

Effects of Social Media Use on the Reading Habits of Selected High School Students in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigates the effect of social media use on the reading habits of high school students: a case study of Obafemi Awolowo University International School, Ile-Ife, Osun State and International School, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Out of a total of 200 copies of questionnaire administered, 196 copies were duly filled, representing 98% response ratio, while the drop ratio was 2%. The findings of the study revealed that 113 (57.7%) of the respondents were male while 83 (42.9%) of the respondents were female counterparts. Majority of the respondents (99%) were between ages 13 to 20 and only 1% of the respondents is above 20 years of age. Furthermore, majority of the respondents, 154 (78.6%) were Day students, while 42 (21.4%) were Boarders. The study found that high school students spent more time on the use of social media especially with the affordability of smart phones, thereby causing an uncultured lifestyle of reading. The study concluded that, indisputably, it is obvious that the use of social media has constituted a great havoc on the reading culture of high school students. Thus, stakeholders such as the school teachers, parents, educationist and policymakers should ensure they sensitize students on the profitability of reading and also organise seminars and symposia on how to use the social media to promote and enhance good reading habits.

Keywords: Effect, Use, Social Media, Reading Habits, High School Students.

Introduction

Developing good reading habit is very crucial to students' educational outcome as there cannot be academic success and all round development without good reading habits. According to Owusu-Acheaw (2014), reading habits determine the academic achievements of students. To a great extent it also shape students' personality and enhance thinking abilities to create new ideas, thus, the creative abilities would be heightened. Developing good reading habits required self-discipline on the part of students in the area of time management. In producing all-round development, students in the 21st century schools should not downplay good reading habits. all

other things that could stand as barriers to it should be dealt with so that high school students would be ardent readers. The arrival of information, communication technologies (ICTs) has drastically changed the way students get and share information in the information society. Internet has opened new horizons for youth to have instant connection with anyone in the world through Facebook, messenger services, skype, etc. (Mubashar & Abdul, 2014) Social media sites are platforms by which students can communicate, share information and create new relationships. High school students are so engrossed in the use of social media sites that it has become part of their daily life experiences. Camilia, Ibrahim and Dalhatu (2013) reported that students are heaviest computer and the Internet users, probably because they serve as tools they use for the accomplishment of their academic pursuit.

Generally, social media sites include but not limited to Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, YouTube, Twitter, Tango, 2go, Yahoo mail, and Blog. With smart phones, which are affordable, individuals find it easy to access the Internet and many students have these at their possessions. It is evident that students spent a lot of time on social media sites to do one thing or the other. This is corroborated by Dike, Okpala and Babarinde (2013), who asserted that globally, students use social media extensively and this may have adverse effect on their reading habits. It is on this note that the researcher intends to investigate the effects of social media use on high school students' reading habits with particular reference to Obafemi Awolowo University International School, Ile-Ife, and International School Ibadan, University of Ibadan.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the effect of social media use on the reading habits of high school students in Obafemi Awolowo University International School, Ile-Ife, and International School Ibadan, University of Ibadan, Ibadan. Specifically, it is to:

- i. determine the amount of leisure time spent on reading and other activities such as talking and playing with friends, school assignment, on the phone/text-messaging, playing computer game;
- ii. find out the level and frequency of reading among high school students in Obafemi Awolowo University International School, Ile-Ife, and International School Ibadan, University of Ibadan, Ibadan;

- iii. ascertain the means of accessing social media sites;
- iv. determine the level and frequency of social media use among high school students in Obafemi Awolowo University International School, Ile-Ife, and International School Ibadan, University of Ibadan; and
- v. ascertain the relationship between social media use and reading habits among Obafemi Awolowo University International School, Ile-Ife, and International School Ibadan, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Research questions

- i. How much of your leisure time do you spend on the following activities: talking and playing with friends, school assignment, on the phone/text-messaging, playing computer game?
- ii. What is the level and frequency of reading of high school students in Obafemi Awolowo University International School, Ile-Ife, and International School Ibadan, University of Ibadan, Ibadan?
- iii. What are the various means of accessing social media sites?
- iv. What is the level and frequent use of social media by high school students in Obafemi Awolowo University International School, Ile-Ife, and International School Ibadan, University of Ibadan, Ibadan?

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between social media use and reading habits

Literature Review

According to Saodah, Syed and Novelyna (2012), social media sites are the most preferred media for youths to connect one another and share information which could be positive or negative in nature. Dike, Eke and Babarinde (2013) asserted that students use social media extensively, while adults have become apprehensive about its effect on reading habits of students. In a study of youth usage of social media sites in America, Lenhart, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr (2010), found that the percentage of American youth that used social media sites has significantly increased to 73%. Gerlich, Niteesh, Showdry and Shrank (2010), affirmed that youths in Australia use social media extensively as well, but the good story about it is that

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Australian youths share matters regarding education such as educational materials via social media sites. According to Adiu-Sarlodee, Edward, Akussah (2015), social media has exploded as a category of online discourse where people create content, share, bookmark and network at an alarming rate. The researchers highlighted some social media sites such as Facebook and Myspace, Blogs, Micro blogs such as Twitter, wikis, tools for sharing photos and videos such as Flickr and YouTube, on-line gaming, and virtual worlds such as second life.

Mubashar and Abdul (2014) reiterated that the advent of the Internet ushers in opportunity for chatting and facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and information. Consequently, sharing information among students becomes easy and instant with the use of social media sites. It allows the sharing of information on various issues ranging from friendship, health information on current issues around the globe, educational issues and entertainment among others. According to Saodah, Syed and Norealyna (2012), some students share information on social media sites which were considered as private and intimate.

Malaysia students use social media sites for positive and negative activities (Zahara, 2011). Though the issue of positive or negative is relative, what an individual considers to be positive may be negative to others and vice versa. Hence, it could be summarized that social media sites are a platform for students where they exercise the freedom to express their true self, make new friends, communicate freely, share information among others. However, Markwei and Appiah (2016), expressed a great concern as the extensive use of social media sites could result to several risks and consequences such as sharing too much information, posting of false information about themselves and others, addictions to Internet and social media use among others. According to them, major concern about Internet and social media use is cyber fraud; this is not peculiar to Ghana alone, it cuts across the globe.

The extensive use of the Internet and social media sites by high school students could be attributed to ease of use that does not necessarily require much computer literacy skills and technologies that are very cheap to possess. Dike et al. (2013) found out that students used the media primarily for social information-seeking purposes and less for entertainment. However, the researchers expressed fear of danger in form of social media addiction, cyber bullying and loss of study time. Haliru Abdulkarim and Aliyu (2015), acknowledged the fact that reading is an indispensable tool in learning which forms an integral part of any learning situation and is the

bedrock of all educational endeavour. Oyewusi (2016) corroborated this assertion that reading helps to develop thinking skills, enrich knowledge, enhance language proficiency and broaden life experience. Thus, reading enhances students' imagination; widens their views and horizons, and encourages comprehension, acquisition of knowledge and skills. Reading is pivotal to intellectual and all round wellness of students. In a study that investigated the secondary school students' reading habits in Kaduna, Haliru, Abdulkarim, Mohammed and Dangani (2015), found out that the preferred activities of the respondents in rank order were: watching films 160 (33%), social networking, 156(32%), playing video games 50(11%) sleeping and jesting with friends 115(24%). It is obvious from the findings that social media sites could be used for all these activities except sleeping which is natural and cannot be denied. In another study of Nigerian students reading habits, Aina, Ogungbeni, Adigun and Ogundipe (2011), concluded that Nigeria cannot be regarded as a reading nation because the younger generation of Nigerians does not consider reading a leisure activity.

Reading is the cornerstone for lifelong learning and individual all round development. To have all-round educational development, intensive and extensive forms of reading cannot be neglected by high school students. Kolawole (2009) asserted that many high school teachers do not have the right perception on how to inculcate reading culture in students and the assumption is that reading only exists in language domain (such as English, Yoruba, French) among others. Consequently, the issue of reading among high school students should be given adequate attention by all educational stakeholders: parents, teachers, guidance and counselors, school librarians, school administrators and policy makers. Palani (2012) as cited in Owusu-Acheaw (2014) asserted that reading is an essential and important aspect for creating a literate society in the world. However, with the new development of high school students' addiction to social media, this could possibly constitute an inhibition to reading that will enhance effective learning. Owusu-Acheaw (2014) acknowledged comprehension skills as an essential ability to understanding the meaning of words in isolation and in context. Apparently, students have quality time in the past to engage in meaningful reading of books, magazines, and journals among others before the advent of social media. The importance of reading cannot be over-emphasized, as reading is one of life's greatest pleasures that open the door to knowledge and independence (Haliru, et al. 2015). Therefore, this study investigates the use of social media on reading habits of high school students.

Methodology

The study adopted survey design of the correlational type. Two universities owned high school were chosen by simple random sampling technique (Obafemi Awolowo University International School, Ile-Ife and International School, University of Ibadan, Ibadan). Senior Secondary two (SS2) were also selected randomly. The instrument used to collect data for the study was a questionnaire. The overall co-efficient of the reliability of the instrument is $r = 0.79$ using Cronbach alpha methods. A total of 200 questionnaires were administered on SS2 students in the two selected university owned high schools which were randomly selected with the assistance of the class teachers. However, only one hundred and ninety-six (196) copies were duly filled and returned. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version (21) was used to analyse the data collected.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to Socio-Demographic

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	113	57.7
Female	83	42.3
Total	196	100.0
Age	Frequency	Percentage
13-19 Year	194	99.0
20 Years +	2	1.0
Total	196	100.0
Class	Frequency	Percentage
SSS2	196	100.0
Total	196	100.0
Type of Student	Frequency	Percentage
Boarding Student	42	21.4
Day Student	154	78.6
Total	196	100.0

Table 1 above shows that 113(57.7%) of the respondents are males while 83(42.3%) are their female counterparts. Majority of the respondents are between ages 13-19, only 1% is 20years and above. All the respondents are in SS2 class. 42(21.4%) are boarder students and 154(78.6%) are day students.

Table2: Distribution of respondents according to their activities in leisure time.

S/N	Amount of leisure time spent on the following activities	0-10 mins	30 mins - 1 hr	1 hr-2 hrs	2hrs	3hrs-4hrs	Mean	S.D
1	Watching television online	38 19.4%	38 19.4%	41 21.4%	20 10.2%	58 29.6%	3.11	1.50
2	Reading for Pleasure	29 14.8%	55 28.1%	53 27.0%	25 12.8%	34 17.3%	2.90	1.30
3	Talking and playing with friends	28 14.3%	60 30.6%	51 26.0%	29 14.8%	28 14.3%	2.84	1.26
4	School assignment	18 9.2%	68 34.7%	71 36.2%	24 1.2%	15 7.7%	2.74	1.04
5	On the phone/text-messaging	56 28.6%	49 25.0%	27 13.8%	24 12.2%	40 20.4%	2.71	1.50
6	Playing computer game	67 34.2%	49 25.0%	33 16.8%	10 5.1%	37 18.9%	2.49	1.48
Grand Mean=2.80								

Responses on how much leisure time students spent on the activities listed in Table2 are as follows viz: Watching television (mean=3.11) was ranked highest and was followed by reading for pleasure (mean=2.90), talking and playing with friends (mean=2.84), school assignment (mean=2.74), On the phone/text-messaging (mean=2.71), playing computer game (mean=2.49).

Table 3: Respondents according to Frequency of Access to Social Media Sites

Means used to access social media sites	Frequency	Percentage
Laptop computer	33	16.8
Smart phone	153	78.1
I pad	5	2.6
Others	5	2.6
Total	196	100.0

Table 3 shows that 33(16.8%) of the respondents use laptop computers to access social media sites, 153(78.1%) use smart phones, 5(2.6%) use I-pad and 5(2.6%) use other devices

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents according to Platform for Using the Social media

S/N	Items	No	Yes
20	Facebook	95 48.5%	101 51.5%
21	Whatsapp	79 40.3%	117 59.7%
22	Yahoo mail	175 89.3%	21 10.7%
23	YouTube	115 58.7%	81 41.3%
24	2go	155 79.1%	41 20.9%
25	Others	144 73.5%	52 26.5%

Looking at Table 4, 95(48.5%) of the respondents indicated 'no' to Facebook as platform for using social media while 101(51.5%) indicated yes; Whatsapp, 79(40.3%) indicated no while 117(59.7%) indicated yes; Yahoo mail 175(89.3%) indicated no while 21(10.7%) indicated yes; YouTube, 115(58.7%) indicated no while 81(41.3%) indicated yes; 2go, 155(79.1%) indicated no while 41(20.9%) indicated yes and Others, 144(73.5%) indicated no while 52(26.5%) indicated yes.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents according to Time spent on Using Social Media

Number of hours spend each day using social media sites	Frequency	Percentage
0-1hr	87	44.4
2-3 hrs	54	27.6
4-5 hrs	38	19.4
6-7 hrs	3	1.5
8 hrs and above	14	7.1
Total	196	100.0

Table 5 shows that 87(44.4%) of the respondents spend less than 1 hour on social media sites, 54(27.6%) spend 2-3 hours, 38(19.4%) spend 4-5 hours, 3(1.5%) spend 6-7 hours and 14(7.1%) spend 8 hours and above.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents according to Time spent on reading

Number of hours spent on reading	Frequency	Percentage
0-1 hr	57	29.1
2-3 hrs	89	45.4
4-5 hrs	31	15.8
6-7 hrs	9	4.6
8 and above	10	5.1
Total	196	100.0

Table 6 shows that 57(29.1%) of the respondents spend less than 1 hour reading books, magazines novels e.t.c, 89(45.4%) spend 2-3 hours, 31(15.8%) spend 4-5 hours, 9(4.6%) spend 6-7 hours and 10(5.1%) spend 8 hours and above.

Test for Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Social Media use and Reading Habits

Table 7 Significant relationship between Social Media and Reading Habits

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Social Media	6.1582	2.8267	196	.332*	.000	Sig.
Reading Habits	4.3929	1.9065				

*Sig. at .05 level

This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Table 7: showed that there was a positive significant relationship between Social Media and Reading Habits ($r = .332^*$, $N= 196$, $p<.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is obviously seen from the above that social media use has negative impact on the high school student’s level of reading habits to 33% which is not encouraging most especially in the 21st century that societal expectation is very high.

The findings of the study reveal that 113 (57.7%) of the respondents were male, while 83 (42.9%) of the respondents were female counterparts. Majority of the respondents (99%) were between ages 13 to 20 and only 1% of the respondents is above 20 years of age. Furthermore, majority of the respondents 154 (78.6%) were Day students, while 42 (21.4%) were Boarders. As regards how the respondents spent their leisure time, Watching television online (mean=3.11)

was ranked highest and was followed by Reading for pleasure (mean=2.90). The findings corroborate Mohammed and Dangani.(2015). They found out that the preferred activities of the respondents in rank order were: watching films 160 (33%), social networking, 156(32%), playing video games 50(11%) sleeping and jesting with friends 115(24%). 33(16.8%) of the respondents use laptop computers to access social media sites, 153(78.1%) use smart phones, 5(2.6%) use I-pad and 5(2.6%) use other devices. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents use smart phones to access social media sites, which could be responsible for the high rate of social media use (78.1%) among the respondents. This finding is in line with Owusu-Acheaw (2014) who found that 62.0% of the respondents indicated their visit to social media sites and concluded that majority of the respondents use their leisure time to visit social media sites in preference to reading. However, 89 (45.4%) of respondents use social media daily. This indicates that the rate at which the respondents use social media sites is still moderate compared with, Lenhart, Pucell, Smith and Zickuhr (2010), who found that American youths social media sites usage was 73%. Respondents claimed to visit social media sites regularly, Yahoo mail 175 (89.3%) was ranked highest and was followed by 2go 155 (79.1%) while whatsapp 79 (40.3%) was the least. Only 45.4% claimed to read between 2 to 3 hours daily.

However, the correlation between reading habits and social media use sites of the respondents showed that there was a positive significant relationship between Social Media and Reading habits ($r = .332^*$, $N= 196$, $p<.05$). Judging by this result, it is obvious that reading habits among high school students are plagued by the abuse of social media. In view of the foregoing, something urgent must be done to salvage the dying culture of reading in high schools before it becomes difficult to curb.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Indisputably, it is obvious that the use of social media has constituted a great havoc on the reading culture of high school students. Thus, stakeholders such as the school teachers, parents and school guardians and counselors should ensure they sensitize the students on the profitability of reading and also organize seminars and symposia on how to use the social media to promote and enhance effective reading habits

In line with the findings and conclusion of this study, the following are therefore recommended:

1. Students in high school should be restricted from using smart phones. This will be necessary in order to allow them concentrate on reading their books.
2. The stakeholders such as the teachers and parents need to sensitize the students especially those in high school on the need for self-discipline so as to develop the culture of reading.
3. Teachers should also give the high school students demanding assignment that will enable them read extensively.
4. Reading club should be organised in schools and developed by the school language teachers in collaboration with the school librarian.
5. Government should help to build modern libraries furnished with 21st Century technological equipment as well as relevant textbooks.
6. Guidance and counseling unit should be revived in our high schools and qualified counselors should be employed by the government. This will assist in sensitizing the students on the need for developing reading culture and how to use the social media devices for the advancement of their reading skills.

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