CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE INTERNET TO THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY BUSINESS EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The need to ensure effective use of the internet by university students necessitated this study to determine the contributions of internet to the academic development of university business education undergraduates in Anambra State. One research question guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested. Survey research design was used. Population was 647, university business education undergraduates in Anambra State of the 2015/2016 academic session. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 156 (63 male and 93 female students). Instrument for data collection was a 5 – point rating scale structured questionnaire which was duly validated by three experts and its reliability tested using Cronbach Alpha to check internal consistency of the items which yielded 0.69 coefficients. Data were analyzed using the arithmetic mean while z-test and ANOVA were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that internet contributes to academic development of university business education undergraduates. It was found also that gender and institution ownership did not significantly affect the respondents' response. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the internet is of immense benefit to the overall development of students. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study it was recommended among others that Government, through curriculum planners should incorporate internet literacy into undergraduate programmes in order to educate students on the risks and benefits of Internet use.

Key words: Internet, Development, Academic Development, Business Education

Introduction

Education is a key and vital element in the broad development of the nation. It remains the key to empowerment of the people and nations as a whole. The 1990 Longe Commission reviewed Higher Education in Nigeria and noted that education is the most powerful instrument for social reform. The societal expectation therefore, is that higher institutions particularly universities are sources of intellectual power that can be harnessed for the socio-economic priorities of a nation. Universities are established to satisfy specific or general educational needs of a country through

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teaching of students, conduct of research and dissemination of the knowledge together with other community service activities.

One form of education that equips its recipients to achieve total development is business education. According to the American Vocational Association (AVA) in Osuala (2009), business education is a programme of instruction which consists of two parts: (a) office education: a vocational education programme for office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education leading to employability and advancement in office occupations, and (b) general business education: a programme to provide students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal and business affairs and in using the services of the business world. Business education according to Isu in Ubulom and Dambo (2016), is that type of education that deals with the acquisition of practical skills, knowledge and values that enables one to function effectively in the society. It is regarded as that aspect of education, which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills and basic scientific knowledge. However, business education produces responsible, productive and self-reliant citizens. Business education undergraduates are students who are enrolled for their first degree programme in the field of business education in the universities. University business education is driven by standards for and about business, therefore teaching and using Internet fit perfectly into the many areas of business education.

The internet adds a new dimension to business education, in that it provides students with the opportunities to engage in more challenging and life-like activities (Braide, 2015).The term internet according to Ogedebe (2012) is a large computer network formed out of some thousands of interconnected networks, and it supports a whole range of services such as electronic, file transfer protocol, database access and many others. The use of the Internet in undergraduate education encourages student-faculty exchange, cooperation among students, active learning, prompt feedback, time management, communicates high expectations and respects diverse talents and ways of learning (Bankole & Oludayo, 2012). As Braide further held, integrating the internet in university business education enables one to achieve social competence and optimum individual development.

Development is a process of structural social change. It means a progression from a simpler or lower to a more advanced, mature, or complex stage in life. Thomas (2004) defined it as a gradual advancement or growth through a series of progressive changes. Aubrey, (2010) stated that development covers activities that improve awareness and identity, develop talents and potential, build human capital and facilitate employability, enhance the quality of life and contribute to the realization of dreams and aspirations. Total development for university undergraduates covers many areas including academic development. Academic development involves students increasing their work output, academic standing or work quality. Academic development entails an ongoing accumulation of new knowledge and skills or increasing depth of understanding in one‘s field of study. In the context of this study,

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academic development is aimed at helping students develop strategies and behaviours needed to perform as confident, independent and active learners.

Despite the many obvious advantages of the internet to business education undergraduates, the amount of time spent by some university students online might be a cause for concern. Students who have difficulty controlling their time spent online may suffer from internet addiction, resulting in their studies being adversely affected (Chen & Peng, 2008). Ijendu (2014) noted that male has high rate of internet addiction than female. Ajisafe (2014) also lent credence to the fact that gender of the students can influence their utilization of internet for learning. Similarly, ownership of the tertiary institution can facilitate or mar internet access and use since ownership will normally affect the availability of funds for relevant resources for internet utilization by students.

Adebowale (2013) observed with great concern that students in tertiary institution (including university business education undergraduates) have abandoned the use of internet and other social networks for assignments, library research, reading and team work in preference to chatting with friends even at lesson time. This takes much of students study time, results in difficulty in balancing online activities and academic preparation and distracts students from completing their assignments and adhering to their private studies time table and poor academic performance. Therefore, this study sought to determine the contributions of internet to the academic development of university business education undergraduates in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The internet is immensely contributing to positive progress in human societies especially among university undergraduates through its provision of various possibilities. As a result, many undergraduates spend long hours both day and night and a lot of money on the internet. Ezemenaka (2013) stated that there is high tendency for students to interact with their phones during lectures either to respond to received messages, answer/ make calls or browse the internet. These, no doubt, take heavy toll on their level of concentration to studies. Ezemenaka further stressed that outside the classroom, students who use internet enabled phones devote much time chatting on Twitter, 2go, Facebook, instant messages (Bbm, Yahoo messenger). Consequently, the time that ought to be devoted to studies and other useful academic endeavours are wasted.

Given the numerous benefits of the internet and the fact that university undergraduates are willing to invest much time and money on it, it is expected that it will greatly contribute positively to their general development. However, the researchers are worried that the amount of time and money university business education undergraduates spend on internet appears to be fighting their overall development rather than contributing positively to it. Therefore, the study is considered imperative as it will provide data on the contributions of the internet to the

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academic development of university business education undergraduates in Anambra State in order to guide their internet use.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the contributions of internet to the academic development of university business education undergraduates in Anambra State.

Research Questions

One research question guided the study:

1. What are the contributions of the internet to the academic development of university business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Male and female university business education undergraduates in Anambra State do not differ significantly in their mean responses on the contributions of the internet to their academic development.
2. Business education undergraduates in federal, state and private universities in Anambra State do not differ significantly in their mean responses on the contributions of the internet to their academic development.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research study is based on the Theory of Connectivism by George Siemens in 2004. The theory of connectivism stated that a community is the clustering of similar areas of interest that allows for interaction, sharing, dialoguing, and thinking together. Learning and knowledge in the connectivism theory is gained through maintaining connections, making connections between fields of information, and using decision making skills to decide what to learn as well as the meaning of the information from the community. The theory of connectivism is related to this work because connectivism is not only limited to the community, as it embodies the Internet, and describes its social integration powers and knowledge sharing among academics. Since the internet allows users to build personal learning communities and collaborates with experts in every field, students and lecturers in business education can connect with other students and academics to share best practices, resources ideas using any internet social network of their choice.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey. The study was carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 647 (263 males and 384 females) business education undergraduates from the three universities in Anambra State for the 2015/2016 academic session. Purposive sampling technique was used to select only 400 level undergraduates which comprised 156 (63 males and 93 females) for the study on the fact that their length of stay in the programme had sufficiently

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exposed them to the contributions of the internet to their development. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled ―Contributions of Internet‖ (CI) which was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Technology and Vocational Education and one from the Department of Education Foundation in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was determined through trial-testing using Cronbach Alpha which yielded an internal consistency of 0.69 coefficient. The instrument was administered to the respondents in their schools personally by the researchers with the help of one final year student from each school. This yielded a high response rate as 144 copies representing 92.31 percent were returned and used for the study. Mean scores were used to answer the research question while z-test was used to test the null hypothesis 1 and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis 2 at 0.05 level of significance. For the research questions, real limits of numbers of 4.50 – 5.00 was regarded as (Strongly Agree), 3.50 – 4.49 (Agree), 2.50 – 3.49 (Undecided), 1.50 – 2.49 (Disagree), 1.00 – 1.49 (Strongly Disagree) was used. In testing the hypotheses, the decision rule was to accept the null hypothesis where the f-value is greater than 0.05 and reject the null hypothesis where f-value is less than or equal to 0.05.

Results

The results of the study are presented below:

What are the contributions of the internet to the academic development of business education undergraduates in universities in Anambra State?

Data relating to this research question were analyzed and presented in Table 1. **Table 1**

Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Contributions of Internet to the Academic Development of University Business Education Undergraduates

S/N	Items	-	SD	Remarks
1.	The internet helps me to have quick access to academic materials	4.03	1.13	Agree
2.	The internet helps me to work at my own pace	3.93	0.94	Agree
3.	The internet aids my better collaboration with students from other schools	4.51	0.69	Strongly Agree
4.	The internet makes my research work faster	4.74	0.66	Strongly Agree
5.	The internet improves my collaboration among students and lecturers in the school.	4.39	0.99	Agree

Table 1 (Contd.)
Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Contributions of Internet to the Academic Development of University Business Education Undergraduates

S/N	Items		SD	Remarks
6.	Internet use saves me time when used in doing assignment	4.34	0.88	Agree
7.	The information I get from the internet increases my inquisitiveness	3.76	0.91	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**4.24**		**Agree**

Data in Table 1 show that two out of the seven items have mean rating of 4.51 and above which means that the respondents strongly agreed that internet contributes to their academic development while the remaining five items have mean ratings from 3.76 to 4.39 which shows that the undergraduates agreed that internet contributes to their academic development. The cluster's mean of 4.24 shows that the respondents agreed that the internet contributes to the academic development of university business education undergraduates in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 1
Male and female university business education undergraduates in Anambra State do not differ significantly in their mean responses on the contributions of internet to their academic development.

This null hypothesis was tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Summary of z – test Analysis of Male and Female Respondents on the Contributions of Internet to their Academic Development

Gender	N		SD	α	df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male	53	4.03	1.11					
				0.05	142	0.54	1.96	Not Significant
Female	91	3.91	1.01					

Data in Table 5 show that the calculated z - value of 0.54 is less than the critical z -value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 142 degree of freedom. This means that male and female business education undergraduates in Anambra State do not differ significantly in their mean responses on the contributions of internet to their academic development. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Business education undergraduates in federal, state and private universities in Anambra State do not differ significantly in their mean responses on the contributions of internet to their academic development.

This null hypothesis was tested using ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the Mean Responses of Business Education Undergraduates in Federal, State and Private Universities in Anambra State on the Contributions of Internet to their Academic Development

Sources Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-cal	F- crit	Decision
Between Groups	0.21	2	0.11	0.42	3.56	Not Significant
Within Groups	4.61	18	0.26			
Total	4.82					

Data on Table 6 show that F-cal of 0.42 is less than the F-crit of 3.56 at 0.05 level of significance with 2 and 18 degree of freedom. This means that business education undergraduates in federal, state and private institutions do not differ significantly in their mean responses on the contributions of the internet to their academic development. Therefore, the null hypothesis is upheld.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study are discussed in line with the research question and hypotheses that guided the study as follows:

Contributions of the Internet to the academic development of undergraduates

Findings of this study revealed that business education undergraduates in the area of the study agreed that internet contributes to their academic development. The study revealed that the internet provides undergraduates with quick access to academic materials, helps save time in doing academic work, and makes their research work to become faster. This result buttressed the fact that with the internet, students can improve their learning by gaining access to information and materials available online, which they might read online or download and print to read later.

The findings of this study concurred with that of Ezemenaka (2012) which showed that it was possible for students to enhance and broaden their academic horizon by browsing for academic materials and equipped themselves better toward preparation for examinations during studies. The study also revealed that students utilize internet to share educational resources, enhance communication with lectures and fellow students, collaborative study, and research study. This finding is in line with that of Akintomide and Ademodi (2013) report which revealed that a great

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number of students make use of the internet on a daily basis for mostly assignments. Majorly, students browse the internet to do assignments which they ranked ―most high‖ in all the faculties, followed by social networking, news update and research in this order. This finding greed with that of Mohamed, Fouad, Ismail and Mohammad (2014) report which revealed that online study groups improves students' study and communicative skills. In agreement, Ogedebe (2012) opined that if internet services were fully exploited, the performance of students in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria will improve.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that gender and institution ownership did not significantly affect the respondents' responses on the contributions of internet to their academic development. This is in line with the findings of Singh and Kumar (2013) which revealed that male and female students did not differ significantly on the extent they utilized internet via Facebook for academic purposes. The researchers could not find any study on internet in relation to institution ownership. However, the findings of this study can be a reference to subsequent studies that may be carried out on this or related variables.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that the internet is of immense benefit to the academic development of students as it provides them with quick access to academic materials, helps save time in doing academic work, enhance communication with lectures and fellow students, collaborative study, and makes their research work to become faster. The study also revealed that gender and institution ownership are not determining factors to the contributions or of internet to the development of university business education undergraduates.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Students with phones and other internet facilities should be encouraged to either use it to supplement their research in the library rather than the usual chatting with friends all the time. They should be introduced to sites that can add values to their academic work and research.
2. Lecturers in Universities, among others should organize education of undergraduates to improve their internet skills/knowledge and to enable them to harness the enormous benefits of the internet.
3. Authorities of tertiary institution should encourage reforms in education that will ensure integration of internet technologies into their schools by aligning it with curriculums. This will provide students with skill and proficiencies on how to use internet service to achieve academic development.
4. Government through curriculum planners should incorporate media literacy into undergraduate programmes in order to educate students on the benefits of internet to their academic development.

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