

**SOCIAL MEDIA ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION
FORMAT: IMPLICATION FOR BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS'
COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

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Abstract

This study seeks to evaluate the implication of the use of social media on the communication skills of Business Education students. A quantitative approach was adopted for this study. 200 male and female Business Education students who use social Media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram were used for the study. The sample was made up of undergraduates and NCE Business Education students. Based on literature and *social interactionist theory*, a structured questionnaire was developed for the study. The instrument was administered using an online survey format to 200 students. Based on the findings of this research, it was discovered that there is significant covariate relationship between social media usage and Business Education students' communication format. It was also discovered in this study that there is significant direct relationship between English language usage and Business Education students' communication skills; but there is no significant relationship between communication format and communication skills. This implies that the students' ability to develop good communication skills does not lie in the use of social media and in their communication format, but in constant use of English language. This findings is contrary to some researches that believe that social media helps to improve communication skills. Recommendations were made on how to improve communication skills.

Language is considered by social interactionist theorist to develop as people interact in their social environment. Based on this, communication skills is said to develop through social interaction. People consciously and unconsciously develop certain skills of communication as they interact in their social environment. Language accelerates cognitive development. It is believed that language is very important in any social interaction, since it is the primary medium of communication in any social setting. There are other reasons why language plays a very important role in an individual's cognitive development. One of such reasons is that language equally plays an important role in social interaction in social media and other forms of social interactions (Staines & Lauchs 2013; Baron, 2013; Coiro, 2012). According to Dafoulas & Shokri, (2016), social media enhances learning and development of students. This means that communication skills can be developed through the use of social media. Several studies have proposed several online strategies that can enhance communication skills. Computer-assisted language learning project, developed based on an open source techno-pedagogical solution to facilitate online oral language production and interaction was proposed by Mhichíl, Appel, Ciardubháin, Jager & Prizel-Kania, (2015). Garcia, Elbeltagi, Dungay, & Hardaker, (2015) opined that student use of Facebook for informal learning and peer support can improve their cognitive development and communication skills. This is in line with the findings of Gil-Flores, Torres-Gordillo & Perera-Rodríguez, (2012) and that of Moyer, (2011), as well as the findings of Hsieh & Dwyer, (2009).

Despite the numerous development benefits of social media, González-Ramírez, Gascó, & Taverner, (2015) and Lee & Wu, (2013) identified some weaknesses of the use of social media like Facebook. Ursavaş & Reisoglu, (2017) also identified the short coming of social media to include shortage of certain learning features that can enhance good development of communication skills. Thurai Raj, Hoon, Roy, & Fong (2015) asserted that the kind of language used in social media can make or mar academic English.

Communication skills include speaking skills, reading skills as well as writing skills (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Pfof, Dörfler, & Artelt, 2013). Communication skills can be measured in terms of the ability to communicate fluently, accurately both in writing, speaking, and reading. The ability to pronounce words correctly and give clear sounds while speaking is an indication of good oral communication skill which is termed as fluency. Writing communication skills is measured in terms of accuracy and coherent arrangement of words and phrases to give clear and concise meaning to the readers.

There are several factors that have been identified as factors that hinder good communication skill. Among such factors include approach towards communication. Silva, (2009) in an attempt to ascertain the relevance of reading through the internet indicated that social media actually influences communication skills. Such influence can be positive or negative.

Research framework

A research framework based on social interactionist theory was developed for this study. This theory is an explanation of language development emphasizing the role of *social interaction* between the developing child and linguistically knowledgeable adults. It is based largely on the socio-cultural theories of Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky. This theory explains communication skills to be a product of the interaction in the social environment of an individual (Moerk, 1994; Crawford, 1996). *Social development theory* argues that *social interaction* precedes development, this means that communication skills develops through social interaction (Sarem & Shirzadi, 2014). This theory also argues that consciousness and cognition are the end product of socialization and *social* behaviour. Based on literature and *social interactionist theory*, the researchers developed a preliminary research framework presented in Figure 1.

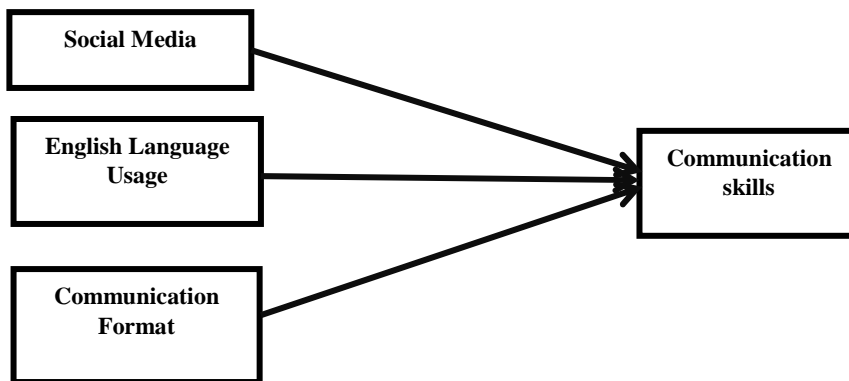


Figure 1. Research Framework

Three research questions and three research hypotheses were developed to guide the study based on the research framework. These three research questions and three research hypotheses were stated as follows:

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does social media usage significantly relate with business education students' communication format?
2. How does English language usage significantly relate with business education students' communication skills?
3. How does communication format significantly relate with business education students' communication skills?

Research Hypotheses

H1. Social media usage has significant impact on business education students' communication format.

H2. English language usage has significant impact on business education students' communication skills.

H3. Communication format has significant impact on business education students' communication skills.

Methodology

Design: An online survey research design was used for this study.

Population: The population for this study consisted of all Business Education undergraduate and NCE students who use social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram

Area of study: This study was conducted online using the Internet.

A quantitative approach was adopted for this study. 200 male and female Business Education students who use social Media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were randomly selected for the study. The sample was made up of undergraduates and NCE Business Education students.

Instrument and Measures

Based on literature and *social interactionist theory*, a structured questionnaire was developed for the study. The instrument was administered using an online survey format to 200 students. An initial pilot test was conducted online using 60 students. The pilot test data were analysed using SPSS version 24 using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates; after which a coefficient of .85 was obtained. This result indicated that the instrument was a reliable measure of the variables used for the study. On this basis, the instrument was developed and floated for a survey that lasted from January, 2017 to August, 2017.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1. How does social media usage significantly relate with business education students' communication format?

H1. Social media usage has significant impact on business education students' communication format.

In order to answer the research questions 1 and to confirm hypothesis 1, analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS version 24. Table 1. Shows a cross tabulation analysis showing the relationship between social media usage and the communication format of Business Education students.

Table 1.Social Media Usage * Communication Format Crosstabulation Social Media Usage * Communication Format Crosstabulation							
CountCommunication Format							
Social Media Usage		Very Unstructured	Unstructured	Mixed	Semi Standard	Standard	Total
	Seldom	10	3	1	0	3	17
	Occasionally	2	22	1	5	3	33
	Sometimes	1	2	21	0	0	24
	Often	3	3	1	42	2	51
	Constantly	4	2	2	0	67	75
Total		20	32	26	47	75	200

The result of the analysis presented in Table 1 shows that majority(10), of students who seldom use social media have very unstructured communication format. On the other hand, majority (67) of students who constantly use social media have standard communication format. Based on this, Social media usage has significant impact on Business Education students' communication format.

Table 2 shows the Chi-Square Tests of significanceshowing the relationship between social media usage and the communication format of Business Education students.

Table 2.Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	416.761 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	331.744	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	90.333	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 9 cells (36.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.70.

The Chi-Square test of significance presented in Table 2 shows a high likelihood ratio of 331.744 and a linear-by-linear association of 90.333 which is equally high. Based on this, social media usage has significant impact on Business Education students' communication format.

Table 3 shows the Symmetric Measures of significance showing the relationship between social media usage and the communication format of Business Education students.

Table 3. Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error^a	Approximate T^b	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	1.444			.000
	Cramer's V	.722			.000
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.674	.062	12.829	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.720	.057	14.595	.000 ^c
N of Valid Cases		200			

The symmetric measures test of significance presented in Table 3 shows that Social media usage has significant impact on Business Education students' communication format. This is indicated by the value of the Cramer's V which is .722; Pearson's R which is .674; and the value of Spearman Correlation which is .720.

Figure 3 presents the bar chart showing the significant relationship between social media usage and the communication format of Business Education students.

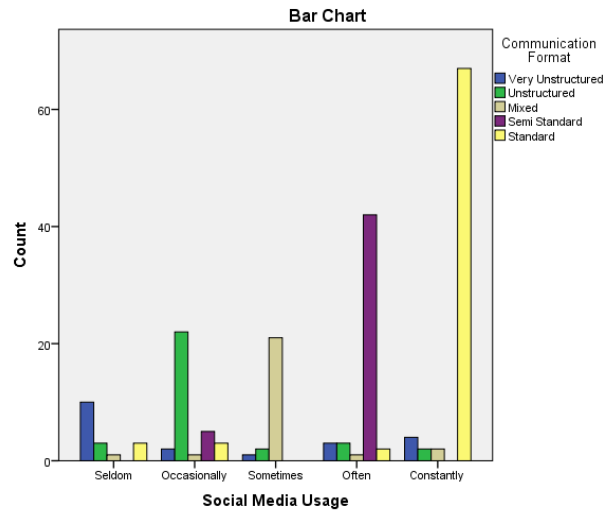


Figure 3. Social Media Usage * Communication Format

The results of the cross tabulation presented in Table 1 to 3 and figures 3 are used in answering research question 1 and to confirm hypothesis 1. Majority of those who used social media constantly have standard communication format while majority of those who seldom use social media have very unstructured communication format. Based on the result of the cross tabulation analysis, the research hypothesis 1 was not rejected and the researchers therefore concluded in answer to research question 1 that there is significant relationship between social media usage and business education students' communication format.

In order to answer the research questions 2 and 3, and to confirm hypothesis 2 and 3, further analysis was carried out. Using IBM SPSS version 24, the data obtained from the survey were initially used in conducting factor analysis. Factors with adequate factor loading, Correlation Matrix and Communalities were selected and used for further analysis in IBM AMOS version 24. Figure 2 shows the result of Structural Equation Modeling analysis using IBM AMOS version 24.

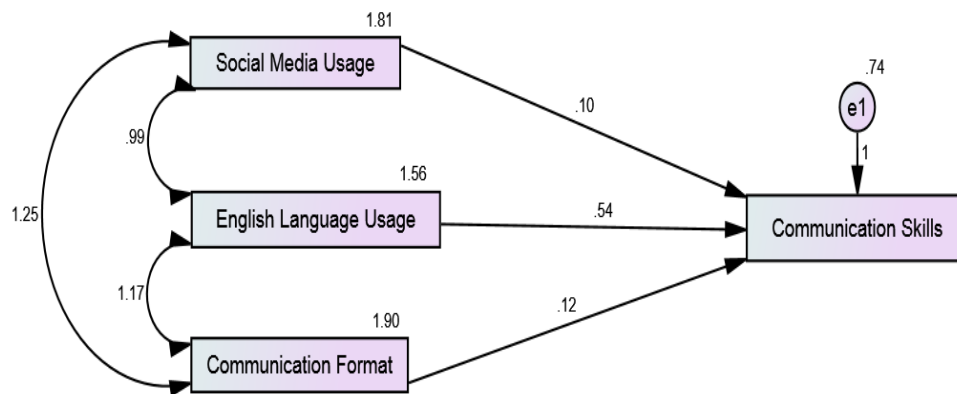


Figure 2. Result of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

The covariance shown in the result of the structural equation model in Figure 2 shows a very high covariance (1.25) between the social media usage and communication format. However, the result shows a very low direct relationship between social media usage and communication skills (.10) and an equally low direct relationship between communication format and communication skills (.12). This indicates that the use of social media does not directly significantly help the students to have good communication skills. And the communication format does not directly significantly help the students to have good communication skills. On the other hand, English language usage shows a direct significant effect on communication skills (.54). Based on the result of the structural equation modeling, the research hypothesis 2 was not rejected and the researchers therefore concluded in answer to research question 2 that there is significant relationship between English language usage and Business Education students' communication skills. This implies that the students' ability to develop good communication skills does not lie in the use of social media, but in constant use of English language. This findings is contrary to some researches that believe that social media helps to improve communication skills. This study rather confirms the findings of Thurairaj et al., (2015) who believed that social media usage can make or mare standard academic English.

Contrary to popular views of researchers, the result of the structural equation modeling shows that communication format does not significantly affect communication skills. This was indicated in the model by the score of the direct regression line from communication format to communication skills which showed .12 below the acceptable significant range of .50 and above. Based on this result, the research hypothesis 3 was rejected and the researchers therefore concluded in answer to research question 3 that

there is no significant relationship between communication format and Business Education students' communication skills.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussions presented, the researchers made the following conclusions:

1. There is significant relationship between social media usage and Business Education students' communication format. The relationship was however indicated as a covariance. This means that the relationship can be positively covariate and can also be negatively covariate. This implies that communication format can be acquired as students interact using social media. Such format could be very unstructured, unstructured, mixed, semi-standard and standard communication format. This largely depends on the users of social media and their preferences.
2. There is significant and direct relationship between English Language usage and Business Education students' communication skills. Students' ability to develop good communication skills depends on constant use of well-structured and standard English language.
3. There is no significant relationship between communication format and Business Education students' communication skills. Business Education students commonly use multiple *communication formats* to reach the widest audience possible when conveying messages on social media. Each *communication format* offers advantages or disadvantages depending on the message being delivered and the individuals receiving the message. This implies that some communication format used can make or make standard academic English.

Recommendations

In order to improve the communication skills of Business Education students, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. Students should constantly use standard English language while interacting on social media. This will improve their communication skills.
2. Instructors who use social media for educational purposes should insist on the use of well-structured and standard English Language as means of communication while interacting with their students. This will help the students to develop good communication skills.

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