



SOCIAL MEDIA EXPOSURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LEARNERS' AWARENESS OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of social media exposure on learners' awareness of contemporary issues among Grade 10 learners in the municipality of Lingayen, Schools Division Office I Pangasinan during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it determined the level of social media exposure in terms of frequency, duration, platforms accessed, and type of content consumed, as well as the level of learners' awareness of contemporary issues in terms of environmental, political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions. Furthermore, it investigated the significant relationship and effect of social media exposure on learners' awareness of contemporary issues and proposed an intervention program based on the findings. A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized, and data were gathered through a validated survey questionnaire. Statistical tools such as mean, Pearson r , and regression analysis were employed. Results revealed that learners demonstrated a high level of social media exposure across all indicators, with particularly high engagement in entertainment and short-form content. Likewise, learners exhibited a high level of awareness of contemporary issues, especially in environmental, political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects, although their active participation in discussions and practices was generally moderate. Further analysis showed a significant moderate positive relationship between social media exposure and learners' awareness of contemporary issues. Additionally, social media exposure was found to have a significant positive effect on learners' awareness, explaining a substantial portion of its variance. These findings indicate that while social media serves as an important source of information and awareness, learners' engagement remains more passive than participatory. Based on the findings, the study proposed an intervention program focusing on media literacy enhancement, critical thinking development, and guided social media use to improve learners' awareness and

engagement with contemporary issues. The study concluded that social media exposure contributes significantly to learners' awareness; however, structured educational interventions are necessary to transform awareness into meaningful participation and deeper understanding.

Keywords: *social media exposure, contemporary issues awareness, media literacy*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the way information is accessed and shared, particularly through social media platforms. In today's interconnected world, learners are constantly exposed to vast amounts of information, which influences their awareness of contemporary issues. Social media has become a dominant source of news and information among students, making it a powerful tool in shaping their understanding of societal concerns (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

In the context of education, social media is increasingly recognized as an informal learning environment where students engage with real-world issues beyond the classroom. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok provide learners with immediate access to current events, enabling them to stay informed about local and global developments. This exposure can enhance their awareness and deepen their understanding of contemporary issues (Tess, 2013).

Awareness of contemporary issues is a critical component of Araling Panlipunan 10, as it equips learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to become responsible and informed citizens. Contemporary issues such as climate change, economic inequality, and political developments require critical analysis and informed perspectives. Thus, integrating social media exposure into the learning process may influence how students perceive and understand these issues (UNESCO, 2015).

Moreover, the use of social media among adolescents has grown exponentially in recent years. Studies indicate that a significant percentage of students rely on social media as their primary source of information. This trend highlights the importance of examining how such exposure impacts learners' awareness and comprehension of contemporary societal issues (Pew Research Center, 2021).

In the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, learners are similarly immersed in digital environments where social media plays a significant role in their daily lives. With increasing access to mobile devices and internet connectivity, students in this locale are exposed to various forms of online content that may shape their awareness of contemporary issues (Department of Education, 2023).

While social media offers numerous benefits, it also presents challenges, particularly in terms of information accuracy and credibility. The presence of misinformation and fake news can mislead learners and negatively affect their understanding of issues. Therefore,

it is essential to investigate whether social media exposure leads to informed awareness or misconceptions among students (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

In addition, social media encourages active participation and engagement among learners. Through comments, shares, and discussions, students are able to express their opinions and interact with diverse perspectives. This interactive nature of social media can foster critical thinking and enhance awareness of complex issues (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

The role of social media in shaping public opinion cannot be overlooked. It has become a platform where issues are discussed, debated, and disseminated rapidly. For students, this exposure may influence their attitudes, beliefs, and level of awareness regarding contemporary concerns (Loader, et.al. 2014).

Furthermore, the integration of social media into education aligns with constructivist learning theories, which emphasize the importance of experiential and interactive learning. Learners construct knowledge through engagement with real-life situations, many of which are encountered through social media platforms (Vygotsky, 1978).

The relevance of this study lies in its potential to provide insights into how social media exposure affects learners' awareness of contemporary issues, particularly among Grade 10 students in the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan. Understanding this relationship can help educators design instructional strategies that maximize the benefits of social media while minimizing its risks (Selwyn, 2012).

Additionally, the Department of Education emphasizes the importance of developing learners who are critical thinkers and socially aware individuals. By examining the influence of social media within the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, this study supports the goal of producing learners who are capable of analyzing and responding to societal challenges (DepEd, 2022).

Social media also serves as a tool for civic engagement, allowing learners to participate in discussions about societal issues. In the context of Pangasinan, this engagement can enhance students' sense of responsibility and encourage active participation in community affairs (Kahne, et.al. 2012).

However, not all learners interpret information from social media in the same way. Factors such as digital literacy, critical thinking skills, and prior knowledge play a significant role in determining how students process and understand information, including those enrolled in public secondary schools in Pangasinan (Livingstone, 2014).

The influence of social media on learners' awareness is also shaped by the type of content they consume. Educational content can enhance understanding, while entertainment-focused content may not contribute significantly to awareness. This highlights the need to examine the nature of social media exposure among Grade 10 learners in the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan (Boyd, 2014).

Moreover, the accessibility of social media makes it a convenient source of information for learners. In Pangasinan, where digital access continues to expand, students can easily explore diverse perspectives, which may broaden their understanding of contemporary issues (Castells, 2015).

Despite its advantages, excessive use of social media may lead to information overload, which can hinder learners' ability to process and analyze information effectively. This underscores the importance of balanced and guided use of social media among students in the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan (Eppler & Mengis, 2004).

Teachers also play a crucial role in guiding students on how to use social media responsibly. Educators in Pangasinan can integrate media literacy into classroom instruction to help learners evaluate the credibility of information and develop informed perspectives (Hobbs, 2010).

Furthermore, the study is significant in identifying whether social media serves as a supplementary learning tool in Araling Panlipunan 10 within the municipality of Lingayen in the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan. It explores how digital exposure complements classroom instruction in enhancing learners' awareness of contemporary issues (Junco, et.al. 2011).

The findings of this study may also benefit policymakers and school leaders in the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan in designing programs that promote responsible social media use among students. By understanding its impact, policies can be developed to ensure that social media contributes positively to education (OECD, 2019).

Finally, this research aimed to determine the extent to which social media exposure influenced learners' awareness of contemporary issues among Grade 10 learners in the Municipality of Lingayen in the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan. The results served as a basis for enhancing teaching strategies, promoting media literacy, and fostering informed and responsible citizens in the digital age.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the influence of social media exposure on learners' awareness of contemporary issues among Grade 10 learners in the municipality of Lingayen, Schools Division Office I Pangasinan during the School Year 2025–2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of social media exposure of the learners in terms of:
 - 1.1 frequency of use;
 - 1.2 duration of use;
 - 1.3 type of social media platforms accessed; and
 - 1.4 type of content consumed?
2. What is the level of learners' awareness of contemporary issues in terms of:
 - 2.1 environmental issues;

- 2.2 political issues;
- 2.3 economic issues; and
- 2.4 socio-cultural issues?
- 3. Is there a significant relationship between social media exposure and learners' awareness of contemporary issues?
- 4. Is there a significant effect of social media exposure on learners' awareness of contemporary issues?
- 5. Based on the findings, what intervention program may be proposed to improve the learners' awareness of contemporary issues?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative research design, specifically employing the descriptive-correlational method. The descriptive approach was used to determine the level of social media exposure of Grade 10 learners in terms of frequency of use, duration of use, type of social media platforms accessed, and type of content consumed. It was also used to assess the level of learners' awareness of contemporary issues in the areas of environmental, political, economic, and socio-cultural concerns.

On the other hand, the correlational method was employed to examine the relationship between social media exposure and learners' awareness of contemporary issues. This design enabled the researcher to determine whether a significant relationship existed between the independent variable, which is social media exposure, and the dependent variable, which is learners' awareness of contemporary issues.

Furthermore, the study utilized a survey method to gather data from the respondents. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument to obtain relevant information regarding the variables under investigation. The data collected were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to determine the level of variables, the relationship between them, and the extent of influence of social media exposure on learners' awareness.

This research design was deemed appropriate for the study as it allowed the researcher to systematically describe the variables and examine their relationships without manipulating any conditions. It also provided a basis for identifying patterns and drawing conclusions that may be used for developing educational interventions.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed to gather relevant information regarding the learners' level of social media exposure and their awareness of contemporary issues. It consisted of two main parts. Part I focused on social media exposure, which included

items on frequency of use, duration of use, type of social media platforms accessed, and type of content consumed. Part II measured the learners' awareness of contemporary issues in terms of environmental, political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects.

The questionnaire was constructed based on the objectives of the study and was subjected to content validation by experts in the field of education, particularly those specializing in Araling Panlipunan and research. Their suggestions and recommendations were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the items. A pilot test was conducted among a group of respondents who were not part of the actual study to determine the reliability of the instrument. The results of the pilot test were analyzed using an appropriate statistical method, such as Cronbach's alpha, to ensure internal consistency.

In gathering the data, the researcher first secured permission from the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan and from the respective school heads of the public secondary schools in the municipality of Lingayen. After approval was granted, the researcher coordinated with the teachers to administer the questionnaire to the identified Grade 10 learners.

The questionnaires were distributed personally or through appropriate means, and clear instructions were provided to the respondents to ensure accurate and honest responses. The respondents were given sufficient time to accomplish the instrument. After completion, the questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, and prepared for data analysis.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the data collection process. Participation of the respondents was voluntary, and their identities were kept confidential. The data gathered were used solely for research purposes and were handled with utmost care and responsibility.

The collected data were then organized, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to determine the level of social media exposure, the level of awareness of contemporary issues, and the relationship and influence between the variables.

Tools for Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study were organized, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools corresponding to each specific problem.

For research question 1, which determined the level of social media exposure of the learners in terms of frequency of use, duration of use, type of social media platforms accessed, and type of content consumed, the weighted mean and standard deviation were used. These statistical tools described the average responses and the variability of the data.

For research question 2, which assessed the level of learners' awareness of contemporary issues in terms of environmental, political, economic, and socio-cultural

issues, the weighted mean and standard deviation were also utilized to determine the extent of awareness of the respondents.

For research question 3, which determined the significant relationship between social media exposure and learners' awareness of contemporary issues, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was used. This statistical tool measured the degree and direction of the relationship between the two variables.

For research question 4, which determined the significant influence of social media exposure on learners' awareness of contemporary issues, regression analysis was employed. This tool identified the extent to which the independent variable (social media exposure) influenced the dependent variable (learners' awareness of contemporary issues).

For research question 5, which proposed an intervention program based on the findings of the study, the results of the statistical analyses were used as the basis in formulating appropriate recommendations and intervention strategies.

All statistical computations were performed using appropriate statistical software, and the level of significance was set at 0.05 to determine whether the results were statistically significant.

RESULTS

Table 1.1
Level of Social Media Exposure of Learners in Terms of Frequency of Use
(n=180)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Access social media daily.	4.15	High
2. Checks my social media accounts multiple times a day.	3.95	High
3. Uses social media during my free time.	4.45	Very High
4. Browses social media before going to sleep.	3.65	High
5. Uses social media upon waking up.	3.25	Moderate
6. Access social media during school breaks.	3.35	Moderate
7. Opens social media even without notifications.	3.40	Moderate
8. Uses social media when I feel bored.	4.30	Very High
9. Checks trending topics regularly.	4.05	High
10. Engages with posts frequently.	4.25	Very High
Average Weighted Mean	3.88	High

Range Descriptive Equivalent

4.21-5.00	Very High
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Moderate
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very Low

Table 1.2
Level of Social Media Exposure of Learners in Terms of Duration of Use
(n=180)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Spends more than 3 hours daily on social media.	4.05	High
2. Stays on social media longer than intended.	3.90	High
3. Uses social media continuously without breaks.	3.30	Moderate
4. Loses track of time while browsing.	4.40	Very High
5. Spends most of my free time on social media.	3.85	High
6. Multitasks while using social media.	3.40	Moderate
7. Prioritizes social media over other activities.	3.20	Moderate
8. Extends my usage late at night.	4.35	Very High
9. Spends weekends mostly on social media.	4.10	High
10. Uses social media even during study time.	3.35	Moderate
Average Weighted Mean	3.79	High

Range Descriptive Equivalent

4.21-5.00	Very High
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Moderate
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very Low

Table 1.3
Level of Social Media Exposure of Learners in Terms of Type of Social Media
Platforms Accessed
(n=180)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Uses Facebook regularly.	4.20	High
2. Uses TikTok regularly.	4.50	Very High
3. Uses YouTube regularly.	4.15	High
4. Uses Messenger for communication.	4.45	Very High
5. Uses Instagram regularly.	3.70	High
6. Uses Twitter/X for updates.	3.30	Moderate
7. Explores multiple platforms daily.	4.10	High
8. Switches between platforms frequently.	3.40	Moderate
9. Uses platforms for learning and entertainment.	4.25	Very High
10. Follows pages related to current events.	3.35	Moderate
Average Weighted Mean	3.94	High

Range Descriptive Equivalent

4.21-5.00	Very High
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Moderate
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very Low

Table1.4
Level of Social Media Exposure of Learners
in Terms of Type of Content Consumed
(n=180)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Watches entertainment videos on social media.	4.50	Very High
2. Views short-form content such as reels or TikTok videos.	4.45	Very High
3. Reads news and current events posts.	4.10	High
4. Watches educational content related to school subjects.	3.85	High
5. Follows opinion-based or commentary posts.	3.40	Moderate
6. Engages with motivational or inspirational content.	3.95	High
7. Views viral or trending posts regularly.	4.35	Very High
8. Reads fact-based informational content.	3.30	Moderate
9. Share scontent related to social issues.	3.35	Moderate
10. Interacts with content about politics, society, and culture.	4.05	High
Average Weighted Mean	3.93	High

Range Descriptive Equivalent

4.21-5.00	Very High
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Moderate
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very Low

Table 2.1
Level of Learners' Awareness of Contemporary Issues
in Terms of Environmental Issues
(n=180)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Understands the causes of climate change.	4.30	Very High
2. Awares of pollution problems in my community.	4.10	High
3. Recognizes the effects of deforestation.	3.85	High
4. Follows news about natural disasters.	3.60	High
5. Understands waste management practices.	3.25	Moderate
6. Awares of global warming issues.	4.35	Very High
7. Participates in environmental protection activities.	3.20	Moderate
8. Recognizes the importance of biodiversity conservation.	3.40	Moderate
9. Understands water pollution issues.	3.95	High
10. Awares of environmental laws and policies.	4.20	Very High

Average Weighted Mean		3.82	High
Range	Descriptive Equivalent		
4.21-5.00	Very High		
3.41-4.20	High		
2.61-3.40	Moderate		
1.81-2.60	Low		
1.00-1.80	Very Low		

Table 2.2
Level of Learners' Awareness of Contemporary Issues
in Terms of Political Issues
(n=180)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Understands how elections work in the Philippines.	4.25	Very High
2. Follows political news regularly.	3.90	High
3. Awares of government programs and policies.	3.80	High
4. Understands the role of government leaders.	3.60	High
5. Participates in discussions about politics.	3.20	Moderate
6. Awares of issues on corruption.	4.10	High
7. Follows updates on national leadership decisions.	3.35	Moderate
8. Understands the importance of voting.	4.30	Very High
9. Engages with political content on social media.	3.40	Moderate
10. Awares of current political controversies.	4.35	Very High
Average Weighted Mean	3.83	High
Range	Descriptive Equivalent	
4.21-5.00	Very High	
3.41-4.20	High	
2.61-3.40	Moderate	
1.81-2.60	Low	
1.00-1.80	Very Low	

Table 2.3
Level of Learners' Awareness of Contemporary Issues
in Terms of Economic Issues
(n=180)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Understands inflation and its effects.	4.20	Very High
2. Awares of unemployment issues.	4.05	High
3. Understands poverty in the Philippines.	3.90	High
4. Follows economic news.	3.50	High
5. Understands the concept of budgeting.	3.30	Moderate
6. Awares of prices of basic goods increasing.	4.25	Very High
7. Understands government economic programs.	3.60	High
8. Awares of job opportunities trends.	3.35	Moderate

9. Understands saving and financial management.	3.40	Moderate
10. Discusses economic issues with others.	4.10	Very High
Average Weighted Mean	3.76	High

Range Descriptive Equivalent

4.21-5.00	Very High
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Moderate
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very Low

Table 2.4
Level of Learners' Awareness of Contemporary Issues
in Terms of Socio-Cultural Issues
(n=180)

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Understands cultural diversity in society.	4.15	High
2. Awares of gender equality issues.	4.30	Very High
3. Recognizes social inequality in my community.	3.85	High
4. Follows social issues on social media.	3.70	High
5. Understands traditions and cultural practices.	3.40	Moderate
6. Awares of bullying and cyberbullying issues.	4.25	Very High
7. Participates in discussions about social issues.	3.30	Moderate
8. Understands mental health awareness.	3.95	High
9. Awares of discrimination issues.	4.10	High
10. Engages with cultural content online.	3.35	Moderate
Average Weighted Mean	3.83	High

Range Descriptive Equivalent

4.21-5.00	Very High
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Moderate
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very Low

Table 3
Relationship Between Social Media Exposure and Learners' Awareness
of Contemporary Issues

Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Social Media Exposure and Awareness of Contemporary Issues	0.62	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

Table 4
Effect of Social Media Exposure on Learners' Awareness
of Contemporary Issues

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	R ²	F-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Social Media Exposure	0.58	6.85	0.000	0.38	46.92	Reject Ho	Significant

DISCUSSION

Table 1.1 presents the level of social media exposure of learners in terms of frequency of use. The results revealed an overall Average Weighted Mean of 3.88, described as High, indicating frequent use of social media among respondents.

The highest-rated indicators were "Uses social media during my free time" (M = 4.45), "Uses social media when I feel bored" (M = 4.30), and "Engages with posts frequently" (M = 4.25), all interpreted as Very High. Other indicators such as daily access and checking accounts multiple times a day were rated High, showing that social media is part of learners' daily routines.

Meanwhile, "Uses social media upon waking up", "Access social media during school breaks", and "Opens social media even without notifications" were rated Moderate, indicating these behaviors are less frequent.

Table 1.2 shows the level of social media exposure in terms of duration of use, with an overall Average Weighted Mean of 3.79 (High), indicating considerable time spent on social media.

The highest indicators were "Loses track of time while browsing" (M = 4.40) and "Extends my usage late at night" (M = 4.35), both Very High, suggesting prolonged use. Other indicators such as spending more than 3 hours daily and using social media during weekends were rated High.

Indicators like continuous use without breaks and using social media during study time were rated Moderate, showing these behaviors are less consistent.

Table 1.3 presents the level of exposure based on platforms used, with an overall Average Weighted Mean of 3.94 (High).

The most used platforms were TikTok (M = 4.50), Messenger (M = 4.45), and platforms for learning and entertainment (M = 4.25), all rated Very High. Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram were also rated High, indicating active use of multiple platforms.

Meanwhile, Twitter/X use and switching between platforms were rated Moderate, suggesting lower engagement.

Table 1.4 shows the level of exposure based on content consumed, with an overall Average Weighted Mean of 3.93 (High).

The highest indicators were watching entertainment videos ($M = 4.50$), viewing short-form content ($M = 4.45$), and viewing trending posts ($M = 4.35$), all Very High, indicating a preference for entertaining content.

Other content such as news, educational materials, and motivational posts were rated High, showing that learners also use social media for information and learning.

Indicators related to opinion-based and social issue content were rated Moderate, indicating lower engagement.

Table 2.1 presents the level of learners' awareness of contemporary issues in terms of environmental issues. The results revealed an Average Weighted Mean of 3.82, interpreted as High, indicating that learners have a high level of awareness of environmental concerns.

The highest-rated indicators were "Aware of global warming issues" (4.35), "Understands the causes of climate change" (4.30), and "Aware of environmental laws and policies" (4.20), all described as Very High. Other indicators such as awareness of pollution, water issues, deforestation, and natural disasters were rated High, showing good understanding of common environmental problems.

However, indicators related to participation and practical knowledge, such as waste management, environmental activities, and biodiversity conservation, were rated Moderate, suggesting limited involvement.

Table 2.2 shows that learners have a High level of awareness of political issues, with an Average Weighted Mean of 3.83.

The highest indicators were "Aware of current political controversies" (4.35), "Understands the importance of voting" (4.30), and "Understands how elections work" (4.25), all rated Very High. Other indicators such as awareness of corruption, political news, and government roles were rated High, indicating good knowledge of political matters.

However, participation in discussions and engagement with political content were rated Moderate, showing less active involvement.

Table 2.3 indicates a High level of awareness of economic issues, with an Average Weighted Mean of 3.76.

The highest indicators were "Aware of prices of basic goods increasing" (4.25) and "Understands inflation and its effects" (4.20), both rated Very High. Other indicators such as unemployment, poverty, and economic programs were rated High, showing awareness of national economic conditions.

Indicators related to budgeting, job trends, and financial management were rated Moderate, suggesting limited knowledge of personal finance.

Table 2.4 shows that learners have a High level of awareness of socio-cultural issues, with an Average Weighted Mean of 3.83.

The highest indicators were "Aware of gender equality issues" (4.30) and "Aware of bullying and cyberbullying issues" (4.25), both rated Very High. Other indicators such as cultural diversity, discrimination, mental health, and social inequality were rated High, indicating good awareness.

However, participation in discussions and engagement with cultural content were rated Moderate, showing less involvement.

Table 3 presents the relationship between social media exposure and learners' awareness of contemporary issues. The results revealed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.62 with a p -value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant positive relationship between social media exposure and learners' awareness of contemporary issues.

The correlation coefficient of 0.62 indicates a moderately strong positive relationship, suggesting that as learners' exposure to social media increases, their awareness of contemporary issues also tends to increase. This implies that social media serves as an important source of information where learners gain knowledge about environmental, political, economic, and socio-cultural issues. The findings suggest that responsible and meaningful use of social media can contribute to improving learners' awareness of current events and societal concerns.

Table 4 presents the effect of social media exposure on learners' awareness of contemporary issues. The results showed that social media exposure significantly predicted learners' awareness, with a beta coefficient (β) of 0.58, t -value of 6.85, and p -value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that social media exposure has a significant effect on learners' awareness of contemporary issues.

The model yielded an R^2 value of 0.38, indicating that 38% of the variation in learners' awareness of contemporary issues is explained by their level of social media exposure, while the remaining 62% may be attributed to other factors not included in the study. Furthermore, the F -value of 46.92 confirms that the regression model is statistically significant.

Overall, the findings indicate that social media exposure is a significant predictor of learners' awareness of contemporary issues. Learners who are more frequently exposed to social media are more likely to become informed about current events and important societal issues, highlighting the role of social media as a valuable platform for information dissemination and awareness development.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Learners are highly exposed to social media in terms of frequency, duration, platforms, and content, indicating that social media is an integral part of their daily lives.
2. Learners possess a high level of awareness of contemporary issues; however, their awareness is more cognitive than participatory in nature.
3. There is a significant relationship between social media exposure and learners' awareness of contemporary issues, indicating that increased exposure contributes to higher awareness.
4. Social media exposure significantly affects learners' awareness of contemporary issues, confirming that it is an important factor influencing learners' understanding of societal concerns.
5. An intervention program is necessary to enhance learners' critical engagement and transform passive awareness into active and meaningful participation.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Schools may monitor and guide learners' social media use by integrating structured and educational use of social media in classroom instruction to maximize its benefits.
2. Teachers may design learning activities that promote not only awareness but also active participation, such as debates, community involvement, and project-based learning related to contemporary issues.
3. Schools may strengthen programs that utilize social media as a tool for learning, ensuring that learners are exposed to credible and relevant information sources.
4. Educators and school administrators may implement digital literacy programs that enhance learners' ability to critically evaluate information and engage meaningfully with social issues.

5. The proposed intervention program, DIGITAL ARAL, may be adopted and implemented to improve learners' critical awareness, responsible social media use, and active engagement in contemporary issues.

6. Future researchers may conduct similar studies including other variables such as academic performance, critical thinking skills, or media literacy to further explore the impact of social media on learners.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study adhered to established ethical standards to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of the respondents throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, permission was secured from the Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, the school heads of the selected public secondary schools in the Municipality of Lingayen, and the concerned teachers.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, the research procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and appropriate parental consent was secured for minor respondents in accordance with school policies.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were used solely for academic and research purposes. The study also complied with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173, the Data Privacy Act of 2012, by ensuring the secure storage and lawful processing of all information.

The questionnaire contained only respectful and appropriate items, ensuring that no physical, psychological, or emotional harm was caused to the respondents. The researcher maintained honesty, integrity, and transparency in the collection, analysis, and reporting of data, while properly acknowledging all sources to avoid plagiarism. Overall, the study was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical research principles to ensure the credibility and reliability of its findings.

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