



SOCIAL MEDIA AND READING BOOKS: THE PARADIGM SHIFT IN NIGERIAN DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract

This study is on social media and reading books: a paradigm shift in Nigerian digital era. This study is a theoretical and pragmatic reviews of literature of conceptualized views and survey reports on social media and the distinctive changes in reading habits. The paper highlighted the social media and its incredible and exciting technological perplexities which allure users to toss aside the characteristic norm of reading books for knowledge and information. Also in the paper are the amazing futures of smart gadgets with their wide range possibilities. The paper illustrates that despite technological bewilderment, reading books cannot be replace by social media applications. The paper asserts that the future of reading books would be brighter with more advance technologies that would be integrated with the social media to help people reading books better even without the reader holding a book. The paper affirms that so long as the human race existed, reading books cannot die.

Key words: Information, Nigerian Digital Era, Reading Books, Social Media,

Introduction

Every day, millions of Nigerians are connecting to the world of the Internet and the social media to share information, market products, shop, get news, play games, surf the web, develop and share their personal interest, seek fascinating entertainments in movies and in sports, learn new things, build relationship, read profiles, share pictures, chat and make new contacts. Generally, the social media is a massive computer-generated online community of people with common interest in creating, sharing and exchanging information and ideas. In education, it is an interesting cybernetic community learning platform for exploring talents, information and contacts through short messages, video conferences, etc.

Nigerian operates digital economy which makes millions of the people to always connect to the internet and social networking to exploit almost everything they need to do using digital gadgets. Habitually, with more and more people moving and meeting new friends on the Internet and the social media, new ideas, perception, moral values and approach to practices are formed and applied as new trends. These digital dispositions have remarkably reshaped the Nigerian economy, the people's attitudes, norms and values to the extent that many people now view the habit of reading book as dead.

Palki (2023) postulated that the social media has killed reading books and that major book publishers and book sellers were closing their businesses because of decreases in patronage. The assumption is that the young persons who are supposed to be reading books are spending too much time on social media. Also presumed is that in time past, reading books were habits highly cherished by people for information, processing and validating data for new knowledge, facilitating interest in further studies and other developments. Again, the library which used to be the common man's university because of its hub for self-education, social integration and leisure is having low patronages. This school of thought argued that though in time past things were slow, yet steady and satisfactory in attaining whatever levels the people needed in the society. Also asserted is that respects were more accorded to education and its certificates; moral values were well regarded with high sense of responsibility, caution and worship; but that today, all these values have been compromised to the social media and the Internet usage.

Specifically, reading book is a real-time habit that inculcate deep knowledge, information, norms and values for a person's educational experiences, hard work, self-worth and social integration. Abora (2021) posited that in time past, satisfied ideas, visions and clear directions come by the process of reading books. Adesode (2020) noted that the emergence of the social media and mobile apps have changed many narratives. Undoubtedly, this technology era have launched us into a new world of digital order. The Internet, social networking and smart phones are providing many possibilities everywhere. With new sensory devices and other systems, one can swiftly connect and exchange data and information, synchronize and integrate them with expanded quality images and information in a classy and astonishing ways with other people online.

Akoni & Usman (2022) postulated that the youths of this era are no longer interested in reading books, they want everything around them smart. Abayomi & Isa (2021) also affirmed that the best of technologies and their puzzlement were yet to come. Already, the Internet of Things (IoT), Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the robotics are integrating with the social media with overwhelming proficiency in education, security, production and in management cycles. In the book industry, many publishing houses are migrating into digital printings of audio-books, digital chips, memory chips, application-specific and system-on-a-chip devices (SoCs), etc. Virtual libraries are now preferred to the conventional library service systems and their bulky resources. In the advanced economies, conventional libraries are also converting their library holdings and operations into green and smart library services so as to meet new technology standards and attract their digital citizens on the social media for patronages.

Routinely, new smartphones are coming out every day with huge upgraded functionalities. The latest been the Apple iPhone 15 Pro Max, Samsung Galaxy S24 Ultra -, Google Pixel 8 Pro, Asus ZenFone 10 -, Sony Xperia Iv, etc. Their excellent action buttons, outstanding camera systems with perfect display intrigues and blazing Internet connectivity are alluring and can synchronize with the human cognitive and integrate seamlessly with the social media and social networking. These perplexity revolutions, no doubt, are capable of reorienting this generation into thinking that the

act of reading books is hectic and a depressing habit. Adesode (2019), Bozimo (2021) and Palki (2023) postulated that we are moving reckless into an epoch of cultural tragedy were among other things, the habit of reading books would be dead and the future generation may only perceive the habit of reading books as mere allegories. In another vain, Egbenaru (2020) opined that in every new era, societal pattern evolve alongside innovations. This postulate, no doubt, explains why different processes have continue emerge to create many imaginable social contents. Already, there are many enticing digital apps to attract people to read books and in this trend, it is beyond questioning that there is a shift from reading books. In this paper, it is our trust to examine that paradigm shift between social media and reading books in Nigerian digital era and establish a balance.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose for this study is to appraise literature insight on social media and the habit of reading books in this digital era. The paper explored online posts, descriptive surveys, interviews and observations on the social media and reading books. Specifically, the study examined:

- a) the concept of social media
- b) the benefits and state of reading books,
- c) Benefits of social media
- d) the shift between social media and reading books

Method of the Study

The study adopted literature reviewed perspectives, descriptive surveys - using questionnaire, observations and interviews for data gathering and analysis by using simple percentages. Twelve academic libraries were visited in the six Nigerian geopolitical zones. All the head librarians were interviewed. Accidental sample method was used to collect workable data from a total population of 278 respondents: librarians 12, students 208 and social elites 58. The survey covered three months: October - December, 2023. The observation and interview comments are entrenched in the general discourse of data analysis as suitable to strengthen the theoretical and pragmatic reviews in this study. Scholarly post, book types, web analysis and journals were searched with key terms to preview pertinent studies - their contents, data used and results. All extracted information are discussed as related to each variable of the subject matter of this paper.

The Concept of Social Media

Dollarhide (2023) conceptualized the social media as the diversity of technologies that enable sharing of ideas and information between users. Also, Timespro (2023) intellectualized the social media as a powerful instrument for linking people, sharing information and in addition, convey objects, etc. Correspondingly, Kashish (2021) posited the social media as straightforward electronic information interchange platform of globally connected circles that have become a vital portion of human lives. Specifically, therefore, the social media is a giant digital-based platform that is designed to allow users to create and share

content on wide subject of interest with the user community. In other words, its an extended diversity of technologies that are designed to smartly facilitate communication of ideas and information between users on real-time experiences.

The social media serve multiplicity of purposes for the users' fulfilment. It specifically operates on the platforms of social networking, social bookmarking, the social news, media sharing, micro-blogging and online forums, depend on the one that appeals to the user's sense of purpose. Examples of the social media include Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, blogs, the Myspace, micro-blogs, wikis, WeChat, LinkedIn, the YouTube, Tumblr, podcasts, widgets, the virtual world, Tik Tok, Friendster, the WhatsApp, Messenger, "X" (for former Twitter), etc. With the social media platforms, users are provided with instant access to various information, skills and knowledge to the extent that they would not want to spend a moment looking at traditional print based resources. Adesode (2019) noted that this generation of social media users' want to learn variety of subjects and ideas online instead of reading them from books.

Dan-duke (2022) and Carlo (2023) avowed that social media platforms permit persons to access real-time information and smartly connect with others on functional communities. With the enthralling effects, many people can also manoeuvre many things on the platforms to redesign their lives. In our survey study, all the respondents interviewed stressed that at best, the social media platforms make them feel connected to the world of pragmatism. Statistically, 87.9% (183) student respondents affirmed that social media brings them more connected to their peers; another 68.8% (143) noted that the social media make them feel good as they surf the platforms. WhatsApp was rated as the most widely used followed by Facebook, FB Message, Instagram, TikTok, "X", and Telegram. Sasu (2023) similarly affirmed that as at January 2023, the number of active social media users in Nigeria was 31.6 million of which the WhatsApp was the most popular app used.

The number of social media users in Nigeria is exploding every day. Itunu (2023) reported that in 2022, Nigeria came first among countries who spent more time on the social media in the world. In our survey study, 75.5% (210) total respondent users were between the ages of 16 – 60 years; about 83% (231) of the users said they were usually fascinated by the many fantasies on their apps and so do not mind how much time they spent online; also, 76.4% (159) undergraduates respondents accepted that the social media help facilitated their academic learning and research works; yet, 80.3% (167) of the same respondents acknowledged the social media as distractor to their studies but that they were coping with it. Besides, many literatures have also linked the people in trade and business spending much time on platforms of social network. Social networking is the most effective and relatively inexpensive platforms for people to advertise and market their business products, build images for their products and reach out faster to their patrons.

But while many users adjudged the social media application as improves lives, others such as Abayomi & Isa (2021), Muzammil (2023) and Peajapati (2023) have identified many of its drawbacks to including but not limited to:

- Intrigues: it is the most popular platforms for many conspiracies, saboteurs as well as for carnivals.

- Addiction: Spending a lot of time on the web, often lead to lack of productivity, anxiety and even depression.
- Marrying misinformation: many social media users often spread fake news and rumours on the platforms thereby misguiding people with confusion, chaos and distrust.
- Distractions: Omigie (2016) asserted that it is often a distractor as one is always tempted to checking every notification for the latest information, this can take minutes to refocus attention.
- Increases stress: Petersen (2019) noted that many who regularly use Facebook or "X" platforms have been reported to always have high levels of stress.
- Cyberbully: this include receiving some violent and unpleasant types of email treats, unfriendly manipulated photos, comments leading to extreme tensions and stresses.
- Other disadvantages include: hacking on account, cutting face to face people's communication, causing depression, sleeplessness, and loneliness, decreasing ones' communication skills, too many inappropriate contents, lack of privacy, etc.

Benefits and State of Reading Books in Nigeria

While many writers have argued that this generation of social media users see the act of reading books as hectic and dwelling in the past, many others have identified numerous benefits associated with reading books. Stanborough (2019) affirmed that the reading habit improves the reader's brain connectivity especially the somatosensory cortex of the brain that is responsible for the physical sensations of movement and pains. Similarly, Healthline (2023) reported a research group findings in the United States which established that 30 minutes of reading reduces blood pressure, heart rate and mental state of psychological distress of the reader. Several other literatures have also reported that reading books help to regulate sleep and rejuvenate the body for the effective human activities. In addition, reading fiction can make a reader to momentarily move out of his world into another realm of the imagined experiences of the characters in a book. Furthermore, Jamgbadi (2021) noted that medical doctors often recommend reading for their patients as a cure measure to alleviate their conditions. Reading habit therefore, refreshes the mind and soul of the reader and also improves the overall health benefit of the body.

On another development, Thomas (2021) celebrated that reading books improve the reader's ability to focus on a cognitively challenging task. According to this author, reading is a skill that allows one to rapidly master complex information and produce quality results in less than no time. In a related view, Karen (2020) averred that in a world where social media gadgets shorten users' attention, reading habit helps to train a person to be focus without distractions. This axiom collaborated Abora (2021) assertion that satisfied ideas, visions and clear directions come from the process of regular reading. Equally important to note is that regular reading help the reader to build understanding and knowledge that are necessary for critical thinking and good memory for problems solving.

Okpen & Temiras (2020) declared that reading books have the capacity to increase the readers' vocabulary and comprehension ability. In a related opinion, Atamah & Atamah (2022) stated that children who reads at early age, build-up large vocabulary on regular basis which in the long run will positively affects their academic success. Respondents interviewed in this study shows that 62.9% (175) of the respondents agreed that vocabulary developments are better acquired directly from reading books which in turn affects the effective communication repertoire skills of a person more than from social media; 59.4% (165) agreed that the regular reading of books can open persons' minds to understanding diverse occurrences of life and in turn help to eliminate the negative perceptions of a person towards other people. In this regards, reading habit can also help one to develop the spirit of patience and empathy with people in certain circumstances of life.

These researchers also sought to know the state of reading books by the elite respondents (retirees): 36.2% (21) agreed to occasional reading newspapers online; 20% (12) agreed to buying and reading the printed newspapers, and 8% (5) agreed to reading books and novels. The undergraduate respondents scored 42% (88) to borrowing and reading library books, 50.5% (105) agreed that they had no time going to the library but read lecture notes and browse other information online. On the students real-time with the library, the librarians agreed by 83% (10) to users not coming to the library ordinarily to read except during exam periods; on the levels at which students borrow library books, all the libraries studied rated this as very low, about 75% (9) librarians agreed that users preferred online resources on their smart phones rather than borrowing the printed sources. This finding correlated with Amadi & Ajayi (2022) study on the use of library resources by undergraduates in university libraries in North Eastern Nigeria which reported that only 32.6% respondents used the libraries.

The Benefits of Social Media

When it comes to technology development and application, there is always something new to experience with novelty devices and their features. Abayomi & Isa (2021) affirmed that the best of the technologies were yet to originate. Already, various technologies savvy such as the Blockchain, Full-stock, Edge computing, Internet behaviours, Snowflake, the DevOps, Predictive analytics and the cybersecurity, etc. are trending. The Internet of Things (IoT) is also gaining momentum and as more and more people come to understand the web and the server-side programming, developers will continue to building additional all-inclusive user-friendly apps. Ragala (2023) opined that in the near future, we should see more gadgets that would be connected to the IoT from our home appliances to automobiles. The Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already here with its astounding advances in machine learning, natural language processing and image recognition. The AI is effective in predicting user engagement with content and as its impact from TV, VFX, radio and social media apps it will make things easier for the citizens.

At present, many platforms are also increasingly adding new outfits and features to advance their social media users' experiences. Currently, Social commerce, influencer marketing, augmented reality, customer service, etc. are trending. Amanda

(2022) asserted that short-form video content will dominate the social media platforms such as those on Tik Tok, Facebook's Reels, You Tube's shorts and Instagram's Reels and stories. In a related view, Kingsnorth (2023) predicted that in the near future, the social media would become a primary format to satisfy the expectations of added users. We also expect many platforms to grow with outstanding features that would produce direct videos in mobile-main presentations. This would motivates more influencers to build on their revenues through creative platforms that would drive their users into real experiences. As the technology continues to expand, we should expect further changes and novelties in the way people would connect, communicate and share facts on the social media.

The future of social media is indeed, full of exciting possibilities. The speed of innovations now have never been faster. Augmented reality (AR) of the peoples' real-world experience is expected to go into mainstream. Amanda (2022) averred that other technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality will integrate with the social media to offer more engagement with clients. In this sense, we should expect increased engagement through interactive experiences with people in business more than mere watching on a screen; people would be able to connect with their audiences, conveying information that would gain them more trust in business and otherwise; there would be enhanced learning that would captivate an effective transformation through interactive and visual experiences, etc. Engine Creative (2023) affirmed that augmented reality is gaining immense acceptance due to its applications from gaming to healthcare and education and would more significantly impacting the art world. Other benefits of AR would include incredible accessibility, far higher interactions, availability of data everywhere, etc.

Social listening would be employed by many organizations and individuals to monitor users' conversations on social networking about their products, services and management as feed-backs. This would enable them to appreciate the impact of their operations, users' perceptions about their brands, services and other insights of the users' responses and needs. With new engaging features, the social media would in fact, be integrated, like a dream into every aspect of people's lives. Santiago (2023) asserted that many consumers of information would come to search for information on social media or through AI in place of the customary search engines; shopping would become seamless as social media users would purchase direct on social network themselves as a complete ecosystem. Indeed, the world of science fiction is impacting the technology narratives, the future can still not be imagined in the perspectives. But while this is so, will people still read books?

The Paradigm Shift

Despite the streaming of the social media, results in this study shows that the future of reading books can never be blinked. Even Hegarty (2019) opined that the future of books would be digital and people would still continue to read books. Stories would be told more on several media and with the dawn of more new sophisticated devices, combine with artificial intelligence, personalized devices would allow readers to interact with characters and reshape the reading story. Similarly, Smucker (2019) posited that people would not stop reading and that different types of books would

be available online and in audio chip formats; longer books would be a series of short books online so as to attract readers.

In another view, Belli (2019) affirmed that reading books cannot be replaced by technology because regular reading habit satisfies an almost original need within the reader. The idea here is that as one reads, attention is usually shifted and centred on an innate taste for something new from the book. Equally, Rajdeep (2019) opined that as long as humans remain biologically conscious, people would read books but the inevitable mode may change. This author postulated further that reading would be in digital formats but paper copy of the books would remain as items or objects to be possessed. Rajdeep's axiom is that as long as human species undergo trans-humanist and biological/neuronal consciousness into ontologically entangle with non-biological structures and/or substrates, the whole habit of reading books would also change.

Lewis (2019) in another view, advanced that there is more entertainment at people's fingertips than ever before and not everyone out there reads but despite that, people who read everyday would always be there and that the only time people would stop reading books may be when reading is banned. Propositionally, banning reading can never be possible because even as Lewis asserted, there would be full resistance and defying the authority.

Reading is a habit that technology cannot replace so long as the human race lives. People would regularly read books because printed books are more durable than the e-books. Also, the e-copies and the Internet cannot replace printed books because it is difficult to trust the various copyright issues of digital books and the aesthetic quality of downloaded copies. Besides, e-books need constant security protection against virus attacks but printed books are cheaper to maintain by repairs and other preservation and conservation methods. Often, new software systems are very problematic in terms of compatibility with old version e-books and so making it difficult to use. No matter the threat of technology and the social media, reading books would never die. Again, people will always seek and acquire new knowledge and information from printed books because of the hazards of the computer screen emissions on the eyes and to the brain.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper focused on the social media and reading books: The paradigm shift in the Nigerian digital era. The paper exposes the impact of social media on reading book habits by Nigerians; the technology lures of the social media apps; apps will continue to grow with wide range possibilities including increased interactive engagement through the augmented reality, social listening, virtual authenticity, etc. and despite these bewilderment, reading books cannot be replaced so long as the human race exists because of the many benefits of reading books as discussed in the paper; printed books will still exist; reading would go more digital using sophisticated devices such as the AI, etc. to move people to reading stories and seeking information, etc. Significantly, the findings in the paper would serve as a guide to many stakeholders in education and other sectors of the economy on the importance and needs to reading books despite the many social media enticements.



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