

The interplay of digital distractions, writing habits, social media engagement, and writing skills of Grade 8 learners

Jesamie J. Cabajar*¹, Kriscentti Exzur P. Barcelona, PhD²

^{1, 2} Lourdes College Inc., Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

*Corresponding Author email: jesamie.cabajar@lccdo.edu.ph

Received: 24 February 2026

Revised: 04 April 2026

Accepted: 08 April 2026

Available Online: 15 April 2026

Volume 1 (2026), Issue 2, P-ISSN – 3116-3769; E-ISSN - 3116-3777

<https://doi.org/10.63498/injelps44>

Abstract

Aim: This study examined the relationship between digital distractions, writing habits, social media engagement, and the writing skills of Grade 8 learners. Anchored in Self-Regulated Learning Theory, the study aimed to determine how these factors relate to students' writing performance and to provide insights for improving writing instruction in secondary education.

Methodology: The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design involving 173 Grade 8 students. Data were collected using structured questionnaires measuring digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement, together with a writing assessment that evaluated students' proficiency in content development, grammar, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Results: The findings revealed that students demonstrated a fairly satisfactory level of writing proficiency, indicating that they were able to express ideas but still showed weaknesses in clarity, grammatical accuracy, and organization. Regression analysis showed that writing habits significantly predicted students' writing skills, while digital distractions and social media engagement did not demonstrate significant effects.

Conclusion: The study highlights the critical role of disciplined writing habits in strengthening students' writing proficiency. The findings suggest that teachers should emphasize structured writing practices such as planning, drafting, revising, and feedback integration. Strengthening students' self-regulated learning strategies can support the development of stronger writing skills and improved academic outcomes.

Keywords: *digital distractions, writing habits, social media engagement, writing skills, Grade 8 learners*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a fundamental skill that enables students to express ideas, demonstrate understanding, and communicate effectively in both academic and real-world contexts. Globally, strong writing skills are essential for academic success and are highly valued in the workforce, as they foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication. Despite instructional efforts, many learners continue to struggle with organizing ideas, maintaining coherence, and producing grammatically accurate compositions (Patty, 2024; Ada & Funa, 2025; Aripin, 2025). These persistent challenges highlight the need for continuous improvement in writing instruction and support systems worldwide.

In the Philippine context, writing instruction has been integrated across grade levels as part of the basic education curriculum. These challenges suggest gaps in curriculum implementation, instructional strategies, and teacher interventions, which in turn affect students' academic performance and writing confidence. Studies focusing on Filipino learners, particularly at the junior high school level, have similarly reported weaknesses in clarity of expression, sentence construction, and overall writing quality (Ada & Funa, 2025).

At the local level, concerns about writing proficiency are also evident among learners in Bukidnon Province. Students in this region commonly struggle with idea organization, sentence construction, and clarity of expression,

indicating the need for structured guidance and targeted instructional interventions (Patty, 2024; Ada & Funa, 2025; data from Bukidnon junior high writing research). These challenges may be further influenced by variations in access to digital resources, differences in instructional practices, and socio-economic conditions, which shape how students engage with writing tasks and learning opportunities.

In addition, digital technology plays an increasingly significant role in students' daily lives across global, national, and local contexts. While digital tools such as grammar checkers and online dictionaries can support writing development, excessive engagement with social media may lead to digital distractions and the development of poor writing habits. At the local level, concerns about students' writing proficiency are also evident in research involving learners from Bukidnon and nearby regions. For example, descriptive studies of junior high and senior high learners in the Philippines report persistent difficulties with idea organization, coherence, sentence construction, and overall writing quality, underscoring the need for structured instruction and targeted interventions. One study found that learners often struggle with maintaining a coherent flow of ideas and logical sequencing in essay writing, reflecting weaknesses in organizing and expressing thoughts clearly (Ada & Funa, 2025). Among secondary students in Bukidnon, writing performance in research and academic tasks has been linked to limited writing preparation, motivation, and support, suggesting that learners require more systematic scaffolding in writing processes. Additionally, related work on Grade 10 and Grade 12 learners in the region shows that learners often exhibit poor writing mechanics and low performance in writing tasks, which can be improved through targeted instructional strategies such as concept mapping and freewriting (Abella & Candilas, 2024; Daguplo & Paglinawan, 2025). Together, these findings highlight ongoing challenges in local writing development and the need for curriculum designs that integrate structured guidance, explicit teaching of organization and mechanics, and scaffolded writing practice for junior high school learners.

Despite the growing body of literature, previous studies have largely examined writing difficulties, digital distractions, social media engagement, and writing habits as separate variables, with limited attention to their combined and interactive effects. This gap is particularly evident in localized contexts such as among Grade 8 learners in Bukidnon, where unique educational and technological conditions may influence writing development. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the combined influence of digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement on students' writing skills, providing a more comprehensive and contextually grounded analysis.

This study advances writing pedagogy by offering an integrated perspective on the multiple factors that shape students' writing performance. Rather than viewing writing development solely as a product of instruction, it emphasizes the role of learners' digital environments and behavioral practices, thereby supporting a more holistic and responsive approach to teaching writing. The findings can inform instructional strategies by guiding teachers in designing structured writing activities, promoting consistent writing habits, and integrating digital tools in ways that enhance rather than hinder learning. Specifically, the study highlights the importance of guided practice, formative feedback, and explicit instruction in distinguishing between informal and academic writing contexts.

Furthermore, the study contributes to digital learning research by examining how technology-related factors—such as digital distractions and social media engagement—interact with traditional literacy skills. It provides empirical evidence on the role of responsible and purposeful use of digital tools in supporting academic writing, while also addressing the risks associated with overreliance on technology. By linking digital behavior with writing outcomes, the study supports the development of digital literacy frameworks that promote self-regulated learning, critical thinking, and effective communication.

Overall, the study contributes to the broader goal of improving educational quality by generating insights that are both pedagogically relevant and contextually grounded, particularly for learners in developing and digitally evolving educational environments.

Review of Related Literature

This review of related literature presents various related literature and studies gathered from different sources, which provide essential information that supports the present study.

Students' Writing Skills

Writing involves multiple components, including content development, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics, making it a complex cognitive and metacognitive process. According to Sun and Zhang (2023), while learners can express basic ideas, they often encounter difficulties in producing more advanced forms of writing due to the demands of higher-order thinking and language control. In second language contexts, metacognitive strategies—such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating—play a crucial role in enhancing writing performance and

overall proficiency, as emphasized by Riwayatningsih et al. (2024). Similarly, Han (2024) found that metacognitive instruction and strategy-based interventions significantly improve students' writing skills and motivation. Moreover, Zhang and Teng (2024) highlighted that writing development is influenced by cognitive and self-regulatory processes, indicating that consistent practice and strategic awareness contribute to improved writing outcomes across contexts.

Digital Distraction

Digital distractions, particularly frequent smartphone use and multitasking during academic tasks, have been shown to negatively affect students' attention and academic performance by disrupting sustained focus and cognitive processing. Research indicates that such distractions can lead to fragmented attention and reduced task performance, contributing to increased errors and poorer comprehension (Zhang & Wang, 2023; Pérez Juárez, González-Ortega, & Aguiar-Pérez, 2023). Studies on digital device use in learning contexts further suggest that multitasking and off-task engagement can hinder students' ability to fully process information and maintain concentration (Mrazek, Mrazek, Ortega, et al., 2021; Pérez Juárez et al., 2023). Regarding technological supports for writing, recent empirical investigations show that AI-assisted writing tools and feedback systems can enhance aspects of writing proficiency—including grammar, vocabulary, organization, and revision practices—when used strategically alongside pedagogical guidance; however, overreliance on these tools may reduce learner autonomy and limit higher-order cognitive engagement (Mekheimer, 2025; Song & Zhao, 2023; Valdez, Reyes, & Cruz, 2025).

Social Media Engagement

Social media engagement can influence writing through multiple dimensions, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. A meta-analytic study found that social media use is positively associated with writing proficiency, suggesting that engagement with social media environments may facilitate the development of writing skills—particularly when interaction is structured and pedagogically oriented (Xie & Huang, 2025). Similarly, empirical research has shown that social media participation and peer interaction can enhance vocabulary use, writing speed, and collaborative learning, which support descriptive writing and interactive learning (Masluha et al., 2023). However, other studies report potential negative effects of social media use on academic writing, such as the promotion of informal language styles and an increased likelihood of errors, when learners fail to distinguish between informal online communication and formal academic conventions (Nutakor & Israel, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on several established learning and writing theories that explain how digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement influence students' writing skills. The primary foundation of the study is the Cognitive Process Theory of Writing proposed by Linda Flower and John R. Hayes (1981), which describes writing as a complex cognitive activity involving planning, translating ideas into text, and reviewing or revising written output. According to this theory, writing requires sustained attention, organization of ideas, and continuous monitoring of one's work. In the presence of digital distractions such as social media notifications and multitasking, students' cognitive processes may become fragmented, making it difficult to produce coherent and well-structured compositions. This theory supports the assumption that digital distractions interfere with the mental processes necessary for effective writing performance.

Empirical research supports these claims: Martin, Long, Haywood, and Xie (2025) found that digital distractions significantly interfere with students' cognitive engagement and academic performance, highlighting that frequent interruptions from devices reduce focus and the quality of complex tasks such as writing. Similarly, Deng, Zhou, and Broadbent (2024) noted that classroom multitasking and digital interruptions are associated with lower task persistence and decreased learning outcomes, which have implications for sustained writing performance and coherence in written compositions. These findings align with the Cognitive Process Theory of Writing by demonstrating how distractions disrupt the mental processes necessary for effective writing.

The study is further grounded in Social Cognitive Theory developed by Albert Bandura (1986), which emphasizes the reciprocal interaction among personal factors, behavior, and environment. Social media platforms serve as environmental influences that shape students' writing behaviors, language exposure, and attitudes toward writing. Through observation and interaction, students may adopt vocabulary, expressions, and writing styles encountered online. While social media can enhance creativity and exposure to diverse ideas, it may also encourage

informal writing conventions that conflict with academic standards. This theory explains how environmental factors such as social media engagement can significantly influence students' writing development.

Research indicates that the nature of digital engagement plays a significant role in learning outcomes. Barwick, Pathak, and Wong (2026) observed that students who are highly engaged with digital platforms perceived greater distraction and reported lower performance in academic tasks, suggesting that the environmental impact of digital media can both shape writing behaviors and pose challenges to maintaining formal writing standards. These findings underscore how environmental and behavioral factors interact to influence writing development, consistent with Social Cognitive Theory.

Another important foundation of this study is the Self-Regulated Learning Theory of Barry J. Zimmerman (2002), which highlights the importance of goal setting, self-monitoring, strategic planning, and reflection in academic success. Writing habits reflect students' ability to regulate their own learning processes. Students who consistently plan, draft, revise, and edit their work demonstrate stronger self-regulation skills, which contribute to higher writing proficiency. Conversely, excessive digital distractions may weaken students' ability to manage time and maintain discipline in completing writing tasks. This theory supports the idea that strong writing habits and effective self-regulation are critical factors in improving writing performance.

Empirical evidence supports this theory: Pérez-Juárez, González-Ortega, and Aguiar-Pérez (2023) found that digital distractions negatively affect academic performance and are closely linked with poorer self-regulation of learning. Likewise, Flanigan et al. (2025) identified that learners with stronger self-regulation tendencies are better able to mitigate the negative effects of digital distractions and maintain academic engagement, which has important implications for complex tasks such as writing. Together, these studies support the idea that strong writing habits and high self-regulation are critical for academic writing success.

The Dual Coding Theory introduced by Allan Paivio (1971) also informs this study. The theory explains that individuals process information through both verbal and visual systems. In today's digital environment, students are frequently exposed to multimodal texts such as videos, infographics, and social media content. While such exposure can enrich vocabulary and comprehension, it may also lead to a preference for brief and image-based communication rather than structured academic writing. This theory helps explain how digital media exposure influences students' cognitive processing and written expression.

Finally, the study draws from Engagement Theory proposed by Greg Kearsley and Ben Shneiderman (1998), which posits that meaningful learning occurs when students are actively engaged in collaborative, creative, and purposeful tasks. Social media platforms provide opportunities for communication, idea sharing, and peer feedback, which may enhance students' motivation and creativity in writing. However, without proper guidance, such engagement may also reinforce informal language use. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive explanation of how cognitive processes, behavioral regulation, and environmental influences interact to shape students' writing proficiency.

Together, these theories and the contemporary empirical studies incorporated here provide a comprehensive explanation of how cognitive processes, behavioral regulation, and digital environments interact to shape students' writing proficiency. They also provide a firm theoretical and empirical basis for the study's conceptual framework, which illustrates the relationships among digital distractions, writing habits, social media engagement, and writing skills.

Conceptual Framework

This study conceptualizes writing skills proficiency as being influenced by three major independent variables: digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement. Digital distractions refer to interruptions caused by gadgets, notifications, multitasking, online entertainment, and excessive screen time that may reduce students' focus and concentration while completing writing tasks. Writing habits refer to students' regular practices in approaching writing activities, including planning, drafting, revising, editing, and engaging in consistent writing practice. Social media engagement pertains to students' level and manner of participation in digital platforms, including educational use, peer interaction, content creation, exposure to informal writing styles, and time spent online.

The dependent variable of the study is writing skills proficiency, which includes content development, organization and coherence, grammar accuracy, vocabulary use, and writing mechanics such as punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. The framework assumes that digital distractions may negatively influence writing performance by reducing sustained attention and cognitive organization. In contrast, strong writing habits are expected to positively influence writing proficiency by fostering discipline, self-regulation, and structured thinking. Social media engagement may have both positive and negative effects depending on how it is utilized; purposeful

and educational engagement may enhance vocabulary and creativity, while excessive and unregulated use may encourage informal writing patterns that affect academic writing standards.

Overall, the conceptual framework proposes that students' writing proficiency is shaped by the combined and interacting effects of digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement. Understanding these relationships provides a basis for identifying strategies and interventions that can help Grade 8 learners improve their writing skills in the context of an increasingly digital learning environment.

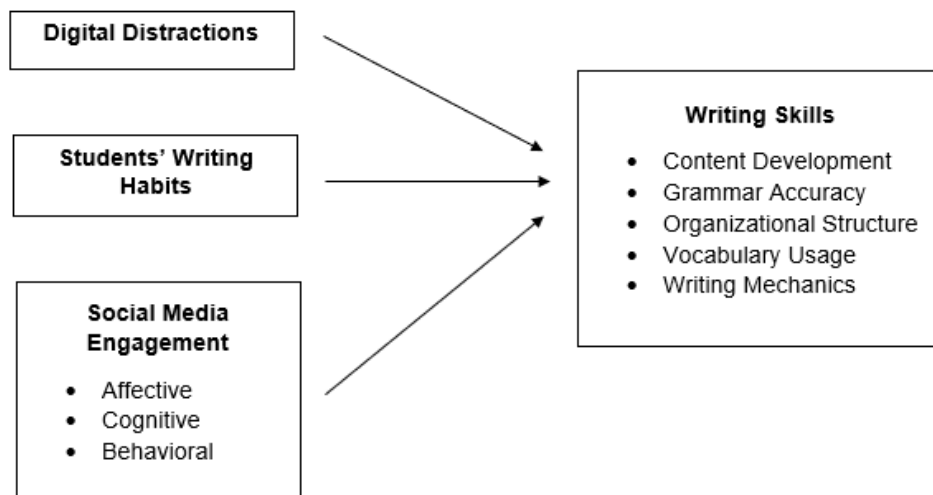


Figure 1. Schematic Presentation of the Study

Statement of the Problem

Writing proficiency remains a major concern in secondary education, as many students struggle to organize ideas, apply grammatical rules, and express thoughts clearly in written form. Despite continuous efforts to improve writing instruction in schools, learners often demonstrate weaknesses in content development, organization, vocabulary, and writing mechanics. These challenges affect students' academic performance and their ability to communicate effectively in academic and real-world contexts.

In the digital age, students are increasingly exposed to various online platforms and technologies that influence their learning behaviors. While digital tools can support writing development through access to information and language resources, excessive use of digital devices and social media may also create distractions that reduce students' focus during academic tasks. Frequent interruptions from notifications, online entertainment, and multitasking behaviors may disrupt students' concentration and cognitive engagement in writing activities.

In addition to digital distractions, students' writing habits also play a critical role in writing development. Effective writing requires consistent practice, planning, drafting, revising, and editing. However, many learners engage in writing only when required for school tasks and may lack structured writing routines that strengthen writing competence.

Furthermore, social media engagement has become a significant part of students' daily lives. While social media platforms may promote interaction, collaboration, and exposure to language use, they may also encourage informal writing styles that differ from academic writing conventions.

Given these circumstances, it is important to understand how digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement interact to influence students' writing skills. Examining these factors among Grade 8 learners can provide valuable insights into the role of digital environments and behavioral practices in shaping writing proficiency.

Research Objectives

General Objective

To examine the influence of digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement on the writing skills proficiency of Grade 8 learners.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the level of digital distractions among Grade 8 learners in terms of:
 - 1.1 gadget notifications and interruptions
 - 1.2 multitasking behaviors
 - 1.3 online entertainment use
 - 1.4 screen time duration
2. To determine the level of social media engagement of Grade 8 learners in terms of:
 - 2.1 educational use
 - 2.2 peer interaction
 - 2.3 content creation
 - 2.4 exposure to informal writing styles
 - 2.5 time spent on social media platforms
3. To evaluate the writing skills proficiency of Grade 8 learners in terms of:
 - 3.1 content development
 - 3.2 organization and coherence
 - 3.3 grammatical accuracy
 - 3.4 vocabulary usage
 - 3.5 writing mechanics
4. To determine whether there is a significant relationship between:
 - 4.1 digital distractions and writing skills proficiency
 - 4.2 writing habits and writing skills proficiency
 - 4.3 social media engagement and writing skills proficiency
5. To determine whether digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement significantly predict writing skills proficiency among Grade 8 learners.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of digital distractions experienced by Grade 8 learners in terms of:
 - 1.1 gadget notifications and interruptions
 - 1.2 multitasking behaviors
 - 1.3 online entertainment use
 - 1.4 screen time duration
2. What is the level of writing habits of Grade 8 learners?
3. What is the level of social media engagement of Grade 8 learners in terms of:
 - 3.1 affective engagement
 - 3.2 cognitive engagement
 - 3.3 behavioral engagement
4. What is the level of writing skills proficiency of Grade 8 learners in terms of:
 - 4.1 content development
 - 4.2 grammatical accuracy
 - 4.3 organizational structure
 - 4.4 vocabulary usage
 - 4.5 writing mechanics
5. Is there a significant relationship between:
 - 5.1 digital distractions and writing skills proficiency
 - 5.2 writing habits and writing skills proficiency
 - 5.3 social media engagement and writing skills proficiency
6. Do digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement significantly predict writing skills proficiency among Grade 8 learners?

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between digital distractions and writing skills proficiency of Grade 8 learners.
H02: There is no significant relationship between writing habits and writing skills proficiency of Grade 8 learners.
H03: There is no significant relationship between social media engagement and writing skills proficiency of Grade 8 learners.
H04: Digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement do not significantly predict the writing skills proficiency of Grade 8 learners.

METHODS

Research Design

This study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to examine the relationships between digital distractions, writing habits, social media engagement, and the writing skills of Grade 8 learners. This design was appropriate because it allows the measurement of naturally occurring variables and the assessment of their associations without manipulating conditions. Data were collected through researcher-made survey questionnaire and writing assessments, enabling statistical analysis of the levels of the independent variables and their relationships with writing performance.

Population and Sampling

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to examine the relationships among digital distractions, writing habits, social media engagement, and writing skills. The total population consisted of Grade 8 learners in Baungon I District is 173, from which 120 respondents were selected using systematic random sampling. This method was chosen because it provides a simple, efficient, and unbiased way of selecting participants from a large population. Instead of randomly choosing individuals one by one, the researcher selects respondents at regular intervals, which saves time while still maintaining randomness. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula to ensure adequate representation.

Instruments

All instruments underwent content validation to ensure alignment with the study objectives and literature on writing skills, digital behavior, and social media engagement. Expert validation was conducted by three specialists in language education and educational measurement, who assessed clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of items.

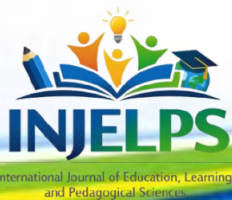
A pilot test was administered to 20 Grade 8 learners outside the main study sample. Cronbach's alpha coefficients indicated high reliability: 0.87 for digital distractions, 0.85 for social media engagement, and 0.83 for writing habits. The writing proficiency test was reviewed by experts to ensure scoring consistency and accurate assessment of the five writing components.

Data Collection

Data were collected during the second semester of the 2025–2026 school year with permission from school authorities. Three researcher-made survey questionnaires were used to measure digital distractions, writing habits, social media engagement, and writing skills. The questionnaires were administered to Grade 8 learners in their classrooms during scheduled class periods to minimize disruption of regular activities. Participants were given sufficient time to complete the instruments, and all questionnaires and writing outputs were collected immediately after administration to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Treatment of Data

The data gathered were processed and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to address the research questions. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to determine the levels of digital distractions, writing habits, social media engagement, and writing skills proficiency of Grade 8 learners. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the significant relationships among variables, while multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement significantly predicted writing skills proficiency. All analyses were performed using standard statistical software, with the level of significance set at 0.05.



Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were rigorously adhered to throughout the study. Ethics approval was obtained from the Lourdes College Research Ethics Committee (LC-REC) institution’s review board prior to data collection. Informed consent was secured from all respondents, ensuring they understood the study’s purpose and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Permissions were granted to administer the survey instrument and confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses. These measures ensured that ethical standards were upheld throughout the research process to safeguard the rights and welfare of all participants.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study on the interplay of digital distractions, writing habits, social media engagement, and writing skills proficiency of Grade 8 learners.

1. To what extent do the participants report their experience of digital distraction during writing activities?

Most participants experienced a moderate level of digital distraction during writing activities, with occasional interference from devices being common, while only a few reported minimal or high levels, indicating that digital distractions are a consistent but manageable part of their learning routines.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Participants’ Digital Distraction

Score Range	Description	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	Very High	0	0.00
3.51 – 4.50	Often	High	14	11.67
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	Moderate	81	67.50
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	Low	22	18.33
1.00 – 1.50	Never	Very Low	3	2.50
Total			120	100
Mean			2.97	
Interpretation			Moderate	
SD			0.59	

Statement	Mean	Description	SD
1. I often find it difficult to concentrate on academic tasks due to my mobile phone use.	3.06	Sometimes	1.06
2. I frequently check my social media accounts during study or writing sessions.	2.30	Rarely	1.11
3. Notifications from digital devices interrupt my workflow.	3.08	Sometimes	1.03
4. I get easily distracted by online entertainment when working on writing assignments.	3.28	Sometimes	1.25
5. I multitask between writing and browsing the internet.	2.93	Sometimes	0.92
6. Digital distractions interrupt my writing process.	3.18	Sometimes	1.21
Overall	2.97	Sometimes	0.59

The findings indicate a moderate level of digital distraction among participants. While entertainment-oriented content poses challenges, students show discipline in limiting social media use during study time. These distractions, though present, remain manageable. Teachers can address them through structured study routines, focused writing sessions, and digital literacy lessons, while curriculum design can promote attention management strategies. The results highlight the need to strengthen students’ self-regulation and focus in a learning environment shaped by constant digital access (Wang et al., 2022).

2. How are the participants characterize in terms of their writing habits?

The Grade 8 participants demonstrated moderately developed writing habits, with an overall mean of 3.49 indicating that writing routines are present but not consistently strong. While many students exhibit fairly structured and disciplined writing behaviors, variations exist due to differences in motivation, experience, and engagement with

writing tasks. Nearly half of the participants fell under the High category, and most of the rest were Moderate, suggesting that strong writing habits are common but still require reinforcement, particularly in planning, time management, and revision practices.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Participants' Writing Habits

Score Range	Description	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
4.51 – 5.00	Always	Very High	8	6.67
3.51 – 4.50	Often	High	56	46.67
2.51 – 3.50	Sometimes	Moderate	48	40.00
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	Low	8	6.67
1.00 – 1.50	Never	Very Low	0	0.00
Total			120	100
Mean			3.49	
Interpretation			Moderate	
SD			0.65	

Statement	Mean	Description	SD
1. I allocate specific time regularly for writing activities.	3.51	Sometimes	1.00
2. I prefer to draft and revise my writing before submission.	3.53	Often	1.04
3. I write better when I am in a quiet and distraction-free environment.	3.62	Often	1.16
4. I am able to start writing assignments on time.	3.58	Often	1.07
5. I often proofread my work before submitting it.	3.44	Sometimes	1.14
6. I start immediately and write continuously with my writing assignments.	3.58	Often	0.97
7. I plan and outline first my writing assignments.	3.36	Sometimes	1.09
8. I use reading model compositions to improve my writing.	3.47	Sometimes	1.19
9. I use grammar checkers to improve my writing.	3.45	Sometimes	1.18
10. I ask for teacher feedback to improve my writing.	3.37	Sometimes	1.09
11. I ask my peer/s for review/editing to improve my writing.	3.50	Sometimes	1.09

The findings reveal moderate writing habits among participants, reflecting responsibility, effort, and time management, but still leaving room for growth. While students can begin tasks early and benefit from focused learning environments, they require additional support in planning, revising, and incorporating feedback. These results align with recent studies emphasizing that regular writing practice, guided reflection, and structured feedback improve writing habits and overall proficiency (Vrika, 2023; Teng & Qin, 2024; Cheng & Xu, 2025). The findings highlight the need for scaffolded writing activities, iterative feedback, and curriculum designs that provide frequent writing opportunities, enabling students to develop stronger discipline and self-regulated learning in academic writing.

3. What is the participants' level of social media engagement across the following dimensions:

3.1 Affective;

3.2 Cognitive;

3.3 Behavioral?

Table 3 reveals a *Moderate* level of behavioral social media engagement among the participants. Their online activities involve posting, interacting, following accounts, and staying updated on personal interests, but these behaviors are balanced and not overwhelming. These findings bring together an overall view of students who are active but controlled social media users, indicating that while digital platforms are part of their everyday lives, their behavior remains manageable and aligned with typical usage patterns seen among students today.

Table 3

Summary of Participants' Social Media Engagement Across Three Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Description	Interpretation
Affective Engagement	3.06	0.63	Sometimes	Moderate
Cognitive Engagement	3.08	0.61	Sometimes	Moderate
Behavioral Engagement	2.93	0.56	Sometimes	Moderate
Overall	3.02	0.60	Sometimes	Moderate

The participants demonstrated moderate social media engagement across affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Emotionally, they felt connected to online content without it disrupting daily routines; cognitively, they reflected on information to some extent, though critical evaluation and source comparison were limited; behaviorally, they engaged in posting, commenting, and following accounts in a controlled manner ($M = 2.93\text{--}3.08$). These results suggest that students maintain balanced social media habits, consistent with research showing that moderate social media use can support collaboration, vocabulary development, and motivation while avoiding significant negative impacts on academic performance (Paيدا et al., 2022; Farella, 2025; Noviany et al., 2024). Teachers can enhance the benefits of social media by integrating digital literacy lessons, guided online activities, and critical thinking exercises into the curriculum, helping students leverage social media for academic purposes while minimizing distractions (Samir & Ahmed, 2024; Sikandar, 2025).

4. What is the participants level of writing skills in terms of the following components:

- 4.1 Content development;
- 4.2 Grammatical accuracy;
- 4.3 Organizational structure;
- 4.4 Vocabulary usage; and
- 4.5 Writing mechanics?

The results reveal that participants demonstrate developing skills in writing mechanics, with many requiring additional guidance to apply conventions accurately. While students are generally able to express ideas, mechanical inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation, and grammar hinder the clarity and professionalism of their writing. These findings align with research indicating that explicit instruction in writing conventions, focused editing practice, and guided proofreading significantly improve students' mechanical control and overall writing quality (Urban, Graham, & Fitzsimmons, 2021; Bautista, 2022). Teachers can address these gaps by incorporating scaffolded exercises, iterative feedback, and targeted lessons on writing mechanics, while curriculum design should emphasize systematic practice in editing and proofreading to strengthen students' precision, confidence, and academic writing proficiency.

Table 4

Summary Table of Writing Skills Components

Writing Skill Component	Mean (M)	SD	Interpretation	Highest Frequency Category	Key Insight
Content Development	2.21	0.80	Fairly Satisfactory	Fairly Satisfactory (38.33%)	Students struggle with depth, coherence, and idea expansion.
Grammatical Accuracy	1.73	0.62	Fairly Satisfactory	Did Not Meet Expectations (45.00%)	Majority have difficulty with basic grammar (tenses, SVA, punctuation).
Organizational Structure	1.79	0.65	Fairly Satisfactory	Fairly Satisfactory (47.50%)	Students struggle with coherence, transitions, and logical flow.
Vocabulary Usage	1.83	0.65	Fairly Satisfactory	Fairly Satisfactory (44.17%)	Students rely on basic vocabulary; limited range affects clarity.
Writing Mechanics	1.77	0.65	Fairly Satisfactory	Fairly Satisfactory (44.17%)	Frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation
Overall	1.87	0.67	Fairly Satisfactory		

The participants' writing skills were generally developing, with most areas rated as Fairly Satisfactory. In content development, the mean of 2.21 shows that many students struggle to generate, organize, and elaborate ideas, with 63.33% falling under Fairly Satisfactory or Did Not Meet Expectations. Grammatical accuracy was weak ($M = 1.73$), as 87.50% of participants frequently made errors in verb usage, sentence structure, and punctuation.

Organizational structure also showed challenges ($M = 1.79$), with the majority unable to create clear paragraphs, maintain logical flow, or use transitions effectively. Vocabulary usage was limited ($M = 1.83$), as many students relied on repetitive or simple words, affecting clarity and expression. Finally, writing mechanics ($M = 1.77$) revealed frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, and formatting, indicating the need for consistent proofreading and guidance. Overall, the findings suggest that while some students demonstrate developing competence in these areas, most require structured support, guided practice, and exposure to model texts to strengthen their writing proficiency across content, accuracy, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics.

5. Do the participants' level of digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement significantly influence their writing skills proficiency?

Table 5 presents the results of the regression analysis examining the influence of digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement on participants' writing skills. The overall regression model was significant, $F(5, 114) = 5.80$, $p < .001$, indicating that, when considered together, these variables meaningfully predict writing performance. Because the p-value is less than the standard significance level of 0.05, the result shows that the combined effect of these factors on writing skills is unlikely to be due to chance. Therefore, the first null hypothesis—which states that digital distractions, writing habits, and social media engagement have no combined effect on writing skills—is rejected, confirming that these variables collectively play a significant role in influencing students' writing performance. The adjusted R^2 of 0.168 indicates that 16.8% of the changes in writing skills can be explained by the predictors in the model, the remaining 83.2% reflects participants with moderate, average, or varying performance. This means these factors have an important but moderate contribution, showing that writing performance is influenced by both academic behavior and other external variables not included in the model.

Table 5

Regression Analysis of Digital Distractions, Writing Habits, and Social Media Engagement on Writing Skills

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		B	95% CI		T	p
	B	SE		Lower	Upper		
Constant	0.64	0.40		-0.14	1.43	1.632	0.105
Digital Distractions	-0.08	0.10	-0.075	-0.29	0.13	-0.785	0.434
Writing Habits	0.48	0.10	0.482	0.29	0.67	4.992*	<.001
Affective SME	-0.07	0.10	-0.074	-0.28	0.13	-0.738	0.462
Cognitive SME	-0.07	0.12	-0.070	-0.32	0.17	-0.605	0.547
Behavioral SME	0.10	0.12	0.083	-0.15	0.34	0.786	0.434

Model Summary

$R = 0.450$ $R^2 = 0.203$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.168$ $F(5,114) = 5.80^*$ $p < .001$

Note. SME = Social Media Engagement, B = unstandardized beta coefficient, SE = standard error, β = standardized beta coefficient, 95% CI = 95% confidence interval, t = t statistic, p = probability value. *Significant at 0.05 two-tailed alpha level.

$$\text{Model Equation: } WS = 0.48WH$$

Legend: WS = Writing Skill, WH = Writing Habit

The regression analysis indicates that the overall model significantly predicts writing skills ($R^2 = 0.203$, $F(5,114) = 5.80$, $p < .001$); however, only writing habits emerged as a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < .001$), while digital distractions and social media engagement were not significant. This suggests that students' discipline, consistency, and self-regulated writing routines contribute more to writing skill development than online activity.

These findings are consistent with research demonstrating that planning, revising, and strategy-based instruction enhance writing performance (Teng & Zhang, 2022; Graham, Harris, & MacArthur, 2025). Pedagogically, the results underscore the importance of structured writing habits, guided revisions, and scaffolded tasks in curriculum design to support students in expressing ideas with clarity, accuracy, and confidence.



Conclusions

This study found that Grade 8 learners experience a moderate level of digital distraction during writing activities, indicating that digital interruptions are present but not overwhelmingly disruptive to their academic routines. Students also demonstrated moderately developed writing habits, suggesting that while some learners practice planning and revising their work, many still lack consistent writing routines that support sustained writing improvement.

The findings further revealed that students demonstrate a fairly satisfactory level of writing proficiency in terms of content development, grammatical accuracy, organization, vocabulary usage, and writing mechanics. However, weaknesses remain evident in grammar, coherence, and vocabulary diversity, indicating the need for continued instructional support in writing development.

Regression analysis showed that writing habits significantly predict students' writing skills proficiency, while digital distractions and social media engagement do not demonstrate significant direct effects. This suggests that the development of disciplined writing routines plays a more critical role in improving writing proficiency than the mere presence of digital technologies.

Overall, the study contributes to educational research by emphasizing the importance of structured writing practices and self-regulated learning strategies in strengthening students' writing performance. The findings highlight the need for instructional practices that cultivate strong writing habits while promoting responsible and purposeful use of digital technologies in the learning environment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

Teachers may integrate regular writing workshops and classroom activities that strengthen students' abilities in content development, grammar, vocabulary usage, organization, and writing mechanics. Explicit instruction on the writing process, including planning, drafting, revising, and editing, may help students develop stronger writing habits. Teachers may also incorporate collaborative writing activities, peer-editing, writing conferences, and guided feedback to support students' development as effective writers.

School administrators may design and implement programs such as writing clinics, writing camps, and peer-editing initiatives that promote a school-wide culture of writing. Professional development programs focusing on writing pedagogy, digital literacy, and strategies for strengthening writing habits may also support teachers in improving writing instruction. Schools may also provide access to writing resources such as writing centers, libraries, and digital learning tools that encourage continuous writing practice.

Future researchers may conduct correlational, qualitative, or mixed-method studies to explore further why digital distractions and social media engagement do not significantly influence writing skills in this context. Researchers may also examine additional variables such as reading habits, student motivation, home literacy environments, and teacher feedback practices that may influence writing proficiency. Longitudinal studies investigating interventions aimed at strengthening writing habits may also provide deeper insights into how writing routines develop over time.

Students may strengthen their writing proficiency by practicing consistent writing routines, including planning, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing their work. They may also manage their digital activities through self-regulation and focused study routines to ensure that writing time is used productively. Reading academic and literary texts more frequently may also help students expand vocabulary, improve idea development, and strengthen writing organization.

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