

Impact of Social Networking on Reading Habits of N.C.E Students of College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Reading habits are well-planned and deliberate pattern of study which has attained a form of consistency on the part of students toward understanding academic subjects and passing at examinations. Social networking is the latest technological explosion in the world of information; it is an online platform or site that focuses on building and reflecting on social relation among people, who share common interest or activities. Minds of our young people have been steadily taking over by the influence of social networking and this affects their reading habits. This study therefore, sought to find out the effects of social networking on NCE students of College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti, four research questions were raised to guide the study. Survey method was adopted using questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Copies of questionnaires were administered and retrieved from 266 NCE students. Findings revealed that 263(98.9%) of the students are involved in social networking to connect with friends and relatives, the study also indicated that 196(73.7%) respondents stipulated that social networking distract their reading habits. Based on the findings, conclusion and recommendations were made.

Keywords: social networking, reading habits, NCE students, College of Education.

Introduction

Reading is essential for international understanding and world brotherhood. It helps to understand and appreciate the common achievements of the global family. Reading is an essential tool for lifelong learning. It is important for everyone to develop the rudiments of reading and the culture of reading always so as survive in life. Reading is the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development (Dadzie, 2008). This implies making meaning out of recorded information either printed or non-printed in the life of an individual. People read for different reasons and purposes, some of which include for pleasure, leisure, relaxation, information and for knowledge.

Okeke (2000) reaffirms that the art of reading is a priceless instrument for everyone. It is one of the most important activities of life through which we enter the life and experiences of others and extend our knowledge, scope of experience and enjoyment.

Reading experience can be obtained in the library. The school library is a gateway to knowledge and will serve as a starting point or road map to reading and the promotion of reading culture. The library provides books and other information bearing resources which will help shape thoughts and influence the actions of students throughout life with active supervision by an experienced librarian. Ajayi and Alonge (2010) define reading as activities in academic arena that is indispensable for a student because no student can make a success of academic without reading. Reading also takes place in professional circles like radio houses, religious gatherings and political rallies. The major purpose of re4ading is for information and to acquire knowledge.

The activities of reading are regarded as habit when it is repeatedly carried out. In measurable terms reading habits is often considered in terms of the amount of material being read, the frequency of reading as well as the average time spent on reading and this habit can be cultivated (Wargener, 2002). Reading which is a long-term habit starting with the very early ages is the prominent gateway to the knowledge room. It can be assumed as a practice that assists individual to gain creativeness and develops their critical thinking capacities. In this sense, reading habit is an important tool for the development of personalities and mental capacities of individuals.

Reading habit refers to the behaviour which expresses the likeness of individual types of reading and tastes of reading (Sangkaeo, 1999). It is a pattern with which an individual organizes his or her reading. Similarly, Shen (2006) identifies reading habits, as how often, how much, and what students read. The

success and failure of a students' academic life depends to a large extent upon his reading ability. Pleasure reading furthers the development of reading as life-long habit which strengthens both language skills and fluency noted that children improve their reading skills when they read for pleasure. Cunningham and Standvich (1998) reports that reading volume both inside and outside the school has a significant impact on the development of reading speed and fluency. Vocabulary, general knowledge overall verbal ability and academic achievements. A good reading habit is necessary for a healthy intellectual growth and play a way crucial role in academic performance.

Due to technological development, reading habits are changing. In our society today, while technology is slowly taking a steady control over individual lives, the reading habit is fast vanishing into thin air (Hinda, 2004). Students now lack the skills of reading. Instead they spend more hours on social networks. Browsing the net, playing with funky handsets and passing non-stop short message service seem to be the order of the day, thereby making reading a book or any other piece of written material in a quiet or peaceful corner of a library or home become an archaic idea for most school and adults. Obama (2008) in speech pinpointed that children cannot achieve unless they raise their expectations and turn off television sets and other means where there can be distraction. Shabi and Udofia (2009) notes that active learning from books is better than passive learning such as watching films online and chatting playing games.

Social networking websites provide tools by which people can communicate, share information, and create new relationships. With the popularity of social networking websites on the rise, our social interaction is affected in multiple ways as we adapt to our increasingly technological world. The way the web users interact and talk to each other has changed and continues to change. These users now socialize through the internet and it takes away from the person socialization that has been around forever. Social networking websites have affected our social interaction by changing the way we interact face-to-face, how we receive information, and the dynamics of our social groups and friendships (Asur and Huberman, 2010).

Kaitlin (2010) further opines that social networking websites also affect the way we receive information and news. The sites open up different portals through which we get information and create more diverse news outlets. Rather than reading the newspaper or watching the news on television, students rely on "friends" on the sites to give them updates on the world around us (Kaitlin, 2010).

Students' unwillingness to read extensively these days is a worrisome phenomenon. Students' reading habits these days are distracted with the persistence use of social networking. Thus, they now become passive readers who prefer to sit back, only to be entertained and do not put effort to reading. They prefer to spend the whole days chatting with friends instead of reading or studying. Some students even when they use the social media for academic purpose, they do so because they rely on its information accessibility to provide direct lifting of answers for their assignment. This affects students' academic performance because the more time students spend on social media sites, the less the time they spent reading their books.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. Do social networking sites affect the reading habits of students?
2. How frequent do students use social network sites?
3. How many hours do students spend on browsing social network sites?
4. What are the students' reasons for using social network?

Literature Review

Reading helps in all-round development of a person from his birth to death. It adds new sight to eyes and new wisdom to mind. A dumb person becomes a communicator and a lame climbs mountains of knowledge through reading. Reading loads the mind with new software (Satija, 2002). Reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self-discovery. "Reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed it can last one's life time Green, (2001). Many authors such as Palani (2012), Grosseck (2009) and Gaona (2012) agrees that reading is an essential tool for knowledge transfer. In this sense, the habit of reading is an academic activity that increases skills in reading strategies.

Reading habits, therefore, play a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical efficiency. "Laws die but books never." Indeed, books are the most suitable medium through which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation (Issa et al, 2012).

Gallo (2007) said "books, yield their best to you, if you read them at the age at which each particular masterpiece can ideally be chewed and digested". There is little knowledge about the everyday reading practices of tertiary education students and how these practices affect their academic achievement.

Everyday reading consists of individuals' reading activities for a variety of purposes, such as for relaxation or information (Issa. et al, 2012). There is a general sense in which one appreciates the link between good habits of reading and the academic performance of students generally (Issa et al, 2012). Guthrie, Benneth & McGough, (2007) believe that "reading" is the act of getting meaning from printed or written words, which is the basis for learning and one of the most important skills in everyday life.

Ogbodo (2010) further identifies three main types of reading habits. These are Hobby, Recreational and Concentration. A hobby is an activity one does because one derives some joy and satisfaction from doing it. After formal education's attainment, some people like reading as their hobby. Its purpose is to widen the reader's horizon areas like educational, religious, political, economic, current affairs, fiction and non-fiction. The practice of reading as a hobby helps one to be versatile in knowledge in many areas and the person can discuss issues knowledgeably with others.

Every new media of information and communication technology (ICT) has been a threat to man's interest in reading. The radio, television, cell phone, computer and the Internet have captured a big slice of time and reading has taken a back seat. It is visible that people have reduced their contacts with the world of books and other reading materials.

CopperWiki (2008) reports that reading habits among children are on the decline and the reasons for decline in reading habits among children are offshoots of technological advancements. Social networking is a way that helps many people to feel as though they belong to a community. Due to the increased popularity of social networking sites, economists and professors are questioning whether grades of students are being affected by how much time is being spent on these sites (Choney, 2010). Smart phones are a new concern to the academic world when it comes to social networking. A smart phone is a cell phone that "allows users to choose the applications they want to install" while acting as a communication and computing device. A study done at Ball State in 2010 showed that the number of smart phones purchased by students had doubled over the last year Hernandez, (2010). As at February, 2009, 27% of students had smart phones. However, by February 2010, 49% of students had purchased a smart phone. The reason is that owning a smart phone has made students more aware of grades and students with smart phones access the Internet from the device which allows easier access to social networking sites as well (Hernandez, 2010). Facebook and other social media websites are beginning to take up more time of students due to the society's increasing reliance on computers (Choney, 2010).

Since the last decade the usage of Social Networking Sites among college students is increasing rapidly throughout the world. Evidently Social Networking Sites have become a significant part of the lives of these youth (Gemmill and Peterson 2006).

Kuan-Yu Lin and His-Peng Lu (2011) applies network externalities and motivation theory to understand the usage of Social Networking Sites among college students. After conducting an empirical research involving 402 samples, using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Approach, Lin and Lu (2011) found that "Enjoyment" was the most influential factor for the increasing usage of Social Networking Sites among the college students.

Bicen and Cavus (2010) evaluated the usage of Social Networking Sites among students in the department of computer education instructional technology and found which social networking sites are the most preferred by students. The study revealed that use and sharing of knowledge on Internet is made an integral part of college students' lives. Results show that Live Spaces and Facebook are the commonly used sites by the students.

Mikolaj Jan Piskorski (2009) in his study, "Understanding the Uses of Social Networks", cites that people love to look at pictures, which is the killer application of all online Social Networking Sites.

Nicole Ellison's study (2008) on Social Networking Sites provides very thought provoking insights. According to this study, 85 % of the respondents use one or more social networking sites. The majority of the users of Social Networking Sites spend 5 hours or less per week. Younger respondents report spending more time than older respondents.

According to Vitak (2008) there are various reasons as to why individuals use a social networking site. The first reason is for them to meet strangers and become friends. On the other hand, a strong interpersonal relationship with offline friends needs time and effort to be maintained. Coyle and Vaughn (2008) in their study examined the literature on Social Networking Sites and conducted a survey on how college students are engaged in social networking. They found that the main purpose of using Social Networking Sites is to keep in touch with friends. Further, in the research studies of Chernigo Barnett - Ellis (2007), Subrahmanyam and Lin (2007), Valkenburg and Peter (2006) and Huong (2008) it has been found that the college students are using Social Networking Sites more than older people.

In addition, college students use Social Networking Sites for various purposes. A study conducted by Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfeld (2007) among college students in Midwestern university found that students most often used Social Networking Sites for social purposes — to stay in touch with their friends from high school as well as to form interconnections with people they had met offline such as in their dormitories or in class. Similarly Ellison (2007) found that college students used Social Networking Sites to maintain or bolster existing relationship. An academic research was conducted by Wilson (2009) through which he proposed that university results are harmfully affected by Facebook usage. Likewise, Khan (2009) found that Facebook users had poor performance in exams. Pasek and Hargittai (2009) examined Facebook usage by undergraduates and Facebook use in relation to grades.

Kirschner and Karpinski (2009) state that users of Social Networking Sites devote lesser time to their studies than the non users and subsequently had lower grades in their academic courses. Further Karpinski (2009) says that among various unique distractions of every generation, Social Networking Sites have been proved as the major distraction of current generation.

Similarly, Banquil and Burce (2009) found a continuing drop of grades among student who were users of social networking sites. In addition, Boogart and Robert (2006) declared that use of SNSs and Facebook have detrimental impacts on academic performance of student users. Subsequently, Grabmeier (2009) observed that students having lower GPAs were mostly those who log in any SNS. Internet abuses are increasing at an alarming rate and stressing a serious need to promote usage regulations among student users.

Methodology

Survey method with the use of questionnaire was used for data collection. Copies of questionnaire were administered on NCE students of College of Education Ikere-Ekiti with the assistance of trained research assistance. Twenty percent (10%) of the entire College of Education Ikere-Ekiti NCE students' population of 2820 was sampled for the study through systematic simple random sampling technique. The sample size is supported by Babbie, (2005). He was of the opinion that for a population of 1000 and above, a sample size of 10 -20% is acceptable. To improve the Reliability and validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was pilot-tested on similar but smaller sample group from All State College of Education, a private College of Education situated at Akure Ondo State. Observed errors, corrections and re-wordings discovered were effected and incorporated into the main instrument. From the total of two hundred and eighty two (282) copies of questionnaire distributed, two hundred and sixty six (266) copies were filled and returned, representing a response rate of 94.3%.

Results

1. Research Question 1: Does social networking affect the reading habits of students?

Table 1: Effect of social networking on students reading habit

S/N	QUESTIONS	YES	%	NO	%
1.	Does social networking distract students while reading in class?	196	73.7	70	26.3
2.	Does social networking increases socialization contact with friends?	172	64.7	94	35.3
3.	Does social networking reduces time for reading?	203	76.3	63	23.7
4.	Does social networking makes student come late to classes or misses lectures?	162	60.9	104	39.1
5.	Does social network expose students to illicit act?	112	42.1	154	57.9

From the above table 1, it was clear that social networking site has an effect on the reading habit of students. The first indication was that they are distracted when friends communicate with them while they are reading. These constitute 196 (73.7%) of the respondents who are the highest number that said yes to

this. 172 of (64.7%) of the respondents said yes to social networking increases of socialization while 94 (35.3%) said NO. On the reduction of time available for reading, 203 (76.3%) said yes while 63 (23.7%) said NO. Also, 162 (60.9%) of the respondents agreed and said yes that their concentration on the social network sites can make one forget time and go to classes late or even miss lectures. While 112 (42.1%) respondents said social network does not expose students to illicit acts.

Research Question 2 : How frequent do students use social network sites?

Table 2: Frequency of use of social network

S/N	FREQUENCY OF USE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
1.	Several times a day	181	68
2.	Daily	59	22.2
3.	Weekly	12	4.5
4.	Occasionally	14	5.3
	Total	266	100

Table 2 above revealed the majority of the students total 181 (68%) of the respondents use social network site several times a day, others 59 (22.2%) of the respondents indicated that they use it once a day. This showed that the interest to get connected to their friends makes them use it frequently.

Research Question 3: How many hours do students spend on browsing social network sites?

Table 3: Time spent on the social network site per visit

S/N	TIME SPENT PER VISIT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
1.	Less than 15 minutes	72	27
2.	15 - 30 minutes	80	30.1
3.	30 minutes - 1 hour	93	35
4.	1 - 2 hours	21	7.9
	Total	266	100

The above table 3 reveals the times students spent when they visit their site of interest. Majority 93 (35%) of the respondents spent between 30 minutes to an hour. This means that each time they log into the site, they spent not less than 30 minutes to 1 hour. When related to table ii, it was a clear evident that the spending of more of their time on social media has a tendency to reduce the time students spend on their personal readings.

Research Question 4: What are the students' reasons for using social network?

Table 4: Reasons for using social network

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
For Reading/Academic Purpose		
To communicate with lecturers	14	5.3
To share and exchange academic information	40	15
Source materials to read for examination and test	24	9
Reading of newspaper/magazines	12	4.5
For Non Academic Purpose		
Chatting with friends	80	30.1
Photo sharing	40	15
To create groups of likeminded individual	40	15
Online dating	13	4.9
To create/post photo (nudity)	3	1.2
Total	266	100

The table 4 above shows that students use social network for various reasons. The table indicates that majority of them use social network for non-academic purposes than for academic purposes. This is well exposed when the highest number of 80 (30.1%) of the respondents indicated their reasons to be for chatting with friend, others 40 (15%) respondents stated photo sharing and creating groups of like-minded individual respectively while 40 (15%) respondents use social network for academic purposes.

Discussion of Findings

Distraction, increased socialization, reduction in time of reading, lateness to lecture room and illicit act were the major effects of social networking among NCE students of College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti. The study revealed that 196 (73.7%) of the respondents said YES to the question Does social networking distract students while reading in class? This agrees with Kirschner and Karpinski (2009) state that users of Social Networking Sites devote lesser time to their studies than the non users and subsequently had lower grades in their academic courses. Further Karpinski (2009) says that among various unique distractions of every generation, Social Networking Sites have been proved as the major distraction of current generation.

On the frequency of usage, several time a day had the highest respondents with 181 (68%), once a day with 59 (22.2%) of the respondents agreed to using social network site once a day. This position agrees with Nicole Ellison's study (2008) on Social Networking Sites provides very thought provoking insights. According to this study, 85 % of the respondents use one or more social networking sites. The majority of the users of Social Networking Sites spend 5 hours or less per week.

Two major purposes were identified in this study being reasons for the use of social networking, i.e academic purposes and non-academic purposes. Majority of the respondents agreed that usage of social networking was majorly for non-academic purposes. Chatting with friends with 80 (30.1%), photo sharing 40 (15.0%) and to create groups of likeminded individual with 40 (15.0%) while sharing and exchange academic information with 40 (15.0%). This greed with the findings of Vitak (2008) that there are various reasons as to why individuals use a social networking site. The first reason is for them to meet strangers and become friends. On the other hand, a strong interpersonal relationship with offline friends needs time and effort to be maintained. Coyle and Vaughn (2008) in their study examined the literature on Social Networking Sites and conducted a survey on how college students are engaged in social networking. They found that the main purpose of using Social Networking Sites is to keep in touch with friends. Further, in the research studies of Chernigo Barnett – Ellis (2007), Subrahmanyam and Lin (2007), Valkenburg and Peter (2006) and Huang (2008) it has been found that the college students are using Social Networking Sites more than older people. Mikolaj Jan Piskorski (2009) in his study, "Understanding the Uses of Social Networks", cites that people love to look at pictures, which is the killer application of all online Social Networking Sites.

Conclusion

Since technology is the main order of the day, the study therefore concluded that social network has strongly affected the reading habits of students but also social network could be used wisely not only for keeping in touch with friends but also to provide vital academic information that would be of great benefit to the students and the society at large.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

College management should intensify enlightenment campaign on the negative effects of social networking among the students. For effective campaign, it should be through music, drama, lectures and other forms of interaction.

There should be a forum where students will be given orientation on the appropriate time for social networking. Since most of these students access social network sites with wireless network (cell phones), normal phone culture and habit lectures should be organized for them by experts.

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