

Original Article

Reading Habits and Social Media Use as Predictors of Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension

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Abstract. This study examined the combined effects of reading habits and social media use on students' autonomy in reading comprehension among 235 Grade 11 students in a private educational institution in Davao City, Philippines. Despite the critical role of reading comprehension in academic success, many senior high school graduates in the Philippines continued to face persistent challenges in effectively comprehending, analyzing, and applying information from written texts, highlighting a significant gap in foundational literacy skills. A quantitative, descriptive-correlational research design was employed, and data were collected using adapted and validated survey instruments. Findings indicated that students demonstrated high levels of reading habits Mean = 3.62 and autonomy in language comprehension Mean = 3.79, while their social media use was moderate Mean = 3.26. Statistical analysis revealed a significant moderate positive relationship between reading habits and student autonomy, $r = 0.530$, $p < 0.05$, whereas social media use showed a significant but weak positive correlation, $r = 0.267$, $p < 0.05$. Furthermore, both variables significantly predicted students' autonomy, with reading habits emerging as the stronger predictor. The study concluded that both factors contributed to independent learning and suggested that integrating digital literacy with traditional reading activities could enhance self-directed comprehension.

Keywords: *Language reading comprehension; Philippines; Predictors; Reading habits; Social media use.*

Reading comprehension is increasingly understood as an active, multi-step process that involves predicting outcomes, identifying main ideas, questioning assumptions, and clarifying ambiguities (Liou, 2021). However, Çaliskan and Ulaş (2022) reported that in several countries, including Turkey, students' reading comprehension skills continue to fall below expected standards. Further evidence from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), which assesses literacy among adults aged 16 to 65, reveals that 28% of adults scored at Level 1 or below, 29% at Level 2, and only 44% achieved Level 3 or higher. In addition, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2023) reported a 9-percentage-point increase since 2017 in the proportion of adults at the lowest literacy levels. This trend highlights persistent challenges in reading comprehension, particularly among late adolescents and young adults aged 18 and above.

In the Philippines, a substantial proportion of senior high school graduates continue to have difficulty

comprehending written texts. This trend indicates that, despite completing formal education, many individuals have not sufficiently developed the ability to understand, analyze, and apply information derived from texts. Consequently, reading comprehension—the central variable of this study—remains significantly underdeveloped among a considerable segment of senior high school graduates nationwide. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2025) further reveal that this issue affects more than 18 million SHS graduates nationwide, underscoring the scale and urgency of the problem. Additionally, a study conducted in Davao City revealed that senior high school students demonstrated only a moderate level of reading comprehension, suggesting that learners have not yet achieved full proficiency in understanding written texts (Del Socorro, 2024). Similarly, Basilio (2025) reported that although many senior high school students possessed a relatively wide vocabulary, their overall comprehension skills remained weak. The study further noted inconsistencies in understanding and persistent gaps in the full interpretation of texts, indicating that vocabulary knowledge alone does not necessarily translate into effective reading comprehension.

This study is grounded in Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1985), which posits that individuals become more motivated to learn when their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. In the context of language reading comprehension, students who are given greater autonomy in selecting and engaging with reading materials are more likely to develop a deeper understanding and stronger intrinsic motivation. Likewise, learners who perceive themselves as competent, self-regulated, and internally motivated tend to establish more consistent reading habits. Social media use may also play a dual role in this process, enhancing motivation by fostering connected learning communities or weakening it by diverting attention from focused reading activities. Overall, Self-Determination Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how students' autonomy, reading habits, and social media engagement interact to influence their reading comprehension.

Another study, consistent with Self-Determination Theory, found that teacher autonomy support enhances students' motivation, which, in turn, positively influences reading comprehension by fostering more effective reading habits. Specifically, Bureau et al. (2021) examined student motivation, emphasizing competence and autonomy as key factors that shape learners' engagement and persistence in academic tasks. Their findings suggest that when teachers provide autonomy-supportive learning environments, students are more likely to improve their reading comprehension and develop consistent, positive reading habits.

Furthermore, the relationship among the variables aligns with Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1996), which posits that learning is most effective when individuals actively construct knowledge by integrating new information with prior understanding and engaging in social interaction. Within this framework, reading habits support learners in personally constructing meaning from texts, while social media may provide platforms for discussion and collaborative interpretation of ideas. For instance, a study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic found that social media-based group learning increased students' interaction with both instructors and peers, thereby improving academic performance and engagement in online learning (Alismaiel et al., 2022). Similarly, Herdi and Santika (2020) reported that in a middle school setting, students' reading comprehension scores improved from 69.5 to 77 after the implementation of a constructivist teaching approach that emphasized guided learning and the connection of ideas. Collectively, these findings suggest that reading comprehension can be strengthened by integrating individual reading practices with collaborative discussion and knowledge sharing, including those facilitated by social media platforms.

Moreover, metacognitive theory emphasizes that learners should be consciously aware of and able to regulate their own reading and thinking processes. This involves planning how to approach a text, monitoring one's understanding, evaluating comprehension, and making necessary adjustments when difficulties arise. Recent empirical studies support the effectiveness of these metacognitive strategies in improving reading outcomes. For example, a large-scale analysis of PISA data revealed that students who frequently applied metacognitive reading strategies—such as evaluating the credibility of sources and summarizing key ideas—achieved higher reading scores (Ghimire & Mokhtari, 2025). Similarly, a study involving Grade 11 students demonstrated that explicit instruction in metacognitive strategies significantly enhanced reading comprehension, with a large effect size indicating a substantial improvement from pre-test to post-test (Muhid et al., 2020). In addition, Tang et al. (2024) reported, in a comprehensive review, that metacognitive strategies consistently improved the reading abilities of English language learners across various contexts, including Indonesia and the Philippines. Their findings further suggest that teaching learners how to apply structured reading strategies and encouraging critical reflection on

their comprehension processes lead to measurable gains in reading understanding.

Considering these factors, the researchers sought to address a gap in the existing literature regarding the relationship between reading habits, social media use, and students' autonomy in language reading comprehension. Previous studies examining reading habits and social media engagement have often given limited attention to reading comprehension as a key component of language learning. Hence, it is important to investigate whether reading habits and social media use significantly influence reading comprehension outcomes.

The Research Addresses Five Key Objectives:

- (1) To assess the level of Reading Habits
- (2) To ascertain the level of Social Media Use.
- (3) To determine the level of Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension.
- (4) To determine the significant relationship
- (5) To determine the combined influence of Reading Habits and Social Media Use on the Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension.

This study aimed to examine how reading habits and social media use, when considered together, influence students' autonomy in language reading comprehension. Given that reading comprehension remains a global challenge despite years of formal education, it is essential to explore how these two factors shape learners' ability to process and understand texts independently. Moreover, the study contributes to the existing literature by investigating whether social media, often perceived as a distraction, can also support reading development when balanced with consistent reading habits. In this context, social media use may function as a dual influence: it can enhance exposure to diverse textual materials, yet it may also hinder comprehension when it promotes superficial or distracted reading practices.

From a broader perspective, this issue is particularly relevant in contemporary educational settings, where students are heavily engaged with digital platforms. When integrated thoughtfully with strong reading practices, such platforms may offer opportunities to develop more effective instructional strategies to address persistent challenges in reading comprehension. Moreover, the results of this study are expected to provide school administrators with relevant insights for developing and implementing appropriate academic interventions and instructional strategies. In addition, this research aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4, which promotes inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education that supports lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to examine reading habits and social media use as predictors of students' autonomy in language reading comprehension. As noted in the literature, descriptive-correlational designs are employed to describe variables and determine the relationships that naturally exist among them without manipulation. For instance, Iting et al. (2024) explain that the main goal of correlational research is to identify significant correlations between the variables being studied rather than to establish a cause-and-effect relationship. In this context, it refers to the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables, which may be either positive or negative.

This approach is consistent with descriptive research, which McCombes (2023) defines as a design that provides a systematic and accurate description of a population, situation, or phenomenon. It is primarily used to answer questions about what, where, when, and how, although it does not explain the underlying causes of the observed conditions. In addition, Putri et al. (2025) explain that correlational research is a quantitative, non-experimental method that focuses on identifying relationships between variables without changing or controlling them.

This study employed a descriptive research design to determine the levels of reading habits, social media use, and students' autonomy in language reading comprehension. In addition, a correlational design was utilized to examine the significant relationships between reading habits and students' autonomy in language reading comprehension, as well as between social media use and students' autonomy in language reading comprehension. Furthermore, the study investigated the extent to which reading habits and social media use jointly predict

students' autonomy in language reading comprehension.

Results and Discussion

The Level of Reading Habits

Table 1. *The Level of Reading Habits of Senior High School Students*

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive level
Reading Attitude	0.68	3.80	High
Reading purposes	0.66	3.81	High
Time spent on reading	0.94	3.24	Moderate
Overall	0.61	3.62	High

The results presented in Table 1 show that senior high school students generally demonstrate a high level of reading habits. This suggests that students frequently demonstrate positive reading habits, indicating that reading remains an important part of their academic and personal activities. The responses were fairly consistent across students, reflecting a common pattern of engagement in reading-related behaviors. This finding aligns with Alnahdi and Aftab (2020), who described reading habits as a gateway to acquiring information and developing a broader understanding of the world beyond the text. Similarly, Maulidi et al. (2025) emphasized that strong reading ability is essential for students' learning across different academic disciplines. In addition, Hassan et al. (2021) reported a strong relationship between ESL learners' reading habits and academic achievement, highlighting the significance of reading practices in supporting overall academic success.

The Level of Social Media Use

Table 2. *The Level of Reading Habits of Senior High School Students*

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive level
Performance Index	0.95	3.04	Moderate
Entertainment	0.77	3.41	High
Health Influence	0.85	3.29	Moderate
Isolation	0.98	2.93	Moderate
Social Networking Connection	0.82	3.44	High
Consuming Time Index	0.94	3.47	High
Overall	0.63	3.26	Moderate

Table 2 presents the level of social media use among senior high school students. The findings indicate that senior high school students demonstrate a moderate level of social media use, suggesting that it is occasionally observed among the respondents. This implies that students moderately engage with social media across various dimensions, including performance, entertainment, health influence, isolation, social networking, and time consumption. The responses are relatively consistent across participants, indicating a generally shared pattern of social media use. Thus, the distribution of responses is homogeneous, indicating a shared moderate level of social media engagement among participants. This finding is consistent with Zhang et al. (2024), who highlighted that social media has become an integral part of students' daily lives, primarily serving functions such as communication, information sharing, entertainment, and social interaction. In contrast, Oguguo et al. (2020) emphasized the need to regulate social media use, particularly among younger populations, to maximize its benefits while minimizing potential negative effects.

The Level of Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension

Table 3. *The Level of Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension of Senior High School Students*

Indicator	SD	Mean	Descriptive level
Cognitive	0.65	3.82	High
Metacognitive	0.63	3.77	High
Affective Motivational	0.92	3.76	High
Action Oriented	0.63	3.67	High
Social	1.03	3.93	High
Overall	0.52	3.79	High

Table 3 presents the level of students' autonomy in language reading comprehension among senior high school

students. The findings indicate that students demonstrate a high descriptive level of autonomy in language reading comprehension. This reflects students' general ability to regulate and monitor their reading processes, apply appropriate reading strategies, and independently understand and interpret texts. The responses were relatively consistent, which further implies a homogeneous distribution of autonomy in language reading comprehension among the participants.

The Significance of the Relationship between Reading Habits and Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension

Table 4. *Significance of the Relationship between Reading Habits and Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension of Senior High School Students*

	The Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension		
	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Reading Habits	.530	(.000)	Significant

Table 4 presents the significance of the relationship between reading habits and students' autonomy in language reading comprehension among senior high school students. The findings reveal a significant moderate positive relationship between reading habits and students' autonomy in language reading comprehension. All computed p-values are below the level of significance; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This confirms a significant, moderate relationship between reading habits and students' autonomy in language reading comprehension. This finding suggests that improvements in students' reading habits are associated with higher levels of autonomy across cognitive, metacognitive, affective-motivational, action-oriented, and social dimensions of language reading comprehension.

The Significance of the Relationship between Social Media Use and Students' Autonomy in Language

Table 5. *Significance of the Relationship between Social Media Use and Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension of Senior High School Students*

	Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension		
	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Social Media Use	.267	(.000)	Significant

Table 5 presents the significance of the relationship between social media use and students' autonomy in language reading comprehension among senior high school students. The findings reveal that overall social media use is positively and significantly correlated with students' autonomy. This indicates a statistically significant but weak positive relationship between the two variables. Among the individual indicators, Social Networking Connection showed the strongest positive correlation with overall autonomy, while the Consuming Time Index also demonstrated a notable association. These findings suggest that increased engagement in online social interactions and greater time spent on social media are linked to higher levels of students' autonomous reading behaviors. Health Influence and Entertainment also showed weak but significant positive correlations, indicating that different forms of social media engagement may play varying roles in either supporting or diverting self-regulated learning. In contrast, the Performance Index was not statistically significant across all dimensions of students' autonomy. This suggests that students' perceived academic performance related to social media use is not directly related to reading autonomy. Overall, social media use showed significant but weak correlations with the cognitive, metacognitive, and action-oriented dimensions of autonomy. This implies that increased social media engagement is associated with slight improvements in students' ability to process, regulate, and apply reading strategies. However, these effects remain limited compared to the stronger influence of reading habits on students' language autonomy.

The Significance of the Influence of Reading Habits and Social Media Use on Students' Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension

Table 6 presents the results of the linear regression analysis examining the influence of reading habits and social media use on students' autonomy in language reading comprehension among senior high school students. The findings reveal a moderate positive relationship between the independent variables and students' autonomy in

language reading comprehension. This suggests that improvements in reading habits and social media use are associated with higher levels of learner autonomy. The regression analysis further indicates the model is statistically significant. This confirms that reading habits and social media use, when taken together, significantly predict students' autonomy in language reading comprehension. The findings further imply that the observed relationship is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance, supporting the model's reliability.

Table 6. *Significance of the Influence of Reading Habits and Social Media Use on Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension of Senior High School Students*

Independent Variables	Autonomy in Language Reading Comprehension			
	B	β	t-value	Sig
Reading Habits	0.420	0.495	8.486	.000
Social Media Use	0.091	0.110	1.886	.061
r-value= 0.540				
r ² = 0.291				
F-value= 47.706				
p-value= .000				

Reading Habits

The study identifies Reading Purposes as the highest-rated dimension, indicating that students consistently approach reading with specific objectives, a finding supported by participants' relatively homogeneous responses. This purposeful engagement aligns with research by Chen et al. (2023), who emphasize its role in shaping material selection, as well as findings from Sari (2020) and Sutopo and Prayitno (2020) regarding its positive impact on textual interpretation and comprehension. Reading Attitude ranks second among the most prominent indicators, reflecting a generally favorable disposition toward literacy. This positive outlook is consistent with studies by Bayraktar and Firat (2020), Nurdiana (2023), and Baba and Affendi (2020), which highlight how personal values and digital accessibility foster student engagement.

In contrast, Time Spent on Reading emerged as the lowest-rated dimension, characterized by a significant degree of heterogeneity among the participants. While Torppa et al. (2020) and Böckle et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of resource access and critical interpretation over mere duration, the current findings suggest that time allocation remains inconsistent. This issue is further contextualized by Yulastri et al. (2022), who observed that students often prioritize smartphone usage over traditional reading, ultimately hindering the development of consistent reading habits.

Social Media Use

The Consuming Time Index emerged as the highest-rated dimension, reflecting a substantial daily commitment to social media, corroborated by Mohammad and Al-Qudah (2020) and Statista (2024). This is closely followed by Social Networking and Entertainment, both of which demonstrate that students utilize these platforms primarily to facilitate peer connectivity and seek leisure, as supported by Yang et al. (2025), Wong and McLellan (2024), Mohammad and Al-Qudah (2020), and Newman et al. (2021). These findings collectively suggest a consistent pattern of behavior wherein students prioritize social interaction and digital engagement over other daily activities.

Conversely, Health Influence and the Performance Index were assessed at moderate levels, indicating that the impacts of social media on well-being and academic productivity remain varied across the student population. Research by Al-Dmour et al. (2020), Nesi (2020), Ermita et al. (2025), and Tafesse (2022) highlights the complex, dual-natured role of these platforms: supporting learning while posing potential health risks. Finally, Isolation received the lowest rating, suggesting that while some students experience disconnection, these feelings are not universally linked to social media use, a perspective consistent with the findings of Forsman (2021).

Students' Autonomy in Language Comprehension

The study highlights that reading comprehension is a multifaceted, continuous process that depends on cognitive abilities and prior knowledge, a view supported by Busari et al. (2025) and Catts (2021). Among the analyzed dimensions, Social interaction emerged as the highest-rated indicator, suggesting that collaborative engagement and literary socialization play a central role in student autonomy, as evidenced by Johansson and Nordenstam (2020), Yu et al. (2023), and Benabbes and Abu Taleb (2024). Furthermore, the Cognitive and Metacognitive indicators were highly rated, reflecting students' frequent use of strategic planning and self-evaluation, which

aligns with findings from Catts (2021), Todorova (2024), Villanueva (2022), and Bouknify (2023).

Additionally, the Affective-Motivational and Action-oriented dimensions were identified as key components of comprehension, with students demonstrating significant emotional engagement and practical application of reading strategies. While Putri and Pradita (2022) and Yang et al. (2023) emphasize the nuanced role of motivation in sustaining deep comprehension, Germain-Rutherford (2021) and Al Roomy (2022) underscore the importance of critical reading in fostering higher-order thinking and mental sharpness. Collectively, these findings suggest that autonomy in language reading comprehension is achieved through a balanced integration of social, cognitive, and self-regulatory practices.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, several key conclusions and implications were drawn.

Based on the findings of this study, several key conclusions and implications were drawn. The level of reading habits among senior high school students was rated high, indicating that their reading attitude and reading purposes are frequently demonstrated. However, time spent reading was only moderate, suggesting that while students generally exhibit positive reading behaviors, the duration devoted to reading remains somewhat limited. In addition, the level of social media use among senior high school students was rated moderate. This indicates that although engagement in entertainment, social networking, and time consumption is relatively high, aspects such as performance influence, health impact, and feelings of isolation remain moderate. Overall, this reflects a balanced but noticeable level of digital engagement among the students.

Furthermore, the level of students' autonomy in language reading comprehension was rated high. This suggests that cognitive, metacognitive, affective-motivational, action-oriented, and social domains are strongly manifested, collectively supporting students' autonomous learning behaviors throughout the reading process. A significant relationship was found between reading habits and students' autonomy in language reading comprehension, indicating a moderate positive correlation. Likewise, social media use was also found to have a significant but weak positive relationship with students' autonomy in language reading comprehension. These results suggest that both variables are associated with students' autonomy, although reading habits demonstrate a stronger relationship.

In addition, Self-Regulated Learning Theory and Self-Determination Theory support these findings by emphasizing that consistent reading practices and appropriately managed digital engagement enhance learners' autonomy through improved self-monitoring, motivation, and strategic information processing. Furthermore, the reading habits domain significantly influences students' autonomy in language reading comprehension, highlighting that established reading routines and positive reading attitudes play a crucial role in developing independent comprehension skills. In contrast, social media use was not a significant predictor of autonomy in this context. This implies that students' autonomy in language reading comprehension is primarily driven by their engagement in purposeful, habitual reading practices rather than by their use of social media platforms.

Contributions of Authors

Author 1: Served as the primary editorial reviewer for the manuscript. She played an active role in strengthening both the structure and depth of the paper. She provided critical feedback on the structure and academic tone, offering comprehensive grammatical comments and suggestions that significantly improved the paper's overall quality and clarity.

Author 2: Played a key role in developing and refining the study's theoretical framework and performed the comprehensive statistical analysis of the research data. He provided essential academic oversight, led the development of the discussion and conclusion sections, and guided the research toward its successful completion.

Author 3: Involved in data collection and in evaluating how the data were presented. She helped organize and validate statistical outputs, contributing to the precision and coherence of the results section. She aided in the initial analysis and the interpretation of significant findings. She also performed an extensive review of relevant literature to support the study's conceptual foundation.

Author 4: Led the data collection process. She administered the distribution of research instruments, coordinated with respondents, and ensured that data were handled in accordance with ethical standards. She also assisted in identifying and selecting relevant literature to support the study's objectives.

Author 5: Contributed to the collection and organization of research data in collaboration with Author 2. She assisted in refining statistical outputs and verifying the accuracy of analyzed results, thereby supporting the reliability of the study's conclusions. She also participated in identifying relevant literature to strengthen the theoretical framework.

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Conflict of Interests

A research conflict of interest occurs when an investigator's personal, financial, or professional interests may potentially influence, or appear to influence, the impartiality, integrity, and validity of a study. Such conflicts may compromise the objectivity of the research process, particularly in the design, implementation, analysis, or reporting of findings, thereby affecting the credibility of the results. Transparent disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest, along with strict adherence to established ethical guidelines, is essential to safeguard the integrity of the research and maintain public trust in the study and the researchers involved.

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