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INFLUENCE OF MOBILE PHONE USAGE ON MORALITY OF RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ETHIOPE EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE

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Abstract
The study specifically investigated the moral values of secondary school students in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State. The purpose of using mobile phone, frequency of mobile phone usage and how mobile phone usage influences the moral values of rural secondary school students. The correlational design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 211 SS3 students of two public secondary schools in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State. Specifically, 123 students were from Oviorie Secondary School, while 98 was from Ovu-Grammer School. The entire population was used as sample for the study. In order to collect data, the questionnaire was adopted while data were analysed using descriptive and influential statistics. The study found that the students possess moral value. Students use mobile phone for the purposes outside their academic work on a regular basis. Furthermore, mobile phone usage has a negative influence on the moral value of the students. From the findings, it was recommended that secondary school student activities could be checked to ensure they are not involved in the sites that will affect their moral value.
Keywords: Influence, mobile phone, usage, morality

Introduction

The issue of morality among youths particularly secondary school students has been a topic of concern in recent times. The changing social and cultural dynamics in the country has led to deterioration in the moral value of students. Some youths no longer see the need to be sincere and faithful in any activity they are involved in. According to Igbal (2016) that recently, most youths are now involved in all sort of immoral acts like fraud, robbery, cheating. This is unlike in the past where there were good numbers of respectful, sincere youths that are faithful to any work committed to them as well as their educational activities. Morality is very important in the life of individual, society, organisation and everything concerning this world at large. It guides the behavior of human to be able to differentiate right from wrong. According to Lawal and Sala-hudeen (2021) morality is a psychological fact that is influenced cognitively by processes and emotional responses. Morality is a psychological phenomenon that involves cognitive processes, emotional responses, and social interactions, shaping individuals' decisions about what is morally right or wrong. In order words, morality is a belief that guides an individual to be able to determine what is wrong and right. It has been observed that immorality has taken the place of morality most especially amongst youths in Nigeria. Youths are now dishonest, disrespectful, disobedient, cheating, cultism, drugs and so many other crimes. (Ohwovorione 2013). There are so many factors that may contribute to immorality among youths of these days. The widespread in the use of technological tools has been noted to be

a contributing factor to the attitude of youths. Majority of them are addicted to their mobile phones in search of whatsoever will satisfy them.

A mobile phone is a device that is capable of making and receiving calls through connection to a mobile network provided by a mobile phone operator. Also, mobile phones most especially the modern mobile ones (smartphones) support a wide variety of other services like as text messaging, MMS, email, Internet access and short-range wireless communications (Encyclopedia of Mobile Phone Behaviour, 2015). Borth (2024) also define mobile phones as portable device that connects to a telecommunications network in order to transmit and receive voice, video and other data. The use of mobile phone with its lots of features such as access to internet, sms, accessing social network sites such as facebook, listening to music, creating content, help to overcome loneliness etc has been noted as some of the benefits of mobile phone to man which has led to increase in it usage. But it has also been noted that mobile phone usage is been problematic to users (Vaidya, Pathak and Vaidya, 2016). According to Soyemi, Oloruntoba and Okafor, (2015), the increase in the use of mobile phones has led to its indispensability most especially amongst youths. Though there are lots of benefits attached to the use of mobile phone, its influence on morality among rural secondary school students has become an issue of concern. Students now easily access contents through mobile phones and other devices also expose them to various forms of content that encourages violence, sexual promiscuity etc. Parents and teachers find it difficult to control the content students are addicted to which now lead to reduction in the moral value of students (Julius, Abdullah, & Suhairom, 2018). Studies have shown that the use of mobile phone has caused lots of problems in the society. Students no longer concentrate in their studies fully rather they now regard to school as scam. According to Rabiu, Muhammed, Umaru and Ahmed (2016) that mobile phones have now become parts of individual life. In order words, man as well as the present generation youth can no longer live without mobile phones usage. This study is therefore set to find out if mobile phone usage influences secondary school students in Ethiope East Local government area, Delta state Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the purposes of the study.

1. to find out the moral values of secondary school students in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State;
2. Ascertain the purpose of using mobile phone among rural secondary school students
3. Examine the frequency of mobile phone usage among rural secondary school students
4. Find out how mobile phone usage influences the moral values of rural secondary school students

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study

1. What is the moral values of secondary school students in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State;

2. What are the purposes of using mobile phone among rural secondary school students
3. How often do rural secondary school students use mobile phone
4. How does mobile phone usage influences the moral values of rural secondary school students

Review of Related Literature

The ability to discern what is right from wrong is a habit that everyone should possess in a family, organisation, institutions and society. In time past, it was a norm for individual to possess a moral value as a character of faithfulness, honesty and faithfulness. According to Othoo and Aseu (2022) that moral values such as respect, empathy, justice, honesty, responsibility, kindness, fairness, consciousness, courage, cooperation, gratitude, self-discipline, patience, generosity, tolerance, forgiveness, humility etc. are important in the personal and social life of secondary school students. Bekomson and Ntamu, (2019) noted that morality help in distinguishing right from wrong, having the right behavior towards others and preventing harm to promote good. Lawal and Sala-hudeen (2021) stated that moral values is the foundational ideas that sharpened the behavior, decisions and interaction of secondary school students moral values of secondary school students in the school, community, at hone and the society at large. These students are able to fit into anywhere they find themselves when they are morally alright. Othoo and Aseu emphasized that moral value of students encompasses, honesty and integrity, respect and empathy, responsibility and accountability, compassion and citizenship, modesty and lots of others. Majority of the youths in this present age do not have these moral values that are necessities in the life of an individual. It was noted by Lawal andSala-hudeen that most youths of this day lack respect for those older than them. They are dishonest, they are intolerance and lack manners. It was noted by Ogungbeni et al. (2016) that in Nigeria, there is no more regard for work, duty. Value is no more placed on clean environment; there is no tolerance and respect for anyone. Today, dishonesty, disrespect, disobedient and other forms of malpractices now manifest in the various Nigerian schools in form of cheating during examination, dishonesty, riots, cultism, kidnapping, raping, and abuse of drugs (Ohwovorione, 2013). According to Ngussa, Makewa and Allida, (2016) that studies have shown that in Tanzania where one of the aims in secondary school curriculum is to inculcate moral values in the mind of the learners, pupils still leave school seriously with the mindset of immoral behaviors. Kwameswarao and Suneela (2022) found that most students to an extent are respectful. Obedient, hardworking and could be regarded as moderate level in their moral values. A study by Ngussa, Makewaand Allidafound that hardworking and responsibility, punctuality and time consciousness, obedience with the mean score of 3.65, 3.52 and 3.50 respectively is an indication that youths in secondary schools lack these moral values. The reason behind most students' immoral act in this 21st century is an issue that could be associated to neglect in the part of parents, teachers, society in bringing these children up in the proper way. In order words, family, community, schools, society have failed in the moral values of the youths. When there is lack of moral education in curriculum or the moral aspects in curriculum are not properly addressed, it becomes a problem. Also, in a

situation where everything in a society has tailed towards making money, fame etc with the aid of technological facilities such as mobile phones without considering when and how to make use of these tools, immoral act becomes immense.

According to Lawal and Sala-hudeen (2021) that mobile phone has been the most popular device that is used by everyone since the inception of ICTs. Mobile phone. The way mobile phones are used among secondary school students in Nigeria reveal intriguing insights into the impact of technology on their daily lives. It has recently been noticed that mobile phone is now ubiquitous among the youths to aid communication, leisure activities and shaping their behavior. Students now utilizes platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp etc as means of virtual gathering spaces where students connect with friends, share updates, photos, and videos, and participate actively in discussions online and social interactions (Viatonu et al, 2014). There is now a transformation in students communication, reasoning, physical activities and otherwise. According to Srivastava (2005) as cited in Lawal and Sala-hudeen (2021) most students now use mobile phone for instant messaging and communication. It could be for real-time conversations through text messages, voice calls, and video calls. Mobile phones also serve as gateways to the vast realm of information available on the internet. Nigerian secondary school students frequently have access to internet through their mobile phone to seek information for academic purposes or personal interests. Furthermore, Srivastava stated that most Nigerian secondary school students Stream videos, listen to music, play games. In essence, they are involved in academic and entertainments which enable the students to enjoy their preferred forms of leisure at their convenience. Also, Igere (2022) noted that technology aid access to academic information which helps the students to reduce the problem of cost and so many hindrances experienced in the time past. In a study carried out by Olumuyiwa et al. (2018) on the use of mobile phones among adults and youths, it revealed that most students used their phones to browse social networking sites and they rarely used their mobile phones to download school work or assignment. The benefit accrued to the use of mobile phone is a factor that contributes to its constant usage. A study conducted by Rabiu and Indo (2016), shows that the time spent daily on usage of phone ranged from 3 to 5 hours, and in some cases, some students spend 8 hours or more on their phones. There is presently excessive usage that is associated with mobile phone amongst the youths. A Jairus et al. (2017) finding also shows that students used mobile phone to often access information. It was also found by Vaidya, Pathak and Vaidya (2016) that majority of the students use mobile phone majorly at night spending almost all hours on internet except for few who spend less time using their mobile phone. At every notification on their phone they check to know who and what the message is all about showing a constant usage of mobile phones. The constant usage of mobile phone has impact in the life of users positively and negatively.

Mobile phone is now a powerful tool for communication, entertainment, and retrieval of information. It has the ability to offer a wide array of features and applications that facilitate instant connectivity, social media engagement, and access to a vast digital landscape. According to Igere (2020), the advent of technology which mobile phone is part of has modernized access to information as well as featuring other factors globally.

Maheswaran, Rajashekar and Rajashekar (2018), noted that mobile phone is a source of encouragement to adolescents expressing themselves and engaging in conversations, which can lead to improving social skills and emotional intelligence. Moreover, mobile phones provide quick and access to educational resources, research materials, and online platforms that foster learning and intellectual growth to the world. With the features possessed by mobile phone, people tend to be addicted to it which in a way negatively influences moral value of the youths. It has been found that most students are exposed to cyber bullying which expose them to harmful ideologies that may reduce their obedience to elders, authority's and also promoting materialism, misinformation, encouraging negative morals such as violence, sex, drugs, and alcohol. Maheswaran et al (2018) revealed that a higher level of mobile phone usage was associated with lower moral sensitivity scores, indicating a potential impairment in the students' ability to perceive and respond to moral issues due to excessive mobile phone usage. The study of Fakokunde (2017) on cell phone use and moral values among adolescent students in Turkey shows that mobile phone usage has a positive influence on moral values such as empathy, responsibility, and respect. In order words, student who uses the internet display a higher level of moral value. This indicates that mobile phones can play a role in fostering positive moral behaviors among adolescent students. But when it is excessively used it then has a negative influence on users. Dhanawade, (2023) study revealed that students who spend more time on their phones has decline their ability to effectively communicate and engage with others. This decline is attributed to the reduced opportunities for practicing and developing social skills through direct interaction. Darko-Adjei (2019) also noted that excessive phone usage had a negative impact on students' moral development. When students are always using their mobile phones, it becomes difficult for them in their ability to make moral and sound decisions.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a correlational design with a population of 211 SS3 students of two public secondary schools in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State. Specifically, 123 students were from Oviorie Secondary School, while 98 was from Ovu-Grammer School. The entire population was used as sample for the study as a result of the small size of the population. In order to collect data, the questionnaire was adopted while data were analysed using descriptive and influential statistics.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One: What is the moral value of secondary school students in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State?

Table 1: Moral value of the students

S/N	Moral Values of Secondary School Students	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$
1.	I exhibit humility in their interactions	113	71	11	9	3.41
2.	I practice patience in difficult situations	105	78	15	6	3.38
3.	I respect constituted authority	121	53	13	17	3.36
4.	I prioritize honesty in my actions and behavior	105	76	11	12	3.34
5.	I exhibit kindness and empathy towards others	94	88	13	9	3.31
6.	I am tolerant of differences in others	94	79	21	10	3.26
7.	I engage cooperative and skilled in teamwork	93	83	13	15	3.25
8.	I show courage in facing challenges	96	73	14	21	3.20
9.	I am self-disciplined in my actions	101	61	22	20	3.19
10.	I display fairness and justice in my activities	102	53	33	16	3.18
11.	I engage in social responsibility and community service	74	101	21	8	3.18
12.	I appreciate cultural diversity and inclusivity	70	101	30	3	3.17
13.	I value a strong sense of community and social cohesion	89	76	24	15	3.17
14.	I take responsibility and accountability for my actions	89	80	14	21	3.16
15.	I express gratitude for what I have	67	93	27	17	3.03
	Aggregate Mean					**3.24**
	Criterion Mean					**2.50**

Table 1 revealed that the students possess moral value with humility in interaction having a mean of 3.41, patience in difficulty 3.38, respect to constituted authority 3.36, honesty in action and behaviour 3.34, kindness and empathy towards others 3.31, tolerance of differences in others 3.26. The aggregate mean is 3.24 which is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that the moral value of secondary school students in the area sampled in Delta State is high. This is to an extent related to the findings of Kwameswarao and Suneela (2022) that most students to a great extent are respectful, obedient, and hardworking and this could be termed moderate level in their moral values.

Research Question Two: What are the purposes of using mobile phone among rural secondary school students?

Table 2: Purpose for mobile phone usage

S/N	Purpose of Using of Mobile Phone	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1.	Listening to music	142	69.6	62	30.4
2.	Entertainment	127	62.3	77	37.7
3.	Access to information	96	47.1	108	52.9
4.	Making new friends	113	55.4	91	44.6
5.	Following social media trends	133	65.2	71	34.8
6.	Flirting/romance	123	60.3	81	39.7
7.	Gossips	107	52.5	97	45.5
8.	Playing games	124	60.8	80	39.2
9.	Finding/meeting friends	136	66.7	68	33.3
10.	Access to academic work	67	32.8	137	67.2

Table 2 provides valuable insights into the various purposes for which rural secondary school students use mobile phones. It was found that majority of the students listen to music with their mobile phones with a response rate of 69.6%, finding and meeting friends 66.7%, following social media trends 65.2%, entertainment 62.3, playing games 60.8 and flirting and romance 60.3. On the other hand 108(52.9%) refused access to information, 137(67.2%) disagreed to access to information. It can be concluded that the students purpose of using mobile phone is to satisfy their social lifestyle and not for academic purpose.This finding is in line with that of Olumuyiwa et al. (2018) that most youths use their phones to browse social networking sites and they rarely used their mobile phones to download school work or assignment.

Research Question Three: How often does rural secondary school students use mobile phones?

Table 3: Frequency of mobile phone usage

S/N	Frequency of Mobile Phone Usage	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1.	Daily	167	81.9	37	18.1
2.	Weekly	81	39.7	123	60.3
3.	Fortnightly	84	41.2	120	58.8
4.	Monthly	83	40.7	121	59.3

Table 3 provides revealed the frequency of mobile phone usage by rural secondary school students it was found that majority of the students with a response rate of 167(81.9%) use mobile phones daily. 123(60.3%), 121(59.3%) and 120(58.8%) disagreed to using mobile phone weekly, monthly and fortnightly respectively. This shows that the students often use mobile phones. This is in line with the study of Jairus *et al.* (2017) that students often used mobile phone to search for information. It is also similar with that of Vaidya, Pathak and Vaidya (2016) that majority of the students spend more time using mobile phone.

Research Question Three: How does mobile phone usage influence the moral values of rural secondary school students?

Table 4: Influence of mobile phones on students' moral value.

S/N	Positive Influence	SA	D	D	SD	$\bar{x}$
1.	Mobile phone usage promotes good academic morals	12	9	51	132	1.51
2.	Mobile phones provide access to knowledge and moral values online.	12	16	52	124	1.59
3.	Mobile phones offer inspirational content for personal growth and development.	22	19	23	140	1.62
4.	Mobile phones usage fosters a culture of respect for elders and authority figures, enhancing moral values in society.	17	33	17	137	1.66
5.	Mobile phones foster positive social interactions and collaboration among students	19	32	24	129	1.71
6.	mobile phones usage contribute s to fostering respect and moral values towards cultural heritage and traditions	27	20	34	123	1.76
7.	Mobile phones expand horizons and nurture moral values such as compassion and tolerance.	20	32	43	109	1.82
8.	Mobile phone usage promotes honesty, integrity, and moral Values	28	27	53	96	1.94
	Negative Influence					
9.	Mobile phone usage expose s rural students to harmful ideologies or negative influences	92	78	21	13	3.22
10	Phones encourage social comparison, harming cultural values by promoting competition	102	60	31	11	3.24
11.	Mobile phone usage can be a platform for cyberbullying, which can have a negative impact on the cultural values of senior secondary school students	102	75	15	12	3.31
12.	Phone use may reduce obedience and respect for authority and laws.	113	58	21	12	3.33
13.	Mobile phone usage can promote materialism, eroding cultural values like simplicity.	119	57	21	7	3.41
14	Mobile phone usage has helped spread misinformation, which can negatively impact cultural values	113	72	11	8	3.42
15.	Mobile phone usage promotes negative morals such; violence, sex, drugs, and alcohol, leading to a decline in cultural values	118	65	12	9	3.43
16.	Mobile phone usage creates an addiction to instant gratification, which can negatively affect cultural values	121	59	15	9	3.43
17.	Phone usage foster shallow connections, undermining cultural values of deep relationships.	121	63	12	8	3.46
	Aggregate Mean					**2.58**
	Criterion Mean					**2.50**

Table 4 reveals the influence of mobile phone usage on the moral values of secondary school students. It an aggregate mean of 2.58, slightly surpassing the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that on average, students maintain a balanced perspective

concerning the impact of mobile phones on their moral values, acknowledging the potential for both positive and negative consequences. Notably, majority of the respondents generally attested to negative influence of mobile phone on student's moral value. For instance, respondents with the mean of 3.46 agreed that mobile phone usage foster shallow connections, which could undermine the cultural values of deep relationships, 3.43 attested that mobile phone usage create an addiction to instant gratification, promote negative morals such as violence, sex, drugs, and alcohol, leading to a decline in cultural values, 3.41 agreed that mobile phone can create materialism. Those who agreed to the positive influence of mobile phone on moral values are low compared to the criterion mean of 2.50. For instance, mobile phone usage promote honesty, integrity, and moral values had a mean of 1.94, mobile phones expand horizons and nurture moral values such as compassion and tolerance had a mean of 1.82. There is a clear indication that there is a negative influence of mobile phone usage on moral values. This is in corroboration with the study of Dhanawade, (2023) that students who spend more time on their phones has decline their ability to effectively communicate and engage with others. Although, Fakokunde (2017) found that there is positive influence of mobile phone use on moral values of Turkey adolescents.

Conclusion

This study concludes that though secondary students regularly use mobile phone for the purposes outside their academic work, their moral value is high. Furthermore, mobile phone usage has a negative influence on the moral value of the students. Some of these negative influences are fostering of shallow connections leading to undermining cultural values, creating an addiction to instant gratification, promoting negative morals like violence, sex, drugs, and alcohol which lead to a decline in cultural values, creating materialism and lots of others.

Recommendations

From the findings, it is recommended that:

1. Though the moral value of students is high, caution should be taken not to allow students into sites that will negatively influence them.
2. The activities of secondary school students could be checked to ensure they are not involved in sites that will affect their moral value.
3. Students should be taught the effect of delving into sites that could affect moral values.

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