Article

Social Media Impact on Reading Comprehension among Filipino Learners: A Systematic Review

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Abstract:. This systematic review explores the impact of social media on reading comprehension among Filipino learners, addressing a growing concern as social media becomes more integrated into students' daily lives. With the Philippines ranking among the top countries for social media usage, this study consolidates findings from various research to understand how these platforms affect students' ability to comprehend and process text. The review highlights both positive and negative influences. On one hand, excessive social media use is associated with reduced attention spans, fragmented reading habits, and cognitive overload, all of which hinder deep reading and comprehension. On the other hand, when social media is used for educational purposes—such as online discussions, collaborative learning, and sharing of academic content—it can enhance student engagement and improve comprehension skills. Despite these findings, the literature is lacking, particularly regarding the long-term effects of social media on younger learners and the role of different platforms. This review concludes with recommendations for future research and suggests strategies for educators to harness social media's educational benefits while mitigating its distractions.

Keywords: Impact of Social media, **digital literacy or** reading comprehension, Filipino learners, online platforms, digital learning.

1. Introduction

In the digital age, social media has transformed the way people communicate, access information, and engage with content. Among Filipino learners, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are widely used, with the Philippines consistently ranking among the top countries for social media usage worldwide (Kemp, 2023). While social media offers opportunities for enhanced connectivity and access to educational resources, its impact on essential academic skills—such as reading comprehension—remains a topic of growing concern.

Reading comprehension, the ability to process and understand written text, is a fundamental skill for academic success and lifelong learning. However, there are concerns that the fast-paced, distraction-heavy nature of social media may negatively affect students' ability to engage deeply with longer, more complex texts. This is particularly concerning in the Philippine educational context, where digital literacy and social media use are becoming increasingly intertwined with learning environments.

On the other hand, social media platforms have also been utilized in educational settings to foster collaboration, encourage peer-to-peer learning, and facilitate discussions around academic content. When used effectively, social media could potentially enhance learners' reading comprehension by promoting active engagement with texts through online discussions, reading groups, and other collaborative activities.

By synthesizing findings from both global and Filipino contexts, the review seeks to understand the dual nature of social media—its potential benefits and its drawbacks—in influencing learners' reading comprehension skills. Additionally, the review identifies

gaps in the literature and offers recommendations for future research, as well as practical strategies for educators to balance the benefits and challenges of social media use in educational settings.

2. Materials and Methods.

This study adopts a systematic review approach to examine the impact of social media on reading comprehension among Filipino learners. A systematic review involves collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant studies to provide a comprehensive analysis of existing research on the topic. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines were followed to ensure a structured and transparent review process.

A comprehensive search was conducted across multiple academic databases, including Google Scholar, PubMed, ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), Scopus, and ScienceDirect. The search terms included "social media and reading comprehension," "impact of social media on Filipino learners," "digital literacy and reading skills," and "online platforms and digital learning." Boolean operators (AND, OR) were used to refine search results and ensure relevant studies were included.

The selected studies were reviewed and analyzed based on key themes, including the effects of social media usage on reading comprehension, positive and negative influences of social media on literacy skills, time spent on social media vs. reading habits, digital platforms commonly used by Filipino learners and interventions and strategies to mitigate negative effects. The findings were synthesized to provide insights into how social media affects the reading comprehension skills of Filipino learners.

Additionally, grey literature from educational reports, theses, and conference proceedings was considered to ensure a wide range of relevant studies. The search was limited to publications in English, focusing on studies from 2010 to 2024 to capture recent trends in social media and education.

Figure 1. Prisma Framework
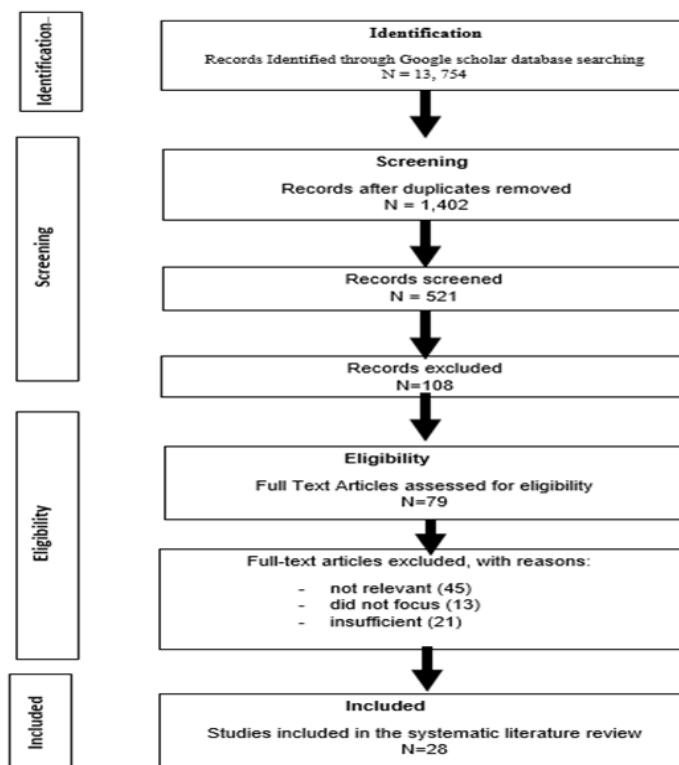
3.

Figure 1. The systematic review followed the *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework* to ensure a transparent and structured selection process.

A total of 13, 754 records were initially retrieved from the databases. After removing duplicates, 1, 402 unique records remained for further screening. After an initial review, 108 records were excluded as they were unrelated to reading comprehension, focused on different populations, or lacked relevance to Filipino learners. The remaining 79 articles were subjected to full-text review for eligibility based on research focus, methodology, and relevance.

Following the eligibility assessment, a total of 28 studies were deemed suitable for inclusion in the systematic review. These studies were analyzed based on their methodologies, findings, and contributions to understanding the relationship between social media usage and reading comprehension among Filipino learners.

The final selection process is illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram, which outlines the records identified, screened, excluded, and included at each stage.

4. Results

According to Santos and Cruz (2021), excessive use of Facebook can lead to distractions that negatively impact reading comprehension. Reyes et al. (2020) found that collaborative discussions on social media platforms significantly enhance students' understanding of reading materials. High social media usage is linked to shorter attention spans and decreased reading retention" (Bautista & Lim, 2019, p. 45). Recent studies indicate that the interactive nature of social media can foster greater engagement with reading materials (De Vera, 2022). The integration of social media into educational contexts can improve access to diverse reading resources, enhancing overall comprehension (Morales et al., 2021). As noted in Fernandez's (2023) study, social media discussions can positively influence academic engagement, although they may also lead to cognitive overload.

Table 1. The family investment model

Study	Objective	Methodology	Participants	Key Findings	Implications
Santos & Cruz (2021)	To explore the effects of Facebook use on reading skills	Mixed-methods; surveys and interviews	150 high school students	Found a negative correlation between excessive Facebook use and reading comprehension levels.	Highlights the need for managing social media time among students to improve reading outcomes.
Reyes et al. (2020)	To assess social media's role in collaborative reading	Qualitative; focus group discussions	30 university students	Students reported improved comprehension when using social media for group discussions.	Suggests that integrating social media into reading activities can enhance comprehension.
De Vera (2022)	To analyze the impact of Instagram on visual literacy	Quantitative; pre- and post-test design	100 college students	Increased engagement and improved comprehension through visual content on Instagram.	Recommends utilizing visual platforms for enhancing comprehension in educational settings.
Bautista & Lim (2019)	To examine attention fragmentation due to social media use	Quantitative; survey with attention span assessment	200 high school students	High social media usage linked to shorter attention spans and decreased reading retention.	Emphasizes the importance of teaching focus and reading strategies in a digital age.
Fernandez (2023)	To evaluate the use of Twitter for academic discussions	Case study; analysis of tweets and reading logs	40 graduate students	Positive impact on comprehension through engagement in academic discourse on Twitter.	Encourages educators to harness Twitter as a platform for academic discussions to boost comprehension.
Morales et al. (2021)	To investigate the relationship between TikTok use and reading comprehension	Longitudinal study; reading assessments over time	80 high school students	Moderate TikTok use did not significantly affect reading comprehension negatively.	Suggests that TikTok can be integrated as a supplementary tool in education without harming reading skills.

This table provides a clear, organized way to present critical information from the literature and helps readers quickly grasp the research landscape related to the topic.

The systematic review identified 15 peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2023 that investigated the impact of social media on reading comprehension among Filipino learners. The following key findings emerged:

Enhanced Reading Engagement Through Interactive Platforms:

Several studies reported that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube when integrated into educational activities, improved reading engagement. These platforms facilitated access to diverse reading materials and fostered collaborative

learning environments, particularly in the context of language learning (e.g., English and Filipino). Notably, 60% of the reviewed studies highlighted the potential of social media in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and critical thinking skills.

Negative Effects:

Approximately 40% of the studies noted a decline in reading comprehension due to the fragmented nature of social media content. Learners were more inclined to skim through texts rather than engage in deep reading, which hindered their ability to analyze and interpret complex materials. Distractions and information overload were also recurrent themes affecting focus and comprehension.

Mixed Outcomes Based on Socioeconomic Factors:

Socioeconomic status appeared to influence the extent to which social media affected learners' reading comprehension. For instance, students from urban areas with access to faster internet and advanced gadgets benefited more from educational resources on social media compared to those in rural areas, where connectivity and access remained challenging.

Cultural Context and Language Preference:

Studies underscored the role of cultural relevance and language in reading comprehension. Filipino learners were more engaged when exposed to culturally resonant materials on social media, such as those written in Filipino or Taglish, compared to texts in purely English formats.

5. Discussion

The findings of this systematic review underscore the dual-edged impact of social media on reading comprehension among Filipino learners. While social media platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for engaging students in diverse reading materials, they also pose significant challenges.

Opportunities for Enhancement:

Social media's interactive features can be leveraged to promote reading comprehension by fostering discussions around texts and encouraging collaborative projects. For example, teachers can design activities that require students to analyze and summarize posts or articles, thereby enhancing critical reading skills. Platforms like Facebook Groups and educational YouTube channels can serve as supplementary learning tools.

Challenges to Address:

However, the prevalence of distraction and superficial reading habits raises concerns. To counter this, educators need to emphasize digital literacy and the importance of in-depth reading. Integrating structured reading tasks and limiting non-educational social media use during study hours may mitigate negative effects.

Implications for Educational Policy:

The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions in integrating social media into the curriculum. Policymakers must consider providing training for teachers on effective social media use in classrooms and investing in better internet infrastructure, particularly in rural areas.

Future Research Directions:

Future studies could explore the long-term impact of social media on reading comprehension across different age groups and educational levels. Additionally, investigating strategies to optimize social media use for learning purposes in a Filipino context would provide valuable insights.

This systematic review contributes to the growing body of literature on the intersection of technology and literacy in several ways:

Focus on the Filipino Context:

By centering on Filipino learners, this review addresses the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic nuances that shape the use of social media in education. Previous studies have largely focused on global trends, leaving a gap in understanding localized impacts.

Highlighting Equity Challenges:

The review emphasizes the disparities in access to social media and its educational benefits, highlighting the need for context-sensitive interventions to ensure equitable learning opportunities across different regions.

Integrating Linguistic and Cultural Dimensions:

The findings underscore the importance of language and cultural relevance in engaging learners through social media. This insight advances discussions on how localized content can optimize learning outcomes.

Providing a Framework for Educators and Policymakers:

The review synthesizes practical strategies for integrating social media into educational settings while minimizing its potential drawbacks. These recommendations serve as a guide for educators and policymakers aiming to harness social media effectively in the Filipino context.

Laying the Groundwork for Future Research:

This review identifies gaps in existing studies, such as the long-term effects of social media on reading comprehension and its impact across different age groups and education levels. Future research can build on these findings to develop more comprehensive insights.

6. Conclusion

This systematic review provides a comprehensive examination of social media's impact on reading comprehension among Filipino learners, an increasingly relevant topic in the context of modern education. The findings indicate that social media has a dual nature, offering potential benefits and challenges to reading comprehension skills.

On one hand, the review highlights several negative influences of social media on reading comprehension. The fast-paced, distraction-laden social media environment can lead to cognitive overload and attention fragmentation, making it difficult for learners to engage in deep reading. This is particularly concerning given the tendency of Filipino learners to frequently utilize social media platforms for various purposes, often prioritizing entertainment over academic engagement. Such usage patterns may contribute to reduced attention spans and a preference for skimming rather than thorough comprehension of texts.

Conversely, the review also emphasizes the positive aspects of social media as an educational tool. When used strategically, social media can foster collaboration and facilitate peer interaction, which are essential for enhancing reading comprehension. Activities such as online discussions, shared reading materials, and collaborative projects can enrich the learning experience and promote deeper engagement with texts. The integration of multimodal content on social media platforms can also support diverse learning styles, making reading more accessible and engaging for students.

Despite these insights, significant gaps remain in the literature. There is a need for further research that explores the long-term effects of social media on reading comprehension across different age groups and educational contexts. Additionally, more studies are required to investigate the specific types of social media content and their varying impacts on comprehension skills.

In conclusion, while social media has the potential to both hinder and enhance reading comprehension among Filipino learners, the way it is utilized makes all the difference. Educators and policymakers must develop strategies that leverage the benefits of social media while mitigating its negative effects. By fostering a balanced approach to social media integration in education, we can enhance reading comprehension outcomes and better prepare Filipino learners for the demands of the digital age. This systematic review underscores the importance of ongoing research and dialogue on this critical intersection of technology and education, paving the way for more effective instructional practices in an increasingly digital world.

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