SOKOTO: PERCEPTION OF SELECTED UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE USING WHATSAPP

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Abstract

This study investigates perception of students on the use of WhatsApp among students learning English, exploring its advantages, disadvantages, and potential solutions. The study reveals that students use WhatsApp for learning English language purposes, including learning (48.4% and 22.4%), management of students (11.2%), delivery of lecture notes or assessments (9.2%), and socialization (8.8%). However, the use of WhatsApp also has some disadvantages, such as addiction or excessive use (48.0%), poor electricity (32.8%), and poor accessibility (19.2%). To address these challenges, the study suggests monitoring (54.0%), proper orientation on the use of social media (30.4%), and improvement in power supply (15.6%). These findings are consistent with previous research that highlights the benefits and challenges of using WhatsApp in education. The findings reveal that students utilize WhatsApp for learning, socialization, management, and delivery of lecture materials. However, excessive use, poor electricity, and poor access are notable challenges. To mitigate these issues, the study suggests monitoring, proper orientation on social media use, and improvement in power supply. The research provides insights into the role of WhatsApp in English language learning, highlighting its potential benefits and challenges.

Keywords:
Students, university, WhatsApp, learning, media, orientation.

Introduction

The English language plays a vital role in modern communication, serving as a global lingua franca that bridges cultural and geographical divides. Its importance extends to various aspects of life, including education, business, science, technology, and international relations. In the realm of education, English is often the primary language of instruction in many institutions worldwide, providing students with access to a vast array of academic resources, research opportunities, and international collaborations. Proficiency in English can significantly enhance one's academic and professional prospects, facilitating participation in global discussions, conferences, and knowledge-sharing networks. In the business world, English is widely used as a medium of communication among companies, organizations, and governments, enabling effective collaboration and exchange of ideas across borders. As a result, individuals with strong English language skills are highly sought after in the job market, particularly in industries that operate globally (Fattah, 2019).

Furthermore, English is the dominant language of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, with many leading research journals, conferences, and publications being in English. This underscores the importance of English language proficiency for individuals seeking to engage with cutting-edge research, innovation, and technological advancements.

In international relations, English serves as a common language for diplomatic communication, facilitating dialogue and cooperation among nations. Its widespread use has made English an essential tool for anyone seeking to engage with global affairs, international development, or cultural exchange. Overall, the importance of the English language lies in its ability to facilitate communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing across cultures, industries, and borders, making it an indispensable skill in today's interconnected world (Annamalai, 2019; Yusuf, 2020).

The rapid advancement of technology has transformed the way we learn and communicate, with mobile devices and social media platforms becoming increasingly integral to our daily lives. Among these platforms, WhatsApp has emerged as a popular tool for instant messaging, facilitating real-time communication and collaboration. Its widespread adoption and user-friendly interface have made it an attractive option for various purposes, including education   (Hubbard,2017; Annamalai, 2019;. Alshammari, 2020).

In the context of language learning, WhatsApp offers a range of benefits, including improved communication skills, enhanced learning experiences, and increased student engagement. By leveraging WhatsApp's features, such as group chats and file sharing, language learners can engage in interactive discussions, share resources, and receive feedback from peers and instructors (Chapelle, 2017; Basal & Aytan, 2019).This study aims to explore the perception of selected university students in learning language using WhatsApp. By investigating students' attitudes, experiences, and challenges, this research seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness of WhatsApp as a tool for language learning. The findings of this study can inform educators and policymakers about the potential benefits and limitations of using WhatsApp in language education, ultimately contributing to the development of more effective and engaging language learning strategies. This study investigates perception of some Sokoto (university)

students on the use of WhatsApp among students learning English, exploring its advantages, disadvantages, and potential solutions

Materials and methods

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design to investigate the perception of university students on learning English using WhatsApp. A descriptive survey design is suitable for this study as it allows for the collection of data on students' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences.

Sampling

The study consisted of 250 university students (in Sokoto) who were selected using a convenience sampling technique. The sample size was determined based on the research objectives and the need for a representative sample. The students were from various departments and faculties, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives.

Instrumentation

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire was designed to measure students' perceptions of learning English using WhatsApp and consisted of several sections:

1. Demographic Information: This section collected data on students' age, gender, department, and English language proficiency level.
2. WhatsApp Usage: This section assessed students' experience with WhatsApp, including frequency of use, purposes of use, and familiarity with WhatsApp features.
3. Perception of Learning English using WhatsApp: This section measured students' attitudes towards learning English using WhatsApp, including perceived benefits, challenges, and effectiveness.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to the participants during regular class hours or via online platforms, depending on the students' preferences and availability. The researcher ensured that the participants understood the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their responses, and the voluntary nature of their participation.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentages. The data were analyzed using statistical software (e.g., SPSS) to generate summary statistics and identify patterns in students' perceptions.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted with a small group of students to test the instrument's clarity, relevance, and consistency. The feedback from the pilot study was used to refine the questionnaire and improve its validity.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' responses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured that their participation would not affect their academic standing or relationships with the university.

Results and Discussion

Perception refers to the opinion of respondents. Students opinion about WhatsApp use in learning or instruction matters significantly because it may encourage or discourage the advantageous use of technology media. WhatsApp advantages are enormous. It is supposed to be affordable, accessible, valuable, flexible, competitive, and helpful to students or teachers in the course of learning interactions (Irvianti, 2022). Here, the results are in Tables 1-4.

Table 1: Advantages of WhatsApp to students in learning English language

Advantage	Frequency	Percentage
Delivery of lecture notes or assessments	23	9.2
Management of students	28	11.2
Learning by students or teachers	121	48.4
Learning by students or teachers	56	22.4
Socialization	22	8.8

According to the finding revealed in Table 1, it shows that, the use of WhatsApp by students in learning English language include, socialization (48 4%), learning (22.4%), management of students (11.2%), and delivery of lecture materials or assessment. The findings here are in relation to the ones in Annamalai (2019) that stressed WhatsApp as an application that empower learners, readily accessible, portable, and consolidate learning. Baishya & Maheswari (2019) quoted the, use of v among students including socialization, entertainment, and extracurricular activities. Afzal & Abdullahi (2019) stressed the benefits of WhatsApp as a supportive technology in learning and teaching.

Table 2: Disadvantages of WhatsApp to students

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Addiction or too much socialization	120	48.0
Poor accessibility	48	19.2
Poor electricity	82	32.8
Total	250	100.0

Based on the outcome of Table 2, the disadvantages of WhatsApp include, addiction or too much use (or reliance) (48.0%), poor electricity (32.8%), and poor access (19.2%). Annamalai (2019) disclosed the

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challenges of WhatsApp in including overloaded messages, and technical hurdles. Bruno & Lawyer (2020) found that, issues of WhatsApp include effects on socioemotional development.

Table 3: Suggestions for curbing disadvantages of WhatsApp among students

Suggestion	Frequency	Percentage
Improvement in power supply	39	15.6
Proper orientation on use of social media	76	30.4
Monitoring	135	54.0

According to the Table 3, the suggestions to curb the disadvantages of WhatsApp misuse include, proper orientation of students on the advantageous use of social media (30.4%), monitoring (54.0%), and provision of sources of power (15.6%).

The findings suggest that students utilize WhatsApp for various purposes in learning English, including socialization, learning, management, and delivery of materials. These results align with existing research, such as Annamalai (2019), Baishya & Maheswari (2019), and Afzal & Abdullahi (2019), which highlights WhatsApp's potential as a supportive tool for learning and teaching, facilitating social interaction, and consolidating knowledge. Certainly, to curb the disadvantages of WhatsApp misuse among students, the following suggestions have been proposed:

-Proper Orientation: Educate students on the beneficial use of social media (30.4%). This involves teaching students how to harness social media for learning, collaboration, and networking while minimizing distractions.

- Monitoring: Keep track of students' social media activities to prevent misuse (54.0%). This can be achieved through regular checks, setting boundaries, and using productivity tools to block distracting sites.

- Provision of Sources of Power: Ensure students have access to reliable power sources (15.6%). This is particularly important in areas with frequent power outages, which can hinder students' ability to use WhatsApp and other digital tools for learning. By implementing these strategies, educators and parents can help students use WhatsApp and other social media platforms responsibly and effectively for academic purposes (A-Harbi, 2019; Yusuf, 2020).

Conclusion

These findings suggest that while WhatsApp can be a useful tool, it's essential to be aware of its potential drawbacks and use it responsibly. Challenges are many, some of them are: Overloaded messages, technical hurdles, potential negative effects on socioemotional development.

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