Article

PROBLEMS AFFECTING STUDENTS' INTERNET SERVICE UTILIZATION IN NIGERIAN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study investigated the problems affecting Internet service utilization in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education zone of Anambra State. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated. The researcher employed descriptive survey research design using questionnaire. The population of the study consisted of 3,374 students. The sample of 640 respondents was drawn from the population and eight schools which had Internet services for at least five years were considered and used. The sample was drawn through purposive sampling technique. An instrument titled "Problems Affecting Internet Services Utilization Questionnaire (PAISOQ)" was used to elicit responses from the respondents. Out of 640 questionnaire items administered on the respondents, six hundred (600) questionnaire drafts were returned. The data obtained were analyzed using mean frequency and T-test. The findings revealed that irregular electricity power supply, high cost of purchasing computer/Internet facilities and inadequate skilled personnel are some of the major problems affecting the students from the utilization of Internet services in private schools in Onitsha Education Zone. Based on the findings, it was recommended that proprietors should buy generators to serve as an alternative source of power supply. There should be continuous and periodic training of teachers and students on practical and functional knowledge of the computer and access to internet-based resources in order to lower marginal cost and purchase of greater volume of bandwidth, the private secondary school proprietors were advice to form a consortium for purchasing Internet bandwidth.

Introduction

The Internet is the largest set of computer networks. The invention and development of the Internet have remained the biggest discovery by mankind in the 20th century. It has brought a new dimension in education generally from primary to tertiary institutions. Presently, it has become the key tools and has had a revolutionary impact on how we perceive the world and how we live in it. Undoubtedly, it has become an integral part of Information Communication Technology (ICT) (Nwachukwu, 2004).

Nevertheless, Internet has a revolutionary impact on educational methodology globally. According to Inyiana (2002), the Internet has indeed turned the world into a global village such that any nation or business that opts to remain an Island would quickly cease to be relevant in the millennium. He further stated that any activity in any part of the world is received in all parts of the world through the Internet.

Recognizing the tremendous role the Internet plays in the education and development of the youths, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004: 5) and the National Policy on Education (2004) made provisions for Internet in school libraries and stated that government should provide necessary infrastructures for information and communication technology/Internet in the school in the school system in recognition of the role of ICT in advancing knowledge and skills in the modern world.

In today's network global village, ready connectivity or access to the Internet is clearly the most useful Information Communication Technology (ICT) service that a library can provide for its users (Ukpanah, 2010). Providing Internet facilities in the school library makes it easier for many students to have access to the Internet.

Internet has been developed to provide students with many educational opportunities and access to information, being the most important. Students now have access to libraries around the world. The use of Internet in learning makes students appreciate learning activities in their everyday life activities.

The Internet is useful for completing assignments/home-work in schools/colleges and at home. It enables students and teachers to become contributors by allowing them to publish their own locally created reports or studies through gopher and World Wide Web (www) services (Michele, Geoff and Yvonne, 2011).

Statement of Problem

The use of Internet services and its integration in learning in private secondary schools have brought a lot of changes in the life of students. By this feat, students can interact with their friends (chatting), communicate with international students, carry out class assignments, prepare for examinations, update their knowledge and read latest news with the aid of their Internet services. Thus, the findings of Gan (1998) & Berger (2001) revealed that most private secondary schools do not have adequate Internet facilities for effective utilization of Internet services in learning. It appears that not much has been done on Onitsha Local Government Area especially as it relates to availability of Internet facilities, availability of technical assistance, lack of usage or non application of practical aspect of Internet and poor knowledge of Internet skills. In the light of these, the need for this study is obvious.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the problems affecting students' Internet service utilization in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone. Specially, the study intends to:

1. Find out the problems that students face in the utilization of Internet services.
2. Find out the strategies for improving the problem of Internet utilization.

Research Question

1. What are the problems affecting the use of Internet services by students in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone?
2. What strategies can be used to improve the use of Internet services by students in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone?

Research Hypotheses

The research formulated two hypotheses to guide the study:

1. There is no significance difference in the mean scores of male and female students on the problems faced in Internet Service utilization in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students on the measure to be adopted to improve the problems of Internet service utilization in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone.

Literature Review

Internet has brought a new dimension in education generally from primary to tertiary institutions. Presently, it has become the key tools and has a revolutionary impact on how we perceive the world and how we live in it. Undoubtedly, it has become an integral part of Information Communication Technology (ICT) Nwachukwu 2004).

Many problems affect the use of Internet services in school library. Among these factors is the absence of well trained personnel known as teacher librarian, who should organize and render services to user. Daramola (2004) said, that Internet in school library is militated against by lack of skilled manpower. Without the qualified personnel to handle the affairs of the Internet in the school library there is bound to be setback in the process of school library development and utilization. The untrained school librarian without adequate knowledge of the new trend cannot perform the function of teaching the student the methodology of using the Internet. Bade (2004) stated, that several factors inhibit the successful implementation of Internet such as lack of skilled personnel, coupled with lack of training culture in Internet skills, intermittent electric power cuts etc. He further observed that trained personnel are so crucial for the effective performance of Internet in school library. A trained school librarian is very important without which the school library cannot function effectively.

Mbachu (2007) commenting on the problem of fund, stressed that fund will be required for training and retraining of specialist staff, who will man the media centers. Assistance from government, some social clubs together with the association of old students could be of great help towards achieving a reasonable fund to equip the Internet in the school library. Teachers on their own part should always use the Internet so that they can be in the position to encourage the students to use the library by giving them assignments to do with the use of Internet in the school library.

Okeke, Okakpor & Ezejiofor (2007) commenting on the problem of the use of Internet by students, stated that the major problems are fund, computer phobia, changes in the role of school librarian, pornography and misinformation. Others include change in library arrangement, installation and repairs.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used to gather data for this study. The target population is the students of Onitsha Education Zone. A total of six hundred and forty

respondents were purposively used for the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using percentages, mean, t-test and chi-square statistics.

Findings

Table 1: Mean scores on the problems faced by students on the adoption of Internet services.

S/N	ITEMS	X	REMARK
1.	Most secondary schools lack committed and trained personnel	3.82	Agreed
2.	Irregular power supply hinders the use of Internet services in private secondary schools.	3.89	Agreed
3.	Students are very reluctant to adapt to the use of Internet in learning process	4.05	Agreed
4.	The cost of purchasing computer/Internet facilities in the school is high	3.83	Agreed
5.	There are inadequate facilities to support full application of Internet technology	3.67	Agreed
6.	The non inclusion of Internet programmes in school curriculum affects its adoption in school	3.67	Agreed
7.	Lack of fund hinders private secondary schools from embracing Internet access	4.08	Agreed
8.	Poor teacher-student relationship	2.44	Disagreed
9.	Time consuming as it requires more technical support	2.46	Disagreed
10.	Lack of accessibility to utilize the Internet services at Will	4.12	Agreed
11.	Insufficient time allotment on the school Timetable for Internet utilization	3.82	Agreed

Table 1 shows how students in Onitsha Education Zone perceive problems affecting their Internet service utilization in learning. This is the mean scores of the students on the problems they face on the adoption of Internet services. The students identified 9

out of 11. Problems studied with mean scores ranging from 3.67 to 4.12 and they disagreed on the other two. The greatest being lack of accessibility to utilize the Internet service at will with a mean score of 4.12, followed by lack of fund with a mean score of 4.08 students are very reluctant to adapt to the use of Internet in learning process (4.05), irregular power supply (3.89), the cost of purchasing computer/Internet access in schools is high with a mean score of 3.83 followed by most of the secondary schools lack committed and trained personnel and insufficient time allotment on the school timetable for Internet utilization ranked equal with a mean score of 3.82, inadequate facilities to support full application of Interne technology and the non inclusion of Internet programmes in school curriculum affects adoption in schools ranked equal with a mean score of 3.67, undecided variables are time consuming and it requires more technical support with a mean score of 2.46, poor teacher – students relationship with a mean score of 2.44. This shows that 98 percent of the issues raised as problems against the effective utilization of Internet services for learning were accepted by the students.

Null Hypothesis I

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students on the problems they face in using Internet services.

Table 2: T-test on mean scores of male and female students on the problems they face in the use of Internet services.

Source of variation	N	X	SD	DF	Cal. T	Crit.	>0.05
Male	214	36.60	10.81	598	0.94	1.98	NS
Female	386	35.71	11.14			NS	= Not significant

Table 2, showed the t-test analysis of the mean scores of male and female students on the problems they face while using Internet services. It shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 598 df of the calculated, 0.94 is less than the critical t 196. Therefore, the 2nd null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the male and female students on the problems facing them in the use of Internet services.

Table 3: What strategies can be used to improve Internet services in private secondary schools.

S/N	ITEMS	X	REMARK
1.	Proprietors should buy generators as an alternative to power supply	3.92	Agreed
2.	Fund should be made available by parents, proprietor and government	3.89	Agreed
3.	Availability of Internet facilities	3.87	Agreed
4.	Periodic training of teachers and students on computer Internet skills acquisition	3.82	Agreed
5.	Continuous exercise on political and take home is needed	3.78	Agreed
6.	Recruitment of specialist/personnel staff	3.72	Agreed
7.	Organizing of seminars, conference, workshop	3.72	Agreed
8.	Low bandwidth	3.40	Agreed

Table 3 shows the mean scores of the students on the strategies to improve the problems of Internet service utilization. It was observed that with mean scores ranging from 3.92 to 3.72, the students accepted the strategies as recommended.

Null Hypothesis 2
There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students on the strategies for improving the problem of Internet service utilization.

Table 4: t-test mean scores of male and female students on the strategies to improve the problem of Internet service utilization.

Source of variation	N	X	SD	DF	Cal. T	Crit.	>0.05
Male	214	14.78	4.96	598	0.50	1.96	NS
Female	386	14.99	4.83		NS	= Not	significant

Table 4 shows t-test mean score analysis of male and female students on the extent they accepted the strategies to improve Internet service utilization. It shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 598 df, the calculated t 0.50. Therefore, the second null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significance difference in the mean scores of the male and female students on the strategies to improve Internet services utilization.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study showed that students agreed that they encounter problems in utilization of Internet services for learning. Among the problems identified are lack of funds, inadequate facilities to support full application of Internet technology, lack of accessibility to utilize the Interne services at will, irregular power supply and lack of committed and trained personnel. The epileptic power supply is a national problem that has detrimental effects on all sectors of the economy. This is synonymous with the findings of Yusuf (2005) & Ofodile (2007) who submitted that irregular power supply in the country is a major obstacle to the usage of Internet services in all spheres of the economy. The effect of epileptic power supply could be ameliorated by improvement in the funding of schools. The study showed that most schools in the sampled area lack committed skilled personnel. The lack of committed and skilled personnel might not be unconnected with the non inclusion of ICT applications in teacher training programmes or in schools curriculum at all levels of education in Nigeria. This finding is in support of Kwache (2007), Debasaki (2005) and Oyebanji (2003) who submitted that lack of skilled manpower to manage available system and facilities for Internet service hinders its use in schools. Kwacha (2007) remarked that most institutions lack committed and trained personnel and technical experts that would support and manage the Internet connectivity and/or application of computer systems in the teaching learning process.

Research question two stated that strategies which can be used to improve the use of Internet services is private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone. From the analysis on table 4, it was found that the students strongly agreed that organizing seminars, and workshops, designing of relevant curriculum, provision of adequate funds, and provision of adequate infrastructural facilities (computer and modem) are effective strategies to reform or ameliorate problems of Internet service utilization in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone.

Research hypothesis one states that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students on the problems they face in Internet service utilization. The result in table 2 showed that the 0.05 level of significance and 598 df of the calculated 0.94 is less than the critical t 1.96. Therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted. There is no significance in the mean scores of the male and female students on the problems face into Internet service utilization. The implication is that both parties agreed that the identified problems/factors militated against quality Internet service utilization in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone.

Hypothesis two states that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students on the strategies to improve problem of Internet service utilization in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone. From the analysis on table 4, it was found that 0.05 level of significance and 598 df, the calculated t 0.50 is less than the critical t 1.96. Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted. There is no significance difference in the mean scores of the male and female students on the strategies to improve Internet service utilization. This implies that the null hypothesis was retained; similarly, this means that the male and female students showed no difference on the proposed strategies for improved Internet service utilization in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone.

Conclusion

The study addressed the problems and strategies for improving Internet service utilization in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone. The findings showed that organizing seminars and workshops for students, adequate funding provision of ICT facilities (e.g. computer/modem) and inclusion of Internet service utilization in private secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the research findings:
1. There should be continuous and periodic training of teachers and students on computer and Internet skills acquisition. This will provide them with functional knowledge of the computers and access to internet-based resources.
2. Efforts should be made to provide standard internet facilities in the school libraries in the state.

3. In view of the importance of school libraries to the educational system, it is imperative to provide at least a teacher-librarian with technical skill and professional experience to man the school library.

4. The government, the philanthropists and proprietors should consider the provision of fund to the schools to enhance teaching and learning process.

5. In order to lower marginal cost and purchase greater volume of bandwidths, the private secondary school proprietors should form a consortium to purchase bandwidth.

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