Impact of the Internet on Academic Performance of Students in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract

This research work investigates the impact of the internet on the academic performance of students in some selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted in conducting this research. Questionnaire was the instrument employed for data collection. Frequency count and simple percentage was used to analysis the data. The study population comprises of six thousand (6000) students, drawn from the University of Benin, Benin City, Delta State University, Abraka, Western Delta University, Oghara and the Delta State polytechnic, Otefe. The study found that majority of the respondents were computer literate and that they make use of the internet, it was discovered that the students frequently access the internet from Cyber Café, and that they consult the internet in order to retrieve relevant academic materials, majority of the students rated the internet for academic pursuit to be on the average, E-journals and E-books were among the resources the students mostly used on the internet. They also indicated that with the help of the internet, they are better prepared for their examinations. It was also revealed that Power outage, slow internet speed, lack of computer terminals, too many hits or information overload, Insufficient computer were some of the problems militating against effective internet access in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Necessary recommendations were made.

Keywords: internet, academic performance, internet resources, computer terminals, academic pursuit.

Introduction

Over the years, the internet has been a very important instrument for facilitating academic activities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The information and communication technology revolution is sweeping through the world and the gale has even caught up with developing countries like Nigeria. There has been a tremendous growth in the use of the Internet and the World Wide Web for finding and sharing information. The Internet originated from government and academia and spread to business and industry (Shelley, 2002). According to Agil, and Ahmad (2011) the internet is the transport vehicle for the information stored in files or documents on a computer. It carries together various information and services, such as electronic mail, online chat, file transfer, the interlinked Web pages and other documents of the World Wide Web. In today world, the Internet plays a vital role in the teaching, research and learning process in academic institutions. Thus, the advent of the Internet has heralded the emergence of a new form of knowledge production and distribution – the soft form. This new form of information resources has, as its greatest advantage, a virtually unlimited wealth of information resources which is widely readily available and accessible to hundreds of millions of people simultaneously in many parts of the world (Kumar & Kaur 2006). The Internet is a powerful and efficient tool for searching, retrieving, and disseminating information, with a significant impact on students and scholar's world wide. The Internet can be consulted and like a reference resource, it is broader and highly dynamic. It also provides a means of scholarly communication (Brunning, Schraw, Norby &Ronning, 2004).

The Internet has liberated scholarship from the academic, social, legal, political, economic and geographical constraints associated with traditional print media (Kuma & Kaur 2006). This liberation has had a major effect on scholar's research capacity and productivity. It has also aided scholars, who want to stay at the forefront of research and keep up to date with developments in his or her research fields by utilizing the Internet (Kumar & Kaur 2006).

Research Questions
- What is your purpose for using the internet?
- What are the students rating of the internet for academic pursuit?
- How has the internet helped in your academic pursuit?
- What are the resources used on the internet?
- What are the problems militating against effective internet access in your institutions?

Literature Review

The Internet is an inseparable part of today's educational system. The academic increasingly depends on the Internet for educational purposes (Gupta & Sanocki, 2002). It was observed recently that majority of academic and research institutions provide Internet service to students, teachers, and researchers (Kaur, 2008).
Advancement in technology is also another factor that brings major impacts on education (Underwood 2003).Many tertiary institutions around the world are expanding their investment in information technology (IT), especially the Internet, and are actively promoting Internet usage in tertiary education (Al-Nuaimy, Zhang & Noble, 2001; Gupta & Sanocki, 2002)

The use of the Internet for learning is seen as a means to improve accessibility, efficiency and quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and service as well as remote exchanges and collaboration (Kamba 2009). Within the Nigerian context, many people have attributed students' non-challant attitude to reading which culminates in mass failure of students in examinations to the use of the Internet (Alakpodia 2010). Internet's seemingly infinite information offers access to up-to-date research reports and global knowledge so it has become an important component of electronic services in academic institutions. Therefore, the Internet has become a valuable tool for learning, teaching and research (including collaborative research) in Nigeria (Nwokedi, 2007).

Ogedebe (2012) in his study found that 79% of the respondents accepted that their academic performance has been improved by using the internet, while 13% believed otherwise, 8% made no response to that question. The study also revealed that 65% of the respondents were computer literate, while 29% were not, 6% of the respondents neglected the question. The study further revealed that 8% of the respondents believed that their GPA has been improved remarkably as a result of the internet, 6% agreed that their GPA has been declining, 28% responded that it aids them in preparing better for CA and semester examination while 22% were indifferent about the options and therefore did not respond.

In the study of Aqil and Ahmad (2011) it was found that 47 (52.64%) users rated the utility of Internet based information services as average for their academic purposes, while 36 (39.56%) users rated the Internet as high. Moreover, 6 (6.59%) and 2 (2.19%) rated it as low and very low respectively. Wagner (1998) saw internet as a forum that promote group discussion which is time and distance independent. The World Wide Web service provided by the internet with over 5 million web sites allows students from all disciplines to source for relevant information. Microphone members of the group can actually see and hear each other.

Gudimani and Mulimani (2008) in their study revealed that majority of the respondents (42) 46.46% use the internet for Online database, (34) 37.78% use internet for electronic journals, (26) 26.89% use internet web based OPAC, (12) 13.33% use the internet for published files, (8) 8.88% respondents use the internet discussion forum.

Awoleye, Siyanbola and Oladipo (2008) found that less than 10% (46, n=272) of the total students from some of the Universities studied, use the Internet on a daily basis. It also revealed that about 40% of the total respondents (n=272) use it on a weekly basis. It was also found that the students have more access to the Internet in the Cybercafés (90.8%). Jagdoro (2004) in his study asserted that 45.2% of students access the Internet at the cyber café in the university while only 8.2% use the library Internet facilities.

Anasi (2006) investigated the pattern of Internet use by students of the University of Lagos and found low use of Internet among students from Law and Education, though Internet use had very high impact on their academic career.

A study by Udende and Azeez (2010) reported that 311 (80.8%) of Students of the University of Ilorin, admitted that they mostly use the internet for academic purpose, while 54 (14%) used it mostly for mails, 19 (4.9%) used it most for fun, none for others. 100 (26%) of the respondents agreed that they used the internet daily, 178(46.2%) used the internet on weekly basis, while 107(27.8) used the facility ones in a while. The study also revealed that 38 (9.9%) respondents were of the opinion that the internet does not contribute towards their academic excellence, whereas as many as 347 (90.1%) held a contrary view that the internet help them in solving their academic problems. Their report on the problems militating against the effective use of the

internet indicated that 181 (47%) were of the view that the general power outage in the country affect them in accessing the internet. One hundred and ninety (49.4%), however, observed that the state of power do not affect them much while 14 (3.1%) said they are not affected at all. As 296 (76.9%) attributed their inability to login to power failure, 70 (18.2%) associated it with network failure (Udende and Azeez 2010)

Research Method
The survey research design was adopted in conducting this research. Questionnaire was the instrument employed for data collection. The study population comprises of six thousand (6000) students, drawn from the University of Benin, Benin City, Delta State University, Abraka, Western Delta University, Oghara and the Delta State polytechnic, Otefe. These tertiary institutions were chosen because they represent a Federal, State, Private University, and a state polytechnic. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. A total of 6000 copies of questionnaire were randomly distributed through the help of research assistants. A total of 5000 completed copies were retrieved and found usable. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results are presented below.

Finding and Discussion
Response Rate of the Respondents

No. of questionnaire administered	No. of questionnaire retrieved
6000 (100%)	5000 (83%)

The researcher was able to retrieve 5000 (83%) out of the 6000 (100%) questionnaire administered. Thus, indicating a high response rate.
Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Institutions

Tertiary institutions	Frequency
University of Benin	1500 (30)
Delta State University	1350 (27)
Western Delta University	700 (14)
Delta State polytechnic, Otefe	1450 (29)

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents from the sampled institutions. It revealed that 1500 (30%) of the respondents were from the university of Benin while 1450 (29%) of the respondents were from the Delta State polytechnic, Otefe. This shows that majority of the respondents are from the university of Benin

Table 2: Computer Literacy

Computer	Frequency	Percentage

literacy		
Yes	4400	88
No	600	12

Table 2 that show 4400 (88%) of the respondents reported that they were computer literate while 600 (12%) agreed that they were not computer literate. This means that majority of the respondents are computer literate. This study is in agreement with Ogedebe (2012) who found in his study that 65% of these respondents were computer literate while 29% were not.

Table 3: Use of the Internet

Use of the internet	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4840	97
No	160	3

Table 3 shows that majority of respondents 4840 (97%) indicated that they make use of the internet while 160 (3%) don't make use of it. This finding is in conformity with Kamba (2009) who found that the use of the internet for learning is seen as means to improve accessibility, efficiency and quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and service as well as remote exchanges and collaboration.

Table 4: Frequency of the Use of the Internet

Frequency of the use of the internet	Frequency	Percentage
0-3 days	1420	28
0-2 days	680	14
3-5 hours	1170	23
6-7 minutes	860	17
No response	870	17

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents 1420 (28%) indicated that they use the internet 0-3 days a week, 1170 (23%) use it 3-5 hours, 860 (17%) use it 6-7 minutes. This findings corroborates that of Awoleye, Siyanbola and Oladipo (2008) who found that less than 10% (46, n=272) of the total students from some of the universities studied use the Internet on a daily basis, about 40% of the total respondents (n=272) use it on a weekly basis

Table 5: Most Frequently Used Location of Internet Use

Location of internet use	Frequency	Percentage
Cyber café	2350	47
Library	950	19
Department	580	12
Home	1120	22

Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents 2500 (47%) indicated that they accessed the internet from Cyber Café, 1120 (22%) accessed the internet from Home while 950 (19%) accessed the internet from the library. This finding is in conformity with Jagboro (2004) who asserted that 45.2% of students access the Internet at the cyber café in the university while only 8.2% use the library Internet facilities.

Table 6: purpose for using the Internet

Purpose for using the internet	Frequency	Percentage
Send and receive e-mail	840	17
Career development	520	10
Group discussion	550	11
Relevant academic materials	2310	46
Entertainment	180	4
Update yourself	600	12

Table 6 revealed that majority of the respondents 2310 (46%) use the internet to retrieve relevant academic materials, 840 (17%) use it send and receive e-mail, 600 (12%) use it to update their self. These findings is in conformity with that of Udende and Azeez (2010) that 311 (80.8) of Students of the University of Ilorin, admitted that they mostly use the internet for academic purpose.

Table 7: Students rating of the Internet for academic pursuit

Students rating of the internet for academic pursuit	Frequency	Percentage
Average	2430	49
High	1300	26
Low	730	15

Not helpful at all	540	10

Table 7 shows that majority of the respondents 2430 (49%) rated the internet for academic pursuit to be on the average, 1300 (26%) rated it to be high, 730 (15%) rated it to be low while 540 (10%) rated it not to be helpful at all. This finding is in agreement with Aqil and Ahmad (2011) who found that 47 (52.64%) users of the internet rated the utility of Internet based information services as average for their academic purposes, while 36 (39.56%) users rated the Internet as high

Table 8: Internet usefulness in academic pursuit

Has Internet helped in academic pursuit	Frequency	Percentage
GPA has improved	4500	90
GPA has been on the decline	60	1
None of the above	440	9

Table 8 shows that majority of the respondents 4500 (90%) indicated that with the help of the internet for your academic pursuit, their GPA has improved. This finding is in agreement with Ogedebe (2012) who found that 79% of the respondents accepted that their academic performance has been improved by using the internet. The study further revealed that 8% of the respondents believed that their GPA has been improved remarkably as a result of the internet.

Table 9: Resources used on the internet

Resources used on the internet	Frequency	Percentage
Reference document	600	12
Database	960	19
Technical report	740	15
E-books	1150	23
E-journal	1350	27
Conference proceedings	200	4

Table 9 shows that majority of the respondents 1350 (27%) indicated that the resources they used mostly on the internet is the E-journals, 1150 (23%) indicated E-books. This study is in

agreement with Gudimani and Mulimani (2008) who found that majority of the respondents 34 (37.78%) use internet for Electronic journals.

Table 10: problems militating against effective internet access

Problems militating against effective internet access	Frequency	Percentage
Slow internet speed	880	18
Lack of computer terminals	410	8
Too many hits or information overload	620	12
Non technical staff	470	9
Irrelevant information	280	6
Power outage	1560	31
Insufficient computer	780	16

Table 10 shows that there are many problems associated with effective internet access. The major problem as stated in the table is power supply 1560 (31%). This implies that power outage is the greatest impediment to the use of the internet for academic purpose. This conforms withUdende and Azeez (2010) who found that 181 (47%) of his respondents were of the view that the general power outage in the country affect them in accessing the internet

Conclusion and Recommendations
The Internet has opened the door to a new way of learning. The wealth of information available therein exceeds that of any physical library. Of the various uses the internet can be put to, academic purpose occupies the highest enviable position as far as students are concerned. However, they face a lot of challenges using the internet for academic purpose. Such as incessant power outage and the disgusting network failure. The need exist for tertiary institutions to acquire high powered generators which will serve as backup in case of power outage.
Cybercafé managements should see the need to invest more funds, not only for opening such, but also for proper maintenance. If cybercafés are provided with wireless access points, it will become possible for users to browse within the environments and thus enhance access to information needed especially to enhance academic performance. Tertiary institution should ensure that adequate internet services are been provided in their respective libraries, so as to enable students meet their information needs.

On the basis of the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

- More cybercafés should be licensed to operate within the campus
- Lecturers should do more in inculcating the habit of using the internet to students by giving them assignments that will compel them to use it academic purposes.

- Orientation training progammes should be organized by tertiary institutions at regular intervals so that the maximum users can improve their excellence or proficiency in the use of the Internet for academic purposes.
- More efficient technical staff should be appointed and they should always be present in the Internet section for expert advice.
- More computers and computer terminals with latest specification should be made available to academic libraries, so that students can have access to them
- Training on internet search skill should be given to students to enable them locate materials with ease
- Awareness programmes should be put in places to sensitize students of the advantages derived from the use of the internet

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