

## The Extent at Which Undergraduate Students Use the Internet for Reading

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sejauh mana mahasiswa S1 menggunakan internet untuk membaca. Penelitian secara khusus, (i) Mengkaji sejauh mana mahasiswa S1 menggunakan internet untuk membaca, (ii) Menyelidiki perbedaan sejauh mana penggunaan internet untuk membaca mahasiswa S1 laki-laki dan mahasiswa perempuan, (iii) Meneliti perbedaan tingkat penggunaan internet pada membaca mahasiswa sarjana berdasarkan bidang spesialisasi. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif dengan tipe survey. Kuesioner terstruktur yang dirancang oleh peneliti digunakan dalam pengumpulan data. Teknik simple random sampling digunakan untuk memilih 150 responden yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini dari Universitas Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Hitung frekuensi, rata-rata dan persentase digunakan untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian. Hipotesis satu diuji dengan independent t-test sedangkan hipotesis dua diuji dengan Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Semua hipotesis diuji pada taraf signifikansi 0,05. Temuan menetapkan bahwa Sarjana selalu menggunakan internet untuk membaca berita online, E-book, Email, informasi Kesehatan, Lelucon, Komik, Fashion, Makanan/Gizi dan informasi Penjualan. Juga, tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara tingkat penggunaan internet pada membaca mahasiswa sarjana berdasarkan jenis kelamin dan bidang spesialisasi. Namun direkomendasikan bahwa perlu adanya program pelatihan ekstensif yang diselenggarakan secara berkala sehingga semua kategori pengguna dapat meningkatkan efisiensi mereka dalam penggunaan internet.

**Kata kunci:** Tingkat Penggunaan, Internet, Membaca, Mahasiswa, Jenis Kelamin, Spesialisasi

### Abstract

This study aims to investigate the extent at which undergraduate students use the internet for reading. The study specifically, (i) Examine the extent at which undergraduate students use the internet for reading, (ii) Investigate the difference on the extent of the use of internet for reading of male and female undergraduate students, (iii) Examine the difference of extent of the internet usage on reading of undergraduate students based on areas of specialization. The study was a descriptive research of survey type. A structured questionnaire designed by the researcher was used in data collection. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 150 respondents that were involved in this study from the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Frequency count, mean and percentages were used to answer the research questions. Hypothesis one was tested with independent t-test while hypothesis two was tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings established that Undergraduates always use the internet for reading online news, E books, Email, Health information, Jokes, Comic strips, Fashion, Food/Nutrition and Sales information. Also, there was no significant difference between the extent of the internet usage on reading of undergraduate students based on gender and areas of specialization. It was however recommended that there is a need for extensive training program organized at regular interval so that all categories of users can improve their efficiency in the use of the internet.

**Keywords:** Extent of Usage, Internet, Reading, Undergraduate Students, Gender, Specialization

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Internet makes Students Independent in their Studies; using internet technologies, students can decide about their own studies, learning time, place and resources in a better way (Abdullahi et al., 2014; Karchmer et al., 2005). Students can work in more supportive environments, seek help from teachers and fellows, and share their learning experiences and ideas in romantic and productive fashion. The development of high-performance computing and communication is creating new media such as the www and virtual realities. In turn these

new media enable new type of messages and experiences, such as interpersonal interactions in immersive synthetic environments lead to the formation of virtual communities. The innovative kinds of pedagogy empowered by these emerging media and experiences promoted the opportunities of distance education and at present virtual education and eliminated the barriers of distance and time (Akidi et al., 2021; Borup et al., 2014). New and innovative learning experiences would be enhanced and encouraged by these technologies, as by virtual communities, which exist by interactions across the globe through global network of computers round the clock. This technology has reshaped the tertiary educational practice in terms of improving academic learning (Felvegi & Matthew, 2012).

Internet is concerned with the sociological, psychological, pedagogical, political, cultural, technical, artistic and other dimensions of the world which is ultimately associated to information and communication technology (Rajashree et al., 2019; Song et al., 2004). The internet plays a profound role in the field of education. Internet is one of the profound contemporary innovations in the world of information technology. Internet has become the need of everyone. It is a big hand of today's success of the people. It provides us an amazing facility of searching and information from any corner of the world by anyone. At present the internet is used in varieties of ways to promote education, productivity, communication, business, advertisement, marketing and so on. Through internet we can solve our problem easily. In classroom teachers also recommend to use internet more and more for educational purpose, so that the children can know about her/his study and gather knowledge. By using internet, we can easily know about other country, what the people do, what is their culture, what is their motivation, they are co-operative with each other or not. Internet is used much more by students who get knowledge by using internet they also have many information by using it.

The internet is a computer mediated communication tool, providing the individual with access to a broad spectrum of information and unique communication technologies (Wells, 2016). Internet can broadly be defined as worldwide network of computers communication via an agreed upon protocol (rules for exchange of information). It provides access to the most diversified source of information hosted by individuals and various organization worlds wide on a vast network of servers. The internet is a global system for interconnected computer network that use the standard internet protocol suite to serve billions of users worldwide. It is a network of networks that consist of millions of private, public, academic, business and government network of local to global scope that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies. The internet carries a vast range of information resources and services such as the interlinked hypertext documents of the world wide web (www) and the infrastructure to support electronic mail (Ogungbeni et al., 2016). Internet has become an important component of electronic services in academic institution (Emeka & Nyeche, 2016). Hence the internet has become an invaluable tool for learning, teaching and research (including collaborative research).

Previous study asserted that, the internet is a worldwide communication network linking thousands of computers to a network, through a mixture of private and public phone lines and microwave links (Oluwatumbi & Olunmi, 2017). Its components network are run by government agencies, universities and commercial organizations working together and loosely controlled by the internet society. These organizations bring many millions of people onto the internet and more works in their home computer through one or any other service providers. The use of internet has revolutionized access to information for the business world, libraries, education and individual which include E-mail, www, FTP (file Transfer protocol), Usenet and Telnet. The internet and its technology continue to have a profound effect in promoting the sharing of information especially in the academic world thereby making possible rapid transactions among business and supporting global collaboration among

individuals and organizations. The most important aspects of the internet and World Wide Web, electronic mail [e-mail], news groups, tele-conferencing, personal phones, online phones, online social networks, my space, Facebook and 2go.

In an increasingly networked environment, the new generation readers gradually develop the new reading behavior and increasingly change their traditional reading practices (Loan, 2012). The students believe that the Internet surfing increases interactive reading, superficial reading and extensive reading and at the same rates decreases sequential reading, concentrated reading and in-depth reading. The alarming factor is the decrease in the concentrated and in-depth reading. It indicates that the online readers have to use print sources for the in-depth and concentrated reading. These practices of reading are very essential for actual consumption of information and knowledge to qualify educational as well as competitive examinations. The possible reasons for decline in the concentrated reading during the Internet surfing are hyperlinks embedded in the web resources, blinking images on the Web, opening of unwanted web sites and scrolling and turning of pages. These problems need to be solved for reading with full concentration during surfing. The possible solutions are to take printout of the web documents for reading or save them on computer and read offline. Opening of unwanted web sites should be dealt technologically. The firewalls should be installed to block them.

The students should also avoid clicking on unwanted web sites, blinking pictures, attractive screen savers, irrelevant headings, etc. to be more focused while surfing. This will definitely help them to browse the Internet with full concentration. Moreover, the new technological reading devices like kindle of Amazon can make e-reading easy for the continuous, in-depth, and concentrated reading. The other possible factor responsible for decrease in the in-depth reading is that the students are possibly surfing on the free portion of the web where the subjects are not discussed deeply but extensively. Moreover, they may not be aware about the deep web and open access web resources. The need is to make the Internet users aware about the deep web collection and its search tools where they can find the qualitative documents for in-depth reading. The other possible solution can be to subscribe the qualitative web resources for the college students as well through consortia and other means. Previous study sought to ascertain the influence of the use of internet on reading habits among students in tertiary institutions (Onovughe, 2012). The finding revealed that although the students, 210 representing 78.3% enjoy reading generally and to a relative extent read web pages each day, they (student) also spend most of their after-school time in watching television, VCD, playing computer games. The finding also revealed that although a good number (127) of respondents use the internet for academic purpose, nevertheless 52% spend less than two hours reading web pages each day. This can hardly impact heavily on academic performance. There abound great opportunities for students on the internet for academic use. Hence, the following recommendations are made:

Concerted effort be made to encourage students to use most of their after school, time (leisure) for profitable activities on the internet that will add value to their academic performance, Lecturers should give assignment that will compel students to make use of the internet for academic reading, Lecturers should encourage students to give enough time for personal study on the internet. Most students look up to their college teachers' advice, this will help add value to their academic information. Lecturers should give information about web sites where students can get unlimited education material information, Colleges/Universities should have an electronic library open to all students with all necessary accessories. For only quality time, purposely utilized internet can add value to one's academic performance. In it all the findings revealed that there is not much influence of internet use on reading habit of students in tertiary institution.

Previous study examined the extent and level of internet access in Nigerian universities submitted that undergraduate students extensively use the internet (Ani, 2010). However, majority of the respondents indicated that they relied on commercial internet services and cybercafés due to poor internet infrastructure in the university. The results showed that most of the students use the internet for academic purpose. Undergraduate students accessed internet facilities from the privately-owned cybercafés in town despite the fact that their university grossly lacks internet facilities (Adekunmisi et al., 2013). Furthermore, the students use the internet mostly for emails, academic purpose and getting information while the high cost of browsing, slow internet access speed, power outage and few internet facilities are challenges identified as impediments to internet by the students. Another study commenced that undergraduate students use internet in a moderate way, however 4.75% students are found as excessive internet user (Mahanti et al., 2016).

The effect of internet on students reading culture to include access to information sources, Use of foreign sources, Contacts with worldwide readers, Time spend on reading, Dependence on print sources, Contacts with print sources, Reading in local languages, and Reading of books (Loan, 2011). All these efforts together will help to increase reading of books while Internet surfing. A study founded that whenever a picture was posted on Facebook, it would get about 240 likes and 53 comments in 24 hours but if an article was posted, it would only be able to gather about 16 likes and 5 comments over that same 24 hour period (Shehu & Shehu, 2014). He felt very worried that many youths spent their time scrolling.

Previous study established that undergraduate student use internet in a moderate way, however 4.75% students are found as excessive internet user. It was also found there is a variance in the internet dependency between male and female undergraduate students, male students are superior internet users (Mahanti et al., 2016). Thus, it can be concluded that internet use pattern varies according to gender and stream but did not show any difference according to region as nowadays internet is available in any area irrespective of the region. Another study found that females use internet more than males in their study on gender differences in computer literacy among medical students in selected southern Nigerian Universities (Ikolo & Okiy, 2012). There is a variance in the internet dependency between male and female undergraduate students, male students are superior internet users, but there is no significant difference found against their region wise analysis, hence a difference is found in science and arts students' internet use pattern (Mahanti et al., 2016). Thus, it can be concluded that internet use pattern varies according to gender and stream but did not show any difference according to region as nowadays internet is available in any area irrespective of the region.

A study explored the reading habits of university students, studying English Language and Literature at Atatürk University (Akarsu & Daryemez, 2014). The study shows that in the ever changing world of today, reading habits of individuals have started to become more digitalized in accordance with the advances in technology. As well as those who read from printed word, there seems to be an increase in the amount of people who use technological devices such as e-book readers, tablet computers, computers, and mobile phones to satisfy their reading interests. The majority of the respondents, for example, stated that they often followed online information. The findings of the survey showed that reading habits of respondents were affected by the media and technology. Most of the participants spend hours and hours in front of their computer screens. Respondents mentioned they first checked their 'Facebook' account when online. They enjoy listening to music, playing games, and doing many other things. The majority of the respondents claimed that they often read online news, check their emails, view the weather report and read comic strips. Based on the survey findings, some valuable advice was given in the discussion part. The educators should work

on some applicable methods to develop not only the students' reading habits, but also the language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening.

## **2. METHODS**

The study was descriptive research of the cross-sectional survey type. A closed form researcher-designed questionnaire was used to collect information from students on the influence of internet on undergraduate students reading culture in the University of Ilorin. The population for this study consists all University of Ilorin undergraduate students. The target population for this study consisted students from five (5) faculties in the University of Ilorin. Students was selected from five different faculties in the University to form the sample population to the study. Random sampling technique was used in selecting one hundred and fifty (150) students out of the total population of forty-five thousand eight hundred and eighty-five (45885), a total number of thirty (30) each from the areas of specialization selected from the five faculties and a total of one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires was produced.

A researcher-designed questionnaire was used for this study, it contained three sections. Section A had background information such as the respondent's gender and area of specialization. Section B was made up of items seeking information on what extent do students use the internet for reading. The responses to the questionnaire items were drawn on response mode categorize as: Never; (0), Rarely; (1), Occasionally; (2), Always; (3). The research instrument was validated by five experts from the department of educational technology, university of Ilorin, in order to ascertain the face and content validity of the instruments by ensuring that all items in the questionnaire were appropriate and suitable to assess exactly what it was designed for. The researchers sought permission from the head of department of the five selected areas of specialization and then gave out the questionnaire to each of the thirty students from the various areas of specialization which include: Agriculture and Bio system engineering, Educational technology, Microbiology, Linguistics and Public Administration. The questions were collected back immediately for data analysis and evaluation.

Ethical issues that were considered includes the fact that respondents were not be forced to attest to the questionnaire, the details of the respondents were treated discretely, responses gotten from respondents were respected and confidentially noted, Data that were gotten will be treated and analyzed objectively, carefully and with honesty and integrity. The data was analyzed using the descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency count, mean and percentages was used to answer the research questions. Hypothesis one was tested with independent t-test while hypothesis two was tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

A total of 150 copies of questionnaire were administered but 149 copies were properly filled and returned and was thus used for the analysis amounting to 99.3% return rate. The extent at which undergraduate students use the internet for reading was upstretched in research question two. Four response scale of never, rarely, occasionally and always was used as the response mode for this section. Frequency count with their respective percentage of responses on each item was recorded on each item on the extent of use of the internet for reading was established too and was thus used for this section. The results of Undergraduate Students Extent of Use of the Internet for Reading is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Undergraduate Students Extent of Use of the Internet for Reading

S/N	Items	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Always
1	Online news	11(7.4%)	46(30.9%)	42(28.2%)	50(33.6%)
2	Online magazines	17(11.4%)	42(28.2%)	58(38.9%)	32(21.5%)
3	E books	12(8.1%)	38(25.5%)	49(32.9%)	50(33.6%)
4	Stories and Novels	20(7.4%)	35(23.5%)	48(32.2%)	46(30.9%)
5	Email	11(7.4%)	36(24.2%)	37(24.8%)	65(43.6%)
6	Journal articles	19(12.8%)	41(27.5%)	54(36.2%)	35(23.5%)
7	Health information	8(5.4%)	29(19.5%)	58(38.9%)	54(36.2%)
8	Jokes	9(6.0%)	32(21.5%)	43(28.9%)	65(43.6%)
9	Comic strips	19(12.8%)	43(28.9%)	37(24.8%)	50(33.6%)
10	Fashion	14(9.4%)	43(28.9%)	35(23.5%)	57(38.3%)
11	Weather reports	26(17.4%)	50(33.6%)	41(27.5%)	32(21.5%)
12	Food/Nutrition	26(17.4%)	31(20.8%)	51(34.2%)	57(38.3%)
13	Sales information	11(7.4%)	39(26.2%)	47(31.5%)	52(34.9%)

The extent at which undergraduate students use the internet for reading revealed that Unilorin’ undergraduates always use the internet for reading Online news, E books, Email, Health information, Jokes, Comic strips, Fashion, Food/Nutrition and Sales information. They occasionally use the internet for reading online magazines, Journal articles, Health information and Nutritional reports for reading while they rarely use the internet for weather reports reading. The results related to hypotheses one and two formulated for the study in chapter one was as shown in subsequent tables. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. T-test was conducted to determine if there is any significant difference in on the extent of utilizing internet by male and female undergraduate students for reading. The result is shown in Table 2. The statistics shows no significant difference in the extent.

**Table 2.** T-test on extent of Internet usage for Reading based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Male	71	21.386	4.9947				
Female	78	21.045	5.0342	147	0.415	0.679	Not Significant
Total	149						

Results in Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value was 0.42 with significant value of 0.68 that was not significant at 0.05 alpha levels. This implies that the null hypothesis one was not rejected: hence, there was no significant difference on the extent of utilizing internet of male and female undergraduate students reading. This is in favor of the male students with the mean score of 2.14 against the female students’ mean score (2.10). Analysis of Covariance was conducted to determine if there is any significant difference on the extent of utilizing internet for reading based on area of specialization. The result is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** ANOVA on extent of Internet usage for Reading based on Specialization

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2.042 <sup>a</sup>	4	0.510	2.101	0.084
Intercept	669.688	1	669.688	2756.931	0.000
Specializations	2.042	4	0.510	2.101	0.084
Error	34.979	144	0.243		
Total	707.195	149			
Corrected Total	37.021	148			

The result in Table 3 shows the difference in the mean scores on the extent of internet usage on students' reading based on specialization. It indicates that  $F(4, 148) = 2.10, P > 0.05$ , which means that there is no significant difference in the mean scores on extent of internet usage for students' reading based on specialization. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby not reserved. Thus, there is no significant difference in the extent of internet usage for students' reading based on specialization.

## **Discussion**

Internet is concerned with the sociological, psychological, pedagogical, political, cultural, technical, artistic and other dimensions of the world which is ultimately associated to information and communication technology (Rajashree et al., 2019; Song et al., 2004). The internet plays a profound role in the field of education. Internet is one of the profound contemporary innovations in the world of information technology. Internet has become the need of everyone. It is a big hand of today's success of the people. It provides us an amazing facility of searching and information from any corner of the world by anyone. At present the internet is used in varieties of ways to promote education, productivity, communication, business, advertisement, marketing and so on. Through internet we can solve our problem easily. In classroom teachers also recommend to use internet more and more for educational purpose, so that the children can know about her/his study and gather knowledge. By using internet, we can easily know about other country, what the people do, what is their culture, what is their motivation, they are co-operative with each other or not. Internet is used much more by students who get knowledge by using internet they also have many information by using it.

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Web, electronic mail [e-mail], news groups, tele-conferencing, personal phones, online phones, online social networks, my space, Facebook and 2go.

The Extent of internet usage for reading by undergraduate students was examined in research question one. Table 3 revealed that Unilorin' undergraduates always use the internet for reading Online news, E books, Email, Health information, Jokes, Comic strips, Fashion, Food/Nutrition and Sales information. They occasionally use the internet for reading online magazines, Journal articles, Health information and Nutritional reports for reading while they rarely use the internet for weather reports reading. In with this, students use the internet primarily for communication, entertainment and leisure (reading and sending e-mails, online chatting, instant messaging, playing games and downloading music videos, and reading newspapers) (Yebowaah, 2018).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Undergraduates always use the internet for reading online news, E books, Email, Health information, Jokes, Comic strips, Fashion, Food/Nutrition and Sales information. Also, there was no significant difference between the extent of the internet usage on reading of undergraduate students based on gender and areas of specialization. It was however recommended that there is a need for extensive training program organized at regular interval so that all categories of users can improve their efficiency in the use of the internet. Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations were made is Government should as a matter of necessity improve on the present state of power in the university and its immediate environment; There is a need for extensive training program organized at regular interval so that all categories of users can improve their efficiency in the use of the internet; Teachers can/should incorporate new technology tools that will improve reading environment and automatically encourage students' participation.

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