



STUDENTS INTERNET USAGE AS A CORRELATE OF READING CULTURE IN COLLEGE OF HEALTH TECHNOLOGY, CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE NIGERIA.

¹EZE, EZE AJI Ph.D

Department of Health Information Management

College of Health Technology, Calabar

EMAIL:ezeaji@yahoo.com

College of Health

²Kaka Ochagu Ph.D

Dept. of General Studies

Technology,

Calabar

³Okon, Victoria Aniedi

Dept. of Health Info. Magt.

College of Health Tech., Calabar

1. Abstract

The study examined students' Internet usage as a correlate of Reading Culture in College of Health Technology Calabar, Cross River State. The specific objectives, research questions and hypotheses were raised to guide the study. The study adopted a correlational survey research design to enable the researcher to relate the variable to one another. Simple random sampling, and stratified random sampling technique were used in the study. The instrument used was the structured questionnaire which was distributed to 913 respondents for data collection and the data was analyzed using SPSS Version 22.0. The statistical tool used for the analysis is Chi-square statistical analysis X^2 and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient- r were used to test the

hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The results of the study revealed that; internet usage significantly impacts on students reading culture as proved in hypothesis 1; also there is a significant relationship between internet usage and reading culture as proved in hypothesis 2. The study concludes among others that Internet usage for education and recreation also play an important role in influencing student academic achievement. This is because, if the students are using online media as well without wasting time with non-beneficial online activities, they will definitely increase academic achievement. The study recommended, among others, that a student's academic achievement can be increased if awareness is created on how to use the Internet in the right way and Computer awareness and education specifically apply to the use of Internet at all levels which should be encouraged while the application of ICT in academics, including in teaching and learning should be emphasized, especially for students in Colleges. That government should provide fund for the provision of the needed facilities to ensure the use of internet services in the school environment.

2. Background to the study

Reading is the springboard of any literacy program. It is one of the oldest habits of human civilization and has remained the passion of the greatest personalities of all times. According to Nnadozie and Egwim (2010), reading is a complex skill requiring the coordination of several interrelated sources of information. It is the art of interpreting printed and written words, and the most effective process of conscious learning, which influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as the attitudes, morals, beliefs, judgement and action of individuals (Edeole & Adejoke, 2016). However, due to the attitude of individuals in recent times who rarely pick a book or magazine to read, there is a serious decline in reading culture. The same applies to the school child for whom reading has come to mean a thing of spare time. Considering the place of creative thinking in reading, it becomes very important for one to develop the rudiments of reading and the culture of reading always.

The importance of reading culture cannot be overemphasized because it is crucial for both personal and academic success. Furthermore, it is an aid to language development, socialization and civilization. The development of good reading culture is important because society has realized the importance of information and effective communication for the survival and exploitation of their environment. Moreover, the development of reading and reading culture are

basic skills, which society must confer on its students as part of their childhood education. Unfortunately, there are problems inherent in the development of a proper reading culture among students as a result of some technological innovations.

Exposure to new technologies provides many benefits for everyone. It also includes the benefits that can be gained by students through the development of the internet as a medium of learning. Through the use of the Internet, students can familiarize themselves with the internet, it can be beneficial for those who want to take the chance. Most of the students adopted digital media as a place for seeking information materials, on general and current issues as well as a platform for sharing information with partners such as through social networking sites. Therefore, the use of the internet makes it easier for students to obtain the desired information easily and quickly. This facility will also make students more motivated to search for information more often. Therefore, the use of the internet will be a factor that will affect the academic performance of students. However, if the use of the Internet is not controlled properly, it will have a negative impact on students' academic performance. However, students can better manage Internet usage, it will have a positive effect on the academic performance of students. The role of the internet that allows access to the e-book, eases search information and assists students in completing tasks will be significant in increasing student academic achievements. Thus, this study reveals the impact of the Internet on the academics, that is, it refers to how Internet resources and services helped students improve learning, and search for information to complete their tasks and other, activities.

One of the technological innovations is the Internet. The Internet can be broadly defined as a worldwide network of computers communicating through an approved protocol. The Internet, according to Kumar and Kaur in Jibrin, Musa and Shittu (2017), has an unlimited wealth of information resources that are readily available and easily accessible for people to use worldwide and simultaneously. The Internet is a veritable tool in learning, teaching and research if effectively used. However, it has been observed that owing to this technological innovation, reading culture is being threatened, especially, among teens and secondary school students. In Nigeria society today, while technology is slowly taking a steady control over individual lives, the reading culture among secondary school students is also fast vanishing. Today, students rather than read to acquire new knowledge, prefer to spend hours unending, surfing the net, playing with funky handsets, chatting and passing non-stop short message services (SMSs), thereby

making reading a book or any other information resource in a quiet or peaceful corner of a library or home, an archaic idea. The declining interest in reading among our children (especially those in secondary schools) compared to increase in hours spent on the Internet has become a cause for alarm and a challenge to all and something needs to be done to change the scenario. However, assuming or concluding that Internet use is the cause of the declining reading culture can be better regarded as an assumption until empirically proven. It is against this backdrop that the current study “Internet Usage as a correlate of students’ reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar.” is necessitated.

Specific objective

The specific objectives of this study are to;

1. Evaluate internet usage and its impact on students reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar.
2. Examine the relationship between the use of the internet and reading culture of students in College of Health Technology, Calabar.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study;

1. Do you feel the impact of internet services on students reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar?
2. Is there any relationship between the use of the internet and reading culture of students in College of Health Technology, Calabar?

Hypotheses

In order to investigate into the subject matter, it was necessary to formulate the following hypotheses based on the research questions:

1. That internet services does not significantly impact on students’ reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar.
2. There is no relationship between the use of the internet and reading culture of students in College of Health Technology, Calabar.

3 .LITERATURE REVIEW

Internet Services and Impact on Students Reading Culture

Ramirez (2003) and Liu (2005) reveal that with the growing amount of digital information available, people particularly young adults, are found spending more time reading electronic materials. Bjork & Turk (2001) conducted a study to identify how the Internet is overtaking the print media and conclude that the average respondent uses print media and the Internet equally (50:50), however, heavy use of the Internet drops with age and with the exception of the population from 35-45 who use the Internet slightly more than younger and older colleagues. The Hong Kong Department of Education (2001) reports that more students read books at lower levels whilst at higher levels, more students read electronic information. Li-Bi Shen (2006) conducted a study with the purpose of determining the impact of computer technology on college students' reading habits and concludes that college students reading habits change from paper-based to Internet-based reading. The findings depict that 83.9% of students read online information everyday whereas only 31.4% of them read newspapers and 33.1% read magazines daily. The China Research Institute of Publishing Science survey finds that the number of Chinese reading traditional books has fallen while the number reading Internet publications has increased sharply. The results discover that book reading rate was 60.4% in 1999, 51.7% in 2003, and 48.7% in 2005, falling 11% in six years. Although the popularity of book reading continues to fall, online reading has grown rapidly, from 3.7% in 1999 to 18.3% in 2003 to 27.8% in 2005 (People's Daily Online, 2007). Broddason (2006) argue that there is not only decrease in book reading but overall print reading due to the introduction of Internet. He reports that the percentage of youths reading newspapers daily was 89% in 2003. it was confirmed that only 40% are still currently daily readers of newspapers. The findings of all the studies reveal that Internet has impacted on reading habits positively as well as negatively.

Eze E.A. (2018) in Murray, (2014) explained that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is often used as an extended synonym for information technology. It is a more specific term that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of communications which specifically applies to the use of internet. The internet and other accessories allow users to access,

store, transit and manipulate information, these allows student in Colleges to become computer literate, which adds positive value to the students academic performance in colleges.

Since the introduction of ICT, the subject of the students` reading culture has attracted a major concern. According to Yusuf (2015), this major concern is as a result of the need to keep the school child active and able to cope with the demands of the present day. Saka, Bitagi, and Garba (2012) pointed out that inculcating a reading culture should be introduced at an early age among children. This is because reading and reading culture develop over a prolonged period and an early promotion will be able to mould them into lifelong readers. The challenge is therefore to ingrain the culture of reading in children so that it is as important as sports and other hobbies. Perhaps then, the impact of negative media will be directly reduced.

Consequently, Yani (2003) observed that reading culture of Nigerians is a matter of concern in our educational and national development, stating further that in a developing country like Nigeria, the concept of reading culture should not be relegated to the background. Fundamentally, the major way to improve the reading culture of students is through a well-equipped school library. Topo, as cited in Strong (2014) affirmed that the need today is the thoughtful integration of book reading with high technology as it will reverse the decline in book reading among children and adults. According to Yusuf (2007), equipping school libraries is the first practical step in these efforts. This is because books and other information resources are the most suitable medium through which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

Nonetheless, Kristy (as cited in Kolawole, 2005) reported that the prevalence of poor reading skills varies, and believed the consequential effect to include poor grades for students and difficulty trying to find or advance to a good job for adults. Saka, Bitagi and Garba (2012) in their submission were of the view that the majority of students read to pass examinations and to do assignments. The implication being that absence of examinations and assignments creates a distance between students and their books, while shifting their attention and energy to the net for frivolities. As to what these students prefer, the study of (Almasi, Machumu & Zhu, 2017) reported a growing increase in the use of the Internet, which is gradually eroding reading culture among secondary school students. The authors, however, observed that the students use the Internet also for activities related to schoolwork as well as more general activities, believing that Internet-based activities in schools may have several impacts on students` life at schools and

thereafter. Besides, various studies have reported that the use of the internet can have benefits on the educational achievement of students.

Considering the influence of the use of the Internet on students' learning performance or other outcomes, the studies of Davis (2001), Widyanto and Griffiths (2006), Odaci and Kalkkan (2010), and Odaci (2011) reported that it has either a negative influence or no significant influence. Furthermore, Young (as cited in Amasi et al., 2017) suggested that excessive Internet usage among students has negative effects on students' academic success. The studies of Olatokun (2008) and Nwagwu, Adekannbi and Bello (2008) reported that students chiefly utilize the Internet for academic purposes, such as preparation for assignments and examinations, rather than for leisure purposes. Though some students use the Internet much more than their school libraries, they also find the Internet as a source of general knowledge since it assists them in their reading habits as well as improving their academic performances. Tarimo and Kavishe (2017), believed that by providing Internet access and enhancing its usage in schools, a chance to improve students' learning through access to the huge amount of information that is accessible on the Internet is guaranteed. Chen and Fu (2009) stated that the Internet has brought unparalleled opportunities to students on one hand and a major concern for parents on the other hand. This is because while online searching for information helps to boost examination scores and performances in assignments given to students, using the internet mainly for socializing and gaming results in poor reading habits and poor performance in examinations, general academic achievements as well as poor personal development. Since some internet use may seriously distract students, affect their reading habit and generally distort their academic achievements, effective use of the Internet should be employed by students.

In the same vein, (Yebowaah, 2018); Akande and Bamise (2017) reported that access to information brought about by the use of the Internet can influence the academic performance of the secondary school students. Sahin, Balta and Ercan (2010) and Yebowaah (2018) believed that the use of credible Internet resources is of greater importance for academic activity, especially in high-class courses which require an academic review of the literature. This is not different from the belief of Kim (as cited in Yebowaah, 2018) who asserted that Internet use for educational purpose is the heart of adolescent academic achievement, as it helps students to broaden their

academic knowledge, research and carry out assignments by accessing information worldwide as well as enhances easy communication to the academic community.

Relationship between the Use of the Internet and Reading Culture of Students

Yebowaah, (2018), Singh, Gupta and Garg (2013) found that the Internet is not mostly used for academic purpose rather it is used majorly for recreational activities. The authors further buttressed that though students are more into the use of the Internet, in reality, they are using it mainly for non-academic purposes like emailing, gaming and social networking, which has contributed greatly to the decline in their reading culture. This brings to the fore the controversy among empirical studies on the influence of internet use on the academic performance and reading culture of College students.

The internet is a platform where millions of people engage in the creation and exchange of information. Indeed, this fact affects a large sector of the population and eats deep into academic achievement and social life.

In view of his study Akedor I, Daniel O, Eze E. A., Eyong C, Edadi U, (2015) presents the view of Braimoh (2012) on the “evaluation of computer use and Internet access among undergraduate Medical students” showed that proper ICT training and knowledge is still relatively low. Another work by Obuh (2010) on “Web Affinity: a study of undergraduate students in Nigerian Universities”, opined that there is a relatively low level of skillfulness in the use of internet among students of Nigerian Universities; though students spend more time on the web, they most often patronize non academic websites.(Akedor I, Daniel O, Eze E.A., 2015).

Use of the Internet as academic materials

(Sampath Kumar & Manjunath, 2013) in quantitative studies has found that teachers and research scholars have been using the internet to support their research and teaching. By the use of the internet, it has a positive impact on their academic performance, namely by writing research papers and offering further help in doing better research and also providing a better learning experience. Besides, according to (Sushma et al., 2014) the more time spent with the Internet, the more student gets addicted to the internet. The study showed that the time spent on the internet is becoming a measure of academic achievement. The use of the Internet excessively beyond the

time will be a hindrance to academic success.

Facebook affects student learning

According to (Ahsan Ul Haq & Sohail Chand, 2012) the use of Facebook by students adversely affecting their academic performance. These negative effects are more on male students. This is based on the behavior of male students as more active and spend a lot of time on Facebook which makes them unable to focus on their academics. Moreover, (Rouis, Limayem, & Sangari, 2011) argued in their research that many students using Facebook possess an extroverted personality and can lead to poor academic achievement. It indicates that the personality of a person while using Facebook plays a role in ascertaining if the academic performance can be achieved or not.

Online media use gives a positive and a negative impact on student's academics

Online media used in teaching are efforts to make improvements or to enhance the quality of teaching and learning process. In addition, the online media has the advantage of being able to combine a variety of different media such as text, images, animations, video and sound. Examples of online media for education use is watching news online and viewing videos related to the subjects, while for online media for recreation is entertainment is like a online video game. Note that, online media is interactivity where the user does not obtain or communicate in one way only, but users can communicate bilaterally in obtaining information, and also carry out activities. To find out more about online media that are used for educational and non-educational purposes, there are a several review of previous studies.

Based on the study of (Anand, 2007) online media have a negative effect on students. This is based on studies that have been done by the researcher about the online video game which is a type of online media purely for recreation; this online media negatively affect academic achievement. Besides, also based on the research by (Kubey et al., 2001) the decline of college student's academic achievement is due to the application of synchronous communication such as chat rooms, which can lead students to stay up late at night and cause their academic achievements to decline. Therefore, it can be said online media use affects academic performance. The social media has a negative effect on student's academic performance (Asemah, Okpanachi & Edegoh, 2013). Shakir Ullah et al., (2013) on the other hand show that the facts about the electronic media (the authorized agent of socialization) and realize it can not

only educate the public but it can also help students in their lessons better than any other.

Interest in studying at the University is one of the contributors to academic achievement.

The interest of a students in the university includes when the students willing to involve themselves in the learning process to meet the learning needs of daily living such as doing assignments and attending classes (Rouis, 2012). Initiation and participation in this study had to do with the internal pleasure derived from membership in a group and also the desire of the students to learn to meet the needs of the class. Therefore, the higher the desire of students to perform well in the university, the greater their academic achievement. In effect, this study shows that students who do not express a desire to learn will get low grades in their academic performance.

Moral Corruption

Despite the useful things available on the net, there are such things too which could lead to moral corruption of the students. Everything is easily accessible over the net which leads to this situation. Students tend to visit such websites which are meant for the adults and this becomes a daily routine for them. They enjoy watching prohibited sites. Therefore their mental development exceeds their age.

Distraction

With its advancements and explorations, internet serves as a distraction for students too. Be it the social networking sites or any of the gaming ones, they seem to never let the net go. Either they are busy chatting or just surfing the net, simply wasting time. Spending too much time on the internet, they get distracted from their studies which ends up in a loss for them. This adversely affects their academic performance.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to answer the research questions of this study. The researcher selected a descriptive survey design since it attempts to describe the characteristics of the variables of this study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). According to Robson, (2002) descriptive research design studies have advantages in that they may be adopted to collect information that can be generalized from all population and they provide relatively simple and straight forward approach to the study of values, attitudes, beliefs and motives.

The underlying principle of social survey research is that the consensus of individual opinions of the sample population on a particular subject or problem is expected to provide solutions to the problems studied. These are in line with the nature of this study; which is to seek the opinion of the sample population of male and female on the subject matter and then generalize it about the whole population.

Population of the study

The Population of the study consist of 1,833 students in College of Health Technology, Calabar. The population is made up of students from 8 departments in the institution.

Sampling Technique and sample

The sample for the study consisted of 913 respondents which were randomly selected from students from their respective departments in College of Health Technology, Calabar, via male and female. The stratified was used in selecting 50% sample from each strata for study while simple random sampling technique which is a probability sampling was used for the study. Also, simple random sampling technique with Balloting was adopted to give equal chance to subjects in the sample space to be selected to participate in the study.

Table 1. Distribution of data in relation to sample

Health Programs	Population	Sample (50%)
Health Information Management	578	289
Community Health	350	175
Environmental Health	305	153
Pharmacy	142	71
Medical Laboratory	158	79
Dispensing Optician	155	78
Medical Imaging	105	53
Public Health Nursing	30	15
Total	1823	913

Source: Departmental Admission List (2022)

Data collection instruments

The research instrument adopted for the study was a set of questionnaire which consisted of 15-item questions. The questionnaire was divided into two sections:- Section “A”- consisting of 6-item questions on Demographic Data while section “B”- consists of 9-item questions on the “ Internet services and its impact on students’ reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar.”. The 913 copies of the questionnaire were administered personally to the students from the above named institution.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure or the extent to which a true and accurate measure of a trait is probable. Validity of the research instrument was determined through consultation with experts and the content validity were established by using experts in research and statistics. The experts certified that the instrument was face and content valid and could then be used for the study. The corrections and suggestions of the experts and the supervisor led to a modification of some items in the questionnaire

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency that an instrument demonstrates in measuring what it does. The reliability of the instrument was tested by the consistency of response, which was tested using test-retest. That is, the researcher gave some group of respondents the questionnaire

to complete after a week interval, the same questionnaires was given again to the same group. The scores for the questionnaire administered were collated. The reliability estimate was 0.75-0.81. This method gave the instrument reliability over time.

Method of data analysis

The data collected were presented first on a tabular form to show the various questions from which the data were collected. The analysis of the data were firstly descriptive in nature and were statistically presented in chi square analysis which revealed the respondents view on each question, conclusion were drawn on each analysis while testing the hypotheses in chapter four using the chi-square statistical analysis X^2 and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient r

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Hypothesis

Here, the hypothesis formulated were tested in relation to the data collected from the 913 respondents to reveal the actual situation of the analysis. The null hypothesis is denoted H_0 ;

Hypothesis 1

H_0 : That internet services does not significantly impact on students reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar.

Question 7 - Do you feel the impact of internet services on students reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar? Was used for the analysis and the result shown in table .2

Table 4.4.1 - Observed (O) and Expected (E) Frequency, in respect to Question 7

Departmental	Yes (O)	No (O)	Total	X^2 cal.value
Students	(E)	(E)		
Male	102	200	302	
	(33.7)	(66.1)		

Female	398 (266.3)	213 (142.5)	611	509.5*
Total	500	413	913	

Decision:

If X^2 Cal is greater than X^2 tabulated, reject H_0 : But if X^2 Cal. value is less than X^2 tabulated, accept H_0 : therefore since X^2 Cal.value of 509.5 is greater than X^2 tabulated of 3.84, reject H_0 : thereby accepting the H_1 : meaning that internet usage significantly impact on students reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar.

Hypothesis 2

H_0 : That there is no significant relationship between the use of the internet and reading culture of students in College of Health Technology, Calabar.

Question 8 - Is there a relationship between the use of the internet and reading culture of students in College of Health Technology, Calabar? Was used for the analysis and the result shown in table 3 below

Table .3

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis of the influence internet usage in students reading culture (N = 913)

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	R
Internet Usage	43.37	18.3	0.92
Reading Culture	30.67	14.6	

*Significant at 0.05, df = 911, critical-r =0.139

The result of the second hypothesis gave a correlation value of 0.92. the calculated r value = 0.92 is greater than critical $-r$ value of 0.139 with degrees of freedom of 911 at 0.05 level of significance. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. This means that there is a significant relationship between internet usage and reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar.

Discussion of Findings

After a careful analysis of the above data, it was discovered that internet services significantly impact on students reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar as proved in hypothesis 1. This is in line with Yusuf (2015), who opined that since the introduction of ICT, the subject of the students' reading culture has attracted a major concern. This major concern is as a result of the need to keep the school child active and able to cope with the demands of the present day. Saka, Bitagi, and Garba (2012) pointed out that inculcating a reading culture should be introduced at an early age among children. This is because reading and reading culture develop over a prolonged period and an early promotion will be able to mould them into lifelong readers. The challenge is therefore to ingrain the culture of reading in children so that it is as important as sports and other hobbies. Perhaps then, the impact of negative media will be directly reduced.

The research equally revealed that there is relationship between the use of the internet and reading culture of students in College of Health Technology, Calabar as proved in hypothesis 2. This is in line with Ngoumandjoka (as cited in Yebowaah, s2018), Singh, Gupta and Garg (2013), who found that the Internet is not mostly used for academic purpose rather for recreational activities. The authors further buttressed that though students are more into the use of the Internet, in reality, they are using it mainly for non-academic purposes like emailing, gaming and social networking, which has contributed greatly to the decline in their reading culture. This brings to the fore the controversy among empirical studies on the influence of internet use on the academic performance and reading culture of College students.

5. Conclusion

Internet usage for education and non-education also play an important role in influencing student academic achievement. This is because, if the students are using online media as well without

wasting time with things that are not beneficial, they will definitely increase academic achievement. This is based on the correlation of both positive and negative. In addition, the internet usage for non-education has the lowest mean value. For student interest in the university, it has a highest significant value and the strong correlation compared with other factors, it is proved that the student interest in university education is a factor that most affects academic achievement. In addition, student interest in university education also has the highest mean value compared to other factors. Thus, based on the results obtained, a conclusion can be made that a student's academic achievement can be increased if they allocate how to use the Internet in the right way. Furthermore, this study provides a significant contribution to the universities who want their student's academic performance improved because students are an important asset to the university.

6. Recommendations

Given the antecedent of the "Internet usage as a correlate of students reading culture in College of Health Technology, Calabar". The researcher therefore recommends as follows:

1. That Computer awareness and education specifically apply to the use of Internet at all levels which should be encouraged while the application of ICT in academics, including in teaching and learning should be emphasized, especially for students in Colleges.
2. That impact of computer technology on college students reading habits change from paper-based to Internet-based reading which will increase the amount of reading time for each student.
3. That a student's academic achievement can be increased if they educate them on how to use the Internet in the right way
4. That students should be encouraged to spend much of their time in the e- library on study materials rather than stay on the Internet for several hours if they want their academic performance to be improved upon.
5. That government should provide funds for the provision of the needed facilities to ensure the use of internet services in the school environment.

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