Accessibility and Utilization of Internet Service by Graduate Students in University of Lagos, Nigeria

BOLA, Olaniyi Oladimeji
OGUNLADE, Oyeronke Olufunmilola

Department of Science Education
University of Ilorin
Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

The major objective of the study was to examine the accessibility and utilization of Internet service by graduate students in university of Lagos ,Nigeria. Specifically, the study made effort to determine the extent to which Internet service was accessible to staff and students of the university, how point of Internet access influenced its usage, factors motivating the use of Internet and what Internet was used for by graduate students in University of Lagos. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and data were collected by administering questionnaires to two hundred respondents randomly selected from faculty of Education in the University. Results of the findings revealed that students didn't have as much access to Internet service as the staff. (27.7% and 62.4% respectively). 47.9% of respondents strongly agreed to visiting the cybercafé to access Internet. 53.1% and 50.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that proximity to cybercafé and valid information contained from the Internet were their major motivating factors for surfing the Internet. It also found that the respondents strongly agreed that the purposes for their surfing the Internet were to register courses , enroll for exams, gather information for literature review, send and receive mails, amongst others. Based on the findings, it is therefore recommended that since the Internet is being utilized in every sector such as Education, Banking, Medicine and others, the University should make Internet service assessible for students' use. This study can further be conducted in other institutions in Nigeria.

Introduction

Students' enrolment in higher education at global level witnessed rapid increase since mid eighties. This was linked with the global economic recession and changes in the labour market. For instance, as at April 2004, there were 27million higher education students in European Union and United State of America (Scott, 2008). Students' enrolment in higher education in Nigeria has also manifested similar trend since year 2000, when the establishment of many states and private Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education relatively increased students' enrolment in these institutions (JAMB, 2009).

However, adequate measures have not been put in place to assist both undergraduate and graduate students in Nigeria institutions to access and utilize information without having to travel to another geographic location. The aged long library and facilities provided could not satisfy the information need of the students. Most Higher Institution of learning have adopted Internet as an alternative hence the need be to evaluate whether Internet services are accessible and utilized by graduate students in University of Lagos.

Review of Related Literature

Accessibility of Information Sources

Accessibility of information sources is an important theme in this research work. However, Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), submitted that resources may be available in the library and sometimes there may be identified bibliography relevant to one's area of interest, but the user may not be able to locate the material. According to Rosenberg (1967), Allen (1968) and Slater (1963) in their respective studies found out that one may identify citations in indexes but may not have access to the sources containing the relevant articles.

Researchers often use materials and information sources available to them, which may require little or no effort to access. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) therefore identified five major possible types of inaccessibility which include conceptual, linguistic, critical, bibliographic, and physical inaccessibility. However, availability of information does not imply that such information is readily accessible for utilization by users who need them.

Utilization of Internet information in Nigeria

University education is geared towards the production of a complete intellectual, capable of independent learning and research. Prior to the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for acquisition, processing and dissemination of information, university research, teaching and learning were restricted to information due to materials available to students' dominical institutions library or by extension, those materials made available through inter-lending. However with globalization through the Internet, Carbo (2003) informed that the world is shrinking resulting to immediacy of information. Thus, multimedia resources can be created, and information can be communicated instantaneously. The mode of acquiring and disseminating information for university education changed from physically available prints to e-materials with virtual reality. As a result of that Akintunde (2002), asserted that any attempt to have meaningful academic communication can be successful only by the use of ICT which presents information in real time and space.

Youngsters especially students and researchers spend most of their time in cyber café and because this is not available in the university community, they risk travelling a further distance to transact one business or another on the Internet. These members of the university community use the Internet for the resources it provides which according to Ikoro (2002), include e-mailing, world wide web browsing, telephoning, and telex/video conferencing and others. Available also in the Internet are audio broadcasting, news and discussion/chart group, face-book YouTube and twitter resources. Using those resources available on the Internet, Cisse (2004) noted that students and researchers are disposed to access maximum information and communicate at world level. Thus they can debate democratically and freely while being exposed to happenings in their fields of activities as well as other subjects. Chifwepa (2003) discovered a high use of Internet by the staff of the University of Zambia where 35 out of 37 staff made use of Internet. Their major motivation for such use was convenience (82.91%); usefulness (80.05%); free access to information and software (71.4%); and ease of use (68.6%). In Nigeria, Jagdoro (2004), in his own research ascertained that 45.2% of graduate students access the Internet at the cyber café in the university where only 8.2% used the library Internet facilities. A greater percentage (38.24%) did that only on monthly basis where 39.7% spent one hour on each visit.

History of postgraduate studies in Nigeria

The area today known as Nigeria came about as a result of the merger of the then separately governed British Protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria by Lord Frederick Lugard in 1914 (White 1981). Before the advent of the British colonial government, the culture of the southern part of Nigeria was largely oral. The northern part of the country on the other hand, had before the advent of the Europeans, had some exposure to Arabic writings and culture as a result of the spread of Islam in the West African sub-region. University education came into the country following the report of the Elliot and Asquith Libri (2000). University education started in Nigeria in 1948 with the establishment of University College Ibadan, under a special relationship with the University of London. Under this arrangement, the University College graduated its first graduate students in 1952 (Oduneye, 1998).The early part of the sixties in Nigeria was an exciting period for university expansion. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka was set up in the eastern region in 1960, and in 1962, Universities of Lagos and Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ile-Ife, as well as the Ahmadu Bello University at Zaria, came to stream. The establishment of these new universities served as a catalyst for rapid development of graduate training in Nigeria so as to provide quality academic staff for the new universities (University of Ibadan 1948-2008). The University College, Ibadan remained the only University in Nigeria where graduate study was carried out. Until 1960, when the following Universities were established which include University of Nigeria, Nzukka Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) University of Lagos.

The Federal government took over the three existing regionally owned Universities and the Midwest Institute of Technology, which later became the University of Benin. Today, this group of Universities constitutes Nigeria's first generation Universities (Agboola, 1993).

In 1975 the Federal government established seven more Universities which are located at Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Kano, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Sokoto to cater for the manpower needs of the expanding economy. This group of Universities is collectively referred to as the second-generation Nigerian Universities (Ifidon, 1995). The group of Universities established between 1980 and 1998 are collectively referred to as the third generation universities (Agboola 1993) . There are 104 Universities comprising 27 Federal; 36 State; 41 Private Universities in Nigeria (Abdullahi, 2010).

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the accessibility and utilization of Internet services by graduate students in university of Lagos. Specifically the study found out;
1. The extent of the Internet accessibility to the staff and students of the university
2. How the point of Internet access influenced its usage
3. Factors motivating the use of the Internet in the university
4. The Internet used by students in the university

Methodology

In order to achieve the specific objectives, researchers-designed questionnaires were administered using two hundred respondents who were graduate students in faculty of Education, University of Lagos but one hundred and seventy three were eventually retrieved and used for the research.

Data Analysis

Data, having been collected through the use of the questionnaire were analyzed using tabulated frequency count and simple percentage.

Table 1: Access to Internet by staff and students of University of Lagos

	STAFF RESPONSE		STUDENTS RESPONSE	
	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very accessible	108	62.4	48	27.7
Slightly accessible	32	18.5	21	12.1
Not accessible	28	16.2	59	34.1
Not accessible at all	5	2.8	40	23.1
Undecided	-	-	5	2.8

Table 1 contains analyzed data on respondents' access to the Internet. While 62.4% of the respondents comprising staff of the university said that Internet was very accessible to them, another 16.2% said that the Internet was slightly accessible to them while, 16.2% and 2.8% of the staff said that the Internet was not accessible to them at all. However, on the side of the students who responded to the items ,27.7 and 12.1% said that they very and slightly access the Internet while 34.1 and 23.1% of them said that the Internet was not accessible to them at all .Meanwhile 2.8% of the students never decided.

Table 2: The extent to which point of Internet access influence its use

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
1	Personal laptop	65 (37.5)	15 (8.6)	48(27.7)	40(23.1)	5 (2.80)
2	Cyber café	86 (47.9)	25 (14.5)	60(34.7)	2 (1.2)	-
3	University Internet facility	58 (33.5)	37 (21.4)	71(41.0)	3 (1.7)	4 (2.3)
4	Friends/colleagues' laptop	35(20.3)	29(16.7)	80(46.2)	26	3 (1.7)
5	University library	52(30.0)	28(16.2)	60(34.7)	33(19.0)	-

The result of the analysis on the above table on how point of access influence its usage revealed that 37.5, 47.9, 30.0 percent of the total respondents used for this study strongly agreed that they accessed the Internet via personal laptop, cybercafé, university Internet library facilities and university library while 21.4 and 16.7 agreed that they accessed Internet through university Internet library facilities and through friends/colleagues' laptops. However, 34.7%, 41.0%, 46.2% and 19.0% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that they used cybercafé, university Internet, library facilities, friends/colleagues' laptops and university library while 2.80% and 2.3 % never decided.

Table 3: Factors motivating the use of Internet among the students

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
1	The Internet contains more information	87(50.2)	38 (21.9)	24 (13.8)	16 (9.2)	8 (4.6
2	Nearness to cyber café	92(53.1)	44 (25.5)	10 (5.8)	23 (13.3)	4 (2.3)
3	Availability of Internet in the university	73(42.2)	28 (16.2)	69 (39.9)	3 (1.7)	-
4	Inadequate materials in the library	103 (59.5)	16(9.2)	42(24.3)	11(6.4)	1(0.6)
5	The Internet is more convenient to use	80(46.2)	13(7.5)	73(42.2)	7(4.0)	-
6	Free access to the Internet	69(39.8)	25(14.5)	44(25.4)	29(16.7)	6(3.5)
7	Usefulness	44(25.4)	23(13.3)	59(34.1)	34(19.6)	15(8.7)
8	Ease of use	36(20.8)	40(23.1)	10(5.8)	77(44.5)	10(5.7)

The analysis of the result on factors that motivated the use of Internet revealed that 50.2, 53.1, 59.5, 46.2 and 25.5, 23.1% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they used Internet due to the following motivating factors such as; the Internet contained more information, proximity to cyber café, lack of adequate materials held in the school library, convenient to use and ease of usage while 39.9, 42.2, and 44.5% of most of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that the following did not motivate them to use the Internet such as availability of Internet in the university, Internet is more convenient to use and easier. However, 8.7, 5.7 and 4.6 percent did not decide whether they were motivated based on its usefulness, ease of use and the vast arrays of information it contained.

Table 4: The purpose for which the students used the Internet

S/N	ITEMS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
1	To register courses and enroll for exams	123 (71.0)	32(18.5)	18(10.4)	-	-
2	To gather information for literature review	55(31.8)	28(16.2)	62(3.8)	28(162)	-
3	For current awareness/update knowledge	68(39.3)	34(19.7)	35(20.2)	36(20.8)	-
4	Send and receive mail	82(47.4)	25(14.4)	44(25.4)	19(10.9)	3(1.7)
5	For information to supplement course materials	25(14.5)	17(9.8)	48(27.7)	26(15.0)	54(31.2)
6	To publish articles	55(31.8)	28(16.2)	13(7.5)	66(38.2)	11(6.4)
7	Browse for information to write assignments	82(47.4)	23(13.3)	62(35.8)	6(3.5)	-

The result of the analysis on the table above revealed that 71.0, 31.8, 39.3, 47.4, 18.5, and 19.7 percent strongly agreed and agreed that they used the Internet for course registration and examination enrolment, gathering of information for literature review, awareness and update of knowledge, sending and receiving of mails and among others while 25.4, 27.7, 35.8, 20.8 and 38.2 percent of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that they did not use the Internet to send and receive mails as sources of information to supplement their course work and browse to do their assignments.

Discussion of findings

The findings confirmed that the graduate students in the university did not have access to Internet service in university of Lagos . This may be as a result of denial of access by the management of the institution building a firewall that prevented graduate students access code to hook to the institution network service provider .However, majority of the staff of the university purportedly said that the Internet is very accessible to them. The result is at variance with the study conducted by Anyira (2011) on Internet services in Nigerian private universities: a case study. It was reported that 100 (41.7%) of the respondents said that the Internet was slightly accessible to them, another 100 (41.7%) of them said that the Internet was not accessible to them. However, 30 (12.5%) of the respondents agreed that the Internet was very accessible to them, but 10 (4.1%) of them said that it was not accessible at all.

While the result of Bukky (2006), who worked on a survey of Internet access and usage among undergraduates in an African university, the result of his findings revealed that out of the 664 respondents, 596 (89.9%) had access to the Internet facilities. Only 68 respondents had no access to Internet facilities. Only 68 (10.1%) respondents had never used the Internet facilities at the time of carrying out this study. The result of the findings on influence of point of access on its usage showed that most respondents involved in the study had access to cybercafé which in turn led to its usage, this result is in agreement with the study carried out by Jagboro (2003) who studied Internet usage in Nigerian universities: a case study of Obafemi Awolowo university. It was found that Cybercafés had the highest score of 45.2 percent, followed by departmental offices with 21.9 percent, the Computer Building with 15.1 percent, personal offices with 9.6 percent and the H.O. Library with 8.2 percent. The high score for use of the Internet via cybercafés was due to the proximity of these cafés to student user facilities such as hostels, mini-markets and lecture halls. The result of the findings also revealed that 53.1% and 50.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that proximity to cybercafé and valid information obtained from the Internet were their major motivating factors for surfing the Internet for relevant information to their research work. The result of the findings also showed that the respondents agreed and strongly agreed to register courses and enroll for exams, gather information for literature review, send and receive mails. This result is somehow in line with the findings of Bao (1998) who discovered that students and faculty searched the Internet for information related to both their academic (83.2%) and nonacademic studies (73.8%).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper focused on accessibility and utilization of Internet services by graduate students in university of Lagos. It dealt extensively with the important themes and variables related to this research such as accessibility and utilization of Internet, utilization of Internet information in Nigeria and lastly history of postgraduate studies in Nigeria. It was paramount for this kind of study to be conducted in this institution of learning to determine the extent to which Internet services were available to staff and students, find out wether point of Internet access influenced its usage, determine the factors that motivated the use of the Internet and find out the purpose for which Internet was used by students in the university.

References

Abdullahi, O.E (2010). *Nigeria higher education and employability in the international market.* A paper presented at 1ˢᵗ International Conference of Faculties of Education in West Africa. Unpublished paper.

Agboola, A.T. (1993). Third Generation Nigerian University Libraries. *International Information and Library Review* 25(1): 43–59.

Akintunde, S. (2002). *Say it again: We just took off" Nigerian libraries* 36(2)

Bao, Xue-Ming. (1998). *Challenges and opportunities: A report of the 1998 library survey of Internet users at Seton Hall University.* College & Research Libraries, 59(6), 535–543.

Bukky Olufemi Omotayo (2006). A survey of Internet access and usage among undergraduates in an African university. The International Information & Library Review (2006) 38, 215–224

Carbo T (2003). The Future of Librarianship. A view from a school of library and information science. *Library Connect* 1(4): 5

Chifwepa V (2003). The use of the Internet and Internet by teaching staff of the University of Zambia. *Afr. J. Archives Inf. Sci.* 13(2): 119-132.

Cisse C (2004). *Access to electronic information and information research.* SCALWA Newsletter 5(1): 14-17.

Ifidon, B. (1995) Recent developments in Nigerian academic libraries: The effects of accreditation on university library Bookstock. *Libri* 45(3/4): 186–198.

Ikoro F.M. (2002). Information sources for effective teaching and learning in Nigerian languages. *Lang. Librarianship J.* 1 (2): 21-29.

Isaac Echezonam Anyira (2011) Internet Services in Nigerian Private Universities: A Case Study. *Library Philosophy and Practice 2011*

Jagdoro K.O (2004). *A study of Internet usage in Nigerian universities: A case study of Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Nigeria.* UNESCO, Paris. (http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue8-2/jagdoro/index.html.

Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (2009). U.M.E / DE BROCHURE. Abuja. *Journal of Personality and Psychology*

Oduneye T.O. (1998). *The postgraduate school- its structure and function. Paper presented at the Induction course for newly appointed Administrative Staff, University of Ibadan.* Unpublished paper.

Scott, P (2008) *Education higher* Microsoft Encarta 2008.

University of Ibadan (1948-2008). *Sixty landmarks.* Ibadan, U.I Printing Press.

White J. (1981). *Central administration in Nigeria, 1914–1948: Problems and Polarity.* London: Frank Cass: pp. 19–21.