

Reading Attitudes and Competence of Grade 10 Students in the Age of Social Media Microtexts

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between exposure to social media microtexts, reading attitudes, and reading competence among Grade 10 students in the Mobo North District, Division of Masbate Province. The study was anchored on the Limited Capacity for Mediated Message Processing Theory, Schema Theory and Constructivism, and Connectivism, which explain the cognitive, developmental, and social dimensions of reading in digital environments. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed involving 127 Grade 10 students selected through stratified random sampling from a population of 189 learners. Data were gathered using an adapted questionnaire to assess students' exposure to social media microtexts and reading attitudes, while reading competence was measured using the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI). Descriptive statistics, weighted mean, Chi-square test, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, Spearman's rank-order correlation, and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that students were frequently exposed to social media microtexts and generally demonstrated positive reading attitudes; however, most remained at the instructional and frustration levels of reading competence. The results further showed no significant relationship between daily time spent on social media and reading competence, as well as between frequency of exposure to social media microtexts and reading competence. Conversely, a significant positive relationship was found between frequency of exposure to social media microtexts and reading attitudes. The study concludes that while social media microtexts encourage positive reading attitudes, they do not necessarily enhance reading competence. It recommends strengthening guided reading, vocabulary development, comprehension strategies, and the purposeful integration of digital literacy into classroom instruction. The study supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 – Quality Education by providing evidence to improve literacy instruction and SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure by promoting the responsible integration of digital technologies into learning. Its findings contribute to educational and digital sustainability by informing evidence-based reading interventions and supporting collaborative efforts to improve students' literacy development.

Keywords: Connectivism, Grade 10 Students, Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), Reading Attitudes, Reading Competence, Schema Theory, Social Media Microtexts, Students' Exposure to Social Media Microtexts

1. Introduction

Reading engagement among adolescents has declined despite increased access to education and digital technologies. Globally, many learners fail to attain minimum reading proficiency, while digital environments have transformed traditional reading practices into predominantly screen-based interactions characterized by rapid navigation, multimodal processing, and short-form content (UNESCO, 2017; OECD, 2019; 2023; Schleicher, 2020; OECD, 2021). Social media microtexts have become a dominant form of everyday reading, influencing language use, literacy practices, and communication patterns among adolescents (Ezeudo, 2024; Liu, 2021; Leu et al., 2019; Ellen, 2011; Chaturvedi, 2024). Existing studies present mixed evidence, indicating that while microtexts may promote motivation and collaborative literacy, they may also encourage fragmented reading habits and reduced persistence with longer texts (Carr, 2020; Mak and Fong, 2021; Greenhow and Lewin, 2016). In the Philippines, persistent reading challenges reported through national and international assessments underscore the need to examine emerging digital reading behaviors. Despite increasing exposure to social media, limited local evidence explains how microtext exposure relates to students' reading attitudes and reading competence, particularly among junior high school learners. This study therefore investigates the relationships among social media microtext exposure, reading attitudes, and reading competence of Grade 10 students in Mobo North District to provide evidence for strengthening reading instruction in the digital age.

1.1 Background of Social Media Microtexts, Reading Attitudes, and Reading Competence among Grade 10 Learners

Reading proficiency remains a global educational concern despite widespread school participation. UNESCO (2017) identifies a continuing learning crisis in which many learners fail to achieve minimum reading proficiency, while OECD findings reveal persistent declines in reading motivation and performance among adolescents (OECD, 2019; 2023).

Schleicher (2020) further notes that adolescents increasingly spend less time reading for pleasure and demonstrate lower persistence in engaging with extended texts as digital technologies reshape literacy practices. Digital reading has shifted learners from traditional print toward screen-based environments that require navigation across multimodal and hyperlinked content (OECD, 2021). Although digital environments promote new literacy skills such as multimodal interpretation and information evaluation (Leu et al., 2019), they also encourage skimming, selective attention, and frequent task switching, which may limit deep comprehension (Liu, 2021). Within these environments, social media microtexts—including captions, comments, chat messages, and other brief digital texts—have become central to adolescents' daily literacy experiences (Ellen, 2011; Chaturvedi, 2024). While these texts increase exposure to written language, educators continue to observe weak comprehension of sustained academic texts among learners, suggesting a disconnect between frequent digital reading and academic literacy. Research indicates that repeated exposure to short-form texts may influence reading habits and cognitive processing. Carr (2020) argues that frequent engagement with brief texts reduces persistence with longer materials, while Mak and Fong (2021) associate heavy short-form content consumption with fragmented reading strategies and diminished sustained attention. Conversely, Greenhow and Lewin (2016) emphasize that social media can strengthen collaborative literacy, motivation, and multimodal comprehension when used purposefully. Reading attitude remains a critical factor influencing reading behavior and achievement, as motivation and engagement are fundamental components of successful reading development (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Guthrie & Klauda, 2016). Positive attitudes characterized by enjoyment, interest, and perceived value promote reading engagement and comprehension (Guthrie and Klauda, 2016), while PISA findings consistently associate reading enjoyment with stronger academic performance regardless of socio-economic background (OECD, 2019). However, digital environments may either strengthen or weaken reading motivation depending on learners' experiences and the cognitive demands of digital texts (Schiefele et al., 2016; Baron, 2021). These contrasting perspectives have generated continuing debate regarding whether social media microtexts support or undermine reading development. Wolf (2018) argues that continuous exposure to condensed texts weakens the cognitive endurance required for deep reading, whereas Turner and Hicks (2017) suggest that microtexts can effectively promote reading engagement when strategically integrated into classroom instruction. These differing perspectives highlight the need to examine how exposure to social media microtexts relates simultaneously to students' reading attitudes and reading competence.

1.2 Themes and Insights on Social Media Microtexts, Reading Attitudes, and Reading Competence

The reviewed literature consistently identifies three major themes concerning social media microtexts and adolescent literacy. First, studies recognize that social media has fundamentally transformed reading practices by exposing learners to continuous streams of brief digital texts across platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and other online applications, which function as social networking sites that facilitate user-generated content and social interaction (Boyd & Ellison, 2013; Kovalova & Shalman, 2024; Twenge et al., 2018; OECD, 2024). These microtexts promote rapid information access and frequent reading opportunities but differ substantially from conventional academic texts in structure, language, and cognitive demands (Rodríguez Meza & Cedeño, 2022; Ellen, 2011; Chaturvedi, 2024). Second, the literature presents mixed evidence regarding the influence of microtexts on reading attitudes and competence. Positive reading attitudes consistently predict greater reading engagement, comprehension, and academic achievement (Septianingsi & Atmanegara, 2021; Guthrie & Klauda, 2016; Alda et al., 2024). Likewise, several researchers argue that social media functions as an informal learning environment that promotes peer interaction, collaborative learning, vocabulary development, and reading motivation (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Sadha, Novitri, & Syarfi, 2022; Fan, 2022; Zhao & Yang, 2022). Other studies similarly report that digital and multimodal texts can support comprehension when combined with appropriate instructional strategies (Delgado et al., 2022; Fajardo et al., 2022; Salmerón, L., & Lasagabaster, D. (2022)). Conversely, numerous investigations associate excessive social media exposure with fragmented reading habits, reduced attention span, and weaker reading comprehension (Yanti et al., 2022; Rodríguez Meza & Cedeño, 2022; Ermita et al., 2025; Valdez et al., 2024; Dimacangun, 2024; Gulinao et al., 2025). Frequent engagement with highly condensed digital texts may encourage scanning and surface-level processing rather than sustained comprehension (Graganta, 2025; Journal AJL2C, 2024). Third, Philippine studies emphasize that reading competence extends beyond decoding to include vocabulary, inferential reasoning, comprehension, and critical thinking, commonly assessed through the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI Group, 2018). Local research likewise suggests that although Filipino learners frequently engage with social media and often demonstrate favorable reading attitudes, these do not consistently translate into higher reading competence (Gagalang, 2021; Bacang, 2024). Researchers further note that curriculum implementation, instructional practices, digital literacy, and access to learning resources shape whether social media exposure strengthens or weakens literacy development (Abril et al, 2022; Valdez et al., 2024; Marvas, 2024). Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that social media microtexts simultaneously present opportunities and challenges for literacy development. While they may increase reading engagement, incidental reading, and collaborative learning, they may also encourage fragmented reading patterns that affect comprehension of longer academic texts. These contrasting findings underscore the need for context-specific investigation into the relationships among microtext exposure, reading attitudes, and reading competence among Filipino secondary learners.

1.3 Global, National, and Local Context of Social Media Microtexts and Reading Competence among Grade 10 Learners

Globally, declining reading engagement and proficiency have become major educational concerns. International reports indicate that many adolescents continue to struggle with reading comprehension despite increased school participation, while digital technologies have transformed literacy practices from sustained print reading to predominantly screen-based reading (UNESCO, 2017; OECD, 2019; 2023; Schleicher, 2020; OECD, 2021). The widespread use of social media has further intensified exposure to microtexts, requiring learners to process brief, multimodal, and rapidly changing information (Leu et al., 2019; Liu, 2021). At the national level, the Philippines continues to experience significant challenges in reading achievement. The Department of Education, through the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), has consistently reported that many learners remain at instructional or frustration reading levels (DepEd, 2018). Likewise, PISA 2018 and 2022 results reveal that Filipino adolescents continue to experience difficulties in understanding, evaluating, and reflecting on written texts (OECD, 2019; 2023). The EDCOM II Final Report (2026), drawing from the 2025 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM), further emphasizes that a substantial proportion of Filipino learners remain within the lowest proficiency bands in reading. National assessment data likewise indicate declining reading proficiency across grade levels, with many learners performing below expected standards and experiencing cumulative reading difficulties that limit higher-order comprehension and critical thinking (EDCOM II, 2026). Bernardo (2020) attributes these outcomes to persistent challenges in developing both foundational and higher-order literacy skills, while Cabardo (2020) emphasizes the importance of strengthening reading competence during junior high school to prevent continuing literacy difficulties. Although digital literacy has gained increasing attention, Philippine studies continue to report that media literacy and reading comprehension are positively associated among secondary learners, suggesting that strengthening learners' critical engagement with digital texts may contribute to improved literacy outcomes (Abanco et al., 2025; David & Albano, 2022). In the local context of Mobo North District, learners increasingly participate in digitally mediated environments where social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and Messenger dominate daily communication. Widespread access to mobile internet has increased learners' exposure to chat messages, captions, comments, memes, hashtags, and other forms of microtexts (DataReportal, 2024; Philippine Statistics Authority, 2025). Consequently, reading experiences are increasingly characterized by fragmented and fast-paced digital content rather than sustained academic texts. Given the increasing reliance of Filipino adolescents on social media for communication and information (DICT, 2024), examining how exposure to social media microtexts relates to reading attitudes and reading competence is essential for developing evidence-based literacy interventions that integrate digital fluency with academic reading demands.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Basis of Social Media Microtexts, Reading Attitudes, and Reading Competence

This study is anchored on three complementary theoretical perspectives that explain how exposure to social media microtexts may influence students' reading attitudes and reading competence: the Limited Capacity for Mediated Message Processing (LC4MP) by Annie Lang (2000), Schema Theory/Constructivism by David Rumelhart (1980) and Jean Piaget (1952), and Connectivism by George Siemens (2005). The Limited Capacity for Mediated Message Processing (LC4MP) posits that individuals possess limited cognitive resources for processing mediated information (Lang, 2000). Continuous exposure to brief and rapidly changing digital content may overload learners' cognitive capacity, reducing sustained attention and deep comprehension when reading longer academic texts. This perspective supports examining whether frequent exposure to social media microtexts is associated with differences in students' reading competence. Schema Theory and Constructivism explain that comprehension develops as learners connect new information with prior knowledge through assimilation and accommodation (Rumelhart, 1980; Piaget, 1952). Repeated interaction with microtexts may shape learners' cognitive frameworks toward rapid, surface-level processing, while varied reading experiences may also enrich existing schemata and facilitate comprehension. These theories provide a basis for understanding how exposure to digital texts may influence both reading attitudes and reading competence. Connectivism emphasizes that learning occurs through participation in digital networks where individuals interact with information, technology, and other learners (Siemens, 2005). Social media platforms therefore function not only as communication tools but also as learning environments where students read, exchange ideas, and construct knowledge collaboratively. This perspective supports examining how students' engagement with social media microtexts may influence their motivation to read and their literacy development. Collectively, these theories explain the cognitive, developmental, and social dimensions of reading in digital environments. LC4MP accounts for the cognitive demands of continuous microtext exposure, Schema Theory and Constructivism explain how reading experiences shape learners' comprehension processes, while Connectivism emphasizes the role of digital participation in literacy development. Together, these frameworks provide the theoretical foundation for examining the relationships among exposure to social media microtexts, reading attitudes, and reading competence among Grade 10 learners. The study is further guided by a conceptual framework in which students' exposure to social media microtexts serves as the independent variable, measured through daily time spent on social media, most frequently used social media platforms, and frequency of reading microtexts. The dependent variables are reading attitudes and reading competence, with the latter measured using the Phil-IRI assessment. The framework assumes that variations in learners' exposure to social media microtexts may influence their reading dispositions and reading performance within an increasingly digital learning environment. The conceptual paradigm therefore illustrates

the hypothesized relationships between exposure to social media microtexts and the two outcome variables without implying causality. The original figure has been converted into this narrative description.

1.5 Research Gaps on Social Media Microtexts, Reading Attitudes, and Reading Competence among Grade 10 Learners

Despite the growing body of international and Philippine literature on social media, reading habits, and literacy development, several gaps remain. Existing foreign studies primarily examine the influence of digital media and microtexts on reading behavior and comprehension but provide limited evidence specific to Filipino secondary school learners (Twenge et al., 2018; Kovalova & Shalman, 2024; Rodríguez Meza & Cedeño, 2022). Similarly, Philippine studies have documented the effects of social media on reading attitudes and reading performance but seldom investigate the combined relationships among exposure to social media microtexts, reading attitudes, and reading competence using standardized measures such as the Phil-IRI (Gagalang, 2021; Bacang, 2024; Dimacangun, 2024; Ermita et al., 2025). Furthermore, previous research presents inconsistent findings regarding the influence of social media. While several studies report that digital platforms enhance motivation, collaborative learning, and incidental reading opportunities (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016; Sadha, Novitri, & Syarfi, 2022; Zhao & Yang, 2022), others associate excessive exposure with fragmented reading habits, reduced sustained attention, and weaker comprehension of academic texts (Yanti, Zabadi, & Rahman, 2022; Valdez et al., 2024; Ermita et al., 2025). Contextual factors such as platform type, frequency of exposure, digital literacy, and socio-educational environments also remain insufficiently explored among Filipino Grade 10 learners. Accordingly, this study addresses these gaps by examining Grade 10 students' exposure to social media microtexts, their reading attitudes, and their reading competence as measured through the Phil-IRI. It also investigates the relationships among these variables to provide empirical evidence that can inform reading instruction, digital literacy initiatives, and curriculum development in Philippine secondary education.

1.6 Alignment of the Study with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The study aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education, as it examines factors influencing students' reading attitudes and reading competence in an increasingly digital learning environment. By investigating how exposure to social media microtexts relates to literacy development, the study supports efforts to improve reading proficiency, strengthen evidence-based instructional practices, and enhance learning outcomes among junior high school learners. These objectives are consistent with improving inclusive and equitable quality education through effective literacy interventions. The study also relates to SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure because it considers the educational implications of digital technologies and social media as emerging literacy environments. Understanding how learners engage with digital texts may support the development of innovative instructional approaches that integrate technology while promoting academic literacy. Additionally, the findings support SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals by providing evidence that may strengthen collaboration among schools, teachers, parents, educational researchers, and policymakers in designing literacy programs and digital learning initiatives responsive to students' evolving reading practices.

1.7 Contribution of the Study to Educational and Digital Sustainability

This study contributes primarily to educational sustainability by generating evidence on how social media microtexts influence reading attitudes and reading competence among Grade 10 learners. The findings may assist teachers, school administrators, and the Department of Education in strengthening reading interventions, improving instructional strategies, and aligning literacy programs with students' digital reading experiences. The study likewise contributes to technological and digital sustainability by promoting a balanced understanding of digital literacy. Rather than viewing social media solely as a challenge or opportunity, the research provides empirical evidence that may guide the responsible integration of digital platforms into reading instruction while addressing potential effects on sustained academic reading. It also supports community and socio-economic sustainability by emphasizing the shared roles of schools, parents, communities, and educational stakeholders in fostering positive reading habits and literacy development. Strengthening students' reading competence contributes to improved educational outcomes that support lifelong learning and informed participation in society.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationships among students' exposure to social media microtexts, reading attitudes, and reading competence. Quantitative research objectively examines relationships among variables using numerical data analyzed through mathematical procedures (Creswell, 2003; Aliaga and Gunderson, 2002). A descriptive-correlational design describes existing conditions and determines naturally occurring relationships among variables without manipulating them (McBurney & White, 2009; Sousa et al., 2007). Accordingly, the study examined the relationships between students' daily time spent on social media and reading competence, frequency of exposure to social media microtexts and reading attitudes, and frequency of exposure to social media microtexts and

reading competence. Since the study sought to determine relationships rather than establish cause-and-effect, an experimental design was not appropriate.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted among Grade 10 students in the Mobo North District, Division of Masbate Province, where it investigated students' exposure to social media microtexts, reading attitudes, and reading competence within the district's secondary schools.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 127 Grade 10 students selected from a total population of 189 learners enrolled in the Mobo North District. Mobo National High School contributed the largest proportion of respondents, with Herodotus, Einstein, and Jose P. Rizal sections providing the highest representation, while Tugbo Integrated School and Dacu Integrated School each contributed 13 respondents. These participants served as the primary source of data for assessing social media microtext exposure, reading attitudes, and reading competence.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study utilized stratified random sampling, a probability sampling technique that ensured proportional representation of Grade 10 students from different schools and sections despite differences in population size. Probability sampling allows each segment of the population to be represented while reducing sampling bias (Mertens, D. M., 2005). Stratified sampling groups respondents into homogeneous strata before selecting participants proportionately (Parsons, V. L., 2017). The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, an approach applicable when population characteristics are unknown (Ellen, 2022). After determining the required sample size, respondents were selected through simple random sampling, and proportional allocation was applied to ensure that each school and section was represented according to its population.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were collected using an adapted survey questionnaire from Gagalang, J. L. (2022). The instrument comprised two major parts. The first measured students' exposure to social media through daily time spent on social media, most frequently used social media platforms, and frequency of reading social media microtexts. Responses on the frequency of reading microtexts were rated using a five-point scale ranging from 5 – Always to 1 – Never. The second part assessed students' reading attitudes using twenty indicators measured through a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 – Always to 1 – Never. Students' reading competence was determined using secondary data obtained from the Phil-IRI results provided by the schools' respective reading coordinators.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection commenced after the research proposal was approved during the Thesis Outline Defense. Communication letters endorsed by the Thesis Adviser and the Dean of the Graduate School were submitted to the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Masbate Province through the recommendation of the Senior Education Program Specialist (SEPS) for Planning and Research. Upon approval, the researcher administered the survey to the selected respondents. Separate requests were also submitted to the students' advisers to obtain Phil-IRI results. Participants were informed about the nature, purpose, and scope of the study and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Their right to withdraw at any stage of the research and their anonymity were strictly observed. Adequate time was provided for completing the questionnaire, after which the accomplished instruments were retrieved according to an agreed schedule. All collected data were subsequently analyzed using quantitative methods.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency count and percentage were used to describe respondents' daily time spent on social media and their most frequently used social media platforms. Weighted mean measured the extent of students' frequency of reading social media microtexts and their reading attitudes (Bluman, 2009). To determine the relationships among the study variables, the Chi-Square Test was used to examine the relationship between students' daily time spent on social media and reading competence (Pearson, 1900). Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) determined the relationship between students' frequency of exposure to social media microtexts and reading attitudes (Cramer, 1998). Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation measured the relationship between students' frequency of exposure to social media microtexts and reading competence (Spearman, C., 1904). Finally, standard deviation was computed to determine the variability and dispersion of the collected data (Whitley E, Ball J., 2002; Vetter T.R., 2007; Wissing DR, Timm D., 2012).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Students' Exposure to Social Media Microtexts

3.1.1 Daily Time Spent on Social Media

The findings revealed that most Grade 10 students spent 4–6 hours daily on social media (37.01%), followed by 1–3 hours (29.13%) and 7–9 hours (19.69%). Fewer students spent less than one hour (11.02%), while only 3.15% reported spending more than nine hours daily. Overall, nearly 60% of the respondents spent at least four hours each day on social media, indicating substantial exposure to digital environments where microtexts are frequently encountered. These findings indicate that social media has become a significant part of students' daily literacy environment. Frequent exposure to digital platforms supports the observations of Kovalova and Shalman (2024), Twenge et al. (2018), and OECD (2024) that adolescents are increasingly surrounded by short digital texts that often replace extended reading. Likewise, Gagalang (2021) observed that Filipino learners regularly encounter microtexts that shape fragmented reading habits, while Ermita et al. (2025) associated prolonged social media use with shorter attention spans and disrupted reading behaviors. However, Septianingsi and Atmanegara (2021) suggested that positive reading attitudes may also encourage greater reading engagement. These findings emphasize the importance of instructional strategies that help learners transition from frequent microtext reading to deeper academic reading.

3.1.2 Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

The results showed that Facebook was the most frequently used social media platform (84.25%), followed by TikTok (70.87%), YouTube (58.27%), and Instagram (37.80%). Twitter (10.24%) and Snapchat (9.45%) were the least frequently used platforms. These findings suggest that learners primarily engage with digital platforms characterized by continuous exposure to short-form texts, multimedia content, and rapid information exchange. The dominance of Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube supports the findings of Kovalova and Shalman (2024) that these platforms continually expose adolescents to microtexts that shape reading practices. Rodríguez Meza and Cedeño (2022) explained that such environments encourage scanning and skimming rather than deep reading, whereas Greenhow and Lewin (2016) emphasized that social networking sites may also function as informal learning environments when used educationally. Similarly, Gagalang (2021) noted that Filipino learners' frequent use of Facebook and TikTok exposes them to fragmented digital texts that influence their reading attitudes and habits. These findings suggest that educators should capitalize on students' familiarity with these platforms to strengthen academic literacy through meaningful digital reading activities.

3.1.3 Frequency of Reading Social Media Microtexts

The findings indicated that students often read social media microtexts, with a composite mean of 3.65 ($SD = 0.95$). Reading short social media posts received the highest rating ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 0.95$), followed closely by reading posts from friends or influencers for entertainment ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.90$). Reading headlines and summaries, following educational pages, reading comments, sharing useful posts, and participating in short-form discussions were likewise rated "Often," although participation in discussions received the lowest mean ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.98$). Overall, students frequently consumed microtexts but demonstrated greater engagement in passive reading activities than in interactive or educational participation. The moderate standard deviation further indicated variations in students' reading behaviors despite generally high exposure. These findings suggest that students' digital reading habits are largely shaped by entertainment and social interaction rather than active or academic engagement. Frequent reading of short posts supports the observations of Kovalova and Shalman (2024), Twenge et al. (2018), and OECD (2024) that digital environments encourage repeated exposure to condensed texts. Likewise, Gagalang (2021) found that Filipino learners primarily engage with microtexts for recreational purposes. The relatively lower participation in online discussions aligns with Rodríguez Meza and Cedeño (2022), who reported that social media users often favor scanning over deeper engagement, while Ermita et al. (2025) associated fragmented digital reading with surface-level processing. Although Greenhow and Lewin (2016) recognized social media as a potential venue for collaborative learning, the moderate ratings for educational engagement suggest that students have yet to maximize its academic value. Valdez et al. (2024) similarly observed that learners often prioritize entertainment over educational use. These findings highlight the need for instructional approaches that encourage learners to move beyond passive consumption toward critical, reflective, and interactive engagement with digital texts.

3.2 Reading Attitudes and Reading Competence

3.2.1 Students' Positive Reading Attitudes

The findings showed that Grade 10 students generally manifested positive reading attitudes, with a composite mean of 3.58 ($SD = 1.04$), interpreted as "Often." The highest-rated indicator was enjoying sharing what they had read ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.05$), followed by being happy to learn new things through reading and being comfortable reading aloud in class (both $M = 3.65$). Conversely, the lowest-rated indicator was consulting other references when needed ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.06$), while valuing reading, enjoying lengthy literary texts, and appreciating teacher-assigned reading tasks also received comparatively lower ratings. Overall, students demonstrated stronger positive attitudes toward social, expressive, and interest-driven reading than toward independent and academically demanding reading activities. The overall variability of responses ($SD = 1.04$) indicated differences in students' reading attitudes across various reading contexts. These findings

suggest that students are more motivated when reading involves interaction, communication, and shared experiences than when it requires prolonged independent engagement. This pattern supports Septianingsi and Atmanegara (2021), who emphasized that emotional and behavioral factors strongly influence reading attitudes, particularly when reading is socially meaningful. Similarly, Greenhow and Lewin (2016) noted that interaction within digital environments enhances students' motivation and engagement with texts, while Gagalang (2021) observed that Filipino learners respond more positively to interactive reading activities. Conversely, the relatively lower ratings for consulting additional references, reading lengthy texts, and engaging in academic reading reflect weaker dispositions toward sustained reading. Rodríguez Meza and Cedeño (2022) explained that repeated exposure to brief digital content may reduce learners' motivation for extensive reading, whereas Ermita et al. (2025) associated fragmented digital reading environments with decreased attention to prolonged academic materials. Likewise, Valdez et al. (2024) and Twenge et al. (2018) observed that frequent exposure to entertainment-oriented digital media encourages preferences for shorter texts over extended academic reading. Bacang (2024) further reported that positive reading attitudes do not necessarily translate into stronger reading performance. These findings highlight the need for instructional strategies that gradually strengthen students' engagement with sustained, analytical, and academically oriented reading tasks.

3.2.2 Students' Reading Competence

The Phil-IRI assessment revealed that 46.46% of the respondents were classified at the Instructional reading level, 37.01% at the Frustration level, and only 16.54% at the Independent level. These results indicate that the majority of Grade 10 students had not yet achieved independent reading proficiency. Nearly half of the learners required teacher guidance to comprehend grade-level texts effectively, while more than one-third continued to experience substantial difficulty in reading despite instructional support. Only a small proportion demonstrated the ability to comprehend texts independently. Overall, the findings show that most learners remained within the lower to middle levels of reading proficiency. The predominance of learners at the Instructional and Frustration levels reflects continuing challenges in reading comprehension among secondary students. This finding is consistent with the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI Group, 2018), which reports that many learners continue to require structured reading assistance. Similarly, Bacang (2024) found that many Filipino secondary students demonstrate limited reading competence despite expressing positive attitudes toward reading, while Gagalang (2021) noted that frequent engagement with fragmented digital texts does not necessarily strengthen deep comprehension. Rodríguez Meza and Cedeño (2022) likewise explained that excessive exposure to short digital texts encourages scanning and skimming rather than critical reading. The relatively small proportion of independent readers also supports the observations of Twenge et al. (2018) and the OECD (2024), which suggest that modern digital environments may reduce learners' capacity for sustained reading. Valdez et al. (2024) similarly reported that excessive social media use may negatively affect comprehension when learners prioritize entertainment reading over academic texts, while Ermita et al. (2025) emphasized that fragmented reading habits may hinder higher-order comprehension skills. Nevertheless, the substantial number of learners at the Instructional level suggests opportunities for improvement through guided reading support, vocabulary development, and structured comprehension instruction, consistent with the Phil-IRI framework (2018). Greenhow and Lewin (2016) further argued that appropriately integrated digital tools can enhance literacy development by providing engaging and interactive reading experiences. These findings underscore the importance of differentiated reading instruction that addresses the varying needs of learners and supports their progression toward independent reading proficiency.

3.3 Relationships Among the Study Variables

3.3.1 Relationship Between Daily Time Spent on Social Media and Reading Competence

The Chi-square test revealed no significant relationship between students' daily time spent on social media and their reading competence. The computed value ($\chi^2 = 11.540$) was lower than the critical value ($\chi^2 = 15.507$) at $df = 8$ and $\alpha = 0.05$, resulting in the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This indicates that differences in the amount of time students spent on social media were not associated with differences in their Phil-IRI reading proficiency levels. Regardless of whether students spent fewer or more hours on social media, their reading competence remained statistically comparable. The findings suggest that the amount of time spent on social media alone does not determine students' reading competence. Other factors, including reading strategies, vocabulary development, instructional support, and home literacy experiences, may have greater influence on reading performance. This result is consistent with Salmerón and Lasagabaster (2022), who argued that screen-based reading does not inherently improve or reduce comprehension because outcomes depend on how learners process texts. Likewise, Twenge et al. (2018) emphasized that screen time alone is an insufficient predictor of academic literacy. Esteban et al. (2024) similarly noted that digital exposure becomes meaningful only when technology is integrated effectively into instruction, while Ermita et al. (2025) observed that evidence linking social media use to reading competence remains inconsistent when duration of exposure is considered independently. These findings indicate that reading competence is shaped by more complex factors than time spent on social media alone.

3.3.2 Relationship Between Frequency of Exposure to Social Media Microtexts and Reading Attitudes

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis revealed a significant high positive relationship between students' frequency of exposure to social media microtexts and their reading attitudes. The computed correlation coefficient ($r =$

0.729) exceeded the critical value ($r = 0.147$) at $df = 125$ and $\alpha = 0.05$, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This result indicates that students who were more frequently exposed to social media microtexts generally demonstrated more positive attitudes toward reading, including greater enjoyment, interest, and engagement in reading activities. The strong positive relationship suggests that frequent interaction with microtexts may make reading more familiar, accessible, and enjoyable for learners. Septianingsi and Atmanegara (2021) emphasized that reading attitudes are influenced by both the nature of reading materials and the frequency with which learners engage with them. Similarly, Greenhow and Lewin (2016) described social media platforms as informal learning spaces that encourage engagement and interaction with texts, while Gagalang (2021) observed that repeated exposure to microtexts increases Filipino students' familiarity with reading and promotes positive reading attitudes. Nevertheless, Valdez et al. (2024) cautioned that positive reading attitudes do not necessarily translate into improved reading comprehension, indicating that favorable attitudes and actual reading competence represent distinct aspects of literacy development.

3.3.3 Relationship Between Frequency of Exposure to Social Media Microtexts and Reading Competence

The Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation analysis showed no significant relationship between students' frequency of exposure to social media microtexts and their reading competence. The computed correlation coefficient ($r_s = 0.163$) was lower than the critical value ($r_s = 0.175$) at $df = 125$ and $\alpha = 0.05$, resulting in the acceptance of the null hypothesis. Although the correlation indicated a negligible positive relationship, the association was not statistically significant. This means that students who frequently encountered microtexts were not necessarily more proficient readers than those with less frequent exposure. The findings indicate that frequent exposure to social media microtexts alone does not significantly influence students' reading competence. Rodríguez Meza and Cedeño (2022) explained that short digital texts often encourage scanning and skimming rather than deep comprehension, limiting their contribution to formal reading proficiency. Ermita et al. (2025) similarly noted that the effect of social media exposure on reading comprehension varies and depends on learners' cognitive engagement and reading strategies rather than exposure frequency alone. This finding is further supported by Bacang (2024), who reported that frequent digital reading does not necessarily improve Phil-IRI performance, and by Salmerón and Lasagabaster (2022), who emphasized that reading competence depends more on how learners process and engage with texts than on how frequently they encounter them. These results suggest that meaningful comprehension develops through effective reading strategies and purposeful engagement with texts rather than through exposure to microtexts alone.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that Grade 10 learners are highly exposed to social media microtexts and generally exhibit positive reading attitudes, particularly toward social and interactive reading activities. However, most learners remain at the instructional and frustration levels of reading competence, indicating the need for continued instructional support. While frequent exposure to social media microtexts is significantly associated with more positive reading attitudes, neither the amount of time spent on social media nor the frequency of exposure to microtexts has a significant relationship with reading competence. These findings suggest that although social media microtexts encourage students' interest and engagement in reading, they are insufficient on their own to develop higher-order reading comprehension skills, which require deeper cognitive engagement and effective reading strategies.

Based on the findings, teachers should integrate digital literacy, critical reading activities, and educational microtexts into instruction to strengthen students' transition from passive digital reading to deeper academic reading. Reading interventions should focus on learners at the instructional and frustration levels through guided reading, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies. Schools should promote balanced reading practices by combining sustained academic reading with meaningful digital literacy activities, while parents should supervise students' social media use and encourage academic reading at home. School leaders should strengthen reading programs and provide professional development on digital literacy and reading instruction, and future researchers should conduct similar studies involving broader populations and additional variables related to reading development.

The study was limited to Grade 10 students in the Mobo North District and examined only the relationships among exposure to social media microtexts, reading attitudes, and reading competence. It focused on selected variables measured through an adapted questionnaire and Phil-IRI results and did not include other factors that may influence reading competence, such as reading strategies, academic achievement, vocabulary development, and the home literacy environment. Consequently, the findings are specific to the study participants and context and may serve as a basis for future investigations involving larger populations, different grade levels, and additional variables.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study was conducted in accordance with the approved research procedures of the institution and the required permissions from the appropriate educational authorities prior to data collection. Participants were informed of the nature, purpose, and scope of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process, participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage of the study, and all collected data were used solely for research purposes.

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