

UTILIZATION OF INTERNET RESOURCES BY STUDENTS IN HUMANITIES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Several students use Internet resources for knowledge enhancement and advancement while some use it to the detriment of their academic performance. This study investigated the impact of Internet utilization as determinants of academic performance of the students in humanities in some selected universities in Nigeria. The descriptive survey method was used. Data were collected through the use of a structured questionnaire. Out of 6000 copies of the questionnaire distributed to 10 universities (federal and state) in Humanities in Nigeria. 5250 (87.5%) were retrieved and analyzed for this study. The data were subjected to frequency counts, percentages and Chi- Square test. The finding indicated that the students of humanities use the Internet mainly for academic work, sending and receiving electronic mails, but not for leisure and games. They also relied on teacher's notes and their colleagues through e-mail for information

while their disciplines encourage constant use of the Internet. The result also indicated that there are sufficient evidences to conclude that Internet use and academic performance are related. Creation of more access points within the universities and integration of computer skill into the pedagogical frameworks of the institutions were recommended.

Keywords: Internet Resources Utilization, Academic Performances, Humanities, Undergraduates Students, Nigeria

Introduction

The most widely used technology that caresses information and corporate culture is the Internet resources. Internet resources ensure public, cooperative and self-sustaining facility that contain information or provide data processing capabilities accessible to hundreds of millions of people worldwide (Culver, 2009). With these valuable resources, people can access lecture notes online, download textbooks and journals and access other information resources to write projects and do class assignments. Therefore, the Internet allows students to expand their academic experience to boost their performances. Manir (2007) opined that the Internet will lead the academic community (in Nigeria) to exploit opportunities that will make them educated, more literate and conscious of the potentials for research.

Among the categories of students in the academic community that benefit from the Internet resources are humanities students. The humanities are academic disciplines that study human beings, their cultures, and self-expression; the disciplines include the study of languages and literature; history and philosophy; religions; the visual arts and performing arts. These disciplines aim towards understanding and expressing human conditions. Students of Humanities in Nigerian universities have similar objectives as other categories of students, that is, academic success.

Academic performance of students has been viewed as the accomplishment of studying, learning and conducting research taking cognizance of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed (Mohammed and Al-Karaki, 2008). The measurement of academic performance in the

context of university students may be viewed as studying, learning and doing research with the highest level of accuracy within the shortest period and at minimum cost. These factors are easy to achieve with the use of the Internet resources. The technology fires imaginations and promotes fast and good learning. Thus, the use of Internet by the students of humanities in Nigerian universities could encourage rapid learning, create flexibility in time and space, and ensure active participation and interaction among the students.

Most universities in Nigeria expend their scarce resources on the Internet to advance dissemination of information among their students. However, the Internet has been posing serious challenges for the students of humanities, as studies have revealed that some of them use Internet to the detriment of their academic success and achievements due to extensive patterns of late night browsing which results in psychomotor agitation, anxiety, loss of control, intolerance and total degradation of their academic performances (Santiago, 2003; Iskender and Akin 2011). Besides this, substantial time the students ought to use for academic works is squandered in chat-room gossips, surfing irrelevant websites, intensive games resulting in academic failure, probation and eventual rustication from their institutions.

Although several studies have been published on the use of Internet by science students in other countries, there are not enough studies that address the relationship between Internet use and academic performance of students of humanities in Nigerian universities. Thus, the findings of this study may present the relationship in the Nigerian context, and it will also enhance the current and future Internet usage for the academic performance of this category of students. Hence, it becomes imperative to investigate the use of Internet in respect of perceived academic performance of students in humanities in Nigerian universities.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. to find out the frequency of access to the Internet by students of humanities in the Nigerian universities;

2. to ascertain the purpose of using the Internet by the students of humanities in the Nigerian universities;
3. to determine the perceived contributions of the use of Internet to the academic performance of the students of humanities in the Nigerian universities;
4. to find out the respondents opinions of the impact of the Internet on the academic performance of the students of humanities in the Nigerian universities.

Literature Review

Internet has been considered to be the most valuable invention in modern technology and in modern revolution of information and communication. It has been in existence for over thirty years but its education and scientific values were recently acknowledged (Mohammed and Al-Karika, 2008). Ebersole (2000) specifically stated that Internet is mostly used by university students for research, learning, and communication. Telia (2007) in the study of Internet usage by the undergraduate students of the University of Botswana found that the respondents mostly use Internet for the purpose of obtaining course-related information and for communication by electronic mail. Internet is very useful to students in Nigerian universities, it helps them to keep abreast of ever expanding knowledge and bridging the gap resulting from scarcity of resources.

Finding of Ogedebe (2010) on the relationship between academic performance and Internet services among the microbiology and accountancy students of University of Maiduguri, Nigeria observed that 89% of the respondents claimed that they got relevant information pertaining to their course of study through browsing of the Internet, 8% claimed that they did not get information while the remaining proportion were indifferent.

In addition, Mohammed and Al-Karika (2008) in the study of the integration of Internet into traditional education in Hashemite University of Jordan reported that the introduction of Internet services at the university level has made revolutionary changes in the way of improving students' intellectual skills compared to traditional learning. The study

affirmed that the use of Internet in education ensured flexibility in time and place, acquisition of study materials, multiple responses and view of other scholars in various fields, thus widening students' knowledge.

Furthermore, Castano-Munoz (2010) in his study of the digital divide among university students in relation to academic performance in developed countries opined that differences in access to the Internet, both in motivational and in infrastructure, are practically of no significance in the university community in the developed countries, the reason being that most of the students have their own ways of accessing the Internet and they have been motivated by their youthfulness and high academic level. However, computers with Internet facilities are still inadequate for the university students in the developing countries and have denied them the opportunities to access.

This was supported by the study of Jagboro (2003) on Internet usage at Obafemi Awolowo University, He- Ife, Nigeria. He found that 22.1% of the respondents accessed Internet on a daily basis; 38.2% on weekly; 11.8% on monthly and 16.2% quarterly. He further revealed that 25% of the respondents spent an average time of half an hour on Internet per week; 39.7% spent one hour; 19.1% spent 2 hours; 7.4% spent 3 hours and 3.0% spent 4 hours while 5.9% spent more than 4 hours. By implication, an average time of 1 hour per week was spent on the Internet.

The major characteristic which influence the use of Internet is computer skill. According to the study conducted by Tien and Fu (2008), it was shown that the most effective way to improve Internet skill was to inculcate computer skill into the courses and strategic plans of the university degree requirements. With all variables being equal, it was shown that engineering and science students were the most skillful of Nigerian students on Internet use. Also, Hargittai and Hinnart (2008) affirmed that a lot of time spent on the Internet leads to skill improvement. They claimed that those who used more than 5 days a week or spent more hours online have better Internet skill.

Telia (2007) also pointed out that a positive relationship exists between the use of Internet by the respondents and their academic performance; the computerized chi-square test showed that all the four-item questions raised to ascertain the relationship were highly significant, that is (a) without the Internet, it will be difficult to survive in my programme; (b) without the Internet, I would have been an average student; (c) use of Internet as supplementary to the information given by my teacher has improved my GPA; and (d) Internet access enhances my academic performance more than class lectures. These are significant with Chi-square value of 431.9; 119.7; 132.5 and 75.0 respectively.

Werschauer (2008) asserted that Internet infrastructure alone has no effect on academic performance but in addition, the place where the Internet is used. Students who connect from the universities have better academic results than those from other locations, because university connections are largely related to academic works and also restrain the user autonomy. Telia (2007) in supporting the view, explained that the most points of connection with students in developing countries like Botswana is from the university and as such encourage the use of the Internet to improve their academic performance and not for leisure. Also, Castano-Munoz (2010) hinted that Internet skill does not have a negative effect on academic performance, but more likely positive provided these skills are integrated in their syllabus. Conclusively, the conditions necessary to make Internet use to improve academic performance had been enumerated to include: (1) students must be ready to learn; (2) Internet skill must be incorporated into the pedagogical framework of higher education; and (3) the interest and will of students to increase their knowledge (Castano-Munoz, 2010). The Internet is a valuable source of information that makes data available to users for knowledge acquisition. There is no doubt that the Internet and information communications technology continue to dominate information globally and these have also complemented physical library resources.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is ex-post-facto research design. This is important to find the relationship between the variables and in observing what has happened to the sample subjects without any attempt to control or manipulate them. The population of the study consists of the students of humanities in the six selected Federal Universities (University of Ibadan, University of Benin, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, University of Lagos and University of Ilorin) and the four selected State Universities (Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Lagos State University and Osun State University) that offered at least three of the core disciplines in humanities (Language, literature, visual and performing arts, history, philosophy, and religion). These universities produce the major annual turnout of the humanities' graduates to the Nigerian labour market, and they are notable for academic excellence.

Stratified sampling technique with the equal allocation method was used to select 600 students of humanities from each university, making a total of 6000. The 400 level undergraduate students were chosen, so that it would be easier for the group to determine the contribution the Internet has made to their academic performance in the past years. A questionnaire modified from Internet Access/ Perceived Academic Performance Scale which had been tested and used by Telia (2007) was adopted and used to collect data for the survey. The instrument has two sections; the first section requests for the personal data of the respondents. The second section contains items on Internet access and perceived academic performance of the respondents, which was subdivided into four parts: Internet access; purpose of Internet usage; frequency of use, and the relationship between Internet use and perceived academic performance. Items of the questionnaire were adapted from various scales that have been validated, tested and used, the scale has both content and face validity. However, to ensure the reliability of the instrument, each part of the scale and the overall coefficient were determined through a test-retest method. The instrument was administered to 50 respondents from a university that was not included in the sample. The general reliability coefficient of the scale

is $r = 0.82$ and reliability of each of the various questions included in parts is $r = 0.78$. The librarians in various institutions were employed to administer the questionnaire to the respondents in their respective departments during a core course to avoid exchange of ideas that could distort the result of the findings. A total of 5250 respondents out of 6000 sampled responded, giving a response rate of 87.5 percent.

Data Analysis

The 5250 respondents in the study comprised of 2100 (40.0%) male and 3150 (60.0%) female. Concerning their age, 2887 (55%) of the respondents were in the age bracket 15-25 years; 1418 (27%) were in the range of 26-30 years; 683 (13%) were in the age bracket of 31-35 years while 262 (5%) were above 35 years of age.

Table1. Distribution of the respondents by universities and students in Humanities

University	No sampled	Lang & Lit	Hist & Phil	Rel.	Visual & Perf. Arts	Total
University of Ibadan	600	184	132	142	110	568
University of Benin	600	134	126	116	116	492
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	600	201	133	108	111	553
University of Lagos	600	164	129	143	78	514
University of Ilorin	600	187	139	109	142	577
University of Jos	600	172	94	125	115	506
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	600	211	129	146	89	575
Lagos State University	600	199	119	136	109	563
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology	600	104	116	122	95	437
Osun State University	600	138	121	101	105	465
Total	6000	1694	1238	1248	1070	5250

Table 2: The level of the respondents' by Internet use skill

Internet resources use skill	Respondents	Percentage (%)
High	1200	22.9
Medium	3300	62.9
Low	575	10.9
I don't know	175	3.3
Total	5250	100.0

From Table 2, it was observed that 85.8% of the respondents claimed to be skillful in the use of Internet. This shows that there has been an improvement in the Internet resources use skill of the students of humanities in Nigerian universities.

Table 3: Frequency of access to the Internet use per week

Access Time	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	2888	55.0
Less than 2 hours	1575	30.0
Less than 3 hours	367	7.0
Overnight	420	8.0
Total	5250	100.0

On their frequency of access to the Internet, the respondents were requested to state the average number of hours they spent on Internet per week. The results in the Table show that (55%) of the respondents spent one hour or less on the Internet while 1575 (30%), 367 (7%) and 420 (8%) claimed to spend 2 hours, 3 hours and overnight browsing the Internet respectively. The results in the Table indicate that majority of the student's access Internet for a limited time, average of 1.92 hours per week and those that engage in overnight browsing are more than those that engage in 2 or 3 hours. This may likely be due to the fact that overnight browsing is cheaper and faster than daytime browsing.

Table 4: Purpose of using the Internet by the respondents

Purpose	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
Research and learning	3413	65.0
Access to entertainment	315	6.0
Communication and social interaction	577	11.0
Something to do when bored	368	7.0
Access to materials otherwise unavailable	315	6.0
Cultural information and support	53	1.0
Games and sexually explicit sites	53	1.0
Business transaction	156	3.0
Total	5250	100.0

The respondents were asked to indicate their purpose of using the Internet among the various alternatives. The findings indicate that 65% of the respondents spend their time on Internet for the purposes of obtaining information for research and to carry out activities such as class assignments, term papers, projects and tests while 11% of the respondents spend their time on Internet to communicate and for social interactions among friends, relatives, lecturers, study group, etc. The remaining proportion, 24% of the respondents, spends their limited hour on Internet for leisure and non academic issues. The finding revealed that Internet was used by the respondents mainly to obtain information on their academic purposes and less on non- academic matters or leisure purposes.

Table 5: Perceived influence of Internet use on academic performances

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Without the Internet, it would be difficult to survive in my academic programme as humanities' student	2100 (40%)	2058 (39.2%)	409 (7.8%)	683 (13%)	5250
2	Without the Internet, I would have been an average student	3019 (57.5%)	1779 (33.9%)	253 (4.8%)	199 (3.8%)	5250
3	Use of the Internet as supplements to the information given by my teachers has improved my GPA	3460 (65.9%)	1202 (22.9%)	336 (6.4%)	252 (4.8%)	5250
4	Internet access enhances my academic performance more than the class teacher	2252 (42.9%)	2011 (38.3%)	499 (9.5%)	488 (9.3%)	5250

(SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree SD= Strongly Disagree D=Disagree)

The respondents were asked to establish the relationship that exists between the use of Internet and academic performance. This is to find out the impact of Internet on their academic performance. From the Table, 2100 (40%) of the respondents strongly agreed that without Internet, it would have been difficult for them to survive in their academic programme while 2058 (39.2%) agreed, 409 (7.8%) disagreed and 683 (13%) strongly disagreed, When the four points were collapsed into two: agreed and disagreed, the number of respondents that agreed outnumbered those that disagreed. Also, 3019 (57.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they would have been average students if they did not use Internet in their course of study, but 1779 (33.9%) agreed, 253 (4.8%) disagreed and 199 (3.8%) strongly disagreed. In the same vein, if the four scales were merged to agree and disagree, the respondents that agreed were more than those that disagreed. Similarly, 3460 (65.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the use of Internet provides supplementary information to what their teachers have given them, while

1202 (22.9%) agreed, 336 (6.4%) and 252 (4.8%) of the respondents, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Furthermore, 2252 (42.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Internet access enhances their academic performance more than their teachers could give, while 2011 (38.3%) agreed, 499 (9.5%) disagreed and 488 (9.3%) strongly disagreed. On collapsing the points the points into two, the number of the respondents opting for agreed are more than disagreed. In all cases in the results, the proportion of the respondents that agreed and strongly agreed were more than disagreed or strongly disagreed.

In order to ensure that the responses were not biased in favour of strongly agreed and agreed, a chi-square test was conducted to ascertain if there is any significant impact of the use of Internet on academic performance among the students of humanities. The test was conducted at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. Table 6 below represents the results.

Table 6: Chi- Square Test of Internet Use and Academic Performance

Responses		Observed and Expected Frequencies				
		Items				
		1	2	3	4	Column Total
Number of people that agreed	Observed N Expected N Residual	4158 (4470.25) 21.81	4798 (4470.25) 24.03	4662 (4470.25) 8.23	4263 (4477.25) 9.61	17881
Number of people that disagreed	Observed N Expected N Residual	1092 (779.75) 125.04	452 (779.75) 137.76	588 (779.75) 47.15	987 (779.75) 55.09	3119
Row Total		5250	5250	5250	5250	21000

Calculated Chi-Square - 428.72 and Tabulated Chi- Square @ degree of freedom of 3 =12.84

Decision: Since Calculated Chi-Square is greater than Tabulated Chi-Square at 95% confidence interval, there are sufficient evidences to conclude that internet use and academic performance are related.

Discussion of the Findings

It was initially believed that the use of Internet does not necessarily improve academic performance of students of humanities in Nigeria and not all use of Internet is productive to the students, The findings of this study, however, proved otherwise. The students of humanities in Nigerian universities access Internet mostly from their institutions for academic works, but characterized by limited duration and restriction of user autonomy. The alternative source is cybercafe which is also costly, this, however, limited access.

The students of humanities in Nigerian universities claimed to be skillful in the use of Internet while the application of Internet on their work improved their academic performance,

Another major purpose that students of humanities use Internet is communication and social interactions among their mates, friends and teachers. This primarily involves sending and receiving electronic mails which are indirectly related to academic purposes.

Students of Humanities use Internet as supplementary information to what is given to them by their teachers. This emphasized the nature of their courses; they are more of people oriented. This may be the reason why they claimed that their survival as students of humanities is not only dependent on the Internet, but also on people around them.

Recommendations

The study has taken a step in the direction of defining the relationship between Internet use and academic performance in a particular group of students of Nigerian universities. It is possible that other categories of students with different factors and disciplines may produce entirely different results. In addition, it is important to emphasize that methodological problems in the research design may limit the interpretation and presentations.

Create more access points within universities campuses studied while Internet literacy skills is integrated into their course contents to further boost Internet use skills acquisition.

Conclusion

The major purpose of using the Internet by students of humanities in universities in Nigeria is for academic work and for receiving e-mail. Internet resources also serve as complimentary to what lecturers teach in class, rather than as means of survival for their academic programme. The Internet improves knowledge acquisition and encourages information exploitation for technological development,

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