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IRRESISTIBLE PASSION: AN ANALYSIS OF POST-MODERN NOVELS FROM THE LENS OF FEMALE READERS

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the viewpoints of female junior high school readers at Elizalde National High School about their experiences in reading the digitalized book material, which is Wattpad. A phenomenological qualitative study was used to identify the responses of the participants. In-depth interviews and focused group discussions were conducted to gather the data, ensuring the confidentiality, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of each research participant. Results revealed that reading Wattpad helped each learner to enhance their reading vocabulary, emotional maturity towards life's situation, social relationships, and their academic growth. This qualitative study is significant as it sheds light on the evolving reading habits of young female readers in the digital age, particularly their engagement with post-modern narratives found in online platforms like Wattpad. It offers valuable insights into how digital literature fosters not only literacy development but also emotional and social growth among female adolescents. By understanding their experiences, educators and curriculum developers can better integrate digital reading materials into learning frameworks to support students' holistic development. Moreover, this study contributes to the broader discourse on gendered reading perspectives and the transformative potential of post-modern literature in shaping the identities, values, and worldviews of young women.

KEYWORDS: *MAED Teaching English, Female Readers, Quality Education, SDG 7, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Many have observed that women are typically emotional and passionate. As they say, women even cry for shallow reasons, are outspoken when troubled, and vocal with what they think and feel. Women are affected by movies, tales, and novels. Just recently, many teenagers and early adult women are hooked on the most recent culture of reading, that is, Wattpad stories. In this latest generation, the reading culture, which is popularly called the digital social reading, is said to be a rising phenomenon in the field of literature (Soronen).

A study looked into how teenagers who were learning to read on Wattpad perceived its effect on their lives. Junior high school students from the Philippines answered questions about how Wattpad reading has influenced their reading habits and morals. Data indicated that teens' reading habits and values had been positively impacted by Wattpad as a reading platform. Unquestionably, regular Wattpad use has helped many of the participants develop their maturity, self-awareness, motivation, inventiveness, and enjoyment of reading (Rabang).

In Canada, Wattpad has become the fastest consumed literary piece, which has recorded millions of users and downloads by various consumers. With the agenda of changing the way of telling and sharing stories. Their goal was to give their readers easy access to download and read the material at their convenience while exposing the literary masterpieces of the different writers, and it also needs to be used in the class to achieve literary comprehension among students (Lau and Yuen).

Additionally, Wattpad has been a comfort zone for the approximately 70 million people who generously spare 22 billion minutes a month, all hooked up reading the original version of stories. This twist of literary representation has swiftly triggered the cravings of the users and subscribers from the boredom of turning the hardbound pages of the literary pieces, as they can conveniently carry along with them different stories with just a click (Gardner).

In the Philippines, Wattpad readers have established linkages with their fellow readers; in fact, they have formed groups and institutions. The freedom to express their responses at the time of reading allowed them to expand their digital ecosystem. Time and again, reactions to stories being read on Wattpad are evident on the social media sites of its active subscribers. The rise of Filipino Wattpad lovers has been continuously growing, most especially among Generation Z.

English teachers have been bound to motivate the students to love reading. Unfortunately, most find it boring, especially when reading alone with those hardcopy, heavy, and bulky materials. As this highly digitalized modern era enters the scenario, learners and even most citizens have found their way easy by way of browse the internet for anything they want to discover. Thus, Wattpad has been a new culture for reading various materials. I pushed to dig out the underlying reasons and criticisms of the Wattpad readers and find out how they contributed to the goal of the teachers to promote an enjoyable reading habit.

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As this issue has become a rising phenomenon today, I would like to conduct this as a study to find out how the female readers evaluate the post-modern types of novels, what experiences they could reveal upon being hooked with the material, and how their inclination could impact the people around them.

Since literature has become an integral part of our society and culture, it is undeniable that many of our experiences have been recorded in writing. Other writers are influenced by their expansive imagination, and some have evidence-based stories that capture the senses of readers. People in the previous times were reliant on the printed black and white, hard copy of the literary pieces, and yet, they still loved reading, only that it would take them to carry the literal weight of the materials.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the views of female readers reading wattpad stories?
2. How do Wattpad stories impact the lives of female readers?
3. What are the insights of the female readers?

METHODS

Study Participants

This research involved a total of fourteen (14) female students, with seven (7) participating in in-depth interviews and another seven (7) involved in a focus group discussion. The selection of the number of participants followed Creswell's (2013) recommendation of having three to fifteen individuals for qualitative studies. I chose seven (7) individuals for the In-Depth Interview (IDI) to gain a deeper understanding of their personal experiences, thoughts, and viewpoints without the influence of others (Mack et al., 1), and another seven (7) for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to allow collaborative sharing of experiences, challenges, and viewpoints where peer influence might be present. I considered this number sufficient to reach data saturation.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. In qualitative research, sample size is based more on relevance and richness rather than quantity. Purposive sampling, also known as judgment sampling, involves selecting participants intentionally based on specific characteristics they possess (Guetterman). The inclusion criteria for participation were: female students enrolled at Elizalde National High School, located in Maco, Davao de Oro, who regularly read digital content and have accessed numerous stories through digital platforms.

Materials and Instruments

Interviews were conducted in person, ensuring compliance with school protocols and without interfering with students' academic responsibilities. The method followed van Manen's approach which includes bracketing, intuiting, analyzing, and describing. Approval was secured from the school before conducting any research activity.

Both In-Depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions were carried out during data collection, using validated questions and sub-questions. Tools such as journals, a voice recorder, and an interview guide were prepared to assist in accurately recording the data collected.

Design and Procedure

This research utilized a qualitative phenomenological design to collect in-depth qualitative data. The purpose of this phenomenological approach was to vividly capture the perspectives and lived experiences of students regarding gender-fair language in English education. According to Creswell, phenomenology explores the shared essence of individual experiences and involves interpretative analysis to draw meaning from participants' lived realities.

Using this framework allowed the study to focus on personal narratives and how each participant made sense of her experience. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions offered a platform for participants to authentically share their thoughts and feelings.

Lafon, as referenced by Lombard, stressed the necessity of qualitative approaches in language planning and execution: "Without qualitative assessments, static surveys do not do justice to the language dynamics at play." This further justifies the selection of qualitative methodology.

Initially, I drafted interview questions and sub-questions, which were later validated by both internal and external reviewers. Requests for permission to conduct the study were sent to appropriate authorities. After receiving approval, consent forms were distributed and signed by participants to formalize their involvement.

Participants were fully briefed on the purpose of the study, and their voluntary participation was emphasized. Data collection involved in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and other related techniques to gather insights from participants. Interviews were recorded for accuracy and ethical assurance, and participants were informed of this in advance. Anonymity was ensured as part of the ethical standards.

After each interview, recordings were transferred to a computer, translated, and transcribed. Gratitude was extended to participants after each session, acknowledging their time and contribution. As a gesture of appreciation, a small token was given to each participant in recognition of their cooperation.

Additionally, ethical clearance was granted by the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee under Protocol No. UMERC-2024-309 on October 5, 2024, valid until April 5, 2025, ensuring ethical standards were upheld.

Credibility

To protect participants' confidentiality, no real names were disclosed. Pseudonyms were used for each informant to maintain their anonymity throughout the study.

Dependability

Regarding dependability, I placed trust in the honesty, integrity, and sincerity of the participants in sharing the information

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required. While their credibility was valued, factual accuracy was also verified to maintain the study's integrity.

Confirmability
Confirmability was addressed by ensuring that all original materials such as field notes, journals, and audio recordings were preserved for future reference and validation.

Transferability
To ensure transferability, I prepared a detailed and well-documented manuscript. The participants were allowed to review and verify the data before finalizing the research findings to prevent misrepresentation. The content was organized clearly and logically to make the results accessible and engaging for future readers.

This study adopted a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the personal experiences of female Wattpad readers. For data analysis, the six-phase thematic analysis method developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006) was used, known for its flexibility and richness in interpreting qualitative data.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study was anchored in the Feminist-Phase Theory. This theory utilizes a feminist context to integrate the advertising matters as gendered text and consumer answers as gendered readings into consumer research. It also focuses on the feminist perspective on gendered reading, which supports the idea of the empathetic attitude of women in different reading materials and how they responded after having read the said materials (Stern).
Another support to this is the theory of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Derrida, which is called the Literary and Cultural Theory. This theory speaks about the different elements found in literature and how they affect the senses of the readers from the literal meaning down to its implication and deeper interpretation, or in the linguistic aspects. Additionally, this theory also helps explain how feminist criticism takes its place while preserving the thought implied by the authors. In this theory, readers are permitted to give criticism based on how they feel and understand what the material is trying to convey to the readers (Barry).

As this issue has become a rising phenomenon today, I would like to conduct this as a study to find out how the female readers evaluate the post-modern types of novels, what experiences they could reveal upon being hooked with the material, and how their inclination could impact the people around them.

Since literature has become an integral part of our society and culture, it is undeniable that many of our experiences have been recorded in writing. Other writers are influenced by their expansive imagination, and some have evidence-based stories that capture the senses of readers. People in the previous times were reliant on the printed black and white, hard copy of the literary pieces, and yet, they still loved reading, only that it would take them to carry the literal weight of the materials.

In this modern virtual world, the birth of the newly digitized literary pieces has impacted the readers, particularly women. If you tend to visit the site, you would surely notice the engagement of more women and their active responses to the materials being read.

An educational outcome suggests that readers who engage in Teen Fiction learn to read Classics and to judge books not only in direct emotional response to a character's behavior, but also focusing more on contextualized interpretation of the text (Pianzola, Rebora, Lauer).

The aim is to bridge existing knowledge gaps by investigating whether this engagement positively contributes to their grasp of literature or instead hampers their academic progress. Additionally, the study aims to delve into the motivations driving teenagers to utilize this platform. It also aims to understand the social standing of women teens recognized for their reading habit and how this recognition influences their self-perception and confidence in academic settings (Aydatul, Pandin).

This study sought to explain the views of female readers of post-modern literature and will eventually give an idea as to why this has become contagious in the lives of the readers. In addition, this also helped the English teachers realize its use in optimizing the students' ability to read and comprehend what they are reading, even beyond the sentential level, which resulted in the success of the pedagogical goal of the language teachers of today. Lastly, it may surely trigger the interest of others to take a tour and eventually become a part of the so-called Wattpad Community.

This phenomenological study was done according to the prescribed format, to wit:

This section introduces the background of the study as well as the theory upon which the study is anchored. It is also in this part that the scope and limitations of the study have been divulged, and the significance and purposes by which such a study is being undertaken. The urgency to conduct the said study is highlighted in this section to inform the readers and beneficiaries why this research is badly needed to be conducted.

This part includes connected works wherein various related articles that contribute to this study are found. It is in this section that where supporting viewpoints of the different authors bout the study were enumerated and highlighted.

This comprises the method of which included the description of the research design, the role of the researcher, data collection procedure, and the manner of analyzing the data. The trustworthiness and ethical considerations were also clearly emphasized in this chapter. To be discussed also in this chapter are the protocols and standards of research.

This section comprises the results and information revealed by the key informants and participants, as well as their detailed explanation of their responses. The readers were able to absorb

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the essential themes that were drawn out from the various responses, as well as the thematic statements, which served as the justification of the themes taken from the interview.
Lastly, discussions and conclusions on the findings of the research, the implications for practice was based on the data gathered and the themes being generated from the different responses from the In-depth Interview and Focus Group Discussion, and how this study contributed for further research so with the concluding remarks of the researcher with details of the breakthroughs and challenges during the entire period of research.

Post-Modern Literature. Post-Modern Literature is a form of literature that is characterized by the use of metafiction, unreliable narration, self-reflexivity, intertextuality, and which often thematizes both historical and political issues.

Wattpad. Wattpad is an e-book community where undiscovered and published writers can publish and share their works. It is also a reading application that can be accessed using a mobile phone or a computer. It requires no special hardware, instead, it makes use of common mobile phones for downloading, and online web pages, storage, and display of ebook material. It can be run on most mobile phone devices. The content is user-generated, allowing anyone to contribute to the library.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Themes and Core Ideas on the Views of female readers reading Wattpad stories

Themes	Core Ideas
Vocabulary Enrichment	• The unfamiliar words become the way to search it in the dictionary. • The unacquainted words awaken their gut in reading. • They can now use correct terms to apply in the sentence.
Figuratively Attractive	• New genres of stories make them excited to read more. • Reading recommended stories from readers they trust and reading trendy stories brings out curiosity. • Social media comments about a certain story linked to the interest of the readers. • Reflects real-life issues that make reading experiences more meaningful.
Personal Character Portrayal	• Seeing one's self in the character's shoes. • Connection of the reader to the character through personal experiences. • Coping from real-life circumstances grounded on the character's victory.
Personal Character Attachment	• The emotions of the readers are drawn to the character's behavior in the story. • Hooked on the portrayal of the character's role. • The students answered the question with full emotion on how the story impacted their lives.

With the theme, Vocabulary Enrichment, participants revealed that reading post-modern novels through the use of Wattpad helped them enhance their vocabulary by looking for unfamiliar words in the dictionary and apply the correct usage of the words in the sentences

This was confirmed by the experience shared by IDI6:
"For me, the factor that urges me to read more about Wattpad stories is the unfamiliar words that I read that allow me to search in a dictionary to add to my knowledge and vocabulary."

It was also validated by IDI5
"Also, the fact that I could also learn life lessons and unfamiliar words made me continue reading more and more."

The ideas were expanded by FGD5
Sa akoa Maam kay mga realization maam about sa tama ug mali na term, ug kanang mga English gud ana na word maam, makabalo na ko unsaon sya pag gamit sa sentence.

"For me, Ma'am, I realized about the correct and wrong terms, especially the English words, I can now use the right term in the sentence."

Reading through the instrument Wattpad, it boosts the vocabulary of every individual, which helps them use the terms in their future conversation and allows them to construct more lengthy and informative contents.

Pertains to the multifaceted strategies employed to enhance learners' lexicons. Various studies indicate that explicit instruction and interactive methods can significantly improve vocabulary acquisition. Hukom emphasizes the importance of a vocabulary notebook, which cultivates knowledge beyond mere definitions, including synonyms, antonyms, and usage in context, thereby fostering deeper comprehension and retention (Hukom)

The theme of Figuratively Attractive in the context of Wattpad encompasses the platform's unique ability to engage readers through compelling narratives and rich, imaginative language that resonates with diverse audiences.

It was confirmed by IDI 2
"Social interaction, such as comments, discussions, and recommendations within the white community, is what truly shapes my preferences through social interactions. I can get both negative and positive feedback from leaders, as well as be exposed to new stories and genres that I might consider reading."

It was also validated by IDI 4
Seeing what others think about a story, especially in the comments, helps me discover new reads. I love reading reactions from people who feel the way I do about certain parts. Sometimes, recommendations from readers I trust or seeing a story that is trending make me curious enough to check it out."

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The idea was supported by IDI 6
"One thing comes to mind when I am reading a feed of a famous writer, I can see the comments being written in their walls and it kind of some way influence me to read the story they are talking and that's how social interaction with like comments, stories and links influence my preferences".

Wattpad female readers tend to read more stories about how the words were being presented figuratively. It catches their eyes and stirs their mind with excitement, the placement of the words and how it is deeply understood by the readers.

This aspect is particularly vital in fostering a connection between writers and readers, enhancing the overall reading experience. Wattpad serves as a dynamic literary platform that promotes reading and writing in an attractive and accessible manner. According to Widiasmara, the platform is characterized by its user-friendly design, which allows for the creation and sharing of stories across various genres, effectively drawing in readers and facilitating a feedback mechanism between writers and their audience (Widiasmara)

With the theme Personal Character Portrayal, the participant's emotion towards the story was being hooked because of their personal experiences. Personal Character Portrayal examines how vocabulary is utilized to reflect and shape personal identity and character in communication.

This was confirmed by IDI 4:
"Honestly, this is a huge deal for me. when I see myself in a character whether if it is their struggles, their personality, or their dreams it makes the story ten times better. It is like the author understands what I am going through, and it makes me feel less alone. Even when I don't completely relate to a character, if I can understand their choices, l will still feel connected."

It was validated by IDI 5:
"I could cry because of the fact that their life is getting worser and worse, and sometimes relate to some of their certain circumstance. I had read about some characters that made me question about myself. The fact that they are able to hold on to what is right inspires me to one day choose the right leader."
This idea was supported by FGD 4:
"Sa ako Maam, akong nabasa na The Hell University, ang bida maam kay ganahan ko kay bisag bisan kinsa na tao ang naghimo niyag dautan, di niya ma kuan, unsay tawag ana uy. Dili jud sya magpatakag tuo, dili siya mangita ug gubot aron walay samok."

"For me, Ma'am, as I read the story The Hell University, I like the protagonist because of how she manages those people who hurt her, and she doesn't trust easily to avoid conflict."

In examining the theme of personal character portrayal within Wattpad narratives, it becomes evident that this platform has a significant impact on how characters are represented and how these representations resonate with the lives of readers. The use of Wattpad allows aspiring writers to explore the portrayal of complex characters, offering insight into diverse life experiences, identities, and emotional landscapes. Such representations often encourage readers to engage in self-reflection and empathy, enhancing their understanding of different perspectives.

Characters in Wattpad stories frequently embody relatable struggles and triumphs, reflecting the nuances of contemporary youth experiences. Specifically, narratives often tackle themes of love, personal growth, and the search for identity, which are particularly resonant for younger audiences (Loi et al.,).

This engagement with character portrayal emphasizes the development of social awareness and emotional intelligence, as readers navigate the complexities of character motivations and conflicts. As reported by various studies, the interactive nature of Wattpad also facilitates community engagement, where readers contribute their thoughts and feedback, further enriching the narrative through shared experiences (Nidar & Monteza,).

With the theme Personal Character Attachment, it relates to the emotional connections formed through language.

This was confirmed by FGD 1:
"Ang leading man maam kay redflag jud sya kayo Maam, as in, kay gi let ra niya ang uyab niya Maam na dili tabangan, mas nitabang sya sa dili niya uyab. For me maam naglagot jud ko niya Maam kay givalue pa niya ang lahi na babae kaysa sa iyang uyab, which is si Duke."

"The leading man was red-flagged, he let his girlfriend do things all by herself, yet, he helped another girl that isn't his girlfriend. I was so mad at him for valuing another girl rather than his girlfriend who named Duke."

It was validated by FGD 2:
"Same jud mi ug answer maam kay makalagooooooot jud sya maam, lami kayo sya tuk-on, lami musulod sa cellphone unya tuk-on teka."
"We have the same answer, Ma'am, because I was mad at him, if I could get a chance to enter the cellphone, I would choke him."

This idea was expanded by FGD 5:
"Sa akoa Maam kay ang isa ka character kay full of evilness, lami kayo ilisan ang scenes Maam kay muapil ko, na usabon ang linya sa script."
"For me, Ma'am, one of the characters was full of evilness, I want to change their scene and change their script."

This suggests that language not only facilitates mere communication but also plays a crucial role in emotional bonding and relational dynamics. In the educational context, understanding the interplay between vocabulary and personal attachment can enhance teaching strategies, particularly in fostering supportive learning environments that address the emotional and social dimensions of language learning.

On the second research question posed, the participants used the validated interview guide to view female readers reading wattpad stories. After the interview, transcription and careful analysis of the documented data, the following themes emerged: Develop Emotional Maturity, Boost Self –

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Confidence, Develop Smart Decision Skills, Connect with Similar Social Concerns, and Develop Reader – Character Identification.

Table 2
Themes and Core Ideas on How Wattpad stories impacted the lives of the female readers

Themes	Core Ideas
Develop Emotional Maturity	
	• Reading relatable stories brings awareness of past mistakes, offering a chance to recognize and correct personal wrongdoings.
	• Wattpad serves as a haven, helping process emotions, offering comfort in tough times, and providing an escape from stress.
	• Strong attachments to characters foster deep emotional responses, enhancing empathy and understanding of different life experiences.
Boost Self–Confidence Wattpad	
	• Stories inspire perseverance and resilience, reinforcing the idea that no matter how difficult life gets, one must keep fighting and growing stronger.
	• Relatable characters and narratives help readers understand themselves better, encouraging self-acceptance, self-awareness, and the courage to embrace personal journeys.
	• Reading stories that promote self-love and self-worth contributes to improved self-esteem, helping individuals shift from insecurity to self-empowerment.
	• Wattpad fosters independence by encouraging readers to prioritize their own growth rather than seeking validation from others, ultimately leading to increased confidence and self-trust.
Develop Smart Decision Skills	
	• Wattpad stories encourage analyzing situations and consequences, improving decision-making skills.
	• Reading about characters overcoming challenges helps develop strategies for real-life problems.
	• Exposure to different scenarios teaches caution and the importance of making informed choices.
	• Understanding characters' emotions and actions enhances self-awareness in decision-making.
Connect with Similar Social Concerns	
	• Wattpad stories highlight social issues that readers can relate to fostering a sense of connection and understanding.
	• Reading about social concerns raises awareness and encourages discussions on important societal topics.
	• Stories help readers develop empathy by exposing them to different struggles and perspectives.
	• Wattpad provides a space for readers to connect with others who share similar concerns, creating a supportive and understanding community.
Develop Reader – Character Identification	
	• Readers form deep bonds with characters by relating to their feelings, struggles, and growth.
	• Identifying with characters helps readers better understand their own thoughts, emotions, and experiences.
	• Watching characters evolve inspires readers to learn from their journeys and apply lessons to their own lives.
	• Relating to characters provides a sense of belonging, comfort, and reassurance during difficult times.

With the theme, Develop Emotional Maturity, participants' Wattpad stories help readers reflect on past mistakes, offering an opportunity for growth and self-improvement. They also serve as a source of comfort and emotional support, providing an escape from stress. Additionally, forming strong connections with characters enhances empathy and deepens understanding of diverse life experiences.

This was confirmed by the experience shared by IDI2:
"My exposure to different perspectives and life experiences through Wattpad stories helps me to better understand my own identity. It also improves my self-perception as it broadens my understanding of this world and my place within it. Reading Wattpad stories evokes foreign emotions and is a great place for self-reflection."

It was validated by IDI 3:
"It helps me realize the wrongdoings I did that I didn't realize in the past, until I read a story that really relates to myself and my situation."

This idea was expanded by FGD 4:
"Wattpad stories are like a haven. They help me process emotions I do not always know how to deal with. when I am sod, I find comfort in stories that reminds me I am not alone. When I am stressed, they give me an escape. Reading about characters overcoming challenges gives me hope, while lighthearted stories make me laugh and feel at ease."

Wattpad stories often reflect themes of love, identity, and personal growth, which are particularly pertinent for female readers navigating their adolescence and young adulthood.

Research has shown that storytelling fosters emotional intelligence and self-reflection, contributing to emotional maturity. Readers develop an understanding of complex emotions through the characters' journeys, which enhances their ability to process and articulate their feelings (Pianzola et al.)

With the theme Boost Self Confidence, Wattpad stories inspire perseverance and resilience, emphasizing personal growth despite challenges. Through relatable characters and narratives, readers gain self-awareness, self-acceptance, and the courage to embrace their journeys.

These stories promote self-love and self-worth, boosting self-esteem and fostering empowerment. Additionally, Wattpad encourages independence by helping readers focus on personal

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growth rather than external validation, leading to greater confidence and self-trust.

This was confirmed by the experience shared by IDI 4
"Wattpad has helped me understand myself better. Some characters reflect parts of me I did not even realize, and their journeys make me think about my own. Whether it is about chasing dreams, standing up for myself, or embracing flaws, these stories remind me that it is okay to grow and figure things out."

It was validated by IDI 5
"Ever since I started reading, I have continuously improved my self-esteem and have loved myself much better now than before. Insecurities are just something I question others., but not to myself. A character and an author have told me to love myself more before loving others. A lot of people have been saved because of wattpad, and that sums up how much wattpad had contributed to my mental health and also with my viewpoints."

This idea was expanded by IDI 6
" I would have to say that it helped me in a way herein I became self aware in things I have and I doubt have, it also helped me grew as someone who is not afraid of herself and I would have to say also that wattpad also helped me to have a strong connection with myself."

Engaging with narratives that feature strong female protagonists can empower readers, promoting self-confidence. Studies illustrate that individuals who relate to characters in literature tend to experience an increase in self-confidence, as the narratives often depict struggles that parallel their own (Basri & Tamrin, 2020).

With the theme Develop Smart Decision Skills Wattpad stories influence decision-making and self-reflection. Readers learn to analyze their own actions, apply cause and effect in daily life, and consider consequences before making choices. Characters' mistakes serve as lessons, encouraging smarter decisions. Additionally, Wattpad emphasizes the importance of balancing life and considering loved ones when pursuing dreams.

This was confirmed by the experience shared by IDI 5
"I applied cause and effect in my daily life since I have read about them making right decisions, they should have never made, been much more aware of the consequences that thinking this is good."

It was validated by IDI 6
"The character was very stupid in making a decision that moved me in a ways I didn't yet understand, so, right now, if I would decide for myself, I would always remember the character and encourage myself to think correctly, decide smartly because if I would say to myself na if I won't, I would just be like her."

This idea was expanded by IDI 6
"Kuan maam sa akoa na desisyon na dili mag dali-dali, pagbasa nako sa wattpad maam kailangan I balance jud ang mga nahitabo sa imong kinabuhi bago ka mag desisyon Maam."
"You don't need to rush things, as I read wattpad, I learned that you need to balance things that happened in your life before you decide."

Wattpad users contribute to and engage in discussions about the narratives they read, fostering critical thinking and decision-making skills. By reflecting on character choices and their consequences, readers evaluate options and anticipate outcomes in a low-stakes environment. This process of narrative comprehension aids in developing smarter decision-making abilities as individuals internalize the lessons from various plots and character arcs (Costabile).

With the theme Connect with Similar Social Concerns Wattpad stories raise awareness of social issues, fostering connection and understanding. They encourage discussions, build empathy through diverse perspectives, and create a supportive community for readers with shared concerns.

This was confirmed by the experience shared by IDI 2
"I express and share my experiences with wattpad stories within my social circle through discussions and recommendations. Engaging conversations about interesting plots, characters, and themes that promotes my connections to other readers not just on socmed but also to readers that I encounter on my daily basis."

It was validated by IDI 4
"I talk about Wattpad stories with friends who also read them, especially when I find one that really touched me. We share recommendations and even joke about which characters we would date or be friends with. Sometimes, l even quote lines or refer to stories."

This idea was expanded by FGD 1
"With interacting with them Maam nga naga talk ug wattpad stories na maka ingon ka na ma talk nimo sa ila imong emtions, ma feel ug matunan an na experiences."

"As I interact with the people reading Wattpad, I am really certain that it fills with emotions and the have experienced so much in ife."

The collaborative nature of Wattpad fosters community among readers and writers, facilitating a sense of belonging and shared experiences. The platform encourages comment interactions, which serve not only as feedback for authors but also as a medium for readers to connect over shared interests and themes (Ayub 2023).

Moreover, the exploration of romantic themes that resonate with female readers contributes to a deeper understanding of societal expectations and personal desires, which is crucial for identity formation during formative years. This not only aids in character identification but also allows for the exploration of complex social issues surrounding relationships and personal agency. (Izharuddin).

With a theme, Develop Reader – Character Identification, Wattpad stories inspire personal growth, resilience, and self-reflection. They motivate readers to pursue dreams, embrace self-love, and take risks. Characters' struggles encourage

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bravery, standing up for oneself, and expressing emotions. Wattpad serves as more than entertainment—it's a source of life lessons and empowerment.

This was confirmed by the experience shared by FGD 4
"There was a time when a story inspired me to focus more on my dreams because the characters showed me that success comes with determination. Other times, a story about forgiveness or self-love motivated me to let 00 of grudges or be kinder to myself. Wattpad has this way of planning ideas in my head, and sometimes, those ideas push me to be braver or try something new."

It was supported by IDI 5
"To take the steps or the risks they took for them to overcome the challenges they are experiencing motivates me to do the same and to think twice about my life decisions."

This idea was expanded by FGD 3
" Sa ako maam kadtong the Hell University, kadtong female didtoa na bida kay lami kayo ako nalang tong babae, permi niya ginapakita na fake na bisan nasakitan sya, dili gihapon niya ipakita na nasakitan siya, kanang unfair kayo kay dili niya I share iyang nabati, kung ako to maam gusto jud nako ipakita to maam na nasakitan ko."

"In the Hell University story, how I wish that I were the lady in the story because she showed fake emotions to someone even though she was hurt. She doesn't show she was hurting, but if I were that lady, I would tell and show that I was hurt."

When readers engage with characters in Wattpad narratives, they often construct personal relationships with these figures, allowing for profound emotional experiences. This emotional resonance is essential, especially for female readers who may find themselves reflected in the characters' journeys. Research indicates that identification with characters fosters empathy and self-awareness, creating a bridge between the reader's internal experiences and the external narrative.

This connection can lead to increased self-compassion and personal insight as readers relate their own experiences to those faced by characters in the stories (Green).

Table 3
Themes and Core Ideas of the Insights of the female readers in reading Wattpad

Themes	Core Ideas
Intimate Connection with Life's Complexities	
	• Stories that challenge relationships and explore sensitive topics resonate deeply, making them more impactful.
	• The originality of storytelling and the variety of perspectives make Wattpad a stimulating platform.
	• The most engaging moments are when character decisions evoke personal reflection, making you consider what you would do in their situation.
	• The peak of the story, with its intense scenes and character emotions, draws you in and leaves a lasting impact.
Detail the persona of the story.	
	• Fully reading and analyzing a story helps in grasping the details and understanding the author's intent.
	• Understanding why characters act the way they do, how their past influences their choices, and connecting small details makes the story feel like a puzzle where every piece matters.
	• Writers create excitement through plot shifts where characters evolve and take on new roles, keeping the narrative engaging.
	• By analyzing the character descriptions and story flow, readers can often predict the protagonist and the plot direction early on, though full interpretation happens after finishing the story.
Figure out the life experiences.	
	• Over-the-border stories on Wattpad require professional critique, so maintaining a level of detachment helps prevent them from overly influencing imagination and insights.
	• Wattpad stories are a form of artistic expression where writers channel their emotions and creativity.
	• Reading allows for vivid imagination, where well-written descriptions help readers picture the setting, enhancing the experience.
Skill Development	
	• Wattpad enhances imagination, critical thinking, and grammar skills.
	• Character journeys inspire self-reflection, encouraging readers to recognize their strengths, appreciate life, and learn from challenges.
	• Wattpad stories are a form of art that connects with real-life situations and struggles.
	• Stories about overcoming setbacks inspire readers to develop resilience, face their challenges, and remain determined despite obstacles.

This was confirmed by the experience shared by IDI 2
"Stories that challenge relationships delve into sensitive topics often resonate deeply within me. The creativity and originality of the story telling along with the diverse voices presented, is what truly makes Wattpad a more stimulating source of engagement."

It was validated by IDI 4
"The most engaging part for me is when the emotions of the character choices make me think about what I would do if I were in their shoes."

This was expanded by IDI 5
"The most engaging part in the Wattpad story is, of course, its climax, where the intense scenes and attitude of the character dwell in my emotions."
The influence of the first message factor, the protagonist's appraisal of story events, is perhaps most directly related to what appraisal theorists imply when they describe a message's "appraisal-relevant theme." Often, stories are narrated in such a way that readers will experience the story events from the protagonist's perspective. Theories of narrative and character involvement suggest that readers often adopt the story

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characters' goals and view the story world from the characters' perspective.

This mental representation of characters' emotional states enables readers to derive meaning from narratives in ways that resonate with their personal experiences. As they witness character growth through adversity, female readers often reflect on their challenges, allowing for a nuanced understanding of emotions such as sadness, triumph, and resilience (Hamby & Komeda).

This was confirmed by the experience shared by IDI 4.
"I try to understand why characters act the way they do and how their past shapes their decisions. I love connecting the dots between small details in the story to see how it all comes together. For me, a well-written plot feels like solving a puzzle where every piece matters, and analyzing it helps me appreciate the story even more."

It was validated by IDI 6
"I would say that writers really know how to make the readers feel excitement while they are reading because there were some shifts in the plotlines of the story where each character also changes their part of the story."

This idea was expanded by FGD 1
"Ma analyze nako Maam na mao na sya ang bida sa first chapter pa lang kay sa description sa character ang flow sa story sad ma recognize nimo na mao nana ang plot sa story, ma interpret nako siya after sa story najud."

"I will realize that this character is the lead because it was being discussed in the first chapter already, and also during the flow of the story, and I can interpret it after reading the whole story."

The personas of characters within Wattpad narratives exhibit a distinct quality, balancing authenticity and relatability with dramatic elements to captivate the audience. This resonance is pivotal for readers, who often seek not just entertainment but also moral lessons and personal inspiration from the constructs of these characters, underscoring Wattpad's role as a source of motivation and emotional exploration (Nidar & Monteza).

The platform thus serves not merely as a publishing venue but as a participatory culture where both readers and writers thrive through shared experiences and evolving narratives.

This was confirmed by the experience shared by IDI 1
" Over the border stories on Wattpad need criticism by professionals, so that's why most of the time I try not to be attracted to the story so it doesn't steer my imagination and influence my insights."

It was validated by IDI 4
"Wattpad stories are definitely a form of art. Every writer pours their thoughts, emotions, and creativity into their work, and it is beautiful that now different styles can evoke different feelings. It influences my insights because it shows me now many ways there are to look at the world and now storytelling can reflect the depth of human experiences."

This idea was expanded by IDI 6
"I would say that it influences me because it is a form of artistic expression, and it influences my insights to think differently about my thoughts."

Wattpad has significantly influenced the life experiences of its users, particularly in the domains of reading and writing skills development. Research indicates that Wattpad serves as a platform where users can cultivate both literacy and creativity simultaneously. For instance, a study demonstrated that Wattpad users feel more comfortable expressing themselves while developing their reading and writing skills through extensive reading and creative writing engagement (Widiasmara).

This highlights Wattpad's role in fostering positive literacy experiences, allowing users to interact with diverse narratives that resonate with their own life situations.

This was confirmed by the experience shared by IDI 3
"Wherein, the way I think and imagine has become wider, and my biggest improvement is my grammar. Wattpad helps me more in every aspect of life."

It was validated by IDI 4
"There are times when a character's journey makes me reflect on my own life. For example, stories about overcoming fear or standing up for one have made me think about my strengths. Some stories even remind me to be grateful for what I have or to forgive myself for my mistakes"

This idea was expanded by IDI 6
"A year ago, I came across a story wherein the character faced so many setbacks, and challenges, yet, she chose to stand up and chose to fight and in that instance, where I have experienced personal growth because through her, I have made it myself also to never let challenges stop me, one thing also, thru these stories nan aga tackle ug social issues, it also opened my eyes to such things, and made me self reflect, and made me help personal growth"

The impact of Wattpad extends beyond mere writing improvement; it also plays a crucial role in enhancing students' overall literacy skills and engagement with reading. Wattpad has proven effective in fostering reading comprehension, with studies showing increased literary appreciation and analytical skills among its users.

The ability to access a wide array of genres and styles allows users to develop a more nuanced understanding of narrative structures and techniques, thereby enriching their learning experiences (Faqih).
Overall, the interactions facilitated by Wattpad form a dynamic environment conducive to skill development in both reading and writing, demonstrating the platform's potential as a robust digital literacy tool.
Implications For Practice

The rise of Wattpad as a popular digital reading platform has significantly influenced the reading preferences of female audiences, particularly young adults and teenagers. Unlike

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traditional published books, Wattpad stories are often serialized and written in an interactive format, allowing readers to engage directly with authors through comments and votes. This interaction creates a unique reading experience that fosters a sense of community, which may not be as prevalent in conventional literary consumption. As a result, female Wattpad readers may develop a preference for fast-paced, emotionally engaging narratives that prioritize relatability over literary complexity.

Beyond reading habits, Wattpad also plays a role in shaping female readers' perceptions of relationships, gender roles, and self-identity. Many of the platform's most popular stories revolve around themes of romance, power dynamics, and personal transformation, which can influence how young female readers view love and societal expectations. Engaging in online discussions within Wattpad's community, however, allows readers to critically analyze these narratives, potentially fostering media literacy and encouraging them to differentiate between fiction and reality.

Furthermore, the immense popularity of Wattpad among female readers has broader implications for the publishing industry and digital storytelling as a whole. Many Wattpad stories, especially those with a large following, are being adapted into traditionally published books, movies, and television series. This transition highlights the growing power of reader-driven content in shaping the literary market. Consequently, the success of Wattpad in engaging female readers demonstrates the increasing importance of online platforms in democratizing literature, giving aspiring authors, particularly women, a chance to share their stories without the barriers of traditional publishing.

Implications for Future Research

Future research on female Wattpad readers can explore the long-term effects of digital storytelling on their reading habits and literary engagement. As Wattpad continues to evolve, it would be valuable to examine whether exposure to serialized, interactive fiction influences readers' willingness to engage with traditional literature or impacts their critical reading skills.

Researchers can also investigate the role of Wattpad in fostering writing development among female users, particularly how the platform's feedback mechanisms and community-driven nature shape aspiring writers' storytelling techniques and confidence in their creative abilities.

Lastly, future research could investigate the commercial and technological implications of Wattpad's growing influence on the publishing industry. Studies could examine how data analytics and algorithm-driven recommendations affect female readers' content consumption patterns and whether these trends mirror or differ from those in traditional publishing markets.

Concluding Remarks

As researchers, we conclude that our study has highlighted the meaningful impact of Wattpad stories on female readers, particularly in shaping their emotions, values, and perspectives. Through this exploration, it became evident that Wattpad serves not only as a platform for entertainment but also as a space for emotional connection, identity formation, and personal growth. For readers, especially young women, the platform encourages engagement with diverse narratives that resonate with their lived experiences and challenges.

This study may also offer valuable insights for educators. Teachers can view Wattpad as a potential tool to foster students' interest in reading and writing, particularly in language and literature classes. By incorporating digital storytelling platforms into educational settings, teachers may better connect with students' interests and harness their creativity. Furthermore, understanding what students read and why they are drawn to certain narratives can help educators develop more relevant and responsive teaching strategies.

Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital reading platforms like Wattpad influence readers and presents opportunities for educators to integrate these insights into more effective and engaging learning practices.

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