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## “Wattymania”: Wattpad Readers’ Perspective on Wattpad's Role in Their Lives

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**ABSTRACT:** Wattpad thrives in the Philippines, boasting over 5 million users. This study explored the implications of reading Wattpad stories among readers at UM Digos College. The study used a phenomenological descriptive research design and Colaizzi’s method of thematic analysis to explore the perceptions of readers regarding the reasons, motivations, and roles of Wattpad in their lives. The study found that there are seven emergent themes: enjoyment and satisfaction, life’s inspiration, satisfying curiosity, providing excitement, developing empathy, convenience reading, and life lessons as participants’ reasons for reading Wattpad stories. It was also reported that the impact of the characters, relatable stories and scenes, emotional appeal, and being influenced by friends and family were reasons for people to engage themselves more in continuing to read Wattpad stories. Furthermore, the study also showed that they perceive Wattpad as a source of providing moral lessons, motivation to write, providing comfort, emotional awareness, being influential to living, grammatical awareness, and stress relieving. The study’s findings suggest using Wattpad-like content to enhance learning and guide students towards responsible reading habits. Further, school stakeholders can integrate Wattpad stories as contemporary literary text subject in language courses.

**KEYWORDS:** Wattpad, qualitative-descriptive, Colaizzi, Philippines

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In today’s digital world, online reading finds its way to the mobile phones of teenagers. Wattpad, a unique app for reading and sharing stories, launched in 2007, has the Philippines as the second-largest Wattpad community in the world with over 5 million registered members, second to the USA (Rabang, Tajolosa, & Beguina, 2021). Excessive reading can have negative effects. It may lead to irritability when interrupted, reduce interest in socializing, cause poor time management, neglect of physical health, and potentially influence language and behavior (Ganci, 2016). Maintaining a balanced approach to reading is crucial for overall well-being, integrating intellectual pursuits with social interaction, physical activity, and self-care (Posluns & Gall, 2020). Most teenagers, according to Quartiroli, et al (2019) especially girls, even those aged 20 years old and above, are now engaging to the famous world of writing and reading which is the Wattpad app, in this app you can read stories in any genres, you can even create your own stories if you want. Thus, Wattpad can be very interesting to read because for those wappaders, this is a way to escape the reality Rabang, et al (2021).

On the other hand, the advancement of technology over the years has enabled students to do many activities online, including Wattpad reading activity outside the classroom. Additionally, the presence of Internet connection allows learners to gain access to an enormous number of authentic materials to make English learning more enjoyable (Dang, 2018). There are quite many online reading platforms available on the internet and one of these is the Wattpad. This platform enables their users to read extensively online as Wattpad claims to have an audience of more than 70 million users in 2019. Learners who read extensively on Wattpad are provided with massive amount of reading materials in various genres which they can choose based on their personal interests. Therefore, this makes Wattpad a potential platform for the students to do Extensive Reading activities outside the classroom, independently (Rahman & Amir, 2019).

However, persistent exposure to the gadget screen for hours may cause health issue to the users. In the recent study presented by West Chester University (Thempratty, 2014), presented their findings which showed a sample of middle school students given eBooks retained less information about what they read compared to students given the same information in print. The students with eBooks were much more motivated to read but they were also able to re-tell less. Their ability to answer question wasn’t quite as strong when they were reading interactive books. Schugars (2017) stated that the problem with many eBooks; are all just of the flashy gimmicks, fun designs and let anyone to wander how the text presented that distract readers from reading carefully.

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On the study presented in an Asian Journal Institution (Gorra et. al, 2016) among the negative consequences listed by students is reading EBooks during classroom time regardless of whether it's online or offline or through app or browser, it was observed that students are most likely to have negative consequences using mobile with internet, downloading, and using copyrighted material. The view that use of technology helps in enhancing learning related activities in classroom, but technology may also be used for distracting students from their learning activities and other important tasks. Another Studies proved that reading Wattpad negatively affects the student's academic performances because most of the students were reading it which affects their grades because most of them spent more time reading fiction stories on Wattpad than doing their homework and other school related activities (Tingcang, 2021).

There are previous relevant studies under the same topic. However, none of the studies have explored students’ perceptions towards the role of Wattpad on their lives as well as the benefits the students get from doing the activity on the platform. Arifuddin (2018) conducted a thesis entitled “Students’ Perception in the Impact of Extensive Reading Course”. His study observed the students’ perceptions towards an extensive reading class which was conducted in a state university in Indonesia. The findings of the study reveal that Extensive Reading approach enhances students’ interest in increasing their reading. It also builds students awareness in reading either in class or beyond classroom until it turns into their habits to read more and improve their reading level.

A qualitative study named "Students' Perception on the Online Extensive Reading" was carried out by Sanubari (2018). The purpose of the study was to determine the advantages and drawbacks of extensive internet reading that Indonesian university students conducted on their own. The study's conclusions demonstrate that students believed that reading a lot on the internet would help them with reading assignments and would also enhance their vocabulary and grammar abilities in English. Anindita (2020) conducted a study entitled “Efl Students’ Perception Towards Extensive Reading Practices in Higher Education Level.” The purpose of the study was to investigate the students’ perceptions towards extensive reading subject, kinds of materials that they preferred, and its benefit to their English skills. The result of this study showed that the students have good perceptions towards extensive reading practices. Besides, extensive reading practices also enhanced students’ knowledge and English skills such as writing, speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary mastery, and grammar.

This study is anchored on the theory promulgated by Harold Lasswell, which is entitled, “Hypodermic Needle Theory” or also known as “Magic Bullet Theory”. This theory assumes that a message of a media is wholly "injected" into the recipient's consciousness. The theory describes that the media controls the things the audience watches and listens to and its effect. The theory, therefore, maintains the convincing media contents reach the desired shift in attitude from intended audience (Griffin, 2000). The “Magic Bullet Theory” is related to the present study, because it signifies the effect of Wattpad to student readers. As the internet provides Wattpad as an electronic reading platform, is also incorporates an extensive range of influence on its readers, specifically in the beliefs and cultures of the readers.

The findings of this study hold significant benefits for various stakeholders. For teachers, the insights gained provide a deeper understanding of Wattpad stories and content analysis, offering valuable ideas for incorporating them into educational practices. By integrating approaches that combine education and entertainment, teachers can leverage Wattpad to enhance learning experiences, particularly in English and Literature subjects. This study empowers parents by making them aware of the potential effects of their children's engagement with Wattpad stories, enabling them to take proactive measures to guide and support their children appropriately. Students stand to gain from this study as well, as it illuminates the diverse offerings of the Wattpad community, inspiring them to explore reading opportunities within the platform and discover the accessibility and enjoyment it offers. Additionally, the study serves as a valuable reference for researchers interested in conducting further investigations related to Wattpad, providing a foundation for future studies in this area. Overall, the insights gleaned from this study contribute to the understanding of Wattpad's role in education and its implications for various stakeholders, guiding educators, parents, students, and researchers alike in navigating the digital landscape effectively.

On these accounts, most of the related studies on the use of e-books focus on the positive effects of this on the gain in achievement and performance of students, motivation, and efficiency of learning, not specifically on how the concept of Wattpad impacted the readers. There is also, however, very limited literature on the possible negative effects of e-learning and the way e-learning is executed, especially through Wattpad stories. This will serve as another source of ideas as well as legit information for the next research project. Therefore, the researchers were motivated to conduct this study, which aimed to explore the role of Wattpad in the lives of student readers. Specifically, the aim was to understand the underlying indicators that contribute to how the concept of Wattpad impacts the lives of its readers.

## **2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This study aims to determine the concepts of Wattpad student readers on Wattpad’s role in their lives. Thus, this study will be guided by the following research objectives;

1. Identify what triggered the participants to engage in reading on Wattpad;
2. Determine what motivated the participants to read on Wattpad;
3. Describe the indicators of Wattpad addiction among the participants.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

Researchers utilized qualitative research to explore Wattpad student readers' perceptions of Wattpad's role. They employed purposive sampling, selecting eight participants from UM Digos Branch who had been Wattpad readers for at least two years. Snowball sampling was also used to expand the sample. In-depth interviews using semi-structured questionnaire, were conducted, allowing for open-ended discussion. Data analysis involved transcription and coding of interviews, focusing on emerging themes.

### 3.2 Research Participants

The researchers used in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. Instruments included the researchers themselves, a validated interview guide, a recorder, notebooks, pens, and consent forms. The main instrument was the researchers, following a validated interview guide with flexibility for adjustments during interviews. Other instruments ensured accurate recording and transcription of responses. Consent forms were used to secure participants' permission and assure confidentiality.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Identified reasons triggered the participants to engage in reading Wattpad



Figure 1: Reasons triggered the participants to engage in reading Wattpad

The illustration demonstrates the reasons of the participants in engaging themselves to read wattpad stories. Based on the data gathered, there are the six emergent themes identified in this study. The most common reasons for reading Wattpad were enjoyment and satisfaction, followed by life's inspiration, satisfying curiosity, provides excitement. Additionally, reading Wattpad had helped them also develop empathy and provided them with convenience reading and life lesson.

The findings of this study suggest that Wattpad is a popular platform for reading because it provides users with a variety of benefits. The most common benefits reported by respondents were;

**Enjoyment and Satisfaction:** Reading is an inherently enjoyable activity, and Wattpad offers a unique platform filled with variety. Participants 1, 5, 6 and 8 stated that enjoyment and satisfaction engage them to read more Wattpad stories. The **personalized recommendations** curate content that truly aligns with readers individual preferences, ensuring to encounter stories that is genuinely love ( Fuller et al., 2023; Guehring, 2023). This **episodic format of wattpad** fuels engagement with **chapter-by-chapter accomplishment** and **suspenseful cliffhangers**, creating a satisfying cycle of anticipation and resolution (Sillence, 2022) making the participants engage themselves more in putting more time in reading different stories. They responded as follows to support. Participants 1,5,6 and 8 cited this as evidence.

*‘It gives me enjoyment and satisfaction. It gives me enjoyment because I usually read romance. ’ PAR. 1*

*“It was because of boredom and I decided to spend my time on reading had a struggle on reading so when I started using Wattpad it improved my reading skills.” PAR. 5*

*“It is so inviting to read stories that are romance. I read it because it is thrilling and exciting.” PAR. 6*

*“It was trending back then to read on Wattpad. I like it because it provides entertainment too.” PAR. 8*

But Wattpad goes beyond individual reading. The vibrant **community fosters connection and shared enjoyment** through comments, discussions, and forums, allowing you to engage with others who share your passion (Barany & Foster, 2021). Gamification elements like contests and interactive features add another layer of fun and participation, making the readers an active part of the Wattpad universe (Franco, 2017). In essence, Wattpad's enjoyment stems from a combination of **personalized content**,

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**engaging storytelling, a supportive community, and interactive elements**, creating a reading experience that goes beyond simply offering variety (Loi et al., 2023; Pianzola, 2021).

**Life's Inspiration:** Wattpad's power to inspire goes beyond simply featuring relatable characters as showed in the findings according to Participant 8 making it one of the reasons why participants engage themselves in reading more wattpad stories. They responded as follows to support. Participants 8 cited this as evidence.

*“I’ve read a story wherein that character was poor and he studied hard to succeed. It motivated me to do the same.” PAR. 8*

These characters, often grappling with real-life challenges like bullying, self-discovery, and navigating relationships, act as a **mirror** reflecting one’s own experiences, fostering **identification and connection** (Fejzullahu, 2022; Mirra, 2018). Witnessing their journeys, triumphs, and struggles can serve as a **motivational force**, providing the courage to tackle similar obstacles or pursue the readers dreams (Convey, 2022). But the platform's impact extends further. By showcasing diverse characters and perspectives, Wattpad acts as a **window into unfamiliar worlds**, broadening your horizons and fostering empathy, compassion, and acceptance (Anderson, 2019; Gajdošová et al., 2022). This exposure to different experiences can spark **personal growth and reflection**, encouraging the researcher to examine own perspectives and engage with the world in a more open-minded and understanding manner (Nganga, 2019). In essence, Wattpad's ability to inspire transcends relatable characters, offering a platform for personal growth, reflection, and a deeper understanding of yourself and the world around you (Mendes, 2023).

**Satisfying Curiosity:** Stepping beyond the familiar narratives of mainstream literature, Wattpad unlocks a treasure trove of user-generated content that fuels the **curiosity and expands the literary horizons**. The study showed that Participant 2 has been very curious and got influence by peers to read Wattpad stories making it immerse itself in **unique voices** that tell stories unseen in traditional publishing, offering **fresh perspectives** that challenge existing norms and spark new ideas. Dive into **innovative plotlines** that push the boundaries of conventional storytelling, venturing into genres and themes that might never have considered before. They responded as follows to support. Participants 2 cited this as evidence.

*“I started when I was on eight grade. It was through my friends that I decided to start reading. I got curious whenever they read because it seems to be interesting and fun.” PAR. 2*

This **constant influx of novelty** keeps the readers on the edge of their seat, eager to discover the next hidden gem (Field, 2019). Whether it's a captivating fantasy world unlike anything you've read or a contemporary romance with a unique cultural twist, Wattpad offers a **playground for exploration** (Baron, 2023). Readers embarked on a journey of **self-discovery**, uncovering new interests and passions that is new (Laing & Frost, 2017; Pariyar, 2019). Additionally, the platform serves as a launchpad for talented authors, allowing readers to **connect with rising stars** and potentially discover the next favorite writers long before they hit the mainstream (De Kosnik, 2021; Brown, 2020). Wattpad's vast library of user-generated content is more than just a collection of stories; it's an invitation to explore, experiment, and expand the readers literary horizons in ways never before possible (Murray, 2020).

**Provides Excitement:** Wattpad isn't just about satisfying the curiosity; it's about keeping you **on the edge of your seat**. Participant 6 and 7 highlighted that reading wattpad stories provides greater excitement to them. Many stories masterfully employ **cliffhangers, suspenseful buildups, and unexpected twists**, leaving them desperate for the next chapter. They responded as follows to support. Participants 6 and 7 cited this as evidence.

*“It is so inviting to read stories that are romance. I read it because it is thrilling and exciting.” PAR. 6*

*“Reading on Wattpad was famous before because of it’s convinience wherein you can just use your phone. Every chapter released gives me excitement due to different plot twist of the story that can also be applied on my life.” PAR. 7*

But the excitement doesn't stop there. The **serialized format** fuels a unique brand of anticipation. Each chapter release becomes an event, fostering a **community buzz** as readers discuss theories and predictions (Moulton, 2022). This **constant anticipation** creates a deep **emotional investment** in the story, making you feel like you're living and breathing alongside the characters (Fisher et al., 2019). Wattpad doesn't simply offer stories; it creates **shared experiences** that are **immersive and thrilling**. Additionally, **interactive elements** like polls and quizzes further **gamify the experience**, turning reading into an active pursuit that keeps you hooked and engaged (Briggs, 2022). Ultimately, Wattpad's ability to provide excitement lies not just in its cliffhangers, but in its ability to create a **dynamic and interactive reading experience** that leaves you yearning for more (Ito et al., 2019).

**Develops Empathy:** Wattpad isn't just a platform for escaping into different worlds according to Participant 3,4,6 and 7; it is also a catalyst in developing **empathy and understanding that gives great impact to their everyday life**. By delving into the lived experiences of diverse characters, participants embark on a journey beyond the surface by immersing themselves in their **thoughts, feelings, and motivations**, gaining a deeper understanding of their unique situations and perspectives. This exposure isn't just intellectual; it's **emotional**. They connect with characters different from thierselves, experiencing their struggles and triumphs alongside them. This **emotional connection** fuels empathy, allowing them to see the world through their lens and appreciate their lived realities (Kim, 2018). They responded as follows to support. Participants 3,4,6 and 7 cited this as evidence.

*“Before I seemed to cringe on love itself but when I started reading on Wattpad I felt a lot of emotions just by reading.” PAR. 3*

*“The life lessons I’ve read on Wattpad about family made me think that I am not the only person who is struggling with the same situation.” PAR. 4*

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*“It truly affects me because I end up comparing my life to the stories I’ve read that is relatable.” PAR. 6*

*“The inspiring stories that I’ve read motivates me to work hard as well.” PAR. 7*

But the impact goes beyond individual characters (Cohen, 2018). By showcasing diverse narratives, Wattpad exposes readers to a **broader spectrum of human experiences**. Readers encounter characters from different cultures, backgrounds, and identities, each with their own unique stories to tell (Gee, 2018; Campano, 2019). This **broadening of horizons** challenges existing biases and preconceived notions, fostering a more **open-minded and accepting** perspective (Sobkowiak, 2019). Ultimately, Wattpad doesn't just offer diverse characters; it offers a **window into the human experience** in all its richness and complexity (Pianzola et al., 2020). By immersing yourself in these stories, you cultivate empathy, compassion, and a deeper understanding of the world around you, making you a more **inclusive and well-rounded individual** (Charles, 2023).

**Convenience Reading:** Wattpad doesn't just offer stories; it offers convenience for **Participant 7 and 8 because through the use of phone they have unlimited access in reading different stories making them consistently engage themselves in continuously reading wattpad stories**. They responded as follows to support. Participants 7 and 8 cited this as evidence.

*“Reading on Wattpad was famous before because of it’s convinience wherein you can just use your phone. You can gain life learning that can be applied on your life.” PAR. 7*

*“It wa very interesting back then because you can just read it with the use of your phone. We tend to bring our phones at all times so when you feel bored you can easily access it on your phone.We can also be able to learn new words just by reading” PAR. 8*

Wattpad stories are available on various devices, it becomes your **pocket-sized reading haven**, ready to whisk you away anytime, anywhere (Murray, 2020). Whether you're **waiting in line, commuting, or stealing a few moments during a break**, Wattpad ensures you can **seamlessly fit reading into your busy schedule** (Marxism, 2018). This convenience isn't just a perk; it **removes barriers** for individuals who might struggle with traditional reading habits due to time constraints (Pankiw, 2022). It empowers even the most **time-crunched individuals** to **indulge in the pleasures of reading**, fostering a love for literature that might not have been possible otherwise (Grubb, 2020).

Furthermore, Wattpad's **offline reading functionality** allows you to **download stories** and enjoy them even without an internet connection, ensuring your reading journey remains uninterrupted (Driscoll, 2024)). This **flexibility and accessibility** make Wattpad more than just a reading platform; it's a **lifeline for busy individuals** seeking a **convenient and enjoyable escape** into the world of stories (Kelley, 2021)

**Life Lessons:** While the data suggests "Life's Inspiration" as a key motivator for reading Wattpad, participant 4 and 5 mention of "Life Lessons" hints at a deeper impact. The finding showed that participants not only gained enjoyment while reading wattpad but also a lifelong lesson that gives great impact to their life. Unlike simply finding relatable characters and drawing inspiration, Wattpad offers a unique space for **vicarious learning and growth**. Readers can **process real-life themes and challenges** through fictional narratives, leading to valuable lessons applicable to their own lives.They responded as follows to support. Participants 4 and 5 cited this as evidence.

*“The life lessons I’ve read on Wattpad about family made me think that I am not the only person who is struggling with the same situation.” PAR. 4*

*“I remembered when I read a drama story and there’s an independent hardworking woman. I thought of doing the same with my life.” PAR. 5*

Wattpad stories often explore **universal themes** like love, loss, friendship, identity, and overcoming adversity (Bratteng, 2023). By immersing themselves in these journeys, readers can **explore complex emotions, gain different perspectives, and even develop coping mechanisms** for similar situations they might face (Magolda, 2023). Additionally, the **diverse range of stories** exposes them to a wider spectrum of human experiences, challenging biases and fostering **empathy and understanding**, ultimately leading to **personal growth and reflection** (Woiwode, 2023).

Further enhancing this learning experience is the **interactive nature** of the platform. Readers can **engage in discussions, share interpretations, and receive feedback**, deepening their understanding of the stories and their own personal takeaways ( Ocskus, 2018). Research by Pianzola et al (2020) highlights how readers often use Wattpad to **explore social issues and personal struggles**, suggesting a desire to learn and grow through fiction. Additionally, Widiasmara (2023) emphasizes how **community engagement and shared experiences** on Wattpad can lead to **meaningful conversations and reflections**, further enriching the learning process . Thus, Wattpad offers more than just inspiration. It's a platform for **emotional exploration, personal growth, and deeper understanding** of oneself and the world around us ( Biniak, 2018). The diverse narratives, community engagement, and real-life themes on Wattpad create a dynamic platform where readers can immerse themselves in multifaceted storytelling. Beyond traditional literary experiences, Wattpad serves as a gateway for exploration, enabling readers to broaden their perspectives, empathize with diverse characters, and develop critical thinking skills in an increasingly interconnected world (Helton, 2022).

### I. Identified reasons for the readers to continue and make reading on Wattpad a habit.

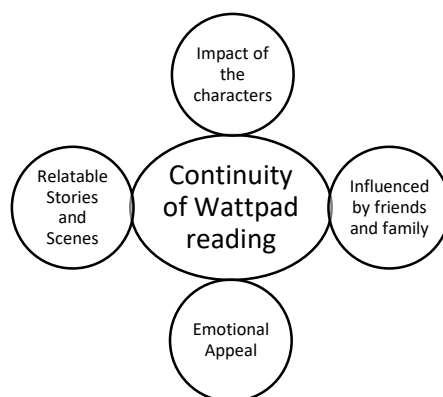


Figure 2. motivation of participants to read on Wattpad

**Relatable stories and scenes:** One of the key factors driving readers to Wattpad is the platform's ability to offer relatable stories and scenes, as evidenced (Mawarni, 2023). This study found that Filipino students particularly enjoyed the way Wattpad stories resonated with their own experiences, highlighting themes like young love, family issues, and friendship struggles Garciano., et al (2024). This relatability factor is especially crucial for younger audiences who crave stories that reflect their own lives and challenges (Lotz & McCutcheon, 2023).

But Wattpad's reach extends beyond specific demographics and genres. By delving into different genres and subgenres, readers can discover relatable characters facing challenges that resonate within their unique interests (Faruque, 2023). For instance, fantasy readers might connect with characters overcoming personal struggles within fantastical worlds, while fans of contemporary fiction might find solace in characters grappling with real-world issues like bullying or mental health, as mentioned in the study by (Driscoll, 2024).

Participants seeks to shed light on its importance in shaping contemporary reading behaviors and preferences. They even mentioned that;

*“I feel so relieved and amazed that what if what I read will also happen to me”.* P2

*“I feel happy especially if the scenario is relatable. It inspires me if the story I read reflects my current situation.”* P4

*“It was fun and enjoyable. I felt like my time was not wasted whenever I read a relatable story.”* P5

**Emotional Appeal:** Beyond the gripping cliffhangers and serialized format, a major draw for readers on Wattpad lies in the emotional rollercoaster stories offer, as highlighted by (Sillence, 2022). Wattpad dives into the depths of human experience, evoking strong emotions like love, loss, excitement, and everything in between (Gordon, 2023). This ability to resonate with readers on a deeper level is what keeps them coming back for more (Weiland, 2023).

The platform thrives on diverse emotional experiences. From the heart-wrenching twists of romance to the nail-biting tension of thrillers, each genre offers a unique emotional journey (Ashta & Yadav, 2021). Wattpad empowers authors to explore the full spectrum of human feelings, catering to a wide range of reader preferences (Franklin, 2022). Whether seeking the comfort of a happily-ever-after or the adrenaline rush of a daring plot, readers can find stories that resonate with their emotional needs (Selinger, 2021).

Moreover, according to (Kelley, 2021) wattpad stories provide a safe space for escapism and connection it engaged narratives offer emotional connection while allowing readers to temporarily step into different worlds and experience a range of emotions without the real-world consequences. This escape from daily life provides a welcome break and allows readers to connect with the characters and their struggles, fostering a sense of shared experience and empathy (Driscoll, 2024).

Participants are sometimes transported by simply reading the stories, as they resonate with the experiences depicted. They even mentioned that;

*“I feel thrilled and sometimes sad and It takes me a long time to get over from it. I feel happy too if it is a happy story.”* P3

*“Sometimes it makes me cry, happy or excited. It will lead you on applying it on your daily life.”* P6

*“Ofcourse, I feel happy especially if it has a good ending.”* P7

*“I feel happy, inspired and motivated. Sometimes I cry with the stories I read.”* P8

**Impact of the characters:** On Wattpad, characters aren't just names on a page; they become companions, confidantes, and sometimes even surrogate friends. Studies by Ayson & Garcia (2019) highlight the deep connections readers form with these fictional figures Pianzola., et al (2020). Unlike traditional novels, Wattpad stories often unfold in real-time, with characters facing relatable experiences and navigating emotional journeys that mirror our own (Chedikulathu, 2020). According to (Seow, 2022), this shared ground fosters a sense of empathy and understanding, making us root for their triumphs and mourn their losses.

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At times, participants engaging with Wattpad stories has the capacity to prompt introspection and shift our viewpoints. Participant 1 even mentioned that;

*“I feel overwhelmed and sometimes I feel sad whenever the scenario seems to be the same on what I am going through. I came to realize that it is not just me who is struggling with the same situation.” P1*

**Influenced by friends and family:** On platforms like Wattpad, where stories unfold in a social space, the influence of friends and family goes beyond casual conversation. Studies like Beck., et al, (2023), highlight the power of word-of-mouth recommendations, where trusted voices within our social circles can introduce us to new stories and authors. These recommendations carry the weight of shared taste and experience, making them more persuasive than traditional advertising (Lou, 2022). This social discovery fosters trust and exploration within the platform's vast library, encouraging readers to venture beyond their usual preferences Kee., et al (2023).

But the impact goes deeper than just discovering new content. Shared reading experiences and discussions with friends and family, as highlighted by (Loh, 2023), create a sense of community and belonging around stories. Discussing plot twists, character development, and personal interpretations fosters deeper engagement with the narratives and strengthens connections with those who share the passion Dawes., et al (2023). This shared journey through stories transcends individual reading and creates a vibrant space for shared experiences and diverse perspectives (Khujaeva & Allaberganova, 2024).

Reading Wattpad stories can occasionally impact participants' behavior and actions. They even mentioned that;  
*“I feel overwhelmed and sometimes I feel sad whenever the scenario seems to be the same on what I am going through. I came to realize that it is not just me who is struggling with the same situation.” P1*

*“I feel so relieved and amazed that what if what I read will also happen to me.” P2*

*“I feel thrilled and sometimes sad and It takes me a long time to get over from it. I feel happy too if it is a happy story.” P3*

*“I feel happy especially if the scenario is relatable. It inspires me if the story I read reflects my current situation.” P4*

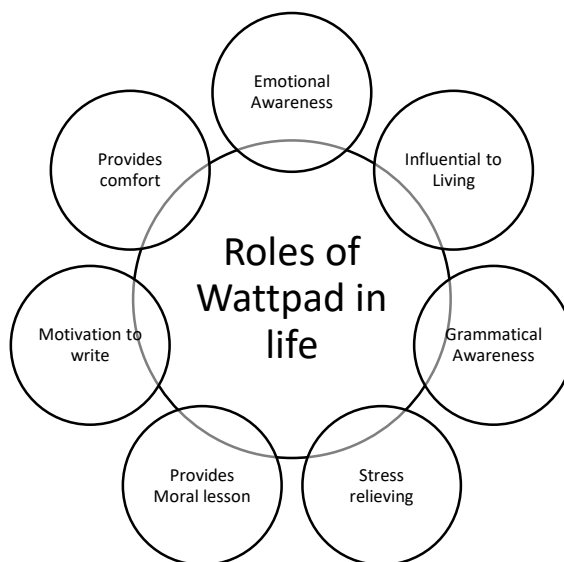
*“It was fun and enjoyable. I felt like my time was not wasted whenever I read a relatable story.” P5*

*“Sometimes it makes me cry, happy or excited. It will lead you on applying it on your daily life.” P6*

*“Ofcourse, I feel happy especially if it has a good ending.” P7*

*“I feel happy, inspired and motivated. Sometimes I cry with the stories I read.” P8*

## II. Identified Roles of Wattpad in their lives.



**Figure 3: Identified Roles of Wattpad in their lives.**

The figure above showed the seven clustered motifs of the emergent theme of Roles of Wattpad in Readers Life that was identified in this study. This study's third goal is to find the Roles of Wattpad in Participants lives. Taking into account the responses that the respondents provided during the various sessions:

**Emotional Awareness:** The study showed that the most of participants viewed wattpad in their life not just just about entertaining narratives; it' is a platform that unlock a deeper understanding of their perspectives through the lens of fictional

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characters most specially according to Participant 6 that relates life to the stories chapter. As the readers immerse themselves in stories, they encounter characters traversing a spectrum of emotions, from the euphoria of love to the sting of betrayal. They responded as follows to support. Participants 6 cited this as evidence.

*‘It is like a chapter of my life wherein every chapter we feel different emotions. It can be happy or sad’.* PAR. 6

This **vicarious experience**, as highlighted by Wang & Taylor (2021), fosters **empathy** and allows readers to connect with individuals different from themselves (Lopez and Friedman, 2019). Witnessing characters navigate complex emotional landscapes can prompt **introspection**, leading readers to question and understand their own emotions in new ways (Barrett and Westlin, 2021). Imagine encountering a character grappling with grief, their pain resonating with a personal loss you experienced (Kessler, 2019). This emotional connection can spark self-reflection, encouraging you to process your own emotions and potentially find new ways of coping. Similarly, witnessing characters overcome challenges with courage and resilience can inspire **emotional growth**, motivating you to approach your own struggles with newfound strength.

Furthermore, Wattpad's diverse range of characters and narratives exposes readers to a wider spectrum of human experiences than they might encounter in their own social circles. This **broadening of horizons**, as noted by Rueda & Lara (2020), challenges biases and fosters **compassion**, allowing readers to understand and appreciate emotions beyond their own limited perspective. Wattpad becomes more than just a platform for reading; it becomes a gateway to emotional exploration and self-discovery (Musyayyadah, 2020). By engaging with characters' journeys and their emotional complexities, readers can unlock a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them, cultivating valuable skills in emotional intelligence that extend far beyond the realm of fiction (Rahman et al., 2019).

**Grammatical Awareness: Participants stated that Wattpad** transcends its role as a reading platform by offering a unique opportunity to improve their grammar skills as stated by Participant 6. Its interactive nature, as highlighted by the participants), allows them to engage in **meaningful discussions and share feedback** on each other's writing. This goes beyond simply reading well-written content; it creates an immersive learning environment where readers are **actively exposed to diverse writing styles and grammar usage**. They responded as follows to support. Participant 6 and 8 cited this as evidence.

*‘The advantage is we can be able to enhance our reading skills and understanding. The disadvantage is that too much of reading, it becomes addicting and we won't be able to finish other things.’* PAR. 6

*‘I was able to learn a lot of new words that I use on reportings or writing essays.’* PAR. 8

Imagine reading a story on Wattpad and encountering a sentence structure you haven't seen before. Curiosity might lead you to ask a question in the comments, sparking a discussion about its effectiveness and the grammar rules behind it (Rojabi et al., 2022). This **interactive dialogue**, enriched by constructive feedback from other users, becomes a mini-grammar lesson, expanding your understanding of language and its nuances (Watsons and Newman., 2021).

Furthermore, Wattpad provides a platform for **experimentation and practice**. As readers dabble in their own writing and share their creations, they receive valuable feedback from other (Sobiek, 2018). Constructive criticism, while sometimes challenging, can highlight areas for improvement in grammar, sentence structure, and word choice (Ito et al., 2018). This **guided learning process**, as mentioned by Bushnell et al (2022), allows writers to refine their skills and develop a strong grasp of grammar in a practical and engaging way.

It's important to note that this learning process is **not unidirectional**. By providing feedback and engaging in discussions, users also enhance their own understanding of grammar (Saeed et al., 2018). This **reciprocal learning environment**, fostered by the platform's interactivity, benefits everyone involved, creating a community where both reading and writing contribute to improved grammar skills (Nair et al., 2022).

**Motivation to Write: Another finding in this study is that Wattpad** isn't just a haven for the participants, it is also a fertile ground where aspiring writers can blossom. The participants stated that the platform provides more than just a blank page and it offers a **supportive community and global audience**, igniting the fire within writers to share their stories and refine their craft. They responded as follows to support. Participant 2 cited this as evidence.

*‘It is my inspiration and motivation to write a story myself. The stories I've read help me to be more understanding.’* PAR. 2

Imagine the thrill of uploading your first chapter and receiving immediate feedback from readers across the globe. This **interactive exchange**, as described by Andalibi & Garcia (2021), fosters a sense of **community and belonging**, replacing the solitary act of writing with a collaborative journey. Comments, votes, and discussions become like virtual cheers, pushing writers to continue their stories and hone their skills (Kennedy, 2022).

Furthermore, the **massive audience** on Wattpad offers a unique opportunity for writers to **gain recognition and validation**. Unlike traditional publishing routes, aspiring writers can see their work read and appreciated by thousands, even millions, potentially propelling them forward and fueling their writing passion (Wilkins ad Benneth, 2021). This **sense of success**, as highlighted by Evans and Smith (2023), can be incredibly motivating, encouraging writers to refine their craft and pursue their literary dreams. Wattpad isn't just a platform; it's a launching pad. By providing a supportive community, a global audience, and the potential for



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recognition, Wattpad becomes a powerful tool that motivates aspiring writers to turn their passion into polished prose, propelling them on their journey from hopeful wordsmiths to published authors.

**Stress Relieving:** The participant in this study finds engaging with Wattpad, both through reading and writing, to be a form of escapism and relaxation. According to them, immersing themselves in stories offers a break from daily pressures, aligning with research showing the psychological benefits of fiction in reducing stress and anxiety by providing temporary escape. They responded as follows to support. Participant 3 and 7 cited this as evidence.

*“It provides me a positive outlook not just romantically but in life as well. It takes away my stress just by reading.”* PAR. 3

*“It is like a stress reliever to me with all the responsibilities at school that need to be done. I do look forward on my vacant time so that I can continue reading.”* PAR. 7

The sense of calm and enjoyment mentioned resonates with the concept of "flow," a state of focused absorption linked to relaxation and reduced stress (Norsworthy et al., 2021). Additionally, reading narratives might contribute to a more positive outlook through emotional regulation and fostering empathy towards different perspectives (Kucircova, 2019; Batini et al., 2021). While this excerpt provides individual experience, further research is needed to explore the specific impact of Wattpad on stress relief (Pianzola et al., 2020). Healthy habits and diverse stress management techniques are crucial for overall well-being (Hanawi et al., 2020).

**Provides Moral Lessons: Participants viewed** Wattpad's vast collection of stories holds a role in their life to offer moral lessons beyond mere entertainment. The platform's diverse range of narratives often delves into **complex themes and moral dilemmas**, presenting characters facing difficult choices and consequences. Engaging themselves with these stories allows readers to **step into different perspectives**, experiencing firsthand the complexities of navigating right and wrong. This **exposure to diverse viewpoints** can prompt critical reflection on one's own values and beliefs, potentially leading to **personal growth and ethical development**. They responded as follows to support. Participant 1 and 8 cited this as evidence.

*“You can get life learnings and moral lessons from it. It takes away my stress, too. The disadvantage is some of it is too fictional and unrealistic. .”* PAR. 1

*“The advantage is you can be able to learn moral lessons like you should be strong on facing life difficulties.”* PAR. 8

Research supports the notion that engaging with fictional narratives can foster **moral reasoning** (Wimmer et al., 2021). Studies have shown that readers can **internalize the values and lessons** embedded within stories, leading to a **greater understanding of ethical issues** and the development of **critical thinking skills** (Paul & Elder, 2019). However, it's crucial to acknowledge that not all content on Wattpad is created with the intention of providing moral lessons (Habsari, 2021). Readers should be **mindful of critically analyzing the stories they engage with**, considering the potential biases and messages conveyed (Filipovic, 2018). Ultimately, while the platform offers a space for exploring complex themes, the responsibility for extracting moral lessons lies with **individual readers' active engagement and critical thinking** (Wersun et al., 2019).

**Provides Comfort: The study shows that reading wattpad gives greater comfort and a scape zone to the participants. According to them** wattpad's online community fosters a sense of belonging and connection, especially for those who might feel isolated or alone that gives great emphasis in helping them overcoming problems in their life. Engaging with other readers and writers with shared interests can provide emotional support and combat feelings of loneliness. They responded as follows to support. Participant 4 and 5 cited this as evidence.

*“It provides comfort in times that I am in a bad mood.”* PAR. 4

*“Reading on wattpad is like having a friend that shows up anytime when you need comfort and words of wisdom.”* PAR. 5

Stepping beyond the role of mere entertainment, Wattpad offers a unique platform for fostering a sense of **belonging and connection**, particularly for individuals who might struggle with feelings of isolation or loneliness (Thomas, 2020). The platform's online community brings together readers and writers who share a passion for specific genres, narratives, or simply the act of storytelling itself. This shared passion acts as a bridge, fostering **meaningful interactions and emotional support** among users (Giaxoglou, 2020). Research on the positive impact of social connections on well-being underlines the crucial role they play in combatting stress, anxiety, and loneliness (Eden et al., 2020). Engaging with others on Wattpad allows individuals to connect with like-minded individuals, creating a space for **validation, shared experiences, and emotional support** (Johnson, 2021). This sense of belonging can be particularly significant for those who might feel isolated in their daily lives, offering a crucial sense of connection and community (Peacock et al., 2020). Through online discussions, shared recommendations, and even collaborative writing projects, Wattpad fosters a sense of camaraderie and belonging, allowing individuals to find solace and support within the platform's vibrant online community (Weiler, 2019).

**Influential to Living: Participants viewed** The stories and experiences shared on Wattpad offers valuable life lessons and diverse perspectives. By connecting themselves with relatable characters and their journeys, participants find inspiration in overcoming similar challenges, pursue their dreams, or simply gain a new outlook on life. They responded as follows to support. Participant 2, 7 and 8 cited this as evidence.

*“I can get ideas from their perspectives that I can apply on my daily life. There are life lessons and sometimes you can adapt the personality of the character.”* PAR. 2

*“It can also be a guide for me on how I should deal with the future situations that I haven't experienced yet”* PAR. 7

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*“You can gain life lesson that can be applied to yourself. The advantage is you can be able to learn moral lessons like you should be strong on facing life difficulties.” PAR. 8*

Wattpad transcends entertainment by offering a treasure trove of **valuable life lessons and diverse perspectives** that can influence readers in profound ways (Aragon and Davis, 2019). The platform acts as a stage for stories and experiences that delve into a myriad of human emotions, aspirations, and struggles (Rodriguez, 2023). By immersing themselves in the narratives and connecting with relatable characters facing challenges and triumphs, readers embark on a journey of **identification and reflection (Dillon-lee, 2018)**. This resonates with the concept of **narrative transportation**, where readers become invested in fictional worlds and characters, allowing them to **explore different possibilities and perspectives** (Bourgeon-Renault, 2019). This process can ignite the spark of **inspiration** to overcome personal obstacles, persevere towards dreams, or simply gain a **fresh perspective** on their own lives (Walsh, 2020). Whether it's finding the courage to pursue a passion, navigating life's complexities, or simply learning empathy for others' experiences, Wattpad's diverse narratives offer a unique platform for personal growth and transformation (MacAlister, 2023).

## 5. IMPLICATION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

### 5.1 Implication

The findings of this study have several implications specifically towards social and linguistics and also the stakeholders, particularly educators, parents, students, a researchers interested in understanding the role of Wattpad in student lives. For educators, the findings highlight the power of relatable stories and engaging characters in fostering student engagement. By incorporating Wattpad stories or similar elements into their teaching strategies, educators can tap into this existing interest and make learning more interactive and meaningful. Parents gain awareness of the potential influence Wattpad has on their children's emotions and social interactions. This awareness empowers them to have open conversations about responsible reading habits and guide their children towards positive online experiences. Students themselves can leverage the study's findings to discover the diverse offerings of Wattpad and explore reading opportunities that fulfill their emotional and social needs. Finally, researchers gain a foundation for further studies exploring the impact of technology on reading habits and the unique dynamics of online communities like Wattpad.

The fervent enthusiasm surrounding Wattpad among student readers suggests its significant role in their lives. For non-readers, this phenomenon hints at a digital literacy divide and a rich world of online storytelling they may overlook, sparking curiosity about social dynamics, cultural significance, and digital trends. Peering beyond individual preferences, it illuminates Wattpad's broader social and linguistic impact. It reveals how shared reading and discussions weave a vibrant online community, fostering connection and belonging. The study also highlights the power of social influence, where recommendations from trusted circles shape the literary landscape for young readers. But the impact goes beyond the social. Wattpad's embrace of informal language reflects real-life communication, potentially influencing language development. Its global reach further exposes users to diverse linguistic styles and cultures, fostering intercultural understanding. However, it's crucial to remember that these findings may not apply universally, and potential downsides like cyberbullying require attention. Ultimately, it unlocks a door to understanding the social and linguistic implications of online reading communities, equipping us to navigate this digital landscape and maximize its potential for positive experiences.

Overall, the implications of this study extend beyond simply understanding Wattpad's role in student lives. It provides valuable insights for educators, parents, students, and researchers to navigate the digital landscape effectively and harness the potential of online storytelling platforms for learning, connection, and personal growth.

### 5.2 Concluding Remarks

Wattpad isn't just an app, it's a portal to relatable stories, emotional journeys, and a supportive community. This study explored the experiences of eight students who've been immersed in Wattpad for at least two years. What keeps them hooked? Relatable themes like young love and family struggles resonate deeply, creating a sense of connection. But it goes beyond that. Wattpad is an emotional rollercoaster, offering stories that evoke a kaleidoscope of feelings, fostering deeper connections with characters who become companions and confidantes. This connection even prompts introspection and shifts in perspective. Wattpad isn't just about individual journeys. Recommendations from friends and family guide readers to new stories, while shared reading experiences and discussions build a sense of community and belonging around their shared love for storytelling. This social aspect allows them to explore diverse perspectives together.

Overall, Wattpad offers student readers a unique space for connection, emotional exploration, and shared experiences, catering to their need for relatability, emotional engagement, character connection, and a sense of community. While potential risks exist with excessive use, this study highlights the positive impact Wattpad can have on students' lives.

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### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The researchers involved in this study have not disclosed any potential conflicts of interest. We have conducted the study and analyzed the collected data impartially to ensure the reliability and objectivity of the research findings. This impartiality indicates that the researchers have no personal biases or vested interests that could potentially influence the results or conclusions drawn from the study.

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