



**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON STUDENTS'
READING HABITS: A STUDY OF AMINU SALEH
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AZARE, BAUCHI STATE
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This paper reports the findings of a study that investigates the influence of social media on student's reading habits. The study adopts a descriptive survey design. Structured questionnaire was used to collect responses from two hundred and twenty NCE students randomly selected from Aminu Saleh College of Education Azare, Bauchi State Nigeria. Data collected for this study were analysed using frequency distributions and percentages. Based on the findings, students spent more hours using the social media platforms than reading their books. The study recommends that students should be encouraged to join literary society in order to develop their interest in reading and reading competitions should be organized by the college management every academic session to encourage students' reading habits.

Keywords: *Reading, social media, facebook, whatsApp, reading habits*

Introduction

Reading is considered the cornerstone of learning. It is an activity that is required by learners at all levels of education. It is a strategic activity meant to improve the knowledge of students. The ability to read is a critical factor in improving students' ability to learn at all stages of schooling and is an essential skill for accessing opportunities beyond school (Igwe, 2011). Reading is an essential tool for knowledge transfer. According to Olaofe (2013), reading is central to academic and intellectual development of learners at all levels. Sekara (1988) as cited in Rahman (2004) also asserts that one of the most important activities in tertiary education is reading, which is not for pleasure but for information that has been researched, organized and documented in accordance with the rules of academic discourse. It is therefore necessary for students at the college level to develop the habit of reading for their academic achievement.

In Nigeria where English Language is an official language, the ability to read equips learners at any level of education to read and understand other subjects in the school curriculum. Therefore the habit of reading is an academic activity that increases the skills in reading for academic progress. Onwusu-Acheaw (2014) emphasizes that reading habits determine the academic achievements of students to a great extent. Achievement in the colleges requires awareness of facts and acquisition of skills in learners' field of study which is achieved through effective reading habit. Reading habits depicts the behavior which expresses the likeness of reading and tastes of reading (Chettri and Rout, 2013). Reading habit is the use of reading as a regular activity. However, students' ability to form the habit of reading can widen their academic horizon, and equally improve access to relevant information for their academic achievement. Nssien (2008) opines that reading habit is identified as the single most important determinant of a student's success in education and in our modern complex society.

Statement of the Problem

The declining habit and interest in reading among students in higher institutions is a challenge to education stakeholders, especially in institutions that train teachers in different fields of education. Experience has shown that most students in Colleges of Education lack interest in reading which has contributed to their poor academic performance. Onwusu-Acheaw (2014) observes that the problem most students have that contributes to their poor performance in tests and examinations is lack of proper reading habit. Similarly, Paul, Baker and Cochran (2012) as cited in Kojo, Agyekum and Arthur (2018) discover that in most tertiary institutions, learners do not read, even the few that read only do so as a means of passing their examinations. Fatiloro, Oyekola, Hamid and Adewumi (2017) note that teaching and learning in tertiary institutions is faced with endless problems on the part of the learner due to their non mastery of the skills implicit in reading. In relation to that, investigations reveal that most students who graduated from such institutions have inadequate reading ability which is attributed to poor habit of reading during their school days.

The situation has been made worse with the advent of the social media as a means of communication among students. They spend more hours on electronic media where they brows, send text messages and chat with their friends using their handsets instead of reading their books or any other piece of written materials. Loving and Ochoa (2010) observe that social, networking sites have proven to be universally addictive for tertiary institution students who tend to spend considerable amount of time maintaining social communications, making new acquaintances and a broad based of friends during their years of study. It

is against this background that the present study investigates the influence of social media on students' reading habits in Aminu Saleh College of Education Azare, Bauchi state Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the influence of social media on students' reading habits in Aminu Saleh College of Education Azare, Bauchi State, while the specific objectives are:

1. To examine the types of social media frequently use by students.
2. To find out number of hours spend by students browsing and chatting on social media platforms.
3. To identify the number of times students visit the library to read books.

Research Questions

1. What type of social media do students frequently use?
2. How many hours do students spend browsing and chatting on social media platforms?
3. How many times do students visit the library to read books in a week?

Review of Literature

Social media is online technology platforms that help to connect people together. It facilitates the creation and sharing of information, ideas and interest among groups. According to Adomi and Ejirefe (2012), social media networking refers to activities, practices and behavior among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge and opinion using interactive media. Similarly, Davis, Canche, Deil-Amen and Rios-Aguilar (2012) refers to social media technology as a web based and mobile application that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage and share new user generated on existing content, in digital environments through multi-way communication. Thus, social networking websites provide tools by which people can communicate, share information and create new relationship among users. According to Kaitlin (2010), when users communicate through these websites, they use things like instant message (IM) and chatting as well as status or twitter to talk to friends and express themselves.

Today, the increase in use of social media has become an international phenomenon. It has become a way of life for many people especially students

in higher institutions all over the world. The media often requires computers or mobile devices such as smart phones, Ipad, Labtop with internet access to share information online (Ukume, Ochogwu and Agbum, 2018). These mobile devices make it easier for users to access social media networks without any stress. William, Scot and Sumone (2015) refer to these social networks as websites or applications that allow users to communicate with one another by posting items such as comments, images and messages. The examples of these social media network applications are facebook, twitter, Youtube, whatsApp, instagram, etc. Social media applications offer compressive sources of online content of the network. One of these popular social networks is the facebook. Ogbe (2014) asserts that facebook is one of the two most frequented websites in the entire internet which has over 800 million active users. WhatsApp is also a useful tool of connecting people with common interest and shared concerns. Armry (2014) notes that over 450 million active users of whatsApp are recorded monthly with over 10 million messages shared daily by users. It is a free down load application for smart phones that uses the internet to send messages, images, audio or video.

Many studies have been conducted by different scholars on the negative effect of learners' engagement on these social media networks. A study carried out by Rithika and Selvaraj (2013) shows that those who spend more time on social media may have difficulties balancing their online activities and their academic preparation. Similarly, Yeboah and Ewur (2014) also conducted a study on students' use of social media networks such as whatsApp in Ghana reveals that it distract academic life and affect their concentration during classes. These suggest that more time is spent concentrating on these media networks by the students. Kojo, Agyekum and Arthur (2018) observe that many students cannot go for two – three hours without checking and updating their profiles on these social networks even to the detriment of reading activities. This has been a problem to most students in higher institutions which affects their reading habits.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate the influence of social media on students' reading habit in a teacher training institution. A

sample of two hundred and twenty (220) students was drawn from six schools in Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare using a simple random sampling. Structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for the study. The questionnaire contained items that required respondents to give information by ticking the options related to their habit of using social media and reading of books stated in columns. Copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents selected from the six schools in the college. The data generated through the questionnaire were analysed using frequency counts and percentages.

The Results

The results of the study on the influence of social media on students' reading habit are presented in table 1-3. The analysis is presented after each table.

Table 1: Types of social media frequently use by students

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	102	46.36%
whatsApp	76	34.54%
Facebook and WhatsApp	34	15.45%
Other social media	6	2.73%
None of the above	2	0.91%
Total	220	100%

Results in the above table reveal that 102 respondents representing 46.36% indicated that they frequently use facebook. 76 respondents representing 34.54% indicated that they use whatsApp. 34 respondents representing 15.45% indicated that they use both facebook and whatsApp. 6 respondents representing 2.72% indicated that they use other social media while 2 respondents representing 0.91% do not use any of the social media.

Table 2: Number of hours spent by students browsing and chatting on social media platforms

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
One hour	63	28.64%
Two hours	86	39.09%

Three hours	44	20%
Four hours and above	21	9.55%
None of the above	6	2.73%
Total	220	100%

Results in the above table shows that 86 respondents representing 39.09% indicated that they spend two hours browsing and chatting on social media. 63 respondents representing 28.64% spend one hour. 44 respondents representing 20% spend three hours. 21 respondents representing 9.55% spend four hours and above while 6 respondents representing 2.73% do not spend any hour on social media.

Table 3: Number of times students visit the library to read books in a week.

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Once a week	74	33.64%
Twice a week	39	17.73%
Three times a week	36	16.36%
Four times and above	23	10.45%
None	48	21.82%
Total	220	100%

Results in table 3 indicate that 74 respondents representing 33.64% visit the library once a week to read books. 48 respondents representing 21.82% do not even visit the library to read books. 39 respondents representing 17.73% visit the library twice a week to read. 36 respondents representing 16.36% visit the library three times a week to read while 23 respondents representing 10.45% visit the library four times and above a week to read books.

Discussion of Findings

The result from the analysis shows that 46.6% and 34.54% of the student used facebook and whatsApp which attract the attention of students in the study area. This agrees with the study by Loving and Ochoa (2010) which proves that social media has become addictive for students in tertiary institutions who tend to spend considerable amount of time maintaining social communication.

Results from the finding also indicate that 33.64% visit the library once a week and 21.82% do not even visit the library to read books. This suggests that reading habit of student is very low. This is in line with the study by Kojo, Agyem and Arthur (2018) that many students cannot go for two to three hours without checking and updating their profiles on social media to the detriment of their reading activities.

Conclusion

From the findings and discussions, the study affirms and concludes that students spend more hours on social network while having less time to visit the library to read books. Thus, time spend on these social networks have greatly contributed to low level of reading habits among students. At this level of education, students are expected to have enough time to read because it determines their success in their academic achievement.

Recommendations

1. Students should be encouraged to join English and literary society in order to develop their interest in reading of books.
2. The college management should organized a reading competition at the end of every academic session and award the best readers in order to encourage students' reading habits.
3. There should be a need of integration of extensive reading in the minimum standard of colleges of education in Nigeria as an independent general study course for students in order to improve their reading habits.
4. There should be a need to train college students on how to locate and evaluate information from the internet that could enhance their reading habits instead of spending hours on social media.

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