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Perceptions of Social Media-Based Microlearning in Enhancing Interest and Retention in Japanese Language Learning among Interns to Japan

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ABSTRACT

Effective learning strategies are essential for mastering foreign languages, especially Japanese, which presents structural and cultural complexities. This study investigates the perceptions of prospective interns in Japan regarding the use of social media-based Microlearning to enhance their interest and retention in Japanese language learning. A quantitative survey design was employed involving 150 prospective Japanese interns selected through cluster sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire designed to measure learning interest and retention. The instrument's validity was assessed using the Aiken index, while reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha (interest = 0.869; retention = 0.904). Data analysis included descriptive statistics, normality testing, and simple linear regression to examine the relationship between learning interest and retention. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between learning interest and learning retention ($r = 0.637$, $p < 0.01$), with interest accounting for 40.6% of the variance in retention. Most respondents demonstrated high levels of interest and retention, particularly among Generation Z learners. These outcomes suggest that Microlearning via social media platforms supports both engagement and memory retention in language acquisition. Microlearning offers concise, accessible, and engaging content that aligns with the digital habits of modern learners. Its implementation in Japanese language education, particularly for internship preparation, can enhance learner motivation and long-term retention. The study recommends further exploration into content design, learner motivation, and digital engagement strategies to optimize microlearning outcomes in foreign language contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the midst of the rapid development of the digital era, information technology has changed almost all aspects of human life, including education. The emergence of various social media platforms and

digital devices has created new habits in accessing and processing information (Irdalisa, 2022). The utilization of social media in education helps students, teachers, and parents to obtain more valuable information while connecting with learning groups and other educational systems (Sasikala et al., 2021). Digital transformation has changed the way people learn. In the context of language learning, students need methods that can strengthen their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in a sustainable and interesting way. One method that is growing rapidly is Microlearning through social media. Microlearning is learning based on small, focused units that are usually short in duration and easy to access. According to Hug (2005), Microlearning refers to relatively small learning units and short-term learning activities. This method is very suitable for the behavior of social media users who are accustomed to accessing short and fast information. Microlearning is a strategy for delivering learning materials in the form of small, focused modules. It is usually delivered through digital media with a short duration (1–10 minutes). Seaman et al. (2018) stated that Microlearning fits with the demands of modern learners, who seek just-in-time content that is accessible, targeted, and engaging.

In the digital era, social media is not only a means of communication and entertainment, but also an effective learning medium. The microlearning approach is increasingly in demand because it is concise, easily accessible, and in accordance with the learning style of the digital generation. This paper discusses how Microlearning through social media can increase learning interest and information retention in language learning. The results of the study and literature show that social media supports more personalized and sustainable learning. According to Gómez in (Miguel & Laserna, 2020) many teachers and institutions are incorporating new forms of communication and interaction into their teaching strategies and content dissemination, adapting to these new interests that arise with digital media, as digital media is an ideal place to exchange information and knowledge in a fast, easy, and convenient way. This condition is further reinforced by the characteristics of Generation Z, a generation born between the late 1997s and early 2012s, known as the digital-native generation (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). Young people who belong to this digital native generation are very easily influenced by the times and foreign cultures. This is because the digital-native generation is a generation whose daily lives are always side by side with modern technology, such as laptops, smartphones, cell phones, video games, and other modern technologies (Putu Windu Mertha Sujana et al., 2021). This makes them more responsive to learning approaches that are fast, practical, and engaging.

The distinctive characteristics of Gen Z require educators to adapt learning models to be more relevant to their needs and preferences. As explained by (Joyce et al., 2019), not all students are comfortable with conventional learning models such as deductive approaches in basic sciences that are theoretical and complex. This generation of students tends to prefer learning paths that are direct, concise, and provide quick results. Therefore, overly complex learning tasks need to be simplified into more exploratory and contextualized forms, such as puzzles or visual challenges, which can encourage the emergence of meaningful knowledge through a fun and challenging process.

One approach that is in line with Gen Z's learning style is learner-centered Microlearning that offers short, concentrated learning units with interactive multimedia, which can be accessed on various devices (Meliana & Seli, 2023). Badrul Huda Khan stated in (Khlaif & Salha, 2021) that Micro-learning is a learning method that consists of a small unit, interactive, and focused on specific objectives and outcomes to be achieved. This unit is delivered in a very short duration using various technologies, such as wearable devices, cell phones, and tablets. Meanwhile, (Hug, 2012)identified six main characteristics of Microlearning, namely, short duration, specific content focus, fragmented structure, clear objectives, variety of media (both print and digital), and the use of pedagogical approaches such as repetition, constructivism, and connectivism. (Leong et al., 2021) added that Microlearning has significant benefits such as improving retention, active engagement, learning motivation, collaborative learning, and overall academic performance. In line with that, every learner has their own learning style and strategy that sometimes happens without realizing it. Learning strategies and styles can help learners master a language in achieving their learning goals (Hassan, 2017).

In the context of foreign language learning, such as Japanese, the microlearning approach is very relevant. Japanese has high complexity which includes listening (聞く技能), speaking (話す技能), reading (読む技能), and writing (書く技能) skills (Sutedi, 2011). Japanese is considered quite complex, so it requires learning methods that are interesting, practical, and easy to understand. Many learners have difficulty in learning Japanese through conventional methods due to time constraints and low engagement. This need is becoming increasingly important in Indonesia, along with the increasing trend of apprenticeships to Japan through programs such as Industrial Training and Specified Skilled Worker (SSW). These programs require participants to have basic to intermediate Japanese language skills. However, students and potential apprentices often face challenges in maintaining learning engagement and retention, especially if the methods used do not suit their learning style.

The advantage of this approach is not only in the flexibility of access, but also in its ability to strengthen retention, which is the ability of learners to remember and store information in the long term. It is generally known that the use of the latest technology can have a positive influence or impact on the learning process, especially in terms of remembering the material that has been taught to students in terms of a long period of time, which is commonly referred to as retention power (Melinda & Ningrum, 2020). High retention is very important in the context of learning Japanese, because the use of words and language structures must be remembered and applied continuously, especially in an internship work environment that demands active communication.

Microteaching involves training teachers through live teaching sessions followed by immediate feedback, thus providing opportunities for focused improvement (Kusuma & Mulyana, 2020). It is an effective tool for training future professionals because it allows repeated practice and direct feedback, essential for skill mastery and motivation (Fernandez, 2005). Thus, microteaching helps boost prospective teachers' confidence because they have the opportunity to try and improve their teaching practices in a controlled setting.

Some problems about the perception of micro learning through social media, namely the lack of understanding about the effectiveness of micro learning through social media, challenges of student motivation and interest in following micro learning, can the use of social media as a micro learning medium really increase students' interest in learning japanese, or does it make them easily distracted, the influence of social media on japanese language material retention, to what extent can micro learning through social media increase retention (memory) of japanese language material compared to traditional learning methods. The existence of social media limitations in delivering complex japanese language learning content is social media capable of delivering quite complex japanese language learning content.

In addition, visually and interactively presented content can increase interest in learning. Interest is a condition in which a person has an attention to something accompanied by a desire to know and also learn about it (Darmadi, 2017). According Slameto (2010), the indicators that show interest in learning are: "attention, feelings of pleasure, interest, and involvement. Meanwhile, that interest in learning includes two main aspects, namely personal value for the subject matter and affective involvement in the learning process (Schiefele, 1991). Basically, interest can arise because of a deep interest in something, where this interest creates a sense of desire to know, learn, and prove it. Educational content presented through social media in a light, fast, and fun format has been proven to increase interest in learning Japanese, especially among Gen Z, who love digital and visual interaction.

Language learning through engaging visual and audio content, such as daily vocabulary videos, speaking challenges, and grammar infographics, can attract students' attention. Susanti (2020) stated that the use of social media provides learning motivation because students feel that learning is easier and closer to everyday life. The microlearning approach indirectly supports the spaced repetition technique, which is repeating content over a certain period of time, which has been shown to improve long-term memory. Salas et al. (2012) stated that Frequent repetition and retrieval of content, even in small chunks, significantly enhance retention and transfer of learning. Microlearning through social media offers an adaptive, engaging, and relevant language learning alternative for today's generation. With a concise,

focused, and easily accessible content delivery strategy, this method has the potential to significantly increase learning interest and information retention. It is important for teachers and educational institutions to use this approach strategically to achieve optimal learning outcomes (Irdalisa, Paidi, & Djukri, 2020).

Based on the state of the art conducted by researchers, learning Japanese through microlearning-based social media with a population of interns to Japan has not been done by many researchers before, therefore, Novelty in this study is that researchers examine the tendency of interest and retention of interns in Japan learning Japanese through Microlearning-based social media. Thus, the researcher set a goal in this study is to see the relationship between interest in learning and learning retention. To achieve these objectives, this study used a quantitative approach with a survey design of 150 prospective interns to Japan. The instrument used was a Likert scale questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was conducted using a normality test and Pearson Product-Moment correlation to determine the relationship between interest and learning retention. The hypotheses of this study are H_a: there is a significant relationship between interest and retention of microlearning-based learning through social media; H_0: there is no significant relationship between the two. Thus, the research question is how the perception of micro-learning through social media increases interest and retention in Japanese language learning among Japanese Internship participants.

2. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative survey design to examine the relationship between learning interest and retention in Japanese language learning among prospective interns to Japan. A total of 150 respondents were selected using single-stage cluster sampling, where the population was divided into clusters, and all members within selected clusters were surveyed.

2.1 Data Collection

The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers to assess participants' levels of interest and retention. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree") and was designed to reflect indicators of learning interest (e.g., enthusiasm during lessons, motivation to explore additional material) and learning retention (e.g., ability to recall and explain previously studied content).

2.2 Instrument Validation and Reliability

Prior to distribution, the instrument underwent expert validation to assess construct validity, ensuring alignment with theoretical definitions and learning indicators. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in scores of 0.869 for the learning interest scale and 0.904 for the retention scale—indicating high internal consistency.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. A normality test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) was conducted as a prerequisite for parametric testing. The relationship between interest and retention was analyzed using simple linear regression, aimed at evaluating the predictive influence of learning interest on retention levels in the context of Microlearning via social media platforms such as Instagram Reels and YouTube.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.869	.870	10

(**a**) Interest Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.904	.903	10

(**b**) Retention Reliability Test

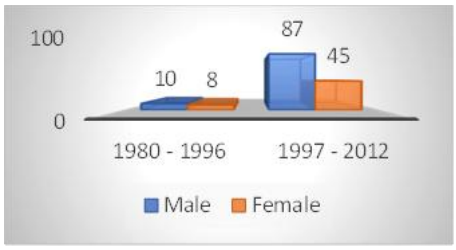
Figure 1. The results of the reliability test

The reliability test results presented in Figure 1 confirm that the instruments used in this study demonstrated strong internal consistency. With Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.6, both the interest and retention scales were deemed reliable for measuring the intended constructs. These findings validate the use of the questionnaire as a dependable tool for capturing participants' perceptions related to microlearning-based Japanese language learning. The high reliability values also support the robustness of subsequent statistical analyses, particularly in examining the relationship between the two variables. Having established the validity and reliability of the instrument, the study proceeded to data analysis to explore how learning interest influences retention in the context of social media-based Microlearning.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

The results of the research obtained questionnaire values filled in by interns to Japan. The learning interest and learning retention scales each with 5 (five) answer options were distributed to 150 respondents. Respondents consisted of birth years 1980-1996 and 1997-2012.



(**a**) Number of Responden

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Retensi Belajar	37.81	5.916	150
Minat Belajar	40.51	5.380	150

(**b**) Descriptive Statistic Table

Figure 2. Respondents consisted of birth years 1980-1996 and 1997-2012.

As shown in Figure 2, the majority of participants in this study were from the 1997–2012 birth cohort, commonly categorized as Generation Z, comprising 87.9% of the total respondents. The remaining 12.1% were born between 1980 and 1996. This demographic distribution reflects the current trend in Japanese internship programs, which predominantly attract younger individuals who are more familiar with digital technologies and social media platforms. The gender composition also indicates a higher proportion of male participants, particularly within the Gen Z group. This demographic context is essential in interpreting the results, as age and digital affinity may influence both interest in

microlearning approaches and the ability to retain language material delivered through short-form content on social media. Further descriptive statistics regarding interest and retention scores across gender and age groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Interest and Retention Table by Gender and Age

Year	Age	Gender	Interest	Retention
1997-2012	132 (87.9%)	87 of Men (66.4%)	76 of Men (78.4%),	72 of Men (74.2%),
		45 of Women (33.6%).	41 of Women (78.8%)	38 of Women (73.1%).
1980–1996	18 (12.1%).	10 of Man (55.6%)	6 of Man (54.5%)	5 of Man (45.5%)
		8 of Women (44.4%).	5 of Women (71.4%)	4 of Women (57.1%)

The data presented in Table 1 highlight notable patterns in learning interest and retention across age and gender groups. A dominant proportion of respondents belonged to the 1997–2012 cohort (Generation Z), which also exhibited the highest levels of both interest and retention. Specifically, 78.8% of Gen Z females and 78.4% of Gen Z males demonstrated high learning interest, suggesting a strong engagement with the microlearning approach among this digital-native population. In terms of retention, 73.1% of females and 74.2% of males in this group also reported high levels, indicating that the microlearning format may be effective in facilitating long-term memory of language content.

In contrast, respondents from the older cohort (1980–1996) showed relatively lower percentages. While 71.4% of females in this group reported high learning interest, only 54.5% of males did the same. Learning retention was also lower, with 57.1% of females and just 45.5% of males scoring in the high category. These differences suggest that younger learners may be more responsive to Microlearning strategies, likely due to their greater familiarity and comfort with digital platforms such as social media. Overall, the findings reinforce the suitability of social media-based Microlearning in enhancing both interest and retention among younger generations preparing for international internships**.**

As a prerequisite for parametric analysis, a normality test was conducted on both the learning interest and learning retention variables using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Learning Interest	.077	150	.029	.975	150	.007
Learning Retention	.082	150	.016	.977	150	.014

Lilliefors Significance Correction

The significance values (p-values) for both tests are less than 0.05, indicating that the data for both variables do not follow a normal distribution. This suggests that the assumption of normality required for parametric tests is not fully met. However, due to the sample size being sufficiently large ($n = 150$), the Central Limit Theorem may be applied, allowing continued use of parametric tests such as Pearson's correlation and linear regression with caution.

To examine the relationship between learning interest and learning retention, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used. The hypotheses tested were:

- H_a: There is a significant relationship between learning interest and learning retention.
- H_0: There is no significant relationship between learning interest and learning retention.

The results of the correlation analysis and further statistical outputs are presented in the following section.

Table 3. Correlation Coefficient

		Learning Interest	Learning Retention
Learning Interest	Pearson Correlation	1	.637**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Learning Retention	Pearson Correlation	.637**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the table of Correlation Coefficient Interpretation guidelines above, it can be seen between interest in learning (variable X) and learning retention (variable Y) that there is a relationship with a "medium" category of 0.637.

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Dusbin-Watson
1	.637[a]	.406	.402	4.574	.406	101.200	1	148	.000	1.96

(**a**) Predictors: (Constant), Learning Interest

(**b**) Dependent Variable: Learning Retention

In this section, the value of R = 0.637 and the coefficient of determination (KD) or R square = 0.406 or 40.6% are displayed. This shows that the learning interest variable (X) explains the variable (Y) by 40.6% or variable X affects variable Y by 40.6% while 59.4% is influenced by other factors.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that microlearning-based Japanese language instruction through social media has a significant and positive impact on both learning interest and learning retention, particularly among Generation Z learners. This is consistent with previous literature suggesting that Microlearning, which emphasizes brief, focused, and easily digestible learning content, is highly effective for modern learners who are accustomed to consuming information quickly through digital platforms (Hug, 2005; Leong et al., 2021).

Generation Z, generally defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, possesses distinct learning characteristics shaped by lifelong exposure to digital technology (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). Members of this generation often prefer visual, fast-paced, and interactive content, and demonstrate a higher engagement rate with short-form digital media, such as that found on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube (Khlaif & Salha, 2021). This study supports the view that leveraging social media as a platform for Microlearning aligns well with Gen Z's preferences and results in increased motivation, interest, and information retention.

The increased learning interest observed in this study may be attributed to the interactive and entertaining nature of social media content. Educational materials delivered via short videos, infographics, or gamified quizzes make the learning experience more enjoyable and accessible (Kahoot!, 2017). When learners are interested and emotionally engaged, they are more likely to invest cognitive resources into learning tasks (Schiefele, 1991). This aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the role of learner engagement and prior knowledge in constructing meaning from content (Joyce et al., 2019).

Moreover, microlearning supports cognitive mechanisms that promote retention. According to Ebbinghaus's (1885) Forgetting Curve Theory, information that is reviewed in short, repeated intervals is more likely to be stored in long-term memory. Microlearning facilitates this through spaced repetition and chunked delivery, both of which are known to combat memory decay. As Leong et al. (2021) suggest, microlearning encourages just-in-time learning that allows learners to revisit content as needed, thereby reinforcing neural connections and improving retention rates.

The findings of this study demonstrated a statistically significant correlation between learning interest and learning retention ($r = 0.637$, $p < .01$), with interest contributing to 40.6% of the variance in retention. This moderately strong relationship indicates that learners who are more engaged and motivated are also more likely to retain the language material presented. Such a result is supported by prior studies in language education, which have found that interest is a strong predictor of effort, time-on-task, and memory recall (Schiefele, 1991; Hassan, 2017).

Another important aspect is the role of learning autonomy and personalized content, which are core features of social media-based Microlearning. Learners can control the pace and sequence of their learning, revisit difficult content, and access materials anytime and anywhere. These affordances are particularly beneficial in second language acquisition, where consistent exposure and repeated practice are critical (Gikas & Grant, 2013). In this study, learners reported high retention of Japanese vocabulary and grammatical structures, likely due to the repeated, on-demand exposure enabled by social media content.

While the results are promising, it is important to recognize that Microlearning is most effective when well-designed. Simply presenting short content is insufficient if the content lacks instructional value or cognitive alignment. Effective microlearning design should include clear objectives, cognitive engagement strategies (such as retrieval practice or concept linking), and multimodal content that caters to various learning styles (Hug, 2012; Salas et al., 2012).

In the context of vocational preparation for internships in Japan, the results also suggest practical benefits. As Japanese language proficiency—particularly at the N4 level—is a prerequisite for many internship and employment opportunities, increasing language retention through microlearning may improve participants' readiness for real-world communication tasks in workplace settings. Moreover, social media-based learning tools are often cost-effective and scalable, making them accessible for a broader range of learners in Indonesia and other countries participating in Japan's internship programs.

Future research should investigate the longitudinal effects of Microlearning on language acquisition, especially in terms of speaking fluency, listening comprehension, and writing skills, which are more complex to measure and require integrated practice. Additionally, exploring content design variables (e.g., video length, interactivity, and narrative style) may provide insight into optimizing microlearning strategies for language learners.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that microlearning-based Japanese language learning delivered through social media platforms has a significant and positive effect on both learning interest and retention among Generation Z learners. The short, visually engaging, and easily accessible format of microlearning aligns well with Gen Z's learning preferences, fostering increased motivation and sustained memory retention. The statistical analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.637$) between learning interest and retention, with interest accounting for 40.6% of the variance in retention outcomes. These findings indicate that learners who are more interested in microlearning content are more likely to retain the material effectively. However, this study is limited by its reliance on self-reported data and a single method of measurement for both interest and retention, which may introduce bias and restrict generalizability. Additionally, the study focused only on prospective interns in Japan, which may limit the applicability of the results to broader populations. Future research should

consider incorporating mixed methods approaches, longitudinal data tracking, and experimental designs to explore causal relationships. Further studies could also examine the role of content design, learner motivation, and platform-specific engagement features in enhancing learning outcomes. Exploring these aspects would deepen our understanding of how microlearning can be optimized for language education, particularly in preparing students for international internships and professional communication in multicultural environments.

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