ASSESSMENT OF INTERNET INFORMATION UTILIZATION BY LECTURERS AND STUDENTS OF THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY MINNA, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate internet information utilization by lecturers and students of the Federal University of Technology, Minna. A modified technology assessment scale (MTAS) adopted from Smart 2004 was used. 20 items constructed on a 5-point likert scale questionnaire was used to elicit lecturers and students' responses. 240 lecturers and students, 120 each of the Federal University of Technology, Minna were randomly sampled from the 7 schools (faculties) in the university. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were used. The data collected were analyzed using means, standard deviation and Z-test statistics. Findings from the investigation revealed the mean positive assessment scores of male lecturers and students, and the mean negative assessment scores of female lecturers and female students in internet information utilization. Male lecturers and male students in the Federal University of Technology, Minna have a more positive attitude towards internet information utilization them female lecturers and female students. From the findings of the study, the researcher recommended among others that government should improve funding of university education especially in the provision of internet facilities in the universities, so that lecturers and students can have access to it.

Introduction

Internet information utilization has transformed the present day society into knowledge society. In the past, information utilization and knowledge were passed by word of mouth or through manuscripts, thereby making communication a slow process. Today, it is passed from one individual to an infinite number of other users through internet which makes rapid and widespread dissemination of information possible. The internet is considered to be the most valuable of the many computer technologies available to the society or nation at large (Umeh, 2012). Umeh stressed further that most of the higher institutions have adopted the internet usage due to its realization of better dissemination of knowledge. The internet serves as a backbone and connects to sources of information irrespective of their location and has taken the responsibilities of controlling problems such as collecting, organizing, storing, and retrieving as well as disseminating information (Adams, 2006). Most schools and libraries like the Federal University of Technology Minna, have acquired internet facilities. The user groups include lecturers, students undergraduates and postgraduates of professional courses such as computer science, engineering technology, library and information technology and information communication technology as well as other courses. Scientists and researchers need access to the latest information within a short span of time. Thus, Federal University of Technology Minna is not an exceptional in the utilization of internet. The Federal University of Technology, Minna is a federal government-owned university established on 1st February, 1983. The objective of its establishment is to give effect to the nation's drive for the much needed self-reliance in science, engineering and especially technology. It is no doubt a specialized university of technology. The university started at the former Government Teacher's College Bosso road, Minna, which now serves as the Bosso campus of the Federal University and later in June 1992, acquired its permanent site so that the university operates in

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two campuses to ensure that widest opportunities are given to students to learn about technology and its application to the solution of human problems. The campuses also encourage rapid development of infrastructure and better internet facilities.

Academic activities started fully on the main campus of the university (Gidan Kwano) during the 2004/2005 academic session. The university today has about 756 academic staff and 653 non-academic staff with about 14,000 students' population. The university operates the school system and has seven (7) schools namely, Engineering and Engineering Technology (SEET), Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (SAAT), Environmental Technology (SET), Science and Science Education (SSSE), Information and Communication Technology (SICT), Entrepreneurship and Management Technology (SEMT), and postgraduate (PGS). All the programmes mentioned above are technologically-inclined such that they find widest use in both the public and private sectors and most especially in our everyday lives. Obviously, it is amazing that with a link one passes information to thousands of people in a second. This is the power of media technology.

Media technology, according Andrew (2012) is a group of internet-based applications that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of web and allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content. The internet is a means of interaction among people. This includes:

Twitter, Facebook, 2go, foursquare and so on (Netron, 2002). Prior to the deregulation of the Nigerian telecommunication sector in 1992, very few Nigerians had access to computers and lack of sufficient technological infrastructure such as internet and mobile phones constrained communication within the society and schools in particular. Few years after deregulation, media network spread like wild fire in Nigeria especially in the universities.

The power of internet usage especially in the universities and particularly the Federal University of Technology, Minna has contributed positively to the development of Nigerian students and lecturers. It has kept the lecturers and students more informed and up to date. It has opened up a medium for admission advert among the students and has improved admission process. The internet has also contributed to improved lecturers efficiency, as many of them can have their tasks completed within a shorter time frame and with less error (Umeh, 2009).

In addition, internet information utilization has gradually enabled lecturers and students know how best teaching and learning can be achieved. The internet provides several opportunities for the academia. It is a mechanism for information dissemination and a medium for collaborative interaction between lecturers, students and their computers without regard for geographic limitation of space (Sharon, 2012).

There are thousands of internet home pages such as Google, yahoo, YouTube e.t.c., which serve as information sources for universities and other organizations. Most universities, polytechnics and colleges of education throughout the world have established their presence on the internet, thereby making it possible for researchers especially lecturers and students to access past and current research publications. Prospective students can also access information on courses offered by the universities and as well as their admission requirements. In the same vein, journals, magazines, newspapers, and books of different fields are available for reading in electronic form. In addition, there are hundreds of serials published via the internet, like informal newsletters constructed for small groups on individual personal computers to sophisticated, highly specialized, and fully referred academic journals. It is, therefore, believed that easy access to internet information and utilization by lecturers and students is responsible for learners' demand and the reduction in government funding. In view of the above, the study sought to examine the accessibility and utilization of the internet by lecturers and students of the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger state, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate internet information usage by lecturers and students in the Federal University of Technology, Minna. It specifically focuses on the following objectives:

- ➢ To assess the attitude of lecturers/students towards internet information utilization.
- ➢ To investigate the best search engines used by the lecturers and students.
- ➢ To identify the problem faced by the lecturers and students when using the internet services.

Research Questions

1. What is the attitude of the lecturer and students of the Federal University of Technology in the assessment of internet information utilization?
2. Does the assessment of internet information utilization by lecturers and students have effects on gender?

Research Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at $P \leq 0.05$.

Ho_1 - There is no significant difference in the attitude of lecturers and students of the Federal University of Technology in the assessment of internet information utilization.

Ho_2 - There is no significant difference in the assessment of internet information utilization by lecturers/students and the effect on gender.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was employed to elicit lecturers' and students' opinion on internet information usage. The population of the study consisted of 240 lecturers and students from the 7 schools (faculties) in the Federal University of Technology Minna. The schools are: School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (SAAT), Engineering and Engineering Technology (SEET), Science and Science Education (SSSE), Entrepreneurship and Management Technology (SEMT), Information and Communication Technology (SICT), and postgraduate (PG). Using fish-bowel technique, a simple random sample of 240 representing 37.2% of lecturers and students, was drawn from the university.

Instrumentation

The instrument for data collection was a Modified form of the Technology Assessment (MTAS) originally developed by Smart (2006). The instrument was validated by three educational technologists. They validated items in terms of contents relevance, ambiguity and vagueness of expression. Their scrutiny was used to produce the final instrument for data collection. The second section with twenty items was retained. The first part of questions sought personal information on the respondents. The second section contained 20 items on the attitude towards internet information usage.

The instrument was administered to 240 lecturers and students; 120 lecturers and 120 students (60 male and 60 female lecturers, also 60 male and 60 female students each). All 240 copies were duly completed, collected and analyzed. The data was analyzed using the following procedure for positive questions, the scores of 5 Strongly Agree (SA), 4 Agree (A), 3 May Agree (MA), 2 Disagree (DA) and 1 Strongly Disagree (SD). The research questions were answered by computing the mean positive and mean negative attitude scores of the questionnaire.

Results

The data were analyzed using mean scores as follows:

Research Question One

What is the attitude of the lecturers and students of the Federal University of Technology towards the assessment of internet information utilization?

Table 1: Lecturers and students mean attitude towards internet information utilization

Attitude	NO	$\bar{X}$	Mean Diff
Positive lecturers/students	240	3.57	
Negative lecturers/students	240	2.66	1.0

Results in Table 1 reveal that the lecturers and students of Federal University of Technology, Minna have 3.57 positive attitude mean score towards internet information utilization. This implies that the lecturers and students of the Federal University of Technology Minna have positive attitude in the assessment of internet information usage.

Research Question Two

Does the assessment of internet information utilization by lecturers and students have effect on gender?

Table 2: Mean attitude scores of male and female lecturers and students towards the assessment of internet information utilization

Attitude	Sex	No	$\bar{X}$
Positive	Male lecturers and students	120	3.66
	Female lecturers and students	120	2.75
Negative	Male lecturers and students	120	2.82
	Female lecturers and students	120	3.68

Results in Table 2, show male lecturers and students positive mean score of 3.66. The results indicate that male lecturers and students oftheFederal University of Technology have positive attitude towards internet information utilization. The results also reveal that femalelecturers and students of the Federal University of Technology,Minna have negative mean score of 3.68; meaning that they have negative attitude towards internet information utilization.

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant difference in the attitude of lecturers and students of the Federal University of Technology in the assessment of internet information utilization

Table 3: Z-value of lecturers' and students' attitude towards internet information utilization

Attitude	No	$\bar{X}$	S.D	S.E	Cal. Z-value	Table Z-value
Positive	120	3.57	0.925			
Negative	120	2.66	0.895	0.083	10.96	1.96

Table 3 shows a computed Z-value of 10.96 which is greater than the critical table-value of 1.96. The table, it reveals that there is significant difference between the positive and negative attitude mean scores of the lecturers and students internet information utilization.

Hypothesis Two

Table 4: Computation of Z-value on male lecturers and student and female lecturers and students

Attitude	Sex	NO	$\bar{X}$	S.D	SE	Cal. Z-value	Table Z-value
Positive	Male lecturers and students	120	3.66	1.33			
	Female lecturers and students	120	2.75	1.26	0.168	0.12	1.96
Negative	Male lecturers and students	120	2.82	1.32			
	Female lecturers and students	120	3.68	1.28			

In Table 4 the Z-calculated is 0.12 shows that there is no significant difference between male lecturers and students and female students. Since the calculated Z-value 0.12 is lower than Z value cited of 1.96 which means that the null hypothesis which stated that no significant difference is retained

Discussion of the Finding

The results of the research question one revealed that lecturers and students mean attitude towards internet information utilization have positive effects. This research has shown that internet information utilization by the lecturers and students of theFederal University of Technology Minna has improved their teaching and learning in the two groups (lecturers and students), provided several opportunities for the academicians, also contributed positively to ICT skills development of lecturers and students in the university education. Lecturers and students' have a positive attitude mean score of 3.57 as against the negative attitude mean score of 2.66 in internet information usage. This result reveals that lecturers and students of Federal University of Technology have positive attitude towards internet information utilization. Lecturers and students exhibiting negative disposition toward internet information usage are far less than those who positively assess internet information usage. This conclusion is in agreement with Sharon (2012) who found that internet information utilization improves researchers especially lecturers and students to access past and current research publications, and other related materials that promote teaching and learning in the universities.

Mean attitude scores of male lecturers and students revealed that they are much more enthusiastic in the teaching and learning process. When the positive and negative attitudes of lecturers and students towards internet information utilization were compared, it was revealed that there was significant difference between the positive attitude and negative attitude (0.925, 2.66 and 0.895). The comparison of the mean positive attitude scores of male lecturers/students and that of the negative attitude score of female lecturers/students showed no difference. There seems to be a convergence of attitude of the lecturers and students. This implies that both male and female lecturers and students averagely shared common attitudes when compared. These results showed that lecturer's and student's attitude toward internet information utilization in the Federal University of Technology, Minna is positive, that both lecturers and students have positive attitude in internet information utilization for effective teaching and learning in university education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is revealed that there is a positive attitude towards internet information utilization among male lecturers and students in the Federal University of Technology, Minna.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government at the federal, state and local government should improve the funding of university education especially in the provision of internet assessment so that lecturers and students irrespective of course can have access to it.
2. School management in various universities in Nigeria should ensure internet connection in every department and with adequate power supply.
3. Non-governmental organizations and alumni should assist the various universities to have internet facilities.

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