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Comparative Influence of Digital and Printed Literary Texts on the Learning Outcomes of English Students at Federal College of Education, Okene

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Highlights:

The study compares digital and printed literary texts among students of English at FCE, Okene.

Students associated print reading with concentration, comprehension, retention and fewer distractions.

Digital texts provide considerable advantages in terms of accessibility, portability, and convenience, searching and digital annotation.

A blended approach is recommended to combine the accessibility of digital texts with the perceived strengths of print.

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Abstract: This study investigated the comparative influence of digital literary texts and printed literary texts on the learning outcomes of students of English at FCE, Okene. Adopting a descriptive survey research design, four research questions were formulated in order to obtain information directly from students concerning their perceptions and experiences of reading literary texts in print and on screen. The study employed a quantitative-dominant survey approach with a qualitative component to carry out this investigation. From the investigation, digital texts are found to provide considerable advantages in terms of accessibility, portability, and convenience, searching and digital annotation. Printed texts, however, were more strongly preferred by respondents for intensive literary study. The open-ended responses particularly associated print reading with concentration, fewer distractions, comprehension, retention and annotation. This is reflected in the finding that 66.7% of the respondents recommended print as the preferred format for studying English Literature. The study concludes that a blended pedagogical approach-strategically integrating both digital and printed literary texts-offers the most effective strategy for enhancing students' academic performance. It therefore recommends the adoption of a balanced instructional model that leverages the strengths of both formats to maximize learning outcomes among the students of English.

Keywords: Digital literary texts; Printed literary texts; Reading comprehension; English Literature

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Introduction

One major contribution to 21st-century education is the infusion of technology into the learning process, and this new mode has enabled teachers and students to access the new realities technology offers. There is a variety of teaching approaches and study materials that are now accessible online, and there is a demand from end-users (teachers and students) to switch from the conventional classroom learning methods to more innovative ones that use devices like laptops and smartphones to access study materials in soft copy (Singhal et al., 2019). Given the increasing prevalence of tablets, smartphones, and laptops, the idea of digitalisation in education is no longer new or cutting-edge. It has been ingrained in numerous educational fields, and it is geared for the benefits of learners.

The integration of digital technologies into higher education is intended to transform reading practices in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Nigeria, where access to literary texts is limited due to government inadequate investment in education.In the past, students studying English and Literature in English have to rely on old books in the library to get access to literary texts that were recommended in literature classes. Since the number of books in the library may not be enough, students would often make copies of those texts by the road side or rely on local vendors who most often may not have enough copies to satisfy the demands of the students. With the economic hardship occasioned by bad economic policies of successive military governments in the 1990s, the reading of literary texts which used to be interest of the educated in Nigeria,has to be confined to the departments of English in the faculty of the humanities where students would have to read these texts because they need to pass departmental semester examination in literature. This is so because poverty and economic recession have made many families see the reading of literature texts as a luxury because of overwhelming competing economic interests many homes are now facing.

Recently, technology has allowed students to use their Android phones to gain access to literary texts that might have been difficult for them to access in the past. Today, there are e-books and other platforms that give access to students to literary texts across various traditions both for examination purposes and critical discussions. Although, these digital materials may not be cheaper when compared with books, however the multifunctional and multimodal roles they play in day to day activities have made it almost necessity for students and their parents who ensure their wards have it even if it is for communication purposes. With all these gadgets available, students may not have to make photocopies of materials but may just have to take pictures on their phones for later reading or for examination purposes. So, the multi-functional use of digital tools cannot be overemphasised. The term e-book is thus used to describe many different kinds of digital books. A simple definition of an e-book is an electronic book or a book that is in a digital format that is read on an e-book reader or application (Clay, 2012). Unlike other forms of digital textual content, generally the e-book follows the same conventions as a printed book. Comparison of electronic and printed copies of the same publication reveals few, if any, differences. The structure and content are usually identical, with the same number of chapters and the same text. The main differences are in the formatting and the display of pictures and diagrams.

While printed literary texts have traditionally dominated literary studies, digital texts are also found to be increasingly used due to accessibility and affordability. With the introduction of smartphones, Android and IOS phones, it is now easier for students to have access to digital texts with a simple download from the internet or other digital tools for transferring information, like the Bluetooth, Xender, USB flash etc that may not

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need the internet. Though expensive data, lack of electricity and poor internet connectivity have been the major disadvantages of digital tools, these however has not stopped students from purchasing and using them due to the multifarious roles they can be used for.Just like printed materials, digital texts can also be easily read, and teachers can also read along with students in the classroom for study purposes. This approach of course has open up opportunity for students who before this time have limited access to new texts. Literary texts that are produced with a focus on exhume current challenges are studied contemporaneously for students to actively participate in addressing current challenges. Aside, the digital texts opening up the space to have access to various texts within different time and space, it also creates the opportunity to bring to live various texts simultaneously and such situation can make readers/students to delve into the thoughts of the characters and compare how they think over a period.

The study of literature has traditionally relied on printed books as the primary medium of instruction and engagement. However, the rapid expansion of digital technologies has significantly transformed reading practices worldwide. In Nigerian universities, polytechnics and Colleges of Education, including students of English in the Department of English, Federal College of Education (FCE), Okene, increasingly rely on digital copies of literary texts due to accessibility and cost considerations. This development thus raises important academic questions which this paper would attempt to investigate. This study is significant in the manner it contributes to the body of knowledge relating to digital and printed literary texts by providing investigative information on learners' outcomes in the Department of English FCE, Okene. It also raises the issue of comprehension, retention and critical thinking when engaging literary texts be it digital or printed to educators of literature.

Looking at what printed texts has contributed over the years it can be easily argued that texts be it:novel, drama or a work of prose enhance deep reading and retention due to its engagement and reduced distraction. Conversely, digital texts are also found to improve research efficiency through search functions and annotation tools. Books that have been digitally transformed are easier to carry, keep, and distribute among peers through various distribution channels. They are also more convenient to search and offer free downloadable alternatives (Hendrix et al., 2016). Additionally, new research has validated the advantages of electronic books over hard copy literature due to the digital advantages they offer. (Kay & Pasarica, 2019; O'Connor & Andrews, 2015; Singhal et al., 2019; Watson, 2021). Studies have found that the cost of study materials affects students' choices and outcomes, which of course gives advantages to digital texts in terms of affordability, among others (Berry et al., 2010; Islam & Billah, 2019)

A further review of the available literature reveals much recent research, especially in the area of electronic books, that it has the capabilities of meeting the needs of the students in term of portability, accessibility and multimodal functions and college students have also identified it as a good starting point for studies for a number of reasons and this is according to Landoni, Wilson and Gibb (2000), Wearden (1989).

The advantages of using e-books have been identified by Berglund (2004); Berglund et al. (2004); Herther (2005); Bennett and Landoni, (2005) and Elgan (2007) as cited in Owajeme (2017); identified the following as the advantages of digital books:

- Availability. E-books can be accessed by different types of devices: computers, ebook readers, mobile phones, etc. They can be accessed anywhere the Internet is available. Open access e-books can be used simultaneously by unlimited numbers of

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users. Providers of e-books therefore do not have to worry about the number of copies of e-book titles.

- Economic advantages. E-books offer savings on costs of paper, ink, binding, packing, and delivery.
- Environmental advantages. Increasing use of e-books can reduce the consumption of paper and save trees.
- Flexibility. It is possible to change the visual appearance of e-books, their font size or style, etc. Such personalisation options enable the same text to be available to different audiences in their preferred format. Print books, in contrast, would require different print runs in, for example, standard and large print.
- Multimedia. E-books can be enhanced with multimedia features: interactive images, sound, and/or video material. Interactive features such as commentary options and chatting are also available.
- Space saving. E-books do not require physical space. Unlike print books, there is no limit, in terms of storage space, on the number of e-books held in a collection.
- Portability. E-books can be forwarded from one computer to another or even to another device.
- Search possibilities. While traditional books offer only a table of contents and different kinds of supplementary indexes, most e-books offer a variety of computerised search options such as unlimited keywords, combinations of search results, search history, search within a book or the whole collection.
- Security. It is harder to lose, steal or damage e-books, especially if they are available on the Internet, than print books. System of navigation. Hyperlinked references in footnotes, titles, places, or people mentioned in the text facilitate access to related sources of information in e-books and save time.

Bastek (2012) has the following arguments concerning advantages and disadvantages of print publishing:

- Reaching your audience is one of the significant advantages of print publishing in distribution. While printing costs are significantly higher than those involved in publishing on-line because of actual paper and printing costs, the advantage of print publishing is actually placing text in the hands of your audience.
- Printed books are actually better for doing research and taking notes. Printed books help long-term memory recall. Scientists who experimented with students reading digital versus printed text, found that those who read digital text had to read and reread the material multiple times before understanding the material as well as the students who read the print text. With the click of a button, e-readers make it easy to get distracted and put your reading material down. The constant scrolling and the inability to physically highlight the text does nothing to benefit your long-term memory (Riordan, 2013).
- Reader Capabilities: Printed publications have the advantage of creating a design based on whatever capabilities the publisher has with regard to fonts, layout, photos and overall size of the publication. Once a printed publication is in the hands of the reader, the only requirements remaining are for readers to be able to see and to read. This is not necessarily so easy with online publications since they are

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restricted by technological limitations of the user's screen and memory capacity. Editing Print formats poses a problem in itself, with a text that must be finalised by the printing press on paper; the final product is relatively unchangeable.

From the foregoing, it is pertinent to state that there have been arguments and counterarguments on the preference of the most preferable modes of reading by students, which further add to the need to embark on this investigation in the Department of English, FCE, Okene. Some selected works have shown that the advantages of digital texts over printed texts vis-à-vis are often determined by factors such as the interest of the investigation as well as the interest of the students. Valaemathi, Ak and Nurainil (2025) discovered in their studies that digital reading formats often increase students' reading interest because they are interactive and use multimedia, but print materials are better for helping students understand deeply because they are organised and have fewer distractions. Cagri Kaygisiz (2025) examined the effects of reading printed versus digital texts on the reading process and performance and discovered that participants reading printed texts performed more successfully in comprehending the material. Igor Peras et al. (2025) compared digital and paper reading outcomes among students aged 6–18 years old, as well as assessing the impact of various factors (gender, socioeconomic status, and school location) in explaining the differences between the two modes. The findings from the reviewed studies are diverse, with some reporting no significant differences in reading comprehension between the two modes, while others suggest screen inferiority, thereby favouring paper reading. Individual-level predictors, such as prior comprehension skills and reading habits, play a crucial role in determining reading performance across modes. Family-level factors, such as the number of books at home, and school-level factors, like the usage of ICT resources, influence both paper and digital reading comprehension. Moreover, gender differences in attitudes and performance towards different reading modes are apparent. Overall, Igor Peras's work shows that the comparison between electronic and paper reading modes reveals a complex interplay of individual and contextual factors influencing reading comprehension and attitudes. How true or applicable the assertions above are constitutes part of the concerns of this investigation.

The finding of this study will benefit both teachers and students of literature by helping them to make informed decisions about the most effective reading strategies and the choice of texts (printed or digital). Particularly, how each format affects learning outcomes. Importantly, the study lays a foundation for future researchers who may wish for further exploration into digital learning, reading and academic performance in similar contexts. The research is limited to students in the Department of English and does not include students from other departments or institutions. It concentrates on literary texts used for academic purposes and does not cover other forms of digital learning materials such as audiobooks, video lectures, or non-literary online resources. The study also focuses on comparing reading formats rather than investigating broader issues such as internet access challenges, socio-economic background, or psychological factors affecting learning. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insight into the comparative influence of digital and printed literary texts within the specified academic environment.

Research Questions

1. What influence does reading format (screen and print) have on students' comprehension of literary texts among students of English in FCE, Okene?

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2. What influence does reading format have on students' retention of literary themes, concepts and quotations among English Students in FCE, Okene?
3. What influence does reading format have on students' critical analysis of literary texts among English Students in FCE, Okene?
4. Is there any difference in the overall academic influence of digital and printed texts among English Students in FCE, Okene?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain information directly from students concerning their perceptions and experiences of reading literary texts in print and on screen from the Department of English. The population of the study comprised all 502 students studying English/Literature in FCE, Okene. The population comprises NCE Students, Dual Mandate students, University of Ibadan Students, and Ekiti State University students. The last two are affiliated programs in the Department. A simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 84, which represents 16.8% of the whole population, where n=0.167. Section A captured the demographics of the respondents, while section B was developed in 4 clusters to capture all aspects of the research questions. The validity of the instrument of this study was done by a lecturer in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, FCE, Okene and a chief lecturer in the Department of English, FCE, Okene. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted on 50 students from randomly selected students from COE, Ankpa, Kogi State. The reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .82 for the 19-item instrument. This indicates good internal consistency among the items and suggests that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for the study. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents online using their different departmental platforms. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were allowed to provide their responses voluntarily using a Google Form. Completed responses were collected online and prepared for statistical analysis. The data were subsequently organised and coded before analysis. The data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and Means and standard deviations were used to summarise Likert-scale responses.

Results

This section provides analysis of 82 completed questionnaire responses. The results are organised according to the four research questions concerning comprehension, retention of literary themes and quotations, critical analysis and academic writing, and overall academic influence. The descriptive statistics are reported as means (M) and standard deviations (SD), while inferential analyses comprise Welch independent-samples t-tests for gender and one-way ANOVA for level of study. The significance level was set at $\alpha = .05$. The qualitative responses are presented thematically. The research questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Because the items contain both print-oriented and screen-oriented statements, section means are interpreted as average response levels and not as direct measures of print superiority. Research Questions are numbered B-E for identification and the generation of the research questionnaire according to the groupings.

Research Question 1: What influence does reading format (screen and print) have on students' comprehension of literary texts among students of English in FCE, Okene?

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Table1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Responses of influences of reading format (screen and print) on students' comprehension

Item	Statement	Mean	Standard Daviation	Decision
B1	I understand the main idea of a literary text better when I read it in print than on screen.	2.02	1.52	Disagree
B2	I find it easier to recall specific details from a literary text when I read it on screen.	2.45	1.53	Disagree
B3	I can make inferences and interpretations more effectively when reading printed literary texts.	1.98	1.41	Disagree
B4	Screen distractions affect my comprehension of literary texts.	2.31	1.55	Disagree
B5	I read faster and understand better with printed texts than with digital texts.	2.05	1.46	Disagree
Overall	Comprehension	2.16	0.99	Disagree

Decision criterion: based on the five-point Likert scale used in the study M<3,00= Disagree, M=300=neutral, and M>3.00= agree

Note. N = 84. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. The overall value is the mean and SD of respondent-level section scores.

The comprehension section recorded an overall mean of 2.16 (SD = 0.99). B2 had the highest item mean (M = 2.45, SD = 1.53), whereas B3 had the lowest (M = 1.98, SD = 1.41). B1 and B5, both print-oriented, recorded means of 2.02 and 2.05, respectively. These results indicate that respondents did not strongly agree that print consistently provides superior comprehension, while the screen-oriented B2 statement received comparatively greater endorsement.

Research Question 2: What influence does reading format have on students' retention of literary themes, concepts and quotations among English Students in FCE, Okene?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Responses on Students' Retention of Literary Themes, Concepts and Quotations by Reading Format

Item	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
C1	I remember literary themes better when I read from printed books.	2.10	1.54	Disagree
C2	Reading on screen helps me remember literary concepts like symbolism and irony.	2.55	1.55	Disagree
C3	I can recall direct quotations more accurately after reading printed texts.	2.05	1.48	Disagree
C4	Highlighting/annotating on screen helps me retain literary content better than writing in a book.	2.67	1.68	Disagree
C5	Two weeks after reading, I remember more from printed texts than from digital texts.	2.31	1.63	Disagree
Overall	Retention	2.33	1.02	

Note. N = 84. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. The overall value is the mean and SD of respondent-level section scores.

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The retention section recorded M = 2.33 (SD = 1.02). C4 had the highest mean (M = 2.67, SD = 1.68), followed by C2 (M = 2.55, SD = 1.55), both of which concern screen-based tools or learning. C3 (M = 2.05, SD = 1.48) and C1 (M = 2.10, SD = 1.54), which favour print, were lower. The results therefore do not show a strong or uniform retention advantage for print.

Research Question 3: What influence does reading format have on students' critical analysis of literary texts among English Students in FCE, Okene?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Responses on Critical Analysis and Academic Writing by Reading Format

Item	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
D1	Reading printed texts helps me analyse characters and literary devices more deeply.	1.81	1.17	Disagree
D2	Reading format affects the quality of my assignments in literature.	2.83	1.59	Disagree
D3	I find it easier to integrate quotations and evidence into my writing after reading printed texts.	1.93	1.33	Disagree
D4	My essays are more coherent and well-argued when I read the text in print.	2.19	1.57	Disagree
Overall	Critical analysis and academic writing	2.19	0.99	Disagree

Note. N = 84. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. The overall value is the mean and SD of respondent-level section scores.

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The critical analysis and academic writing section produced M = 2.19 (SD = 0.99). D2 had the highest mean (M = 2.83, SD = 1.59), indicating the closest approach to neutrality on whether format affects assignment quality. D1 had the lowest mean (M = 1.81, SD = 1.17), while D3 and D4 recorded means of 1.93 and 2.19. Thus, students did not strongly endorse print as automatically producing better analysis or writing.

Research Question 4: Is there any difference in the overall academic effectiveness of digital and printed texts among English Students in FCE, Okene?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Responses on Overall Academic Effectiveness of digital and printed texts among English Students in FCE Okene

Item	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
E1	Overall, I find printed literary texts more academically effective than digital texts.	2.21	1.65	Disagree
E2	Accessibility and portability make digital texts more effective for my literature studies.	2.12	1.40	Disagree
E3	Eye strain affects my academic performance more with screen reading than with print reading.	2.26	1.56	Disagree
E4	My preferred reading format has a direct impact on my grades in English Literature.	1.79	1.12	Disagree
Overall	Overall academic effectiveness	2.10	1.05	Disagree

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Note. N = 84. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. The overall value is the mean and SD of respondent-level section scores.

The overall academic-effectiveness section produced M = 2.10 (SD = 1.05). E3 had the highest mean (M = 2.26, SD = 1.56), followed by E1 (M = 2.21, SD = 1.65). E4 had the lowest mean (M = 1.79, SD = 1.12), indicating limited agreement that preferred reading format directly affects grades. The descriptive results therefore do not establish a clear academic-performance advantage for either format.

Research Question One: Comprehension

The comprehension mean of 2.16 (SD = 0.99) was below the neutral midpoint of 3.00. However, this value should not be interpreted as a direct score showing that respondents rejected print superiority, because the items were mixed in direction. The item-level means show the actual pattern: the print-oriented B1 (M = 2.02, SD = 1.52), B3 (M = 1.98, SD = 1.41) and B5 (M = 2.05, SD = 1.46) were all below 2.50, while the screen-oriented B2 had the highest comprehension mean (M = 2.45, SD = 1.53). Thus, the numerical evidence does not support a consistent print advantage in comprehension. The gender test was non-significant, $t(20.53) = -0.28$, $p = .779$, $d = -0.10$, and the level ANOVA was also non-significant, $F(3, 35) = 1.31$, $p = .287$, $\eta^2 = .10$. The answer to the first research question is therefore that the sample did not demonstrate a statistically significant or consistent comprehension advantage for either format.

Research Question Two: Retention

The retention mean of 2.33 (SD = 1.02) was also below the neutral midpoint. The item means indicate a mixed pattern rather than print superiority. C4 (M = 2.67, SD = 1.68) and C2 (M = 2.55, SD = 1.55) were the highest, suggesting comparatively greater endorsement of screen-based annotation and digital presentation of literary concepts. C1 (M = 2.10, SD = 1.54) and C3 (M = 2.05, SD = 1.48), which favoured print for remembering themes and quotations, were lower. Retention did not differ significantly by gender, $t(23.28) = -0.81$, $p = .428$, $d = -0.27$, or level of study, $F(3, 35) = 0.87$, $p = .466$, $\eta^2 = .07$. The evidence therefore does not justify concluding that print promotes better retention overall.

Research Question Three: Critical Analysis and Academic Writing

The critical analysis and academic-writing mean was 2.19 (SD = 0.99). D2 produced the highest mean (M = 2.83, SD = 1.59), indicating that students were closest to neutrality when considering whether reading format affects assignment quality. The lower means for D1 (M = 1.81, SD = 1.17), D3 (M = 1.93, SD = 1.33) and D4 (M = 2.19, SD = 1.57) show that respondents did not strongly endorse the view that print automatically improves analysis, quotation integration or essay coherence. The gender result was non-significant, $t(20.70) = -1.64$, $p = .115$, $d = -0.58$, despite a descriptive difference between females (M = 2.02, SD = 0.93) and males (M = 2.58, SD = 1.06). Level of study was also non-significant, $F(3, 35) = 0.24$, $p = .865$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Thus, format may be perceived as relevant to academic writing, but the data do not establish that print produces better critical analysis or writing.

Research Question Four: Overall Academic Influence

The overall academic-effectiveness mean of 2.10 (SD = 1.05) indicates low agreement with the set of statements assessing academic influence. E4, concerning a direct impact of preferred format on grades, had

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the lowest mean (M = 1.79, SD = 1.12), while E1, concerning the academic effectiveness of print, was also below the midpoint (M = 2.21, SD = 1.65). The gender comparison was non-significant, t(21.55) = -1.58, p = .130, d = -0.54, and the level ANOVA was non-significant, F(3, 35) = 0.95, p = .428, η^2 = .08. The finding that 66.7% of respondents recommended print should be interpreted as a preference rather than evidence of superior academic performance. Students may prefer print for concentration and reduced distraction while still recognising the usefulness of digital access, portability and annotation.

Discussion of Findings

Taken together, the four research questions produce a consistent statistical message: the study did not demonstrate a statistically significant superiority of either screen or print reading for the measured academic outcomes. All gender tests had p-values greater than .05, and all level-of-study ANOVAs were also non-significant. The descriptive means were generally below the neutral midpoint, but because the questionnaire mixed print-favouring and screen-favouring statements, these means cannot be treated as simple measures of preference for one medium. The quantitative data do not also establish print superiority.

The findings consequently are in consonance with Lizunova et al (2022) who argued that the world has entered a transition period where the two reading formats coexist in such a way that both support and complement each other. . Print may be preferred by many students for sustained literary reading and concentration, while screen reading provides useful features such as portability, accessibility, search and digital annotation. The evidence suggests that the effectiveness of a reading format may depend on the particular academic task and how students use the medium, rather than on the medium alone. These findings also agree with Marydel et al. (2025), whose studies showed that though digital formats are increasingly accepted, print texts are essential for fostering focus and comprehension, thereby highlighting the need for educational institutions to adopt hybrid approach that integrates both formats.

Furthermore, the quantitative results did not show statistically significant differences by gender or level of study across comprehension, retention, critical analysis and academic effectiveness. Thus, within this sample, demographic groupings were not associated with statistically significant differences in perceptions of reading effectiveness. The qualitative responses provide stronger practical evidence of a preference for print in intensive literary study. Students frequently associated printed texts with concentration, fewer distractions, comprehension, retention and annotation, an inferred earlier. These perceptions are consistent with the literature reviewed in the study, particularly the arguments attributed to Baron (2015) and Mangen et al. (2013) concerning focus, deep engagement and comprehension during print reading.

At the same time, digital texts were valued for accessibility, portability, convenience, searching and digital tools. These advantages are relevant in contexts where students may have limited access to physical copies of literary texts. The findings therefore support a complementary rather than mutually exclusive view of print and digital reading. The practical implication is that teachers and institutions can use print for sustained close reading and detailed literary analysis while using digital texts for accessibility, searching, portability and quick reference. The evidence supports a

balanced instructional approach rather than replacing one format entirely with the other.

Conclusion

The study concludes that both print and screen reading offer important educational advantages, but they serve somewhat different purposes. Digital texts provide accessibility, portability, convenience, searching and digital annotation, while printed texts were more strongly preferred for intensive literary study and were associated by respondents with concentration, fewer distractions, comprehension, retention and annotation. The inferential analyses showed no statistically significant differences according to gender or level of study. Overall, the evidence supports the continued use of printed literary texts alongside digital resources. A blended approach can allow students to use each format according to the demands of a particular academic task.

Recommendations

1. Teachers and institutions should continue to make printed copies of important literary texts available, particularly for texts requiring detailed analysis, annotation and sustained reading.
2. English Literature students should be encouraged to use both formats strategically: print for close reading and detailed analysis, and digital texts for accessibility, searching, portability and quick reference.
3. Educational institutions should provide legitimate access to digital libraries, e-books and electronic literary resources.
4. Students should be taught effective digital reading practices, including highlighting, annotation, bookmarking, searching and note-taking.

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Data Availability

The data collected will be made available by the author upon any reasonable request, and subject to institutional and ethical requirements.

Declaration / Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no form of conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

Disclosure of AI Use

Generative AI was used for language refinements, and the researcher is responsible for every aspect of the research.

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