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Social Media Usage and Critical Thinking Skills among Students in Manticao District, Misamis Oriental

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Abstract
This study explores how social media platforms can enhance critical thinking by exposing students to diverse perspectives and prompting them to question their assumptions. It aims to assess the critical thinking skills of 300 junior high school students in Manticao District during the School Year 2023–2024 and determine the relationship between their social media usage, profile characteristics, and critical thinking abilities. A descriptive research method was utilized, with data analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. A T-test assessed the relationship between social media use and critical thinking, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation measured relationships between variables.
Findings reveal that most respondents are 15-year-old female Grade 10 students who use cellphones for 6–7 hours daily, have a daily allowance of 60–99 pesos, and are generally satisfied with their social media experience. Their critical thinking, particularly in relationship maintenance and analysis, is frequently demonstrated and rated as high. The results show a significant correlation between social media usage and critical thinking skills. It is recommended that educators integrate social media into lessons, promote critical evaluation of content, and use digital platforms to build media literacy. Encouraging responsible gadget use can help enhance students' internet readiness and foster critical, informed engagement online.

Keywords: Social Media Usage, Critical Thinking Skills

1. Introduction

Social media plays a crucial role in the academic and personal lives of junior high school students in the Manticao District, serving as a platform for accessing educational content, peer collaboration, and communication with teachers through gadgets and school Wi-Fi. These platforms offer alternative sources of information and promote exposure to diverse viewpoints, as noted by Shieh and Na-Songkhla (2024). However, challenges such as privacy concerns, cyberbullying, and misinformation remain pressing issues for young users. Martin et al. (2018) emphasizes the importance of cybersecurity education, pointing out that many teens start using social media at an early age without adequate supervision or awareness of online safety. While social media presents valuable opportunities for learning, it also carries significant risks. This study investigates the relationship between social media use and critical thinking skills, aiming to help educators create a safe, interactive, and enriching digital learning environment.

Research Questions

This study attempted to determine the level of social media usage and critical thinking skills among Junior High School students in Manticao District, Division of Misamis Oriental, during the School Year 2023-2024.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, grade level, daily screen time, daily allowance, gadgets used, and attitude toward social media usage?
2. What is the respondents' level of social media usage based on relationship maintenance, entertainment and relaxation, information and learning, and active dissemination?
3. What is the respondents' level of critical thinking skills with regard to analysis ability, curiosity, reflection, and crowd care?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' social media usage and their critical thinking skills?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' social media usage, critical thinking skills, and their profiles?

Significance

The study's findings offer valuable insights for various stakeholders by highlighting the relationship between high school students' social media use and their critical thinking skills. DepEd officials can use the results to craft supportive strategies, while school administrators may implement programs or policies to manage social media use during school hours. Teachers are encouraged to integrate digital platforms into their teaching to enhance learning, and students can become more aware of the negative impacts of excessive use on their academic performance. This awareness may inspire them to adopt healthier habits and help peers facing similar challenges. Parents can also benefit by recognizing signs of overuse, setting reasonable limits, and fostering open communication about digital behavior. Lastly, the study provides a strong foundation for future researchers to explore related topics, ultimately contributing to more effective educational practices and digital citizenship.

Scope and Limitations

This study examined the relationship between social media usage and critical thinking skills among students in public secondary schools of the Manticao District, Division of Misamis Oriental, during the School Year 2023–2024. It included all high school students in the district, regardless of grade level, academic program, or performance. The study focused on respondents' profiles age, sex, grade level, daily screen time, allowance, gadgets used, and attitude toward social media as moderating variables. Social media usage (independent variables) was categorized into relationship maintenance, entertainment, information and learning, and active dissemination. Critical thinking skills (dependent variables) were measured through analysis, curiosity, reflection, and crowd care.

2. Literature Review

Respondents' Profile. Age plays a significant role in influencing how social media use (SMU) relates to students' academic and social experiences. According to Sampasa-Kanyinga et al. (2019), older students show a stronger negative association between SMU and school connectedness, suggesting that as students age, excessive use may reduce their engagement in school. Regarding sex, Kaloeti et al. (2021) found that

gender differences shape social media behaviors, with females more active on platforms like Instagram and more susceptible to anxiety-related disorders, while males tend to prefer YouTube. When it comes to grade level, Shafi et al. (2019) observed that high school students are more vulnerable than middle schoolers to both the benefits and adverse effects of social media, including higher rates of psychotropic use and self-harm, indicating the need for targeted support from educators. Daily screen time also plays a critical role; Kennedy (2020) highlighted that while prolonged use enhances technological fluency, it can also result in sleep issues and reduced well-being due to excessive exposure often exceeding five hours per day. In terms of daily allowance, Saini et al. (2020) emphasized that financial capacity contributes to social media engagement, as more spending power allows greater access, which in turn may foster isolation and negatively impact emotional health. The devices students use also matter; Fortuna (2022) noted that smartphones are the most frequently used gadgets for social media, and their overuse, though supportive of learning, may lead to behavioral concerns. Finally, students' attitudes toward social media greatly influence their learning outcomes. Burgos (2023) found that moderate social media use fosters academic motivation and social interaction, though perceptions of its usefulness are shaped by factors like media literacy, behavioral control, and socioeconomic background.

Social media usage among students has been found to offer numerous academic and developmental benefits. Shieh and Na-Songkhla (2024) emphasized that participation in social networking sites supports the development of self-control, critical thinking, and respectful communication. These platforms offer opportunities for students to express emotions constructively and make well-informed decisions. In terms of relationship maintenance, Alalwan (2022) found that students' actual use of social media significantly contributes to improved learning experiences and engagement, as measured through interaction and satisfaction using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Regarding entertainment and relaxation, Liu et al. (2022) pointed out that while social media can be a source of leisure and emotional expression, excessive use may disrupt reading concentration and hinder deep learning, indicating that overindulgence poses more harm than benefit to academic focus. For the information and learning variable, Orhan (2023) revealed a moderate positive relationship between critical thinking disposition, new media literacy, and the ability to detect fake news. His study highlighted that critical thinking plays a more crucial role than media skills in evaluating the credibility of information on social platforms. Finally, in terms of active dissemination, Abbas et al. (2023) concluded that integrating social media into course activities fosters student engagement through peer interaction and digital literacy. Their findings show that using social media for academic purposes enables students to effectively analyze, share, and communicate information within structured learning environments.

Critical thinking is a vital 21st-century skill essential for academic success and everyday problem-solving. Gemino (2022) defines it as higher-order thinking that helps learners tackle challenges across personal, academic, and social domains. Social media has a complex relationship with critical thinking. Cheng et al. (2022) found that while usage can enhance critical thinking abilities, dependency on it may hinder them. Menichelli and Braccini (2019) observed that millennials often exhibit lower levels of essential thinking due to passive content consumption. In higher education, Halim et al. (2024) noted that although demographic factors like age and gender influence perceptions of using social media for learning, they do not significantly predict actual activities that enhance critical thinking. Xu et al. (2019) demonstrated that social media shapes analytical thinking through its effect on self-construal and cognitive style. Curiosity is also influenced by social media, as Baldwin et al. (2022) showed that online popularity cues can trigger curiosity in educational settings. Reflection, another cognitive skill, benefits from social media

engagement. Sharma (2019) found that students gained confidence and reduced anxiety through English communication online. Finally, Lai et al. (2023) highlighted how social media use, especially when active and paired with strong communication skills, can reduce social anxiety, thus supporting students' psychological well-being and crowd care capacities.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study uses a cross-sectional, descriptive correlational design, collecting data simultaneously through a quantitative questionnaire. While this approach provides a broad view of students' perspectives on social media and critical thinking, it limits the ability to establish causality. The research aims to describe and understand the current situation, exploring the relationship between social media use such as relationship maintenance, entertainment, information, and active sharing and critical thinking skills like analysis, curiosity, reflection, and care. It also examines how student characteristics relate to their social media motivations among high school students in the Manticao District.

Participants

This study involved 300 randomly selected junior high students from the Manticao District, Division of Misamis Oriental, during the 2023–2024 school year, out of a total population of 1,722. Participants came from six public schools, including Manticao National High School (112), Cabalantian National High School (89), Punta Silum Integrated School (41), Tuod Integrated School (38), Mahayahay Integrated School (10), and Malibato Integrated School (10). Their input provided valuable data on social media usage and critical thinking skills in the district.

Data Collection

This research used a descriptive questionnaire adapted from Shieh and Na-Songkhla's (2024) study on social networking sites' effects on students' media literacy and critical thinking. It aimed to assess social media use and critical thinking skills among junior high students in Manticao District public schools during the 2023–2024 school year. The questionnaire has three parts: Part I covers respondent profiles (age, sex, grade level, screen time, allowance, gadgets, attitude); Part II addresses social media usage (relationship maintenance, entertainment, learning, active dissemination); and Part III examines critical thinking skills (analysis, curiosity, reflection, crowd care), providing a comprehensive view of their relationship.

Data Analysis

The procedure involved data collection, tabulation, and analysis using various statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used for Problems 1, 2, and 3 to summarize the data on social media use and critical thinking among Manticao District high school students. For Problem 4, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) was applied to determine the significance, direction, and strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

4. Results and Discussions

Problem 1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, grade level, daily screen time, daily allowance, gadgets used, and attitude toward social media usage?

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents' Profile according to Age

Category	Frequency	Percentage
16 years old and above	81	27.0
15 years old	84	28.0
14 years old	74	24.7
13 years old and below	61	20.3
Total	**300**	**100.0**

Table 1 reveals that the majority of social media users among the respondents are aged 15 to 16, with 15-year-olds comprising the highest percentage at 28%. This indicates that social media use is most prevalent among higher junior high school students, whose developmental stage fosters independence, identity exploration, and peer interaction (Winstone et al., 2021). Although students aged 13 and below had the lowest representation, their presence suggests early exposure to social media, which brings both opportunities and risks, including cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content. The COVID-19 pandemic further increased digital engagement, with adolescents heavily relying on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube for communication and learning continuity (Bozzola et al., 2022). Overall, the age distribution emphasizes the need for educators to guide students particularly those aged 15 to 16 in the responsible use of social media, as excessive and non-academic usage may negatively affect academic performance, well-being, and lifestyle.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents' Profile According to Sex

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	143	47.7
Female	157	52.3
Total	**300**	**100.0**

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents are female, comprising 52.3% of the total, indicating that female students in the District of Manticao are more active social media users and more likely to participate in studies involving surveys. This trend aligns with research findings that females generally use social media more frequently than males for emotional expression, relationship-building, and identity formation (Boer et al., 2021). In contrast, males, who make up 47.7% of the respondents, are less inclined toward social media use and are more drawn to video gaming, which may explain their lower participation in the study. Studies also reveal that girls tend to engage more with smartphones and social platforms, while boys spend more time gaming, often exposing them to different digital behaviors and risks (Twenge & Martin, 2020). Additionally, the higher female representation may reflect the broader educational

context, where female enrollment often surpasses male enrollment, contributing to their dominance among respondents.

Table 3
Distribution of Respondents' Profile according to Grade Level

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Grade 10	78	26.0
Grade 9	76	25.3
Grade 8	74	24.7
Grade 7	72	24.0
Total	**300**	**100.0**

Table 3 shows that Grade 10 students comprise the highest proportion of respondents at 26%, indicating that they are the most active social media users among the surveyed grade levels. This suggests that Grade 10 students, as digital natives, are more engaged with visually driven platforms like TikTok and Instagram, using them for self-expression, communication, and information access. Their developmental stage also aligns with increased self-awareness and identity formation, making them more likely to participate in studies involving social media (Pfeifer & Berkman, 2020). In contrast, Grade 7 students had the lowest participation at 24.3%, likely due to cognitive immaturity, parental restrictions, and school policies that limit their exposure to and understanding of social media. These younger students are typically more cautious and less familiar with online interactions. As Hermino and Arifin (2020) note, the transition to higher grade levels often brings increased autonomy and engagement, explaining the greater representation of older students in social media-related research.

Table 4
Distribution of Respondents' Profile according to Daily Screen Time

Category	Frequency	Percentage
8 hours and above	79	26.3
6 hours – 7 hours	97	32.3
4 hours – 5 hours	79	26.3
2 hours – 3 hours	34	11.3
1 hour and below	11	3.7
Total	**300**	**100.0**

Table 4 shows that the majority of respondents 32.3% spend 6 to 7 hours daily on screens, highlighting the pervasive role of digital media in high school students' lives, particularly in the District of Manticao. This high screen time is driven by both academic needs, such as digital learning tools and research, and personal activities like social media use, streaming, and gaming. Studies by Männikkö (2020) and Bozzola et al. (2022) support these findings, noting that adolescents often spend around 7 hours per day online, driven by social connection needs, peer influence, and the addictive nature of digital platforms. In contrast, only 3.7% of respondents reported using screens for 1 hour or less, suggesting that limited screen time may correlate with better classroom engagement, mental health, and academic performance. These

findings underscore the need to balance digital engagement with offline activities to promote students' overall well-being and healthy digital habits.

Table 5
Distribution of Respondents' Profile according to Daily Allowance

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Php100 pesos and above	82	27.3
Php60 to 99 pesos	114	38.0
Php30 to 59 pesos	73	24.3
Php29 pesos and below	31	10.3
Total	**300**	**100.0**

Table 5 reveals that the highest percentage of respondents (38.0%) have a daily allowance ranging from Php 60 to 99, indicating that most students in the District of Manticao can afford consistent access to mobile data or internet services, thus sustaining daily social media use. This reflects how students prioritize connectivity and how even modest financial resources are allocated toward digital access. Uy-Tioco (2019) highlighted the role of affordable prepaid internet and mobile data in expanding digital connectivity among Filipinos, while Mougharbel et al. (2023) emphasized that socioeconomic status directly influences adolescents' ability to engage with social media platforms. Conversely, only 10.3% of students receive Php 29 or less per day, which significantly limits their ability to access the internet and participate in digital learning or social interactions, raising concerns about digital inequality. These financial disparities affect not only students' online engagement but also their educational and social development, underscoring the need to bridge access gaps to ensure equitable digital inclusion for all learners.

Table 6
Distribution of Respondents' Profile according to Gadgets Used

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Cellphone	241	80.3
Tablet	21	7.0
Laptop	6	2.0
Personal Computer	2	0.7
All of the above	30	10.0
Total	**300**	**100.0**

Table 6 highlights that a significant majority of respondents (80.3%) use cellphones as their primary gadget for browsing social media, underscoring the dominance of mobile devices among Junior High School students in the District of Manticao. The portability, accessibility, and affordability of cellphones make them the preferred choice over personal computers, which had the lowest usage at only 0.7%. This trend reflects a broader societal shift in which smartphones have become essential tools for communication, learning, and entertainment. Studies by Wang et al. (2023) and Poujol et al. (2022) support these findings, noting that adolescents rely heavily on cellphones for constant and convenient

access to digital platforms. While cellphones offer educational benefits and enhance connectivity, their overuse may also lead to mental health concerns, distraction, and reduced academic focus. These insights emphasize the need for a balanced and guided use of mobile technology among students, ensuring that digital tools support rather than hinder their overall development.

Table 7
Distribution of Respondents' Attitude toward Social Media Usage

Indicator	Mean	SD	Description
As a student,			
I feel happy, connected, and informed when using social media.	3.58	0.51	Strongly Agree
I often use social media platforms to impress other people.	3.29	0.53	Agree
I am obliged to check social media constantly or struggle to limit their usage.	3.17	0.57	Agree
I should express myself freely using social media.	3.20	0.63	Agree
I should be entertained by the content on social media so that I can be relaxed.	3.31	0.60	Agree
I believe social media helped me learn new things and discover new perspectives.	3.45	0.53	Agree
I consider that sharing personal information is a security concern when using social media.	3.30	0.61	Agree
I realize that if I use social media, I can compare myself to my friends' daily updates.	3.27	0.63	Agree
I believe staying connected to social media trends is useful as a student.	3.30	0.63	Agree
I feel that I can use social media as a tool for learning.	3.37	0.57	Agree
Overall	**3.32**	**0.58**	**Agree**

Table 7 reveals that respondents generally hold a positive attitude toward social media usage, with an overall mean of 3.32 (SD = 0.58), interpreted as "Agree." This suggests that students view social media favorably, associating it with connection, information, and emotional satisfaction. Notably, the highest-rated item, "I feel happy, connected, or informed when using social media"—earned a mean of 3.58, interpreted as "Very Positive," indicating strong consensus among students about the emotional benefits of social media. Studies by Ostic et al. (2021) and Vaingankar et al. (2022) support these findings, highlighting that responsible social media use enhances social relationships, well-being, and a sense of belonging. However, the lowest-rated item, with a mean of 3.17, shows that many students feel compelled to check social media constantly, reflecting a potential overreliance. This aligns with findings by Barton et al. (2021) and O'Day and Heimberg (2021), who link compulsive social media use to reduced academic performance and underlying psychological factors like anxiety and the need for social validation. These insights emphasize the importance of guided and balanced social media use to maximize its educational and emotional benefits while minimizing distractions.

Problem 2. What is the respondents' level of social media usage based on relationship maintenance, entertainment and relaxation, information and learning, and active dissemination?

Table 8
Summary Distribution of the Respondents' Level of Social Media Usage

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Relationship Maintenance	3.18	0.67	High
Entertainment and Relaxation	3.17	0.65	High
Information and Learning	3.13	0.67	High
Active Dissemination	3.06	0.67	High
Overall	**3.14**	**0.67**	**High**

Table 8 indicates that the respondents' overall level of social media usage is High, with a mean of 3.14 (SD = 0.67), suggesting consistent and frequent engagement across various functions such as relationship maintenance, entertainment, learning, and content sharing. The small standard deviation points to uniformity in responses, highlighting that social media is an integral part of the students' daily lives. The highest-rated component was relationship maintenance (mean = 3.18), reinforcing the idea that students primarily use social media to stay connected with friends and family. This aligns with findings by Yue et al. (2023), who noted that social media strengthens bonding and bridging social capital. Conversely, active dissemination scored lowest (mean = 3.06), though still high, implying that students are less inclined to share content publicly, possibly due to privacy concerns or a preference for personal interactions. Tus et al. (2021) cautioned that while high social media usage fosters communication, it may also blur boundaries between online and offline identities, affecting well-being. These findings suggest that while students benefit from social media's relational and informational affordances, mindful usage remains essential to balance its social and psychological impacts.

Problem 3. What is the level of the respondents' critical thinking skills with regard to analysis ability, curiosity, reflection, and crowd care?

Table 9
Summary Distribution of Respondents' Level of Critical Thinking Skills

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Analysis Ability	3.12	0.66	High
Curiosity	3.10	0.67	High
Reflection	3.05	0.68	High
Crowd Care	3.06	0.70	High
Overall	**3.08**	**0.68**	**High**

Table 9 reveals that the respondents demonstrated a High overall level of critical thinking skills, with a mean of 3.08 (SD = 0.68), indicating generally consistent responses across the group. Among the various

dimensions, Analysis scored the highest (mean = 3.12), suggesting students are adept at breaking down information and drawing logical conclusions, a finding aligned with El-Soufi and See (2019), who emphasized the importance of explicitly teaching analysis to enhance critical thinking. Conversely, Reflection received the lowest mean (3.05), still interpreted as High but suggesting less frequent engagement in introspective thinking. This gap highlights the need to strengthen reflective practices in educational settings, a point supported by Holdo (2023), who noted that reflection is essential for transformative learning and deeper understanding. Overall, the data suggest that while students exhibit strong analytical thinking, further emphasis on reflective exercises may foster more balanced and comprehensive critical thinking development.

Problem 4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' social media usage and their critical thinking skills?

Table 10
Result of the Test on the Relationship between the Respondents' Social Media Usage and their Critical Thinking Skills

Social Media Usage	**Critical Thinking Skills**				
	Analysis Ability R-value P-value Interpreta-tion	**Curiosity** R-value P-value Interpreta-tion	**Reflection** R-value P-value Interpreta-tion	**Crowd Care** R-value P-value Interpreta-tion	**Overall R-value P-value Interpreta-tion**
Relationship Maintenance	.529** 0.00 S	.470** 0.00 S	.493** 0.00 S	.504** 0.00 S	.543** 0.00 S
Entertainment and Relaxation	.490** 0.00 S	.527** 0.00 S	.498** 0.00 S	.503** 0.00 S	.560** 0.00 S
Information and Learning	.621** 0.00 S	.588** 0.00 S	.612** 0.00 S	.599** 0.00 S	.678** 0.00 S
Active Dissemination	.600** 0.00 S	.617** 0.00 S	.627** 0.00 S	.609** 0.00 S	.671** 0.00 S

Table 10 reveals a significant positive relationship between social media usage and students' critical thinking skills specifically in analysis, curiosity, reflection, and crowd care as supported by a p-value of less than .001. The findings demonstrate that students who actively use social media for academic purposes, such as research and knowledge sharing, tend to exhibit stronger critical thinking abilities. This aligns with Raza et al. (2020), who emphasize that social media engagement offers social and educational benefits, and with Sivakumar et al. (2023), who found that social networking enhances student motivation and performance through knowledge sharing. The study further shows that entertainment and information-seeking behaviors on social media correlate positively with critical thinking, especially when users engage with intellectually stimulating content. Activities like participating in online discussions, accessing educational material, and practicing active dissemination contribute to the development of skills such as evaluation, analysis, and problem-solving. These insights underscore the importance of promoting digital literacy and purposeful social media use in education to foster deeper thinking and informed decision-making among students.

Problem 5. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' social media usage, critical thinking skills, and their profiles?

Table 11
Results of the Test on the Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Social Media Usage and their Profile

Respondents' Profile	**Social Media Usage**				
	Relationship Maintenance R-value P-value Interpreta-tion	**Entertain-ment and Relaxation** R-value P-value Interpreta-tion	**Information and Learning** R-value P-value Interpretation	**Active Dissemina-tion** R-value P-value Interpreta-tion	**Overall** **R-value** **P-value** **Interpreta-tion**
Age	-0.05 0.39 NS	-0.03 0.64 NS	-0.01 0.86 NS	-0.05 0.39 NS	0.00 0.99 NS
Sex	-0.09 0.13 NS	-0.11 0.07 NS	-0.10 0.07 NS	-0.05 0.42 NS	-.119* 0.04 NS
Grade Level	-0.03 0.59 NS	-0.01 0.83 NS	0.01 0.91 NS	-0.05 0.44 NS	0.03 0.58 NS

Daily Screen Time	.191** 0.00 S	.214** 0.00 S	.222** 0.00 S	.181** 0.00 S	.227** 0.00 S
Daily Allowance	.192** 0.00 S	.232** 0.00 S	.226** 0.00 S	.252** 0.00 S	.269** 0.00 S
Gadgets Used	0.09 0.13 NS	0.07 0.20 NS	0.09 0.14 NS	0.08 0.18 NS	0.11 0.05 NS

Table 11 explores the significant relationship between students' social media usage and their profiles, particularly highlighting daily screen time and daily allowance as key factors influencing engagement across all dimensions of social media. The findings indicate that students with higher screen time and greater financial support are more likely to participate in a wide range of online activities such as commenting, sharing, and interacting with content. This aligns with studies by Iyimaya and Irmak (2021), and Asio et al. (2023), which link increased screen exposure to more extensive social media use, and note that family rules, parenting style, and financial capacity play influential roles. In contrast, the study found no significant correlation between social media use and the respondents' age, sex, grade level, or gadgets used, suggesting that such variables do not notably impact how students interact online. These insights call for parents and educators to set healthy boundaries and encourage responsible digital behavior while recognizing the central role of screen time and allowances in shaping students' online habits.

Table 12
Results of the Test on the Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Critical Thinking Skills and their Profile

Respondents' Profile	**Critical Thinking Skills**				
	Analysis Ability R-value P-value Interpretation	**Curiosity** R-value P-value Interpreta-tion	**Reflection** R-value P-value Interpretation	**Crowd Care** R-value P-value Interpretation	**Overall** **R-value** **P-value** **Interpretation**
Age	0.07 0.23 NS	0.06 0.33 NS	0.02 0.74 NS	0.06 0.30 NS	0.06 0.31 NS
Sex	-0.06	-0.06	-0.03	-0.11	-0.07

	0.27 NS	0.30 NS	0.59 NS	0.05 NS	0.20 NS
Grade Level	0.07 0.21 NS	0.06 0.33 NS	0.02 0.76 NS	0.07 0.20 NS	0.06 0.32 NS
Daily Screen Time	0.233** 0.00 S	0.195** 0.00 S	0.167** 0.00 S	0.254** 0.00 S	0.229** 0.00 S
Daily Allowance	0.188** 0.00 S	0.149** 0.01 S	0.163** 0.01 S	0.168** 0.00 S	0.201** 0.00 S
Gadgets Used	0.242** 0.00 S	0.346** 0.00 S	0.326** 0.00 S	0.289* 0.02 S	0.185** 0.01 S

Table 12 reveals that students' critical thinking skills are significantly correlated with daily screen time, daily allowance, and types of gadgets used, as indicated by R-values and p-values below the 0.05 significance level. Increased screen time was positively associated with all dimensions of critical thinking, possibly due to greater exposure to information and interactive content, supporting findings by Johnson and Wang (2020) and González and Smith (2019). Similarly, a higher daily allowance correlated with better critical thinking, as financial flexibility may provide access to educational resources and experiences that promote analytical thinking, aligning with Nakamura and Yamada (2019). Use of varied digital devices also positively related to analytical and reflective skills, with Liu and Chen (2020) noting the role of digital interactions in enhancing empathy and social awareness. Conversely, age, sex, and grade level showed no significant relationship with any critical thinking dimensions, suggesting that these demographic factors do not substantially influence students' critical thinking abilities. These results underscore the importance of thoughtful integration of technology and financial resources in students' lives to support critical thinking development.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study highlights the significant relationship of social media usage, such as relationship maintenance, entertainment and relaxation, information and learning, and active dissemination towards their critical thinking skills.

Moreover, the study reveals a significant relationship between social media usage and critical thinking skills regarding students' profiles, such as daily screen time and allowance, and the impact of gadgets used.

Recommendations

Teachers should promote healthy social media habits and integrate digital literacy into the curriculum. They should encourage students to use social media for sharing relevant lesson content and engaging in thoughtful online discussions.

Teachers must guide learners to critically assess social media content by questioning its credibility and recognizing biases.

School heads and teachers should design activities that use social media to enhance critical thinking through analysis and evaluation of online information.

They should also support responsible gadget use and increased screen time when it positively contributes to learning.

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