THE IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM-BASED E-PORTFOLIO ON STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN WRITING

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the impact of utilizing Instagram as a platform for creating and sharing e-portfolio on students' motivation in the context of writing. As the digital landscape continues to advance, teachers seek innovative approaches to engage students in English classroom and enhance their language skills. Instagram, a popular social media platform known for its visual-centric nature, serves as a unique medium for showcasing and sharing individual work. The research employs a qualitative research design, combining multi-method approach, incorporating open-ended questionnaire, classroom observation, content analysis of students' e-portfolios and students' reflection essays, to assess the motivational effects of Instagram-based e-portfolios on students. The participants of this study include a sample of students in SM St. Peter Telipok, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The study explores the impact of visual and interactive elements on students' motivation, self-efficacy, and overall writing performance. This study seeks to enrich and add to the existing literature on progressive teaching methods by shedding light on the motivational factors linked to the integration of Instagram-based e-portfolios. Ultimately, understanding the impact of such platforms on students' motivation in writing can inform educators and curriculum developers in designing effective and engaging strategies for enhancing writing skills in the digital age.

Keyword(s): *ESL Writing, E-portfolio, Instagram-based Learning, Socialmedia Based Learning, Motivation.*

INTRODUCTION

In a recent study by Bora (2023), building up a skillful writing skill is mentioned to not only aids students in their academic endeavors, but also assists employees in effectively expressing their ideas. As writing skills continue to be essential in the present academic and professional settings, educators are keenly interested in exploring innovative methods to enhance students' motivation and proficiency in this fundamental skill.

It has been a common thing now for teachers to make use of social media as an alternative teaching and learning platform as the emergence of Web 2.0, or social media, has enhanced communication and interaction among internet users, shifting them from passive recipients to engaged learners (Kutbi & Alomar, 2017). For instance, social media such as Instagram, is not solely functioning as a tool for sharing photos; it can also be a unique way to improve students'

language skills, specifically writing. Portfolios, which traditionally a compilation of a student's works and reflections to showcase their development throughout the learning process according to Stiggins & National Education Association of The United States, (1998), has now competently transformed into e-portfolios, a digital display of an individual's collection of accomplishments and learning experiences. The inclusion of Instagram, with its image-centric design and interactive features, into the e-portfolio landscape presents a great opportunity to examine how this approach can influence students' motivation towards writing tasks.

In today's digital age, teachers are constantly putting efforts into trying new and creative ways to get students more interested in the lessons and facilitate them with a deeper understanding of the material. The idea that social media can serve an educational purpose is gaining momentum, due to its extensive use for communication (Orlanda-Ventayen & Ventayen, 2017). The same thing goes for any online language learning sites. Nowadays teachers would integrate these platforms as alternative, technological learning tools for students in classroom. For instance, a study by Ghahri et al. (2015) used the English correction sites such as online text correction and spellcheckplus.com to reveal the consequences of technology on students' writing progress and performance. Besides, Haque (2023) revealed the top three social media platforms used by the students for English learning, which are Instagram, YouTube and Facebook.

Despite the growing popularity of this approach, the effectiveness of this approach and students' perceptions of its utility remained unexplored especially when it comes to the use of Instagram as the base of the e-portfolio in ESL (English as a Second Language) writing classroom. This study aims to address these gaps by examining the impact of Instagram-based e- portfolios on students' motivation and their overall perception of its value in a classroom setting, especially as a writing tool. Hence, this study intends to answer the following questions: 1) How does Instagram-based E-portfolio affect students' motivation in the ESL classroom? 2) How do students perceive the Instagram-based E-portfolios as a Writing tool?

LITERATURE REVIEW

E-Portfolio in Writing and Malaysian Institutions Context
Electronic portfolios (e-portfolios), which utilize digital technologies to compile students' work through multimedia elements (Barrett, 2007), serve diverse educational purposes such as alternative assessment, recording learning journeys, fostering autonomy, and promoting self-reflection (Wang & He, 2020). In ESL writing classrooms, e-portfolios provide flexibility, enhance self-awareness, encourage collaboration, and improve writing performance (Babaee & Tikoduadua, 2013; Alshahrania & Windeatt, 2012). Platforms like Facebook further boost technical skills and motivation (Barrot, 2019). In Malaysia, e-portfolios were first adopted by Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) in 2005, later expanding into the MY E-portfolio system involving multiple universities in 2017. While beneficial for employability, the system's usage is hindered by time and technological demands (Norazman & Rahman, 2014). However, in secondary education, e-portfolio research is scarce. Razali et al. (2021) advocate for broader use, especially in digital assessments, highlighting the need to consider student readiness and motivation (Ngui et al., 2019).

The Use of Instagram as a Language Learning Tool
Instagram, launched in 2010 and reaching a billion users by 2018, has become a significant platform in education. Shafie & Mahadi (2019) proposed using Instagram for collaborative activities to enhance writing skills, such as paragraphing, descriptive, and narrative writing. Rizal

& Farikhah (2021) highlighted that Instagram's caption feature boosts confidence in descriptive writing, promotes vocabulary improvement, and encourages peer learning through comments and interactions.
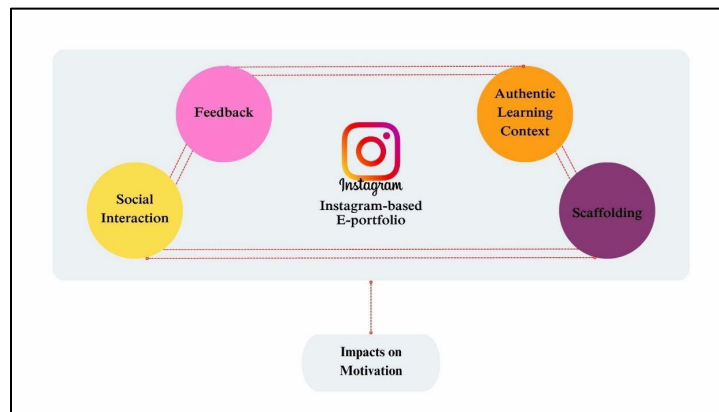

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of The Use of Instagram-based E-portfolio.

Social Constructivism Theory, Self-Determination Theory and Motivation in Learning

The framework for this study revolves around the theories of Social Constructivism, Self-Determination and Motivation in Learning. According to Vygotsky, Social Constructivism highlights the importance of social interaction and collaboration in learning (Liu & Matthews, 2005). This theory asserts that knowledge is gained through the interaction with peers, teachers, and the environment, and that social learning supports cognitive growth (Akpan et al., 2020). Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a fundamental concept that explains how one can learn better when given assistance rather than independently, and scaffolding is a support offered temporarily to learners until they can gain independence. Self-determination Theory (SDT) looks into motivation from different factors such as age, gender, culture, and socioeconomic status, exploring the drives behind someone's actions and behaviours (Deci & Ryan, 2015). SDT also differentiates between autonomous motivation (intrinsic) that encourages individuals to do something because they find it enjoyable, and controlled motivation (extrinsic) that lets behaviours be influenced by desired outcomes.

The main parts of the framework involve the role of social interaction, feedback, authentic learning context, as well as scaffolding support. Using Instagram as the base for students' e-portfolios, social interaction that occurs on this platform gives students the sensation of being a part of a supportive community, which motivates them through the acts of sharing ideas and support. Feedback not only from a teacher, but also from friends, encourages students in terms of their confidence, especially in writing. On the other hand, authentic learning context refers to the use of real content and having real audiences on Instagram, which provide students with a purpose and lead them to reach their best potential. Scaffolding or support from teachers and peers comes in the form of guidance, whether in writing or navigating the platform. Together, these key elements boost students' motivation to write.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research examines how using Instagram as a base for e-portfolios can affect students' writing motivation through a qualitative research design. It depends on multiple methods, such as

classroom observation, open-ended questionnaires, document analysis of the overall impressions of students' e-portfolios, and reflection essays. A sample of participants were chosen to see how Instagram-based e-portfolios impact motivation by engaging in carefully structured e-portfolio writing activities. The objective of this approach is to offer thorough comprehension of how technology and social media enhance writing motivation in education.

Population and Sampling
The group of participants in this study consists of 20 secondary school students, all aged 17, from SM St. Peter Telipok located in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. All of the students enrolled in the same science-major class. The sample intentionally includes a class of upper-form students who have reached a certain level of digital proficiency but have no prior experience with e-portfolios. The study aims to gain detailed insights about the honest perspectives and experiences of the students by focusing on this specific group, which can assist in the development of educational practices and use of technology in similar learning settings.

Instruments
The study employed multiple methods to gather comprehensive data: classroom observation, open-ended questionnaires, document analysis of the overall impressions of students' e-portfolios, and reflection essays. Classroom observation provided a real-time view on the engagement and interaction shown by students during the implementation of the project. The open-ended questionnaires contributed details about students' perceptions of utilizing Instagram-based e-portfolios to complete writing tasks. Document analysis evaluated the overall quality of students' writing productions as shown in their respective Instagram accounts. Last but not least, the reflection essays written at the end of the project offered an equal opportunity to all students to put into words their thoughts on personal experiences and the influence of the e-portfolios on their writing skills.

Data Collection
The study follows a three-stage instructional procedure adapted from Barrot (2019), conducted over 6 weeks.

Stage I: Orientation
The Instagram-based e-portfolios project, called The Einstafolio Project, lasted for 6 weeks. In the first week, students were thoroughly explained about the purpose of the project and eventually created their Instagram accounts as directed by a pre-service teacher. The students received guidelines for setting up their e-portfolios, which included instructions about self-introduction, six writing tasks, and a self-reflection at the end of the project.

Stage II: Implementation
Over the next 3 weeks, students completed two writing tasks each week on different topics. These tasks were posted on the teacher's main Instagram account using the Instagram story feature and were saved in highlights for students' easy reference. Students experienced creative freedom in creating posts and submitted their work using specific hashtags by the end of weeks 2, 3, and 4. In week 5, the students had a final chance to refine their e-portfolios and submitted a reflection essay. Weekly reminders were posted on the teacher's Instagram to keep students on track.

Stage III: Assessment
In the final week, students were assessed based on these criteria: 1) E-portfolio Organization, which includes the e-portfolio's layout, technical skill, and overall impression; 2) Written Productions, which evaluate the completeness and quality of their writing tasks; and 3) Reflection, where students' overall experiences were taken into consideration. The students were also provided with feedback related to their strengths and areas that can be improved after the evaluation.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this research encompassed an intricate examination of qualitative data from previously mentioned sources, which were classroom observation, open-ended questionnaires, document analysis, as well as reflection essays. Two methods used to thoroughly analyze the data were content analysis and thematic analysis. For instance, the responses from open-ended questionnaires and documents consisting of students' written contents were analyzed from coding specific phrases to categorization of codes, quantification of their frequency, and interpretation. The notes from classroom observation and students' reflection essays were thematically analyzed by doing crucial steps such as familiarizing, initial coding, theme searching, theme reviewing, and theme defining. This multi-method qualitative approach established a detailed review of the impacts of Instagram-based e-portfolios on students' writing motivation.

RESEARCH FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: How Does Instagram-Based E-Portfolios Affect Students' Motivation in the Classroom?

Enhanced Motivation through Engagement and Creativity

Based on the results of this study, Instagram-based e-portfolios showed a significant ability to enhance students' motivation especially in writing. The majority of the students (75%) stated that they experienced a big amount of satisfaction as well as increased motivation when utilizing the Instagram platform to complete the instructed writing tasks compared to traditional methods. Key factors included the convenience of digital tools (45%) and the opportunity for creative expression through the help of other application such as Canva (40%). This is aligned with a recent study on digital learning that reveals the potential of social platforms to improve learning through engagement and interactivity (Yadav, 2024).

The features of Instagram, like its personalization and multimedia integration, made learning experience more interesting. At the same time, most students (55%) also found the support from friends and teachers important for guidance and feedback, while 10% felt they could work independently. Social Constructivism Theory, which emphasizes the value and function of social interaction and collaborative learning in encouraging learners, is consistent with the rise in motivation (Vygotsky, 1978). Instagram offered a social setting that reinforced learning and motivation by allowing users to share work, get feedback, and connect with other users.

Alignment with Self-Determination Theory

From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Instagram-based e-portfolios satisfied important psychological requirements, which consequently boosted motivation. The ultimate motivators for students to finish the project were skills improvement (30%), interesting topics

(25%), and the creative process (15%). The creative process also involved the use of Canva to create desired posts. Students' needs related to competence and relatedness were satisfied by the autonomy provided through deciding how they would display their work and having the ability to express their creativity (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The fact that 75% of respondents said they felt greater motivation after using Instagram is an indication on how the social media platform assisted them in meeting their psychological needs, which strengthened their intrinsic motivation to complete writing assignments.

Challenges and Motivation
Despite the overall positive impact, some students still faced certain issues, such as platform-related difficulties (5%), time management (15%), internet issues and personal distractions (20%). These challenges occasionally affected their motivation. These difficulties demonstrate the significance of providing sufficient resources and support, which corresponds with earlier studies that emphasize the requirement for thorough instruction and technical support (Chen & Light, 2010).

Research Question 2: How Do Students Perceive Instagram-Based E-Portfolios as a Writing Tool?

Positive Perceptions and Benefits
Generally, students involved in this study positively perceived Instagram-based e-portfolios as a writing tool. The most valued benefits were Instagram's accessibility (30%), music features (25%), and improved writing skills (15%). The creative options, accessibility, and also the add-on multimedia features offered by this platform provided them with enjoyable writing experiences. These findings are in line with research on e-portfolio usage in the context of Malaysian educational settings, where the adaptability and the ability of digital technologies are acknowledged to further develop student learning (Morshidi et al., 2020).

Perceived Challenges
As students found Instagram beneficial, challenges such as technical issues and time management difficulties were inevitable. These obstacles were recognized as the main restriction that limited the students' ability to achieve the potential of the platform at its best. The demand for additional resources and support is consisted with the challenges emphasized in past research on the e-portfolios implementation (Crocker, 2018).

The results of this study align with Social Constructivism Theory, a theoretical framework that believes in the prospect of collaborative and interactive sites such as Instagram as a new tool for motivation and also learning. The alignment of the platform with Self-Determination Theory can be associated with the increased motivation illustrated by the students, which deals with the needs of students or autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The power that digital tools hold in facilitating effective learning and engagement is pointed out through the positive evaluation of Instagram-based e-portfolio as a beneficial writing tool that helps build a better skill.

To sum up, Instagram-based e-portfolios have been demonstrated to have a big, significant impact on students' motivation, especially in writing, through increasing creativity, promoting engagement, and satisfying psychological needs. Students positively accepted the platform of Instagram as a new, supporting writing tool, recognizing its creative and interactive features while concurrently dealing with certain limitations. The results of this study are consistent

with established theories and literature, demonstrating how Instagram can develop writing abilities and enhance motivation while also highlighting the need for constant support and development.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings from this study have several key implications for using Instagram-based e-portfolios in education:

Enhanced Student Motivation

According to the study, e-portfolios published on the Instagram platform positively boost students' motivation in writing. This is consistent with Social Constructivism Theory, which emphasizes the vital role of social interaction and engagement in learning. Using a platform that students feel familiar with, as well as giving them a sense of creative expression, teachers may develop more engaging and interesting learning environments. This shows that integrating widely known digital tools that students are comfortable with into teaching practice can improve the enthusiasm and involvement of students in learning situations.

Improved Writing Skills

Students who participated in the Instagram-based e-portfolios project reported enhancements in their writing skills. This serves as evidence that e-portfolios, as a way of digital storytelling, can help writers to produce in a more versatile and informative manner. Students can also deliver their ideas with an additional sense of creativity and effectiveness as multimedia components such as images and music are a part of their works, which is in line with the goals of writing instruction and positive impacts stated in existing literature (Crocker, 2018).

Need for Technical Support

As students found Instagram-based e-portfolios beneficial, the study also acknowledged the occurrence of technical issues as one of the major obstacles that limited the efficient use of Instagram-based e-portfolios. This result reaffirms the need for adequate support and training, especially when it comes to the technical aspects for both teachers and students. It is crucial to establish easy access to all resources and guidance provided in order to assist students in resolving issues related to the use of the platform, as well as to increase the overall efficiency of e-portfolios.

Implications for Malaysian Institutions

This study highlighted the potential and the capability of Instagram-based e-portfolios to become a worthy teaching tool in the frame of Malaysian educational institutions, where digital instruments are incorporated progressively. The positive responses and reactions from students reveal that social media platforms such as Instagram can be effective and successful in increasing students' engagements and also improving learning outcomes. Similar digital tools can be listed as one of the options for institutions to try and adapt in learning situations with the purpose to develop students' technological proficiency and overall learning experiences (Morshidi et al., 2020).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Looking at the findings and limitations of this study, recommendations are indeed necessary for future research. Future studies should aim to find a bigger and more diverse sample populations to strengthen the generalizability of the findings. The involvement of more students from different levels of education, institutions, and regions could provide a more extensive comprehension of the effects of Instagram-based e-portfolios. Besides, researchers could explore the long-term impacts of Instagram-based e-portfolios on students' motivation and writing skills by performing longitudinal studies. This would shed light on the continuous impact of persistent use of e-portfolios on learning outcomes.

The effective methods to tackle technical problems related to the utilization of technological equipment is also an aspect worthy of consideration by future researchers. Technical support, training, and complete resources are all parts of the necessities to be provided to ensure students and teachers can use platforms like Instagram effectively, especially for educational purposes. In addition, integrating mixed-method research techniques can provide a more detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of Instagram-based e-portfolios. To get a better picture of their impacts, qualitative data combined with quantitative measurements such as grades and performance assessment would be very helpful.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the integration of Instagram-based e-portfolios in the English classroom, especially as writing instructions, has significantly boosted students' engagement and motivation. The importance of interactive and collaborative learning that is highlighted in the Social Constructivism Theory is supported by the findings of this study. They also justify the Self-Determination Theory as students involved in this project reported that they feel a sense of connection, competent, and autonomous. A major number of the students view Instagram-based e-portfolios positively, appreciating the opportunity to get peer feedback as well as the interactive and visual features that come with the platform. Nonetheless, the study also emphasizes the importance of proper guidance and assistance for both teachers and students in order to effectively utilize and adapt to this tool.

All things considered, e-portfolios based on Instagram have proved their potential as a modern teaching tool. Future study needs to investigate the on-going impacts this tool has on writing competence and also explore alternate digital channels that might increase students' motivation and comprehension. The results of this study outline educators with a basis that lets them get more ideas on building creative strategies to keep students inspired and establishing a more dynamic and interesting learning environment.

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