

**THE EFFECTS OF COMPULSIVE TEXTING BEHAVIOUR ON SPELLING
ABILITY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ADOLESCENTS IN
YABA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, LAGOS STATE**

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of compulsive texting behaviour on spelling ability and academic performance of adolescents in Yaba local government area, Lagos state. Correlational research design was adopted in the study. The population for this study comprised all SS2 students in co-educational public schools in Yaba local government area. A total of 145 participants were selected from two co-educational public senior secondary schools in Yaba local government area, through a simple random sampling technique. Thirty nine (39) out of one hundred and forty five (145) participants were identified to be compulsive texters based on their response to the compulsive texting items and their frequency of texting. Two (2) hypotheses were tested in this study. A questionnaire developed by the researcher with a reliability coefficient of 0.65 was employed in collection of data. The data were analysed and the hypotheses were tested with the use of mean, standard deviation and pearson product moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study revealed that there is no significant relationship between academic performance of compulsive texters. Also, compulsive texting doesn't have any relationship with the spelling ability of adolescents. It was recommended that smart phones use should not be discouraged among adolescents. Adolescents are advised to reduce its use during examination periods, study hours and school hours. Adolescents should also make use of Predictive text feature while texting as a conscious effort to check for incorrect spelling.

Keywords: adolescents, compulsive texting, group counselling

Introduction

In recent times, mobile text message technologies or applications have exchanged interpersonal communications by encouraging more text-based communication rather than face to face discussions. The advent of internet mobile text applications like blackberry messenger (BBM), Whatsapp, 2go, Badoo, We-chatetc. and the availability of flexible and cheaper data plans or bundle by network providers such as Glo, MTN, 9mobile and Airtel has given room for adolescents to socialize and connect longer using their smartphones without paying network providers for short message service (SMS).

Adolescence is a period that is marked with an increasing influence of one's parents as a primary reference group (Adams in Osarenren 2002). Adolescents find support from one another, value social connections and take advantage of any medium that enhances social connectivity. A strong bond of friendship and romantic relationship are built by them through this medium. Cholz (2012) stated that texting has now become adolescents' best mode of communication. In Lenhart (2012) report, adolescents' texting outdoes their use of any other mode of communication, with sending and receiving an average of 167 texts per day.

Today, it is very common to observe adolescents texting while talking, walking on the road, eating, reading, cooking and in the classroom when lecture is going on. Moeller (2010) stated that many adolescents cannot imagine a world without mobile phones, as it has become an integral part of their life and has now gradually taken over them unawares as they are addicted and really dependent on it. The Institute of Mental Health resources (2012), adds that this over dependence is reflected by their recurrent and persistent thoughts and worry about texting, and failed attempts to ignore or suppress thoughts or impulses to text.

According to Lister-Landman (2015), compulsive texting is more complex than frequency of texting. It involves trying and failing to cut back on texting, becoming defensive when challenged about the behaviour, and feeling frustrated when one can't do it. Other

signs include not doing chores to spend more time texting, texts are long, checking texts before doing something else, becoming defensive or secretive when anyone asks them about texting, frustration because they want to text but have to wait, fear that life without texting would be boring and unhappy, snapping, yelling, or acting annoyed if someone bothers them while texting, sleep loss due to texting, feeling preoccupied with texting or fantasising about texting and lying to others to cover up the amount of time they have been texting.

Adolescents' preoccupation with texting may affect their academic performance. In the study carried out by Lister-Landman, Domoff, and Dubow (2015), Domoff (2010) and Kibona and Mgya (2015), compulsive texting was found to negatively affect the academic performance of adolescents. According to Rosen, Carrier and Cheever (2013), compulsive texting can impact study skill and performance in the classroom as Middle school, high school, and college students concentrate on their studies for at least 6 min before they get distracted by social media.

Adolescents' ability to spell correctly may also be affected. Rafi (2010), revealed that the use of texting does not respect orthographic and syntactic regulations as most words are shortened and spelt as they sound e.g., 8 for 'ate', 4 for 'four and for', bcz for 'because', and short sentences as "ow r u?", "b rytbk" "d ouz is fyn" e.t.c. Crystal (2008) says that texters are prone to ignore spellings, either intentionally or reflexively. Frequent use of shortened spellings during texting may overtime reflect in their writing in note taking during lectures, or examinations which may attract some penalties.

Dansieh (2011), attempts a theorisation of the phenomenon when he briefly captured that "as more and more students worldwide acquire and use smart phones, so are they immersing themselves in text messaging. Such is the situation that some teachers, parents and students themselves are expressing concerns that students' writing skills is at the risk of being

sacrificed on the altar of text messaging” .This position is centred on the assumption that texting has negative effects on students’ writing skills. Therefore, the spelling ability of adolescents that are compulsive texters may also be affected.

Statement of the Problem

Compulsive texting behaviour is a serious problem for an adolescent’s social life and work. Compulsive adolescents have a tendency to to feel uncomfortable, unhappy, lost and lonely without checking their phones to read and send text messages. Their work (study, home chores and other meaningful activity) and lives are sometimes disturbed by frequent text messages. They cannot restrict themselves from viewing or responding to a text message while engaging in other activities, which leads to lack of effectiveness and attention to that activity. Also, adolescents may become proficient in text jargon (laugh out loud (LOL) , rolling on the floor(ROTFL), laugh wan kill me die(LWKMD)etc. They also make use of abbreviated words like “wt” instead of “what”, “skul or schl” instead of “school”, “sumtn” instead of “something” etc. in order to be swift in typing and to manage limited number of characters allowed in text messaging. Because of the frequent use of text jargons and abbreviations, many adolescents may find it difficult to spell correctly. Adolescents check their phone continually, snap if they are interrupted and get so pre-occupied with texting that they skip sleep and don’t get all necessary work done. This constitutes a big problem because it impairs their sleep, may affect their academic functioning or performance and engagement in other meaningful activities. Hence, this study aims at investigating the effect of compulsive texting behaviour on spelling ability and academic performance of adolescents in Yaba local government area, Lagos state.

Purpose of Study

The essence of this study is to investigate the effect of compulsive texting behaviour on spelling ability and academic performance of adolescents in Yaba local government area, Lagos state. Other reasons for embarking on this study are to:

1. Determine the relationship between compulsive texting and academic performance
2. Determine the relationship between compulsive texting and spelling ability

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between compulsive texting and academic performance
2. There is no significant relationship between compulsive texting and spelling ability.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a Correlational research design.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A total of 145 participants were selected from two co-educational public senior secondary schools in Yaba local government area to respond to the research questionnaire, through a simple random sampling technique. 39 out of 145 participants were identified to be compulsive texters based on their response to the compulsive texting items and their frequency of texting. In other words, only 39 participants who scored below 26 out of 40 in compulsive item statements, and send or check for text messages often and most times, were further selected for the study through a purposive sampling technique.

Instrument Administration and Collection

A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used in this study. The questionnaire is made up of three sections. The first section is made up of items seeking information on the respondent's bio-data (name, age and gender) and questions on participants' usage of smartphone and the degree at which they check or send text messages on their phone. The second section is made up of two (2) clusters. The first cluster is made up of ten statements on a four point Likert scale adapted from Lister-Landman, Domoff and Dubow (2015) to identify adolescents who are compulsive texters. The second cluster measured the relationship between compulsive texting and academic performance. The third section is made up of fourteen sentences with wrongly spelled words (short form word), which require the respondents to give the correct spelling of the words in bracket. The wrongly spelled word were derived by asking some whatsapp users to send commonly misspelled words used during chatting.

The research instrument was administered and collected by the researcher and an undergraduate counsellor trainee.

Data Analysis

The bio data of the respondents were analysed using simple percentage, mean, standard and standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested using pearson product moment correlation. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between Compulsive texting and Academic Performance among Adolescents.

Table 1: Showing Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Compulsive Texting and Academic Performance of Compulsive Texters.

Variable	X	N	SD	DF	r-cal	r-critical	Decision
Compulsive texting (x)	21.97	39	2.6	37	0.30	0.32	Accept H_0
Academic performance (y)	15.76		4.58				

**Significance level at 0.05*

The above table shows that the calculated r-value of 0.30 is lesser than r-critical value of 0.32, given at 37 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. The Null Hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant relationship between compulsive texting and academic performance.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between compulsive texting and spelling ability among adolescents.

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Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between compulsive texting and spelling ability among adolescents.

Table 1: Showing Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Compulsive Texting and Spelling Ability

Variable	Mean	SD	N	DF	r-cal	r-critical	Decision
Compulsive texting (X)	21.97	2.6	39	37	-0.16	0.32	Accept H ₀
Spelling ability (Y)	12.08	2.54					

**Significance level at 0.05*

The above table shows that the negative relationship between compulsive texting and spelling ability implies that the more adolescents text, the worse their spelling ability. While the calculated r-value of -0.16 is lesser than r-critical value of 0.32, given at 37 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. The Null Hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant relationship between compulsive texting and spelling ability.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis One: Hypothesis one states that there is no significant relationship between compulsive texting and academic performance. The result of the analysis reveals that there is no significant relationship between compulsive texting and academic performance. In other words, compulsive texting does not affect the academic performance of students. Thus, hypothesis two was accepted. These findings contradict earlier study by Kibona and Mgaya (2015), which concluded that the use of mobile phones affects students concentration in class, which causes a drop in academic performance. This findings also negates Domoff (2010) and Lister-Landman, Domoff and Dubow (2015). A likely reason for the contradiction observed may be attributed to the sample size and statistical tool used. A smaller sample size of 39 was

studied in this work as compared to Kibona et al (2015), Lister-Landman et al (2015) and Domoff (2010); 100, 403, 403 respectively. In respect to statistical too, frequencies, simple regression and multiple regression were used respectively.

Hypothesis Two: Hypothesis two states that there is no significant relationship between compulsive texting and spelling ability. The result of the analysis indicated the negative relationship between compulsive texting and spelling ability implies that the more adolescents text, the worse their spelling ability, while there was no significant relationship between compulsive texting and spelling ability. Hypothesis one is therefore accepted. The finding is in contrast with the study by Yousaf and Ahmed (2010) who concluded that student often make spelling mistakes due to SMS using habits. This finding is also negated by Odey, Essoh, Ndobbo and Endong (2014), Powell and Dixon (2011) and Geetersema, Hyman and Deventer (2011).

A likely reason for the contradiction observed could be in the nature of the student population used. Whereas Yousaf et al. (2010), Odey et al (2014) and Powell et al (2011) studied university students, this present study studied secondary school students.

However, it corroborates earlier study by Bushnell, Kemp and Martin (2011). A plausible reason for this finding could be in the nature of the student population. Both study studied adolescents in secondary school.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between compulsive texting and spelling ability. There is also no significant relationship between compulsive texting and academic performance.

Recommendations

Since texting does not significantly have a negative impact on adolescents' academic performance and spelling ability, the use of smart phones should not be discouraged among adolescents. However, adolescents are advised to control its use during examination periods, study hours and school hours.

Adolescents should make use of Predictive text feature while texting as a conscious effort to check for incorrect spelling. Predictive texting suggests or predicts word as the letters are typed. This reduces the need to shorten words and helps the need for swift typing.

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