Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Social Media Utilization in Reading Comprehension among Undergraduates: A Case Study of Ebonyi State University

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Abstract
This study examined the issue of information and communication technology (ICT) and social media utilization in reading comprehension of textual materials among undergraduates in Ebonyi State University. Four research questions were posed to guide the study. The population of the study comprised all the 100 level English language students from the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts in Ebonyi State University. The target population was 300 students. Due the smallness of the population, the whole 300 respondents constituted the sample size for the study. A structured questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts in the English department and Science department in the university. The instrument was also subjected to a reliability test which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84 through the use of Cronbach Alpha. The statistical tool of simple percentages was used for analysis of data. Findings showed that majority of the students, (83.33%) use their mobile phones to access social media. The study also showed that majority of the students, 120 students, (40%) spend an average of 6-8 hours daily accessing social media while only 35, (11.66%) students spend less than an hour. Also, the study showed that most of the students, 95 constituting (31.66%) sample size use social media because it facilitates reading comprehension while the least 25 students, (8.33%) use it for entertainment purposes. Result also showed that the social media platform used by majority of the students, 150 students, (50%) was Whatsapp, followed by Facebook with 100 students, (33.33%), the least platform being Twitter and Telegram which only 5 students, (1.66%) use. *Based on the findings, one of the recommendations was that* the government should collaborate with the university community to organize constant training and workshops in computer and social media use for students so as to equip them to meet the demands of the computer age.

1. Introduction
According to Chukwuma (2018), information and communication technologies (ICT) is defined as any communication device or application encompassing radio. television, mobile phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems, as well as various other services and applications. ICT's comprise various forms of technology that are used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information. The broad definition of ICT includes such technologies as radio, television, video, DVD, telephone (both fixed line and mobile phones), satellite systems, computer and network hardware and software as well as the equipment and services associated with these technologies such as videoconferencing and electronic mail. This combination can facilitate reading comprehension and accelerate literacy learning. Such forms of ICT can also be entertaining and thereby motivate the target audience to watch and learn, (UNESCO,2006).

Biancarosa & Griffits (2012) refer to e-reading technology as hardware and software used to display and interface with digital text. Hardware includes devices such as e-readers and tablets, as well as smart phones, laptops, and even desktop computers that display digital text. Software includes a range of applications and programmes that allow readers to interact with the text, either locally on the device or over a network. The advent of information technology has exposed students to diverse forms of information, computer technology use, internet, palmtops, smartphones, smart phones and social media and social networking websites. Hence the use of ICT has made accessibility to information easier and faster for students. On the hand, this has threatened the destiny of many as they usually spend much time chatting in whatsapp, mobile phones, facebook and other social networking. ICTs are either resources or tools used by both undergraduate and lecturers to enhance teaching and learning activities. ICT facilitates both the instructional and learning process and has a great influence on teaching and learning at higher education, (Siddiquah & Salim, 2017).

Reading is a fundamental skill necessary for necessary for the acquisition of knowledge and a pre-requisite for the attainment of success in academics and all fields of human endeavour. According to Totz reading is capable of enriching one's intellectual capabilities, it develops insight into human problems and has a major impact on their attitude towards the society, http://www.academia.edu. Tyson (2014) comprehension is the heart

and soul of reading. It is the act of constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written text. Comprehension involves an interaction between the reader, the text and the activity. Before the digital age, printed texts were the sole means of learning and reading. Although printed texts are still in use, the inception of the technology age has led to the emergence of digital reading materials. There is an accelerated influx of these digital texts which calls for a change in the pedagogical mechanisms deployed by teachers to ensure that learners comprehend what they read, (Bin Noordan & Yunus, 2022). Today, multimedia technology, the World Wide Web, the use of the internet and network computers have completely transformed and revolutionized the way undergraduate students learn, read and think. Tayo, Adebola, & Yahya (2019) observed that the utilization of social media platforms improves students learning opportunities, fosters collaborative studies and group discussions, communication outside the classroom and enhances critical thinking.

Den Beenit, Thurlings & Willens (2019) see the concept of social media as encompassing internet applications that support the creation and exchange of user-generated content that require a certain degree of self-disclosure and that follow a certain level of social presence. Carr & Hayes (2015:50) define social media as internet-based channels that allow users the opportunity to interact and selectively self-present either in real time or asynchronously with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others. Stewart (2016) refers to social media as any technology that facilitates the dissemination and sharing of information over the internet. Social media can be used for communicating through photos, videos and/or text and sharing sourced information with predominantly friends and families (e.g facebook, instagram, snap chat). Social media can also be used for specialized tasks like blogging (text or photo) and writing (e.g Blogger, Tumbir, Wordpress), sharing photos, video, drawings, and/or text (e.g. virce, snapchat, instagram, twitter), sharing sourced information and discussing it (e.g Pinterest, Reddit, Twitter), gaming (e.g Farmville, world of warcraft), saving and categorizing information to view later (pocket, google, Pinterest) etc. Hence, students can engage in potential interactive communication through the social media.

Issa, Amusan, Adeniran & Bolarinwa (2014) observe that the utilization of new ICT gadgets affect the reading habit of students as spending great time with ICT gadgets mean little time for reading; also making reading more difficult and expensive. They also observe that undergraduates depend highly on the utilization of online tools for reading. The utilization of ICT in the classroom signals a shift from the conventional position of power held by the teacher to a more collaborative approach to learning. This is because computer-based activity increases the responsibility of learning on the students. ICT facilities such as computers, laptops, Ipads and even mobile phones are technological tools that facilitate reading comprehension among students in the university.

Divya &Mohammed (2020) carried out a study which revealed that majority of the respondents opined that, with the availability of laptop, mobile phone and the internet, digital reading has increased among the students. Kojo, Agykum & Arthur (2018) conducted a study on the effect of social media on the reading culture of university students in Ghana. The study revealed that students are negatively affected by their constant access to social media platforms. The findings also showed that excessive use of social media by students has a statistically significant impact on their reading culture and to an extent their academic performance.

Students in the university utilize social media for various reasons such as exchange ideas, feelings, personal information, pictures and videos. It is also used to connect with friends and family. Internet utilization(online) can also offer academic support to students in the university. Social media provides easy access to virtual space which students in the university can explore with friends having the same academic needs. Students who may be reluctant to express their feelings in class find blogs and other interactive web tools rewarding. Presently, one observes that students reading culture seems to be stifled by the persistent utilization of social media. They would rather spend time chatting with friends instead of reading. Some even use their mobile phones in the lecture hall instead of paying attention to what is being taught. They do so because they rely on its information accessibility to provide direct lifting of answers.

2. ICT utilization for reading comprehension among undergraduates

Reading is a very important academic exercise that enhances students' performance. Without reading a student cannot cope with the demands of life in the university. But, it is one thing to read and another thing to understand or comprehend the volumes of texts available in one's course of study. Reading is an integral part of learning; it is the bedrock in which academic performance in hinged. For one to perform well in academics, reading with comprehension is a pre-requisite. However, one observes that most students read without understanding. Information and communication technology tools as well as social media utilization have made reading comprehension more effective among undergraduates. Digital age has brought about the utilization of information and computer technology tools for reading and getting information and not only from printed materials. Hence, students make use of the internet, online newspapers, tablets, e-book readers, online journal articles. The utilization of World Wide Web and google it on the internet has made reading easier to comprehend among students. The advent of ICT has brought about higher interaction and easier communication between the students and their teachers. It encourages self-directed learning, makes project writing and gathering of related

information stressless and faster. Ratheeswart (2018) observes that it improves the quality of education by facilitating learning by doing, directed instruction, self-learning, problem-solving information seeking and analysis, critical thinking and the ability to communicate, collaborate and learn. Similarly, Hanna (2018) observes that ICT facilities such as computers, laptops, Ipads and even mobile phones are technological tools that facilitate reading comprehension among students in the university. With the availability of laptop, mobile phones and the internet their digital reading has increased. Therefore ICT is seen as a sine qua non to effective reading comprehension.

An examination of 16 scientific literature study conducted by Batanero, Rueda, Cerero & Gravan (2021) on the impact of ICT on writing and reading skills; a systematic review (2010 – 2020) revealed the most bibliometric data and other effectiveness of ICTs in enhancing the writing and reading skills of students. The result confirmed that despite the fact that scientific production in this field is still underdeveloped, digital technologies may help in the development of reading and writing skills. Bin Noordan & Yunus (2022) carried out a study on the integration of ICT in improving reading comprehension skills; in systematic literature review. Findings showed that the integration of ICT in teaching reading comprehension in English language is applied in improving pupils' performance, motivating their engagements and improving their attitude towards English language. Iyare, James & Amonde (2018) conducted a study titled, the effectiveness of integrating interactive technology in reading comprehension: A case study of Jamaica's grade schoolNew article. Findings showed empirical support for the positive effects of technology based approaches for addressing reading comprehension and vocabulary skills. Messer & Gilly (2017) in a study on the evaluation of the effectiveness of a computer-assisted reading intervention found out that computer-based interventions for English-speaking, struggling readers can be effective.

Hanna (2018) carried out a study on the effectiveness of using ICT in teaching reading comprehension in secondary schools in Kaduna. Findings revealed that the experimental group which was taught reading comprehension using ICT facilities performed better than the control group. Adibayeva, Mussanova, Mombekova & Suttibayev (2022) carried out a study on digital communication technology for teaching a foreign language and culture through reading. The qualitative research study examined how the utilization of ICT tools like websites and mobile applications can enhance reading skills. The results of the study showed the effectiveness of using digital technology in teaching a foreign language and culture.

3. Social media utilization among students

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) defines social media as a group of internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content, based on interactions among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media cover a wide range of different technologies, including blogs, wikis, you tube videos, mobile devices such as phones, tablets, twitter, skype and facebook. Many undergraduate students utilize social media such as phones and tablets for note-taking, group discussion in whatsapp, writing and submitting assignments through the use of g-mail etc. Kojo et al (2018) observe that tertiary students spend more time on facebook, twitter and other social media through smartphones that are now in abundance. They note that many students cannot go for two-three hours without checking and updating their profiles on these social networks even to the detriment of reading activities. However, they also observe that social media provide easy access to virtual space which tertiary students can explore with friends having similar academic need.

Tayo, Adebola. & Yahya (2019) carried out a study on social media: usage and influence on undergraduate studies in Nigerian universities. Findings also showed that the social media platforms mostly utilized are WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube; which are used mainly for socialization, information and academic purpose and may also perhaps suggest the reason for addiction to social media. Magrino & Sorrell (2014) carried out a study on the use of blogs in combination with other social media platforms (facebook and twitter) in a business and technical writing college classroom and found that students benefited greatly from the collaborative and engaging tools that allowed for greater student interaction, student to teacher communication and distribution of course materials. Similarly, Bal & Bicen (2018) observed that social media improves co-operative learning among students and their communication with the teachers become easier, which means, in terms of student-centered education the use of social media is very essential. Adil, Mulla, Mulla & Sayed (2020) in a study on the usage of social media among undergraduate university students use different types of platforms and great number of students believe that there are equal number of pros and cons of using social media networks and felt that it has effect on their studies. Frederick & Run (2018) in a study on social media usability among students of Jiangsu University China found that majority of the students use social media such as facebook, WeChat, Youtube etc daily for self-pleasure and educational factors. It also revealed that addiction to social media reduce the   time they spend on their academic activities. A study carried out by Jika, & Wickramanayake (2017) on social media use by undergraduate students' education in Gombe state, Nigeria revealed that effective social media usage among students enhanced their reading and learning skills. Similarly, a

study conducted by Saha and Guha (2019) on the impact of social media use of university students in Bangladesh found that students spend more than one hour daily on social media. They also found that Facebook is the most popular social media platform utilized by students. A study conducted by Koolhar, Kazi & Alameen (2021) showed that 97% of the students utilize social media applications for non-academic purposes. Only 1% of them use social media for academic purposes and the most popular applications (that is based on usage) were snapchat 45% and instagram. Olutola, Olatoye & Ademola (2016) reported that positive use of social media improved the reading habits and academic performance of students. Rafiq, Khan, Asim & Arif (2020) in a study on the effect of social media on reading habits found both positive and negative aspects of social media on the reading habits of students. The positive effect are that the use of social media increases the socialization that facilitate the stuents in thier study and they find information on social media accessible to search and use. However, the negative aspect is that students are distracted by the use of social media at the time of study.

4. Purpose of the Study
The performance of students in English language has been poor over the years and this has been blamed on so many factors such as students' lack of interest in learning the subject to lack of commitment in reading extensively as to address the various aspects of English language. Presently, one observes that most students in the university are obsessed with reading from their mobile phones and persistent use of social media. They would rather spend time chatting with friends instead of reading. Some even use their mobile phones in the lecture hall instead of paying attention to what is being taught. They do so because they rely on its information accessibility to provide direct lifting of answers. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to examine the issue of information and computer technology and social media utilization in reading comprehension among undergraduates in Ebonyi State University. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:
1. type of ICT tool students use most to access social media.
2. average time students spend on social media sites.
3. reason why students use social media.
4. types of social media platforms students use most.

4.1 Research questions
The following research questions guided the study.
1. Which ICT tool do you use most to access social media?
2. What is the average time you spend on social media sites?
3. What are the reasons you use social media?
4. Which of the social media platforms do you use most?

5. Methodology
This study utilized the descriptive survey research design. The study was a case study of undergraduates in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. It was conducted within Ebonyi State University, in Abakaliki local government area of Ebonyi state in the South- Eastern part of Nigeria. The target population was the entire undergraduate student population in Ebonyi State University. 100 level English language students of Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts were used for the study. The entire target population was 300. (Source: Faculties of Education and Faculty of Arts, 2022). Therefore, the entire 300 students constituted the sample size of the study because of the smallness of the number. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher was the instrument for data collection for research questions 1-4. The questionnaire items were sieved through reviewed literature. The questionnaire had four clusters, cluster A to D, each dealing with the four research questions. In the questionnaire the students were asked the ty4pe of ICT tool they use mostly for accessing social media; average time spent on social media sites; reasons why they use social media and type of social media platforms they use most. Their responses to the questions were used to answer research questions. 300 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the students in their faculties. They were encouraged to complete them on the spot to avoid losses. Maximum number was retrieved through this approach. Data were analyzed through the use of simple percentages.

6. Results
6.1 Research question 1: Which ICT tool do you use most to access social media?

Table 1: ICT tool used most to access social media

ICT tool	n %	Percentage
Mobile phone	250	83.33
Computer	25	8.33
Iphone	15	5
Tablet	10	3.33

Data analysis showed that 250 students (83.33%) use their mobile phones to access social media; followed by computer, 25 students (8.33%); 15   students use Iphone (5%) and 10 students (3.33%) use Tablet. Thus, findings showed that majority of the students use their mobile phones to access social media.

6.2 Research question 2: What is the average time you spend on social med

Table2: Average time spent daily in accessing social media sites

	Average time	n	%
i.	5- 6hrs	120	40
ii.	3 – 4hr	85	28.33
iii.	1 – 2 hrs	60	20
iv.	Less than 1hr	35	11.66

Data analysis showed that 120 students, (40%) spent an average of 5-6 hours daily accessing social media sites; 85 students, (28.33%) spend up to 3-4 hours on social media;60 students, (20%) spend 1-2 hours while 35 students, (11.66%) spend less than an hour.

6.3 Research question 3: What are the reasons why you use social media?

Table 3: Reasons for using ICT and social media

	Reason of use	Number of users	Percentage
i.	To facilitate reading comprehension	95	31.7
ii.	For entertainment	25	8.33
iii.	For chatting and sending texts to friends	50	16.66
iv.	For writing my assignments	45	15
v.	For reading online	60	20
vi.	For group assignment and project	20	6.66

Data analysis shows that 95 students, (31.7%) use social media because it facilitates reading comprehension; 45 students, (15%) use it for writing assignments; 20 students, (6.66%) use it to collaborate with others for group assignments and projects; 60 students, (20%) use it for reading online; 50 students, (16.66%) use it for chatting and sending texts to friends; and 25 students, (8.33%) use it for entertainment. Results indicate that majority of the students use social media because it facilitates reading comprehension.

6.4 Research question 4: Which of the social media platforms do you use most?

Table 4: Social media platforms used most by the students

Type of Social Media	Number	Percentages
Facebook	100	33.33
Whatsapp	150	50
Instagram	10	3.33
Youtube	30	10
Twitter	5	1.66
Telegram	5	1.66

Table 4 shows the types of social media platforms used for reading comprehension. It can be seen that out of the 300 students, 100 (33.33%) claim that they use Facebook for reading comprehension while 150 (50%) use Whatsapp. On the other hand, 10(3.33%) use Instagram; 30 (10%) use Youtube; 5 (1.66%) use Twitter and 5 (1.66%) of the students asserted that they use Telegram. It is therefore evident that Whatsapp is the most popular social media platform used for reading comprehension among the respondents.

7. Discussion

Research question 1: Findings showed that majority of the students, (83.33%) use their mobile phones to access social media. The least used is Tablet which was used by only 10 students consisting 3.33% of the students. This corroborates with the findings of Kojo et al (2018) that tertiary students spend more time on social media through their smartphones. This is also supported by the findings of Tayo, Adebola & Yahya (2019) that the social media platform mostly used by students were Whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram.

Research question 2: Findings showed that majority of the students, 120 respondents, (40%) spent an average of 6-8 hours daily accessing social media.. The least was 35 students consisting (11.66%) of the respondents who spent less than an hour on social media. This is corroborated by the findings of Kojo (2018) that many students cannot go for two to three hours without checking and updating their profiles on social media. This is also supported by the findings of Saha & Guha (2019) that students spend more than one hour on social media.

Research question 3: Result showed that the highest number of students, 95 comprising 31.66%) of the respondents stated that they used social media because it facilitates reading comprehension. The least number of the respondents 25, (8.33%) reported using it for entertainment. These findings corroborates with those of Iyare, James & Amonde (2018) whose findings showed empirical support on the positive effect of technology for addressing reading comprehension. Similarly, Bin Noordan & Yunus (2022) found that that the integration of ICT in teaching reading comprehension improves students' performance and attitude towards English language. However, this is contrary to the findings of Koolhar, Kazi & Alameen (2021) who found that 97% of the students use social media applications for non academic purposes and only 1% of them use it for academic purposes. This is also contrary to the findings of Kojo et al (2018) that students spent more time on social media to the detriment of reading activities.

Research question 4: Result showed that majority of the respondents, 150, (50%) use Whatsapp as the social media platform for reading comprehension while the least was 5(1.66%) use Twitter and 5 respondents also claimed that they use Telegram for reading comprehension. This result is in line with the studies of Tayo, Adebola & Yahya and Adedibayo et al (2022) that the social media platform mostly used by students are Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram and Youtube.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this research work lends credence to the fact that the advent information communication technology and digital devices has completely revolutionized the way undergraduates read and think. Most students spend most of their time reading on their mobile phones, computers and other internet related devices. Result of this study revealed that majority of the respondents 250 (83.33%) mostly use their mobile phones to access social media sites; 120 students constituting 40% of the respondents spend an average of 5 to 6 hours accessing social media sites. and majority of the students utilize social media because it facilitates reading comprehension, helps them in writing assignments and to collaborate with others for group assignments and projects. Therefore, this study has shown that the use of ICT and social media among undergraduates is a panacea to effective performance in reading comprehension. This is because the digital age with diverse information and communication technological tools has made social media use a sine qua non for effective reading comprehension.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:
1.   The federal government should make policies that will ensure that ICT infrastructure such as adequate provision of computers, laptops, Ipads, mobile phones including internet connectivity is made available to lecturers and students in the university.
2.   Professional Guidance and Counselors should be employed at the Faculty and departmental levels in the university to educate students on the negative effect of spending too much time on the internet.
3.   Students should be encouraged to use their mobile phones for academic purposes so as to enhance their comprehension of textual materials.
4.   The government should collaborate with the university community to organize constant training and workshops in computer and social media use for students since majority of them use whatsapp and facebook mostly for reading. so as to equip them to meet the demands of the computer age

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