



Perceived Effect of Facebook on the Reading Habits of University Students in South-South Nigeria

Emordi Okonjo
emordiokonjo7@gmail.com
Delta State Polytechnic,
Ogwashi-uku, Delta State

Anthonia U. Echedum (Prof)
Nnamdi Azikiwe University,
Awka, Anambra State

Abstract

This research examined the perceived effect of Facebook on the reading habits of University students in South-south Nigeria. The study became necessary following evidences of the declining reading habits of students in Nigeria. Thus, this study investigated the effect of Facebook usage on voluntary reading habits, academic reading habits and recreational reading habits of students in universities in Edo and Delta states, South-south Nigeria. The population of this study is 28,100 consisting of all the final year students in government owned universities in Edo and Delta states, South-South Nigeria. The sample comprised of 563 final year students proportionately selected from three government owned universities in Edo and Delta states, Nigeria. The questionnaire was the main research instrument of the study. The instrument was checked for reliability using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient formula and a reliability coefficient of 0.73 was yielded. Copies of questionnaire were distributed with the aid of a research assistant. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Results showed that Facebook moderately affects voluntary, academic and recreational reading habits of university student. The study concluded that the influence of Facebook on reading habits can be moderated. Therefore, workable recommendations were made.

Keywords: Facebook, Reading, Reading Habits, University Students, South-South Nigeria

1.1 Introduction

Reading has come to hold the most significant place in education as a means of communication in a highly literate society. Book to read is still very much part of people's lives in our modern society and in spite of the invention of the latest audio-visual materials, the book in its ordinary conventional form is still the most important means of communication ever invented. Liepzig (2013)

is of the opinion that reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Reading is an effective activity which is done over a period of time in order to acquire knowledge, skills and attitude.

The activity of reading is regarded as a habit when it is repeatedly carried out. In measurable terms reading habits is often considered in terms of the amount of materials

being read, the frequency of reading as well as the average time spent on reading and this habit can be cultivated (Eyre, 2005). Reading habit therefore refers to the behaviour which expresses the likeness of reading of individual types of reading and tastes of reading. Similarly, Shen (2006) identifies reading habits, as how often, how much, and what students read. Similarly, Shen (2006) identifies reading habits, as how often, how much, and what students read.

Without a reading habit, a child can grow up with some difficulties, especially if in a line of work that requires reading at any level. Bignold (2003) indicated that the habit of reading improved children's reading skills. Hence, the issue of reading whether it is for learning or leisure is important since it helps broaden young people's experiences and knowledge. Furthermore, the researcher added that a good reading habit is necessary for a healthy intellectual growth and plays a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical efficiency. Reading habits, therefore, play a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical efficiency.

Through Facebook, people seek and enjoy the companionship of others online regardless of geographic and time barriers. Social network such as Facebook by nature has the capabilities of educating, informing, entertaining and inflaming the audience (Ezeah, Asogwa & Obiorah, 2013). Thus, it is an electronic interactive communication channel through which people especially young people connect to one another, share ideas, experiences, pictures, messages and information of common interest. Furthermore, Ellison Lampe and Steinfield (2007) opined that it is an online service for users to create a public or semi-public profile, build a network with other users with whom they share a common link and navigate other users' profiles and networks.

The simplicity of Facebook is one significant reason that attracts millions of

users around the globe. Facebook offers huge opportunities for members including university students and librarians who use it to promote the services of the library respectively. Facebook allows institutions and students to create a central platform for media sharing communications around social and academic issues, and drawing the community awareness of certain subjects (Mack, Behler, Robert & Rimland, 2007). Most people of high schools, colleges and universities get connected by internet where they socialize with other individuals with same point of interest, to gather and share knowledge and first-hand information.

However, it is quite unfortunate and very disheartening to observe that most times, students abuse the use of Facebook by neglecting the informative and educative benefits it offers. This is in terms with Ibrahim (2012) who observed that the neglect of educational benefits has endangered students to becoming victims of sexual predators, cyberbullying and harassment, posting or downloading inappropriate pictures and other materials. This could negatively affect their reading habits due to the amount of time dedicated to social world.

Regrettably, students abandon their assignments and reading times in preference for Facebook; chatting with friends, watching, downloading and uploading morally bad and non-academic materials. This assertion is supported by Ibrahim (2012) who opined that most students prefer being on site than reading their books. Folaranmi (2013) also noted that in Nigeria, irrespective of age, most University undergraduates now start the day by checking their Facebook accounts. This trend of obsession, if left unchecked can lead to serious academic problem.

The frenzy is gradually tending towards addiction as some students cannot do without accessing their Facebook accounts within every passing hour. They like to stay up-to-date with current trends and events in

the virtual world of Facebook. The time and attention that University students are giving to Facebook is becoming increasingly alarming because students can access their Facebook accounts on their mobile phones. Often, when lectures are going on, students still find time to chat with friends online or respond to Facebook notifications at the detriment of their academic pursuit. Yet, few students have examined the effect of Facebook on the reading habits of students. It is against this background that this study tries to ascertain the perceived effect of Facebook on the reading habits of University students in South South Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The advent of technology has brought about dramatic change in every facet of human activity. One of the evidence is the development of social network site such as Facebook. Facebook, like other social network provides instantaneous access to information at all times (Junco,2015). The birth of Facebook has fundamentally changed the way one communicates, and how one finds and share personal information, exchanges ideas, feelings, photos and videos at a very overwhelming rate. It basically changes communication pattern.

Facebook has brought many positive implications to human life such as making the connection of millions of people from all over the world possible. With Facebook; the world is now a global village. While this Omnipresent characteristic of Facebook which may seem innocent at the surface, there may be some sinister or evil attributes within it that requires further study.

This social network (Facebook) is setting back the real values of life especially students who accept some adverse impacts from using Facebook as they form the major group of Facebook users. Out of the total Facebook users,70% are students (Ahmed &

Qazi,2011).These students become distracted because of the amount of time and attention being devoted to Facebook. Often times, they are observed using their phones to communicate and do other social activities during school hours when they are expected to be engaged in meaningful academic activities.

Pritchard (2008) argued that at least one third of students' Internet visits are intended to surf sexually oriented chat rooms and websites. It is also observed that most students use Facebook to post distasteful information about their friends and sometimes to harass peers and gossip. The most worrisome part of it is that this valuable time that could be devoted to reading, is drifted away on Facebook especially on activities that add no value to them. Therefore, this study tries to understand the possible perceived effect this Facebook usage has on students in relation to their reading habit.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to determine the perceived effect of Facebook usage on the reading habits of students in south-south Nigeria. Specifically, this study determined perceived effect of:

1. Facebook usage on voluntary reading habits of students
2. Facebook usage on academic reading habits of students
3. Facebook usage on recreational reading habits of students

1.4 Research hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female students on the perceived effect of Facebook usage on voluntary reading habits.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and

female students on the perceived effect of Facebook usage in relation to their academic performance.

2.1 Literature Review

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 (Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe, & Adedeji, 2012). Consequently, reading is usually associated with books as only the written words provide a complete picture of the act of reading. It means that through reading, the individual is able to build or fix things, enjoy stories, discover what others believe and develop ideas or beliefs of their own. Thus, reading provides the key to all forms of information necessary for our day-to-day survival and growth. It follows then that if you are in the practice of reading regularly without thinking about it because of the permanence of its continuity, one can conclude that good reading habits have been formed.

Thus, a habit is formed unconsciously when an individual does something many times, and becomes part and parcel of such a person's life (Adayinka, 2007). There are different types/styles of reading habits, discussed hereunder: According to Orakpor (2012) there different types of reading habits which include voluntary reading, recreational reading and academic reading.

Voluntary reading is also known as free reading; it is free reading, because readers like students and lecturers determine what they want to read without external persuasion or force (Umemeanya, 2004). The purpose of voluntary reading is not for any specific assignment or examination, the students decide when, where, what and how to read.

Recreational reading is related to voluntary reading. It is reading for pleasure during the relaxation period. It is the students major source of reading competence,

acquisition of vocabulary, and ability to handle complex grammatical constructions, because according to Krashen (2003) voluntary and recreational readings are also seen as extensive reading because students and other readers decide the amount of reading to do and the type of materials to read.

On the other hand, academic reading is an intensive reading process where students have to read and learn the selected readings that their lecturers feel will change them to grow intellectually. In academic reading students are faced with the challenge of struggling to comprehend the academic jargon or technical terminology within their own academic discipline or course of study. The students read to understand some of the fundamental knowledge of their courses and to share in the highly specialized background of the academic discipline or course of study (Rosenberg, 2009).

Intensive reading is associated with deep concentration while reading in order to distinguish the main idea of a text from the detail and finding the meaning of unknown words. It is applied when studying a book for deeper understanding, so it requires studying the text closely with maximum concentration. It is also needed for examination purpose. This means that when preparing for text, examination and research writing students and researchers should apply intensive reading. Facebook is used for educational purposes.

The use of Facebook in education have shown the positive results in the context of online discussions, peer support, strengthening social relationships, learning performance, sharing resources and information. It has been proposed by Khana and Bakhsh (2015) that communication, collaboration, and resource /material sharing have a significant and positive effect on educational use of Facebook. Use of Facebook as a learning resource can promote collaborative and cooperative learning as well

as aid student's academic performances. Facebook can help students to improve their learning by achieving a high level of self-esteem, social acceptance and adaptation in university life. Unfortunately Facebook usage among students may also negatively affect their reading habits.

3.1 Research Methods

The design of this study is descriptive survey. The research design was considered appropriate for this research work, because only proportion of the population of students in government owned university in South South Nigeria was studied and the findings generalized to the entire population of university students in Edo and Delta states. The study was carried out in universities in Edo and Delta states. The population of this study is 28,100 consisting of all the final year students in government owned universities in Edo and Delta states, South-South Nigeria. The records were gotten from the Admission office of each University shows that the number of final year students in the three government owned Universities in Edo and Delta states.

The sample comprised of 563 final year students selected from three government owned universities in Edo and Delta states,

Nigeria. Final year students are chosen because they are the ones who have wealth of experience and could easily determine how Facebook affects their reading habit. The students were selected from final year class using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure that each class on the population participated in the study in the same proportion as they existed in the population. The sample size of each University was determined using 2%, to ensure equal selection of students from each university. The questionnaire was the main research instrument of the study. The instrument was checked for reliability using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient formula and a reliability coefficient of 0.73 was yielded. Copies of questionnaire were distributed with the aid of a research assistant. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

4.1 Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the perceived effects of Facebook on voluntary reading habits of students?

Table 1: Mean ratings on the perceived effects of Facebook on voluntary reading habits of students N=500

Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1 Facebook affects my reading of motivational books	3.47	.64	Moderate
2 Facebook affects my reading of business and career oriented books	3.13	.55	Moderate
3 Facebook affects my reading of research projects. e.g. Dissertation, thesis, project works	3.46	.56	Moderate
4 Facebook affects my reading and listening of TV broadcast/news	3.38	.58	Moderate
5 Facebook affects my reading of comic books	3.32	.61	Moderate
6 Facebook affects my reading of journal article/papers	3.05	.68	Moderate
Mean of Means	3.30	.60	Moderate

Table 1 shows the mean of means and standard deviation score of 3.30 and .60. This implies that the respondents perceived Facebook to have a moderate effect on voluntary reading habits of students. The item by item analysis shows that the respondents indicated that Facebook moderately affects their: reading of motivational books (mean=3.47), reading of business and career oriented books

(mean=3.13), reading of research projects. e.g. Dissertation, thesis, project works (mean=3.46), reading and listening of TV broadcast/news (mean = 3.38), reading of comic books (mean = 3.32) and reading of journal article/papers (mean=3.05).

Research Question 2: What are the perceived effects of Facebook on academic reading habits of students?

Table 2: Mean ratings on the perceived effects of Facebook on academic reading habits of students N=500

Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1 Facebook affects my reading of textbooks	3.13	.79	Moderate
2 Facebook affects my reading of exam books/competition	2.69	.94	Moderate
3 Facebook affects my reading of reference books e.g dictionary, encyclopedia	2.84	1.00	Moderate
4 Facebook affects my sourcing for materials for quiz	3.05	.83	Moderate
5 Facebook affects my access to literatures	2.80	.73	Moderate
6 Facebook affects my discussion of contents with instructors	2.44	.85	Rarely
7 Facebook affects my sourcing and sharing of academic information	2.49	.83	Rarely
8 Facebook affects my reading of expert opinion	2.48	.64	Rarely
9 Facebook distracts me while surfing webpages	3.17	.87	Moderate
10 Facebook distracts me while reading webpages/databases	3.52	.59	Moderate
11 Facebook affects my reading of lecture notes	3.17	.70	Moderate
12 Facebook affects my reading of scholarly journals	3.04	.70	Moderate
Mean of Means	2.90	.79	Moderate

Analysis in Table 2 shows the mean of means and standard deviation score of 2.90 and .79 indicating that Facebook has a moderate effect on academic reading habits of students. The item by item analysis shows that the respondents indicated that Facebook moderately affects their: reading of textbooks (mean=3.13); reading of exam books/competition (mean=2.69); reading of reference books e.g. dictionary, encyclopedia (mean= 2.89); sourcing for materials for quiz (mean=3.05); access to literatures (mean=2.80); reading of lecture notes (mean = 3.17)

and reading of scholarly journals (mean=3.04). Others are that Facebook distracts them while: surfing Web pages (mean =3.17) and reading Web pages/databases (mean = 3.20). The respondents however indicated that Facebook rarely affect: their discussion of contents with instructors (mean = 2.44); reading of expert opinion (mean = 2.49) and reading of expert opinion (mean = 2.48).

Research Question 3: What are the perceived effects of Facebook on recreational reading habits of students?

Table 3: Mean ratings on the perceived effects of Facebook on recreational reading habits of students N=500

Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1 Facebook affects my reading of newspaper	3.15	.71	Moderate
2 Facebook affects my reading of novels	2.49	.61	Rarely
3 Facebook affects my reading of poems/poetry etc	3.55	.53	High
4 Facebook affects my reading of magazines	2.42	.66	Rarely
5 Facebook affects my reading of comic books	2.39	.62	Rarely
6 Facebook affects my reading blogs	3.15	.73	Moderate
7 Facebook affects my catch up with friends and family	3.30	.58	Moderate
8 Facebook affects my academic meetings and forum discussions	3.03	.76	Moderate
9 I use Facebook for fun	3.31	.79	Moderate
10 Facebook helps me to maintain existing relationships	3.12	.77	Moderate
11 Facebook helps me to solve relationship problems	3.24	.52	Moderate
12 Facebook helps me in forming new relationships	3.14	.85	Moderate
13 I use Facebook for sharing photos, music and videos	3.44	.64	Moderate
14 I use Facebook for sharing emotional expressions	3.06	.84	Moderate
15 I use Facebook for sharing personal stories	3.31	.74	Moderate
16 I use Facebook to relax during free times	3.28	.57	Moderate
17 I use Facebook to obtain new ideas	3.25	.57	Moderate
18 I use Facebook for intellectual and personal development	3.32	.68	Moderate
19 I use Facebook for professional career development	3.24	.60	Moderate
20 I use Facebook to get news updates	3.44	.54	Moderate
21 I use Facebook to improve my sexual attraction	3.53	.53	High
22 I use Facebook to share opinions and information pertaining life and societal growth	3.35	.57	Moderate
23 I use Facebook to market and advertise products and services	3.33	.62	Moderate
24 I use Facebook to get bigger audience	3.34	.59	Moderate
25 I use Facebook to socialize with friends	3.28	.69	Moderate
Mean of Means	3.18	.65	Moderate

Table 3 shows the mean of means and standard deviation score of 3.18 and .65. This implies that the respondents perceived Facebook to have a moderate effect on recreational reading habits of students. The analysis of the items shows that the respondents indicated that Facebook highly affect their recreational reading habits in two of the 25 items which are: reading of poems/poetry etc and in improving their sexual attraction. They also indicated that

Facebook moderately affect their recreational reading habits in 20 of the 25 items, while Facebook rarely affect their recreational reading habits in three items.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female students on the perceived effect of Facebook usage on voluntary reading habits.

Table 4: t-test comparison of the mean rating of male and female students on the perceived effect of Facebook usage on voluntary reading habits.

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Male	294	3.26	.23	498	4.20	.00	Sig
Female	206	3.36	.31				

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value (.420) **and the corresponding P-value (.00) is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance at 498 df. This indicates** that the difference between the mean rating of male and female students on their perceived effect of Facebook usage on voluntary reading habits was significant. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was therefore rejected.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female students on the perceived effect of Facebook usage in relation to their academic reading habits.

Table 5: t-test comparison of the mean rating of male and female students on the perceived effect of facebook usage in relation to their academic reading habit.

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Male	294	2.91	.32	498	6.47	.00	Sig
Female	206	3.10	.34				

The result in Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value (6.47) **and the corresponding P-value (.00) is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance at 498 df. This indicates** that the difference between the mean rating of

male and female students on the perceived effect of facebook usage on academic reading habits was significant. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups was therefore rejected.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the results is based on the following sub-headings:

5.2 Perceived effect of Facebook usage on voluntary reading habits of students

The result of research question one revealed that Facebook moderately affects voluntary reading habit. This involves reading of motivational books, reading of business and career oriented books, reading of research projects such as dissertation, thesis, project works, reading and listening of TV broadcast/news, reading of comic books and reading of journal article/papers. This finding aligns with the finding of Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2004) which revealed that that majority of the respondents acknowledge the importance of reading, 81.9% of the respondents neither read novel nor fiction within the last two semesters while 62.0% of the respondents only read for the purpose of passing examination. The study also reported that reading habit has influence on academic performance and there is a significant relationship between reading habit and academic performance.

Result relating to the hypotheses one tested revealed that the difference between the mean rating of male and female students on their perceived effect of Facebook usage on voluntary reading habits was significant. Also, this finding supports the findings of Black (2006) which reported a significant correlation between teachers' perception on students' enjoyment of reading and overall students achievement in reading. Also teachers perceive that as students' level of reading achievement increases, their level of enjoyment in reading increases as well. This is as a result of the built up interest in academic activities through reading. Furthermore, the study aligns with the finding of Thompson and Loughheed (2012) which reported that most of the respondents had Facebook

accounts and, and further reported gender differences existing in the use of Facebook.

5.3 Perceived effect of Facebook usage on academic reading habits of students

Data relating to research question two revealed that Facebook has a moderate effect on academic reading habits of students. This finding disagree with the finding of Jagero and Murithi (2013) which found that despite using social media sites, students' users can still manage to be enough in maintenance of class achievement by meeting study targets and covering syllabus with little time devoted to studies.

On the other hand, results relating to hypothesis two show that there exists a significant difference between the mean rating of male and female students on the perceived effect of Facebook usage on academic reading habit. This finding agree to the findings of Adesope and Ogan-Charles (2015) which revealed that there exist significant differences in the use of social media among male and female respondents and in attitude of students towards social media. It was put forward that the use of social media should be incorporated into the curriculum for enhanced universities education.

5.4 Perceived effect of Facebook on recreational reading habits of students

Findings relating to research question three revealed that the respondents perceived Facebook to have moderate effect on recreational reading habits of students. The findings of the present study align with the findings of Wesseling (2012) which reports that students use Facebook for information sharing (receiving/ providing information and generating ideas), for educational purposes (for learning, problem solving and sharing work), and for social purposes (retrieving personal information about themselves,

chatting among others. Hence this goes to prove that students engage all these activities through the use of Facebook.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study which revealed that secondary school students in south-south Nigeria accessed various social media with the ones commonly accessed as Facebook, Whatsapp and Yahoo. Most of the students also possess good study habit. The study further concluded that there is a significant difference in ten out of 21 social media they access due to gender. Therefore, they do not differ significantly in their access of the other 11 social media studied. In line with the hypothesis tested, it revealed no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female secondary school students on their study habit. Likewise, there is no significant relationship between social media use and study habits of students.

Recommendations

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

1. Teachers, parents, guardians and school management should monitor their students on their use of social media. They need to be guided properly and be informed on the vulnerability they may face on these sites if not utilized in moderation.
2. Parents also should be informed regarding appropriate guidance and counseling about dealing on how to develop good study habit for the educational development of their children.
3. School management and teachers should checkmate students' use of computers and cell phones especially

during school hours to ensure that students are not carried away by the use of these technological devices.

4. Seminars, symposium and discussions should be organized regularly as to educate student's on the danger of spending too much time on social media.

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