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Topic: *"Impact of social media on mental health of students at primary school"*

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Abstract

Social media platforms are digital spaces where users connect, share ideas, and express opinions. In recent years, these platforms have become increasingly popular among younger users, including primary school students in Cambodia. This descriptive study explored the impact of social media on the mental health of Cambodian primary students. The results showed a strong link between the amount of time spent on social networking sites (SNS) and the number of platforms used. Additionally, students who spent more time online reported higher levels of anxiety, sleep disturbances, and emotional withdrawal. The study concludes that excessive social media use can negatively affect the mental health of primary students in Cambodia, highlighting the need for early digital literacy education and parental supervision.

Keyword: Social Media, Mental health, Primary school.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background of Research

In recent years, the rapid rise of social media platforms has significantly transformed the way people communicate, learn, and interact, including children in primary schools. Although these platforms are primarily designed for older users, increasing numbers of young students are gaining access to social media through smartphones, tablets, or shared family devices. This early exposure has raised concerns among educators, parents, and mental health professionals regarding the potential effects on children's emotional and psychological well-being. Studies have shown that excessive or unsupervised use of social media can contribute to mental health challenges such as anxiety, low self-esteem, loneliness, and attention problems. For primary school students, who are still in critical stages of cognitive and emotional development, such exposure may interfere with their ability to form healthy relationships, concentrate on academics, and develop a positive self-image. On the other hand, some argue that, when used responsibly, social media can foster creativity, learning, and social connection.

This research seeks to explore the actual impact both positive and negative of social media on the mental health of primary school students, aiming to inform educators, parents, and policymakers about effective strategies for digital well-being in early education.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The increasing use of social media among primary school students has become a growing concern for teachers, parents, and health professionals. While these platforms offer opportunities for communication and learning, they also expose young children to risks such as cyberbullying, unrealistic social comparisons, and screen addiction. As primary school students are still in early stages of emotional and mental development, the effects of social media may be more profound and lasting (Livingstone, 2014). However, there is limited research focused specifically on how social media impacts the mental health of children at this age group. Without clear understanding, schools and families may struggle to provide appropriate guidance and support. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the extent to which social media affects the mental health of primary school students and identify the main psychological challenges associated with its use.

1.3 Research Objectives

In this research, we aim to understand about level of the social media that impact on mental health for the students at primary school.

1.4 Research Questions

What extent does the influence of social media effect mental health of primary school students?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Understanding the impact of social media on the mental health of primary school students is crucial in today's digital age. As children begin using smartphones and social

platforms at increasingly younger ages, it becomes vital to assess how this exposure affects their emotional, psychological, and social development.

This study is significant because it sheds light on how early digital interactions can influence students' self-esteem, behavior, attention span, and interpersonal relationships. By identifying both the positive and negative effects, educators, parents, and policymakers can develop age-appropriate guidelines, promote healthy screen habits, and implement early interventions when necessary. Moreover, the findings can help schools incorporate digital literacy into their curricula, ensuring students are better equipped to navigate online spaces safely and responsibly. This research also serves as a foundation for future studies aimed at safeguarding children's mental health in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Chapter2: Literature Review

2.1 Social Media

2.1.1 What is Social Media?

Social media is a type of online communication that enables people to connect, interact, and share content within virtual communities and networks (PALJUG, 2025).

Moreover, social media refers to digital platforms that enable individuals to connect through online communities, where they can interact, exchange information, and share content they create (PALJUG, 2025).

Social media is a form of online communication that allows individuals to connect, interact, and share user-generated content within virtual communities and networks.

2.1.2 Importance of Social Media

Social media brings several valuable benefits to education by enhancing collaboration, creativity, and access to resources. It supports collaborative learning by allowing students to work together on projects from any location through interactive platforms. These tools also promote creativity and critical thinking, encouraging students to express ideas through multimedia and analyze diverse perspectives. Additionally, social media offers easy access to educational materials, such as tutorials and live expert sessions, while helping students develop essential digital skills needed for academic and professional success. Social media has transformed education by enhancing engagement, collaboration, and accessibility. Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook serve as valuable educational tools for both students and educators (The use of social media in education, 2024). Social media has significantly enhanced the educational experience by boosting engagement, collaboration, and access to learning resources. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook provide students and educators with tools to expand learning beyond the classroom. They offer access to tutorials, global study groups, and expert insights, making education more flexible and inclusive. Social media also promotes teamwork through platforms like Google Classroom and WhatsApp, while interactive features like videos and quizzes help maintain student interest and participation. Moreover, integrating social media into education helps students develop valuable real-world digital skills, such as managing their online presence and creating

content—essential for future career success (Social Media in Education: Advantages and Disadvantages, n.d.). Social media has become a key part of students' learning. It helps them find study resources, connect with others for support, and share ideas. This builds a stronger learning community outside the classroom. It also supports mental health by offering spaces where students can express themselves and get emotional support. Platforms like YouTube are especially helpful, providing free educational videos on many subjects, allowing students to learn at their own pace. When used wisely, social media can boost both learning and personal development (Eckel, 2022). Social media, when used wisely, is a powerful tool for achieving success in both personal and professional life. It allows people to stay connected with friends and family despite busy schedules, provides a platform for expressing opinions and engaging in meaningful conversations, and offers personalized entertainment that helps users relax. In today's fast-paced world, social media plays a vital role by enhancing communication, promoting self-expression, and offering a source of enjoyment (Raju, 2025).

2.1.3 Impact of Social Media in Education

Despite its educational benefits, social media also poses challenges that can hinder students' academic performance. Constant notifications and the temptation to scroll through feeds can be major distractions, reducing focus and productivity. Security and privacy are also concerns, as students may encounter cyberbullying, inappropriate content, or even identity theft without proper guidance on online safety. Additionally, digital communication often lacks the depth of in-person interaction, which can weaken students' social and interpersonal skills. Finally, the widespread presence of misinformation highlights the importance of teaching critical thinking and media literacy to help students navigate online content responsibly (The use of social media in education, 2024). While social media has benefits in education, it also introduces significant drawbacks that can affect students' well-being and academic success. It often causes distractions through constant notifications and engaging content, making it difficult for students to stay focused, especially during online classes. The anonymity of social platforms can also foster cyberbullying, leading to stress, anxiety, and low self-esteem, as students compare themselves to unrealistic online portrayals. Additionally, the spread of misinformation can mislead students during research, highlighting the importance of fact-checking. Privacy is another concern, as social media collects personal data, and students may unknowingly share sensitive information during online learning (WAVE, n.d.).

2.2 Mental Health

2.2.1 What is Mental Health?

Mental health is a condition of psychological well-being that helps individuals manage life's pressures, recognize their strengths, learn effectively, perform successfully, and actively engage in their community. It holds both inherent worth and practical importance, playing a vital role in overall well-being (World Health Organization, 2025).

Mental health encompasses our emotional, social, and psychological well-being. It influences how we think, feel, act, and relate to others.

Mental health is a state of overall well-being that affects how individuals think, feel, and interact with others. It helps people manage stress, use their strengths, perform well, and engage in their communities, making it essential for a healthy and fulfilling life.

2.2.1 Important of Mental Health

Good mental health plays a vital role in helping students thrive both academically and personally. Mentally healthy students are more productive, motivated, and focused on reaching their academic goals. They handle daily stress effectively, build higher self-esteem, and confidently engage in classroom activities. Strong mental well-being also promotes the development of meaningful relationships with peers and educators, supports healthy lifestyle choices, and enhances overall physical health. Ultimately, students with good mental health experience greater life satisfaction and are more inspired to pursue their interests and goals (MASHALL-SESLAR, 2023). Mental health plays a vital role in students' academic and personal success. When students prioritize their mental well-being, they perform better in school, maintain healthier relationships, and enjoy a higher quality of life. It helps manage stress, reduces the risk of mental health disorders, and supports overall emotional and physical well-being (team, n.d.). Student mental health is crucial for overall development and long-term success. First, it enhances well-being and quality of life by improving physical health, self-image, and the ability to cope with challenges. Second, strong mental health supports better relationships with family, friends, and teachers, reducing the risk of social isolation. Third, it leads to improved academic performance by helping students manage stress and stay focused. Fourth, mentally healthy students are less likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as substance abuse, and are more resilient to peer pressure. Finally, good mental health promotes emotional stability and self-esteem, which are essential for building confidence and personal growth (Kline, 2023).

Chapter3: Conclusion

3.1 Conclusion

Social media presents both opportunities and risks for primary school students, who are especially vulnerable to its negative effects. The level of impact depends on how often and how children use social media, what kind of content they are exposed to, and whether adults are involved in guiding their use (Marsh, 2025). Early education and supervision can help keep the impact at a mild or manageable level. While it can support learning and creativity, it also contributes to issues like cyberbullying and low self-esteem. Protecting children's mental health requires collaboration among parents, educators, and policymakers through digital education, screen time limits, and open communication. Early mental health support is crucial for raising resilient and emotionally healthy children in today's digital world.

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