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INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION ON MOTIVATION AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU UNIVERSITY, ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to investigate the perceived influence of digital communication on motivation and academic engagement of English Language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. The study employed descriptive survey research design. Four research question guided the study. The population of the study consist of 1,226 English language students in department of educational foundations in faculty of education and department of English Language in Faculty of art in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. The sample for the study comprises 100 male and female English Language students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State, selected through simple random sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was a 20-item questionnaire titled "Perceived influence of digital communication on motivation and academic engagement of English language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, (PIDMAELUS). The instrument was validated by two experts in the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha statistic which yield reliability coefficient of 0.89, 0.78 and 0.89. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to answer the questions. The findings of the study revealed that constant communication with classmates via digital channels improves

students focus and dedication towards their education and studies. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended to investigate the long-term effects of digital communication on motivation and engagement.

Keywords: Influence, Digital Communication, Motivation, Academic Engagement, English Language

Introduction

The advent of digital communication tools has revolutionized the way people interact, communicate, and learn. And as technology advances, traditional methods are been replaced with modern digital approaches which have redefined the ways things are done, and introduced new culture quite different from what previous generations were used to. The widespread adoption of digital technologies, such as social media, messaging apps, and online learning platforms, has transformed the educational landscape, offering new opportunities for student engagement, collaboration, and learning. Tagg (2015) defines digital communication as the interaction between people that are mediated by digital communication technology (tools which transmit information into different forms. Technopedia, (2016) also defined digital communication as the exchange of information using digital signals which are discrete binary waveforms, sent and received over a communication channel.

Technology is a frequent tool utilized by students outside the classroom. Moreover, integrating technology into the classroom can enable both students and educators to engage in learning methods that were previously unexplored, consequently altering the traditional roles of teachers, learners, and the learning environment. Knezek and Christensen (2017) highlighted that, mobile devices and related software have enabled seamless access to information and learning platforms, facilitating real-time collaboration and knowledge sharing. The advent of mobile collaboration has revolutionized the learning landscape, ushering in an era of unparalleled flexibility and accessibility.

Teaching with digital tools requires significant changes for individuals and teams with an exception for everyone to be committed to growth and improvement. Success in the classroom increasingly relies on the talent, initiative, and skills of the teacher. In fact, research emphasizes that teacher expertise, creativity, and adaptability are essential for fostering engaging and effective learning environments (Kraft & Hill, 2018). The statement highlights the evolving importance of teacher quality in ensuring student success in the classroom. This is because teachers with high levels of expertise, creativity, and adaptability are better equipped to design innovative lessons, adapt to diverse student needs, and leverage new technologies and pedagogical techniques (Kumar 2017).

So, by possessing these qualities, effective teachers can foster a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes academic excellence, social growth, and emotional well-being. The primary motivation for integrating technology in classrooms is to create a supportive learning environment that fosters student engagement and boosts academic success. However, without adequate professional development for teachers, achieving these academic gains and increases in student engagement would be extremely challenging (Kumar *et al*., 2020).

However, motivation can be defined as willingness of action especially in behavior. Motivation is referred to as an internal condition that stimulates, directs and maintains behavior (Kumar, 2017). Motivation refers to a sustained and engaged interest in appealing activities or stimuli, which increases the likelihood of continued participation and engagement in similar behaviors. Motivation is characterized by a lasting and enthusiastic response to stimulating experiences, fostering a willingness to repeat and deepen involvement in related activities. In essence, motivation serves as a driving force that propels individuals towards continued engagement and action. Motivation is a critical factor in shaping successful learning outcomes, as it influences learners' commitment, exertion, and perseverance throughout their educational journey (Kibirige & Ochieng, 2018).

Therefore, educators must recognize the critical role motivation plays and strive to cultivate and maintain learners' motivation through supportive learning environments, meaningful instructional strategies, personalized feedback, and opportunities for autonomy and self-directed learning. in other words, motivated learners consistently exhibit increased engagement, demonstrating a symbiotic link between these two essential elements of effective learning. Notably, a deep level of engagement is often accompanied by high motivation levels, and vice versa - motivated learners tend to exhibit increased engagement in the learning process (Wang & Ecclestone, 2020).

Academic engagement is a multifaceted construct that encompasses various aspects of student involvement in academic pursuits. Academic engagement refers to the active participation and investment of students in their learning experiences (Roche, 2020). Schwartz and Plass (2020) defined academic engagement as the total amount of physical and psychological strength that the student devotes to the academic experience. Academic engagement involves students' cognitive investment in academic tasks, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Eddy, 2020). This refers to the mental effort and resources a student dedicates to understanding and mastering academic content. Academic engagement is a vital aspect of the academic experience that encompasses intellectual, social, and emotional dimensions (Mollen & Wilson, 2018).

Academic engagement involves students' cognitive investment in academic tasks, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Eddy, 2020). This refers to the mental effort and resources a student dedicates to understanding and mastering academic content. Socially, academic engagement entails interactions with peers, faculty, and staff that foster a sense of community, belonging, and support (Wright, 2020). Emotionally, academic engagement involves students' interest, motivation, and emotional connection to their academic experiences (Jang, 2020). Institutions can promote academic engagement through various strategies, such as active learning techniques (Baez, 2020), faculty-student interaction and mentorship (Lundberg, 2020), and extracurricular activities and programs (Bogle, 2020).

Utilizing digital tools and resources has been shown to increase student motivation and engagement. For instance, Alshammari and Alharbi (2020) discovered that online games and quizzes increased student enthusiasm and engagement. Since most students find online interactive exercises and tests to be interesting, they have improved student enthusiasm and involvement in language courses and raised their spirits while studying. Hassan *et al*. (2020) found that multimedia resources tailored to individual learning styles and preferences can lead to improved learning outcomes and increased learner satisfaction in language learning. This is because multimedia resources offer a range of benefits, including increased interactivity, flexibility, and autonomy, which can cater to diverse learner needs and preferences. By leveraging multimedia resources, language instructors can create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment that fosters motivation and promotes academic success.

Again, social media addiction can also lead to social isolation, decreased face-to-face communication skills, and decreased physical activity. Studies have shown that excessive use of digital tools can negatively affect academic performance. Students might struggle to focus on assignments or retain information due to frequent interruptions. Also, social networking sites, such as Facebook, have multiple facets, and one notable aspect is the disproportionate amount of time students spend on these platforms for non-academic purposes. Research has shown that while students may occasionally use Facebook for academic purposes, such as joining course groups or connecting with classmates, the majority of their time spent on the site is for socializing and non-academic activities (Junco, 2018). This raises concerns about the potential influence on academic productivity and the need for students to develop effective time management skills to balance their online activities. Against this backdrop that the research deemed it necessary to examine the perceived influence of digital communication on motivation and academic engagement of English Language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State.

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Statement of the Problem

The widespread adoption of digital communication tools, such as social media and messaging apps, has transformed the educational landscape, offering new opportunities for student engagement, collaboration, and learning. However, the perceived influence of digital communication on the motivation and academic engagement of English Language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State is not yet fully understood.

Understanding how digital communication affects students' attention span, time management, and overall academic performance is crucial. Furthermore, considering the potential benefits and drawbacks of digital communication in the academic context, along with identifying strategies to harness its positive aspects while mitigating any adverse effects, is essential for addressing this complex problem. This remains as a source of worry; hence this study seeks to investigate the perceived Influence of digital communication on motivation and academic engagement of English Language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What is the perceived social influence of digital communication on motivation of English Language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State?
2. What is the perceived cognitive influence of digital communication on motivation of English Language undergraduate Students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State?
3. What is the perceived emotional influence of digital communication on motivation among English Language undergraduate Students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka?
4. What is the perceived influence of digital communication on academic engagement of English Language undergraduate students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka?

Methods

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in the Faculty of Education in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. The population for this study comprised of One thousand two hundred and twenty-six (1226) second year students in both Faculty of Education and Faculty of Art English language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting respondents for the research. The researchers randomly selected 100 respondents in faculty of Art (English language department) and 100 respondents in faculty of Education (Education English language department). A total of 200

respondents were selected for the research. The instrument for data collection was a self-developed close-ended questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Perceived Influence of Digital Communication on Motivation and Academic Engagement of English Language Undergraduate (QPIDMAELU)". The questionnaire for the study consisted of two sections. Section A captures the demographic data of the respondents; Section B contained the clusters of four (4) items on the influence of digital communication on motivation and academic engagement. The responses made by the respondents were scored based on the four-point Likert Scale rating of Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4points, agreed (A) = 3points, Disagreed (D) = 2points, Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1 point. Therefore, a respondents mean score of responses is positive if the mean score was 2.5 and above and is negative if the mean score of response was less than 2.5. The face validity of the instrument was established by three experts; two experts from Department Social Science and Art Education and one expert from Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by administering the Instrument to five undergraduate students in Faculty of Art in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka which was not part of the study area. The Cronbach Alpha was used to check the internal consistency of the instrument and a reliability value of 0.81 was obtained for clusters. This was considered high enough to judge that the instrument is reliable to be used for data collection. Copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researchers; a period of two weeks was used for the distribution and collection of the instrument. Due to this long period of administration, all the questionnaires were retrieved successfully. The data collected were statistically analyzed using statistical mean method. Decisions were taking based on the rating of the responses which are strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) whose points were 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Decision: 2.50 and above was accepted while below 2.5 was rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the perceived social influence of digital communication on motivation among English Language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State?

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Table 1: Respondent mean rating on the perceived social influence of digital communication on motivation among English Language Undergraduate Students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State.

S/N	ITEMS	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	∑x	x	REMARK
1	The availability of academic resources shared through digital platforms keeps me motivated	75	100	20	5	645	3.2	Agree
2	Constant communication with classmates via digital channels improves my focus and dedication	80	100	20	0	660	3.3	Agree
3	Frequent notifications and messages on digital platforms distract me and reduce my motivation	50	70	70	10	560	2.8	Agree
4	I feel motivated when I receive positive feedback from peers on digital platforms	70	110	20	0	650	3.25	Agree
5	Engagement in academic discussions on digital platforms increases my interest in my studies	75	110	15	0	660	3.3	Agree
	Grand Mean						**3.17**	**Agree**

In table 1, the data analysis shows that the items 1,2,3,4 and 5 are 3.2, 3.3, 2.8, 3.25 and 3.3, obtained mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50 for this study. The implication of this is that the respondents agreed that Constant communication with classmates via digital channels improve their focus and dedication in Learning.

Research Question 2: What is the perceived cognitive influence of digital communication on motivation among English Language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean rating of the perceived cognitive influence of digital communication on motivation among English Language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State.

S/N	ITEMS	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	∑x	x	REMARK
1	Digital communication enhances my critical thinking skills in academic tasks.	70	100	15	15	625	3.1	Agree
2	The use of digital communication platforms help me to organize and prioritize my academic goals	55	100	40	5	605	3.0	Agree
3	Interacting with academic content through digital platforms increases my motivation to learn	70	115	15	0	665	3.2	Agree

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4	Frequent exposures to educational content on digital communication platforms improve my understanding of complex concepts.	70	110	20	0	650	3.25	Agree
5	Using digital communication tools during study sessions helps me stay focused and engaged	30	110	55	5	565	2.8	Agree
	Grand Mean						**3.1**	**Agree**

In table 2, the data analysis shows that the items 1,2,3,4 and 5 are 3.1, 3.0, 3.2, 3.3 and 2.8, obtained mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50 for this study. The implication of this is that the respondents agreed that frequent exposures to educational content on digital communication platforms improves their understanding of complex concepts in English Language studies.

Research Question 3: What is the perceived emotional influence of digital communication on motivation among English Language Undergraduate Students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State?

Table 3: Mean rating on the perceived emotional influence of digital communication on motivation and academic engagement of English language Undergraduate Students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

S/N	ITEMS	SA [4]	A [3]	D [2]	SD [1]	∑x	x	REMARK
1	Digital communication platforms help boost my confidence in pursuing academic tasks.	70	115	15	0	655	3.27	Agree
2	Frequent online interactions increase my sense of belonging within academic groups, positively influencing my motivation	45	125	30	0	615	3.1	Agree
3	Receiving positive feedback through digital communication makes me more motivated to achieve goals	65	125	10	0	655	3.2	Agree
4	Excessive use of digital communication can lead to emotional exhaustion, reducing my academic motivation	50	105	45	0	605	3.0	Agree
5	Social validation through digital platforms enhance my motivation to engage in academic	20	125	45	0	545	2.72	Agree
	Grand Mean						**3.1**	**Agree**

From table 3, the data analysis shows that the items 1,2,3,4 and 5 are 3.27, 3.1, 3.2, 3.0 and 2.72, obtained mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50 for this study. The implication of this is that the respondents agreed that digital communication platforms help boost

the English Language undergraduate students' confidence in pursuing academic tasks.

Research Question 4: What is the influence of digital communication on academic engagement among English Language undergraduate students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State?

Table 4: Mean rating on the influence of Digital Communication on academic engagement among English Language Undergraduate Students in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State**.**

S/N	ITEMS	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	∑x	x	REMARK
1	Digital communication platforms [e.g., WhatsApp. Telegram] enhance my participation in academic group discussion	65	105	25	10	635	3.17	Agree
2	I find it easier to collaborate with classmates on academic projects through digital communication tools	55	100	35	10	600	3	Agree
3	The use of digital communication platforms motivates me to attend online classes and academic webinars.	70	105	15	10	635	3.17	Agree
4	Digital communication platforms distract me from engaging fully in my academic activities	50	65	75	10	555	2.77	Agree
5	My involvement in digital academic forums has positively influenced my overall engagement in course related tasks	45	150	5	0	640	3.2	Agree
	Grand Mean						**3.1**	**Agree**

In table 4, the data analysis shows that the items 1,2,3,4 and 5 are 3.17, 3, 3.7, 2.77 and 3.2, obtained mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50 for this study. The implication of this is that the respondents agreed that digital communication platforms [e.g., WhatsApp. Telegram] enhance students' participation in academic group discussion.

Discussion and Conclusion

The major finding of the study revealed first that constant communication with classmates via digital channels has improved English language undergraduate students when it comes to focus and dedication towards academic engagement. Secondly, that frequent exposures to educational content on digital communication platforms improves English language undergraduate students understanding of complex concepts when it comes to the study of English language in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. Thirdly, most of the respondents are of the opinion that digital

communication platforms help boost their confidence in pursuing academic tasks. It was revealed also that WhatsApp. Telegram and other digital communication platforms enhance students' participation in socializing and academic group discussion.

Hence, this study's findings highlight the significant influence of digital communication on motivation and academic engagement among English language undergraduate students. The results show that digital communication has a profoundly positive influence on both motivation and academic engagement, leading to an increase in intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and academic engagement. The use of digital communication tools in English language learning creates an inclusive, interactive, and engaging learning environment that stimulates interest and enjoyment in learning, improves academic performance and attendance, and heightens participation and interaction with course materials.

Recommendations

To further build upon the study's findings, it is recommended to investigate the long-term effects of digital communication on motivation and engagement. This could involve conducting a longitudinal study that assesses the impact of digital communication on students' motivation and engagement over an extended period. Additionally, exploring strategies to optimize digital tool integration in language learning is crucial. This could involve identifying best practices for implementing digital communication tools, such as incorporating personalization and feedback mechanisms to enhance student engagement.

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