CHAPTER 8

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATES' PERCEPTION OF THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THEIR READING HABIT

Mr. Kayode Ezecheal OBAFEMI
Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education,
Kwara State University, Malete



ABSTRACT

This study examined the perceptions of undergraduate students studying childhood education on the impact of social media on their reading habits. The research employed a descriptive survey design and used a multi-stage sampling technique to select 435 participants. A researcher-designed questionnaire, titled the "Questionnaire on the Perceived Effect of Social Media on Reading Habit," was administered and found to be reliable through the use of the test-retest method (r = 0.78). Data were analyzed using percentages, means, and an independent t-test. The results showed that social media has an impact on the reading habits of these undergraduate students, but there was no significant difference in perceptions based on gender. The conclusion was that social media affects the reading habits of childhood education undergraduates, and it is recommended that these students be taught how to use social media in a way that does not negatively affect their reading habits.

INTRODUCTION

The process of socialization is ongoing and happens as people and society develop. Human activity depends on how people interact with one another and their surroundings. Before new technology emerged and integrated sociability into a brand-new social system, people had already been socializing. The advancements in communication technology that have increased the range of communication through information and communication technologies are being celebrated around the world today. Without an uncertainty, modern communication technology has made the world into a small, interconnected community (Osharive, 2015). The development of the internet and social media coincided with the shift to a technological era. Because of technological advancements, it is now simpler for anyone, especially young people, to use the internet and participate in social networking with their peers (Ibrahim, 2012).

Technologies, including social media, greatly aid the functioning of society by enabling the sharing and receiving of various types of media, such as photos, videos, and audio messages. This allows university students to connect with others socially in real time (Aiyende & Omojola, 2021). Social media, as described by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), is a collection of internet-based applications that allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Similarly, Arshin (2010) referred to social networking sites as virtual spaces where users can connect and share information. These sites are open to anyone and

allow users to create a network of friends by creating an account and uploading their information to their profile pages. Some social networking sites are specifically designed for mobile devices, while others can be accessed on computers. There are many different social networking sites available, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, e-Buddy, Orbit, blogs, and YouTube, among others. People use these sites to seek out and interact with others online and to exchange knowledge and services with individuals and organizations with shared interests.

Social networking has expanded to practically every country in the globe and has become a widespread international trend. Social media sites are now widely used and have developed into an online platform where users can generate material, share it, bookmark it, and network quickly. Students are among the most prominent social media users. For students, the frequent use of social media has become a common practice and a way of life (Agwi & Ogwueleka, 2018). It is hard to imagine a young person who does not check the news and social media at least once a day. In today's world, it is important to stay informed about current events and developments (Talaue, AlSaad, AlRushaidan, AlHugail, & AlFahhad, 2018).

Social media plays a significant role in the world of education and for students. It simplifies and facilitates communication, sharing of information, and access to information. Teachers and students may utilize these social media platforms to focus on their education because they are connected to one another. Faculty members are using social media more and more to provide discussions, live lectures, and after-hours help for their students. Social media enables educators to engage with their pupils away from the classroom (Sivakumar 2020). The student's learning chances were improved by the usage of social media platforms, which also enabled real-time contact outside of the classroom, encouraged collaborative opportunities, and increased creativity. A study revealed that social media platforms were seen favorably by educators and students for interacting (Aiyende & Omojola, 2021).

However, Kuppuswamy and Shankar (2010) pointed out that social networks can distract students and lead them to engage in inappropriate, immoral, and non-educational activities such as aimless chatting and time-wasting random searches, which can negatively impact their reading habits.

Reading habits refer to the behavior of reading a book for information, enjoyment, or as a means of passing time (Sherly, 2011). They play a vital role in the development of an individual's personality and intellectual abilities. Reading provides access to social, economic, and civic lifestyles in addition to personal and mental growth (Bano, 2011). A crucial component of lifelong learning is reading. As a result, it's crucial for students to cultivate a positive reading habit if they want to achieve in their academic endeavors. Students' reading habits are important for both their academic achievement and personal development. It is crucial to students' long-term literacy development. Due to social media, students are less likely to use technological resources to improve their reading habits. Instead, they spend more time conversing, hogging, and surfing the internet (Abubakar & Alex, 2020).

Reading and writing skills are needed for many educational tasks. Any person's intellect and personality may be developed via reading in general. Additionally, it improves a person's intellectual capacity. However, social media has progressively taken over the awareness of the youth, altering their reading habits, and has become an essential part of tertiary students' everyday lives (Kojo, Agyekum & Arthur, 2018). The usage of social media is steadily rising everywhere, and Nigeria is witnessing the same trend. The majority of social media users are students in tertiary institutions. Undergraduates' reading habits are being impacted by social media use, since they spend a lot of time conversing with friends rather than reading (Shehu & Shehu, 2014). Hence, this study explored perceived effect of social media on undergraduates' reading habit.

Several studies, including those by Ibrahim (2012), Osharive (2015), Akintola, Bello, and Daramola (2017), Agwi and Ogwueleka (2018), Sivakumar (2020), and Aiyende and Omojola (2021), have examined the topic of social media. However, none of these studies specifically looked at the perceived impact of social media on the reading habits of undergraduates in Kwara State, which motivated the need for this study.

Statement of the Problem

Technology and the internet have been introduced, and they are now essential tools for learning, teaching, and research in learning institutions. Undergraduates are encouraged to utilize social media through these tools. Social media has recently grown immensely popular and pervasive. The majority of undergraduates uses social media extensively and seems to be addicted to it. The usage of social media is steadily rising everywhere, and Nigeria is witnessing the same trend. The majority of social media users are undergraduates in universities. Students' reading habits are being impacted by social media use because they spend more time conversing with friends than reading. Therefore, this study examined the perceived impact of social media on the reading habits of undergraduates in Kwara State.

Research Question

Do childhood education undergraduates perceive that social media affects their study habit?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in childhood education undergraduates' perception of the effect of social media on their study habit

Method

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to explore the perceptions of Early Childhood and Primary Education (ECPE) undergraduates in Kwara State, Nigeria on the impact of social media on reading habits. A multi-stage sampling technique was used, starting with the purposive sampling of the two universities in Kwara State that offer ECPE as a course: the University of Ilorin and Kwara State University. From these universities, 435 undergraduates were selected using simple random sampling. A researcher-designed questionnaire, called the "Questionnaire on the Perceived Effect of Social Media on Reading

Habit," was used to gather data. The questionnaire was validated by experts in Educational Technology at Kwara State University and tested for reliability through the use of the test-retest method, administered to 25 participants over a two-week interval. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78. The study took place over a six-week period, and data were analyzed using percentages, means, and an independent t-test.

Results

Research Question: Do childhood education undergraduates perceive that social media affects their study habit?

Table 1: Childhood Education Undergraduates' Perception of the Effect of social media on their Study Habit

S/N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
1	The use of social media decreases in-depth study	295(67.8)	78(17.9)	26(6.0)	36(8.3)	3.45
2	Social media is an addiction that harms my reading habits	323(74.3)	91(20.9)	12(2.8)	9(2.1)	3.67
3	Use of social media procrastinates my assignments	301(69.2)	104(23.9)	16(3.7)	14(3.2)	3.59
4	By using social media, I cannot concentrate on reading	235(54.0)	90(20.7)	61(14.0)	49(11.3)	3.17
5	Because of downloading and watching videos/music, I do not find time to read	321(73.8)	87(20.0)	11(2.5)	16(3.7)	3.64
6	I get distracted whenever I receive social media updates in class	291(66.9)	105(24.1)	19(4.4)	20(4.6)	3.53
7	Social media updates often interrupt my reading	312(71.7)	96(22.1)	15(3.4)	12(2.8)	3.63
8	I don't read unless I check and respond to social media messages	141(32.4)	38(8.7)	68(15.6)	188(43.2)	2.30
9	I do post/respond while I am doing my homework	225(51.7)	91(20.9)	54(12.4)	65(14.9)	3.09
10	I am always active online for social media updates	325(74.7)	83(19.1)	12(2.8)	15(3.4)	3.65
	Weighted Mean					3.27

Considering the means in table 1, the respondents agreed with items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10. They, however, disagreed with item 8. The percentages also revealed the same trend. The table also showed a weighted mean of 3.27, which is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed that social media has an impact on their reading habits

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in childhood education undergraduates' perception of the effect of social media on their study habit

Table 2: Difference in Childhood Education Undergraduates' Perception of the Effect of Social Media on their Study Habit on the basis of Gender

Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig	Remark
Male	199	33.52	7.23	-.740	433	.460	Not Significant
Female	236	33.92	3.80				

Table 2 illustrates that there was no significant difference in the perceptions of childhood education undergraduates regarding the impact of social media on their study habits based on gender ($t = -.740$; $df = 433$; $p > 0.05$). The hypothesis cannot be rejected based on the results, as the significant value (0.460) is greater than 0.05.

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings showed that social media has an impact on the study habits of childhood education undergraduates, as perceived by the participants. This result may be attributed to the belief that social media takes away time that could be spent on reading. This finding aligns with the research of Wang, Chen, and Liang (2011), which found that the use of social media had a negative effect on college students' reading habits. However, it contradicts the argument made by Lusk (2010) that online social media provides academic support for tertiary students.

Additionally, the study found that there was no significant difference in the perceptions of childhood education undergraduates about the impact of social media on their study habits based on gender. This finding is consistent with the research of Nwoburuoke and Eremie (2021), which indicated that gender had no significant influence on students' perceptions of the effect of social media.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that social media affects the reading habits of childhood education undergraduates. Based on this conclusion, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Childhood education undergraduates should be orientated on the proper way to use social media without any detriment to their reading habit.
2. They should also use social media for educational purposes.

References

Abubakar, S. M., & Alex, A. E. (2020). Influence of the social media on the reading culture of Nigerian students: a study of students in Kaduna polytechnic. Retrieved from https://illsjournal.acu.edu.ng/index.php/ills/article

Agwi, U. C., & Ogwueleka, F. N. (2018). Impact of social media on students' academic performance. ***International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research***, 9 (3), 1454- 1462.

Aiyende, O., & Omojola, O. (2021). Influence of social media on the academic performance of students: a study of university of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. ***Samaru Journal of Information Studies***, 21(1), 13-23.

Akintola, M., Bello, M. B., & Daramola, D. S. (2017). Usage of whatsapp as a social media platform among undergraduates in Kwara State. ***Nigerian Journal of Educational Technology***, 1 (1), 1-14.

Arshin, E. (2010). The effects of social networking sites like Facebook. Retrieved from http://www.Nigeria70.com/Nigerianpaper/reading-culture-iliter.gbane-

Bano, T. (2011). Reading habits among the students of womens college, AMU Aligarh.

Ibrahim, L. (2012). Social media and its influence on students' performance. ***Jamb news***, 3 (21), 4-5.

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite: The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. ***Business horizons***, 53(1), 59-68

Kojo, D. B., Agyekum, B. O., & Arthur, B. (2018). Exploring the effects of social media on the reading culture of students in Tamale Technical University. ***Journal of Education and Practice***, 9 (7), 47-56. Retrieved from https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234641415.pdf

Kuppuswamy, S., and Narayan, P., (2010). The Impact of Social Networking Websites on the Education of Youth. ***International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking (IJVCSN)***, 2(1), 67-79.

Lusk, B (2010). Digital Native and Social Media Behaviour: An overview. ***Prevention Researcher***, 4(1): 17-26.

Nwoburuoke, I. F., & Eremie, M. (2021). Influence of social media on academic performance of senior secondary school students in rivers state: implications for counseling. ***International Journal of Innovative Information Systems & Technology Research***, 9(2), 48-61.

Osharive, P. (2015). Social media and academic performance of students in university of Lagos. A research project submitted to the Department of educational administration, university of Lagos.

Shehu, A., & Shehu, N. (2014). Challenges of Social Networking on Students' Reading Habit in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. ***Research on Humanities and Social Sciences***, 4(19), 34 – 39.

Sherly, B. P. (2011). Reading habits among the readers in people's association for reading and transformation of libraries in Kanyakumari District. A Ph.D study. Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tamil Nadu.

Sivakumar, R. (2020). Effects of social media on academic performance of the students. ***The Online Journal of Distance Education and e-Learning***, 8 (2), 90-97.

Talaue, G. M., AlSaad, A., AlRushaidan, N., AlHugail, A., & AlFahhad, S. (2018). The impact of social media on academic performance of selected college students. International ***Journal of Advanced Information Technology (IJAIT)***, 8(4/5), 27-35.

Wang, Q., Chen, W. & Liang, Y (2011). The Effects of Social Media on College Students. MBA Student Scholarship. Retrieved from http://scholarsarchive.jwu.edu/mba-student/s.