

Internet Resources and Postgraduate Business Education Research in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria: Problems and Way-Forward**Egbri, Jane Nwakego Ph.D**

Department of Vocational & Technical Education,
Faculty of Education, University of Benin,
Benin City, Nigeria,
egbri.jane@yahoo.com

&**Okute, Agnes Lawrence Ph.D**

Department of Vocational Education,
University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria
agnesokute@gmail.com
agnesokute@gmail.com

Abstract

The study focused on problems and way-forward for better utilization of internet resources by postgraduate Business Education Students in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised of 520 postgraduate students. There was no sampling due to the manageable size of the population. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Each item in the questionnaire was assigned five response options of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed and Undecided. The instrument was face-validated by three experts, one from Department of Vocational Education, Business Education Unit, University of Calabar; another one was from Department of Computer Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and the third expert was from Department of Educational Psychology, Measurement and Evaluation Unit, University of Benin. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the questionnaire and a reliability coefficient of 0.96 was obtained. Copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents with the help of trained research assistants. Criterion mean value of 2.50 was used for decision making. Findings revealed, among others, that Internet resources are much utilized to source information to write background and Literature Review of research study. The study thus, recommended that regular orientation and re-orientation of Postgraduate Business Education students on the use of Internet resources for research by authorities of educational institutions.

Keywords: Internet, Business Education, Students, Postgraduate (PG), Challenges.

Introduction

The Internet has become a universal library, where books, journals, articles, teaching/learning and research materials for different purposes can be sourced, right within the confines of an individual's home in any part of the globe where Internet services are available. All categories of students in universities are involved in the use of Internet for the search of particular information or the other and for different purposes. Thus, the integration of internet Universities is increasing with its use among students and teachers as a means of

communication and for information searching (Rupert, 2012; Kiptalam & Rodrigues, 2013). However, the use of new technologies largely depends on its acceptability as well as the inherent challenges associated with its use (Karen, Jason & Annette, 2008; Onu, Ugwoke, Agboeze & Ikehi, 2014).

In view of the foregoing observations, Quadri (2010) identified some of the challenges encountered in the use of Internet as a resource, that could militate against effective utilization, such as very little or no training given to users in many institutions. Other challenges include very little time allocation made for students' use of the Internet. In the same vein, Hamat (2012), Salvation and Adzharuddin (2014) observed that lack of guidance, inability to use and inadequate Internet facilities as some of the problems associated with the use of Internet facilities among students. Other challenges such as cost of data, power supply, age of user and economic issues as observed by various authors (Morris & Teevan, 2009; Ikehi, Paradang & Zimoghen, 2014) could also be militating against the successful utilization of Internet resources for research and other teaching and learning engagements by many PG students in South-East and South-South Nigeria. In order to overcome some of the challenges that militate against the effective utilization of Internet resources, there is the need to put some strategies in place.

Strategies, according to Anioke (2011) offer a framework within which an organization or individual defines possible means of achieving goals and objectives. The objective of every strategy therefore, is to put in place an effective means of achieving a mission or purpose. The challenges that tend to militate against effective utilization of Internet resources for research by PG business education students could be enhanced if some strategies are adopted. Some strategies suggested include providing functional computer laboratory for students' use and provision of Internet ready computers in the business education departments to aid students in information sourcing/dissemination (DiMicco, Millen, Geyer, Dugan, Brownholtz & Muller, 2008; Meredith, Jaime & Katrina, 2010; Computer Weekly, 2015), among others. This study investigates the challenges associated with using internet resources for research as well as the strategies for enhancing internet resource usage among Masters (M.Ed) and Doctorate (PhD) PG Business Education students in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria. The study is guided by the following research questions and hypotheses.

Research Questions

1. What are the challenges of utilization of internet resources by PG Business Education students in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria?
2. What are the strategies for enhancing the utilization of Internet resources for research by PG business education students in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria?

Null Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of M. Ed and Ph.D Business Education students on challenges to effective utilization of Internet resources for research in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of M. Ed and Ph. D business education students on strategies for enhancing the effective utilization of Internet resources for research by PG business education students in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out using seven universities that offer business education programme up to post-graduate level in South-East (S/E) and South-South (S/S) Nigeria (4 Federal and 3 State Universities). The Universities in South-East include: Ebonyi State University, Abakiliki; Enugu State University of Science & Technology, Enugu; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and University of Nigeria, Nsukka while S/S consists of University of Benin, Benin City; University of Uyo, Uyo and Rivers State University of Science & Technology, Port-Harcourt. The population for the study comprised of 520 PG students of business education in the above named Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria, comprising 64 M.Ed students and 156 Ph.D students. There was no sampling, so all the population was used due to the manageable size. However, the numbers that completed and returned the questionnaire were 436 (325 M.Ed and 111 Ph.D) students. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire divided into two parts – A and B. Part A elicited information on the respondent's type of PG programme while part B was used to collect data for answering the research questions. The research instrument was face-validated by three experts. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the questionnaire and a reliability coefficient of 0.96 was obtained. The data for this study were collected by the researchers with the help of one research assistant from each of the seven Universities. The research assistants were briefed on how to administer the questionnaire and retrieve the completed copies from the respondents. Each research assistant covered one university in the area of the study. Mean and standard deviation were the statistical tools employed for the analysis of data collected. The research questions were answered using the real limit of the mean values of:

Strongly Agreed (SA) -4.50 - 5.00, Agreed (A) -3.50 - 4.49, Disagreed (D) - 2.50 - 3.49 ,Strongly Disagreed (SD) -1.50 - 2.49,Undecided (U) -0.50 - 1.49

Criterion mean of 2.50 was used for decision making such that any item whose mean value is greater than or equal to 2.50 is regarded as a challenge or strategy while any item with mean value less than 2.50 is not a challenge or strategy for the utilization of Internet resources for research by PG Business Education students in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria. With respect to the standard deviation, any item with its value of standard deviation less than 1.96 is considered very good response and highly clustered around the mean. To further ascertain the difference in the mean responses of M.Ed and Ph.D Business Education students on the research variables, two null hypotheses were tested using independent sample t-test at 0.05 levels of significance. Any null hypothesis whose t-value was less than p-value was rejected but otherwise accepted.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the challenges to effective utilization of Internet resources for research by PG business education students in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the challenges to effective utilization of Internet resources for Research by PG Business Education Students.

N = 436				
S/N	Item Statements on the challenges to effective utilization	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Poor orientation about the use of Internet services for research work	4.13	1.11	A
2	High Internet charges in the country	3.90	1.12	A
3	Poor Internet services by network providers	4.00	1.10	A
4	Unstable Internet services/network	4.04	1.04	A
5	High cost of Internet enabled devices	3.86	1.07	A
6	Limited supply of Internet enabled devices to students for research	3.86	1.14	A
7	Dominance of unverified information on the Internet	3.52	1.15	A
8	Lack of skills in the operation of Internet enabled devices	3.66	1.12	A
9	Limited knowledge of availability of information resources on the Internet	3.69	1.12	A
10	Difficulty in the use of search strings to display the required research information	3.62	1.15	A
11	Difficulty in sorting displayed information on the web page to retrieve relevant information	3.61	1.19	A
12	Unsteady/poor power supply to power the Internet enabled devices	4.08	1.16	A
13	High occurrence/number of distractions online while using the Internet.	3.61	1.18	A
14	Inability to browse because of lack of knowledge of browsing procedure	3.72	1.17	A
15	Difficulty in generating information required without assistance	3.63	1.19	A
16	Difficulty in framing questions to elicit the right information	3.60	1.13	A
17	Lack of knowledge of how to use electronic mail to send and retrieve research information from the net	3.71	1.12	A
Overall		3.78	1.13	A

Key: SD = Standard Deviation; A = Agree

The data presented in Table 1 show the mean responses of the students on the challenges militating against effective utilization of Internet resources for research by PG Business Education students. The mean responses of all the items ranged from 3.52 to 4.13, while the values of the standard deviation ranged from 1.04 to 1.19. The result in the table reveals that the respondents agreed that all the 17 items are challenges militating against the effective utilization of Internet resources for research by PG business education students. The overall Standard Deviation of 1.13 and the Standard Deviation of each of the items ranging from 1.04 – 1.19 showed that all the PG business education students have similar opinions that

all the challenges identified in this study militate against their effective utilization of Internet resources for research.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of M.Ed and PhD business education students on the challenges to effective utilization of Internet resources for research by them in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

Table 2: t-test Analysis on the Mean Responses of M. Ed and PhD Business Education Students on the Challenges to Effective Utilization of Internet Resource for Research by them.

Status of Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
M. Ed Students	325	3.77	0.79	434	-0.39	0.70	NS
PhD Students.	111	3.80	0.79				
	436						

Key: SD= standard deviation; NS = Not significant, $p > 0.05$

The data presented in Table 2 show that the aggregate mean responses of M.Ed and PhD students on the challenges militating against the use of Internet resources for research by them are 3.77 and 3.80 respectively, while the corresponding standard deviations are 0.79 and 0.79. Testing at 0.05 level of significance, the t-value of -0.39 is not significant at p-value of 0.70. Thus, the null hypothesis is, therefore, accepted since the p-value of 0.07 is greater than the criterion significant value of 0.05. This implies that the mean responses between M.Ed and PhD Business Education students do not significantly differ with regard to the challenges militating against the use of Internet resources for research.

Research Question 2: What are the strategies for enhancing the effective utilization of Internet resources for research by PG business education students?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Strategies for Enhancing the Effective Utilization of Internet Resources for Research by PG Business Education Students
N = 436

S/N	Item Statements on Strategies	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Regular orientation of PG business education students on the utilization of Internet resources for research.	4.41	1.02	A
2	Improvement/steady power supply to power the Internet-enabled devices.	4.35	.99	A
3	Establishing an efficient/stable Internet services/network for research work.	4.29	1.02	A
4	Ensuring that each business education department has a functional computer laboratory for students' use.	4.28	1.07	A
5	Provision of Internet ready computers in the business education departments to aid students in information sourcing/dissemination.	4.30	1.05	A
6	Constituting expert groups to ensure effective functioning of the networks in the institutions where the services are available.	4.02	1.14	A
7	Establishing a regulatory body to substantially reduce the cost of Internet provider to higher institutions.	4.13	1.07	A
8	Ensuring subsidized cost of Internet enabled devices to PG students.	4.10	1.10	A
9	Ensuring that sources of information or websites are verified on the Internet.	3.93	1.13	A
10	Training PG students on the skills in the operation of Internet enabled devices.	4.14	1.08	A
11	Ensuring that appropriate resource(s) are effectively utilized for specific information needed for research.	4.06	1.09	A
12	Ensuring that appropriate research terms are utilized to capture their described information needs.	4.06	1.04	A
13	Ensuring minimal occurrence/number of distractions online while using the Internet.	3.79	1.16	A
14	Developing the ability to browse by understanding browsing procedures using the Internet resources.	4.12	1.04	A
15	Developing the ability to generate required research information online without any necessary assistance.	4.02	1.12	A
16	Ensuring that questions to elicit research information online are well framed to give maximum result.	4.17	1.08	A
17	Ensuring adequate knowledge of the use of electronic mail social network sites to send and receive research information.	4.11	1.10	A
Overall		4.13	0.17	A

Key: SD = Standard Deviation, A = Agree

Table 3 shows the mean responses of the students on the strategies that would enhance the utilization of Internet resources for research by the PG business education students. The mean values of all the items ranged from 3.79 to 4.41 indicating that all the items are strategies for enhancing the utilization of Internet resources for research by PG business education students. The Standard Deviation of each of the items as well as the overall Standard Deviation which ranged from 1.00 to 1.07 shows that all the respondents have similar opinions that all the items are strategies for enhancement of the utilization of the Internet resources for research by the PG students.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of M. Ed and Ph. D business education students on the strategies for enhancing the effective utilization of Internet resources for research by PG business education students in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of M. Ed and Ph. D Business Education Students Responses on the Strategies for Enhancing the Effective Utilization of Internet Resources by them for Research

Status of Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t-value	p-value	Decision
M. Ed Students	325	4.10	0.86	434	-1.16	0.25	NS
PhD Students.	111	4.21	0.79				
	436						

Key: SD= standard deviation, NS = not significant, $p > .05$

Table 4 shows the aggregate mean ratings of M. Ed and PhD business education students on the strategies for enhancing the use of Internet resources by them for research as 4.10 and 4.21 respectively, and the corresponding standard deviations as 0.86 and 0.79. The table presented a t-value of -1.16 with a p-value of 0.25. The null hypothesis is accepted since the p-value of 0.25 is greater than the criterion significant value of 0.05. This means that the M. Ed and PhD business education students did not significantly differ in their mean ratings as regards the strategies for enhancing the use of Internet resources by them for research.

Discussions of Findings

Data analysis for research question 1 showed that postgraduate Business Education students face a lot of challenges in the utilization of Internet resources for research. Many challenges were found to militate against the effective utilization of Internet resources for research by the PG business education students such as poor orientation about the use of Internet services for research work, poor Internet services by network providers, unstable Internet services/network, unsteady/poor power supply to power the Internet enabled devices, high cost of Internet-enabled electronic devices among others.

The findings of the study is in consonance with that of Quadri (2010) and Ikehi, Paradang and Zimoghen (2014), who found that very little or no training is given to students in the use of Internet facilities. The findings are also in line with that of Karpinski (2009); Onu, Ugwoke, Agboeze and Ikehi (2014) who found that lack of guidance, inability to use and

inadequate internet facilities are some of the problems associated with the use of Internet facilities among students.

Similarly, the findings of the study agrees with that of Bamigboye and Ojo (2010) who found inadequate Internet facilities, very slow Internet connections, and few computers with Internet connections at the university as some of the challenges to the utilization of Internet resources for teaching, learning and research. The data analyzed for the corresponding hypothesis (H_{01}) on table 2 showed that both the M.Ed and PhD business education students have similar opinions on the challenges militating against effective utilization of Internet resources for research. This means that both categories of students face the same challenges. Therefore any observed difference is not a statistical difference, but a mere chance which could have resulted from sampling error.

As presented in Table 3 for research question 2, many strategies that can enhance the effective utilization of Internet resources for research by the students were identified. These strategies include: provision of Internet ready computers in the business education departments to aid students in information sourcing/dissemination, training PG students on the orientation of the utilization of Internet resources among others. This finding of the study is in agreement with Mostofa (2011) and Ikehi, Paradang and Zimoghen (2014), who stated that orientation programs should be organized by the university at regular intervals so that more students can improve their proficiency in the use of Internet resources for academic purposes.

These findings of the study are also in consensus with that of Bamigboye and Ojo (2010) who opined that university administrations should provide an enabling environment for learning and utilization of ICT including Internet resources. In table 4, the results conclude that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of M.Ed and PhD business education students on the strategies for enhancing the effective utilization of Internet resources for research by PG business education students in Universities in South-East and South-South Nigeria, as indicated by t-test analysis of hypothesis two. This shows that any observed difference is attributable to mere chance of occurrence. The strategies are thus suitable to enhance the utilization of internet resources across most cadres of postgraduate studies in universities.

Conclusion

There are many internet resources available to the PG students that can be utilized for many research activities. However, the students scarcely utilize majority of these internet resources and the few utilized were not extensively utilized. Many challenges were found to constrain the utilization of the Internet resources by the students. Some of the challenges were: poor orientation about the use of internet services for research work, poor Internet services by network providers, unstable Internet services/network, unsteady/poor power supply to power the internet enabled devices, high cost of internet enabled devices among others. Incidentally, various strategies for enhancing the effective utilization of the internet resources by the PG students were identified by the study.

The strategies include: provision of internet-ready computers in the business education departments to aid students in information sourcing/dissemination, training PG students on the orientation of the utilization of Internet resources, Improvement/steady power supply to power the Internet-enabled electronic devices, among others. The poor and low utilization of the resources by the students for research purposes may affect the quality of the research reports submitted by the students. However, the adoption of the identified strategies would greatly

improve research writing and ease of research supervision in Universities and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. There should be regular orientation and re-orientation of PG Business Education students on the use of internet resources for research by Faculties and Departments of educational institutions.
2. Internet resources should be made adequately available in Universities in Nigeria, through collaborative efforts of the University authorities, government and non-governmental organizations.
3. Universities that offer business education programmes should, through collaborative effort with Network providers, regularly organize seminars, workshops and training of business education students as regards the utilization of internet resources for research.

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