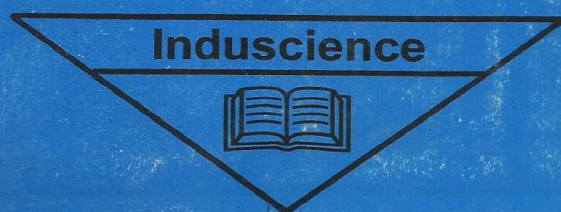


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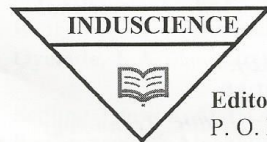
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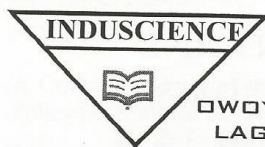
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AN OVERVIEW OF HOME VIDEO, CYBER CULTURE AND READING HABITS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IBADAN CITY

SAMSON OLUSOLA OLATUNJI

A generally poor reading culture has been identified as the major factor for the abysmally poor performance of a typical Nigerian student in various subjects at school as well as in public examinations. For students in urban areas, the home video culture and the cyber culture have also been blamed as catalysts to the poor reading culture among the students. This simple survey conducted on a sample of three hundred students in Ibadan City sought to find out the length of time being habitually spent by senior secondary school students on each of these three sub-cultures in Ibadan city.

Background to the Study

The Place of Reading in Learning

The indispensable role of reading in any learning activity has been attested to by many scholars. It is said to be the process through which most formal learning takes place (Kolawole, 2003; Onukaogu, 2003). Reading is described by Kolawole (2003) as involving recognition of printed or written symbols, comprehension of same through meaning negotiation, retention of the information got as well as the recall of such information whenever needed. This shows that actual reading is a highly complex process.

Onukaogu (2003 and 2007) posits that reading is vital to the promotion of a people's culture and civilization. He, therefore, pins the blame of the obscurity of Nigerian indigenous civilization, which he claims to be superior to the imported, on the fact that our forefathers lamentably had no literacy culture. Headlam (2003) opines that a world of literacy exists in written texts and that lack of a book publishing industry is a strong negative factor that can prevent access into that world of knowledge. This same view is corroborated by Christopher (2007), Okediran (2002) as well as Adetunji and Oladeji (2007).

The personal testimony of the transforming power of books given by Ben Carson (1990) cannot be wisely ignored. The facts that his mother had earlier asserted that reading would make such a great impact on his life and it happened to the extent that Ben has eventually emerged one of the foremost neurosurgeons worldwide proves the consistency of that transforming potential of books. It is, however, unfortunate that as uplifting as books are, the reading culture is fast disappearing from among Nigerian students. A probe into the students' reading habits is thus a worthwhile venture.

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The Cyber Culture and Formal Learning

Several scholars have asserted that information and communication technologies are being used to tremendous advantage in teaching and learning processes generally and language teaching and learning in particular (Taff, 1997; Boswood, 1997; Biesembach- Lucas, 2007; Lai, 2004; Omekwu, 2003; Tabe, 2007; and Olusanjo, 2007). The Internet (also known as the Net) has been identified as the most prominent technological innovation of our time, the most robust communication technology that facilitates data transfer (netlingo, n.d).

El-Rufai (in *New Age*, Monday, June 13, 2007) and Tabe (2007) are of the conviction that without the Internet, education cannot catch up with the happenings in the world. Lai (2004) reports using e-mail (an Internet facility) to teach language topics in practical situations successfully. Biesembach- Lucas (2007) too opines that e-mail holds great prospects for the teaching of stylistics and communicative competence through text- only medium. Cobb, Greaves and Horst (n.d) observe that with the arrival of the Internet, the problem of "too little to read" no longer exists because learners can now search from web site to web site for specific information. There were, according to Omekwu (2003), 1.5billion pages on the Internet in 1993 and almost 2 million pages are added each day. It should be born in mind that the pages are meant to be read. The pieces of information gathered can be of immeasurable help to the academic development of a serious-minded student.

Cyber cafes, commercial places where the Internet can be accessed, increase in Ibadan at a rate that cannot be ignored. People can also access the Net right from their handsets that have been so configured. Students from different levels of education in Nigeria can be seen going to browse the net, send or receive e-mails, engage in on- line charting, and so on.

This writer has also personally observed that many students even go for all-night cyber activities in addition to their day browsing. These diurnal and nocturnal patronage of cyber cafes in metropolitan cities like Ibadan (that can pass for cyber culture addiction) should be expected to reflect positively in the general academic performance of the students considering the good reports that extant literature gives about the application of the Internet to educational pursuits in developed countries, some of which have been cited in this paper.

It is, however, pathetic and stunning that the results released by examining bodies like WAEC and NECO reveal a consistent downward trend in performance. Olatunji (2008) observes that less than thirty percent of the candidates that attempted the West African Senior Secondary School Examination in 1997-2006 had up to the minimum English language grade requirement for admission to tertiary institutions.

One then wonders why the digital literacy skills employed by the students in the cyber cafes do not seem to help them to acquire the right type of information needed for successful academic pursuits. But the following words of Ndukwe (2006) can help solve the riddle: *I am not sure I have seen anybody who goes to the Web (or Internet) with the intention to read. Generally, people go to the Internet to browse; and browsing is a very distinct and different skill compared*

to reading. Learning how to browse the Internet is a small but important part of acquiring digital literacy. p. 2.

Home Vide and Students Academic Development

Mejia (n.d.) convincingly testifies that video and video technology are now being increasingly developed and used for language instruction. Of course, her study was majorly focused on the use of videos for language teaching in a classroom situation. But it would not be out of order to assert in this paper that since videos enhance language teaching in the classroom, they can also facilitate language learning outside the classroom. Therefore, student who are blessed with ample opportunities to interact with video materials in urban areas, all other things being equal, are expected to excel their counterparts that lack such opportunities.

Studies that prove the invaluable positive impact, of employing videos in language teaching and learning abound (<http://www.musicalenglishlessons.org/video-bean1.htm>; and http://www.tdsoaillskill.com/usinvideo_to_teach_social_skill.htm). Ogunsola (2004), while acknowledging the immensely positive role that video cassettes play in literacy development, however, observes that Nigeria is yet to exploit the full benefit of the materials for educational purposes. It then becomes worrisome that the innumerable video productions that flood our market places and video clubs must have been put to counter-productive uses, thus being inimical to anything that is of educational value, reading habit being an integral component. Kaufman (2007) is of the conviction that the proliferation of home videos is obviously anti-reading culture. A study of this nature that probes the veracity of such a claim thus becomes a welcome development. **Research Procedure**

The target population for the study comprised all senior secondary school students in Ibadan city. The simple survey was conducted to find the levels of devotion of the target population to home video viewing, cyber culture and reading. The study sample was made up of three hundred Senior Secondary School Class Two students from ten different comprehensive schools, two schools from each of the five local government areas that constitute Ibadan city. Each of the sampled schools is described as comprehensive because it comprises all the three subject divisions recognized in the Nigerian education system at that level: Arts; Science; and Social Science. A total of thirty respondents were selected through stratified random sampling from each school thus:

SUBJECT	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
Science	5	5	10
Social Science	5	5	10
Arts	5	5	10
Total	15	15	30

With the above sampling procedure done in ten schools, the three hundred students study sample was constituted. The rationale for choosing SS 2 was majorly the fact that students at that level are expected to have become matured enough and conscious of the imminence of their secondary school leaving certificate examination. So, their reading habits must have been well formed and near its peak. SSS 3 was not chosen because the students at that level may have become subject to the "panic reading syndrome," thus being artificial.

The main research instrument was a self-constructed twenty-two item student's questionnaire titled Home Video, Cyber Culture and Reading Habit among Nigerian Secondary School Students. Section A of the questionnaire introduces the exercise, explains its purpose and solicits cooperation from the prospective respondents. Section B seeks information about the sex and subject class division of each respondent. Section C comprises six items seeking information about each respondent's reading habits. Section D has nine items on the students' Internet culture while section E is made up of six items for collecting information about the home video viewing habits of the respondents.

Thirty copies of the questionnaire were trial-tested on students in schools other than those selected for the actual study sample. The validation procedure on the instrument yielded 81.3 cronbach alpha. The researcher went to each school to administer the questionnaire personally on the students with the help of their English language teachers. The questionnaire copies were retrieved immediately, thus eliminating any possibility of loss as well as externally influenced responses.

The descriptive statistics of frequency counts and simple percentages were employed in analyzing the data collected. These were used in answering earlier formulated research questions.

Discussion of Findings

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the frequency of the time spent by senior secondary school students in Ibadan city on reading, home video viewing, and cyber cafe activities respectively?

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Time Spent on Reading, Home Videos, and Cyber Cafe Activities by SSS Students in Ibadan City

Activity	Frequency						Total
	Daily	5-6 Days/Week	3-4 Days/week	2 Days/week	Weekly	Not stated	
Reading	197(65.67%)	72(24%)	30(10%)	1(0.33%)	-	-	300(100%)
Home Video	62(20.67%)	189(63%)	12(4%)	-	37(12.33%)	-	300(100%)
Cyber Cafe	-	-	-	17(5.6%)	32(10.67%)	19(6.33%)	68(22.9%)

Table 1 reveals that 197(65.67%) of the respondents indicated that they read daily while 62(20.67%) of the same sample confessed watching home videos daily. None of them however goes to the cyber cafe daily. This shows that the frequency of reading is much higher than any other of the three activities under study. Furthermore, 72(24%) of them claimed to read about 5-6 days per week while a higher number (189 or 63%) of them watch home videos at the same frequency respectively. While 30(10%) of the respondents read between 3 and 4 days per week, only 12(4%) of them watch home videos at the same frequency. But none of them (0%) visits the cyber cafe as frequently as that. While only 1(0.33%) of them claimed to read only 2 days per week, a greater number (17 or 5.67%) of them visit the cyber cafe so frequently. But none of them (0%) claimed to watch home videos as frequently.

While 37(12.33%) respondents indicated watching home videos weekly, 32(10.67%) engage in cyber cafe activities as frequently. 19(6.33%) of them did not indicate how frequently they visit the cyber cafe. But random personal and casual discussions with some of the students revealed that some of such students visit the cyber cafe so irregularly and rarely that they cannot actually place the frequency. The bottom line is that reading is the most frequently engaged in by the students. This is followed by home video viewing and internet browsing respectively.

Research Question 2: What is the average duration of each reading, home video viewing, and Internet, surfing session by the students?

Table 2: Statistical Representation of the Duration of Each Reading, Home Video Viewing, and Internet Activity Session by Students

Duration	Activity		
	Reading	Home Video	Internet
4-5 hors	16(5.33%)	47(15.67%)	-
2-3 hrs	133(44.33%)	128(42.67%)	23(7.67%)
1 hr	123(41%)	125(41.67%)	32(10.67%)
30 mins	17(5.67%)	-	12(45)
Not stated	11(3.67%)	-	3(1%)
Total	300(100%)	200(100%)	70(2

Table 2 shows that only reading and home video have respondents who engage in them for upward of 4-5 hours at a time (16 or 5.33% for reading and 47 or 15.67% for home videos). Less of the students (128 or 42.67%) spend up to 2-3 hours on home videos than those who spend as much on reading (133 or

44.44%). None of the respondents spends up to 4-5 hours in the cyber cafe. But 23(7.67%) of the whole sample (which is 32.86% of the actual Internet-literate sample) spend an average of 2-3 hours in the cyber cafe per period. 123 (41%), 125(41.67%), and 32(10.67%) of the total sample (including 45.71 % of the 70 Internet-literate) spend an average of 1 hour on reading, home videos, and Internet respectively.

Only 17(5.67%) of the students spend about 30 minutes for each reading session while none spends so short a period on home videos. 12(4%) spend an average of 30 min in the cyber cafe at a time. 11 (3.67%) respondents could not state the average duration of their staying power on reading because of gross haphazard nature of their reading habits. The foregoing analysis shows that students stay longer on home videos than reading while Internet browsing takes the shortest length of time at a stretch.

Research Question 3: Do the students read books other than those recommended for their school subjects?

Table 3: Description of the Students' Rate of reading Non- Recommended Texts

	No of Responses
Affirmative	156(52%)
Denial	139(46.33%)
Not Indicated	5(1.67%)
Total	300(100%)

According to Table 3, while 156(52%) of the respondents affirmed that they read books other than those recommended for their school subjects, 139(46.33%) indicated otherwise, but 5(1.67%) gave no response. This percentage of the students who read beyond the recommended texts is not satisfactory considering the fact that at the penultimate level of secondary school education, more of the respondents ought to have cultivated more vibrant reading culture.

Research Question 4: How do the students perceive their textbooks and subject notes, home video contents, and the Internet materials in terms of ease of comprehension?

Table 4: Presentation of Students' Perception of their Textbooks, and Subject Notes, Home Video Contents, and Internet Materials in Terms of Ease of Comprehension?

Material	Rate of Ease of Comprehension					
	Very Easy	Easy	Difficult	Very Difficult	Neutral	Total
Subject texts	133(44.33%)	104(34.67%)	28(9.33%)	7(2.33%)	29(9.33%)	302(100%)
Internet Materials	47(15.67%)	23(7.67%)	-	-	-	70(23.3%)
Home videos	246(82%)	54(18%)	-	-	-	300(100%)

According to Table 4, a total of 237 responses (133 for *Very Easy* and 104 for *Easy* respectively) indicated that the students find their subject texts easy while a total of 35 (28 for *Difficult* and 7 for *Very Difficult* respectively) perceived their subject texts difficult. However, 28(9.33%) were silent on the issue. Furthermore, all of the 300 respondents (246 for *Very Easy* and 54 for *Easy*) affirmed that they find home video contents easy to comprehend. All of the 70 respondents that signified that they know how to browse (47 for very easy 23 for easy) perceive Internet materials as easy. Though 70 constitute only 23.34% of the whole study sample, it is actually 100% of those who browse that judge the Internet materials easy to comprehend. This means home video and internet materials enjoy 100% acceptance as easy to comprehend while the students' reading texts enjoy 79% acceptance as easy.

Research Question 5: In what order of excitement do the students' rate their subject texts, home video contents, and Internet materials?

Table 5: Students' Perception of the Subject based texts, Cyber café Materials and Home Video according to Degrees of Liveliness

Material	Rate of Ease of Responses					Total
	Very Interesting	Interesting	Natural	Boring	Terribly Boring	
Subject Texts	58(19.33%)	12(4%)	-	-	-	7
Internet Materials	130(43.33%)	117(39%)	23(7.67%)	27(9%)	3(1%)	3
Home videos	245(81.67%)	55(18.33%)	-	-	-	3

Table 5 reveals that 247 (82.33%) of the respondents consider their subject-based text interesting (130 or 43.33% for very interesting and 117 or 39% for

interesting). A much greater part, in fact a perfect percentage (300 or 100%), agreed that home video contents are interest (245 or 81.67% for very interesting and 55 or 18.33% for interesting). It is noteworthy that though only 70 (23.33%) of the total sample agreed that internet materials are interesting to them, this is actually 100% of those who know how to browse. This can thus be safely concluded to presuppose that had all of the students been Internet-literate, almost all of them probably would have agreed.

Research Question 6: How educative do the students perceive their subject based texts, Internet materials, and home videos?

Table 6: Students' Perception of the Educative Qualities of the Subject-Based Texts, Internet, and Home Videos?

Material	Frequency of Responses			
	Highly Educative	Averagely Educative	Not Educative	Total
Internet	57(19%)	13(4.33%)		70(23.33%)
Subject-Based Text	194(64.67%)	106(35.33%)		300(100%)
Home Videos	264(88%)	36(12%)		300(100%)

Table 6 shows that all the students agreed that all of the three types of materials are educative. In the same vein, all of the few that are Internet-Literate perceive the materials got from that source as educative. However, considering the different degrees of accepting the materials as Highly Educative, it is clear that they rank Home Videos (264 or 88%); Internet 57(19% of 23.33 total percentage); and subject- based texts (194 or 64.67%) in that descending order.

Summary of Findings

The findings from the study are summarized thus:

- Senior secondary school students in Ibadan city read their books oftener than they watch home videos.
- Most of the students are not functionally Internet literate. The small home percentages that know how to browse do not take the advantage as often as they read and watch home videos.
- Home videos, however, sustain the students' interest and attention much longer than books do.
- The Internet takes the least of the students' time, perhaps because of the prohibitive cost of Internet access in Nigeria.

- Almost half of the senior secondary school students limit their reading to recommended subject-based textbooks.
- The students perceive home videos most interesting, followed by Internet materials and books respectively.
- They rate home video series easiest to comprehend, followed by Internet materials and books respectively.
- They also perceive home videos most educative, followed by subject-based texts and internet materials respectively.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are made:

- All efforts at reviving the reading culture in our secondary schools need to be intensified as many of the students do not read enough. Focus must be on general interest reading
- No stone must be left unturned in order to make the students Internet literate so that they may maximally harness the world of educational resources available on net.
- Governments and all other stakeholders in the education industry in Nigeria should start exploiting the benefits of the home videos for educational purposes.

It is the strong and sincere conviction of this writer that if all these recommendations are implemented, the chain effects of the revival of reading culture on many other aspects of national life could be worth more-than the effort.

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