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## Research Article

### Social Media Exposure and Grammar Proficiency of Junior High School Students': A Correlational Study

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#### ABSTRACT

Social media has emerged as a contemporary form of media with diverse attributes and characteristics. It serves as a means of instruction, and the younger generation frequently engages with it for various social interactions and communication purposes. While social media offers features not limited to education and is readily accessible to students, it can also impact certain academic aspects through this new digital medium. This study investigated the association between social media exposure and grammar proficiency among junior high school students, specifically spelling and punctuation marks usage. The researchers employed a correlational design and collected quantitative data. Through, total population sampling method, students from Grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 in a laboratory school in Eastern Visayas were chosen. The questionnaire included a spelling and punctuation examination, and the results were analyze using statistical methods such as mean, percentage, standard deviation, Pearson correlation ( $r$ ), and Eta – correlation. This study's findings indicate no significant relationship between the grammar proficiency of the respondents and their social media exposure, as there is a relatively low correlation and association between the time spent on social media and grammar proficiency test scores. However, the study also revealed a positive correlation between age and grammar proficiency, implying that the older the respondents, the higher their knowledge about correct spelling and punctuation marks usage. Furthermore, the study also suggests conducting further research to explore the relationship between other components of grammar competency and specific social media platforms, such as TikTok, which has the highest hours of exposure.

**Keywords:** Grammar proficiency, Junior high school, K-12, Social media, Spelling, Use of punctuation marks

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## Introduction

Social media is a modern and widely used online platform that enables people to connect with their social network, interact with other users, and engage with the general public through connections, comments, and content creation. Educational institutions also utilize social media to enhance instructional resources with the help of technology. As a result, in the present context, social media is regarded as necessary for communication and learning and can also contribute to developing writing abilities. Additionally, increasing social media integration in education impacts teaching methods and practices, especially in student and coworker engagement (Patel, 2016).

Additionally, this also refers to various platforms that allow everyone to convey knowledge and plays a big part in many people's lives, especially students. Nowadays, students can interact with their peers, instructors, and family using social media platforms and as a modality in the learning process. Using social media platforms enhances the student's English language learning skills. According to Walsh (2022), the current era witnesses the popularity of ten major social media platforms: TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp. These platforms serve diverse functions, such as YouTube for sharing videos and novels online and Twitter and Instagram for microblogging. On average, students spend around 2 to 3 hours daily on social media, with males tending to rely more heavily on social media networks than females for various reasons.

According to Heffner (2016), utilizing social media to cope with academic setbacks can be beneficial, especially when students connect with peers experiencing similar challenges. Engaging in social media communication allows students to address and discuss concerns related to their coursework. Moreover, some research findings indicate that social media can facilitate teenagers' social and emotional development, and adolescents who engage with social media platforms like Facebook are more likely to acquire the six fundamental personality qualities crucial for academic achievement: competence, confidence, connection, character,

compassion, and contribution (Lee & Horsley, 2017).

Namaziandost and Nasri (2019) argue that the widespread use of social media is a valuable educational tool for both students and teachers, highlighting the continuous learning and development process of education, educators, and students. Teachers employ social media platforms for educational purposes, such as promoting online classes, facilitating group discussions, and providing guidance and support to students in formal writing (Wil et al., 2019).

The need for rapid and easily accessible communication has led to the widespread use of different social media platforms. Consequently, there has been an increase in misspellings, the use of acronyms, and the improper utilization of informal language. In a study by Wil et al. (2019), social media is considered the finest medium for enhancing writing abilities in English and may make the writing process more enjoyable because social media usage can be advantageous for gathering information, improving reading comprehension, and contextualizing student assignments. Relatively, professors should also employ social media platforms to facilitate online classes and group discussions while providing guidance, mentorship, and support to students in their formal writing endeavors.

Another study by Adjin-Tetty et al. (2022), reveals that social media usage can lead to addiction and diversion. Therefore, children must learn to manage distractions that frequently occur outside school. The increasing interest of students in online communication is considered a persistent trend in today's society. According to a study by Van Dijk et al. (2016), students may only sometimes adhere to traditional written language conventions due to the prevalence of cell phones, the internet, and social media. Including the use of phonetic substitutions like "ur" instead of "your" and acronyms like "lol" for "laughing out loud."

Various surveys indicate that users of modern social networks often need to pay more attention to proper punctuation and use codes instead in both public and private discussions and emails. The focus is more on being understood rather than adhering to punctuation and other language standards. However, young

people must also consider using proper punctuation, especially on popular social media platforms like Facebook, to effectively engage their audience. Students may unintentionally incorporate abbreviations and truncated words from texting jargon into their formal writing, leading grammatical, punctuation, and capitalization issues due to social media usage and insufficient language skills (Bensaid & Touati, 2019).

Considering the existing research on social media in education, there were only limited studies specifically examine how social media exposure influences academic achievement in terms of grammar competency, particularly in spelling and punctuation. Based on these previous findings, the researchers were motivated to conduct a study that explores the relationship between social media usage and grammar proficiency, explicitly focusing on spelling and punctuation. Lastly, the study also gathered de-

mographic information about students, including age, gender, social media platforms used, and level of exposure to social media.

**Methods**

**Research Design**

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational approach to examine the correlation between students' social media exposure and grammar proficiency. In correlational research, two variables are studied, and this study intends to examine the relationship between social media exposure and grammar proficiency.

**Research Respondents**

The study's target population encompasses the entire junior high school level population of an Integrated Laboratory School in Region 8. This sample was chosen using an intact class sampling technique or a complete population approach.

*Table 1. Number of respondents for junior high school students*

Grade Level	Number of Enrollees
7	34
8	32
9	36
10	25
Total	127

**Research Instruments**

In order to assess the participants' grammar proficiency in spelling and punctuation mark usage, the researchers utilized a modified questionnaire. This questionnaire was developed by incorporating content from online worksheets and DepEd textbooks, and it consisted of two sections: the social media exposure inventory and the grammar proficiency test. First is the social media inventory comprised the first section, aimed to collect demographic information such as age, sex, gender, social media platform use, and the extent of social media exposure.

**Validation of Instruments**

To establish the questionnaire's validity, the researchers sought the expertise of three professionals specializing in language, elementary education, and educational research. The

research instrument was also validated using a rating scale adapted from Waltz and Bausell (1983). Subsequently, the researchers conducted a pilot test of the questionnaire in a public junior high school. They selected 30 students from Grades 7 to 10, ensuring an equal representation of participants from each grade level.

Based on the outcome of the pilot testing conducted, the overall Cronbach alpha value of the reliability of the questionnaires is 0.80, with the spelling test result yielding a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.80 and the punctuation mark usage test resulting in a Cronbach alpha value of 0.81. Both of these values indicate good reliability. Additionally, the researcher considers a Cronbach's alpha value of .7 or higher sufficient, which aligns with the generally accepted rule for an acceptable level of reliability, as mentioned by Ursachi et al. (2015).

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha of the Grammar Test

Grammar Test	Cronbach's Alpha
Spelling	.80
Use of Punctuation	.81

**Analysis of Data**

The researchers utilized statistical methods, such as frequency and percentage distribution, to examine the qualitative data collected from the respondents and describe their demographic profiles. SPSS (Statistical Package for

Social Sciences) was also used to analyze the survey data.

First, Pearson's correlational analysis was also used to determine the significant relationship between students' grammar proficiency and their profile variables for age and extent of social media exposure.

Table 3. Pearson's Correlational Analysis

Pearson r correlation	Interpretation
0.90 – 1.00	Very high positive/negative correlation
0.70 – 0.89	High Positive/negative correlation
0.54 – 0.69	Moderate positive/negative correlation
0.30 – 0.49	Low Positive/Negative Correlation
0.00 – 0.29	Negligible

Eta correlation was also employed to assess the relationship between students' grammar

proficiency and their profile variables for sex and social media platforms used.

Table 4. Eta correlational analysis

Eta correlation	Interpretation
0.01	Small effect
0.06	Medium effect
0.14	Large effect

Lastly, the researchers based the student's grammar proficiency level on the guidelines

outlined in the Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 31, issued in 2020.

Table 5. DepEd-based rating

Description	Rating
Beginning	74% and below
Developing	75-79%
Approaching Proficiency	80-84%
Proficient	85-89%
Excellent	90-99%

**Result and Discussion**

This chapter comprises a comprehensive overview of the researchers' findings and data analysis from the research procedure. It is divided into two sections. The first section presents the study's findings, including the profile of the research respondents. The second section focuses on the grammar proficiency of

students. This chapter will also present numerical data in tables accompanied by corresponding labels for clarity and reference.

**Demographic Profile**

To obtain the needed data for the study, the researchers collected the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of (1) the age of the

respondents, indicating the number of years since their birth. Additionally, they gathered data on the (2) sex of the respondents, referring to their biological gender assigned at birth. In addition to these demographic factors, the researchers also focused on gathering information regarding (3) the social media platforms that the respondents have used and continue to use and (4) the amount of time the respondents spend on each social media platform.

### 1. Age

For the study context, the researchers gathered necessary information about the respondents' age and examined its correlation with their grammar proficiency. The researchers also utilized the data collected regarding the respondents' age to categorize the respondents into different age groups.

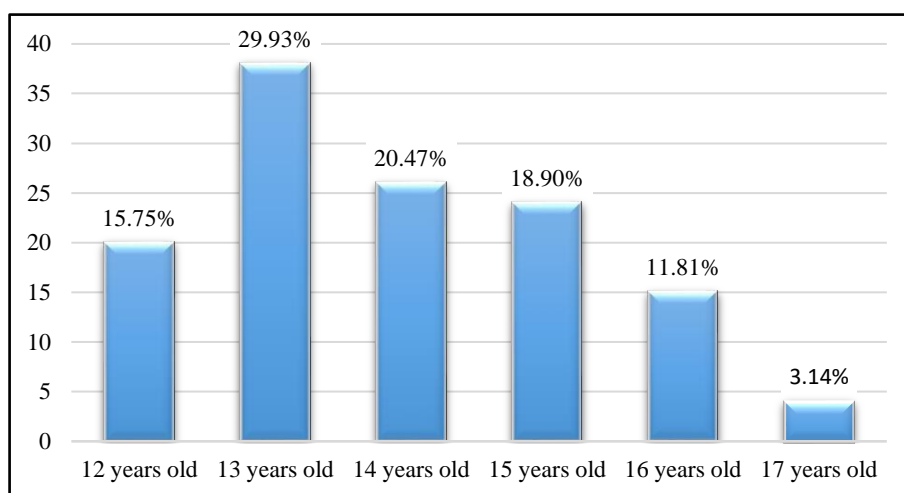


Figure 1. Age of the respondents

The age of the respondents varies between 12 and 17, with an mean age of 13.72 and a standard deviation of 1.37. The figure illustrates that 20 respondents, equivalent to 15.75%, are 12 years old. Similarly, 38 respondents, accounting for 29.93%, fall into the 13-year-old category. Moreover, 26 participants, or 20.47% of the respondents, are under 14 years old. While 24 respondents, representing 18.90% of the sample, are under

15 years. There were also 15 or 11.81% of participants under 16 years. Finally, the least represented group, with only four or 3.14% of the total respondents, are participants aged 17 years old.

### 2. Sex

The gender of the respondents is another demographic variable examined for the study.

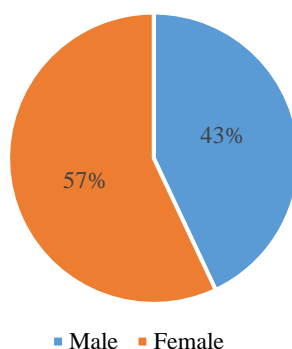


Figure 2. Sex of the respondents

Figure 2 provides information on the gender distribution of the respondents. The table shows that out of the 127 respondents, 54 participants were male, while 73 individuals were female. Hence, the total number of respondents were composed of 43% male respondents, and 57% female respondent - implying that more females participated in the study than males.

### 3. Social Media Platform Used

The social media platforms used by the respondents are among the independent variables investigated in the study. For this purpose, the researcher collected data about the social media platform used in this study and correlated it with the grammar proficiency of the participants.

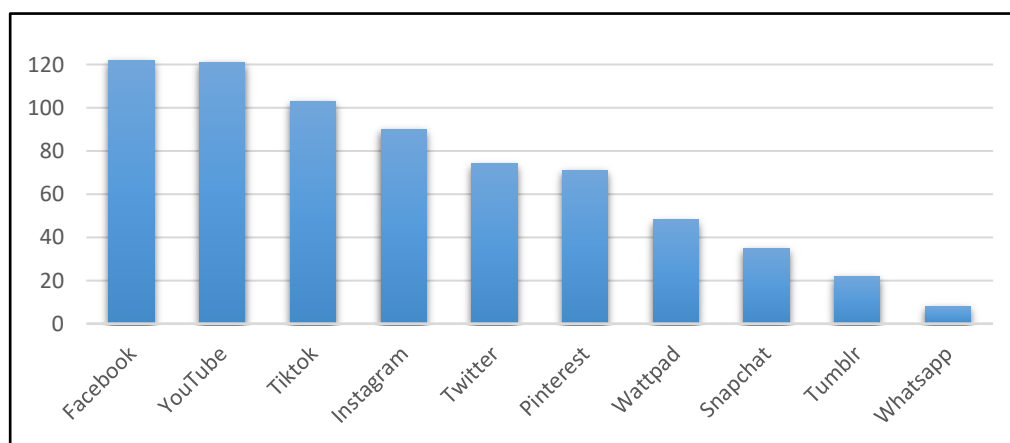


Figure 3. Social media platform used

The figure reveals that the respondents used various social media platforms, including Facebook, Youtube, Tiktok, Wattpad, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, Tumblr, and Whatsapp. Among these platforms, Facebook emerged as the most widely used, with 122 respondents utilizing it. It is followed by Youtube (n=121), Tiktok (n=103), and Instagram (n=90) in the second, third, and fourth positions, respectively. Twitter (n=74), Pinterest (n=71), and Wattpad (n=48) secured the fourth, fifth, and sixth ranks, respectively. The three least utilized platforms on the list were Snapchat (n=35), Tumblr (n=22), and Whatsapp (n=8).

According to Walsh (2022), Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Pinterest, Reddit, YouTube, and WhatsApp are currently among the top ten popular social media networks. This finding aligns with the present study, which identified Facebook as the most frequently used platform, boasting 2.9 billion monthly active users worldwide.

Multiple surveys and studies have also acknowledged Facebook's prominence as one

of the most well-known social media networks ever created. Its usage enables users and language learners to connect with original content and acquire new words, mainly through constant communication (Selwyn, 2012).

Similarly, a survey conducted by the Digital 2023 Global Overview Reports in the Philippine context indicates that 84.5 million social media users in the country, as of 2023, utilize platforms such as Facebook, Tiktok, Twitter, Instagram, and Messenger. Out of this users, a significant portion of 80 million individuals specifically utilized Facebook.

### 4. Extent of Social Media Exposure

The extent of social media exposure refers to the duration of the respondent social media platforms usage per day. This study measures the extent of social media exposure of the respondents in hours. The table below provides information on the respondents' daily exposure to social media and presents the overall mean hours and standard deviation of the respondents' social media exposure.

Table 6. Extent of Social Media Exposure

Type of social media	Mean Hours	Standard Deviation
TikTok	3.08	1.519
YouTube	2.77	1.616
Wattpad	2.31	1.490
Facebook	2.00	1.414
Twitter	1.43	1.061
Instagram	1.39	0.803
WhatsApp	1.25	0.463
Tumblr	1.18	0.395
Pinterest	1.08	0.280
Snapchat	1.00	0.171
Overall mean and standard deviation	= 10.952	3.054

Table 6 highlights that TikTok has the highest mean hour of exposure, with a mean value of 3.08 hours and a standard deviation of 1.519. Youtube follows TikTok, with a mean hour of 2.77 and a standard deviation 1.616. Wattpad ranks next, with a mean hour of 2.31 and a standard deviation of 1.490. On the other hand, Tumblr (x=1.18, SD=0.395), Pinterest (x=1.08, SD=0.280), and Snapchat (x=1.00, SD=0.243) have the lowest mean hours of exposure among social media platforms. The overall mean hour of exposure across all platforms is 10.952, with a standard deviation of 3.054.

According to a survey by Statistica (2022), an internet user in the Philippines utilizes various devices and spends approximately 9.14

hours per day accessing the internet. Furthermore, users of different social media platforms spend an average of 3.43 hours per day engaging with social media.

**Grammar Proficiency Level**

Grammatical competency refers to a thorough comprehension of the functioning of language. The concept of "proficiency" was introduced to address the ambiguity arising from the difference between performance and competence. Taylor (1988) further defines *proficiency* as the ability to apply one's competence, while performance is the actual application of proficiency.

Table 7. Test Results' Mean and Standard Deviation

Grammar Category	Mean	Percentage	Proficiency	Standard Deviation
Spelling (n=20)	13.71	68.6%	Beginning	2.872
Punctuation (n=20)	12.86	64.35%	Beginning	2.637
Grammar Proficiency (n=40)	26.58	66.47%	Beginning	4.50

Table 7 illustrates the grammar proficiency level of the respondents. The mean for the spelling test scores is 13.71 or 68.6%, with a standard deviation of 2.873. It indicates that the most of scores on the spelling test are close to the mean value of 13.71. Similarly, the mean = for the punctuation marks test scores is 12.87 or 64.35%, with a standard deviation of 2.638. It suggests that the respondents' scores in

punctuation are also close to the mean of 12.87. Furthermore, the combined grammar proficiency mean score for the spelling and punctuation mark test is 26.58 or 66.74%, with a standard deviation of 4.50. It indicates that most of the scores, in general, deviate from the mean value of 26.58, and the grammar proficiency level of the respondents is still at the beginning level.



**Table 8. The mean scores of the spelling and use of punctuation mark test of each age**

Age	Mean Score for Spelling (n=20)	Mean Score for Use of Punctuation Marks (=20)	Mean Score for Grammar Proficiency (n=40)
12	12.30	11.40	23.70
13	13.39	12.18	25.58
14	13.38	13.65	27.04
15	14.75	14.00	28.75
16	14.53	13.50	27.73
17	16.75	14.00	30.25

Table 8 summarizes the respondents' mean scores for spelling and usage of punctuation marks based on age. The table reveals that respondents under 17 achieved the highest mean score of 16.75 for spelling, 14.00 for punctuation marks, and 30.25 for overall grammar proficiency. On the other hand, respondents under the age of 12 obtained the lowest mean score of 12.30 for spelling, 11.40 for punctuation marks, and 23.70 for grammar proficiency. The results presented in the table suggest a correlation

between spelling test scores and age, indicating that older respondents tend to score higher.

A similar study conducted by Alnjadat et al. (2019) at the University of Sharjah, comparable to this study conducted in the Philippines, found that the average daily social media use ranged from two to three hours. Although males demonstrated a greater reliance on social media networks for various purposes, the study revealed that social media usage had a more significant impact on girls' academic performance than boys.

**The mean scores of the spelling and punctuation mark test of each assigned sex**

**Table 9. The mean scores of the spelling and use of punctuation mark tests of each assigned sex**

Sex	Mean Score for Spelling	Mean Score for Use of Punctuation	Mean Score for Grammar Proficiency
Male	13.31	12.48	25.79
Female	14.01	13.15	27.16
Overall Mean Score	13.71	12.86	26.58

Table 9 provides an overview of the mean scores for spelling and usage of punctuation marks based on the assigned sex of the respondents. As shown in the table, the male respondents obtained a mean score of 13.31 for the spelling test, whereas the female respondents achieved a slightly higher mean score of 14.01 in spelling. Similarly, the male respondents obtained a mean score of 12.48 for using punctuation marks, while the female respondents achieved a higher mean score of 13.15. Overall, the male respondents obtained a mean score of 25.79 for the 40-item grammar proficiency test, while the female respondents achieved a higher mean score of 27.16.

**Relationship between Grammar Proficiency and the Profile Variables**

The following table summarizes the relationship between the respondent's grammar proficiency and their demographic profile. It summarizes the statistical analysis conducted using Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) and Eta correlation. The first column lists the four profile components categorized by the researchers: age, sex, social media platform used, and extent of social media exposure, along with the corresponding statistical treatment method applied. The second column displays the correlation coefficient (r) values. The third column provides the interpretation of the correlation coefficient. The fourth column presents the p-values, and the final column interprets the p-value.



**Relationship between Spelling to the Profile Variables**

Table 10. Relationship between Punctuation Marks to the Profile Variables

Profile	Correlation coefficient	Interpretation	p-value	Interpretation
Age	0.304	Low Positive Correlation	0.001	Significant
Sex	0.015	Small Effect	0.176	Not Significant
Social Media Platform Used	0.076	Medium Effect	0.213	Not Significant
Extent of Social Media Exposure	- 0.050	Negligible	0.572	Not Significant

Table 10 displays the association between the respondents' spelling test results and their demographic profile, including age, sex, social media usage, and extent of social media exposure. The table shows that the correlation between the respondents' age and spelling test scores is low but positive, with a coefficient of 0.304 and a significant p-value of 0.001. It indicates that the age of the respondents is significantly related to their spelling scores. Furthermore, the sex of the respondents also has a small effect on their spelling scores. The table reveals an eta square of 0.015 and a non-significant p-value of 0.176, suggesting insufficient evidence to establish a correlation between sex and spelling test scores.

Moreover, the table indicates that the social media platforms used by the respondents have

a moderate effect on their spelling scores, with an eta square of 0.076 and a non-significant p-value of 0.213. It implies that social media usage has some influence on spelling scores, but the relationship is not statistically significant. In a study conducted by Holmberg (2019), it is stated that various media platforms can effectively motivate individuals to improve their English vocabulary and grammar skills. However, the present study observed that student usage of different social media platforms has little impact on their grammatical competence and spelling test scores. Lastly, the extent of social media exposure shows a negligible correlation coefficient of -0.050 with a non-significant p-value of 0.574. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between spelling performance and the extent of social media exposure.

**Relationship between Punctuation Marks to the Profile Variables**

Table 11. Relationship between Punctuation Marks to the Profile Variables

Profile	Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation	p-value	Interpretation
Age	0.285	Negligible	0.001	Not Significant
Sex	0.016	Small Effect	0.158	Not Significant
Social Media Platform Used	0.026	Small Effect	0.866	Not Significant
Extent of Social Media Exposure	-0.045	Negligible	0.615	Not Significant

Table 11 indicate a negligible correlation of 0.285 with a p-value of 0.001 between the respondents' scores in the usage of punctuation marks and their age. It suggests that age does not significantly correlate with the scores in the punctuation marks test, as the data did not provide enough evidence to support such a relationship.

Regarding the respondents' sex, the data revealed a small effect on using punctuation

marks scores. The Eta coefficient of 0.016 with a p-value of 0.158 suggests significance in this relationship. Similarly, the type of social media platform used by the respondents also had a small effect on their scores in the punctuation marks test. The Eta coefficient of 0.026 and a p-value of 0.866 indicate significance. Thus, the data provided enough evidence to conclude that the social media platforms used by the

respondents have a significant relationship with their scores on the punctuation marks test.

Furthermore, the study's findings revealed a negligible relationship between the extent of social media exposure and the usage of punctuation marks. The respondent's scores showed a

coefficient of -0.045 with a p-value of 0.615, indicating no significant correlation. The extent of social media exposure did not substantially impact the respondents' scores in the punctuation marks test, as the data did not provide enough evidence to support such a relationship.

**Relationship between Grammar Proficiency to the Profile Variables**

Table 12. Relationship between Grammar Proficiency to the Profile Variables

Profile	Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation	p-value	Interpretation
Age	0.361	Low Positive Correlation	0.00003	Significant
Sex	0.023	Small Effect	0.091	Not Significant
Social Media Platform Used	0.060	Medium Effect	0.377	Not Significant
Extent of Social Media Exposure	-0.059	Negligible	0.513	Not Significant

Table 12 presents a low positive correlation of 0.361 with a p-value of 0.00003 between the respondents' age and grammar proficiency. It suggests a significant relationship, and the data provide enough evidence to conclude that age correlates with grammar proficiency. In other words, older respondents tend to achieve higher scores on the grammar proficiency test.

Regarding the respondents' sex, the data indicate a small effect on their grammar proficiency. The Eta coefficient of 0.023 with a p-value of 0.91 suggests no significance. Therefore, the gathered data do not provide enough evidence to establish a correlation or impact between sex and grammar proficiency. This finding aligns with a study titled "Grammar Competence of Junior High School Students," which found no significant relationship between sex and grammar proficiency.

Similarly, the type of social media platform used by the respondents has a small effect on their grammar proficiency, as indicated in the table. The Eta coefficient of 0.060 with a p-value of 0.377 suggests no significance. Thus, insufficient evidence supports a correlation between the social media platform used and grammar proficiency. Additionally, there is a negligible relationship between the extent of social media exposure and grammar proficiency. The correlation coefficient of -0.059 with a p-value of 0.513 indicates no significance. It implies that there is no sufficient evidence to demonstrate a correlation between

the extent of social media exposure and grammar proficiency.

**Conclusion**

Based on the study's findings, it is evident that students, particularly those aged 13, extensively use various social media platforms, with Facebook and YouTube being the most popular. Additionally, the study reveals that students dedicate a significant amount of their leisure time to browsing social media. However, despite their heavy social media exposure, the study found that it has negligible impact on the students' grammar proficiency. The results indicate room for improvement in the students' grammar skills, particularly spelling and punctuation, as their proficiency level is still at the beginner stage.

The implications of this finding for education suggest the usage of social media as an interactive tool to enhance grammar proficiency due to its beneficial features and accessibility. Given that students today are highly exposed to technology and social networks, the study implies that teachers and school administrators can actively support improving students' grammar skills by integrating various social media platforms into their teaching methods.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the role of parents in limiting and guiding their children's use of gadgets and social media. Parents, as primary influencers on their children's behavior and attitude, should encourage them to

limit the time spent browsing the internet instead of engaging in other leisure activities and studying. Consequently, the study concludes that schools and homes can create a digital environment that offers educational content on social media platforms, particularly content that enhances students' spelling and punctuation abilities.

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