



Mirror or Magnifying Glass? Exploring the Impact of Negative Social Media Comments on Student Self-Worth

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ABSTRACT

Social media is a central part of modern life, offering students a platform for self-expression and connection with others. However, the study addresses the challenge of how negative comments on personal posts impact students' self-worth and explores the coping strategies they employ to navigate such experiences. The study employed a narrative inquiry design conducted at San Isidro College to explore students' experiences of negative social media comments. Eight participants were purposively selected using criterion sampling, and data were collected through in-depth interviews guided by a validated questionnaire. The study found that negative comments on social media deeply affect students' self-worth, leading to low self-esteem, social anxiety, appearance-based insecurities, and emotional distress. In response, students employ coping strategies such as seeking emotional support, fostering self-motivation, taking social media hiatuses, and dismissing criticism. These findings highlight the dual nature of social media as both a source of vulnerability and an opportunity for resilience and self-growth.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, serving as a powerful tool for communication, information dissemination, and community building (Chua & Luyun, 2019). Social media platforms allow individuals to interact with friends, family, and broader communities regardless of geographical boundaries. These platforms also provide opportunities for self-expression and creativity, enabling users to share their thoughts, experiences, and achievements with diverse audiences (Dimaculangan, 2024). Essentially, social media plays a pivotal role in shaping contemporary social interactions and fostering a sense of belonging among its users.

Despite its many benefits, social media has also introduced challenges that can negatively impact users' well-being (Hadjirul et al., 2024). Among these challenges is the issue of negative interactions, such as harmful comments on personal posts, which can significantly affect individuals' perceptions of themselves. For students who are often navigating critical stages of identity formation and self-esteem development, exposure to such negativity can be particularly damaging (Ombayan et al., 2025).

While existing studies have explored the general effects of social media on mental health and self-esteem, there is still a noticeable gap in understanding the specific impact of negative comments on students' self-worth. Much of the current research tends to focus on broader issues such as cyberbullying or social media addiction, leaving out the everyday, less extreme, but still harmful experiences students face through negative feedback on their posts. Additionally, most studies rely heavily on surveys or self-reported data, which may not fully capture the emotional and behavioral responses students develop in real-time (Rasheed et al., 2020; Keles et al., 2020).

There is limited research that looks closely at how students cope with these comments in context, including the strategies they use and how effective those strategies are in preserving their self-esteem. Furthermore, few studies have used a combined approach involving interviews, direct observation, and social media log analysis to deeply understand both the emotional and behavioral dimensions of this experience. This lack of detailed, contextualized investigation highlights the need for further research that goes beyond general patterns to examine the lived experiences of students navigating negative social media interactions.

The study seeks to explore the effects of negative comments on students' self-worth, particularly focusing on personal posts shared on social media platforms.

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the impact of negative comments on personal social media posts on the self-worth of students. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the effects of negative comments on personal social media posts on students' self-worth?
2. What coping strategies do students employ in response to negative comments on their personal posts on social media?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study anchors social comparison theory and social influence theory as its theoretical framework. The Social Comparison Theory (Wheeler, 2024) posits that individuals evaluate their abilities, opinions, and worth by comparing themselves to others. In the context of social media, where curated and idealized content is prevalent, students may engage in frequent comparisons. This study explores how negative comments on personal posts might exacerbate feelings of inadequacy or low self-worth by amplifying these unfavourable comparisons.

Social Influence Theory (Liu et al., 2020) examines how individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours are shaped by their interactions with others. This theory highlights the power of normative and informational influence, where individuals conform to social expectations or accept information from others as a basis for their self-concept. Social media amplifies these dynamics by providing a platform for public feedback, where negative comments can serve as a form of normative influence that challenges a student's self-image.

The study anchors that Social Comparison Theory explains the internal processes triggered by social media interactions, while Social Influence Theory accounts for the external pressures and feedback that shape these experiences. Concurrently, these frameworks offer a comprehensive lens to analyze how negative comments impact students' self-worth.

Student Engagement in Social Medial Platforms

Students today, particularly from Generation Z (Giray, 2022) and millennials (Velasco, 2020), are among the most active users of social media platforms (Reyes et al., 2018). These platforms are essential for communication (Superio et al., 2021), entertainment (Gagalang, 2022), learning (Barrot, 2022), and self-expression (Lazo & Ramos, 2022). Students engage in activities such as sharing personal experiences, consuming educational content, networking with peers, and participating in trending discussions (Datu et al., 2018). The accessibility and visual appeal of platforms make them particularly popular among younger users, fostering a dynamic environment where students can explore their identities and connect with diverse communities (Cleofas et al., 2022).

Positive engagement on social media includes opportunities for students to build relationships, collaborate on academic projects, and access information that supports their personal growth (Valdez et al., 2020). Social media also allows students to showcase their talents, celebrate achievements, and find like-minded individuals who share their interests and values (Hontiveros, 2022; Abiera, 2024). However, these platforms are not without challenges. Negative engagement arises when students encounter cyberbullying, trolling, or exclusion, often leading to feelings of isolation, stress, and diminished self-esteem (Rasheed et al., 2020; Keles et al., 2020). The culture of "likes" and validation can further contribute to pressure and anxiety among students, mainly when their content does not receive the expected level of attention (Oducado et al., 2019; Tadena et al., 2020).

Social media engagement is a double-edged sword for students, offering enriching and detrimental experiences (Chua & Luyun, 2019; Dimaculangan, 2024; Hadjirul et al., 2024; Ombayan et al., 2025). While it enables students to

cultivate connections and access resources, it exposes them to potential harm through negative interactions and unrealistic comparisons (Giray et al., 2024). Understanding this dual nature is crucial for addressing how social media shapes students' self-worth, particularly in light of the complex dynamics of modern digital interactions.

Self-Worth and Social Media

Social media significantly influences students' self-worth by acting as a mirror through which they perceive value (Reyes et al., 2023). These platforms' apparent and interactive nature means that students often measure their self-esteem based on feedback, such as likes, comments, and shares (Ipong et al., 2023; Abellana et al., 2024). Positive peer reinforcement can boost their confidence, affirming their sense of belonging and identity (Bautista, 2024; Canonigo et al., 2024; Hadjirul et al., 2024). However, the absence of validation or exposure to negative comments can have the opposite effect, leading to self-doubt, insecurity, and a lowered sense of self-worth (Ombayan et al., 2025).

The curated and competitive social media environment exacerbates these effects, as students frequently compare themselves to others who appear more successful, attractive, or socially connected (Digamon et al., 2020; Cortez, 2021). This constant comparison can erode self-esteem, especially for students still developing their identities and emotional resilience (Estrada et al., 2019; Sia et al., 2023). Social media's dual role as a source of validation and vulnerability highlights the critical need to explore its impact on self-worth, particularly in addressing the consequences of negative interactions and fostering healthier online behaviors.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sampling Method

The study utilized a narrative inquiry design (Clandinin, 2023) to explore students' lived experiences regarding the impact of negative social media comments on their self-worth. Narrative inquiry focuses on capturing participants' personal stories, allowing a deeper understanding of their experiences and emotions in the context of social media interactions. This approach provides rich, detailed accounts that reveal the complexities of how negative feedback affects self-perception. The study was conducted at San Isidro College (SIC), which provides a supportive environment for understanding the complexities of students' experiences, making it an ideal setting for this research.

The study employed criterion sampling (Schreier, 2018) to select participants who met specific characteristics aligned with the study's objectives. The criteria included: 1) active social media users with a verified account; 2) spending at least four (4) hours daily on social media; 3) posting personal content at least three (3) times weekly; and 4) having received negative feedback on their posts. These refined criteria ensured the inclusion of individuals most likely to provide relevant insights into the phenomenon under investigation. The study involved eight (8) participants from the "*Weekly Kamustahan*" program of the Peer Counselors Club (PCC) of San Isidro College.

Data Gathering and Research Procedures

Before initiating the study, the researchers obtained the necessary permissions from institutional authorities at SIC. Subject-matter experts rigorously validated a questionnaire to align with the study's objectives and ensure reliability and relevance. This preparatory phase ensured that the tools and processes were robust and capable of effectively capturing the desired data.

Data were collected through in-depth personal interviews (Deterding & Waters, 2021), allowing participants to share their experiences and reflections freely and in detail. The researchers followed ethical protocols, including securing informed consent from participants, ensuring their voluntary participation, and explaining the purpose and confidentiality measures of the study. The process adhered to the institution's ethical standards to protect participants' rights and well-being throughout the research.

The interviews, which lasted between twenty (20) and fifty (50) minutes, were conducted with careful consideration of the participants' safety and well-being. The Peer Counselors Club (PCC) guidance facilitator was present throughout the interview sessions to ensure a supportive and secure environment. This presence provided participants with immediate access to professional support should they experience any emotional discomfort while discussing sensitive topics. The structured timing allowed for a thorough exploration of the participants' experiences while respecting their time and comfort levels.

The data collected from interviews were analyzed using narrative analysis and thematic analysis. Narrative analysis (Sharp et al., 2019) was used to reconstruct participants' experiences into coherent stories, highlighting the personal and contextual factors influencing their self-worth. Thematic analysis (Neuendorf, 2018) was employed to identify and categorize recurring patterns and themes related to the impact of negative social media comments. The responses were anonymized to ensure participants' privacy, and stringent data protection measures were implemented to safeguard sensitive information.

RESEARCH RESULT

Negative Comments in Social Media to Students' Self-Worth

Figure 1 illustrated the thematic analysis chart connecting the effects of negative comments on the social media post to students' self-worth. The analysis generated four primary overarching themes, namely *low self-esteem*, *appearance-based criticism*, *socially anxious*, and *emotional distress*. Within each thematic category, subthemes have been recorded and analyzed, observing the effects of negative comments on the social media post to students' self-worth.

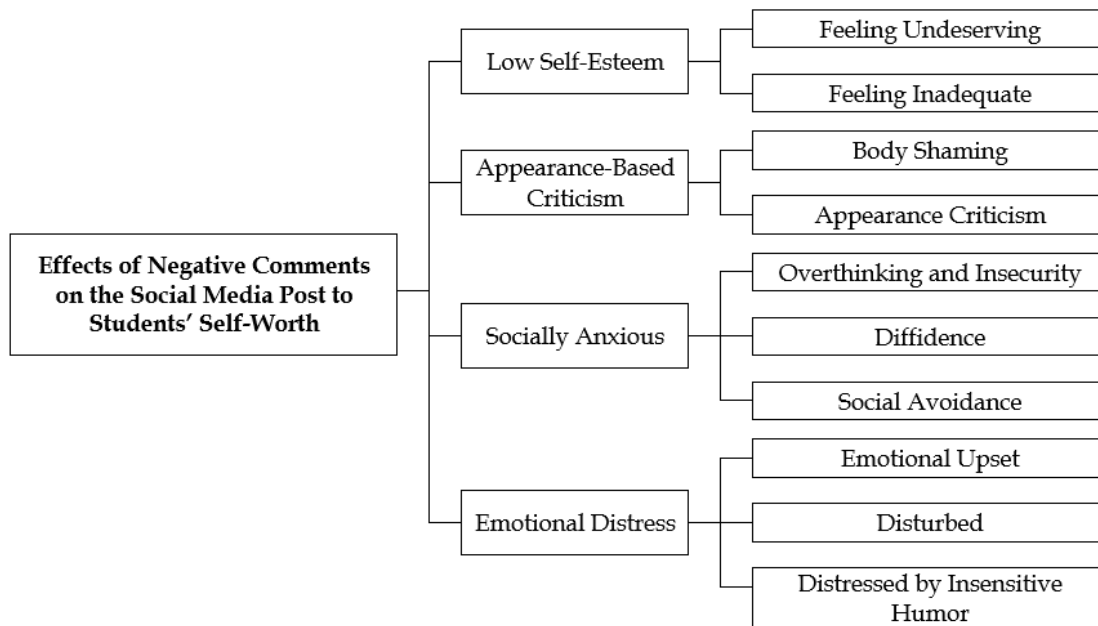


Figure 1. Thematic chart on the effects of negative comments on the social media post to students' self-worth.

The qualitative themes and sub-themes on the effects of negative comments on the social media post to students' self-worth are presented in Matrix 1. In addition, the themes and sub-themes are supported by sample statements of the verbatim responses presented in table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the qualitative themes of the effects of negative comments on the social media post to students' self-worth.

Themes	Sub-Themes	Sample Statements
Low Self-Esteem	Feeling Underserving	"When someone bullied me about my face, I felt unworthy and lowered myself as a person..."
	Feeling Inadequate	"...when someone or others ginasaway ko, pamati nako diko enough, mao na akong gaka feel..." (...when someone or others tease me, I feel that I am not enough, that is what I feel)
Appearance-Based Criticism	Body Shaming	"... 'Tambok na kay ka' [You're getting fat] – those words posted in the comment section made me think that I am not beautiful..."
	Appearance Criticism	"...I remember receiving negative comments about my curly hair ('kulot'). Although it is true, it made me sad..."
Socially Anxious	Overthinking and Insecurity	"...akoang always ginatan aw akoang mga post kung gwapa bako, kay ga overthink nasad ko kung unsay mga comments nasad nga mga sakit akoang madawat..." (...I always look at my post if I think I look beautiful, because I overthink what kind of hurtful comments I will receive...)

Emotional Distress	Diffidence	"...whenever I post a poem that I have created, there is always criticism. It affects my thoughts and emotions, making it difficult to create new poems to post on social media, as people keep commenting negatively..."
	Social Avoidance	"...Ga avoid kos mga people that surrounds me, because of negative comments nga akoang madawatan, kay masakitan rako..." (...I avoid the people around me because of the negative comments I receive, because I know I will just get hurt...)
	Emotional Upset	"...the negative impact on my self-worth and self-esteem is significant. It caused me hurt and pain..."
	Disturbed	"...I feel disturbed, a total disturbance of myself..."
	Distressed by Insensitive Humor	"...I felt hurt when I received negative comments in the past. Although they were stated as jokes, they hurt me because I am a fragile person..."

NOTE: Responses are transcribed verbatim

Coping Strategies of the Students to the Negative Comments

Figure 2 illustrated the thematic analysis chart connecting the coping strategies employed by the students in response to the negative comments on the post in social media. The analysis generated four primary overarching themes, namely seeking emotional support, seeking self-motivation, social media hiatus, and dismissing criticism. Within each thematic category, subthemes have been recorded and analyzed, observing the coping strategies employed by the students in response to the negative comments on the post in social media.

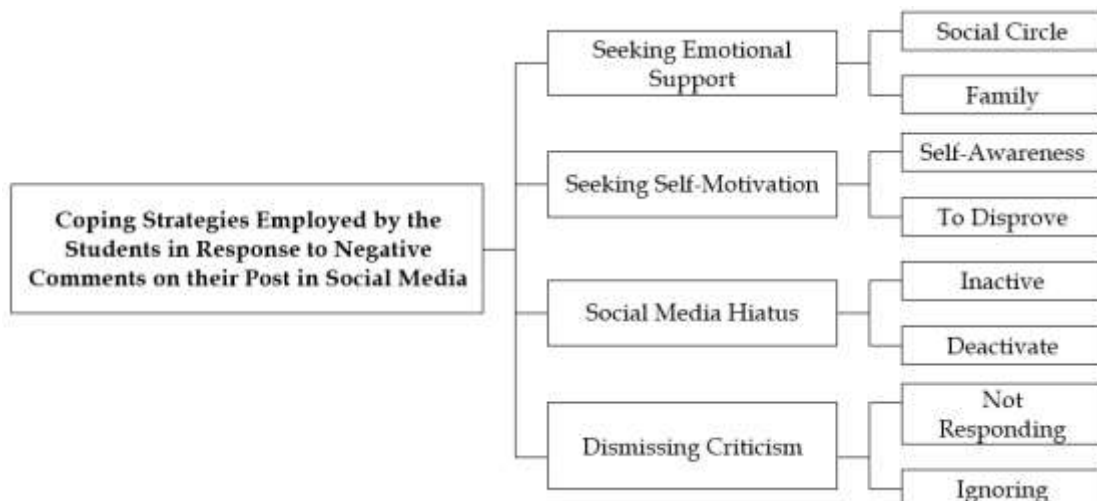


Figure 2. Thematic chart on the coping strategies employed by the students in response to the negative comments on their post in social media.

The qualitative themes and sub-themes on the coping strategies employed by the students in response to the negative comments on the post in social media

are presented in table 2. In addition, the themes and sub-themes are supported by sample statements of the verbatim responses presented in Matrix 2.

Table 2. Summary of the qualitative themes of the coping strategies employed by the students in response to the negative comments on their post in social media.

Themes	Sub-Themes	Sample Statements
Seeking Emotional Support	Social Circle	"...gusto nako mapagawas akoang gibati sa mga tao nga nakapalibot nako ug makapamati sa akong mga drama..." (...I want to express my feelings to the people around me and have them listen to my problems...)
	Family	"...akoa rajung pamilya akong maduolan para tambagan ko ug para ma motivate sad ko..." (...my family is the only one I can turn to for advice and motivation...)
Seeking Self-Motivation	Self-Awareness	"...akoa nalang himoon nga positive sa akoang kaugalingon ang akoang gaka receive ng mga negative comments..." (...I'll try to turn the negative comments I get into something positive for myself...)
	To Disprove	"...gusto nako ipabati nga sayop sila sa pag tan aw sa akoa ug pag hatag ug pasakit sa akoa..." (...I want them to realize that they're wrong for judging me and hurting me...)
Social Media Hiatus	Inactive	"...akoa jud I off [social media] para nakoy kalinaw ug maka reflect ko..." (...I turn it [social media] off so I can have peace and to think things over...)
	Deactivate	"...I deactivate my social media account..."
Dismissing Criticism	Not Responding	"...I did not response [sic]..."
	Ignoring	"...Mangita kog pamaagi nga dili pansinon ang mga comments..." (...I'll try to find a way to ignore the comments...)

NOTE: Responses are transcribed verbatim

DISCUSSION

Negative Comments in Social Media to Students' Self-Worth

Low Self-Esteem

Negative comments on social media posts can significantly undermine students' self-worth, often manifesting as low self-esteem (Cortez, 2021). For many students, repeated exposure to criticism fosters a sense of being undeserving as they begin to internalize negative feedback and perceive it as reflective of their intrinsic value (Reyes et al., 2023; Abellana et al., 2024). This feeling is amplified in digital spaces where interactions are public, and peers can see negative remarks, compounding the sense of shame and unworthiness

(Estrada et al., 2019; Ombayan et al., 2025). Similarly, students may feel inadequate when they perceive their posts or personal attributes as falling short of social standards (Ipong et al., 2023).

The curated nature of social media content intensifies this perception as students compare themselves to others whose lives appear more polished or validated by positive interactions (Digamon et al., 2020; Tadena et al., 2020). These experiences are shaped by external judgments and internalized through self-evaluation processes, creating a cycle where students' self-perception is both shaped and reinforced by negative interactions (Canonigo et al., 2024). These dynamic highlights the powerful influence of social feedback in shaping self-esteem and underscores the psychological toll that negative comments can have on vulnerable individuals (Hadjirul et al., 2024). These dynamic highlights the powerful influence of social feedback in shaping self-esteem and underscores the psychological toll that negative comments can have on vulnerable individuals.

Appearance-Based Criticism

Negative comments targeting a student's appearance on social media can greatly affect their self-worth, mainly when these remarks focus on body shaming or general criticism of physical features (Reyes et al., 2018). Body shaming, where individuals are mocked or ridiculed for their size, shape, or weight, often leads to feelings of humiliation and self-consciousness (Digamon et al., 2020; Tadena et al., 2020). Students subjected to such comments may internalize these judgments, seeing their bodies as flawed or unacceptable compared to societal standards (Keles et al., 2020; Velasco, 2020). Similarly, general appearance criticism, such as derogatory remarks about facial features, clothing choices, or grooming, can erode confidence and heighten insecurities (Oducado et al., 2019).

The constant visibility of idealized appearances on social media exacerbates these effects, as students are prompted to compare themselves to heavily filtered and curated images of peers or influencers (Chua & Luyun, 2019). These negative comments act as a form of external validation that undermines students' self-perception, fostering a reliance on others' opinions to define their self-worth (Ipong et al., 2023; Reyes et al., 2023). This interplay between internal comparisons and external feedback reveals appearance-based criticism's profound impact on a student's mental and emotional well-being.

Socially Anxious

Negative comments on social media posts often lead students to experience heightened social anxiety, characterized by overthinking, insecurity, diffidence, and avoidance of social interactions (Datu et al., 2018; Reyes et al., 2018). Overthinking arises as students repeatedly replay and analyze negative feedback, questioning their actions, words, or posts (Giray et al., 2024). This incessant rumination fosters insecurity as students start doubting their worth and capabilities, often fearing further criticism (Cleofas et al., 2022).

Such feelings contribute to diffidence, making students hesitant to express themselves or engage in social media activities, as they perceive themselves as inadequate or unworthy of attention (Gagalang, 2022). Over time, this cycle may

lead to social avoidance, where students withdraw from online and offline interactions to shield themselves from potential judgment (Estrada et al., 2019; Superio et al., 2021). These behaviors stem from internalizing critical feedback and constant comparison to perceived social norms or expectations (Ombayan et al., 2025). As students adapt their behavior to align with or avoid societal scrutiny, their self-worth becomes increasingly tied to the judgments of others, deepening their social anxiety and diminishing their confidence.

Emotional Distress

Negative comments on social media often result in profound emotional distress for students, manifesting as feelings of emotional upset, a sense of disturbance, and distress caused by insensitive humor (Giray et al., 2024). Emotional upset occurs when students face harsh criticism or unkind remarks that undermine their confidence, leaving them hurt and vulnerable. This emotional toll is exacerbated by the public nature of social media, where the visibility of these comments can amplify feelings of humiliation (Tadena et al., 2020; Cleofas et al., 2022).

The sense of being disturbed arises from disrupting their mental and emotional balance as students grapple with the weight of judgment and struggle to reconcile their self-perception with negative feedback (Abellana et al., 2024; Bautista, 2024; Canonigo et al., 2024). Insensitive humor, such as jokes made at their expense, can intensify this distress, as it not only belittles their experiences but also normalizes the mockery of their vulnerabilities (Estrada et al., 2019; Ipong et al., 2023). These experiences highlight the dual forces of self-evaluation and external validation, where students compare themselves to perceived norms and are influenced by the reactions of others, leading to a compounded impact on their emotional well-being and self-worth.

Effects of Negative Comments on Self-Worth

Negative comments on social media deeply impact students' self-worth by intertwining personal vulnerabilities with the judgments of others. These comments often trigger a cascade of psychological effects, including diminished self-esteem, heightened social anxiety, and profound emotional distress. Students internalize the criticism, perceiving themselves as undeserving or inadequate compared to idealized social media representations. The public nature of these platforms exacerbates the impact, as students become hyper-aware of external feedback, leading to overthinking, diffidence, and avoidance of social interactions.

Appearance-based criticisms, such as body shaming, further intensify these effects by targeting deeply personal aspects of identity, fostering feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. Emotional distress arises as students grapple with feelings of being invalidated or ridiculed, often through insensitive humor that minimizes their struggles. Together, these dynamics illustrate how social media serves as both a mirror and a stage—where students constantly compare themselves to others and adapt their behavior based on external validation, ultimately tying their self-worth to the fluctuating judgments of their digital environment.

Coping Strategies of the Students to the Negative Comments

Seeking Emotional Support

In response to negative comments on social media, students often cope by seeking emotional support from their social circles and family, drawing strength from the reassurance and empathy of those they trust (Velasco, 2020). Turning to friends or peers provides a sense of validation and understanding, as they often share similar experiences or can offer perspective and encouragement (Reyes et al., 2018; Cleofas et al., 2022). This support helps mitigate feelings of inadequacy or isolation, reinforcing a sense of belonging despite external criticism (Hadjirul et al., 2024).

On the other hand, family support serves as a stable foundation, offering unconditional acceptance and guidance that helps students rebuild their confidence (Superio et al., 2021). These interactions counterbalance the unfavorable comparisons and judgments online, as students anchor their self-worth in the affirmations of their immediate community (Hontiveros, 2022; Ombayan et al., 2025). The influence of these support systems highlights how interpersonal relationships can reshape the narratives students construct about themselves, helping them navigate the pressures of social media and regain a more grounded sense of self.

Seeking Self-Motivation

Students often cope with negative comments on social media by seeking self-motivation, which involves cultivating self-awareness and striving to disprove the criticisms they face (Datu et al., 2018; Dimaculangan et al., 2024). Through self-awareness, students reflect on their strengths and values, helping them detach their self-worth from external judgments (Canonigo et al., 2024). This introspection enables them to recognize that negative comments are not definitive of their character or abilities, fostering resilience and a clearer sense of self (Cleofas et al., 2022).

Striving to disprove such comments further bolsters their motivation, as students channel criticism into actionable goals, such as improving their skills or pursuing personal growth (Tadena et al., 2020; Velasco, 2020). This proactive response transforms unfavorable comparisons into opportunities for self-improvement, allowing students to redefine their social identity (Reyes et al., 2018; Superio et al., 2021). The interplay of internal reflection and external actions demonstrates how individuals can navigate social pressures by reframing their experiences, ultimately reinforcing their self-efficacy and diminishing the influence of negative feedback.

Social Media Hiatus

To cope with negative comments on social media, some students choose to take a hiatus by becoming inactive or deactivating their accounts altogether (Barrot, 2022). Temporarily becoming inactive allows students to step back from the digital space, reducing exposure to the criticisms and comparisons that harm their self-worth (Velasco, 2020; Giray et al., 2024). This break gives them time to reflect, heal, and regain emotional stability without the constant pressure of social validation (Chua & Luyun, 2019; Cortez, 2021). Deactivating accounts

represents a more definitive step, as students remove themselves entirely from the platform to disconnect from the source of negativity (Oducado et al., 2019).

By distancing themselves, they create a boundary that protects their mental health and helps them focus on real-world interactions and personal growth (Superio et al., 2021; Hadjirul et al., 2024). Both actions serve as mechanisms to regain control over their self-perception, as the absence of external feedback eliminates opportunities for unfavorable comparisons or social influences to shape their self-view (Reyes et al., 2023; Canonigo et al., 2024; Ombayan et al., 2025). This deliberate withdrawal underscores the importance of reclaiming autonomy in managing the complexities of social media interactions.

Dismissing Criticism

Students often cope with negative comments on social media by dismissing criticism through strategies such as not responding or actively ignoring the remarks (Oducado et al., 2019; Giray et al., 2024). Choosing not to respond allows students to avoid engaging with negativity, preventing further conflict or escalation (Datu et al., 2018; Reyes et al., 2018; Cleofas et al., 2022). This approach helps maintain emotional distance, as students prioritize their well-being over addressing every comment (Superio et al., 2021). Ignoring negative feedback further reinforces this mindset by deliberately shifting attention away from criticism, focusing instead on positive interactions or personal achievements (Valdez et al., 2020).

By refusing to validate harmful comments, students protect their self-esteem and diminish the power such feedback has over their self-perception (Cortez et al., 2021; Sia et al., 2023). This detachment reduces the influence of external judgments, enabling students to resist unfavorable comparisons or the pressure to conform to societal expectations (Reyes et al., 2023; Abellana et al., 2024). By disengaging from negative social influences, they cultivate resilience and assert control over how they define their worth.

Coping Strategies

Among the coping strategies students use to manage negative comments on social media, seeking emotional support and self-motivation are the most positively impactful. Emotional support from friends and family offers immediate reassurance and comfort, helping students feel understood and valued even in the face of online criticism. These close relationships provide consistent encouragement, reminding students of their worth and lessening the emotional burden caused by harsh comments. On the other hand, students who rely on self-motivation develop a stronger sense of independence. By reflecting on their strengths and striving to prove negative comments wrong, they transform criticism into a driving force for growth. This internal process builds confidence and promotes personal development, giving students a stronger foundation for long-term resilience.

In contrast, coping strategies such as social media hiatus and dismissing criticism offer more immediate but temporary relief. Taking a break from social media helps reduce stress and emotional overload, allowing students to recover in private. However, this approach does not always address the root cause of

their emotional reaction, and re-engaging with social media may bring back the same challenges. Dismissing criticism also provides short-term protection by preventing further emotional harm, but it may lead to avoidance rather than reflection. Overall, strategies involving emotional support and self-motivation are more effective in fostering long-lasting confidence and positive self-image, as they involve active engagement and personal growth. These findings show that coping is not just about avoiding harm but also about building strength through meaningful connections and self-awareness.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study reveals that negative comments on social media significantly impact students' self-worth, manifesting through various psychological and emotional responses. Students reported experiencing low self-esteem, heightened social anxiety, appearance-based insecurities, and emotional distress, all of which were influenced by the public and comparative nature of social media interactions. However, the findings also highlight students' resilience as they adopt diverse coping strategies to mitigate these effects. These include seeking emotional support from family and friends, cultivating self-motivation through reflection and self-improvement, temporarily disengaging from social media, and dismissing criticism by reframing their perspectives. These coping mechanisms illustrate the complex interplay between students' internal resilience and external influences in navigating social media challenges.

The study underscores social media's profound role in shaping self-perception and emotional well-being, particularly for students in a highly connected digital age. By understanding social media's dual nature as both a source of harm and an opportunity for growth, the findings provide valuable insights into fostering healthier online environments and promoting strategies to protect and strengthen students' self-worth in the face of adversity.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that institutions could implement programs to enhance students' digital resilience and emotional intelligence. Workshops and peer-support initiatives could help students develop self-awareness and effective coping mechanisms to navigate social media challenges. Additionally, fostering digital literacy programs that emphasize the impact of online interactions can encourage students to engage critically with social media while minimizing its negative effects. Collaboration between educators, parents, and counselors is essential to creating supportive environments where students feel empowered to address negative online experiences constructively.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future studies could examine the long-term effects of repeated negative interactions on social media, especially how they shape students' self-worth, identity, and behavior over time. By observing how students respond to criticism across different stages in their academic or personal lives, researchers can better understand how online negativity contributes to emotional strain or changes in self-perception. Expanding the scope to include different social media platforms and user demographics would also offer a broader view, as the nature and

influence of negative comments may vary depending on cultural backgrounds, age groups, and the specific features of each platform.

To strengthen the accuracy and depth of future research, combining interviews with direct observation and social media log analysis is highly recommended. Interviews provide personal insights into students' emotional responses, while observations can reveal real-time reactions and behaviors that may not be easily expressed through words. Analyzing social media logs adds another layer, helping researchers track actual interactions, patterns, and frequency of negative comments over time. This multi-method approach would give a fuller picture of how students cope, enabling researchers to design better strategies for building digital resilience, improving emotional responses, and promoting healthier online habits.

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