



Exploring the Impact of Social Media on EFL Reading Preferences and Habits

Bochra Benaicha & Boualem Bengahem

Abstract

Reading is a fundamental skill for language learners, particularly those studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It plays a crucial role in cognitive development, language acquisition, and the cultivation of critical thinking. In today's digital age, where social media coexists with the necessity of reading for both enjoyment and academic pursuits, there is a dynamic interplay that shapes the reading habits and preferences of EFL learners. This research aims to investigate the impact of social media on the reading habits and preferences of Algerian EFL students. To achieve this objective, a descriptive, multimethod approach is employed, using an online questionnaire with close- and open-ended questions to gather insights from the target population. Results revealed that Facebook and Instagram impacted the EFL reading preferences among Algerian EFL students. In addition, participants identified various advantages, including enhanced access to diverse reading materials, exposure to a wide range of perspectives and ideas, and the ability to stay current with prevailing trends and topics. However, drawbacks were also highlighted, including potential distractions hindering longer, in-depth reading, a diminished attention span during extended reading sessions, and a tendency to favour visually engaging content over text-heavy materials. This study contributes to the existing body of literature by examining the intersection of social media and reading habits among Algerian EFL students. Understanding the dynamics of this relationship is crucial for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to adapt language learning strategies to the evolving preferences of students in the digital age.

Keywords: English as foreign language learning, reading habits, social media

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1. Introduction

Reading stands as a foundational skill integral to language learning, contributing significantly to cognitive development, language acquisition, and thinking abilities. The current digital environment sees social media and the necessity of reading, whether for academic or leisure reasons, coexisting. This dynamic interaction significantly influences the reading behaviors and preferences of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly those from Algeria.

Despite the existence of previous research on social media and EFL reading, there is limited scholarly attention to the interconnectedness and impact of social media (SM) on EFL reading habits and preferences, especially among Algerian EFL learners. Therefore, exploring the impact of SM on EFL reading preferences and habits among Algerian students is of paramount importance due to several considerations. First, investigating the effect of social media on EFL reading preferences and habits contributes to the understanding of digital influences on reading, i.e., how technology impacts language learning and reading skill. Second, it can assist and help teachers and curriculum developers tailor their teaching practices and adapt their strategies and materials to meet the needs and preferences of learners. Third, understanding how EFL learners interact with digital texts and social media platforms can also lead to the development of digital literacy skills, critical thinking, and discernment in navigating online information.

This research aims to contribute to existing scholarship on EFL literacy by providing a comprehensive understanding of how SM influences EFL reading habits, exploring both its benefits and drawbacks, and identifying the types of reading materials favoured by EFL learners active on social media.

To achieve these objectives, two research questions were formulated:

1. How do social media platforms influence EFL reading habits and preferences?
2. What are the benefits and drawbacks of social media's influence on Algerian EFL learners' reading habits?

In response to these research questions, the following hypotheses were proposed:

1. Increased exposure to SM platforms among Algerian EFL learners is positively correlated with a shift towards shorter-form, visually-oriented reading materials.
2. Social media enhances access to diverse reading materials, fostering reading skills, but may also lead to distractions, reduced depth of comprehension, and a shortened attention span.

Individuals strive to construct a coherent understanding when reading and remembering text by integrating textual information with prior knowledge about the world (Narváez, 2002). This cognitive process applies to social media reading, where

users endeavour to integrate textual information with their existing knowledge to create a unified understanding of the content they consume (Hasyim & Arafah, 2023). While this integration is fundamental to reading comprehension, it is important to recognise the unique challenges posed by social media reading, including potential distractions and multitasking that may adversely affect reading abilities (Kojo et al., 2018). Additionally, incorporating visual elements, such as pictures, in social media has been found to enhance interest in accompanying text (Moltaji, 2018).

2. Theoretical Framework

In educational research exploring social media and reading habits in EFL contexts, various theories and models have been examined. Krashen's study underscores the correlation between strong reading habits and improved test performance, emphasising the foundational role of reading in EFL learning (Bana, 2020). However, certain social media activities, particularly the consumption of comic books and manga, have been associated with diminished reading comprehension performance (Al-Seghayer, 2019). Relatively, the use of SM for academic purposes is proved to contribute significantly to the promotion of reading habits among EFL learners at tertiary level (Liu et al., 2023). Therefore, to understand the dynamics of the correction of SM and EFL reading habits, it is crucial to shed light on major theoretical frameworks relevant to the study:

2.1 Krashen's Input Hypothesis

In his theory, Krashen (1982) emphasises the importance of exposure to a comprehensible input for language acquisition. The theory is built upon the premise that learners acquire language effectively when they are exposed to language that is slightly beyond their current proficiency level. Reflecting on SM and reading habits, learners may actively engage with English content on social media platforms. Therefore, the Input Hypothesis can justify how exposure to diverse reading materials on social media contributes to language acquisition and learning (Krashen, 1982). Several researchers investigated the application of Krashen's Input Hypothesis in the context of SM and language learning. They explored the impact of SM exposure on SLA among college students, emphasising the role of comprehensible input in language learning through social media engagement (Li & Wu, 2022; Chang et al., 2023). Similarly, Garcia and Rodriguez (2021) highlighted the role of online language communities in providing comprehensible input for second language learners through SM, aligning with Krashen's theoretical framework.

2.2 Cognitive Load Theory

Cognitive Load Theory, led by Sweller (1994), explored the impact of the cognitive load imposed on learners on their learning outcomes, distinguishing between intrinsic and extraneous load. To illustrate, social media, with its visualities and features of texts,

images, and videos, may impose varying cognitive load on learners and readers. Therefore, investigating the cognitive load associated with different types of social media content and reading materials can provide further insights into reading habits and preferences. Liu et al. (2023) argue that the prolonged use of social media may lead to cognitive overload, resulting in disruptions of in-depth reading and attention span. Relatively, Smith and Jones (2022) examined the cognitive load experienced by students using SM for educational purposes; they concluded that despite the benefits of SM features, excessive use of it can lead to cognitive overload and may hinder effective learning.

2.3 Cognitive Processing Model of Reading

The Cognitive Processing Model of Reading, introduced by Narváez (2002), depicts the cognitive processes involved in building and constructing understanding while reading. It highlights the importance of integrating textual information with prior knowledge to create a common unified understanding of the reading material (Reichle & Rayner, 2002). These cognitive processes can be applicable not only to traditional reading but also to social media reading; Learners on social media may integrate textual information with their prior knowledge. Delving into the application of cognitive processing models in the context of SM and reading, scholars and researchers emphasise the significance of prior knowledge integration when consuming textual information (Carpenter & Just, 2017).

Transitioning from the theoretical frameworks to the practical considerations surrounding the role of social media (SM) in EFL contexts, it is essential to acknowledge the multifaceted nature of its impact. In other words, social media's potential as a teaching and learning aid in EFL contexts is acknowledged, offering language learners opportunities to engage with authentic English materials (Wang et al., 2022). EFL students leverage diverse social media platforms to enhance their reading skills and language proficiency. For instance, platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok are used by EFL learners to engage with English content, connect with peers, and stay updated, thereby contributing to the improvement of their reading skills (Altam, 2020; Iswahyuni, 2021; Noori et al., 2022). The affordances of each SMP, as reported in related literature, are enumerated below:

- **YouTube:** EFL learners use YouTube to watch videos and listen to recordings in English, which can help improve their listening and vocabulary skills (Altam, 2020; Iswahyuni, 2021).
- **WhatsApp:** This platform provides opportunities for language learners to improve their reading skills, stay connected with peers, and enrich their vocabulary through written communication (Iswahyuni, 2021; Noori et al., 2022).
- **Facebook:** EFL students tend to develop reading skills, vocabulary, and pronunciation through Facebook, making it a valuable platform for language acquisition (Abdullah et al., 2022; Noori et al., 2022).

- **Twitter:** Twitter is also used by EFL learners to develop reading skills and vocabulary, and it can be a useful platform for language practice and engagement (Abdullah et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022).
- **Instagram:** EFL students use Instagram to access English reading materials, interact with content, and potentially improve their reading and language skills (Erarslan, 2019; Iswahyuni, 2021;).
- **TikTok:** While not as extensively studied, TikTok is also mentioned as a social media platform used by EFL learners for language learning and reading (Iswahyuni, 2021).

These platforms offer a range of content and interactions that can support EFL students in improving their English reading skills and language proficiency.

Social media can affect reading comprehension in various ways, both positive and negative. Some of the key effects include:

- **Increased access to information:** Social media allows users to access a wealth of information quickly and easily, potentially enhancing their reading experience and promoting a more diverse range of reading materials (Team, 2021).
- **Interactive and engaging content:** Digital reading platforms can offer interactive and engaging content, such as videos, images, and links, which can make the reading experience more enjoyable and immersive (Team, 2021).
- **Distraction and multitasking:** Social media platforms are designed to keep users engaged and distracted, making it difficult to focus on a book or lengthy text (Shreim, 2023). This can lead to a reduction in reading comprehension, as users may be more prone to multitasking and losing focus while reading (Kojo et al., 2018)
- **Shallow reading and skimming:** Social media users are accustomed to scrolling through short, bite-sized pieces of information, which can lead to superficial reading and skimming through content (Shreim, 2023). This can negatively impact reading comprehension, as readers may not fully understand or retain the information they have read.
- **Decreased literacy levels:** Heavy use of social media has been linked to lower literacy levels in children, as they may be distracted from reading and homework (Shreim, 2023).
- **Negative effects on reading habits:** The intensification of social media use among students has been found to negatively affect their reading culture, resulting in less reading time and a decline in reading comprehension (Kojo et al., 2018).

To mitigate negative effects on reading comprehension, fostering a reading culture and balancing digital and analogue media is essential (Shreim, 2023). Despite potential drawbacks, EFL students consciously incorporate social media into their reading practices. EFL students balance social media use with traditional reading materials through various strategies and perceptions. Some students perceive social media as a valuable tool for accessing a wide range of English reading materials, which can help them enhance their reading skills and vocabulary (Abdalgane, 2022; Bana, 2020). However, they also recognise the importance of traditional reading materials and may use social media alongside printed texts to develop and maintain their reading habits (Bana, 2020). Additionally, students may consciously allocate specific time for engaging with traditional reading materials, such as books and academic texts, while using social media for more informal or interactive reading experiences (Al-Mukhallafi, 2020; Bana, 2020). The types of texts selected by EFL students while reading on smartphones vary, with most students selecting general texts, such as news and articles, from various social media posts or messages (Oh et al., 2022). The approaches used to select texts include personal interest, relevance, and recommendations from peers or social media algorithms (Oh et al., 2022).

Several studies have explored EFL students' perceptions of social media as a tool for reading. The findings suggest that social media can be integrated into EFL syllabi as a teaching and learning aid, as it contains a broad range of English reading materials, potentially enhancing English reading skills (Prayudha, 2022). Social media platforms provide opportunities for language learners to improve their reading skills and vocabulary, as well as to stay connected with peers and stay updated (Noori et al., 2022). However, the use of social media, particularly for activities like reading comic books and manga, has been associated with lower reading comprehension performance (Sanad, 2016); social media has also been found to negatively impact English writing performances of ESL students by introducing non-standard content into their writing (Ghouali & Benmoussat, 2019).

Nesrallah and Zangana (2020) conducted a study at the University of Diyala to explore social media's impact on enhancing English language skills, specifically focusing on vocabulary acquisition among second-year EFL students. The diverse forms of social media technologies, such as magazines, internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, pictures, and videos, were considered in the investigation. The research confirmed the use of social media contributes to a notable enhancement in the vocabulary knowledge of EFL students. Overall, the findings strongly support the idea that social media proves to be genuinely helpful and effective in advancing vocabulary skills.

Rafiq et al. (2019) also conducted a study aimed at investigating the impact of social media on students' reading habits. Positive effects of social media on reading habits were identified, although distractions during study time were noted as a drawback. Gender differences in opinions on certain effects were significant. Facebook, WhatsApp, Google+, and YouTube were daily platforms for students, predominantly accessed through mobile phones.

Umirov (2022) discusses the transformative impact of the digital age on language learning, emphasising the significant role of social media. His study highlights the positive

aspects of using social media as a powerful tool for language learning, enabling learners to connect with native speakers, access language-specific resources, and stay motivated. The study's results acknowledge the availability of useful materials, including websites and audio recordings, on social media platforms. However, it also cautions about potential negative effects, particularly information overload.

The impact of social media on EFL reading preferences and habits is a multifaceted phenomenon. While some studies underscore the positive influence of social media on vocabulary acquisition and motivation for extensive reading, others highlight potential drawbacks such as a decline in traditional reading habits and information overload. These findings emphasise the need for a balanced approach to integrating social media into EFL education, acknowledging its benefits and challenges. Further research is required to explore the nuanced dynamics of this relationship and provide comprehensive insights for educators and learners alike.

3. Methodology

To explore the impact of social media on EFL reading habits and preferences, this study used multimethod, descriptive approach, which purposively combines quantitative and qualitative methods to address the research questions (Johnson & Walsh, 2019). Specifically, an online questionnaire with quantitative and qualitative items serve as the primary data collection instrument. The choice of research design was based on methodological dimensions of previous research words conducted on similar topics. Relatively, the online questionnaire was developed by the researchers after reviewing extensively the relevant literature. The latter encompasses identifying key variables and constructs related to the potential influence of social media usage on EFL reading habits. The participants of this study were 170 EFL learners from different Algerian educational backgrounds who are all users of social media.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section seeks to gather demographic information, including age and gender. The second section highlighted participants' usage of social media. The last third section explored the impact of social media on participants' reading habits and preferences through a combination of close- and open-ended questions. To ensure the research's validity and reliability, the researchers conducted a pilot study to test the questionnaire's clarity and adequacy. The questionnaire was administered to 10 students whose profile matched the target participants; their feedback affirmed the questions' clarity and adequacy. Following the pilot study, the researchers finalized and posted the questionnaire online in EFL reading Facebook groups and communities to reach a broader audience. The online distribution of the questionnaire using Facebook enables capturing diverse perspectives and experiences regarding the topic explored.

Furthermore, statistical analysis using Excel was employed for quantitative data, while qualitative data and the responses to the open-ended questions were analysed following thematic analysis. The latter involved determining and analysing the recurring themes within the qualitative data. Participants' responses were gathered based on their similarities and

themes that emerged. Then, the themes were reviewed and refined according to the dataset and research questions. In the analysis, the researchers provided a concise description and explanation of each theme; relevant data extracts and quotations were inserted to illustrate and support the interpretation. These extracts serve as evidence for the existence of the theme in the data.

Though the study was designed to capture the correlation between SM and EFL reading habits and preferences, certain limitations should be acknowledged, including the potential for participants' self-reporting bias and the exclusive focus on active participants on social media. In short, the data collection procedure involved various steps. First step is the development of the online questionnaire based on extensive literature review. Second step involved pilot testing the online questionnaire and finalising it considering participants' feedback. Third step is the online distribution via Facebook groups; the process of gathering responses from the participants took one week. Last step is the data analysis combining both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods.

4. Results and Discussion

The first section of the questionnaire gathered participants' demographic information, including their gender, age and English language proficiency (Table 1). The results demonstrated that most participants (82.4%) were females, while (17.6%) were males. Among the participants, 73.5% belonged to the age group of 18-24 years old; 17.1% of the participants were part of the second age group of 25-31 years old. Only 9.4% of the participants were more than 31 years old. However, gender and age were not a major variable in this research.

Table 1
Demographic Information

Attributes		Participants	Percentage
Gender	Females	140	82.4%
	Males	30	17.6%
Age	18-24 years old	125	73.5%
	25-31 years old	29	17.1%
	31-37 years old	8	4.7%
	+38 years old	8	4.7%
English Language Proficiency Level	Beginner	19	11.2%
	Intermediate	106	62.4%
	Advanced	45	26.5%

Regarding the participants' English language proficiency, 62.4% of the participants stated that their level in English is intermediate, while 26.5% perceive their level as advanced. Only 11.2% stated that they had a beginner level in the English language. It is worthy to mention that the participants were undergraduate students of English language. Respondents started learning English since the first year of middle school as part of the official national Algerian curriculum. Nevertheless, the researcher is not upholding of participants' responses which may be biased (Creswell, 2012; Dodgson, 2017; Noble & Smith, 2015).

The second section explored participants' social media usage through three questions. Firstly, participants were asked about the time they spent on social media. 48.8% of the participants used social media platforms (SMPs henceforth) between 3 to 5 hours. 34.1% of the participants spent more than 6 hours on SMPs, while only 17.1% used SMP for less than two hours. Secondly, participants were questioned about the highly used SPM; participants were allowed to choose more than multiple options and add others.

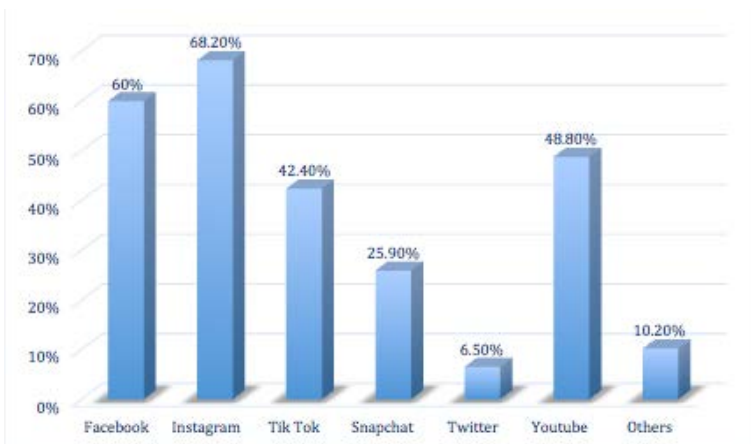


Figure 1. Participants' Usage of SMP

Figure 1 demonstrated the different SMPs used by the participants. Findings revealed that Instagram and Facebook were highly favoured, while Twitter was the least favoured by the participants. The participants added other options of SMPs, including Telegram, Messenger, Discord, Novel, Tumbler, and Pinterest. Thirdly, participants were asked about the major reasons behind their use of social media; participants were allowed to choose multiple options and add other suggestions. The majority of the participants used SMPs for entertainment purposes, including watching memes and reels (65.9%) and interacting with their friends and followers (59.4%). Respondents also used SMPs equally to consume news and information (52.4%) and follow education content (52.4%). Some participants mentioned using SMPs for other purposes, including earning and selling cryptocurrency, watching anime, reading and researching.

The third section investigated the impact of social media on EFL reading habits and preferences through a combination of open-ended and close-ended questions. The first question determined participants' daily time devoted to reading (Table 2). Most participants (68.2%) read for less than 30 minutes. Meanwhile, 17.1% of the participants devote more than 40 minutes daily to reading.

Table 2
Participants' Reading Time Per Day

Reading time	-10 min	11-20 min	21-30 min	31-40 min	+41 min
Participants	31	49	36	25	29
Percentages	18.2%	28.8%	21.2%	14.7%	17.1%

The second question aimed to identify the type of reading materials preferred by the participants. 47.6% of the participants preferred reading printed materials while 31.8% of the participants preferred reading online materials. 20% of the participants demonstrated a preference towards audiobooks. The third question highlighted the correlation between social media use and reading time. 48.5% of the participants confirmed that using SMP affected the amount of time they devoted to reading longer texts, such as books and articles. 18.9% of the participants denied such an impact, while 32.5% of the respondents were doubtful regarding the impact. Based on the responses to the fourth question, most participants (88.1%) found themselves inclined to read shorter-form, visually-oriented materials such as posts and infographics due to their social media usage. Only 11.9% denied such a correlation.

The third section also included an open-ended question to provide further insights and a deep understanding of the influence of social media on participants' reading habits and preferences. Participants' responses can be analysed and categorised into four major themes:

- 1. Time Allocation and Distraction:** Several participants maintained that social media consumed their time, reducing the time allotted for reading. Relatively, it distracts participants from engaging with longer texts; participants spend their time scrolling through SMPs rather than being part of reading activities. Furthermore, some participants acknowledge the struggle to balance their social media usage and reading habits. This theme is demonstrated in the following responses:

“It distracts my reading habits.”

“Maybe spending more time on social media than in reading.”

“Social media takes a lot of our time.”

“Unfortunately, I became so passive. I can't even take a book and read. I can say that I became addicted to social media.”

“It affects me negatively because I spend a long time using it. I rarely read.”

2. **Accessibility and Short Content Preference:** Some participants highlighted that social media facilitates access to various forms of content, including articles, e-books, and reviews. Furthermore, SMPs led to a shift towards consuming short texts and videos and quick visual content, resulting in limitations in attention spans. The latter can be attributed to the constant exposure to short and fast-consumed content. These themes are depicted in the following responses:

“It makes me want to get information the easy way, by reading short posts or watching videos, rather than reading full articles and books.”

“Using social media helps to find more about books sometimes; it also helps to understand the books better by searching for information about them.”

“I follow accounts who publish reviews about their favourite books and then select my reading list accordingly.”

“It tends to encourage shorter, more concise content, which can influence a preference for similar formats in other reading materials.”

3. **Discoverability and Book Recommendations:** Participants confirmed that SMPs allow them to discover new books, genres, and authors and to engage in book discussions, clubs and forums. Respondents advocated that SMPs introduced book recommendations and exposed them to diverse content, consequently expanding their interests in novel genres and topics they might not have encountered otherwise. Some of the participants’ responses are as follows:

“It influences positively due to the large book group discussions where we always share, recommend and discuss books deeply.”

“It encourages me to discover more books and read them.”

“Social media has opened so many doors to readers. Facebook and other platforms put the reader into choosing the best books or articles which he will read.”

“Social media exposed me to a variety of diverse reads and helped me discover my reading preferences.”

“Social media can shape reading habits by introducing diverse book recommendations from friends and influencers.”

“Social media can shape reading habits by exposing users to diverse recommendations, reviews, and discussions.”

“Social media makes me discover new types or genres of books and novels; it gives recommendations.”

4. **Motivation:** Participants opinionated differently regarding the influence of SMPs on their motivation to read. Some participants found SMPs motivating, especially with the exposure to new information or exploration of various genres. Accordingly, one participant stated, “The use of social media platforms increases the ability to read articles and posts and indirectly motivates the user to read.” Another participant maintained, “Social media could never have a bad impact on my reading habits and preferences.” Contrastively, other participants perceive SMPs as negatively impacting their reading habits, leading to reduced reading or a struggle to focus while reading. One participant admitted, “Social media impacts my ability to read in a bad way...it makes me feel bored easily.” Relatively, some responses highlighted the necessity to balance technology and real life, pointing out the potential negative impact of excessive screen time on readers’ motivation.

In the following question, participants were asked about the impact of social media on their preferred types of reading materials. A significant majority of respondents acknowledged the influence of social media on shaping their reading preferences, confirming that it played a pivotal role in determining the types of materials they favoured. The final two questions in the questionnaire focused on explaining the advantages and drawbacks of social media in relation to reading habits.

On the positive side, respondents highlighted several advantages, such as access to a wide variety of reading materials, exposure to diverse perspectives and ideas, and keeping updated with current trends and topics. Conversely, participants were also concerned regarding disadvantages such as distraction from longer, in-depth reading, reduced attention span for extended reading sessions, and preference for visually engaging content over text-heavy materials.

This study explored the impact of SM on EFL reading habits and preferences. The results demonstrated that SM platforms, mainly Facebook and Instagram, had a significant impact on EFL reading preferences and habits. The findings are compatible with earlier research conducted by Rafiq et al. (2019), which revealed that social media positively influences EFL reading habits and preferences. The research findings also align with the research conducted by Koessmeier and Büttner (2021) which identified two main factors for social media distraction including individual differences and the fear of missing out, also known as FOMO.

5. Conclusion, Recommendations, and Future Directions

In conclusion, social media has become extensively used by Algerian EFL learners, exerting a notable influence on their language skills and learning habits. However, despite its prevalent

use, a limited number of research works have delved into the specific impact of SM on EFL reading habits and preferences. This study aimed to address this gap by investigating the influence of SM on EFL reading habits, with findings indicating a significant role played by social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Participants in the study confirmed that the use of social media platforms affected the time allocation for reading longer texts, such as books and articles, with a discernible shift towards shorter-form texts and visually-oriented materials, including posts and infographics. Moreover, social media emerged as a facilitator for accessing diverse content formats, including articles, e-books, and reviews.

In addressing the impact of social media on reading habits, it is crucial to recommend effective time management strategies for participants. Encouraging individuals to strike a balance between social media usage and reading activities can be achieved through the establishment of specific time slots for each activity or the utilization of productivity tools to limit social media access during dedicated reading periods. Another important aspect to consider is the promotion of long-form content. Participants should be advised to overcome the preference for short content by engaging with more extensive materials such as articles, books, and in-depth discussions. Emphasizing the cognitive benefits of in-depth reading for understanding complex topics could potentially counteract the inclination towards shorter texts.

Diversification of reading content is also essential. Participants could benefit from suggestions to explore diverse genres and topics beyond their usual preferences. Active participation in book clubs, forums, or following accounts that introduce a variety of reading recommendations may contribute to expanding their literary interests. Furthermore, participants should be encouraged to utilize social media for its positive impact on reading habits. Highlighting the platform's role in discovering new books, genres, and authors can motivate individuals to actively engage in book discussions, seek recommendations from peers, and use social media as a tool for expanding their overall reading interests.

Recognizing the diverse opinions on the motivational impact of social media is crucial. While some find it motivating, others may face challenges. Recommendations can be tailored to leverage social media for discovering new information and genres for those who find it motivating, while those facing motivational challenges may benefit from creating dedicated reading spaces and setting achievable reading goals. Critical evaluation of information on social media, especially regarding book recommendations, is paramount. Participants should be encouraged to verify information from multiple sources, fostering a more discerning approach to selecting reading materials beyond relying solely on social media.

Addressing concerns related to excessive screen time impacting motivation is necessary. Tips on maintaining a healthy balance between technology use and real-life experiences, including the importance of screen breaks and outdoor activities, should be emphasized. Moreover, acknowledging individual differences in responses to social media influences is important. Participants should be prompted to reflect on their own preferences and habits, recognizing the need for personalized approaches to managing social media's impact on their reading habits.

Consideration should be given to educational initiatives that promote digital literacy and responsible social media usage. Workshops or resources on effective information consumption and managing screen time can contribute to a more mindful engagement with social media. Lastly, fostering community building is recommended. Encouraging the creation of online communities focused on reading allows participants to share book recommendations, discuss their reading experiences, and support each other in maintaining positive reading habits. These recommendations collectively aim to create a balanced and constructive relationship between social media and reading habits.

Despite the valuable insights gained, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations in this research. The reliance on a singular data collection instrument and constraints related to sample size and duration impede the generalizability of the findings to all EFL learners. Recommendations for future research include enlarging the sample size and employing a mixed-method research design to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. Additionally, future investigations could extend their focus beyond reading habits and preferences to explore the impact of social media on other language skills. Furthermore, researchers may investigate the challenges associated with using social media platforms in the context of EFL reading habits and preferences and explore EFL teachers' perspectives on the influence of SM on their students' reading habits.

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