

INTERNET UTILIZATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF ISLAMIC STUDIES STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN LAGOS METROPOLIS

BY

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of internet utilization on academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions in Lagos Metropolis. Internet is indeed a powerful tool for academics, students and researchers. A questionnaire was designed on the relationship between the use of internet and academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions and administered on students in five tertiary institutions where Islamic Studies is taken in Lagos Metropolis. A total of 197 respondents returned the completed questionnaire out of 200 copies of questionnaire. The two research hypotheses formulated were tested using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The study found that the majority of the Islamic studies students in tertiary institutions had access to the internet. Most of the Islamic studies students in tertiary institutions that had access to internet browsed more for educative information. The relationship between internet browsing and students' achievement in Islamic Studies was positive. The study concluded that if Internet Services are fully explored, the performance of students of Islamic Studies in tertiary institutions of higher learning in Nigeria will improve. It was recommended, among others, that students should not be restricted in their access to the internet but could be closely monitored to control their use of internet, so that the use of internet is not at the expense of their academics

Keywords: Relationship, Internet, Academic Achievement, Islamic Studies Students, Tertiary Institution

Introduction

The Islamic thought framework symbolises a broad view of life and that of the universe (Bidmos, 2006). A Muslim is hence expected to pursue both worldly and religious knowledge. In fact, Islam campaigned for knowledge when the whole universe was in the shackle of ignorance. Within a short span of time, the early Muslims generation became learned and sophisticated since Islam had aroused the active use of the intellect in them. Through the teachings of Islam, they understood the fact that beneficial knowledge is sacrosanct for individual and communal progress. Hence, they pursued the knowledge to such an extent that they outshined other nations in terms of productivity and development, while they also extended the torch of civilization to many other centuries in the world.

No modern invention is opposed by Islam as much as such invention is useful to mankind and do not contradict the dictates of the Creator (Musa, 2010). In reality, technologies are not restricted to a particular religion or race can be utilised for either the good or the bad motives, which in return will affect humanity positively or negatively. For example, a glass could be filled with either a poison or a nourishing drink. Also, modern technologies could be deployed for harmful or beneficial purposes. The Internet is a means of communication that uses digital technology, which is among the critical elements of knowledge delivery. Internet without doubt has become an important element among the Islamic Studies students in tertiary institution. This is one of the exceptional changes currently experienced globally that can affect knowledge.

Internet provides a platform for its users to share ideas, events, activities, files, and interests within their personal networks. Several learning theories specially stress the effects of individual interaction on the outcomes of learning. For instance, collaborative learning theory presumes that learning take place through interpersonal interactions. Online collaborative learning was also studied and significant interaction differences were observed when compared with in-class collaborative behaviours.

Constructivism views learning as a social practice that occur through interpersonal communication. By translating ideas into words, the learner actively builds knowledge, while responses and reactions of others form the basis of these ideas. Hence, learning is both active and interactive. From the constructivism and collaborative learning perspectives, interpersonal communication is a critical element of learning. More so, the evaluation of students' performance is indeed open to several definitions, which is dependent on the course content, students' nature, course withdrawals or successful completion, grades, added knowledge, as well as skill building are all parts of the evaluation process of students' performance. This study however, does not intend to assess the perceptions of the students about learning experiences; rather, it aims to assess the students' credit achievements (Larsson, 2006).

According to Aqil and Ahmad (2011), the internet is the transport vehicle for the information stored in files or documents on a computer. It carries together various information and services, such as electronic mail, online chat, file transfer, the interlinked Web pages and other documents of the World Wide Web. In today world, the Internet plays a vital role in the teaching, research and learning process in academic institutions. Thus, the advent of the Internet has heralded the emergence of a new form of knowledge production and distribution –the soft form. This new form of information resources has, as its greatest advantage, a virtually unlimited wealth of information resources which is widely readily available and accessible to hundreds of millions of people simultaneously in many parts of the world (Kumar & Kaur, 2006). The Internet is a powerful and efficient tool for searching, retrieving, and disseminating information, with a significant impact on students and scholar's worldwide.

The Internet can be consulted and like a reference resource, it is broader and highly dynamic. It also provides a means of scholarly communication (Brunning, Schraw, Norby & Ronning, 2004). The Internet has liberated scholarship from the academic, social, legal, political, economic and geographical constraints associated with traditional print media (Kumar & Kaur 2006). This liberation has had a major effect on scholar's research capacity and productivity. It has also aided scholars, who want to stay at the forefront of research and keep up to date with developments in his or her research fields by utilizing the Internet (Kumar & Kaur 2006). In most of the Nigerian Universities, students of Islamic Studies spend many hours browsing and skimming on the internet. They glue so well to their smart phones to receive and send information on internet but use less time studying in the library or elsewhere, particularly in leisure hours. The duration on the internet therefore, may have negative effect on their academic achievement. The online activities have successfully taken some of the students' miles away from their classes and studies in general, as many students are seen in the libraries, halls of residence, computer labs, and even in their lecture rooms surfing the webs. Both the virtual and real campus communities are available to the students of tertiary institution, distorting the lines existing between the two dissimilar communities (Larsson, 2006).

The negative academic implications of internet addiction are therefore pertinent to be painted so that the school management and course advisors could assist students manage the situation effectively and efficiently. It is therefore, on this note that this study examined the impacts of internet utilization on academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions in Lagos metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

To determine whether there is a significant relationship between the use of the internet and academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions.

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the use of internet and academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions.

Literature Review

Islam and Internet

Social Media remains a viable tool for social interaction, utilizing highly scalable and accessible communication techniques. It also involves the use of mobile and web-based technologies to transform communication into an interactive dialogue (Ashitari, et al. 2009.). WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are among the most used social media platforms. It is a very easy way to retrieve and disseminate information to groups, friends, business associates, and organisations etc. Hitherto, the invention of the internet and the spread of information at the speed of light had been predicted by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) according to Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, in the book of Imam Ibn Hibbaan. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said "The end of time will not come until someone will tell a lie and it will immediately reach the horizons of the Earth." Definitely, one would need internet to achieve such things, and the internet was unavailable then. Recently, a survey found that the amount of internet users is over one billion people worldwide and which is rapidly increasing, and this really enhance the spread of information, true and false information alike.

The Study of Islam and Internet

Concerning the study of Islam and the Internet, it is obvious that groups and individuals that stressed their "Muslimness" were part of the foremost internet users. According to Eickelman and Anderson (2003), Muslim guest students in the US had signed up to technological programs at universities that were to become foremost departments in the growth and promotion of the Internet. As Bunt (2009) and Roy (2004) have documented, Muslims represent a huge variety of linguistic, religious, ethnic, and political background using the Internet to discuss the affairs of Islam and Muslim, as well as for argumentative or apologetic reasons. An increasing population of Muslim scholars and well-established Islamic institutions have also invested in the use of Internet and cable television in the promotion of their Islamic understanding (Skovgaard-Petersen, 2004).

It is incumbent to reach out to the Muslims living in Europe and the United States. Mandaville (2001) argues that the Internet gives new chances to explore the understanding and various interpretations of Islam and as well ask questions about issues bothering them. This however, also has its demerits, which is majorly proliferation of wrong understanding of Islamic. Brückner and Pink (2009); Larsson (2006); Eickelman and Anderson (2003) highlighted the complexity and tension of the new media with respect to Islam.

Students and Internet

Throughout the world, the Internet is accepted as a youth-dominated technology, and most especially students who are highly inclined to utilize Internet resources for teaching and learning, social relations, and entertainment (Salako & Tiarniyu, 2007). Shitta (2002) claims that the Internet is a super highway for communication that hooks, links, and transforms the whole world into a global village, where people irrespective of their races or geographical location can easily and swiftly get connected and share ideas or information. Lancaster and Sandore (1997) in Osunade, Ojo, and Ahisu (2009) stressed the potential of the Internet to provide a means of communication that has enhanced the functionalities of the libraries to both physical and virtual users.

Jagboro (2003) found that 66.3% of the sampled University students used the internet for email, while 39.7% of them use it in getting research and course materials. The recorded low usage of the Internet was due to the high cost of internet facilities, which led to low connectivity with the internet. Furthermore, Hanaver, Dible, Fortin, and Col, (2004) studied various community colleges to evaluate students' use of the Internet for health-related information. The study revealed that 83.0% of the Internet users had Internet access at their home, while 51.0% of them had internet access at the library or college. Salako and Tiarniyu (2007) assessed search engines usage for research purposes among postgraduates of University of Ibadan, Nigeria. 327 copies of questionnaires were administered to the students

and the analyses revealed that the majority of the students were aware of the Internet, and were acquainted with it prior to their enrolment for postgraduate studies. Over 50.0% of them learnt about search engine from friends, less than 50.0% of them learnt to use search engines through trial and error method, while a few of them learnt about it at computer schools. Salaam and Adegbore (2010) found that Internet facilities are available to the students virtually in all Nigerian universities, and students were not restricted to access the Internet within the university and particularly in the library.

Internet Usage and Students' Academic Achievement

The impact of Internet on students' academic performance differs based on the population. Some previous studies found no significance effect, while others affirmed the impact of access to Internet among students on their academic performance (Ehrman, 1995). Warren, Brunner, Mair, and Barnett (1998) opines that internet provides platforms that enhance group discussion irrespective of the time and distance barriers. The World Wide Web service which the Internet provided with more than 5 million web sites allows students across all disciplines to source relevant information. Busari (2001) views the internet as a means through which students and lecturers can meet without seeing one another. This is achieved through such Internet platform such as teleconferencing, webinar, etc. Sanni et al (2009) in his study found that gender difference exists in Internet use and as a result, it should be accorded adequate attention to ensuring equal access to Internet use among male and female students. The use of the Internet for learning is seen as a means to improve accessibility, efficiency and quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and service as well as remote exchanges and collaboration (Kamba, 2009). Within the Nigerian context, many people have attributed students' non-challant attitude to reading which culminates in mass failure of students in examinations to the use of the Internet (Alakpodia, 2010). Internet's seemingly infinite information offers access to up-to-date research reports and global knowledge so it has become an important component of electronic services in academic institutions. Therefore, the Internet has become a valuable tool for learning, teaching and research (including collaborative research) in Nigeria (Nwokedi, 2007).

Ogedebe (2012) in his study found that 79% of the respondents accepted that their academic performance has been improved by using the internet, while 13% believed otherwise, 8% made no response to that question. The study also revealed that 65% of the respondents were computer literate, while 29% were not, 6% of the respondents neglected the question. The study further revealed that 8% of the respondents believed that their GPA has been improved remarkably as a result of the internet, 6% agreed that their GPA has been declining, 28% responded that it aids them in preparing better for CA and semester examination while 22% were indifferent about the options and therefore did not respond. In the study of Aqil and Ahmad (2011) it was found that 47 (52.64%) users rated the utility of Internet based information services as average for their academic purposes, while 36 (39.56%) users rated the Internet as high. Moreover, 6 (6.59%) and 2 (2.19%) rated it as low and very low respectively.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research method was adopted for this study so that the opinions of the respondents obtained without any external interference. The population for this study comprised of Islamic Studies students of five higher institutions in Lagos State, vis-à-vis University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos State University, Ojo, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Otto/Ijanikin, Micheal Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija, Epe, and Ansar-ud-deen College of Education, Isolo. From the population, 40 Islamic Studies students were randomly selected for the study, from whom data were obtained for this study, using the research questionnaire. The sample size for this study therefore, is 200 Islamic Studies students in the selected higher institutions in Lagos State. However, only 197 copies of the questionnaire were returned duly filled. More so, the data gathered from the instruments were analysed using frequency distribution tables, mean scores, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS 21.0), at 0.05 level of significance.

Results**Test of Hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between the use of internet and academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions

Table 1: Correlation Statistics

		Use of Internet
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.723 [*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	197

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows $r=.723$, which indicates there is a very strong and direct relationship between the use of internet and academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions, while $p=.005$ shows that the relationship between the use of internet and academic achievement is significant. The null hypothesis that states “there is no significant relationship between the use of internet and academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions;” is therefore rejected, while its alternative that states “there is a significant relationship between the use of internet and academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions;” is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The test of the hypothesis showed that there is a significant correlation between the use of internet and academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions. This is in tandem with the claim that internet is a forum that promotes group discussion which is time and distance independent. The World Wide Web service provided by the internet with over 5 million web sites allows students from all disciplines to source for relevant information (Warren, *et al.*, 1998). Busari (2001) saw the internet as a medium through which lecturers and students can meet without seeing each other. Students can also learn through teleconferencing whereby the use of small video camera and microphone members of the group can actually see and hear each other.

Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of this study, it is concluded that most of the Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions in Lagos State had access to the internet; there was a strong, positive, and significant relationship between access to the internet and the quality of time spent on the internet, while the use of internet also has a very strong, direct, and significant correlation with academic achievement of Islamic Studies students in tertiary institutions in Lagos State.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusion, this study therefore recommends that:

- Students should not be restricted in their access to the internet but could be closely monitored to control their use of internet, so that the use of internet is not at the expense of their academics.
- The students should also endeavour to explore the benefits of the internet for academic purpose and personal development, as well as for the betterment of their academic performance.
- Parents should not also leave their children to take absolute control of their lives, rather, they should create time to monitor the activities of their children on the internet and should also show adequate concern for their academic progress.
- Students should also desist from the use of internet while lecture is ongoing.

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