

A SURVEY OF INTERNET USAGE AMONG UNDERGRADATES IN WESTERN DELTA UNIVERSITY, OGHARA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Globally, the use of internet resources has become an important part of our educational system and undergraduates are heavy users of the internet, hence, academic achievements depend on the ability to read and share information effectively. This study investigated the Internet usage among undergraduates in Western Delta University, Oghara, Delta State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the research were to identify the computer and internet skills of undergraduates, find out the types of internet access the undergraduates use in connecting to the Internet, frequency and duration of Internet use among undergraduates, most frequently used location for Internet usage, activities engaged in by the undergraduates when using the Internet and challenges faced when accessing the Internet. Six research questions were raised. Descriptive survey design was utilized for the study. The population for this study was 300 undergraduates of the Western Delta University who visited the library during the first semester examination of 2019/2020 academic section. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used in analysing the data. Finding revealed that WDU undergraduates possess computer and Internet skills of undergraduates, they access the Internet using their mobile phone and also through the use of cyber-café and they use it on a daily basis between 2hrs and above. Hostels and Cybercafé (around or outside the university) were identified as the undergraduates preferred locations for Internet access and usage. Academic work, social networking, gathering information for literature review and assignment and sending and receiving mails were the purpose why undergraduates use the Internet. Online databases, social networking and search engines e.g. Google, AltaVista, yahoo, World Wide Web were the most utilized/accessed Internet resources. Inadequate internet access in the university, high cost of Internet usage and power outages were some of the problems militating against the effective utilization of the Internet. The study recommended among others that Internet should be made available to undergraduates in the University Library and stocked with sufficient number of computers and also adequate space and facilities should be provided for those that want to make use of their own lap-top. This will enable them to save relevant information discovered, to be use at a later date.

Keywords: Internet, Usage, Undergraduate, Western Delta University, Nigeria.

Introduction

As the world continues to experience technological advancements and growth at a rapid rate, changes in how to execute tasks are being experienced in almost all aspects of life (Fasae & Aladeniyi, 2012). In the field of education, the use of the Internet and the World Wide Web has created possibilities for learning online (Smith, Hoderi & Mcdermott, 2019). The Internet technology over the past few decades has become an important tool in tertiary institutions used for the purpose of learning, teaching and research. The Internet is defined as a global connections of computers of various sizes, capacity and functionality. These networks are often referred to as “information superhighway”, where computers are interconnected with the sole purpose of providing resources, services, and information across the globe, thus reducing the entire universe into a “global village” (Suleiman&Joshua, 2019).

Bankole and Oludayo (2012) maintained that universities universally made a lot of investment on the provision of Internet access because it saves time in the production and utilization of knowledge. It also promotes multi-disciplinary research, fosters cooperation, and facilitates information sharing and exchange of ideas among researchers from various institutions, nations or regions. Ogunjobi and Fagbami (2012) confirmed that Internet resources and services enable undergraduates and lecturers to update their knowledge, prepare up-to-date lecture notes, download free e-books and e-journals, use e-mail for communication and collaboration with colleagues. Through the use of the Internet resources

and services, undergraduates keep up to date with research and development in their fields of study, bringing them fame, recognition and improving their institutional ranking.

Ukpebor (2011) surveyed Internet resources and services utilization by lecturers and students in engineering faculties in Edo State Nigeria. The study showed that both undergraduates and lecturers were encouraged to utilize Internet resources and services despite inadequate infrastructural facilities. This means that both academics and students are making effective use of the available Internet resources and services to carry out their academic activities. Similarly, Aqil and Ahmed (2011) provided the following as the Internet resources use for academic activities, they include e-books, e-journals and online databases while Internet services include, e-mail, Mailing list, News group, and Telnet. Provision of current, relevant and reliable information from these resources is a major reason indicated for their utilization. Thus, this study seeks to find out the Internet usage among undergraduates of the Western Delta University, Oghara, Delta State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

The Internet is acknowledged worldwide as a technology dominated by young people, and particularly undergraduates who are more inclined to exploit Internet resources for education, social interaction and entertainment. Smith, Hoderi and Mcdermott (2019) noted that Internet provides a medium of communication that has extended the potential of libraries' interaction beyond physical library to

users, colleagues and other professional activities and relationship with library users. However, the use of these Internet resources was therefore studied by several researchers across the globe and Nigeria inclusive.

Ajanaku (2019) investigated the Internet activities engaged in, frequency of use of the internet and challenges limiting the use of the internet among the undergraduates of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted. A close-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from 300 undergraduates. Findings were analysed using descriptive statistics and the results indicated that the respondents had good computer skills and used the internet for various activities which vary across faculty of study. The respondents were dissatisfied with the high cost of accessing the internet and inadequate internet facilities. The major recommendation of the study was the provision of basic internet training for the undergraduates; equipping the university with adequate internet facilities; regular power supply and free internet access to all university undergraduates.

Suleiman and Joshua (2019) investigated the awareness and utilization of Internet resources and services for academic activities by the academic staff of tertiary institutions in Adamawa State. The researchers adopted a quantitative research method using cross-sectional survey design to collect data from the respondents. Multi-stage sampling techniques were used. Three hundred and thirty-three (333) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the

respondents in the eight (8) sampled institutions and two hundred and ninety-two (292) respondents representing 87.6% were returned and found useful. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that the respondents were aware of all the Internet resources, (e-books, e-journals, and online databases), but regarding the Internet services, they were mostly aware of only the e-mail. The study further found that online database and e-mail were the most Internet resources and services utilized by the respondents. There are inverse and weak relationship between awareness and utilization of Internet resources and services by the academic staff of tertiary institutions in Adamawa State. The study therefore recommended increased awareness and use to other Internet resources such as the e-books and e-journal and Internet services, especially Usenet, Discussion group and Telnet by the management of the institutions through training, workshops/conferences for better academic activities.

Akintomide and Ademodi (2013) carried out a study on Internet use among undergraduates in Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba-Akoko. A total of five hundred (500) questionnaires were raised out of which four hundred and twenty-eight (428) representing 84.8% were returned and used for the study. The questionnaire sought to elicit responses on frequency of internet use, where and how access is gained to the internet, what resources are used, level of satisfaction with the use of internet resources, preferred source of information as well as challenges encountered in using the

internet. These responses were analyzed using simple percentages and results were presented in tables. The study revealed that a great number of respondents made use of the internet on a daily basis for mostly assignments and social networking purposes. It also revealed that quite a number of respondents, above 50% in most faculties, gained access to the internet via their phones and from their homes with very few making use of internet access platforms provided by the university. The most common internet resource used were search engines and level of satisfaction of most respondents was average. On challenges encountered, majority of the respondents indicated fluctuating network as their greatest challenge. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations made to enhance effective use of internet resources by undergraduates in the university.

Fasae and Aladeniyi (2012) investigated Internet use by students of faculty of science in two Nigerian universities. The study revealed that that 89% of the science students use the Internet for educational purposes, while 58% use it for entertainment purposes, 44% of the respondents use the Internet 2 – 3 times a week followed with 34% of the respondents using the Internet 2 – 3 times a month, 65% of the respondents have more than 3 years of experience in using the internet while the respondents with less than one-year experience in the use of Internet were the least with 11%. The study further revealed that the location from where the Internet is mostly accessed by the science students. Ninety – nine percent of the respondents accessed the

Internet at cybercafé and only 19% access the Internet at the university library.

Statement of the Problem

The Internet over the past decades has become an important tool in tertiary institutions used for learning, teaching and research that enable undergraduates to update their knowledge, prepare up-to-date lecture notes, communicate and collaborate with course mates (Smith, Hoderi & Mcdermott, 2019). Despite the benefits associated with the use of Internet resources, it has been observed in most literature that there is a descending trend in their academic usage. However, observation by the researchers have shown that undergraduates in Delta State are not using the Internet for academic purpose rather they use the resources for other activities. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the level of utilization of Internet resources and services for academic activities by undergraduates of Western Delta University, Oghara, Nigeria

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate Internet usage among undergraduates in Western Delta University, Oghara, Delta state, Nigeria The specific objectives are to:

1. identify if undergraduates of Western Delta University, Oghara, Delta State possess computer and internet skills?
2. find out the types of internet access the undergraduates use in connecting to the Internet;
3. find out the frequency and duration of Internet use among undergraduates;

4. find out the preferred location for Internet usage by undergraduates?
5. find out the purpose for which the undergraduates used the Internet;
6. identify the resources used /access on the internet
7. find out the challenges faced by the undergraduates in accessing the Internet;

Research Questions

The following research question guided this study:

- 1 Do undergraduates of Western Delta University, Oghara, Delta State possess computer and internet skills?
- 2 What are the types of internet access the undergraduates use in connecting to the Internet?
- 3 What are the frequency and duration of Internet use among undergraduates?
- 4 What are the preferred location for Internet usage by undergraduates?
- 5 What are the purpose for which the undergraduates used the Internet?

Results

The findings of the study are presented in the following tables with explanations

Research Question 1:Do undergraduates of Western Delta University, Oghara, Delta State possess computer and internet skills?

Table 1: Computer and Internet skills

Computer and Internet Skills	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	190	67.8
No	90	32.1

Table 1 shows the computer and Internet skills of undergraduates in Western Delta University. The results revealed that 190 (67.8%) possess computer and Internet skills while 90 (32.1%) do not. This implies that majority of the undergraduates

- 6 Which are the resources undergraduates use/access on the internet?
- 7 What are the challenges faced by the undergraduates in accessing the Internet?

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive design. The population for this study is 300 undergraduate students of the Western Delta University who visited the library during the first semester examination of 2019/2020 academic section. The research instrument used for this study is a self-designed questionnaire titled 'Internet Usage

Questionnaire' (IUQ) which was distributed to all the purposively selected undergraduates. All the questionnaires were returned and only 280 copies were found valid for analysis. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the research questions.

possess computer and Internet skills. This finding is in agreement with the study of Ajanaku (2019) whose result indicated that undergraduates of the University of Ibadan. have good computer and Internet skills and

used the internet for various activities which vary across faculty of study.

Research Question 2: What are the types of internet access the undergraduates use in connecting to the Internet?

Table 2: Types of internet access used in connecting to the Internet.9.6

Internet access	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mobile Phone	173	61.8
University LAN	27	9.7
Modem	20	7.1
Cyber-café	60	21.4

Table 2 reveals the types of internet access used in connecting to the Internet by the undergraduates. 173 (61.8%) indicated that they use their mobile phone. This was followed by the use of cyber-café 60 (21.4). This implies that majority of undergraduates use their mobile phones in connecting to the Internet. This may be as a result of the inability of the undergraduates to access the university's Local Area Network (LAN). This study is

in conformity with that of Ajanaku (2019) who revealed that undergraduates of the university of Ibadan were dissatisfied with the high cost of accessing the internet and inadequate internet facilities available in the university. In this same vein, Akintomide and Ademodi (2013) also revealed that above 50% of undergraduates of the Adekunle Ajasin University, gained access to the internet via their phones

Research Question 3: What are the frequency and duration of Internet use among undergraduates?

Table 3a: Frequency of Internet Usage

Frequency of Internet Usage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
On daily basis	184	65.7
On a week basis	40	14.3
On a Monthly basis	23	8.2
Rarely	33	11.8

Table 3a reveals frequency of Internet usage by the undergraduates. Majority 184 (65.7%) use the Internet on a daily basis. This was followed 40 (14.3%) who use the Internet on a weekly basis. This implies that majority of the undergraduates use the Internet on a daily basis. This may be as a result of the fact that they use the Internet for assignments and social networking

purposes. This finding is in agreement with Akintomide and Adesmodi (2013) those study revealed that a great number of undergraduates of the Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko. made use of the internet on a daily basis for mostly assignments and social networking purposes.

Table 3b: Duration of Internet Usage in a day

Duration of Internet Usage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
30min-1 hrs	40	14.3
1 hrs-2hrs	76	27.2
2hs and above	164	58.6

Table 3b reveals the duration of Internet usage in a day. 164 (58.6%) indicated that they use the Internet 2hours and above in a day. This was followed by 76 (27.2%) who indicated 1-2hrs usage. This implies that majority of the undergraduates use the Internet 2hrs and above in a day. This may be as a result of the fact that the undergraduates use the Internet for

educational, social networking and entertainment purposes. This finding is in agreement with the study Akintomide and Ademodi (2013) whose study revealed that a great number of respondents made use of the internet on a daily basis for mostly assignments and social networking purposes.

Research Question 4: What are the preferred location for Internet usage by undergraduates?

Table 4: Preferred location for Internet usage

Preferred location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
University Library(through wired or wireless)	34	12.2
Hostel (Homes)	140	50.0
Cyber café (around or outside the university)	91	32.5
At a designated location	15	5.3

Table 4 shows the preferred location for Internet usage. 140 (50.0%) respondents indicated that their preferred location for Internet usage is their hostels. This was followed by 91 (32.5%) who indicated Cyber café (around or outside the university). This may be as a result of the fact that mobile phones are the most preferred means of accessing the Internet. This implies that the undergraduates are not restricted to a particular location

because they can access the internet anywhere that is comfortable for them which is probably why they mostly choose to access the internet from their hostels. This finding is in conformity with the study of Akintomide and Ademodi (2013) whose study revealed that quite a number of respondents, above 50% in most faculties, gained access to the internet via their phones and from their homes

Research Question 5: What are the purpose for which the undergraduates used the Internet?

Table 5: Purpose of Internet Usage

Purpose of Internet Usage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Academic work	121	43.2
Social networking	71	25.3
To gather information for literature review and assignment	40	14.3
Send and receive mail	48	17.2

Table 5 shows the purpose of Internet usage by the undergraduates. 121 (43.2%) indicated that they use the Internet for academic work. This was followed by social networking usage 71 (25.3%). This may be as a result of the fact that the undergraduates download Internet resources for their assignment, seminar

and for preparing for their examination. This finding is in conformity with the study of Fasae and Aladeniyi (2012) who revealed that that 89% of the science students use the Internet for educational purposes, while 58% use it for entertainment purposes.

Research Question 6: Which are the resources undergraduates use/access on the internet?

Table 6: Resources used/access on the internet

Resources	Frequency	Percentage %
E-books and E- Journals	31	11.0
Social networking	46	16.4
Music	28	10.0
Online databases	58	20.7
Instant messaging	28	10.0
E-mail (Listserv)	20	7.2
Newsgroup (Usenet)	23	8.2
Search engines e.g. Google, AltaVista, yahoo, World Wide Web etc	46	16.4

Table 6 shows the resources used/access on the internet. All the options received positive responses. 58 (20.7%) indicated that they use the Internet to access online databases. This was followed by 46 (16.4%) that stated both the usage of social networking and search engines e.g. Google, AltaVista, yahoo, World Wide Web etc. This implies that majority of the undergraduates utilized the Internet resources for their academic work. This

may be as a result of the fact that the Internet provides a medium of communication that has extended the potential of libraries' interaction beyond physical library to users. This finding is in agreement with the study of Suleiman and Joshua (2019) whose findings revealed that online database and e-mail services were the most utilize Internet resources by the academic staff of tertiary institutions in Adamawa.

Research Question 7: What are the challenges faced by the undergraduates in accessing the Internet?

Table 7: Challenges faced by the undergraduates in accessing the Internet

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage %
Slow internet speed	23	8.2
Difficult in finding relevant information	15	5.2
Difficulties in navigation of some websites	20	7.1
High cost of Internet usage	79	28.2
Power outages	57	20.4
Inadequate internet access in the university	86	30.1

Table 7 shows the challenges faced by the undergraduates in accessing the Internet. Most of the undergraduates 86 (30.1%) agreed that inadequate internet access in the university, high cost of Internet usage 79 (28.2%) and power outages 57 (20.4%) were some of the problems encountered in the use of Internet facilities by undergraduates. This finding is in conformity with the study of Ajanaku (2019) who investigated the internet activities engaged in, frequency of use of the internet and challenges limiting the use of the internet among the undergraduates of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. the result indicated that respondents were dissatisfied with the high cost of accessing the internet and inadequate internet facilities.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it could be concluded that undergraduates of Western Delta University are relying more on the Internet for their academic needs than any other areas and that they reply more on their subscribed mobile phones for internet access. Inadequate internet access in the university, high cost of Internet usage and power outages were some of the problems encountered in the use of Internet facilities

by the undergraduates. The management of WDU should as a matter of urgently provide an alternate power supply in order to have a steady supply of electricity needed for effective Internet services.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this research the following recommendations are proffered:

1. The Internet facilities located inside the campus should be made more functional to encourage Internet use by undergraduates within the campus.
2. The Internet should be made available to undergraduates in the University Library and stocked with sufficient number of computers and also adequate space and facilities should be provided for those that want to make use of their own lap-top. This will enable them to save relevant information discovered, to be use at a later date.
3. There should be an alternate power supply in order to have a steady supply of electricity needed for effective Internet services.

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