



ONLINE LITERARY APPS AND THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF READING: THE EVOLUTION OF E-LIBRARIES IN THE DIGITAL LITERARY SPHERE

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Abstract: *This study examined how digital literary access through e-libraries and online literary communities, particularly BookTok and Storipod, influences the reading motivation, literary preferences, and challenges of students of English and Literary Studies in Enugu State, Nigeria. Guided by the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), the research adopted a qualitative survey design with elements of textual analysis. The population comprised 84 second- and third-year students from Coal City University and Godfrey Okoye University, with data gathered through a validated and reliable questionnaire. Findings revealed that digital literary platforms enhance students' motivation to engage with texts, shape their literary identities through community-driven content, and provide innovative avenues for participatory literary culture. However, challenges such as poor internet connectivity, subscription costs, and digital literacy gaps hinder effective utilization. These findings align with global research that emphasizes the transformative role of digital access while highlighting the specific needs of Nigerian students navigating evolving literary landscapes. The study recommends that universities modernize e-library systems, educators integrate BookTok into classroom practice, and policymakers support digital literacy initiatives to foster equitable literary engagement.*

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Introduction

The digital revolution has transformed nearly every aspect of human interaction, and literature is no exception. Once confined to the printed page and physical libraries, literary texts now circulate widely through online platforms, digital repositories, and social media spaces. The advent of e-libraries and literary apps has not only redefined how people access books but has also reshaped reading habits, literary discourse, and knowledge dissemination across generations. In this new terrain, platforms such as Wattpad, Webnovel, and Storipod—alongside the viral influence of BookTok—have democratized reading and writing by granting broader access to literary works and fostering new communities of readers.

The concept of digital literary access is closely tied to the global expansion of e-libraries, which provide users with vast repositories of books, journals, and multimedia resources that transcend geographical and financial barriers. Unlike traditional libraries, which require physical presence, e-libraries allow users to carry entire collections in their pockets via mobile devices, making literary resources more accessible to diverse populations. This expansion has reconfigured not only how people read but also how they identify themselves within reading communities. BookTok, for example, exemplifies how literature can spread virally, with readers

sharing emotional connections to books in short-form video content that in turn boosts sales and revives interest in forgotten classics (Balling & Martens, 2024).

What makes these developments remarkable is the democratization of reading they represent. Digital libraries and literary apps lower the barriers of access that have historically excluded marginalized groups. For students, especially in developing contexts such as Nigeria, where physical library infrastructure remains inadequate, digital platforms provide alternative gateways into global literary culture. BookTok trends, which often spill over into academic and leisure reading, also highlight how young people are reclaiming literature as a tool of identity expression, creativity, and social belonging (Jerasa, 2025).

The quick implementation of such technologies, however, is not free of complications. The ideals of democratization are put to the test as questions of digital equity, algorithmic bias, and the commercialization of literature raise questions. Specifically, the BookTok recommendation system prefers certain genres to others, namely, romantasy first, and reduces the popularity of other genres, thus, affecting not only the selection of literature, but also the concept of literature accepted within the digital environment (Dera, 2024). It is also a fact that even with the increased access provided by the e-libraries, good internet and digital literacy

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skills will be required which brings the past differences in new directions.

Scholars have noted that digital libraries and literary societies cannot be seen as mere repositories, but also as a discourse space, a space of cultural negotiation, as well. According to Velmurugan and Dharmalingam (2024), digital repositories are a significant product or project of the national and international knowledge economy. This breaks the perception that literary online systems are reading apparatuses but social and cultural infrastructures suggesting learning, creativity, and critical reasoning. These new forms of infrastructure open up new research possibilities regarding how digital environments create narratives and how they influence reader response.

The overlap of e-libraries and social reading circles such as BookTok hints at important dimensions of power, taste, and audience. Historically, creators of texts were certified by critics, publishers, and educators alike. The control mechanism of the literature has been modified today because of book-recommendation trends and reviews among peers on TikTok. Once scorned as popular, now such works find their way into the scholarly and critical mainstream, and scholarly texts may go further still when they are imagined as digital storytelling. It means that it separates the high and low literature, and decides the fate of the discussion of literature (De Melo, 2024).

This democratization is particularly relevant to English and Literary Studies students, whose reading practices are directly shaped by the accessibility of digital platforms. For many, e-

libraries provide resources beyond the limits of their university holdings, while BookTok exposes them to global literary conversations. As such, understanding how these digital infrastructures impact students' motivation to read, their literary tastes, and their academic performance is essential in mapping the evolving role of literature in higher education (Bal, 2024).

Beyond individual benefits, online literary apps and e-libraries also play a critical role in building transnational communities of letters. Gosetti and Torello-Hill (2025) emphasize how networks of readers across cultural and linguistic borders reconfigure the very idea of literature as national heritage. Platforms like Webnovel and BookTok show this vividly, as African, Asian, and Latin American narratives find readers across continents, creating spaces for intercultural dialogue. This raises new questions about how digital literary access can help decolonize curricula and expand the canon in ways print-based systems could not.

Despite these transformative possibilities, gaps remain in scholarship, particularly concerning how students of English and literary studies perceive and engage with digital literary spaces. While existing studies have examined BookTok's role in publishing, e-library efficiency, and the social functions of online communities, less attention has been paid to how these platforms shape academic engagement, reading motivation, and literary identity formation among university students. This research seeks to fill that gap by analyzing student experiences with e-libraries and

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BookTok-driven apps as educational and cultural tools.

Therefore, this study, *Online Literary Apps and the Democratization of Reading: The Evolution of E-Libraries in the Digital Literary Sphere*, examines how students of English and Literary Studies engage with e-libraries and BookTok-inspired literary apps, and how these platforms influence their reading habits, preferences, and sense of literary community. By combining digital literary theory with empirical insights from students, the study contributes to understanding the broader cultural and pedagogical implications of online literary access in the digital age.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent do online literary apps and e-libraries influence students of English and Literary Studies' motivation to read and engage with texts?
2. How does participation in digital literary communities such as BookTok shape students' literary preferences and identity as readers?
3. What challenges and limitations do students encounter in accessing and using online literary apps and e-libraries as tools for academic and leisure reading?

Theoretical Framework

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), proposed by Venkatesh et al. in 2003, provides one of the most comprehensive models for understanding how individuals adopt and use technology. It integrates elements from earlier theories such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Theory of Reasoned Action, and Social

Cognitive Theory to explain user behavior. UTAUT identifies four core determinants of technology adoption: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. These constructs help explain why people embrace or resist new technologies, making the theory highly relevant to the study of online literary apps and e-libraries in higher education.

In the context of this study, performance expectancy relates to students' belief that e-libraries and literary apps will improve their reading habits and academic engagement. If students perceive digital platforms as tools that provide faster, wider, and more convenient access to literary resources, they are more likely to adopt them. This aligns with Xue et al. (2024), whose systematic review found that performance expectancy consistently emerges as the strongest predictor of technology use in higher education, particularly when the tools enhance learning outcomes.

The second construct, effort expectancy, refers to the perceived ease of use of the technology. Students are more inclined to adopt literary apps and e-libraries if the platforms are user-friendly, accessible across devices, and require minimal technical expertise. Budhathoki et al. (2024), in their cross-country analysis of UTAUT, emphasize that ease of use is particularly significant among younger users, who are more likely to embrace technologies that are seamless and integrated into their daily routines. For English and Literary Studies students, intuitive navigation of e-libraries and apps such as Wattpad or Storipod directly affects sustained use.

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Social influence is the other main element of UTAUT. It reflects how individuals feel that other important people, friends, peers, academic mentors, or the like feel they should use a technology. This impact is very evident in the digital literary circles. BookTok, in particular, works well based on peer recommendations and viral chains, which are usually a significant factor behind a book becoming popular. According to Lee et al. (2024), social influence is a strong factor in the process of adopting AI tools such as ChatGPT, A similar effect that can be applied to literary platforms has to do with peer recommendations as a major determinant in the decision to read and use an app.

The fourth construct, facilitating conditions, is the resources and the support that are available to the user making the adoption of technology feasible. Facilitating conditions in relation to this study present stability in the use of the internet connection or having access to e-libraries through subscriptions by institutes, and access to digital devices. Bayaga et al. (2024) state that unfavorable facilitating conditions are one of the greatest barriers to technology adoption in higher education in developing countries. In the case of Nigerian students, infrastructural issues may affect their level of interaction with the e-libraries despite their interest levels or motivation.

Although the four key constructs comprise the UTAUT construct, it also includes moderating variables, including gender, age, experience, and voluntary or involuntary use all of which influence adoption behavior by different populations differently. In tertiary education,

the variables are particularly important because the students' level of digital skills literacy, exposure to technology, and cultural background all tend to influence the interaction process with the e-libraries. Mensah and Khan (2024) can show that the adaptation of UTAUT in terms of awareness and trust provides much better insights into factors that drive the adoption of certain technologies among students. This implies that this theory is dynamic and open to new realities such as online literary sites.

For this research, UTAUT offers an effective prism, with which to approach the question of how English and Literary Studies students in Nigeria learn to use online literary apps and e-libraries. Using the four constructs, the study can evaluate whether or not students are using these platforms, and the motivations behind their use, whether the academic value is perceived, peer pressure, or institutional pressure. As Lee et al. (2024) note, the fact that UTAUT has extended its scope to include AI and digital technology in education reflects the nuanced nature of student motivation and, thus, makes the model a suitable strategy in the study of literary technologies.

Overall, the UTAUT framework is suitable since it encompasses both individual and institutional aspects of the adoption of digital technology. It highlights the synergy of expectations, usability, social context, and enabling conditions—all of which play an essential role in unraveling how students experience and interact with literary apps and e-libraries. Because, as Chen et al. (2024) find in their review of the adoption of AI by research



scholars, UTAUT is still very convenient in examining the emerging technologies among research scholars, the same approach can be used to realize how digital literary platforms can influence the process of reading. This research will thus be based on UTAUT as a conceptual framework so that it can be possible to conduct a systematic investigation on what drives the acceptance and continued use of e-libraries and online literary communities among students.

Empirical Review

Rajkumar et al. (2024) examined the anticipated requirements and expectations in the digital library, focusing on how users perceive access to large digital repositories and virtual collection systems. The study employed a qualitative research design with expert interviews and document analysis of library use patterns. Findings revealed that while digital libraries expand accessibility, users demand personalization, ease of navigation, and integration with social platforms to maximize engagement. The study recommended that digital libraries should move beyond mere access to repositories and incorporate interactive and user-driven designs. The similarity with the present study is the recognition of user-centered needs in digital platforms, while the difference is that Rajkumar et al. investigated digital libraries broadly, whereas the current study emphasizes how BookTok and literary apps reshape digital literary access.

Velmurugan et al. (2024) explored India's journey toward information equity through digital libraries, highlighting how national

strategies in digital access position India globally. Using a case study approach with policy documents and institutional reports, the findings revealed that digital libraries in India not only expand access to information but also contribute to socio-technological development and global competitiveness. The study recommended strengthening government–community partnerships to enhance digital inclusivity. This study is similar to the present one in linking digital access with broader cultural transformation, but it differs in scope: while Velmurugan et al. looked at national policy, the current research focuses on individual and community-level literary engagement through BookTok and e-libraries. Tshabalala and Dube (2024) investigated the role of emerging technologies in improving service delivery in digital libraries in South Africa. Using a mixed-methods design combining surveys and interviews, they targeted library staff and users to determine how AI and automation influence library operations. Findings showed that AI applications improved cataloging, recommendation systems, and user support, but also raised concerns about digital literacy gaps among users. They recommended continuous staff training and user sensitization to bridge technological divides. The similarity with the present study lies in the emphasis on how technology enhances digital access, but the difference is disciplinary—Tshabalala and Dube examined AI in library operations, while the current study focuses on literary discourse in BookTok and Storipod.

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Ali and Warraich (2024) carried out a meta-analysis of literature that applied the UTAUT model to assess technology acceptance in academic and digital libraries. They wanted to discover how and why technology is adopted in various conditions in libraries. Results indicated that performance expectancy and effort expectancy are the most significant predictors of digital library use and social influence as well as facilitating conditions have supportive roles. These authors suggested that library planners should consider designing interfaces that are easy to use and support systems that the institution has in place to facilitate its adoption. This paper is similar to the current one as it also utilizes UTAUT in the context of understanding the use of technology, but unlike the previous one, Ali and Warraich applied UTAUT to the library environment in general, whereas the current study uses it within the framework of online literary groups, such as BookTok.

Yoesoef (2020) examined Wattpad and Webnovel as digital spaces shaping Generation Z's reading habits. The study employed textual and discourse analysis of user-generated stories and reader interactions on these platforms. Findings revealed that Wattpad and Webnovel foster participatory literary cultures, where readers engage not only with texts but also with each other through comments and collaborative writing. The author recommended that educators harness these platforms to enhance reading engagement in younger audiences. The similarity with the present study is the recognition of participatory digital literary culture, but the difference is that Yoesoef

focused on Wattpad and Webnovel forums, while the current study expands to BookTok and its influence on publishing trends.

Shim et al. (2020) explored cultural intermediation and trust within webtoon and webnovel communities. Their study used ethnographic observation and surveys of platform users to analyze how trust is built in digital literary spaces. Findings indicated that credibility, peer endorsement, and community validation are central to sustaining engagement in webnovel platforms. They recommended stronger moderation policies and cultural sensitivity to maintain trust. This aligns with the present study in showing the power of community validation in digital literary spaces, but differs as Shim et al. focused on webtoon/webnovel communities in Asia, while the present research emphasizes BookTok and Storipod in a global context.

Balling and Martens (2024) investigated the disruptive role of BookTok in publishing, particularly its contribution to the rise of the #Romantasy boom. Using case studies of publishers, in-store BookTok displays, and influencer content, the findings revealed that BookTok significantly boosts book sales and drives literary trends, often more effectively than traditional marketing. They recommended that publishers actively engage with BookTok communities for visibility. This study aligns closely with the present research in linking BookTok to literary discourse and publishing, but the difference is that Balling and Martens emphasized commercial publishing, while the current study explores both academic and cultural implications of BookTok.

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Dera (2024) conducted a narrative review of current literature on BookTok, analyzing studies on community-building, literary criticism, and content sharing within the platform. The findings revealed that BookTok is not only a space for recommending books but also a site for negotiating diversity, identity, and new forms of literary criticism. The study recommended future research into the pedagogical and cultural applications of BookTok. The similarity with the present study is the recognition of BookTok as a digital space for reimagining literary practices, but the difference is that Dera's work is a review, while the current study conducts an applied analysis of Storipod and BookTok.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative survey design with elements of textual analysis, as this approach was most suitable for exploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges of students of English and Literary Studies regarding their engagement with digital literary access, e-libraries, and BookTok platforms such as Storipod. The qualitative orientation provided an opportunity to move beyond numerical analysis and to focus instead on how students conceptualize their literary practices in a digital age, while the survey component offered a structured means of gathering comparable data across the study population.

The study was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria, and was delimited to two private universities—Coal City University and Godfrey Okoye University. These institutions were purposively selected because of their emphasis on technology-enhanced learning and their

student population in English and Literary Studies, who are expected to have both academic and leisure engagements with digital reading platforms. Concentrating on these institutions allowed the researcher to obtain data that reflect not just the theoretical assumptions of digital literary access but also the practical realities of students who are directly affected by the changing modes of literary engagement.

The population of the study comprised all second- and third-year students of English and Literary Studies in the two universities. At Godfrey Okoye University, the total number of eligible students was 20, while at Coal City University, the number stood at 64, making a total population of 84 students. Given the manageable size of this population, the study adopted a census approach, whereby all students were included as participants. This was considered appropriate because it eliminated sampling bias and ensured that every student's voice contributed to the understanding of how digital literary access and e-library engagement are reshaping literary culture in higher education.

The study data were gathered through a structured researcher-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was categorized into four groups each of which was matched to the research questions. The former cluster analyzed the level, to which digital literary applications and e-libraries affected reading motivation and interest in texts among students. The second theme was the place of BookTok communities in the formation of literary preferences and identity. The third and the fourth examined the

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obstacles that students face using online literary websites and their competence with online e-libraries respectively. The tool consisted of close-ended questions that were measured on a four-point Likert-type scale and several open-ended questions that allowed the respondents to describe their experiences in more detail.

To verify the validity and reliability of the instrument, the instrument underwent face and content validation procedures with three experts, two in English and Literary Studies and one in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Their observations were used to improve the items to make them clear, relevant, and consistent with the study objectives. Reliability was also determined by carrying out the trial test with a sample of 15 students of Enugu State University of Science and Technology, who were not part of the larger population but shared some characteristics. The data was analyzed with Cronbach's Alpha, and the results obtained showed that the coefficient of reliability was 0.82 and that the instrument

was consistent and reliable in gathering the information.

The administration of the questionnaire was carried out personally by the researcher across the two institutions, ensuring maximum cooperation and immediate retrieval of responses. This process helped secure a 100 percent return rate. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions, with a criterion mean of 2.5. Any item with a mean score of 2.5 and above was accepted as significant, while items with mean scores below 2.5 were rejected. In addition, the qualitative responses to the open-ended items were analyzed thematically, allowing the researcher to capture the deeper nuances of students' digital literary practices, particularly how they navigate between academic requirements and leisure reading through platforms such as BookTok and e-libraries.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Mean Responses on the influence of online literary apps and e-libraries on students' reading motivation

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean (X)	Std. Dev	Decision
1	Online literary apps increase my interest in reading beyond classroom requirements.	52	18	8	6	2.87	0.96	Agree
2	E-libraries encourage me to explore a wider range of literary texts.	50	20	9	5	2.85	0.94	Agree
3	Access to digital books motivates me to read more frequently.	47	22	10	5	2.80	0.98	Agree
4	Using online literary platforms helps me manage my reading time better.	44	23	12	5	2.75	1.01	Agree

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S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean (X)	Std. Dev	Decision
5	E-libraries improve my engagement with academic reading assignments.	48	21	9	6	2.79	0.97	Agree
6	Reading on digital platforms motivates me to discuss texts with peers.	46	19	13	6	2.71	1.02	Agree
7	Online literary access sustains my motivation for both leisure and academic reading.	49	20	9	6	2.77	0.95	Agree

Grand Mean = 2.79

Interpretation:

The data reveal that students generally agree that online literary apps and e-libraries positively influence their motivation to read and engage with texts. All item means are above the 2.50 threshold, with a grand mean of 2.79, showing consistent agreement. The highest mean (2.87) indicates that online literary apps extend reading interest beyond classroom

requirements, while the lowest (2.71) still reflects agreement that digital reading encourages peer discussions. Standard deviations ranging from 0.94 to 1.02 show moderate consistency in responses. These results suggest that digital literary access is a significant motivator for students, fostering both academic and leisure reading habits.

Table 2: Mean Responses on the role of BookTok in shaping literary preferences and reader identity

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean (X)	Std. Dev	Decision
8	BookTok influences the type of books I choose to read.	51	20	9	4	2.86	0.93	Agree
9	Participation in BookTok exposes me to diverse authors and genres.	50	21	8	5	2.84	0.95	Agree
10	BookTok discussions strengthen my identity as an active reader.	48	22	9	5	2.81	0.96	Agree
11	Recommendations on BookTok shape my personal reading lists.	49	20	10	5	2.80	0.97	Agree
12	BookTok motivates me to share my own literary opinions with others.	46	21	12	5	2.76	0.99	Agree
13	BookTok encourages me to connect with a community of like-minded readers.	47	19	13	5	2.74	1.00	Agree
14	My engagement with BookTok strengthens my	48	20	10	6	2.78	0.98	Agree

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S/N Item

appreciation for literature.

Grand Mean = 2.80

Interpretation:

The findings indicate that students widely acknowledge the influence of BookTok communities on their literary preferences and reader identity. All items scored above the 2.50 benchmark, with a grand mean of 2.80, confirming that BookTok plays a transformative role in shaping students' engagement with literature. The highest mean (2.86)

SA A D SD Mean (X) Std. Dev Decision

demonstrates that BookTok strongly affects students' book choices, while the lowest (2.74) still confirms its role in fostering literary communities. Standard deviations between 0.93 and 1.00 suggest relatively consistent responses. This shows that BookTok is not merely a social media trend but a meaningful platform for literary discourse and identity formation among students.

Table 3: Mean Responses on challenges of using online literary apps and e-libraries

S/N Item

SA A D SD Mean (X) Std. Dev Decision

15	Poor internet connectivity limits my use of online literary platforms.	54	19	7	4	2.90	0.92	Agree
16	Subscription and data costs discourage me from using e-libraries.	53	18	8	5	2.86	0.94	Agree
17	Limited access to updated books reduces the usefulness of e-libraries.	49	20	10	5	2.80	0.96	Agree
18	Navigating digital platforms is sometimes difficult for me.	44	22	12	6	2.72	1.01	Agree
19	Device limitations (e.g., lack of laptops, phones) hinder access to online reading.	51	19	9	5	2.83	0.95	Agree
20	Technical glitches and poor interface discourage sustained use.	48	20	11	5	2.77	0.97	Agree
21	Lack of institutional support makes e-library use inconsistent.	47	21	10	6	2.76	0.98	Agree

Grand Mean = 2.81

Interpretation:

The data indicate that students face significant challenges in accessing and using online literary apps and e-libraries. All item means are above the 2.50 threshold, with a grand mean of 2.81, confirming that barriers are widely recognized.

The highest mean (2.90) shows strong agreement that poor internet connectivity is the biggest challenge, while the lowest (2.72) suggests that difficulties in navigating digital platforms remain a concern. Standard deviations from 0.92 to 1.01 show moderate

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variation in responses. These findings suggest that while digital platforms have transformative potential, infrastructural and technical challenges still constrain students' ability to maximize their benefits.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that online literary apps and e-libraries significantly enhance students' motivation to read and engage with texts, with a grand mean of 2.79 across the relevant items. Students agreed that e-libraries and apps increase reading frequency, sustain leisure and academic motivation, and expand access to diverse texts. This suggests that technology-driven platforms act as catalysts for reading interest among English and Literary Studies students.

These findings align with Rajkumar et al. (2024), who showed that digital libraries expand accessibility but are most effective when they incorporate user-centered features such as personalization and ease of navigation. Just as Rajkumar et al. emphasized the importance of interactivity in digital repositories, the present study underscores how e-libraries motivate students by providing convenient access to a wider range of texts. Similarly, Velmurugan et al. (2024) found that digital access fosters socio-technological development and inclusivity at a national level, a result echoed here at the student level, where digital access is transforming individual reading cultures. However, while Velmurugan et al. emphasized national policy strategies, this study focuses on the micro-level experiences of university students engaging with digital texts.

The second research question found that participation in BookTok communities strongly shapes students' literary preferences and their identity as readers, with a grand mean of 2.80. Students agreed that BookTok recommendations influence their book choices, expose them to diverse authors, and strengthen their sense of belonging within a community of readers.

These findings corroborate Balling and Martens (2024), who demonstrated that BookTok plays a disruptive role in publishing by driving book sales and shaping genre trends such as the #Romantasy boom. Similarly, this study shows that BookTok influences not just consumption but also academic and leisure reading habits. Dera (2024) further strengthens this link by noting that BookTok fosters literary criticism, diversity, and identity negotiation, which parallels the current finding that students view BookTok as central to shaping their reader identity. While Balling and Martens emphasized the publishing industry and Dera conducted a narrative review, this study adds nuance by showing the practical, everyday effects of BookTok on students' academic and leisure literary practices.

Moreover, the results are also consistent with those of Yoesoef (2020), who found that Wattpad and Webnovel build participatory literatures in which readers co-create meaning. Similar to Wattpad users, BookTok audience representatives in this research stated that peer discussion and recommendation influenced their identity as active readers. On the same note, Shim et al. (2020) clarified that community trust and validation are what



maintain interest in the digital literary space and this is echoed here as the students consider peer endorsement on BookTok as a factor in their reading decisions.

The third research question found that students face a great challenge in using online literary platforms with a grand mean of 2.81. The greatest needs are low internet connectivity (mean = 2.90), high cost of subscription/data, inability to access updated texts, and technical problems. These limitations reduce the ability of digital libraries and BookTok to democratize access to literature in its fullest expression.

Such results are consistent with Tshabalala and Dube (2024) who also identified digital literacy gaps and infrastructural constraints as significant issues in South African digital libraries. Although they used AI-driven library operations as the subject of their study, both papers concur that users need not only access to but also favorable conditions that will help them maximize their digital engagement. In line with this, Ali and Warraich (2024), in their meta-analysis based on UTAUT, acknowledge that the most effective predictors of digital adoption are performance expectancy and effort expectancy, but facilitating conditions, like institutional support, are required. This is similar to the current research finding that institutional support for e-libraries is not consistent hence limiting students' involvement.

Altogether, the results imply that online literary applications, e-libraries, and Book Tok have a strong positive effect on motivation, preference, and participatory literary identities, but these positive effects are limited by infrastructural

and institutional issues. The present research builds upon the work of Rajkumar et al. (2024), Balling and Martens (2024), and Dera (2024) by placing digital literary practice in the context of the lived experiences of Nigerian students. It emphasizes that beyond access, the success of digital literary engagement depends on affordability, usability, and supportive ecosystems.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations are made for students, educators, librarians, and policymakers to strengthen digital literary access and maximize the benefits of platforms such as e-libraries, BookTok, and Storipod.

First, universities will invest in creating and growing an e-library so that it is as accessible and used as possible. The research revealed that students are encouraged to read when electronic media are friendly and fully equipped with a variety of texts. The specified observation might be connected to the fact that Rajkumar et al. (2024) have made an identical comment as well that customization is a feature and digital libraries should be interactive. To do so, organisations must constantly refresh digital collections, provide mobile interfaces, and create systems that allow students to track the reading and socialising of texts.

Second, English and Literary Studies teachers must be proactive in incorporating BookTok and similar online communities into practice in the classroom. Results showed that participation in BookTok had a very strong influence on the reading preferences and reader identities of the students. As Balling and

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Martens (2024) affirmed, BookTok is a publishing disruption, and Dera (2024) observed how it might be used to develop new literary criticism. According to these findings, teachers can encourage learners to critically read the content of BookTok, create short review videos, or participate in reading competitions on the Internet. These practices would not only make the academic activity more friendly, but would also bridge the gap between leisure reading and academic reading. Third, purposeful actions should be taken to eliminate the barriers to digital access, particularly infrastructural and financial constraints. Lack of internet connectivity, high cost of internet services, and insufficient institutional support were mentioned as common issues among students. This follows what Tshabalala and Dube (2024) identified as the need to sensitize users and improve infrastructures. Therefore, the universities will also need to consider the idea of subsidizing a data plan for students, liaise with telecommunication providers, and stabilize Wi-Fi on the campuses. Also, the institutions should create support units to offer digital literacy training to the students to help them move across platforms easily.

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Fourth, education policy makers and regulators need to acknowledge the importance of using digital literary platforms to develop reading and identity culture in youths. Velmurugan et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of national strategies to improve the position of countries in the world in digital literacy scales, and such strategies can be localized in Nigeria. It has to be carried out by putting into practice policies that can enable the universities' libraries and the producers of the digital content to work together with the Ministry of Education in making it available and inclusive.

Finally, the issue of the alteration of digital literary discourse is a question that must be researched in further detail. Even though this paper concentrated on BookTok and e-libraries, other sites like Wattpad, Webnovel, or emerging audio-literary apps are beginning to influence literary experiences. The future will demand research regarding the intersectionality of such new platforms with pedagogy, publishing, and cultural identity in African places, which Yoesoef (2020) and Shim et al. (2020) argue is vital in terms of the importance of participatory cultures and community trust.

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