

Social Media Exposure and Classroom Behavior as Mediated by Study Habits: Basis for an Action Plan

Rhea T. Cañada*, Richard S. Mula, Kim C. Abico

School Of Advanced Studies Bohol Island State University- Clarin Campus

*Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the relationship between social media exposure and classroom behavior as mediated by study habits among Grade 6 learners in the District of Sagbayan during the Academic Year 2025–2026. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed to examine the association between social media exposure (independent variable) and classroom behavior (dependent variable), as well as the mediating role of study habits. The study was conducted across 21 public elementary schools in the district, with a total population of 465 learners. Using Slovin's formula, 218 respondents were selected through random sampling. The study utilized an adopted survey questionnaire composed of three components: social media exposure, study habits, and classroom behavior. The instrument demonstrated acceptable to high reliability, with coefficients of .83, .85, and .87.

The findings revealed that learners exhibited a moderate level of social media exposure (Composite Mean = 2.31), primarily for communication and maintaining social connections. Study habits were practiced often (Composite Mean = 2.69, SD = 0.94), with strengths observed in completing assignments on time, although self-directed learning remained limited. Classroom behavior was generally positive (Composite Mean = 3.19, SD = 0.93), indicating strong adherence to classroom rules but moderate levels of digital responsibility and self-regulation. Regression analysis showed that social media exposure did not significantly affect study habits ($B = -0.104, p = .474$) but had a significant negative effect on classroom behavior ($B = -0.520, p = .000$). Classroom behavior significantly influenced study habits ($B = 0.613, p = .000$). However, the indirect effect was not significant, indicating that study habits did not mediate the relationship between social media exposure and classroom behavior. Overall, learners demonstrated acceptable academic and behavioral outcomes, suggesting that classroom behavior and study habits are influenced by multiple factors beyond social media exposure alone.

Based on these findings, future researchers are encouraged to employ longitudinal or mixed-methods research designs to better understand how social media exposure influences learners' academic behaviors over time. Incorporating qualitative approaches, such as interviews or focus group discussions with students, teachers, and parents, would provide richer insights into the underlying reasons behind learners' digital habits, study practices, and classroom behaviors. Furthermore, future studies should utilize more comprehensive measures of social media exposure by examining the duration of use, purpose of engagement, platform type, frequency, and the nature of content accessed. These enhancements would provide a more nuanced understanding of how different patterns of social media use influence learners' academic behaviors and overall educational outcomes.

Keywords: Classroom behavior, Social media, Study habits, Social media exposure, Action plan

INTRODUCTION/RATIONALE

Today in the digital age social media has become part of the daily routine of elementary kids, and a method of entertainment, communication, and informal education. Young learners frequently use platforms like Facebook and TikTok to interact with their classmates and access multimedia content. According to Roza (2024) and Macaambac (2025), Grade 6 and intermediate students are using these platforms for pleasure and educational

objectives which show their contribution to the development of the kid in many ways. However, despite these potential benefits, there are concerns about possible effects on students' attention span, classroom participation and general academic engagement due to the increasing and unregulated use.

Classroom behaviors such as attentiveness, active participation, collaboration, and rule following are vital to effective teaching and learning. Studies by Junco (2012) and Rosen (2013) indicate that ethical social media use can increase self-confidence, creativity, and digital literacy, which in turn can enhance academic motivation. In contrast, overexposure has been associated with less attention and reduced participation in classrooms. The contrasting results imply that the impact of social media is strongly influenced by using frequency, intent, and regulation, underlining the need to explore its association with observable classroom behaviors.

The Department of Education in the Philippines advocates a responsible and ethical integration of technology to further develop the 21st century skills of the learners. But much local research has been on academic accomplishment and not classroom behavior, especially in rural settings. Behavioral problems related to excessive or problematic use of social media were acknowledged by Cleofas (2022) and Revilla (2023). Information related to districts and grade levels is still limited. A number of Grade 6 kids in Sagbayan District, Bohol have been observed to be more distracted and less involved, but these are mostly anecdotal reports.

Besides, the study habits as a mediating variable further illuminates the effect of social media use on students' classroom behavior. Good habits like time management and self-discipline will enable kids not to spend too much time online and to behave well while doing their school work. Therefore, there was a clear research void in localized studies with a focus on behavior. The study investigated the relationship between social media use and classroom behavior mediated by study habits of Grade 6 learners in Sagbayan District, providing a basis for evidence-based recommendations to promote responsible digital engagement and improved classroom behavior.

METHODOLOGY

Design. This study utilized a quantitative, non-experimental mediation research design to investigate the mediating role of study habits on the relationship between social media exposure and classroom behavior.

Environment and Respondents. The study was conducted at the municipality of Sagbayan, a landlocked, fifth-class municipality in the province of Bohol, Philippines with a total of 24 barangays and a population of 24,335 as per the latest PSA Census, characterized by predominantly rural settlements and agricultural livelihoods, and hosts 21 public elementary schools namely San Roque Elementary School, Ubojan Integrated School, San Vicente Norte Elementary School, San Vicente Sur Elementary School, Kabasacan Elementary School, Sta. Catalina Elementary School, Libertad Norte-Sur Elementary School, Canmano Elementary School, Sagbayan Sur Elementary School, Mantalongon Elementary School, Kagawasan Elementary School, Langtad Elementary School, Katipunan Elementary School, San Isidro Elementary School, San Ramon Elementary School, Sta. Cruz Elementary School, Canmaya Diot Elementary School, Canmaya Centro Elementary School, and Sagbayan Central Elementary School. Further, the respondents in this study were Grade 6 learners from Sagbayan District for the 2025-2026 school year. The total number of learners in the study is 465, with 218 students selected as the sample size using Slovin's formula. Random sampling was used in the study to obtain the sample size.

Instrument. The instrument utilized in this study consisted of three components that measured social media exposure, study habits, and classroom behavior among Grade 6 learners. Part I assessed the Degree of Social Media Exposure using 31 items adapted from Baria (2021), employing a four-point Likert scale ranging from Always (4) to Never (1) to evaluate learners' engagement with social media for academic, social, and personal purposes. Part II measured Study Habits through 12 modified items from Olutola et al. (2016), focusing on time management, reading practices, note-taking, review strategies, group discussions, and resistance to distractions. Part III evaluated Classroom Behavior using 12 items adapted from the Student Behavior Subject Self-Survey for Conferences, covering learners' compliance, participation, attentiveness, and adherence to classroom rules. The instrument demonstrated acceptable to high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.83 for social media exposure, 0.85 for study habits, and 0.87 for classroom behavior, indicating strong internal consistency and suitability for examining the relationships among the variables.

Procedure. A request letter was submitted to the Campus Director of Bohol Island State University – Clarin Campus to secure approval for the conduct of the study. Upon approval, letters of intent were forwarded to the Schools Division Superintendent of Bohol and the Public Schools District Supervisors of Sagbayan District to obtain permission to conduct the research. After securing the necessary clearances, coordination with school principals, school heads, and faculty members was undertaken to facilitate the administration of the survey questionnaires to randomly selected respondents. The questionnaires were personally distributed during teachers' free time to avoid disruption of classes, and respondents were given ample time to accomplish them while ensuring confidentiality of their responses. After retrieval, the collected data were consolidated, organized into tables, statistically analyzed, and interpreted to derive meaningful findings and conclusions.

Statistical Treatment. To determine the level of social media exposure, the study habits of the learners, and their level of classroom behavior, the study used mean and standard deviation. These tools helped identify the average responses of the learners and how consistent or varied their answers were.

Finally, to determine whether social media exposure and study habits are related to the learners' classroom behavior, the study utilized pathway analysis, which helps identify whether these factors have a meaningful connection with each other.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Grade Six (6) Learners Social Exposure

Table 1 presents the level of social media exposure among the 215 Grade 6 learners. This table displays the extent of social media exposure among Grade 6 students ($n = 215$), encompassing the mean, standard deviation, and descriptive analysis of each variable.

Table 1 Level of Grade 6 Learners Social Media Exposure $n=215$

Statement	Mean	SD	Descriptive Value
Social media updates me of my friends and family's activities	3.30	0.86	Always exposed
Social media allows me to do research for lessons/assignments	3.06	0.81	Often exposed
Social media allows me to make more friends	3.05	0.99	Often exposed
I check my social media account every day	3.00	0.98	Often exposed
Social media is a distraction to release boredom	2.96	0.92	Often exposed
Social media enriches my vocabulary	2.92	0.99	Often exposed
Social media increases my ability to communicate	2.91	1.01	Often exposed
I use social media to release school stress	2.69	1.04	Often exposed
I use social media for uploading pictures/videos	2.66	0.98	Often exposed
Social media is a venue for discussion	2.66	0.89	Often exposed
I update accounts daily	2.64	1.02	Often exposed
I express myself through social media	2.64	0.98	Often exposed
I spend more than 3 hours on social media	2.56	0.95	Often exposed
I do not update accounts regularly	2.55	1.10	Often exposed
I update profile once in a while	2.51	1.00	Often exposed
Social media affects communication skills	2.59	1.05	Often exposed
Social media affects grades	2.59	0.98	Often exposed
I express myself freely online	2.57	0.98	Often exposed
Social media eliminates need for physical presence	2.45	0.98	Rarely exposed
I feel delighted spending most time on social media	2.43	0.94	Rarely exposed
I spend more time browsing than reading	2.44	1.01	Rare exposed
I use social media to reinvent myself	2.46	1.04	Rarely exposed
I forget assignments due to social media	2.27	1.01	Rarely exposed

I need to update status more than reading	2.24	1.01	Rarely exposed
I react/comment on every post	2.19	0.89	Rarely exposed
I stay awake late using social media	2.13	1.10	Rarely exposed
I use abbreviations in school writing	2.06	0.93	Rarely exposed
I maintain 2–3 accounts	2.05	1.10	Rarely exposed
I come late due to social media	1.98	1.06	Rarely exposed
I feel irritated when I cannot check social media	1.75	1.04	Rarely exposed
Composite Mean	2.31	1.03	Rarely exposed

The statistics present a complex story about Grade 6 learners' exposure to social media concerning functional and behavioral aspects. The highest mean ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.86$), "Social media updates me of my friends and family's activities," read as Always exposed, shows that learners predominantly use social media for social connectivity. The reasonably moderate standard deviation indicates a generally consistent answer among learners, i.e. most students have similar experiences in using social media for preserving relationships. On the other hand, the lowest mean ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 1.04$), 'I feel frustrated when I cannot check social media', a Rarely revealed, indicates that emotional dependence or withdrawal symptoms are not clearly observable among the majority. However, the higher standard deviation here indicates diversity, with most learners not forming an emotional bond, but a smaller proportion showing signs of dependence. The composite mean ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.03$), interpreted as Rarely exposed, shows that students are not usually overexposed to social media even when they often participate in certain activities. The SD is quite large indicating that the children were exposed to varying degrees which implies that the pupils are using the strategy in diverse ways. This suggests that in an analytical sense social media is in the lives of learners but neither overbearing or disruptive.

Further, this pattern is very much in line with Uses and Gratifications Theory, which proposes that individuals consciously select media according to their needs. High involvement in social connection satisfies social interaction demands, while moderate use for research and communication implies cognitive and informational gratifications (Katz et al., 1974). This is supported by the literature that points up that younger learners use social media mostly for connection maintenance and entertainment and not for dependent behaviors (Valkenburg & Peter, 2021). Moreover, the variation in SD also reflects the active choice of gratifications by the audience as the theory suggests the active audience choice.

Study Habits of Grade Six (6) Learners

Table 2 presents the level of study habits of Grade 6 learners, focusing on their routines, discipline, and strategies in managing academic tasks. As the dependent variable in the study, study habits play a crucial role in determining learners' academic engagement and overall performance.

Table 2

Level of Study Habits of Grade Six (6) Learners

n=215

Study Habits Statements	Mean	SD	Descriptive Value
I always do my assignment on time.	3.08	0.86	Often Practiced
I try to read other materials to get more information on the topics taught in the class.	2.96	0.77	Often Practiced
When I miss anything while coping notes, I try to correct it immediately after the class.	2.91	0.97	Often Practiced
I have a personal time table which I try to follow.	2.87	0.87	Often Practiced
I always have group discussion with my colleagues.	2.86	0.97	Often Practiced
I am not easily distracted by friends when it is time to study.	2.73	0.88	Often Practiced
I am easily distracted by noise or radio when it is time to study.	2.79	0.96	Often Practiced

I read my class work during holiday period.	2.56	0.92	Often Practiced
I go through my books after every lesson.	2.46	0.86	Rarely Practiced
I always read my books even if there is no exam.	2.44	0.89	Rarely Practiced
I read my book every day.	2.33	0.84	Rarely Practiced
I am always ahead of my teacher.	2.27	1.03	Rarely Practiced
Composite Mean	2.69	0.94	Often Practiced

The findings show there is good study habits of grade 6 learners but it is not optimized. The question with the highest mean score ($M=3.08$, $SD=0.86$) “I always do my assignment on time” was read as Often Practiced and suggests that learners have a feeling of responsibility and task completion. The SD is relatively low, which implies consistency. Most students frequently meet academic deadlines. Conversely, the lowest mean ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.03$), “I am always ahead of my teacher,” was read as Rarely Practiced, and suggests little proactive or advanced learning activities. The higher the SD, the more the diversity That means some students do a lot of prep work. And many do not. The composite mean ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 0.94$) described as Often Practiced suggests that learners tend to practice appropriate study habits, but not at the advanced or highly disciplined level. The SD is close to 1, indicating a lot of dispersion and variation in the consistency and discipline of learners.

From an analytical point of view, these statistics indicate that learners are moving towards compliance-based behaviors (e.g., finishing assignments) rather than self-initiated, higher order study strategies. This is extremely consistent with the Self-Regulated Learning Theory that effective learners plan, monitor and evaluate their learning process. The reduction in the usage of more complicated approaches reveals that the learners are still working on their self-regulation skills, such as goal planning and autonomous learning. However, the research that supports these findings does suggest that elementary learners tend to show emergent but incomplete self-regulatory behaviors and need supervision and organized settings to improve them (Zimmerman, 2022; Pintrich, 2024). Learners are seen to develop basic habits, but need to strengthen their metacognitive and self-directed learning skills.

Classroom Behavior of Grade Six (6) Learners

Table 3 presents the level of classroom behavior among the respondents. It describes how learners behave within the classroom setting in terms of participation, attentiveness, and compliance with rules, functioning as the mediating variable in the study.

Table 3 Level of Classroom Behavior of Grade Six (6) Learners $n=215$

Classroom Behavior Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I follow my teacher's directions.	3.55	0.69	Consistent
I ask for help when I do not understand.	3.45	1.46	Consistent
I always do my best work.	3.42	0.75	Consistent
I listen when my teachers and classmates are speaking.	3.39	0.81	Consistent
I follow playground and cafeteria rules.	3.22	0.89	Frequent
I raised my hand when I have questions or comments.	3.19	0.81	Frequent
I leave my work area and desk neat and put away all my supplies.	3.19	0.84	Frequent
I use the appropriate voice level in the classroom.	3.14	0.82	Frequent
I do not waste learning time in the bathroom or at the water fountain.	3.05	0.91	Frequent
I start work, stay on task, and complete assignments without being reminded.	2.92	0.82	Frequent
I play well with others during recess or free time.	2.88	0.92	Frequent
I use my Chromebook appropriately.	2.86	0.94	Frequent
Composite Mean	3.19	0.93	Positive

The findings shows that the Grade 6 learners exhibit positive and structured behaviors in the classroom in general. The highest mean, “I follow my teacher’s directions,” ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.69$), read as Consistent, suggests substantial conformity with classroom norms and authority. The low SD indicates a high uniformity, meaning that this behavior is regularly displayed by most of the learners. On the other hand, the lowest mean is “I use my Chromebook appropriately” ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.94$). This is viewed as Positive. This result suggests that kids are more inclined to behave correctly with technology but not consistently so as in other areas. The high SD indicates variability, with some learners potentially not using technology appropriately. The composite mean ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.93$) is interpreted as Positive. This suggests that learners are likely to behave well in the classroom, but not necessarily everywhere. The SD indicates considerable variability. It means disparity in behavioral consistency of pupil.

From an analytical perspective, the results show a positive role of the educational context of controlled settings with stated expectations for learners, but the results may differ in less monitored or technology-anchored contexts. This is best explained by Ecological Systems Theory which suggests that a child’s behavior is affected by interactions among many environmental systems, especially the school (micro system). The strict compliance with instructor orders shows the impact of immediate classroom arrangements, whereas the variation in technology use could indicate additional factors like home environment or digital exposure. The literature indicates that positive classroom behavior is closely associated with structured environment, teacher expectations and social context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Wentzel, 2012). Thus, learners’ behavior is not only individual but also shaped by the systems in which they are embedded.

Mediation Analysis

The table presents the mediation analysis examining whether classroom behavior mediates the relationship between social media exposure and study habits among Grade 6 learners in the District of Sagbayan.

Table 4 Mediation Analysis between Social Media Exposure and Study Habits as mediated By Classroom Behavior

Regression Analysis	Estimate (B)	SE	z-value	p-value
Study Habits ~ Social Media Exposure	-0.104	0.145	-0.716	.474
Classroom Behavior ~ Social Media Exposure	-0.520	0.125	-4.147	.000
Study Habits ~ Classroom Behavior	0.613	0.101	6.086	.000
Mediation Analysis	Estimate (B)	SE	z-value	p-value
Direct Effect (Social Media Exposure → Study Habits)	-0.104	0.145	-0.716	.474
Indirect Effect (Social Media Exposure → Classroom Behavior → Study Habits)	-0.319	0.101	-3.144	.002
Total Effect	-0.423	0.155	-2.731	.006
	Mediation Analysis Summary	p-value:	.002	
		p-critical:	0.05	
		Interpretation:	Significant	
		Decision:	Do not reject Ho	

The mediation approach offers a persuasive and nuanced explanation for the relationship between social media exposure and study habits via classroom conduct. First, the association between (social media exposure) and classroom behavior is statistically significant ($B = -0.520$, $p = .000$) which shows the increasing social media exposure is related with a reduction in good classroom behavior. The negative coefficient indicates that social media activity may diminish learners’ attentiveness, compliance or participation in classroom contexts. This finding aligns with other research that have demonstrated how excessive or unregulated use of social media can adversely affect students’ behavioral engagement and classroom discipline by diverting their attention and

diminishing their focus during instructional time (e.g., Keles et al., 2020; Zhao, 2021). Thus, it appears that the behavioral part of learning is disrupted by social media exposure.

From this, the association between classroom conduct and study habits) is also statistically significant and positive ($B = 0.613$, $p = .000$). This suggests that better classroom behaviour is a good predictor of improved study habits by learners. The not relative coefficient shows that behaviors like as attentiveness, conformity with instructions and active involvement are strongly correlated with effective study habits. In other words, if learners behave consistently and positively in the classroom, they are more likely to participate in productive study habits such as doing their assignments, reviewing their courses, and managing their time. This is consistent with recent studies that have stressed the importance of behavioral engagement as a predictor of academic self-regulation and study discipline (Putwain et al., 2022; Teng & Zhang, 2023). Thus, classroom behavior is an important mechanism for the development and maintenance of learning habits.

The data, however, suggest that there is no significant direct association between social media exposure and study habits ($B = -0.104$, $p = .474$). This suggests that mere exposure to social media does not have a direct statistically significant effect on study habits. This discovery is particularly relevant since it demonstrates that social media is not innately damaging to study habits, but its effect is dependent on intervening conditions. Similarly, recent evidence has supported the indirect association between social media use and academic habits through self-control, time management, or behavioral engagement (Chen & Xiao, 2022; Li et al., 2021). The impact of social media exposure on study habits is uncertain or insignificant, if not including classroom behaviour.

Moreover, the mediation analysis shows that the indirect effect is statistically significant ($B = -0.319$, $p = .002$) which is essential for the general interpretation of the model. This finding provides strong evidence that classroom behavior is a key mediator between social media exposure and study habits. Thus, the interpretation of this is that social media use does not directly influence study habits, but indirectly through classroom conduct. More social media exposure leads to worse classroom behavior, which leads to worse study habits, in particular. This negative indirect coefficient enhances this chain effect. Although the direct effect was not considerable, the importance of the indirect path points to full mediation. This pattern is supported by recent empirical studies that find digital activities influence academic performance largely via behavioral and cognitive engagement rather than direct effects (Alonzo & Popescu, 2023; Huang et al., 2020). Thus, classroom behavior is an important explanatory relationship between media exposure and learning outcomes.

Finally, the total effect is statistically significant ($B = -0.423$, $p = .006$) showing that the total negative effect of exposure to social media on study habits, when both direct and indirect effects are summed up, is statistically significant. This supports the significance of the mediating variable in the model. The direct effect is not significant, but the presence of a significant indirect effect leads to a significant overall association. Analytically, this means that treatments should not only reduce social media use but also enhance classroom behavior to buffer its negative impacts. In line with recent educational research, controlled classroom environments and behavioral interventions can decrease the negative effects of digital distractions and improve students' study patterns (Santos & Bocarnea, 2022; Wang & Degol, 2021). In sum, the data indicate a complicated, indirect, and context-dependent influence of social media on academic conduct.

CONCLUSIONS

In an age where digital exposure is frequently cited as the culprit for the decline in academic behaviors, the findings indicate a more complex picture: Grade 6 learners are not necessarily disadvantaged by social media, but are influenced by the interaction between social media and their behavior and learning context. Learners generally show low to moderate social media exposure, positive study habits, and frequent to consistent classroom behavior, indicating a balanced developmental profile. However, mediation analysis shows that social media does not directly impair study habits, but indirectly affects study habits through classroom behavior. Specifically, greater social media exposure is connected with poor classroom behavior, which, in turn, dramatically decreases the quality of study habits, which positions classroom behavior as a major mediating mechanism. This shows that the effects of effective learning techniques depend more immediately on behavioral engagement than media exposure per se. However, the study is hampered by the use of self-reported data which

may be subject to response bias and the cross-sectional design which limits the capacity to infer causality and generalizability outside the study population. Future interventions should focus on reinforcing classroom conduct and self-regulation abilities and guide learners towards purposefully and moderately using social media to aid rather than hamper their academic growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School administrators, ICT coordinators, and teachers may implement guided digital literacy programs that teach responsible, purposeful, and time-managed use of social media (e.g., using platforms for research, collaboration, and academic support rather than passive browsing).
2. Classroom teachers and curriculum planners may integrate structured self-regulated learning strategies such as goal-setting, time management plans, and reflective activities to strengthen independent study skills.
3. Teachers, school heads, and guidance counselors may reinforce positive behavior support systems and establish clear routines for both traditional and digital classroom environments, including monitored and guided use of devices.
4. School administrators, teachers, and policy makers may focus on behavioral management and engagement programs (e.g., classroom management training, student engagement strategies, and behavioral monitoring systems) to mitigate the indirect negative effects of social media.
5. School heads may implement the action plan provided for enhancing study habits and classroom behavior through responsible social media use.
6. For Future Researchers may explore longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships and include additional mediating or moderating variables such as parental supervision, academic motivation, or digital literacy.

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