moderate the harmful contents. Particularly, it relates to aspirational or curated portrayals that inculcate fake standards of beauty and success.
- o Mental Health Advocacy: Public health campaigns must include mental health education regarding the psychological risks associated with excessive use of social media and the need for balance.

3. Theoretical and Research Directions:

Longitudinal Studies: Further studies will move toward the longitudinal effect which social media use has on the mental health of Filipino settings. Longitudinal designs give a deeper realization of changed behavior and its sustainability.

- o Localized Research: This involves those studies that specifically pinpoint Davao City or any other localities. They would have presented evidence of culturally mediated behaviors, for example, how norms of collectivism would influence FOMO and social comparison.
- o Positive impacts: Further research is needed to explore how supportive online communities and empowering narratives can be optimized to enhance mental well-being.

By following such recommendations, all stakeholders, educators, policy framers, and social media platforms themselves have to work toward building a healthier digital ecosystem. The necessary balancing of risks and benefits concerning social media use is thus an imperative in nurturing an environment which prizes mental health while sustaining the connectivity and engagement provided by digital platforms.

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