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Use of Social Media and Reading Habits Among Undergraduate Students in University of Ilorin, Nigeria

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Abstract

A descriptive study was conducted among undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin to investigate social media use on their reading habits. The total population consists of 43,983 full-time undergraduates and purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample population from the faculties of Arts and Communication and Information Sciences which had a total population of 6,202. Slovin formula was used to select a total sample of 376 students. A four point Likert Type Rating Scale Questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Three research questions guided the study and to achieve a very fine result, descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Based on the results of the findings it can be concluded that social media has both positive and negative effects on the reading pattern of students. This is because they access social media everyday and spend more than one hour reading, social media has increased their access to foreign information. But social media has also had negative effects on their reading habit of academic textbooks because they have not completely read a textbook in the last few months, they have reduced usage of print since they started reading online (since academic textbooks online do not come cheap) which can affect their academic performance. Finally, University of Ilorin students prefer reading news on social media to print newspapers which can make them to be grossly misinformed. Sources of news on the internet are highly infiltrated and not validated. This can be misleading with a lot of fake news which can lead to social unrest.

Keywords: Reading habits, Undergraduates, Social media use.

Introduction

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 to survive in life. Reading according to Holte (1998) adds quality to life and provides access to culture and cultural heritage. He pointed out that reading empowers and emancipates citizens and bring people together. 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 into the life and experiences of others and extend our knowledge, scope of experience and enjoyment. It has critical role to play in the overall development of an individual and the nation at large.

Social media is that means of employing mobile and web based technology to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and community share, co-create, discuss and modify user-generated content (Kietzmannn, 2012). Social media is a phrase being tossed around a lot. It is a website that does not just give you information but interact with you while giving you information. It is a group of internet based application that allows the creation and exchange of users generated content. It is easy to confuse social media with social news because we often refer to members of the news as the media. Adding to it, that social news site is also social media site. Some media website include: Social Bookmarking: interact by tagging website and searching through website book marked by others (Blink list, simple). Social News: interact by voting for articles and commenting on them (Digg, propello). Social Networking: interact by adding friends, commenting on photo and profiles, sharing groups for discussions (Facebook, 2go, BB chat) Social Photo and Video Sharing: interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on the user submission. (Youtube and Fliki). Wikis: interact by adding articles and editing existing articles. (Wikipedia, wikia). Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share, exchange and comment among themselves in different networks. Andreas and Michael (2010) are of the opinion that social media is a group of internet based application that builds on the ideological foundation and allows the creation and exchange of users - generated content. Social media has become one of the major channels of chatting through platforms such as 2go, BB chat, blogger and wiki a. There has been an increase in the mobile social media which has created new opportunity for browsing.

The internet usage effect of social media, in the view of Nielsen (2012) is that, students continue to spend more time on the social media than any site. The total time spent on social media across mobile devices increased by 37%, 121 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 88 billion minutes in July 2011. According to Adu and Tella(2013), the situation now is like an undergraduate student who does not belong to one social networking site or the other such student is dwelling in the past and not going in the direction, trend and development of information and socialisation in the world. 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 (The Hindu,

art of reading is a priceless instrument for everyone. It is one of the most important activities of life through which we enter into the life and experiences of others and extend our knowledge, scope of experience and enjoyment. It has critical role to play in the overall development of an individual and the nation at large.

Social media is that means of employing mobile and web based technology to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and community share, co-create, discuss and modify user-generated content (Kietzmannn, 2012). Social media is a phrase being tossed around a lot. It is a website that does not just give you information but interact with you while giving you information. It is a group of internet based application that allows the creation and exchange of users generated content. It is easy to confuse social media with social news because we often refer to members of the news as the media. Adding to it, that social news site is also social media site. Some media website include: Social Bookmarking: interact by tagging website and searching through website book marked by others (Blink list, simple). Social News: interact by voting for articles and commenting on them (Digg, propello). Social Networking: interact by adding friends, commenting on photo and profiles, sharing groups for discussions (Facebook, 2go, BB chat) Social Photo and Video Sharing: interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on the user submission. (Youtube and Fliki). Wikis: interact by adding articles and editing existing articles. (Wikipedia, wikia). Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share, exchange and comment among themselves in different networks. Andreas and Michael (2010) are of the opinion that social media is a group of internet based application that builds on the ideological foundation and allows the creation and exchange of users - generated content. Social media has become one of the major channels of chatting through platforms such as 2go, BB chat, blogger and wiki a. There has been an increase in the mobile social media which has created new opportunity for browsing.

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2004). Students now lack the skill of reading, instead they spend more hours on electronic media. Browsing the net, playing with funky handsets and passing non-stop SMSs 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 an archaic idea for most school children and adults (The Hindu, 2004). The declining interest in reading habit among undergraduates is a cause for alarm and a challenge to all and something needs to be done to alleviate this yawning problem. It is therefore of great importance to explore some of the trending issues facing students' reading habit as a result of social media usage. Thus, this study aims at achieving the following:

1. Determine students' frequency of reading, why students read and when they read.
2. State the purposes for which students make use of social media and the frequency of their usage.
3. Determine the effects of social media usage on the reading pattern of students.

To achieve the above stated objectives, the following research questions were developed and answered by the study

1. What is the students' frequency of reading, why students read and when they read?
2. What are the purposes for which students make use of social media and the frequency of their usage?
3. What are the effects of social media usage on the reading pattern of students?

Literature review

Traditional reading habit and reading in technological age

Traditional reading habit" is the reading of books published in the form of paper only. Typical of this reading habit are mostly elderly people and some young people who stick to their old reading habit although the use of computers for reading has been popular for quite some years, in other words their traditional reading habit has not changed in any way since the arrival of the digital age. Like these older readers, some young people have the same reading habit. During the last few years, they have no access to computers and so they have studied through printed books or notes.

Computers have now become popular but such young readers are still accustomed to reading from paper instead of on screen especially for the purpose of work and thus printed publications are still essential to them for reading purposes.

The Internet may have lots of resources, but such traditional readers find them uncomfortable to use. Reading is a very powerful and indispensable equipment for learning and acquisition of varied skills and experiences needed by man to develop a satisfactory personal life. It is important that students should develop positive habits towards reading of books as a life-long learning experience.

This is important now that an increasing number of people are spending less time reading and also when reading skills are declining. According to Ikpaahindi (2008), research has shown that more than half of the adults in Nigeria hardly ever read a book. He stressed that those who do read spend a much smaller part of their leisure time doing so, compared to 25 years ago. Powell-Brown (2003) cited in Popoola, Ajibade and Etim (2010) reported that a few of her pre-service teachers never loved to read. She pointed out that although many of them know how to read, they prefer to gather information through movies, television, websites and conversations. Ojielo (2001) in support highlighted that Nigerians prefer listening to story instead of reading, a practice which accounts for the popularity of home video among the people.

Kaufman (2001) observed that children spend their time watching TV and playing video games when they are not spending a great deal of time reading and writing. Statistics collected according to Kaufman by the U.S Department of Education "National Centre for Educational Statistics" shows that students' achievement in both reading and writing has been declining in recent times. Ikpaahindi (2008) rightly observed that information and communication technology especially internet technology is having an adverse effect on the reading culture of Nigerians. This is because it discourages lazy students from engaging in serious reading. Many students prefer to spend most of their time in the cyber cafes, browsing, playing games, chatting with friends. Ezema and Ekere (2009) identified that only few schools have good libraries while majority have limited dog-eared books locked up in few cupboards.

In the past, undergraduates rely heavily on print materials such as newspapers, textbooks, handbooks etc for information because they help to create and improve reading habits, knowledge, and awareness. They can be part of good study habit for students in any area of specialization (Kumar, Singh and Siddiqui, 2011). Most recently, there have been worrisome observations about the reading habits of the teaming population in some countries in Africa and some parts of the world. Bobda (2011) cited in Ofodu (2012), while investigating the reading habits of some postgraduate high school student-teachers in Yaounde stated that the lack of reading skills in Africa and most especially in Cameroun is a phenomenon often

the review of the literature that there is the worrisome phenomenon of poor reading habits of students coupled with the fact that social media usage by students has revolutionized the reading habits of young people especially in tertiary institutions.

Methodology

Method and Design

The research design that was adopted for this study is descriptive survey. This design was considered because it enables the researcher to generate data through the standardized collection procedures based on highly structured research instrument(s) and well defined study concepts and related variables.

Data Collection Instrument: Data was collected from selected participants using a pre-tested structured questionnaire, which were self-administered by the participants after giving written informed consent.

Population: The total population consists of all the 43,983 full-time undergraduates from 15 faculties in University of Ilorin and purposive sampling technique was used to select Faculties of Arts and Communication and Information Sciences from the 15 Faculties which had a total population of 6,202.

Sample Selection: In order to determine the required sample for the population, Slovin's Formula was used to compute the sample size to select certain number of respondents from each department present in the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences, it was made sure that each academic level was represented although the number was not equal due to the fact that all 300 level students in the faculty of Communication and Information Sciences were on SIWES break as at the time of administering the questionnaires. Ghazali (2006) as cited in Kule (2016) stated that one of the best ways to calculate sample size is Slovin's Formula. The formula is given below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2};$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the total population, and e is the confidence level. The above formula was used to calculate the sample size (n) which was selected from the Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences and Faculty of Arts out of the total population of the University. , where: N (population) = 6202 (population of faculties of Arts and Communication and information sciences), A total of 367 respondents were gotten using the Slovin's Formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the data. This include percentages and frequencies, Tables and charts, were appropriately used to present the data that was collected for ease of understanding and analysis.

Table 1: Demographic Information.

DEMOGRAPHIC		Frequency	Percentage(%)
Faculty	Communication and information sciences	89	(24.4%)
	Arts	277	(75.6%)
	Total	366	(100.0%)
Departments	Computer science	23	(6.3%)
	Information and communication science	15	(4.1%)
	Library and information science	22	(6.0%)
	Mass communication	14	(3.8%)
	Telecommunication	15	(4.1%)
	Arabic	4	(1.1%)
	English	56	(15.0%)
	French	8	(2.2%)
	History	68	(18.6%)
	Linguistics	52	(12.6%)
	Performing arts	34	(9.3%)
	Religion	55	(15.0%)
	Total	366	(100.0%)
Academic level	100	102	(27.9%)
	200	108	(29.6%)
	300	0	(0.0%)
	400	155	(42.5%)
	Total	366	(100.0%)
	Total	180	(49.0%)
Gender	Male	186	(51.0%)
	Female	186	(51.0%)
	Tota	366	(100.0%)
Years of social media experience	Below 2 years	15	(4.1%)
	2 - 5 years	67	(18.1%)
	6 years and above	284	(77.8%)
	Total	366	(100.0%)

Table 1 shows the demographics distributions of the respondents that while 89(24.4%) are from the faculty of communication and information sciences, 277(75.6%) of the respondents are from the faculty of Arts all in the university of Ilorin. The respondents also vary by departments of which computer science has 23(6.3%), Information and communication science has 15(4.1%), Library and

information science has 22(6.0%), Mass communication has 14 (3.8%), Telecommunication has 15(4.1%), Arabic has 4 (1.1%), English has 56(15.9%), French has 8(2.2%), History has 68(18.6%), Linguistics has 52(12.6%), Performing arts has 34(9.3%) and lastly Religion has 55(15.9%). The table shows that the majority of the respondents representing 155(42.5%) are in their 400 level followed by 108(29.6%) of respondents who are in their 200 level. However, 102(27.9%) and 0(0.0%) are in their 100 and 300 levels respectively. The reason why 300 level has 0 count is that the 300 level students of CIS were on SIWES and 300 level students of Arts had finished their test and are not available at the time of administering. The gender distribution shows that 186(51.0%) of the respondents are female as against 180(49.0%) respondents that are males. This means that the female students covered in the study are more than the male students and this is quite okay because the females tend to be more social media freak than their male counterparts. The table also show the years of social media experience of which 6 years and above has the highest respondents with 284 (77.8%), below two years has the lowest with 15(4.1%) while 2-5 years has 67(18.1%). Justification for the uneven years of social media experience is that most undergraduate students have social media experience even before they got admitted into higher institution.

Table 2: Frequency of reading, reasons for reading and when undergraduate students read

ITEM	SD	D	A	SA
I enjoy reading very much	(7%)	(10%)	(67%)	(16%)
I have favorites childhood book	(10%)	(31%)	(44%)	(15%)
I read everyday	(5%)	(33%)	(46%)	(16%)
I go through my books after every lecture	(6%)	(24%)	(59%)	(11%)
I always read ahead of lectures	(12%)	(29%)	(51%)	(8%)
I spend less than an hour on reading	(9%)	(59%)	(24%)	(8%)
I have completely read a textbook in these last few months	(11%)	(51%)	(30%)	(8%)
I read for leisure	(4%)	(18%)	(56%)	(22%)
I read newspaper	(4%)	(36%)	(45%)	(15%)
I read to seek information for myself	(11%)	(2%)	(60%)	(27%)
I read to solve my assignments	(0%)	(0%)	(52%)	(48%)
I only read for exams	(20%)	(39%)	(27%)	(14%)

From Table 2, Agreed has the highest response with 245(67%) based on "I enjoy reading very much" and Strongly agreed has the lowest response with 25(7%). For I have favorite childhood books Agreed has the highest with 162(44%) while the lowest respond is strongly disagreed with 37(10%). Agreed has the highest respond with 169(46%) based on "I read everyday" and strongly disagreed has the lowest respond of 18(5%). Agreed has the highest respond with 216(59%) for "I go through my books after every lecture" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response of 22(6%). Agreed has the highest response of 186(51%) for "I always read ahead of lectures" and strongly disagreed has the lowest respond of 43(12%). Disagreed has the lowest response with 217(59%) for "I spend less than an hour on reading" and strongly agreed has the lowest respond of 30(8%). Disagreed has the highest range of respond with 186(51%) for "I have completely read a textbook in these last few months" while strongly agreed has the lowest response with 30(8%). Agreed has the highest response with 206(56%) for the item "I read for leisure" and strongly disagreed has the lowest respond with 13(4%). Agreed has the highest with 169(45%) for "I read newspaper" and strongly agreed has the lowest with 13(4%). Agreed has the highest respond of 218(60%) for I read to sought information for myself" and Strongly disagreed has the lowest respond with 40(11%). Agreed has the highest respond of 191(52%) for "I read to solve my assignments" while Disagreed has the lowest response with 30(8%). Lastly, Disagreed has the highest respond of 141(39%) for "I only read for exams" while strongly agreed has the lowest response with 52(14%).

Table 3: Purposes of which undergraduate makes use of social media and the frequency of their usage

ITEM	SD	D	A	SA
I only use social media to connect with people	(13%)	(26%)	(44%)	(18%)
I read news on social media	(3%)	(0%)	(61%)	(36%)
I prefer reading news on social media to reading newspaper	(3%)	(17%)	(39%)	(41%)
I use social media to keep me fully informed and updated on various topics and happenings around me	(0%)	(1%)	(53%)	(45%)
I am always eager to join educative groups on social media	(0%)	(7%)	(63%)	(30%)

Educative groups on social media help me in solving my assignment	(1%)	(9%)	(63%)	(27%)
Educative groups on social media help in my research work	(0%)	(5%)	(65%)	(30%)
Social media is used to share academic information on the go among students	(0%)	(0%)	(73%)	(27%)
I access social media everyday	(1%)	(8%)	(59%)	(32%)
I spend more than an hour on social media	(16%)	(25%)	(53%)	(5%)

From Table 3, Agreed has the highest response of 159(44%) for "I only use social media to connect with people" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 46(13%). Agreed has the highest response of 222(61%) "I read news on social media" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 0(0%). Strongly Agreed has the highest response of 148(41%) "I prefer reading news on social media to reading newspaper" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 12(3%). Agreed has the highest response of 195(53%) "I use social media to keep me fully informed and updated on various topics and happenings around me" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 0(0%). Agreed has the highest response of 229(63%) for "I am always eager to join educative groups on social media" and strongly disagreed has the lowest respond with 0(0%). Agreed has the highest response of 229(63%) for "Educative groups on social media help me in solving my assignment" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 5(1%). Agreed has the highest response of 236(65%) for "Educative groups on social media help in my research work" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 0(0%). Agreed has the highest response of 268(65%) for "Social media is used to share academic information on the go among students" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 5(1%). Agreed has the highest respond of 214(59%) for "I access social media everyday" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 5(1%). And lastly Agreed has the highest response of 195(53%) for "I spend less than an hour on social media" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 57(16%).

Table 4: Effects of social media usage on the reading pattern of students

ITEM	SD	D	A	SA
My reading time has reduced since I started using social media	(13%)	(44%)	(34%)	(9%)
I easily get lured by social media when I am reading	(7%)	(53%)	(35%)	(5%)
I get distracted by social media when I am reading	(8%)	(57%)	(32%)	(3%)
Social media has increased access to foreign information	(2%)	(1%)	(69%)	(28%)
Social media has increased contact with worldwide readers and researchers	(1%)	(4%)	(64%)	(30%)

There is a decrease in print materials usage since I started reading online	(0%)	(12%)	(51%)	(38%)
Social media have led to easier communication with my lecturers	(0%)	(21%)	(61%)	(18%)
It has been very easy sharing academic information among us students using social media	(2%)	(3%)	(62%)	(33%)
I stopped reading newspaper since I started reading news on social media	(1%)	(20%)	(56%)	(23%)

From Table 4, Disagreed has the highest response of 161(44%) "My reading time have reduced since I started using social media" and strongly agreed has the lowest response with 33(9%). Disagreed has the highest response of 128(35%) "I easily get lured by social media when I am reading" and strongly agreed has the lowest response with 19(5%). Disagreed has the highest response of 209(57%) "I get distracted by social media when I am reading" and strongly agreed has the lowest response with 11(3%). Agreed has the highest response of 251(69%) "Social media have increased access to foreign information" and strongly disagreed has the lowest respond with 8(2%). Agreed has the highest response of 234(64%) for "Social media have increases contact with worldwide readers and researchers" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 5(1%). Agreed has the highest response of 186(51%) for "There is decrease in print materials usage since I started reading online" and strongly disagreed has the lowest respond with 0(0%). Agreed has the highest response of 223(61%) for "Social media has led to easier communication with my lecturers" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 0(0%). Agreed has the highest respond of 225(62%) for "It has been very easy sharing academic information among us students using social media" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 8(2%). And lastly Agreed has the highest response of 203(56%) for "I stopped reading newspaper since I started reading news on social media" and strongly disagreed has the lowest response with 5(1%).

Discussion of findings

This section discusses the results obtained from the data analysis to provide a clear picture of the implications of the research results as well as establish a framework for the findings of this study.

Frequency of reading, reasons for reading and when undergraduate students read From the questionnaire distributed, it was revealed that Undergraduate students of university of Ilorin enjoy reading very well because they read every day(46%) and they have a favorite childhood book (44%). They go through their notes after every lecture and that they read ahead of lectures (59%).

Unilorin students spend more than one hour on reading (59%) but they have not completely read a textbook in the last few months(51%). One can conclude logically from this result that though University of Ilorin students may enjoy reading, the reading may not be targeted at academic related materials. Their main purpose of reading is to seek information for themselves and to solve their assignments, this further buttresses the fact that it may probably be that they are pushed to read academic related textbooks only when they have been given assignments. Lastly it was revealed that Unilorin students read before and after exams. It is no surprise that they may enjoy reading but what is particularly of interest will be what they enjoy to read about. This may corroborate with Ikpaahindi (2008) who rightly observed that information and communication technology especially internet technology is having adverse effect on the reading culture of Nigerians. This is because it discourages lazy students from engaging in serious reading.

Purposes of which undergraduate makes use of social media and the frequency of their usage

The findings from the questionnaire distributed to students of university of Ilorin shows that they access social media every day (59%) and they spend more than one hour on social media (53%). This finding is in line with the view of Nielsen (2012) that students continue to spend more time on social media than on other any site. The study also revealed the purposes of undergraduate usage of social media which are connecting with people, reading news, getting informed and updated on various topics and happenings around them, joining educative groups on social media and sharing information among students. It was revealed that Unilorin students prefer reading news on social media to reading newspapers (39%), Unilorin students believe that social media helps in their research work (65%) and that they are eager to join educative groups on social media (63%). But Cull (2011) is of the opinion that while the Internet is a text- saturated world, reading online screens tends to be significantly different from reading printed text. In his study, he reviewed literature from a variety of disciplines on the technological, social, behavioral and neuro-scientific impacts that the Internet is having on the practice of reading. A particular focus was given to the reading behavior of emerging university students, especially within Canada and the United States. A brief overview was provided of the recent transformation of academic libraries into providers of online digital text in addition to printed books and other materials. On the other hand, it seems it has had some negative effects on their reading habits. Instead of people reading books, they now listen to people talk on YouTube, Facebook etc. So, they do not feel the need to read any longer.

purchase textbooks sold online. This can lead to poor academic performance. They have also turned to social media to stay updated with news whose sources cannot be validated or verified. They can be misinformed with fake news which can incite political or social unrest.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researcher made some recommendations as follows: Students should be advised to limit the time they spend socializing on social media sites per day and they should be encouraged them to rather substitute those hours to read novels and relevant academic books to improve their knowledge. Lecturers should give students assignments that will necessitate them to consult in the library. Students should be educated more on how they can make use of social media to enhance their reading habit and other academic activities. It is further recommended that students be advised and educated on the dangers of addiction to social media sites and they should be introduced to social media sites that can add value to their academic work and research.

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