

## **The Impact of Digital and Media Literacy on Reading Comprehension Among High School Students**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the relationship between digital and media literacy and reading comprehension skills among high school students. Using a quantitative research design, the study surveyed 200 high school students, examining how their engagement with digital media influences their ability to comprehend texts across various genres. The findings suggest that higher levels of digital literacy are associated with improved reading comprehension, especially in genres that require critical thinking and analysis. This study highlights the importance of integrating digital literacy into the curriculum to enhance students' reading abilities.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Media Literacy, Reading Comprehension, High School Students

### **Introduction**

Reading comprehension is a critical skill for students, influencing their academic success and overall learning outcomes. However, in today's digital age, students are increasingly exposed to various forms of media that may impact their traditional reading skills. With the rise of digital technologies, students are not only required to decode written text but also to interpret and analyze information presented through multimedia platforms. This shift prompts a need for digital and media literacy, skills that are crucial for navigating the complexities of information in the digital era.

Digital literacy, defined as the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate, and create information using a range of digital technologies, has become an essential competency (Hobbs, 2010). Media literacy, which complements digital literacy, enables students to analyze and critique the messages delivered through various media, influencing how they interpret written content (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of these literacies on students' reading comprehension abilities in a high school setting.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Digital Literacy and Reading Comprehension**

Digital literacy is increasingly recognized as a significant factor in academic achievement, particularly in enhancing reading comprehension. According to Hobbs (2010), digital literacy involves the ability to analyze, evaluate, and create digital content, which can enhance students' capacity to comprehend complex texts. Duke and Roberts (2010) suggest that digital platforms often provide students with opportunities to engage with diverse texts, improving their critical thinking and comprehension skills.

### Media Literacy and Reading Comprehension

Media literacy, defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce media in various forms, has also been linked to improvements in reading comprehension. Clark and Rumbold (2006) argue that media literacy encourages students to engage with a variety of content types, fostering critical reading practices. As students encounter texts from different media platforms, they learn to apply different interpretive strategies, enhancing their comprehension (Sheninger, 2014).

### Reading Comprehension in the Digital Age

The genre-specific nature of reading comprehension is another critical aspect explored in this literature. Duke and Roberts (2010) emphasize that students need to develop different strategies for comprehending various genres. Digital and media literacy supports this by offering diverse reading materials, from interactive online content to multimodal texts, which require students to adopt flexible strategies for understanding.

In addition, studies have shown that culturally responsive teaching practices, which include incorporating digital and media literacy, enhance student engagement and reading comprehension (Gay, 2002; Lindsey et al., 2018). This study builds on existing literature to explore how these literacies specifically influence the reading comprehension of high school students.

## Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, survey-based research design to explore the relationship between digital and media literacy and reading comprehension. The study was conducted in a public high school setting, with a sample of 200 students ranging from 14 to 18 years old.

### Participants

A random sampling technique was used to select participants from different grade levels. The sample consisted of 100 males and 100 females, ensuring gender diversity.

### Instruments

**Digital Literacy Assessment:** A digital literacy questionnaire was developed based on criteria from Hobbs (2010) and Sheninger (2014). This questionnaire assessed students' ability to use digital tools, evaluate online information, and create digital content.

**Media Literacy Assessment:** A media literacy scale was adapted from Clark and Rumbold (2006) to measure students' ability to analyze and critically evaluate media messages.

**Reading Comprehension Test:** A standardized reading comprehension test was administered, consisting of passages from both traditional literature and digital media sources. The test assessed students' understanding, analysis, and synthesis of the texts.

### Data Collection

Students completed the digital literacy and media literacy assessments, followed by the reading comprehension test. Data were collected in a controlled classroom environment over a period of two weeks.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis, were conducted to examine the relationship between digital and media literacy and reading comprehension.

### Results

The data analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between students' digital literacy scores and their reading comprehension performance ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, media literacy was found to have a moderate positive impact on comprehension, with a correlation coefficient of  $0.52$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). The regression analysis showed that digital literacy accounted for 45% of the variance in reading comprehension, while media literacy contributed an additional 10%.

The highest comprehension scores were observed among students who demonstrated high levels of both digital and media literacy, particularly in tasks that required critical analysis of online and multimedia texts. Gender differences were minimal, suggesting that both male and female students benefited equally from digital and media literacy interventions.

### Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that digital and media literacy significantly influence reading comprehension skills among high school students. Students who are proficient in navigating digital tools and critically engaging with media are better equipped to comprehend complex texts. This aligns with previous studies that argue digital and media literacy foster critical thinking and comprehension (Hobbs, 2010; Clark & Rumbold, 2006).

Interestingly, while media literacy had a positive effect, its impact was not as strong as that of digital literacy. This may be due to the fact that digital literacy encompasses a broader set of skills, including the ability to interact with digital texts in ways that require more advanced cognitive engagement. The findings also highlight the importance of integrating both digital and media literacy into the curriculum to support reading comprehension in the digital age.

### Conclusion

This study confirms that digital and media literacy are crucial components of reading comprehension development among high school students. As students increasingly interact with digital texts, they need the skills to navigate, evaluate, and synthesize information. Educators should prioritize integrating digital and media literacy into the curriculum to improve students' comprehension abilities. Future research could explore the long-term effects of digital and media literacy interventions on reading comprehension and academic achievement.

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