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SIGNIFICANCE OF PROVIDING FREE INTERNET CONNECTIVITY IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING IN YOBE STATE.

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Abstract

A study on the significance of providing free internet connectivity in higher institutions of learning in yobe state. This is to investigate it importance among the students of Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua to be examine. A sample of 200 students was randomly selected from the school NCE programme where each of its three levels of education was use as the target population. A field survey research design was used for this study. Five research questions and hypotheses were set to guide the study. The instrument used was a simple percentage to analyses the responses by the respondent. Finally, the study recommends government and higher institutions of learning to provide guaranteed and stable wireless connectivity in the higher institutions in the state.

Keywords: Free internet, connectivity, institution of learning

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Introduction

Students of higher institutions of learning are predominantly in possession of Smartphone's. Internet surf by students using Smartphone's becomes an indispensible component of our student's lives. A cursory inspection of today's university, colleges and polytechnic students indicates that Smartphone's are being utilized in every campus environment, including the classroom, both openly and secretly for internet access. According to Tindell and Bohlander (2012), despite policies prohibiting it, university students often use Smartphone's during class time. As Smartphone technology advances, the device appears to be capable of assisting students in learning and improving in their academic achievements. Looking at the economic hardships where students cannot afford subscription of data bundle. Therefore, higher institution should provide free internet connectivity around the school premises. Because with free internet access students with Smartphone and some other computing gadgets will be fond of getting rapid, portable access to many of the same educationally enhancing capabilities like an Internet-connected computer, in order to have access to online resources such as online information retrieval, file sharing, and communicating with instructors and peers (Bull & McCormick, 2012; Tao & Yeh, 2013).

Recent study, on the other hand, reveals that many university students see Smartphone as primarily as an item for leisure, with majority of the students using them for social networking, surfing the Internet, watching movies, and playing games (Lepp, Musa, & Isaac, 2015). The emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and internet facilities has drastically affected almost every facet of human life. Consequently, it is apparent in the way of smooth teaching and learning. Nowadays, Smartphone have become part of every person's life. Globally, "People around the world have adopted this new and exciting technology as one of the most important and required facility in their everyday's life" (Fawareh & Jusoh, 2017). The influx of Smartphone and its related devices has greatly transformed teaching and learning in developed nations where developing nations is not the exception (Tagoe, 2014). The proliferation of these facilities has changed the style of learning whereby students or learners no more depends on paper- based materials. The introduction of the internet led to the emergence of Smartphone which enables learning to take place irrespective of the geographical location or period of time almost at any time or in any location. Popular activities such as video game playing, Internet surfing, and monitoring social networking sites are now all easily achieved with most Smartphone's. Although cell

phones are mostly acquired and seen in the hands of students while they are in class and studying, and this research point out their relevance to academic achievement. Smartphone use was linked to school failure as well as other harmful behaviours such as smoking and excessive alcohol consumption (Boulos, 2011). Thus, regardless it uses each of these activities must be linked to academic success. Previous empirical research and theoretical approaches both illustrates that the recent rapid increase on the acquisition of Smartphone's has influenced multiple aspects of our daily lives, particularly that of students.

Literature review

The findings showed that 73% of the students are using the internet for research and academic purposes and concluded that necessary facilities should be put in place for the students to make optimal use of information resources available on the internet.

According to Ehikhamenor (2003), non-use of internet in Nigeria is often attributed to the problem of accessibility and cost. This finding is consistent with that of Ani (2010), and Waithaka (2013), in which most of the respondents indicated that students had high level of internet usage and they access the internet from cybercafés. This study also agrees with Adekunmisi et al. (2013) who reported that universities under his study lacked internet facilities and the students accessed internet facilities from the privately own cybercafés.

Statement of problem

The fervent need for this study is based on the increase number of admissions in higher institutions, which accompanied with economic hardships where students found it difficult to feed themselves not to talk of making subscription of data bundle to aid their learning. And from apparent observation, most institutional libraries are faced with significant gaps in the existing collections and increasingly impending outputs of new literature (Kaur, et al. 2018). Moreover, it seems there are inadequate resources in the higher institutions libraries to cope with the demand of users (Njagi, et al. 2016). It is obvious that this could affect the learning output and equally performance of students in higher institutions.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

a. Examine the positive and negative effects of internet access with Smartphone on academic performance in higher institution.

b. Determine the perceived ease of use of internet in learning activities among students.

c. To ascertain the perceived usefulness of Smartphone in terms of academic achievement among students.

d. To find out the factors that prevent people from using Smartphone's as a learning tool.

e. To investigate the impact of Smartphone use on students' learning activities.

Methodology

The data for this study were collected by administering questionnaire to 200 students from the institution at all levels

Data Analysis

The presentation of data analysis through structural authentication and observation technique is focus on the validity and objectivity of the findings. The information obtained on the findings were systematically arrange as much statement were reflected by the sum of sample responses been made and presented in a simple percentage score. Different tables were employed to explore the opinions of the respondents within the perspective of this scope. The study assesses the need for free internet connection in higher institution of learning at Umar Suleiman College of Education Gashua, Yobe state. Two hundred questionnaires were administered and collected. The results are presented in tables below:

Data Analysis and Results

Information of the Respondents

Table 1.0: Age Distribution of the Respondents

Item	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	22-25 Years	135	67.5%
	26-29 Years	47	23.5%
	30 and above	18	9.0%
	Total	**200**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1.0 shows the demographic information of the respondents which shows that 135 respondents representing 67.5% have ages of 22-25 years, 47 respondents representing

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23.5% are between 26-29 years, 18 respondents representing 9.0% are between 30 years and above, respectively. This indicated that majority of the respondents are between the age range of 20-30 years with (67.5%).

Table 2.0: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Item	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	127	63.5%
	Female	73	36.5%
	Total	**200**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2.0 indicated gender of the respondents which revealed that 127 respondents representing 63.5% are Male, while 73 respondents representing 36.5% are female respectively. This indicated that majority of the respondents 127(63.5%) were male.

Table 3.0: Level of Study

Item	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Level in School	NCE III	100	50.0%
	NCE II	66	33.0%
	NCE I	34	17.0%
	Total	**200**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3.0 indicated level of study in the school of the respondents which revealed that 66 respondents representing 36.43% were in NCE II, while 100 respondents representing 50.0% were in NCE III. This indicated that majority of the respondents 100(50.0%) were in NCE III.

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Table 4.0: Analysis of Respondents on Questionnaire

Table showing responses of respondents

S/N	Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
1	Do you find it easy to use smart-phone for reading and surfing the internet	Strongly Agreed	49	24.5%
		Agreed	121	60.5%
		Disagreed	26	13.0%
		Strongly Disagreed	04	2.0%
		Total	**200**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table 4.0 revealed that 121 respondents representing 60.5% agreed question that says "Do you find it easy to use Smartphone for reading and surfing the internet" 49 respondents representing 18.0% strongly agreed with the statement, 26 respondents representing 9.9% disagree with the statement, while 4 respondents representing 1.1% strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicated that majority of the respondents 101 (71.0%) agreed that they find it easy to use their smart phone for reading and surfing.

Table 5.0:

S/N	Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
2	Does using smart-phone for learning require any special computer literacy skills	Strongly Agreed	04	2.0%
		Agreed	31	15.5%
		Disagreed	16	8.0%
		Strongly Disagreed	149	74.5%
		Total	**200**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5.0 indicated that 04 respondents representing 2.0% agreed that "Does using smart-phone for learning require any special computer literacy skills" 31 respondents representing

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15.0% strongly agreed with the statement, 16 respondents representing 8.0% disagreed with the statement while 149 respondents representing 74.5% strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. This reveals that majority of the respondents 149(74.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement that using smart phone for learning does not require any special computer literacy skills.

Table 6.0:

S/N	Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
3	Do you find it easy to use smart-phone for retrieval of course materials from the net	Strongly Agreed	27	13.5%
		Agreed	163	81.5%
		Disagreed	13	1.5%
		Strongly Disagreed	09	4.5%
		Total	**200**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 6.0 indicated that 163 respondents representing 81.5% agreed statement that says "Do you find it easy to use the smart-phone for retrieval of course materials from the net" 27 respondents representing 13.5% strongly agreed with the statement, 13 respondents representing 1.5% disagreed with the statement while 09 respondents representing 4.5% strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. This showed that majority of the respondents 163(81.5%) strongly agreed with the statement.

Table 7.0:

S/N	Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
4	Does smart-phone save you from buying personal laptop for studies	Strongly Agreed	13	6.5%
		Agreed	181	90.5%
		Disagreed	12	6.0%
		Strongly Disagreed	06	3.0%
		Total	**200**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 7.0 indicated that 181 respondents representing 90.5% agreed that "Does smart-phone save you from buying personal laptop for studies." 13 respondents representing 6.5% strongly agreed with the statement, 12 respondents representing 6.0% disagree with the statement while 06 respondents representing 3.0% strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. This showed that majority of the respondents 181(90.5%) agreed with the statement.

Table 8.0:

S/N	Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
5	Does smart-phone helps you in quick access to information related to online educational materials	Strongly Agreed	57	28.5%
		Agreed	137	68.5%
		Disagreed	04	2.0%
		Strongly Disagreed	02	1.0%
		Total	**200**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 8.0 indicated that 57 respondents representing 28.5% strongly agreed that with the question "Does smart-phone helps you in quick access to information related to online educational materials" 137 respondents representing 68.5% agreed with the statement, 04 respondents representing 2.0% disagreed with the statement while 02 respondents representing 1.0% strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. This revealed that majority of the respondents 137(68.5%) agreed with the statement.

Findings and discussions

It can be inferred from this finding that, students finds it easy to use smart phones in their learning activities. The findings also serve as an indication that since most parts of the students learning materials is in digital form, the majority of the students found that internet access by their smart-phones are extremely useful. These findings support the works of Iqbal and Bhatti (2015), in which it was revealed that majority of their respondents finds it easy to use mobile phone which also enhances their perceived usefulness of using a mobile phone for learning activities. However, the findings are inconsistent with the works of Ifeanyi and Chukwuere (2018), in which it was found that majority of the respondents responded in

affirmative that sometimes they find it a daunting task accessing academic material on their smart phones, likewise same perception was evident in the works of Sarfoah (2017), where most of the respondents disagree to the fact that using mobile phone for learning was easy to use.

Conclusion

Internet and smart phones has being an essential part of our cultural way of everyday's life including schooling activities. Based on investigation and casual observation of today's institutions, the findings reveal that cell-phones are being used in every possible campus setting, including the classroom. As the internet connectivity provides continues rapid development, in contributing toward student learning and improvement in academic performance. For example, modem smart-phones with internet connectivity provides students with immediate, portable access to many of educationally enhancing capabilities, such as online information retrieval, file sharing, and interaction with professors, mentors and fellow students. The results show that internet and smart-phone are very important tool for studies as most of the respondents used their phones for study purposes.

In essence, the study revealed that cell phones are beneficial for learning but learners have a tendency to abuse them. Teachers and learners of higher institutions can take advantage of the internet connectivity for their educational purposes because of the intrinsic motivation in the dissemination of academic activities of the institutions to be communicated amongst them.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the results.

i. Students should be using the internet for research and academic purposes.
ii. Necessary facilities should be put in place for the students to make optimal use of information resources available on the internet.
iii. At lecture time, use of internet with mobile phone should be avoided until after classes and lectures.
iv. The use of Internet and smart phone should be enhanced as it has become an indispensable means of communication.

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