ISSN: 2992-2313 (Online)
ISSN: 2992-2305 (Print)

EXTENT OF INTERNET RESOURCES UTILIZATION FOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AMONG BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH SOUTH, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Research is the core of tertiary education. The internet provides unprecedented access to resources for research. This study was conducted to ascertain the extent of internet resources utilization for research purposes by business teacher education students in colleges of education in South South, Nigeria. Specifically, it determined ways internet resources was utilized by business teacher education students. The study adopted the descriptive design in which a total population of 317 business teacher education students was used. A structured questionnaire titled: Internet Resources Utilization Questionnaire (IRUQ), developed by the researcher with a reliability of 0.934 used to gather data for the study. One research question was answered using mean and standard deviations, while two hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The results from the study showed that business teacher education students utilized internet communication facilities to a high extent for research in colleges of education in South South, Nigeria. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings on the extent of utilization of internet resources by gender. There is no significant difference in the extent of internet resources utilization based on ownership of school. It was recommended amongst others that institutions should endeavor to train their students on the utilization and the benefits of using the internet and internet resources for their academic pursuits, while, seminars and workshops should be organized for students to assist them acquire the necessary experience and search skills for better internet resources usage.

Keywords: Utilization, Internet, Internet resources, Business teacher education students

Introduction

The proliferation of the internet has significantly transformed the educational landscape, providing the students with unprecedented access to a wealth of resources. The internet plays a vital role in education. There is no doubt that in this modern era, everyone prefers the use of internet for operations. The internet has introduced improvements in technology, communication and online entertainment. People use the internet according to their needs and interest. However, it is very obvious that the internet provides not only social connection and entertainment, but also academic and scientific information as well. The internet has become a tool for spreading information quickly to a large audience and of going beyond the limitation of time and space. Since the emergence of the internet, it has become an important medium of communication as well as research and leisure tool. People have started to access any kind of information easily on the internet and also use it for social, educational and entertainment purposes.

Internet is an international computer network made up of numerous networks. It is also called "network of networks". It is one of the biggest breakthroughs in communication after the advent of television. The word internet is the short form 'International Network'. Emmanuel (2013) described the internet as one of the most multipurpose technologies because it contains variety of information that could be retrieved in splits seconds. According to Senthils (2018), internet has now become the main tool and is playing a central role in any academic institution. Students are now spending more time on the internet and many of them are reading their text and reference books online. Also, according to Dryli and Kinnaman in Vinaya and Lata (2022), the internet enables students to find information as well as allowing them to think critically and creatively, to become collaborative and cooperative workers and to solve problems.

The internet is one of the most advanced and sophisticated means of communication. It is the interconnection of local and international networks and devices to enhance effective and efficient communication. The National Academy of Sciences (2021) defined internet as international high-speed electronic communications network (linking many local, regional, and national networks) which allows individuals at institutions or at home to access each other's computers for rapid communication or information retrieval. The internet is a tool that permits access to multiple computer networks. The internet has revolutionized the educational system and learning in particular through the use of text, graphics, video and audio simultaneously (Rahman, Hossain, Islam, Alrajeh & Muhammad, 2020). It can be assessed by students anywhere regardless of place and time (Anwar, Mardisentosa & Williams, 2021). The Internet can also support real time interactions and sharing of information (Hartawan & Isa, 2016).

With the advent of the internet, education has definitely benefited in more ways than can be mentioned and although it will not take over the traditional methods of education, it will continue to play a major part in education (Osunde, 2019). As the internet is an inseparable part of today's educational system, the academic institutions increasingly depend on the internet for educational purposes (Gupta & Sanocki, 2021). The internet adds a new dimension to business education, in that it provides students with the opportunity to engage in more challenging and life like activities (Braide, 2015). As Braide further held, integrating the internet in university business education enables one to achieve social competence and optimum individual development. The use of internet in undergraduate education encourages student faculty exchange, cooperation among students, active learning, prompt feedback, and time management, communicates high expectations and respects diverse talents and ways of learning (Bankole & Oludayo, 2015). Although there may be many advantages to be gained from using the internet as an educational tool, there are also drawbacks. Ojedokun (2021) believed that the internet can be a very unfriendly environment for the first time users, but with frequent use, users can get familiar pretty quickly.

Internet resources refer to the vast array of tools and information available online. According to Great (2021), resources are available in all subjects, mailing is possible for users, documents can be forwarded and delivered across the world and directories and journals abound. These resources play a crucial role in peoples' daily lives, providing them with everything from news and entertainment to educational materials and communication platforms. Sahin, Balta and Ercan (2010) observed that when students have the opportunity, almost all of them will prefer to use internet resources, rather than classical libraries for their studies. This is because, students can easily search for the relevant information they

ISSN: 2992-2313 (Online)
ISSN: 2992-2305 (Print)

require on the internet. The time taken to go through many books to find information they need has been drastically minimized compared to the pre-internet day. In addition, there are various websites that provide important information that can help students with their academic work and assignments as well as keep them up to date with the latest information. In this regard, Park in Dogruera, Eyyamb and Menevis (2015) noted that internet resources serve as storehouse of information, communication without boundaries, online e interactive learning, online research, innovation in the new world, improve interest in learning, global education, and information catalogues. Great (2021) identified some of the internet resources to include email, online database and websites (social media platforms). Others are online documents, multimedia files, and cloud based computing.

Internet communication is any form of online communication that can connect individuals from different locations across the globe. The term internet communication denotes communication; reading writing by means of networked computers, which suggests that computer mediated communication helps computer users interact in real time, with all of them operating their computers or enabling devices simultaneously (Para, 2016). For Chaturvedi (2020), it simply refers to sharing information over the internet. The internet provides a wide array of communication facilities that make it easier than ever for people to connect with one another. It allows for instant communication with anyone, anywhere in the world. This enables businesses to operate globally and stay connected with remote teams. There are various types of internet communication facilities available, such as email, social media, instant messaging, and video conferencing. Each of these tools serves a unique purpose and caters for different forms of communication.

Business education is a vocational programme in tertiary institutions designed to equip the recipients with requisite skills needed for general employment as a teacher, office and business manager or as an entrepreneur. Odike and Nnaekwe (2019) defined business education as a programme of study and an aspect of vocational education programme offered in both secondary and tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria. Business education as a programme of learning is designed to meet various objectives. It is an educational course that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable the recipient to operate in the environment he finds himself (Njoku in Ugwunwoti and Ugwu, 2020). Also, Manassy and Ekpeyong in Osharive (2015) stated that Business education is a course of study or part of the total education programme which provides skill, knowledge and understanding for one's participation in the business world, either as a producer, distributor or consumer. It is the education that provides the individual with technical competencies that will enable the individual to attain self-realization in the field of work and in business world.

Business education exposes students to the principles, concepts, fundamentals, theories and processes of business. Business Education, according to Isu in Ubulom and Dambo (2016), is that education that deals with the acquisition of practical skills, knowledge and values that enable one to function effectively in the society. It is regarded as that aspect of education which leads to acquisition of practical and applied skills and basic scientific knowledge. Business education produces responsible, productive and self- reliant citizens. Business education should not be left out of the charge to exploit the potentials and transform the educational landscape of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. With proper integration, business education programme will help improve the academic training of

business educators who holds out the opportunity to revolutionize office automation, pedagogical methods and ensure quality education. There is the need to embrace the challenges through the development and use of internet in business education and be computer literate.

Computer literacy has to do with the degree of proficiency of students in basic computer oriented operation. The utilization of internet by business education students is dependent by their level of computer literacy. Alonta (2019) noted that the utilization of internet resources is affected by the level of computer literacy of the students. This is because when students are knowledgeable in the usage of internet resources, they can confidently carry out their academic work. School cannot afford to remain mere venues for the transmission of a prescribed set of information from teachers to students over a period of time, rather must promote learning to learn the acquisition of knowledge and skills that make possible continuous learning over the life time. Through the internet, students from any part of the world can gain knowledge on different subjects, reduce stress, facilitate access to information and promote creativity among learners (Adamu, Adamu & Bashir, 2013). Being computer literate, business teacher education students at one point will be expected to carry out assignments using either of the internet resources. This will enable them become conversant with the internet. Assignment given may be sent online and the students may reciprocate by sending feedback to the lecturer.

Utilization is the noun forms of the verb utilize, which means to make good use of something. The word utilization involves using something especially for practical purposes. Utilization of resources connotes the equitable use of resources of an enterprise especially education industry for effective implementation of the curriculum. Utilization according to Ugwuanyi (2013) simply represents the actual patronage of school facilities, equipment and supplies by the teacher in teaching. Hornby, as cited in Ugwuanyi (2013) explained utilization as making use of available services at the individual's disposal. Utilization of business education internal resources require teachers' knowledge in the course area and understanding how students learn using varied internet resources as well as good level of technical expertise. This will aid in promoting effective teaching and students' learning in this course area. Utilization of internet resources among colleges of education most especially business teacher education students would determine to a great extent, if Nigeria could have more independent learners, who are problem solvers and who can contribute positively in improving the way things are done in Nigeria and other nations of the world. For this reason, attention will be given to gender and ownership in the study.

Gender as a social construct and attribute has been associated with being male and female and mutual relationship that exists between them. These attributes and relationships are socially constructed and learned through the socialization process, while technology development serves as a forum for exploring the linkage between changing gender relations and development (Adegbija, Bola, Riaz and George, 2013). Gender is a social construct created by the society to describe what the males and females are supposed to do, how they are supposed to behave, and what value is given to them (Hameed and Shukri, 2019). There has been debate on how male and female students use internet resources. In the words of Tsvere, Swamy and Nyaruwata (2014), gender is a key factor in the discourse concerning internet utilization practice. To this end, Bassi and Camble (2011) found that male students use e-resources more for research purposes while female students use the resources more for assignments and leisure. Furthermore, David-West and Akameze (2022) revealed that there is a significant gender difference in the

ISSN: 2992-2313 (Online)
ISSN: 2992-2305 (Print)

utilization of ICT among undergraduates of Library and Information Science. They further revealed that females use ICT facilities for academic purposes more than their male counterparts. On the utilization of Internet resources based on institution ownership, it is perceived that federal institutions are more funded and equipped than those owned by the states. It became important to expand the study to cover internet resources not frequently mentioned.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Learning resources are essential for the development of students' knowledge, skills and experiences. In today's era of Internet of Things (IOT), internet resources exist in various forms to support learning. Internet resources provide easy access to learning materials which can be obtained from any location and at one's convenience. Students can obtain materials online for their studies and assignments. Furthermore, internet resources allow fast sharing of information among students in the form of text messages, video, audio and calls. Internet resources, when utilized properly for educational purposes can increase students' academic performance. In addition, these resources can be accessed by using internet supported devices like laptops and handsets which are affordable by most students. These devices can provide the students with endless access to the internet, at home, school or anywhere they are.

Despite all the internet resources available to business teacher education students, carrying out assignments and writing research projects still constitute problems to them. Students who lack skills in the use of internet resources for learning often face great challenges in their studies. Preliminary observations of the researcher revealed that business education students were seen using their smart phones and laptop for browsing yet are not using them for academic pursuits. When these students are given assignments it is observed that they copy from one another instead of using the different internet resources available to them. Majority of them make little or no use of internet resources and services provided owing to individual, organization and system factors. The inability of business teacher education students to use the available internet resources and the difficulties these students go through when writing assignments as affirmed by the researcher is worrisome and if not checked the consequences in the future may be inconceivable. It is based on this backdrop that it became imperative to ascertain the extent of internet resources utilization by Business Teacher Education students in colleges of education in South-South, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent of Internet resources utilization by business teacher education students in colleges of education in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study:

1. What is the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities by business teacher education students by gender in colleges of education in South- South, Nigeria.
2. What is the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities by business teacher education students by ownership in colleges of education in south south, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study and was tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the extent of utilization of internet resources for research activities by business teacher education students in colleges of education South South, Nigeria.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of respondents in state and federal owned colleges of education in South- South, Nigeria on the extent of utilization of internet resources for research activities by business teacher education students in colleges of education in South South, Nigeria.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The population of the study consists of 325 business teacher education students in colleges of education offering business education in south south, Nigeria. The study used census sampling technique. All the elements were studied due to the small size of the population. The instrument used for data collection was designed by the researcher and titled 'Internet Research Utilization Questionnaire (IRUQ)'' which was made up of two parts (I and II). Part I elicits information on the respondents' personal data while part II was used to collect data for answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses. The IRUQ had a cronbach co- efficient of 0.934. The items on section II were defined on the internal scale. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on the 325 studied elements however, only 317 copies were retrieved and used for analysis.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities by business teacher education students in colleges of education in south-south, Nigeria?

Data answering the research question are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Utilization of Internet Communication Resources for Research by Business Teacher Education Students

S/N	Utilization of Internet Communication Facilities	Mean	SD	Dec.
1.	Google	3.49	0.80	VHE
2.	Yahoo	1.98	1.16	LE
3.	Internet Phone System	2.94	1.10	HE
4.	E-mails	3.03	1.06	VHE
5.	WhatsAPP	3.67	0.78	VHE
6.	Google Meet	2.42	1.17	LE
7.	Messenger	2.78	1.02	HE
8.	Skype	1.97	1.05	VLE
9.	Instant Messaging	2.52	1.15	HE
10.	Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP)	2.27	1.12	LE
	Overall	**2.71**	**0.60**	**HE**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Results in Table 1 revealed that students utilized Internet Phone System, Messenger and Instant Messaging to a high extent with the mean values ranging from 2.5 to 2.94. Also deviations ranged from 0.78 shows that they are utilized to a very high extent for research. The table further showed that two of the internet communication resources, items Google Meet and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) with mean values 2.42 and 2.27 are utilized at low extent while two items Yahoo and Skype with mean values of 1.98 and 1.97 are utilized to a very low extent for research among business teacher education students. The values of the standard deviations ranged from 0.78 to 1.12 revealed that the responses do not deviate so widely from the mean. The overall results show that business education students utilize internet communication resources at a high extent

Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the business teacher education students on the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities for research activities by business teacher education students in colleges of education in South south, Nigeria based on gender, location and ownership of institution.

Hypothesis 1(a)

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the business teacher education students on the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities by gender.

Table 2: Summary of t-test on Utilization of Internet Communication Facilities by Gender

S/N	Variables	Gender				t-value	p-value
		Male (n = 132)		Female (n = 185)			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1.	Google	3.52	0.78	3.47	0.81	0.576	0.565
2.	Yahoo	2.08	1.17	1.91	1.16	1.284	0.200
3.	Internet Phone System	3.09	1.05	2.83	1.12	2.116*	0.035
4.	E-mails	3.04	0.99	3.02	1.09	0.135	0.893
5.	WhatsAPP	3.74	0.63	3.61	0.87	1.483	0.139
6.	Google Meet	2.46	1.19	2.38	1.17	0.585	0.559
7.	Messenger	2.86	1.06	2.72	0.99	1.134	0.257
8.	Skype	2.16	1.12	1.83	0.97	2.805*	0.005
9.	Instant Messaging	2.67	1.10	2.42	1.17	1.921	0.056
10.	Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP)	2.34	1.18	2.22	1.08	0.932	0.352
	Utilization of Internet Communication Facilities	**2.80**	**0.64**	**2.64**	**0.56**	**2.282***	**0.023**

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Summary of t-test on utilization of internet communication facilities by gender is presented in Table 2. The results show that no significant difference existed with regard to utilization of other internet communication facilities. Data show that there is a significant difference ($t = 2.282$, $p < 0.05$) in the utilization of internet communication facilities by gender. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the business teacher education students on the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities by gender is rejected. This means that gender had a significant influence on the mean responses. This is possibly so because of the big difference in the number of females and the males.

Hypothesis 1(c)

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the business teacher education students on the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities based on ownership of school.

Table 3: Summary of t-test on Utilization of Internet Communication Facilities by Ownership of School

S/N	Variables	Ownership of School				t-value	p-value
		Federal (n = 192)		State (n = 125)			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1.	Google	3.44	0.85	3.58	0.70	1.513	0.131
2.	Yahoo	1.96	1.16	2.02	1.16	0.392	0.695
3.	Internet Phone System	2.85	1.14	3.07	1.03	1.769	0.078
4.	E-mails	3.03	1.09	3.03	1.01	0.049	0.961
5.	WhatsAPP	3.68	0.77	3.65	0.79	0.324	0.746
6.	Google Meet	2.53	1.15	2.25	1.19	2.073*	0.039
7.	Messenger	2.78	1.06	2.78	0.96	0.068	0.946
8.	Skype	2.01	1.05	1.90	1.05	0.948	0.344
9.	Instant Messaging	2.54	1.19	2.50	1.08	0.306	0.760
10.	Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP)	2.32	1.15	2.19	1.08	1.014	0.311
	Utilization of Internet Communication Facilities	**2.71**	**0.64**	**2.70**	**0.53**	**0.240**	**0.811**

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 3 presents the summary of t-test on utilization of internet communication facilities based on ownership of schools. The results show that, except on utilization of Google Meet ($t = 2.073$, $p = 0.039$) where a significant difference is observed, there is no significant difference in the extent of utilization of other internet communication facilities with regards to ownership of schools. Overall data show that there is no significant difference ($t = 0.240$, $p = 0.811$) in the utilization of internet communication facilities based on ownership of schools. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the business teacher education students on the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities based on ownership of schools is therefore upheld. This means that ownership of the colleges of education (federal and state) had no significant influence on the mean responses of the respondents.

Discussion of Findings

Utilization of Internet Communication by Business Teacher Education Students

Data analysis for research question two showed that business teacher education students utilize internet communication facilities by business teacher education Students to high extent. These findings implies that even though the students use internet communication facilities during the course of their studies, they are limited to few of the internet communication facilities. These findings in line with Ukpebor (2016) who agreed that both academics and students are making effective use of all the available internet resources and services to carry out their academic services. They survey the internet resources and services utilization by lecturers and students in engineering facilities in Edo State, Nigeria. The study established the encouraging utilization of the internet resources and services despite infrastructural facilities. Adekunmisi et al (2017) discovered that most of the students of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria use internet facilities such as e- mails, web pages and search engines for chatting and academic activities.

Internet communication resources are essential because they provide students with access to a vast amount of information and facilitate interactive learning experiences, it also, cater for different learning styles by promoting visual learners with multimedia content and auditory learners can access podcasts and webinars. They also provide students the opportunity to learn how to analyze information and form their own opinions.

The result of the study revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business teacher education students on the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities by gender. Using the principles of statistical hypothesis testing, the p- value obtained (0.023) is less than the 0.05 level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of male and female business teacher education students regarding to the extent to which they utilize internet communication facilities. According to the findings of the study revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of business teacher education students on the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities based on ownership of schools. Using the principles of statistical hypothesis testing, the value obtained (0.811) is far greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that business education teacher students in both federal and state colleges of education utilize internet communication facilities for research activities to a similar extent. It also imply that ownership of school does not significantly influence how business teacher education students rate the extent of utilization of internet communication facilities.

The findings suggests that access to and use of internet communication facilities among business teacher education students maybe relatively uniform across institutions regardless whether they are federal or state owned. It can be observed from Table 8, that only utilization of Google Meet is where a significant difference is observed. The finding is consistent with previous studies which reported that students' use of internet communication facilities is largely influenced by individual access and digital literacy rather than institutional ownership. For instance earlier research has shown that proliferation of mobile technologies and social media platforms has created access allowing students from different types of institutions to engage similarly with internet resources. However, the results contradicts studies that found significant disparities between federal and state institutions, particularly in terms of infrastructure and institutions support which were believed to influence technology utilization.

Conclusion

The study investigated the extent of utilization of internet resources for research activities by business teacher education students in colleges of education in South South, Nigeria.

1. The findings of the study showed that the utilization of internet resources by business teacher education students does significantly depend on location, gender and ownership.
2. The conclusion also showed that utilization of internet resources by business teacher education students were utilized to a high extent. Some of the internet resources which were utilized to a low extent could be as result of unawareness by the students.

Recommendations

1. Higher educational institutions should endeavor to train business teacher education students properly, also, advocate to them the benefits of using the internet and internet resources for their academic pursuits.
2. There should be prompt internet

connectivity making it possible for business education teacher and researchers to have easy access to information during their course of study so as to enhance research activities.

3. Seminars and workshops should be organized for business education students by colleges of education management to assist them acquire the necessary knowledge of search skills for better internet resources usage.

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