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Research Paper

Analysis Of Social Media Usage Among Elementary Students in Government Schools of Ramlun Cluster, Chhing Veng BRCC, Under SDEO Aizawl East, Aizawl, Mizoram

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the patterns and consequences of social media usage among 234 elementary students (Classes V–VIII) from four government schools—Govt. Ramhlun South M/S, Govt. B.M M/S, Govt. Ramhlun M/S, and Govt. Endala M/S—belonging to the Ramhlun Cluster, Chhing Veng BRCC, under SDEO Aizawl East, Aizawl, Mizoram. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires distributed and collected from students, focusing on mobile phone accessibility, time spent on social media, preferred platforms, and associated health outcomes. The findings show that although 200 students reported access to mobile phones, ownership often referred to shared family devices rather than personal possession. Entertainment was identified as the primary reason for use, with YouTube and Instagram being the most favored platforms. However, excessive screen exposure was associated with sleep disturbances, eye strain, reduced physical activity, and emotional effects such as low self-esteem and mood fluctuations. Despite these concerns, some students reported no noticeable psychological impact, suggesting individual differences in resilience and supervision. The study emphasizes the need for parental guidance, structured awareness programs, and digital literacy education in schools to promote balanced and responsible social media use. Policymakers and educators should work collaboratively to ensure technology supports learning without compromising children's health and well-being.

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KEYWORDS: social media usage, elementary students, digital literacy, mental health, physical health, screen time, mobile phone access, parental guidance, online behavior, Mizoram education.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly reshaped how children communicate, learn, and spend their leisure time. In recent years, social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become a regular part of children's daily routines, offering entertainment, interaction, and access to a vast amount of online content. Although most

social media platforms require users to be at least 13 years old, a growing number of elementary-level students are accessing them through their own mobile phones or through the devices of parents and older siblings. This easy accessibility has introduced young learners to digital environments much earlier than expected, often without adequate supervision or guidance. At the

elementary stage, students are observed to be increasingly dependent on mobile phones, which has brought both benefits and drawbacks. While technology can support learning and creativity, overexposure has led to noticeable behavioral and health-related concerns. Teachers and parents have reported issues such as reduced concentration in classrooms, less participation in physical activities, and a growing tendency toward social isolation. These visible consequences highlight the pressing need to study how social media use influences both the physical and mental health of elementary students. Hence, this research focuses on understanding the patterns, purposes, and impacts of social media engagement among young learners in Mizoram's government schools.

1.1 Background of the Study

Mizoram, one of India's most literate states, has witnessed increasing digital penetration even in elementary education. The Ramhlun Cluster, located under Chhinga Veng BRCC, SDEO Aizawl East, comprises government schools serving urban and semi-urban populations. With the proliferation of smartphones, even young learners in government schools have gained access to social media through their own or family devices. While digital connectivity aids learning, unsupervised exposure has led to growing concerns about children's physical activity, sleep habits, and emotional regulation. This study aims to provide empirical evidence on these emerging patterns among elementary learners in the region.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To assess the extent and purpose of social media usage among elementary students.
2. To examine the physical health implications, such as eye strain, sleep problems, and reduced activity.
3. To explore mental health effects, including mood, self-esteem, and addiction tendencies.
4. To suggest appropriate interventions for healthy digital habits among children.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies have examined the effects of social media on young users. Kuss and Griffiths (2017) emphasized that prolonged exposure to digital content increases the risk of behavioral addiction and sleep disorders. Odgers and Jensen (2020) argued that the impact of social media varies with developmental stage and parental regulation. A study by Twenge and Campbell (2019) found that adolescents spending more than three hours daily on social media reported higher rates of anxiety and depressive symptoms. Similarly, Coyne et al. (2021) identified reduced face-to-face interactions and disrupted circadian rhythms as mediating factors in digital stress among youth. In the Indian context, Sharma and Verma (2022) highlighted how early digital exposure among preteens in government schools correlated with reduced attention and academic performance. However, limited research exists in

northeastern India, particularly among elementary-level students, necessitating this localized investigation.

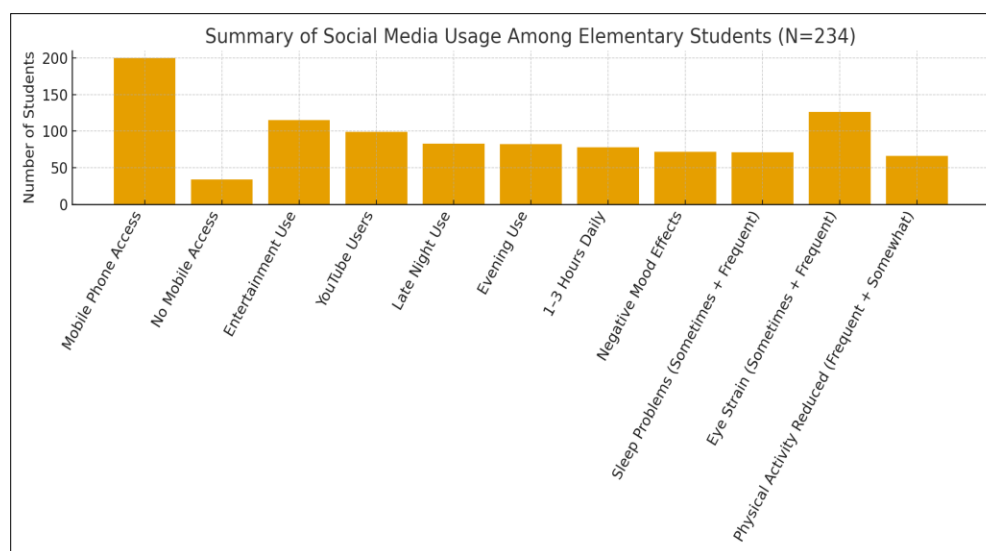
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to capture quantitative data on social media usage and its perceived effects. The sample consisted of 234 students from Classes V–VIII drawn from four government schools: Govt. Ramhlun South M/S, Govt. B.M M/S, Govt. Ramhlun M/S, and Govt. Endala M/S. A structured questionnaire comprising multiple-choice and Likert-scale items was administered. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages to identify trends in mobile access, duration of use, purpose, and reported health outcomes. It was clarified to participants that 'mobile phone ownership' also included access to elders' devices for online use.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Out of 234 respondents from Classes V–VIII, 200 students reported access to mobile phones, while 34 did not, demonstrating that a significant majority have the means to use social media, either through their own devices or those belonging to family members. Among the various purposes of social media use, entertainment emerged as the dominant motive, with 115 students indicating that they primarily use platforms such as YouTube and Instagram for leisure activities. Specifically, YouTube was identified as the most preferred platform (99 users), followed by Instagram (78 users), suggesting that video-based and visual content strongly appeals to children in this age group. Regarding daily usage time, 78 students reported spending between one to three hours on social media each day, whereas 69 students spent less than one hour. Late-night use was particularly common (83 students), closely followed by evening use (82 students), highlighting that social media engagement often continues beyond typical study hours, which could potentially affect sleep patterns and daily routines.

The bar graph provides a visual summary of these findings, illustrating the major dimensions of social media use among the surveyed students. The highest bars represent mobile phone access and entertainment purposes, reflecting the widespread penetration of digital devices and the dominance of leisure-oriented content consumption. Medium-height bars correspond to late-night use, evening activity, and moderate daily duration, showing consistent engagement across time periods. Lower bars, representing health-related effects such as eye strain, reduced physical activity, and negative mood changes, emphasize that although these issues are less frequently reported, they remain significant concerns for developing learners. Overall, the analysis reveals that while social media serves as a major source of entertainment and communication for elementary students, prolonged and unregulated use can influence their physical health, sleep quality, and emotional well-being, underscoring the importance of guided digital habits



5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal a high prevalence of social media use among elementary students, with 200 of the 234 respondents reporting access to smartphones, although many used devices belonging to family members. The analysis indicates that entertainment, rather than educational purposes, is the primary motivation for engagement. Prolonged exposure to social media platforms has been associated with negative emotional states and disrupted sleep patterns. Specifically, 43 students reported experiencing sleep issues sometimes, while 28 reported frequent sleep problems, reflecting digital fatigue similar to that described by Twenge and Campbell (2019).

Eye strain and headaches were common physical effects, with 126 students reporting such issues, confirming the physiological toll of extended screen time. From a psychological perspective, 72 students experienced negative emotional changes, and 63 exhibited signs of social media addiction, consistent with Kuss and Griffiths (2017), who linked excessive online activity with dependency and mood fluctuations. However, over 100 respondents reported no significant emotional impact, indicating differences in resilience and possible parental supervision. Furthermore, 37 students reported a frequent reduction in physical activity, while 29 reported a moderate decline. Overall, the findings underscore that balanced and regulated social media use is vital to protect children's physical and mental health without enforcing total restriction.

6. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that although social media serves as an important tool for entertainment, communication, and learning, its uncontrolled use among elementary students has notable physical and psychological consequences. Findings from the Ramhlun Cluster schools indicate that prolonged screen exposure contributes to issues such as eye strain, sleep disturbances, reduced physical activity, and emotional imbalance. Completely restricting social media access is neither realistic nor beneficial, as digital engagement has become an

integral part of children's social and educational experiences. Instead, early digital literacy programs, parental involvement, and continuous guidance from teachers can help students develop responsible online habits. Policymakers and educators should incorporate screen-time management and media awareness lessons into the elementary curriculum to promote balanced, safe, and healthy technology use, thereby supporting both the academic growth and well-being of young learners.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools should organize workshops on responsible social media use for both students and parents.
2. Teachers should monitor behavioral changes potentially linked to excessive screen exposure.
3. Health educators should integrate digital wellness and posture awareness into the school health program.
4. Government and NGOs (YMA, MHIP, etc.) can collaborate to design local campaigns promoting digital balance.
5. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to explore causality between social media use and developmental outcomes.

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