Influence of Facebook and WhatsApp Usage on Reading Habits of Undergraduate Students in North Central, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of Facebook and WhatsApp usage on reading habits of undergraduate students in North Central, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. The population for the study comprises 26,320, three hundred (300) level students from seven Federal Universities in North central of Nigeria. The sample size of 394 three hundred level undergraduate students from three federal universities (Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State, Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State and Federal University, Lokoja, Kogi State) randomly selected from the seven was used for the study. The sample size of 394 was determined using Taro Yamane Formula. Accidental sampling technique was adopted to compose the undergraduate students for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self structured questionnaire titled “Influence of Facebook and WhatsApp Usage on Reading Habits Questionnaire (IFWURQ) which was validated by experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. Data collected was analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions and Chi-square Statistic to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that, facebook and WhatsApp usage significantly influence the reading habits of undergraduate students negatively. The study concluded that, with social media usage particularly, platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, the reading habits of undergraduate students have washed down the drain. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made that, Undergraduate students must realize all the potential harm from excessive use of social platforms and responsibly approach the learning process and academic results, students should use all available online platforms effectively and they must be conscious of social media negative effects and should try as much as possible to create a balance so as not to get carried away while learning; the use of Social Media among university students should be adequately monitored by lecturers because of its observed negative influence on reading habits and writing skills and students should be encouraged by universities to utilize social media platforms in a manner that will promote their academic activities positively. They should be encouraged to create educational groups and see how to use that to enhance their academic growth and worth.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technology, Social Media, Facebook, WhatsApp and Reading Habits.
Introduction

To achieve 21st century educational needs, the current 9-3-4 system was introduced. It emphasized both technology and academic education and other learning that required meeting educational needs of intellect and technological driven 21st century. One of the breakthroughs in Information and Communication Technology in the 21st century was the discovery and emergence of the new media (social media) which have facilitated the creation of the different platforms for social interaction. Social network is a social structure made up of individuals or organizations called “nodes”, which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige (Adeboye, in Asemah & Edegoh, 2012). Social media can also be referred to as a map of specified ties, such as friendship, between the nodes being studied. The nodes, to which an individual is thus connected, are the social contacts of that individual; the network can also be used to measure social capital – the value that an individual gets from the social network. Social networking sites include: Yahoo Messenger, Facebook Messenger, Blackberry Messenger (BBM), Google talk, Google+, Messenger, iPhone, Androids and so on. These networking sites are used by most people to interact with old and new friends, physical or internet friends (Adeboye, in Asemah & Edegoh, 2012). It is a common sight to see a youth chatting in sensitive and highly organized places like church, mosque and lecture venues. Some are so carried away that even as they are walking along the high way, they keep chatting. Attention has been shifted from visible to invisible friends, while important ventures like study and writing are affected in the process. This phenomenon has become a source of worry to many who believe in knowledge and skill acquisition. The emergence of newer internet applications such as the social media sites: Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, WhatsApp, 2go, Skype, imo, Instagram, Viber, LinkedIn, Eskimo, Baddo, Palmchat, BBM, YouTube, only intensified this need; especially since a large number of University students have social network site accounts, which they check multiple times a day (Darwish, & Laktaria 2011). Most of social network sites studies conducted so far have focused on the social influence of Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, WhatsApp, 2go, Skype, imo, Instagram, Viber, LinkedIn, Eskimi, Baddo, Palmchat, BBM, YouTube (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Social Media have created a new social dimension where individuals can develop increased levels of their social awareness by keeping in touch with old friends, making new friends, dispense new data or product, and getting...
information in many aspects of our everyday lives, making one to become more knowledgeable which is very beneficial especially for students. Social media is the gathering of the people in an online community for the purpose of sharing interest and activities together. The interaction on these social media sites is made possible among students via the use of personal computer (PC) and most commonly, smart phones which are products of information technology (IT).

The concept of IT as mandated by the National Policy on Education (2004) has an overbearing effect on literacy that the use of information technology could cause the lackadaisical attitude among students whereby students will not take their work seriously and that the students’ reading skills developed from scrolling the computer screen could lead to an accelerated but superficial, inaccurate understanding of the content as Ward (2004) pointed out, although students could be exposed to a variety of reading materials and genres of writing. The emergence of social media as a result of advancement in technology and expansion in internet software has raised eye brows among academics on its (social media) influence on studies. Students at all levels of learning now have divided attention to studies, as a result of available opportunities to be harnessed from social media. Ward (2004). Whether these opportunities promote/hamper students’ studies is a question that needs to be answered.

Reading on social media which facilitate assimilation and dissemination of information locally and internationally has taken a central stage in global discourse. Undergraduate students are heavy users of social media. According to Jones (2007) and Young (2004), since undergraduate students are heavy internet users in the aspect of social Media, they may be at risk of developing internet related problems. Social media exerts some negative effects on students’ reading habits (Hetting & Knapp, 2001). As Shabo and Usofia (2009) pointed out, the reading culture of learners has been washed down the drain as a consequence of the evolution of technology and advent of social media. According to the author, instead of reading books, students now listen to peoples’ talk on YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, hence, they do not feel the need to read any longer. For the purpose of this research investigations will be limited to the influence of social media sites such as facebook, Twitter, whatsapp, Instagram, Skype and LinkedIn on reading habits of students.
Oyetunde (2017) conducted a study on the Influence of Facebooking and Social Media Use on Academic Performance among Nigerian Undergraduate Social Sciences Students. Findings of the study showed that Facebook use did not significantly influence the academic performance of the surveyed students at these universities and that its use can, however, be harnessed for augmenting student academic performance and for advancing education in general. Ojenike, Ojugbemi & Ojenike (2017) conducted a study on Social Media and Academic Achievement in the Ibarapa Polytechnic, Eruwa, Oyo State. The findings showed that undergraduate that social media has significant effect on the academic achievement of students. The results indicated that there exists a positive correlation between social media and academic achievement (r=0.576 P<.05) which were found to be statistically significant at 5% level of significance. Ehibudu and Sira (2017) investigated the Influence of Whatsapp and Facebook Social Media Usage on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Port Harcourt Local Government Area Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that Whatsapp has a significant relationship with students’ academic performance in Port Harcourt L.G.A, meaning that it negatively affect students academic performance. The finding also revealed that facebook has no significant relationship with students’ performance, meaning that students involvement in facebook does not in any determine how they will perform or underperform academically. Asemah & Edegoh (2013) conducted a study on the Influence of Social Media on the Academic Performance of the Undergraduate Students of Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria. Findings also show that exposure to social media has effect on the students and that the effect is negative. Findings also show that facebook is the most used social media by undergraduate students of Kogi and exerts negative influence on students’ performances. The researchers concluded that exposure to social media by the undergraduate students of Kogi State University has negative effect on their academic performance. Olutola, Olatoye and Olatoye (2016) conducted a study titled “Assessment of Social Media Utilization and Study Habit of Students of Tertiary Institutions in Katsina State. Findings revealed that there is significant influence of students’ level of social media utilization on their study habit (R square= 0.078, P<0.05). The study recommended that regular orientation should be given to students on how to and when to use social media to enhance their study habit and achievement. Mushtaq (2018) investigated the effects of Social Media on the Undergraduate Students’ Academic Performances. Specific findings of the study revealed that social media influence the academic performance of students negatively, because they distract from the students studies and that addiction to social media is problematic issue that affects the students’ academic life.
Statement of the Problem

Students nowadays, spend better part of their time on one information technology device or the other such as laptops, desktops, palmtops, iPods, windows IOS, blackberry and android phones. Research has shown that students’ engagement on social media with friends, reading dailies and rarely acquiring information that are relevant to their various fields of study has negative influence on reading. Wardin Favor, (2015) pointed out, although students could be exposed to a variety of reading materials and genres of writing, there is a danger that the reading habits and writing skills that are developed from scrolling the computer screen lead to an accelerated but superficial, and often inaccurate, understanding of the content. Print media which influence the growth and distribution of knowledge by permitting revision and update of scholastic work has been relegated to the background. This seems to have reduced interest in reading of both hard copies of academic materials, vocabulary development and general knowledge development which an individual gets from having good reading habits and writing skills. Recently, information sought is subjected to the use of these technological media especially to while away time and to interrelate with friends and pen pals on Facebook, WhatsApp, Titter and Instagram. As a result, the interest in reading and writing among undergraduate students of today’s generation has dropped drastically making for inadequate good academic performances. It is in the light of the above that, this research was designed to study the influence of Facebook and Whatsapp usage on reading habits and writing skills of 300 level undergraduate students in North-central Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

i. Ascertain the influence of Facebook usage on reading habits of undergraduate Students in the North-central Nigeria.

ii. Ascertain the influence of Whatsapp usage on reading habits of undergraduate Students in the North-central Nigeria.
Research Questions

In an attempt to achieve these set objectives, the following research questions guided the study

i. What is the influence of Facebook usage on reading habits of undergraduate students in the North-central Nigeria?

ii. What is the influence of WhatsApp usage on reading habits of undergraduate students in the North-central Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

i. Facebook usage does not significantly influence the reading habits of undergraduate students in North-Central Nigeria.

ii. WhatsApp usage does not significantly influence the reading habit of undergraduate students in North-Central Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. The population for the study comprises 26,320, three hundred (300) level students from seven Federal Universities in North central zone of Nigeria. The sample size of 394 three hundred level undergraduate students from three federal universities (Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State, Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State and Federal University, Lokoja, Kogi State) randomly selected from the seven was used for the study. The sample size of 394 was determined using Taro Yamane Formula. Accidental sampling technique was adopted to compose the undergraduate students for the study. This is a sampling technique that involves choosing the nearest individuals as respondents and continuing the process until the required sample size is obtained. The sampling technique was employed because, it was impossible for the researcher to identify with all the 300 level students in the sampled universities for random selection, hence only those that the researcher accessed were used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self structured questionnaire titled “Influence of Facebook and WhatsApp Usage on Reading Habits Questionnaire (IFWURQ). The questionnaire was validated by experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. Data for the study was collected by the researchers with the aid of research assistants from the sampled universities. Data collected was analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation to answer
the research questions and Chi-square Statistic to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The benchmark of 2.50 was used to answer the research questions since the response options of the questionnaire was on a four point rating scale.

Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the influence of Facebook usage on reading habits of undergraduate Students in universities in North-central Nigeria?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the influence of Facebook Usage on reading habits of undergraduate students in North Central Nigeria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I hardly stick to my time table in school as a result of reading on facebook</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chatting on facebook has greatly reduced my reading time in school</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I spend more hours on facebook than reading my books</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Engaging in facebook has negatively affected my reading habits</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Addiction to facebook is a problematic issue that affects my reading behaviour</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chatting on facebook distract me from reading in school</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I have the urge to go online “facebook” whenever I am in class to read</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Academic discussion on facebook has not enhanced my reading habits</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I share my productive time of reading my books with chatting on facebook.</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My hours of reading will increase if I stop “facebooking”</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cluster Mean and SD**

Cluster Mean = 2.84
Cluster Standard Deviation = .93
Decision: Agree

Analysis of data as presented in Table 1 shows the mean responses of respondents on the influence of facebook usage on reading habits of undergraduate students in North Central Nigeria with corresponding Standard Deviation values.

Data presented on Table 1 revealed that, the respondents agreed to all the items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10) with
mean scores ranging from 2.70 – 3.24 which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The grand mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.84 and SD= .93. With this grand mean, it can be deduced from this finding that facebook usage has negative influence on reading habits of undergraduate students in North Central Nigeria

**Research Question 2:** What is the influence of WhatsApp usage on reading habits of undergraduate Students in universities in North-central Nigeria

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the influence of whatApp Usage on reading habits of undergraduate students in North Central Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>WhatsApping makes it difficult for me to stick to my reading time table.</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Engaging glossily in whatApp chatting has adversely affected my reading habit.</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I spent more time online (whatApp) than I spend on reading.</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The moment I got engaged on whatApp I cease to do anything to improve my reading habit.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Constant chat on whatApp has caused more harm to my reading habits.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>whatApp distracts me from reading.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I often have the desire to go online (whatApping) whenever I am in class to read.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>My zeal for reading hasnot improved as a result of discussion I engage in on whatApp.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I share my productive time of reading to whatApping.</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Even if I stop whatApping, it will not in any way increase my reading hours.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cluster Mean and SD**

| 2.65 | .96 | Agree |

Source: Field Work: 2019

Analysis of data as presented in Table 2 shows the mean responses of respondents on the influence of WhatsApp usage on reading habits of undergraduate students in North Central Nigeria with corresponding Standard Deviation values.

Data presented on Table 2 revealed that, except for item 20 with a Mean of 2.22 and SD = .97, the respondents agreed
to other items (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19) with mean scores ranging from 2.61 – 2.79 which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The grand mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.65 and SD= .96. With this grand mean, it can be deduced from this finding that WhatsApp usage has negative influence on reading habits of undergraduate students in North Central Nigeria

**Hypothesis 1:** Facebook usage does not significantly influence undergraduate students’ reading habits of undergraduate students’ in universities in North Central, Nigeria

**Table 3: Chi-Square Test of Significance of the Influence of Facebook Usage on Reading habits of undergraduate students in North-Central Nigeria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>$x^2$ cal</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Alpha Level</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>674.714</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Valid Cases</td>
<td>394</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Df = Degree of Freedom; $x^2$ cal = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value

Table 3 shows the Chi-square calculated value of 304.061, degree of freedom df=18 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implied that, facebook usage has significant negative influence on undergraduate students’ reading habits in universities in North Central, Nigeria

**Hypothesis 2:** Whatsapp usage does not significantly influence undergraduate students’ reading habits in universities in North Central, Nigeria
Table 4: Chi-Square Test of Significance of the Influence of WhatsApp usage on Reading habits of undergraduate students in North-Central Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>$x^2_{cal}$</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Alpha Level</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>471.294</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Valid Cases 394

Df = Degree of Freedom; $x^2_{cal}$ = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value

Table 4 shows the Chi-square calculated value of 471.294, degree of freedom df=27 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value (α=.05). Since P<.05, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implied that, WhatsApp usage has significant negative influence on undergraduate students’ reading habits in universities in North Central, Nigeria

Discussion of Findings

Based on data collected and analyzed, the following were discussed. Findings of the study as shown on Table 1 revealed that, Facebook usage has negative influence on undergraduate students’ reading habits in universities in North Central, Nigeria. This is evident in that the respondents agreed to items such as “chatting on Facebook has greatly reduced my reading time in school; I spend more hours on Facebook than reading my books; engaging in Facebook has negatively affected my reading habits; addiction to Facebook is a problematic issue that affects my reading behavior; chatting on Facebook distract me from reading in school; I have the urge to go online ‘Facebook’ whenever I am in class to read; academic discussion on Facebook has not enhanced my reading habits; I share my productive time of reading my books with chatting on Facebook and my hours of reading will increase if I stop facebooking”. Similarly, a test of related hypotheses revealed a significant influence of Facebook on undergraduate students’ reading habits. This finding corroborate with that of Asemah & Edegoh (2013) whose study on the Influence of Social Media on the Academic Performance of the Undergraduate Students of Kogi State University, Anyigba reported that Facebook is the most used social media by undergraduate students of Kogi and exerts negative influence on students’ performances. The performance as reported by the authors could be in terms of students reading habits which consequently resulted to
the negative influence observed. The finding however disagrees with that of Ojenike, Odugbemi & Ojenike (2017) whose study on Social Media and Academic Achievement reported that there exists a positive correlation between social media and academic achievement. This achievement reported by the authors could be in form of the students’ reading habits. The findings of this study as observed could be why Shabo and Usofia (2009) pointed out that the reading culture of learners has been washed down the drain as a consequence of the evolution of technology and advent of social media. This finding disagree with that of Oyetunde (2017) who reported that facebook use did not significantly influence the academic performance (reading habits). The finding from this study implies that facebook usage has become a vital component of the daily life of tertiary students and is steadily taking over the consciousness of the youth consequently affecting their reading habits.

Findings of the study as presented on table 2 revealed that twitter usage has negative influence on undergraduate students’ reading habits in universities in North Central, Nigeria. This is evident in that the respondents agreed to items such as “I rarely stick to my reading time table in school as a result of twitting; My reading habit is adversely affected as a result of twitting; I spend less hours reading compared to the hours I spent reading on twitter posts; Since I became engaged on twitter, my reading habit has depreciated; constant reading of twitter post is a problematic issue that has affected me from reading in school, twitter distracts me greatly from reading; I have the urge to go online “twitter” whenever I am in class to read; My reading habit has been poor due to twitting; I spend my productive time in twitting than reading my books and twitting has negatively affected my reading hours. A test of hypothesis of this finding revealed that twitter usage significantly influences undergraduate students’ reading habits. This finding is in tandem with that of Mushtaq (2018) who investigated the effects of Social Media on the Undergraduate Students’ Academic Performances and reported that social media like twitter influence the academic performance of students negatively, because they distract from the students studies and that addiction to social media is problematic issue that affects the students’ academic life. The finding also corroborate with that of Olutola, Olatoye and Olatoye (2016) whose study on “Assessment of Social Media Utilization and Study Habit of Students of Tertiary Institutions in Katsina State” reported that there is significant influence of students’ level of social media utilization on their study habit there is significant influence of students’ level of social media utilization on their study habit. This finding as reported could be in the utilization of social media platform like twitter among students. Similarly, Schill (2011) believes that the more time
students spend on social media platforms like twitter, the less time they spend reading. The implication of this finding is that students’ study habits (reading) will continue to dwindle as long as they are engaged twitter which takes a lot of their times off their studies.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that social media usage affects the reading habits of undergraduate students in North Central Nigeria negatively. With social media usage particularly, platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, the reading habits of undergraduate students has washed down the drain. Many students find it difficult to go about their normal school life without making use of social media. It has been observed that students find it difficult to concentrate in class; they are busy chatting and reading stories online instead of reading and practicing what they have learnt.

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

1. Undergraduate students must realize all the potential harm from excessive use of social platforms and responsibly approach the learning process and academic results. Students should use all available online platforms effectively and they must be conscious of social media negative effects and should try as much as possible to create a balance so as not to get carried away while learning.

2. The use of Social Media among university students should be adequately monitored by lecturers because of its observed negative influence on reading habits and writing skills.

3. Students should be encouraged by universities to utilize social media platforms in a manner that will promote their academic activities positively. They should be encouraged to create educational groups and see how to use that to enhance their academic growth and worth.
REFERENCES


