

## Abuse of Mobile Phones among Students: A Case Study of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo

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### Abstract

This study determined ways Students in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo State abuse mobile phones. It adopted a survey design. Five hundred degree students were selected randomly for the study. Two research questions guided the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The data were analysed using mean. The findings revealed six ways students abuse mobile phones which include, using them as a medium for examination malpractice, among others. It was recommended that efforts should be made by the Nigeria Communication Commission to stop extra-cool. School authorities should punish severely students caught practicing examination theft through the use of mobile phones.

**Keywords:** Abuse, Mobile Phones, Student, Extra Cool, Communication

### Introduction

Communication has been of great importance in human society. According to Roeisch (1995) communication in its many forms is shaping economy and society, making the world a smaller place. It puts individuals in touch with each other and events around the globe in real time. Global System for Mobile Telephone (GSM) was introduced to Nigeria 1999, with the arrival of Nigeria Telecommunications (Plc). Thus, on 7th August, 2001, Economy Network (ECONET) wireless (now *Airtel* Mobile) commenced operations of Global System for Mobile Telephone (GSM) in Nigeria followed by *Mobile Telephone Network* (MTN), *Nigeria Telecommunication* (Nitel), *Globalcom* and *Etisalat*.

Mobile phones have become like the air people breathe, it keeps them connected

and it has even grown to the extent that parents purchase mobile phones for their children in nursery and primary schools. It is important to note, however, that people's perspective towards a particular thing determines whether it is being abused or applied judiciously (Awulor, 2014). The adoption of the mobile phones by young people has been a global phenomenon in recent years. It is now an integral part of young peoples' daily lives. For students in higher institutions of learning, it is the most popular form of electronic communication. In fact, the mobile phone has turned from a technological tool to a social tool (Mariadhas, 2014).

According to Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), there were over 250 million GSM subscribers in Nigeria as at 30th September, 2008 (Science Teacher

Association of Nigeria, STAN, 2008). Since the emergence of the service providers there has always been one form of mobile advertisement in form of promotions for mobile phone users. There are innumerable advertisements of mobile phone service providers which give one options to sign up for one package or the other, among which is “*extra-cool connection*”. Baltzer (1995) noted that the network behind the GSM system seen by the customer is large and complicated in order to provide all the services which are required. Presently, GSM is being abused or misused by various anti-social acts. Some individuals refer to the abuse as ‘GSM Wahala’ which has posed a lot of inconvenience on users (Awulor, 2014).

The “*extra-cool connection*” involves midnight GSM calls at little or no charges, the caller must however have some stipulated amount of air time in his/her phone. By this, the mobile phone service providers increase their income generation strategies, while luring youths including students into such frivolous pastimes such as talking the night away with friends and families. Unfortunately, most students fall victim of this with the aim of reducing the cost on mobile phone recharge cards not knowing that they are making “*extra-cool*” at the expense of their own future and academic performance. If hours spent on using night packages “*extra-cool*” are utilized for achieving and promoting higher education, Nigeria will be stronger, better, enlightened, educated and progressive. Nearly all the service providers now offer “*extra-cool*” for service users, while noting that *extra cool* is for the young at heart. Many students in tertiary institutions have been rubbed of their sleep that is supposed to be beneficial to their body system through making cheap calls at

midnight. Most students do not even know the implications of this “*extra-cool*” connection on their health. Those who ignore the consequences find it difficult to carry out their academic activities in the day time (STAN, 2008). There are various forms of abuse on the use of GSM.

The college students use cell phones in class, and it adversely affects their concentration and brings distractions of all kinds. Even though the majority of college students do not own a Smartphone, those who do are much more active using their phones in class and also make others to get one and use them (Mariadhas, 2014). In a study on cellular telephone obsession, Wikle (2001) noted that people who engaged in long night calls usually have less sleeping time compared to the core-sleeping time. It is important to differentiate between moderate sleep loss (5 to 6 hours) and severe sleep loss (4 or less hours). The less hour of sleep produces more significant effects on daytime performance. Chronic sleep loss can reduce the capacity of every young adult to perform basic metabolic functions. Cutting back from the standard eight hours of sleep to four hours or less each night produces striking changes in glucose tolerance and endocrine function changes that resemble the effects of advanced age or the early stage of diabetes (McIlwraith, Jaconvitz, Kubey, and Alexander, 1999).

Lack of sleep also contributes to lack of growth on an individual. Some hormones such as growth hormones are secreted preferentially during sleep; a student that does not have enough sleep due to *extra-cool* is likely to be retarded in growth. Long calls especially at night are linked to severe headache, heating effects and fatigue (Ling, and Yttri, 2002; Park, 2005). In a situation whereby a student who is

supposed to sleep for eight hours in order to be active for the next day's activities decides to make midnight calls, his/her studies suffers. Ling, and Yttri, (2002); Park, (2005) reported that the longer people used mobile phones the more likely they reported symptoms such as hot ears, burning skins, headaches and fatigue. There have also been various studies (Crabtree, and Roberts, 2003; Haste, 2005; Campbell, 2006) into the connection between making long conversation at midnight on mobile phones which affects the sleeping time of students and memory loss.

Following the potential health risks of all night calls and the related challenges on academic activities of students, it becomes necessary to evolve ways of helping them minimize or avert such practices. This necessitates the study of the students' use of mobile phones. While students in all tertiary institutions may be into night call mobile phone abuse, those in Adeyemi College of Education deserve special attention because of the peculiar situation of the institution and the popularity of the 'extra-cool' among the students. Besides, most of the students lack the finances for expensive day calls and enjoy the opportunity of free calls and which is often available at midnight when they ought to be sleeping.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study was to examine the abuse of the use of mobile phones among students in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo. Specifically, the study determined:

- i) the various ways students abuse the use of mobile phone.
- ii) consequences of the use of "extra-cool" connection on students in Ondo State.

### **Research Questions**

The study answered the following research questions:

- 1) In what ways is mobile phone abused among students in Adeyemi College of Education?
- 2) What are the consequences of "extra-cool" connection on the students of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo?

### **Methodology**

**Area of the Study:** The area of the study was Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Ondo State. The school comprises of both NCE and first Degree students. The school is categorized into sub-schools for easy classification of students. The sub-schools are: School of languages, school of Arts and Social Sciences, School of Vocational and Technical Education, School of Sciences and School of Education.

**Design of the Study:** The design that was used for this study was descriptive survey. It focused on the opinions of students.

**Population for the Study:** The population of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo comprised of 15,183 students. The target population for this study consisted of first, second and third year B.Ed (degree) students. There are 4994 of such students which are both male and female students. The students age range between 17 and 25 years who reside both on campus and off campus.

**Sample for the Study:** The sample size for this study were 500 students who are only first, second and third year degree students in their respective schools through random sampling. To obtain the sample, 120 students were selected from school of science, in school of languages one hundred and ten (100), school of vocational

and technical education one hundred (100), school of Education eighty (80) while in school of arts and social science one hundred (100) students were randomly selected.

**Instrument for Data Collection:** Questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was self-structure and was developed based on the research questions of the study. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A and B consisted of personal data of respondents, Section C consisted of fixed response items on the abuse of mobile phones among Nigerian students. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher and given to two experts in the department of Home Economics for face and content validation. To determine the degree of precision and consistency the instrument measures Test-re-test method was employed. Twenty (20) copies of the

questionnaire were distributed to students outside the sample size and later redistributed to the same set of students after a period of two weeks. The responses to the first and second set of questionnaire were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and a positive correlation with a coefficient of 0.79 was obtained.

**Data Collection and Analysis Techniques:** Five hundred and ten (510) copies of questionnaire were administered by hand to the respondents. The 500 copies of questionnaire were completed and retrieved. Mean was used for data analysis.

### Findings of the Study

The following findings were made.

A. Six ways mobile phone is abused by students. Data are summarised in Table 1

**Table 1:** Mean Rating on the ways by which mobile phone is abused.

S/N	Ways mobile phone is abused by students		Rem.
1.	Students use mobile phones as a tool for examination malpractices.	3.51	A
2.	Students spend more time on their phones (playing games, chatting, browsing etc) compared to the time spent in reading and attending lectures.	3.35	A
3.	Some students buy mobile phones just to show off and not primarily to make and receive calls.	3.34	A
4.	Mobile phone has been used in the past years as a medium for duping people.	3.38	A
5.	Students harass their lecturers/teachers through the use of mobile phone.	3.12	A
6.	Midnight calls have been used as a medium to meet and date new people.	3.56	A

N = 500

Table 1 shows the mean responses of all respondents to all the items which ranged from 3.12 to 3.81 were greater than the cut off point (2.5). It reveals that the respondents agreed to all the items. Hence, in answering the research question, the following are the ways by which Nigerian students abuse mobile phones: they use it (mobile phone) as a tool for examination malpractice, they spend more time playing

games, chatting, browsing etc compared to the time devoted to their study, they use mobile phones to show off (bestow status), they use it as a medium to dupe people and as medium to threaten and harass lecturers/teachers.

B. Consequences behind making midnight calls

**Table 2:** Mean Rating on the consequences behind making Midnight Calls.

S/N	Consequences of Making Midnight Calls		Rem.
1.	People who make extra cool do not usually wake up early for lectures.	3.63	A
2.	Extra cool connection can be attributed to headache because of inadequate sleep.	3.24	A
3.	Students who makes extra cool sometimes miss lectures.	2.86	A
4.	Some students have missed a test/examination because they slept off after making extra cool.	2.97	A
5.	Students who makes extra cool are usually tired in the morning.	2.83	A
6.	Students who make extra cool are likely to doze off during lectures.	2.85	A
7.	Students who make extra cool usually have problems relating to sleep loss.	2.98	A

N = 500

Table 2 shows the mean responses of all respondents which ranged from 2.83 to 3.3 were greater than the cut-off point (2.5). This implies that the respondents agreed to all the times. Hence, people who make extra cool do not usually wake up early for lecturers, extra cool connection can be attributed to headache because of inadequate sleep, students who makes extra cool sometimes miss lectures, some students have missed a test/examination because they slept off after making extra cool, students who makes extra cool are usually tired in the morning, students who makes extra cool are likely to doze off during lectures and students who make extra cool usually have problems relating to sleep loss.

### Discussion of Findings

Result of the findings presented on table 1, revealed that ways by which mobile phones are abused by Nigerian students are; they use it (mobile phone) as a tool for examination malpractice, they spend more time playing games, chatting, browsing etc compared to the time devoted to their study, they use mobile phones to show off (bestow status), they use it as a medium to dupe people and as medium to threaten and harass lecturers/teachers. The finding

is in line with that of Crabtree, and Roberts, (2003); Ling (2004) who noted that the advent of cell phone has facilitated access to the outside world and further enhanced fraudulent activities over the internet. He added that surprisingly, making long conversations on mobile phones is nothing new among our youths of today's world

Since the introduction of mobile phones in Nigeria late 1998, it has been a fast and reliable way of communicating. Despite the manner at which it have been meeting the communication needs of the country, its use have been abused in so many ways. Following the common saying that "too much of anything is bad", mobile phone services have been over used by Nigerian youths, it is now used as a medium to dupe people, harass lecturers, practice examination theft and so on. The onset of extra-cool made things even worse, attention was almost totally shifted from making calls during the day to keeping call appointments late in the night. Some students who found reading more pleasant at midnight while everything is cool and calm now find it difficult to read due to mid night call (extra-cool).

Table 2 presents the implication of extra-cool connection on students, the table

revealed that: people who make extra cool do not usually wake up early for lectures, extra cool connection can be attributed to headache because of inadequate sleep, students who makes extra cool sometimes miss lectures, some students have missed a test/examination because they slept off after making extra cool, students who makes extra cool are usually tired in the morning, students who makes extra cool are likely to doze off during lectures and students who make extra cool usually have problems relating to sleep loss. Haste, 2005; Park (2005); Campbell, 2006 are of the opinion that long cell phone calls has a lot of negative impact on the health of an individual, especially on the amount of sleep. Lack of sleep alters hormones metabolism, stimulates effects of ageing and other related illnesses. In this aspect, mobile phone as done more harm than good. The major effect of making extra-cool is centred on sleep, sleep is needed for the body to function well. When the sleep observed by any individual is not adequate, it have significant effect on every organ of the body. Students who make extra-cool have little or no time to sleep.

### Conclusion

Nigerian students have abused the use of mobile phones in so many ways. They have used it as a medium to dupe people, distract their attention from their studies, harass lecturers/teachers to mention but a few. The implication of extra-cool connection (an abuse of mobile phone) is numerous few of these are: attending lectures late, headache as a result of inadequate sleep, missing a lecture, test or examination, feeling tired early in the morning, dozing off in class during lectures and having problems relating to sleep loss. Extra-cool is a cankerworm that

is eating deep into the fabrics of the time of Nigerian students, it has derailed many students from their primary focus and has lasting effects on their health, sleep and academic performance.

### Recommendations

Based on the result of the findings, the following were recommended;

- Students should be counselled and made to see the hazard caused by extra-cool to the health and academic performance
- Better cheap call packages should be provided by network providers as against all night (midnight) free calls
- Examination malpractices made through the use of mobile phones should be punished severely to discourage others from indulging in it
- Extra-cool connection by different network providers should be stopped by the Nigerian Communication Commission.

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