Influence of The Use of The Internet on the Reading Culture among Senior Secondary School Students in Ezeagu Education Zone, Udi, Enugu State.

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Abstract

Information technology has tremendously modernized and changed information retrieval services in this 'internet global village' and made it very easy. At a single click, any information needed is easily acquired and retrieved, making generation and dissemination of information promptly and effective. But unfortunately, some students have deviated from the purpose of internet for scholastic to browse for pleasure. Consequently, this study was carried out to examine the influence of the use of the internet on the reading culture among senior secondary school students in Ezeagu Education Zone, Udi Enugu State. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. It adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised 516 students. Through purposive sampling technique 275students in SSII were drawn from 10 schools that were picked through random sampling. Findings show that the use of the internet amidst its usefulness, negatively affects the reading culture of the students of Ezeagu Education zone. Recommendations were made.

Introduction

Many Nigerian children lack the basic reading culture. Reading is the springboard of any literacy programme. It is an indispensable learning skill which lays the foundation for independent studies and prepares the child for higher educational opportunities. As a skill and a norm, is desirable for the youth and for all in a development of a nation to foster understanding, increase knowledge and expand horizons of citizens. Longe, Ademu, and Aka-Nwachukwu (2023) define reading as the ability to use letters or groups of letters in place of spoken words to absorb ideas from written words. It is a selective process, which involves partial use of available minimal language cues selected from perceptual input on the basis of the

reader's expectation. Reading is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is formed by a previous reader's knowledge, experience, attitude and language community which is culturally and socially situated. Reading process requires continuous training, development, creativity, improvement and critical analysis. Nnadozie and Egwim (2010) see reading as an important foundation of a child's academic performance; a complex skill requiring the coordination of several interrelated sources of information (Edeole & Adejoke, 2016). They also see reading as an art of interpreting printed and written words and the most effective process of conscious learning, which influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as the attitudes, morals, beliefs, and action of individuals. Reading has been identified as a very important skill in lifelong educational development. It is an indispensable learning skill which lays the foundation for independent studies and prepares a child for higher educational opportunities. Therefore, reading consists of complex psycholinguistic processes of identifications, mental integration, research and application of written language skills. Reading serves as a link between printed symbols and their meanings; therefore achieving interaction between the reader and the author (Rahib, 2020).

Reading culture on the other hand, is an activity that is meant to popularize reading and make it a lifelong hobby. Reading culture is a complex activity that involves a variety of factors that come from within the reader and external factors. Again, reading culture according to Rahib (2020) can be regarded as a product of human kind's ability to learn from the environment and not a capability that is instinctive or inborn instinct. Many Nigerian youths lack the basic reading culture that tend to support an established tradition that Africans have an oral tradition that they would rather listen to a story than reading it (Ezema & Okere, 2008). This perhaps explains the popularity of the use of the internet in place of reading. UNESCO (2015) confirmed this poor reading culture among Nigerian children. In lieu of this, Oladunjoye (2016) stated that the studying culture of Nigerian children has declined significantly elevating worries that many college students will no longer read books from the library at college. In other words, the tradition of reading books is becoming non-existent in our society. Also, Akidi, Oyije-Agbese and Chukwueke (2021) lamented that due to the attitude of some individuals who scarcely pick up a novel or magazine to read, there is a serious decline in reading culture. The same applied to the school child for whom reading has come to mean

a thing of spare time. Considering the place of creative thinking in reading, it becomes very crucial for one to develop the rudiments of reading and the culture of reading always.

Creative thinking is having the power to think creatively, imaginatively, originality and constructively (Akidi, Oyiye-Agbese& Chukwueke, 2021). Reading culture is important for personal development and academic success. It helps vocabulary development. Development of reading culture helps one to be informed always for information is power, helps him for effective communication for the survival and exploitation of his environment. As one of the four basic language skills, it is very important that the society confers it on students compulsorily as part of their childhood education.

Consequently, the National Policy on Education (2014) underscores the vital roles of reading in the overall intellectual development of the child when it provided policy statement that 'States and Local governments shall establish public libraries and actively promote readership'… Despite these policy statements and efforts by some state government in developing libraries, reading culture is still at its low ebb among Nigerian children in general and Ezeagu students in particular.

Internet is a global network which unites millions of computers located in different countries and open broad opportunities to obtain and exchange information. It is the information revolution that has turned the world into a 'global village'. As a result of this value, it is assumed that internet usage in Nigeria is growing due to increasing availability of broad board connections. This increase of internet users in Nigeria, has made the internet a popular medium of communication and interaction as well as forum for online enterprises, such as internet services which have reduced the world into a global village, which makes it look as if everybody is at the same place at a particular point in time, aside from the fact that the internet has made communication to be easier and faster. Jibril, Musa and Shittu (2017), defined the internet as having a vast wealth of information sources that are effortlessly reachable and accessible to human beings all around the world at the sometime. It is a veritable tool in learning, teaching and research if used effectively. The internet has brought reading to the feet of secondary school students. It is no more what it used to be. Before the internet, students' main ally was the library,

and searching through volumes on the shelves was just the norm. The internet has transformed reading materials into a readable virtual book and the library without walls, broadens educational possibilities and studies perspectives (Houghton, 2020). It provides environment that conducts studies, gives assignments, prepares students for examination and gets them connected with friends globally. Internet has actually changed the reading culture of students. But, nowadays, students lack the skill of reading, they rather spend hours unending browsing the net, playing with handsets, passing excessive non-stop texts messages, excessive games and even browsing the sites which have relatively negative effects on their academic success, thereby making reading a book or novel or any other information resources in a quiet or peaceful corner in a library or homes things of the past. The diminishing interest in reading among the secondary schools students (Ezeagu inclusive) compared to increase in hours spent on the internet has become a cause for alarm and a challenge to everyone.

Based on the information above, it is clear that the internet seriously affects students and their reading culture. It is against this background that this study examines the 'influence of the use of the internet on the reading culture among secondary school students in Ezeagu Education Zone Udi, Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Reading is a very powerful and essential tool for learning and mastering the diverse skills and experiences that human need to lead a satisfying and personal life. For reading literary to be strengthened, there is need to access relevant information that promotes reading culture. Today's youth's lack of reading has a negative effect on the quality of graduates produced by our tertiary institutions in Nigeria. As a lifelong learning experience, it is crucial that students develop the reading culture. But unfortunately, the emergence of internet and the accompanying innovations have become a threat to the reading culture among our secondary school students. Students do not have interest in reading again only for doing their assignments and passing their exams. Instead of students studying by reading their books, they spend many hours watching movies, playing games, chatting, visiting online friends, watching pornography and the rest of them. They are capable of doing this from morning till night; not eating nor sleeping. The era of technology is gradually taking over our children's lives the reading habit among

students is rapidly vanishing especially on the boys. That is why Rahib (2020) observed that male adolescents are more glued to the internet than the girls. It gives them joy and a great privilege to meet their friends wide world and interact with them. This study therefore, seeks to investigate the influence of the use of the internet on the reading culture of senior secondary school students in Ezeagu Education Zone, Udi, Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to examine the influence the use of the internet has on the reading culture of senior secondary school students in Ezeagu Education zone, Udi, Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out if the students of Ezeagu make use of the internet
2. to establish the students rational for using the internet.
3. investigate the influence of the use of the internet on the reading culture of the students in Ezeagu Education Zone

H01 To find out the effect of the use of the internet on students reading culture based on gender.

1. Do the students of Ezeagu Education Zone use the internet?
2. What is the rationale of the students of Ezeagu Education zone in using the internet?
3. What influence has the internet on the reading culture of the students of Ezeagu Education Zone?

H01What is the effect of the use of the internet on students reading culture based on gender?

Significance of the study

The study will benefit both, students, teachers and parents. It will help the students to redress and have a change of attitude towards their reading habits. The study will help them minimize their net surfing and have time for net browsing and studying. The study will help the teachers to place the reading at the core of the school improvement plan. Also, the head teachers should actively prioritize reading in their schools. Create individual classroom libraries, set reading challenges with prizes, be a reading models, explore a variety of reading genres,

patience and practice, find a quiet place, free from distractions especially phones and encourage them to read anything in print anywhere, anytime, every time; sets up a reading club, read funny things, talk to pupils what they have read, follow their interests, read regularly to them, read for pleasure and read variety of books. Parents/ caregivers also should nurture their children's reading culture by providing books to them that will stimulate their interests. They should make reading a daily habit, read in front of their children create a reading space, take them to the library often, allow them pick what to read themselves, should learn how children read, pointing to each word as they read it out aloud, repeating new words frequently, and rereading previous chapters, writing notes to your children, and asking them to read to a younger siblings. All these can help in developing their love for reading, thereby reviving their reading culture.

Literature Review

Conceptual framework

Reading

Reading is the act of getting meaning from printed and written word. According to Sentuwa (2014) reading is a learning skill which aids all other learning activities. Reading in this study is the interpreting of meaning from printed words. It is a very powerful and essential tool for learning and mastering the diverse skills and experiences that humans need to lead a satisfying and personal life (Longe, Adenuyi& Aka-Nwachukwu (2023).

Reading culture

Reading culture is an instrument for acquiring lifelong language as noted by Macknezie (2014), which requires the ability to recognize, access, evaluate and utilize information in the available literature or information materials. The ability to read and write alone cannot lead to a reading culture. Reading culture is an activity that is meant to popularize reading and make it a lifelong hobby. The main objective of cultivating and promoting a reading culture that is appreciated and loved by citizens is a learned practice of seeking knowledge, information or entertainment through the written word. Reading culture, in the view of Akidi, Oyiye-Agbese & Chukwueke (2021), is a complex activity that involves a variety of factors that come from within the reader and this made it an important foundation for a child's academic performance. For this reason, reading culture

needs to be developed considering its place of creative thinking. Rahib (2020) considers its development important because it is regarded as a product of human kind's ability to learn from the environment and not a capability that is instinctive or inborn. Development of reading culture is very important for both personal and academic success, which the society has realized its importance in language development socialization and civilization; effective communication for the survival and exploitation of their environment. For its crucial position for academic success, it is very important that society confers it to students as part of their childhood education; that is, exposing a child to books early in life. This early reading exposure of a child to books and the regular modeling of reading lead to different practices of reading and reading materials which are likely to broaden their imagination and engage them in the practice of regular reading. That is why Sanders (2017) advocated that parents should introduce their children to informal method of reading rather than the formal methods, for it is the best way of promoting reading and developing reading culture. He further noted that informal method stimulates a desire in the child to read before trying to read or learn to read. He noted again that this stimulation was done through storytelling by the parents, his first teacher before entering school where the teacher now reads to the child and also consult books to find out things so that the child could associate books with pleasure and usefulness. UNESCO (2015) also pointed out that early exposure of children to reading encouraged them to read and be able to choose the books they would like to read (if allowed) to read books with lots of pictures in them, to read for contests, to have a classroom library and to have an author read to them at school. Research has shown that children who read with their parents had a higher intelligence, reading ability and better communication skills. According to Corirossi (2011) reading should be fun and entertaining. He encouraged parents never to associate reading with punishment or disciplining their children. Punishing your child by sending him to a room to read had a negative effect on his interest in reading; the child will equate reading to punishment. Sangkeo (2013) on his side, asserted that parents who spent time reading to their children gave them the best possible start on the road to literacy; for those children who did best in literacy skills at school were those who came from homes where they interacted with books and their parents as well as siblings who read to them. He therefore, suggested creative ways for parents to foster the reading culture among children and these included reading story books aloud,

creating a learning environment by setting up a home library, visiting libraries and bookshops among others. About storytelling, Dike (2015) argued that as African heritage, the traditions should be seen as a way of bridging the gap between the culture in the school and that at home. These cultures do not have to work against each other. On the contrary, they can be a form of mediation between the culture at home and that at school. Dike (2015) continued that stories, lullabies, anecdotes, proverbs, tongue twisters, riddles, legends, fables, myths and songs are all part of the children's everyday life, so they should be acknowledged as something that can lay the foundation for reading practices and development of reading culture among children; which they would not depart from rather grow up to adulthood with it. Dike aired the views of the children when she stated that the children preferred stories that they are familiar with, understandable and has a lesson to teach. Therefore, she said that, since folktales are likely to be familiar with them as part of storytelling tradition, it has strong moral lessons. This should be employed to encourage reading and developing reading culture. That is why Osakwe (2015) opined that storytelling which was part of a long standing oral tradition and informal education in Africa should be incorporated into today's formal education system. Through story telling literary reading could be taught in a meaningful context. This notwithstanding, Dike (2015) was disappointed when she stated that a high value was placed on sociability in Nigeria which discouraged reading because it was looked upon as a solitary activity. On his own part, Sentuwa (2014) bemoaned that children from well-to-do families preferred spending their leisure time watching movies, surfing the internet and visiting friends whereas children of the poor sell foodstuffs, pure water and fruits to earn a living rather than read; because a suitable environment is not available for them for good reading and reading culture to take place. That is why they were easily carried away by the internet surfing and browsing without knowing the usefulness of the internet as an aid to their reading and development of reading culture rather they used internet for insignificances.

Internet

Internet is a global network of linked computers, servers, phones and smart appliances that communicate with each other using the transmission control protocol standard to enable the fast exchange of information and files along with other types of services. The internet can be broadly seen as a worldwide network

of computers communicating through an approved protocol (spiceworks.com, n.d). It has an unlimited wealth of information resources that are readily available and easily accessible for people to use worldwide and at the same time. The internet according to Houghton (2020) has brought reading to the front door of secondary school students. This is a development that cannot be compared with the formal method of reading from the text books or through the physical library. The internet has been transformed to library without walls, where reading materials have been turned into a readable virtual book, broadens educational possibilities and studies perspectives. He said that it provides study environment that conducts studies, gives assignments, prepares students for examination and gets them connected with friends whom they chat with across the globe. The internet is a real device in learning, education and research when used effectively. But the reading culture of many students has changed drastically in the educational system of today due to the emergence of internet and their exposure to it. Students have no interest in reading for leisure and entertainment, they read just to pass exams only. Instead of studying using the internet, students spend their time watching movies, browsing the internet, chatting and sending SMS unending and visiting friends online. This era of ICT is gradually taking control over students' lives. That is why Rahib (2020) observed that the males are more hooked to internet than the girls because it gives them the more privilege to meet and interact with friends worldwide. It is worthy to note that students are now living in a digital age and have grossly engaged in digital method of communication. Therefore, in order to empower them to become competent and relevant digitally, they need to be given opportunity to develop technologically literate which is as necessary as the air we breathe to survive in this jet age (Okeke & Anierola (2021). That is why Almasi, Machumu & Zhu (2017) reported that growing increase in the use of the internet is gradually eroding reading culture among secondary school students. They observed that the students use the internet for activities related to academics and general activities. Akande and Bamuse (2017) reputed also that access to internet brought about by the use of internet can influence the academic performance of the secondary school student negatively or positively. In this vein, Rahib (2020) stated that the internet has brought unparalleled opportunities to students on one hand and a major concern for parents in the other hand. This is because some internet use may seriously distract students, affect their reading culture and generally distort their academic

achievements. Based on the above, it is clear that the internet has serious effects on students and their reading culture. That is why this work sets out to examine the influence of the use of the internet on the reading culture of students of Ezeagu Education Zone in Enugu State. Undoubtedly, the purpose of internet all over the world is to modernize teaching and equip learners with skills that will enable them to use such technology after their graduation in the society

Theoretical framework

Theory of Unfoldment

Rousseau (1712 – 1778) was one of the earliest theorists that studied and propounded this theory. According to Tracey (2006), this theory states that teachers should follow child's lead with regard to learning reading. As Tracey clearly showed in his prominent novel, 'Emile', if a child is forced to learn something that does not interest him, he will not learn sufficiently. He divided this novel into two parts. The first part showed Emile living in a rural area and was breastfed while in the second part of the novel, Emile, who becomes an orphan child lives with a teacher who was regarded as a social reformer. Emile was let free to nature, he was to follow the nature in order to survive, Tracey (2006) further states that Pestalozzi (1716-1827) was influenced by Rousseau's theory and he added the importance of informal instruction from adults. Pestalozzi built a school to implement this theory. In this school, everything designed for the needs of students and teachers were provided with necessary instructions. Pestalozzi found out that children need formal instructions from the adults. He argued that it is not the nature that gives the social morality. To him, the child takes instructions from his parents, adults, caregivers and teachers. Froebel (1782-1852) developed Pestalozzi theory after his death and added the importance of play in children's learning that is known as play way method.

Studies done on students reading culture and internet.

Akidi, Agbese and Chukwueke (2021) carried out a work on the influence of the use of the internet on the reading culture of students of government college, Umuahia, AbiaState. They adopted descriptive design, with the study population of 278 SS 2 & 3 students using the complete census sampling technique. They pointed out that inculcating a reading culture with the use of internet should be introduced at an early age among children. There reason is that reading and

reading culture developed over a long period and quite early in their lives will help to mould them into lifelong readers. The challenge is therefore to ground in them the reading culture which is as important as games and other hobbies they like. Perhaps then, the impact of negative social media will be somehow reduced. It then means that for effective use of internet, early introduction of students into the use of technology in reading and studying will immensely benefit and help them not to lose focus while surfing the internet. Both studies are not same to an extent though they discuss the influence of the use of internet on the reading culture of secondary school students. They are not exactly the same.

Longe, Ademyi& Aka-Nwachukwu (2023) carried out a work on the relationship between the use of the internet and reading culture of secondary school students in Lagos State. They used purposive random sampling approach to select 200 students for the study. The instrument had reliability coefficient of 0.81.inferential statistics of Pearson product moment co-relational coefficient test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significant levels.

The result revealed that there was no significant relationship between senior secondary student's use of the internet and the students reading culture based on gender. The result also showed that secondary school students use the internet for close to 16 hours daily; the effect for the use of the internet on reading culture was positive and they faced challenges in the use of the internet. Based on their findings it was recommended that students should be encouraged to develop a reading culture that will impact positively on their studies, provide adequate internet connectivity within and outside the school. Both studies are not related but they centred on students reading culture and use of internet.

Oladunjoye (2016) carried out a study on reading culture and internet browsing: A paradigm shift among Nigerian adolescents? This study examined the state of adolescents' readiness to project a stable reading culture in a society where growth of ICT is catching their fancy. A total of 100 respondents 52 awaiting admission into the university, 48 in their first year in the university, were used. Four hypotheses were tested to confirm the number of hours students spend on internet on one hand and to reading on the others identify gender difference in respondents. Perception of the time they spend and what they used the time for

and if their browsing indeed have any impact on their reading habit. The participants' awareness of the existence of ICT language training programmes was equally tested and whether such have impact on adolescents' attitude to reading. All the four hypotheses were rejected and probable reasons advanced, which include the involvement of teachers, counselors, parents, students affairs, personnel and all stakeholders that since the internet affects students' reading habit seriously that the NUC should set in motion the process of accrediting existing Nigerian university libraries to ensure the availability of both digital and non digital sections and recommend that librarians should be equipped with facilities that will make them qualified to monitor balancing in the use of time between manual books selection/ study and digital/ e-learning surveying. These two works are not related though both touch the reading culture of students.

Summary of literature Review

The literature review as organized based on conceptual framework, theoretical framework and the empirical studies which were some of the related studies and their findings. Having gone through these empirical studies, the research found out that none of the works, resembled. Hence the need to investigate the influence of the use of the internet on senior secondary students in Ezeagu Education zone, Udi, Enugu State.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The target population was all SS 2 students in Ezeagu Education zone that consist 575 students from 29 secondary schools. The researcher randomly picked 10 secondary schools and purposively picked 275 students from these 10 schools. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire 'Influence of the Internet on students reading culture (IISRC).The study has 3 research questions and 1 hypothesis which was analyzed with inferential statistics of Pearson product Moment co-relational coefficient used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significant level. The items in the questionnaire consist of close-ended questions using four point scale of strongly agreed (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 , and Strongly Agreed (SA) = 1. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage and mean scores. A bench mark of 2.5 was taken as the accepted score for the positive responses,

which implied that any item with a mean score of 2.5 and above was taken while items with a mean score below 2.5 was rejected.

Presentation of analysis

This section analyses the result of the data collected. A total of 275 copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents and all were returned. The presentation follows the order of the research questions.

Research question 1: How the senior secondary school students of Ezeagu use the internet

Table 1: Responses of the students on the use of internet N= (275)

S/N	Items statement	Yes	%	No	%
1	I use the internet facility?	261	96.1	14	3.9

Table 1 shows the responses of the students on the use of the internet. Result shows that almost all the students 261 (96.1%) indicated the use of the internet while just 14 respondents (3.9) indicated non-use of the internet. The result implied that students of senior secondary schools in Ezeagu use the internet. This finding corresponds with the study done by Tarimo and Kavishe (2017) that revealed the high internet usage among the senior secondary school students.

Research question 2: The rationale behind the students' use of internet

Table 2: Students Reasons for the use of the Internet (N=275)

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	I use the internet to watch movies and other things posted online	126	36	68	45	2.88	A
2	I use the internet to chat with friends	144	96	35	30	3.07	A
3	I use the internet to gather information	91	114	40	20	2.97	A
4	I use the internet in order to make new friends	101	114	40	20	3.08	A

5	I use the internet to write my assignments	92	51	90	42	2.70	A
6	I use the internet to improve my reading culture	25	20	86	114	1.72	Disagreed
7	I use the internet to prepare for exams	114	126	12	20	3.21	A
8	I use the internet for study purposes	75	120	18	62	2.76	A
9	I use the internet to improve my scores in school	35	50	96	94	2.09	A
10	I use the internet to navigate the world	83	61	48	83	2.52	A

Table 2 shows the responses for the rationale behind the use of the internet by the students of Ezeagu Education zone. From the analysis, greater number of students agreed with the following reasons behind their use of the internet. To watch movies and other things posted (2.88); to chat with friends (3.07) to gather information (2.97), to make new friends (3.08), to write assignments (2.70), to prepare for exams (3.21), for studying (2.76) and to navigate the world (2.52). However, respondents that made 1.73 and 2.09 respectively show that their inability to use the internet to improve their reading culture and improve their scores in the school.

From the above results and their means scores it could be concluded that the students of senior secondary schools in Ezeagu Education Zone, make use of the internet for many purposes aside to improve their reading culture and grades in school. In the same vein, preparation for examinations had the highest mean score of 3.21. This finding corresponds with Rahib (2020) that state that the internet has brought unparalleled opportunities to students that online searching for information helps to boost examination scores and performances in assignments given to students. This study therefore revealed that students will only use the internet if work given to them by their teachers requires them to use internet facilities.

Research question 3: The influence of the use of internet has on the reading culture of students of the Ezeagu Education zone.

Table 3: Influence of the use of the internet on students' reading culture N=275

S/N	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Internet increases my reading attention span	20	30	126	99	1.89	D
2	It helps me have better understanding of what I am reading	80	165	10	20	3.11	A
3	The internet distracts my reading	113	117	30	15	3.19	A
4	Chatting with friends keeps me awake to read in the night	102	138	25	10	3.21	A
5	Internet makes me active in the class	77	138	40	20	2.99	A
6	Internet enhances my reading ability	20	15	173	67	1.96	D
7	Internet exposes me to unimportant articles and write – ups and sites	200	30	15	30	3.45	A
8	Internet articles motivate me to read	63	132	30	50	2.76	A

Table 3 presents responses gotten on the influence of the internet on the reading culture of the students of Ezeagu Education zone. The result shows that out of the eight items investigated six were agreed by majority of the students' respondents that made up 311, 3.19, 3.21, 2.99, 3.45 and 2.76 mean scores respectively. However, majority of the students' respondents disagreed with items statements 1 and 6 which present that, it enhances my reading ability, and it increases my reading culture span.

Hypothesis

HO_1

One hypothesis was tested using Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient at 0.05 level of significant

There is no significance difference between senior secondary students' use of the internet and the student's reading culture based on gender.

Variables	N	Mean	Std	Df	r.crit	P	Remark
Male	150	2.850	1.9669	179	0.117	0.19	Reject
Female	125	2.750	.81723				

Table indicates that r-cal 0.117, r-Crit – 0.019. that is the result of the r-cal-value of 0.117 is greater than r-cri of 0.019 at significant difference between senior secondary students' use of the internet and the students' reading culture based on gender, is therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings have shown different influences of the use of the internet on the reading culture of the students of Ezeagu Education zone. Udi. Some of the influences are positive, such as helping them have better understanding of what they are reading; making them active in the calss, motivates them to read and making them stay awake into the night. But, that notwithstanding internet has its' negative aspects such as exposure to unimportant articles, sites and write ups; failure to increase their reading attention span, failure to enhance their reading culture. With these findings, it can be concluded that the negative influence of the use of the internet was greater than the positive influence in the case of students in Ezeagu Education Zone, Udi. This study also corresponds with the work of Odaci (2011) which reported that the use of the internet by students has either a negative influence or no significance influence on students learning outcomes. From the findings, the researcher deduced that the students were not matured enough to have found out the usefulness of the internet for academic purposes that should have also helped them improve their reading culture rather than using the internet for entertainment, chatting, sending Sms, visiting and making new friends and also getting into pornographic sites, which negatively affects their reading culture and their academic success. The negative influence of the internet

as revealed by this study may corresponds with the findings of Akidi, Oyiye-Agbese and Chukwueke (2021) that stated that majority of students are not aware that internet is a veritable tool for searching online academic information rather than surfing the internet for irrelevances. This established through this hypothesis therefore, that there is no difference between senior secondary students' use of the internet and the students' reading culture based on gender is rejected while the alternate hypothesis which states there is significant difference between secondary school students' use of the internet and reading culture based on gender is accepted. This is in agreement with Rahib (20200 who observed that male adolescents are more glued to internet than girls. It gives them a great privilege to meet with friends globally.

Conclusion

Reading is the springboard of any literacy programme. It is one of the oldest habits of human civilization and has remained the passion of the greatest personalities of all times. Reading skills are an important foundation for a child's academic success. Children who read often will read more and acquire more knowledge in many areas of study. Again, poor readers lag behind more educated peers in reading and other areas of study. Inability to read is one of the problems many Nigerian children face today that hamper their dreams actualization. On the other hand, internet has brought reading at the door steps of our secondary school students. It has become a way of life for the majority of tertiary students around the world. This improves their mode of study because of its vast wealth of information sources which easily access at the click of the bottom.

Based on the findings, the study concludes that the use of the internet has positive influence but when used negatively, it affects the reading culture of the students of Ezeagu Education Zone, Udi in Enugu State.

Recommendations

- Secondary school students should be provided with adequate guidance on how to promote their reading culture through the appropriate use of the internet.

- School authorities and parents should closely monitor the internet sites their students and children visit to ensure that the utilization of the educational sites is encouraged.
- While the problem here is lack of awareness, students need to know that reading is fun and lot of internet language programmes are available to help building a strong reading culture.

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