



**USE OF THE INTERNET BY SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDE NORTH
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The Internet has become a major instrument in the world of Information and Communication Technology, transforming the social world of both young and adults; influencing mode of communication, establishing, maintaining relationships and finding social support. This paper examines the use of the Internet by senior secondary school (SSS) students in Ede North Local Government Area of Osun. Population of the study was 690 students from five (5) (SSS) in Ede North Local Government Area of Osun State, namely: Timi Agbale Grammar School; C.A.C. Grammar School; Muslim Grammar School; Command Day Secondary School; and Mapo Arogun Comprehensive High School. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to draw a sample of 300 students for the study and 300 copies of the questionnaire were distributed while 289 (96.33%) copies were returned. Findings showed low level of Internet usage, attributed to non-availability of computers in most of the schools studied, except the Command Day Secondary School with 154 (53.29%) students across the five secondary schools use the Internet and 135 (46.72%) do not use the Internet. The study also revealed that majority of the students (79.22%) use the Internet to their advantage in general, while 20.78% responded on its adverse usage. The study further brought to light that the use of Internet has both positive and negative effects on the youths, as 70.13% of the respondents agreed that its use has positive effects on their academics while 29.87% agreed to the contrary. The paper concludes that low Internet usage was recorded among the secondary school students in Ede North Local Government. It was recommended, among others, that attention be paid to the procurement of computers and installation of internet facilities for the teaching of computer education as ICT is essential in keeping with the dynamics of social change and demands in education.

Keywords: Information, Communication, Technology, Internet, Youth development



Introduction

The Internet is one of the greatest recent advancement in the world of information technology. It is a useful instrument that has fostered the process of making the world into a “global village”. To this end there is hardly any age group of human society that is not affected by this technology one way or the other. Equally, there is no known business that cannot be conducted on the Internet (Samreen, Tariq, Ravleen, & Samina, 2016). Interestingly, like any other technologies that comes with the power of exposing man to socializing, the internet in all ramification, is having a tremendous impacts on the lives of the youth more than any other group in the society. In some cases, the impacts are noticeably positive while on the other hand they are negative because of limitless exposure it allows to its resources. Badamasi (2018) averred that it is not an exaggeration to say that information technology has revolutionized the world and that business, learning, entertainment and many more have been made easier and more accessible due to information technology, so much so that many activities today depend largely on the Internet. The traditional ways of performing most of such actions have given way to technology and youths are raised in a computer driven environment.

Furthermore, the youths are more exposed to the impacts of the internet because of the fact that the society itself and today’s educational enterprise is computer driven. These place much demand on that age group of the society if they would have to function well in a computer/ internet technologically driven society. According to Oluwole (2018), Nigeria’s most internet traffic comes mainly from mobile and desktop computers most of which are served by Mobile ISPs, Ethernet, wired and Wireless. To make internet easily accessible and encourage users, mobile internet service providers offer campus zone discount prepaid/postpaid internet services for students and school staffs. This is aimed at encouraging the use of the Internet among the youths to enable them fit properly into the ever changing society which is Internet driven.

Information Technology has become so important today touching every aspect of human lives. Abdullahi (2019) opined that the Internet creates new ways for individuals to communicate, congregate and share information of their social life. It is obvious that the Internet has and will continue to change the way we live. It touches the lives of both young and old. Song and Khong (2001) wrote that our computer-driven society demands that students develop the ability to operate in a technological environment, acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to be productive. Interestingly, our planet is fast becoming connected like a global village via the Internet that online protocol has become an essential part of technology-based curriculum. However, despite the multi various positive impacts of the Internet on the society as a whole as observed by Green, Field and Yan, (2006)., its multi various menace is gradually attaining an alarming proportion thereby causing societal concern especially among parents. It is against this backdrop that this paper sets out to examine the use of the Internet by Senior Secondary School Students in Ede North Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

This study sets out to:

- a. examine the use of the Internet by Senior Secondary School Students in Ede North Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria;
- b. ascertain the availability of Internet facilities in the schools under study;
- c. examine the purposes of use of the Internet in the schools under study;



- d. identify the level and frequency of Internet usage among the senior secondary school students in Ede North Local Government Area of Osun State; and
- e. determine the effect of Internet usage on the senior secondary school students in Ede North Local Government Area of the State.

Conceptual Framework

The Internet was developed and established few decades ago by the US Defense Department for use within the research community. However, other sectors steadily got attracted and began to explore its use as a result of its ability to share information across organizations and to interact with people at low cost (Njoroge, 2011). The Internet is a system of enormous technical and social complexity. It comprises of a gigantic but almost invisible universe that includes thousands of networks, millions of computers, and billions of users across the world (Alfred, 2014). It is a device for information dissemination and a medium for collaborative interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic limitation of space, (Wei and Zhang, 2008). The word “internet” is derived from two words: “international” and “network”. It is a worldwide system of linked computers networks.

Aina, (2004) describes the Internet as a collection of vast information sources of interlinked computer networks. It is a worldwide network that connects hundreds of thousands of smaller networks”. It is an interconnected system of networks that connect computers around the world via the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (Http). Browsers are tools used in accessing different sites on the internet via satellites when data is stored on them via an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Impacts of internet usage on the society

Today, the internet has a tremendous impact on every facet of human life including business operation, communication, entertainment, education, social activity, shopping and so on. It has become the symbol of information age and a means of accessing and sharing information which extends throughout the whole culture of human beings (Samreen, Tariq, Ravleen, & Samina, 2016). The internet offers limitless range of resources and services to users with lot of instructional tools including electronic mail, remote login, social networking, video conferencing, teleconferencing, Worldwide Area Information Services (WAIS), Hypertext (www) UseNet, File Transfer (ftp), On-line library catalogues, Bulletin boards, Virtual Communities/libraries.

Reach out Australia (2019), elucidates that the Internet and social media provide young people with a range of benefits and opportunities which enable them to empower themselves in a variety of ways to maintain social connections and support networks that otherwise wouldn't be possible. They and can access more information than ever before. The Internet enables interactions of young people for bolstering and self-development, self-confidence and social skills. The use of all these by every individual in the society have proven the internet as an indispensable working tool. Osunade and Ojo (2006) averred that internet features exhaustive materials on arts as well as research materials for academia and coverage of recreation, entertainment, sports, shopping and employment opportunities. The internet is about to replace books as it turned the main source of information globally (Alfred, 2014). Bommelaer and Gahnberg (2019), opined that the internet can as a matter of fact do much more than one can imagine and they through the Internet society embark on the study to better understand the forces of change that will shape the Internet over the next five to seven years.



They identified some forces, or “Drivers of Change,” through extensive consultations with experts in and out of the Internet society’s global community. The drivers encompass technological, economic, regulatory, security, and network-related opportunities and challenges for the Internet of the future. Among the driving forces identified was the Internet economy. They stated that consolidation of the internet economy will provide opportunities to reduce costs, expand market share, and enhance scalability for intrinsic incentives in the economic domain as well as other spheres of life where the Internet has been of a great use. This will enable more people to access to the Internet. Cooper (2019) stated that the Internet has fundamentally changed the way of doing things in all aspects of human lives because in today’s environment it has a bearing on every aspect of our economy and society. This necessitates a fresh approach, based on stronger accountability coupled with more freedom to innovate, and providing better way to align private incentives with the public interest.

Youth Development

Youth, as described by Encyclopaedia Britannica (2007), is that period between the lifespan when most of a person’s characteristics are changing from what is typically considered child-like to adult-like, usually in most cases, between the ages of 10 and 18 .While Ugboma, (2007) sees it as the last recognisable period in the cognitive development of a child into early adolescence. It is therefore, the process through which adolescents and young adults according to (Hasain, 2012) acquire the conjunctive, social and emotional skills and abilities required to navigate life. Physical and the social changes become more prominent during this period though, could vary with the individual as well as with the particular characteristics. The experience can also vary using cultural background, gender and economic class. This development occurs throughout a young person’s life, including formal and informal settings such as home, church or school; and similar relationship (i.e. peer groups/friendships, work, parenting, teaching or mentoring).

Badamasi (2018) stated that youth today learn to use the computers at young age and are introduced to the Internet early. Their early introduction to computers and gadgets and the important roles they played in their formative years have influenced them to a large extent in the use of the Internet. Many trends are brought by the Internet and computers such as social media platforms which form an essential part of their living. He affirmed that despite the huge positive impact of technology on youths, it also has its drawbacks on them. Although little research has been conducted on the effects of the internet on various aspects of human development, Ogunbote (2008) in his work opines that the role of computers and the internet as a means of socialization, education and information access is increasing dramatically. Ojedokun, (2001) in his study confirmed that teens in Abuja, Nigeria use the internet as source of health information in order to gain the necessary information on both sexual and general health issues that they would probably not have access to in their own local environment.

Other studies have shown that through Internet communication, youth are given the opportunity to exercise leadership skills and become stakeholders in communities that they themselves have created. Several studies from the developed world have also confirmed the extent of internet usage among the youths between the ages of 9-18. The communication applications of the Internet such as instant messaging, blogs, and social networking sites (e.g., MySpace, Face book) are especially popular with them and have become their focus.

Wakefield and Rice (2008) affirmed that the use of internet generally influences youth both positively and negatively in areas that include: personal domain; social domain; and emotional Domain.



Suzuki and Calzoz (2004) stated that American youth shows that the internet serves as a powerful resource for information about socially sensitive topics such as sex and interpersonal relations. Again, online communication among young ones encourages more truthful exchanges; many people report a greater willingness to share thoughts and feelings online than they would in person (Lenhart & Lewis, 2001; Mckenna & Bargh, 2000). They further stressed that freedom from social pressures also help adolescents/youths build more confidence in real social situations and can elicit a sense of connection to others, and important aspect in youth social development.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey design method. The survey instrument used was a validated questionnaire aimed at determining the use of the internet among senior secondary school students in Ede North Local Government Area of Osun State. Equally, interview was conducted on the Principals who are the Chief Executives of each school under study. The population of the study consists of all the Senior Secondary School Students from five secondary schools selected for the study as presented in the table below:

Table 1. Study Population

S/N	NAME OF SCHOOLS	ARMS	NO/ARMS	SUM
1	Timi Agbale Grammar School, Ede	4	40	160
2	C.A.C Grammar School, Ede	4	40	160
3	Muslim Grammar School, Ede	4	35	140
4	Command day Secondary school, Ede	3	30	90
5	Mapo Arogun Grammar School, Ede	4	35	140
	Grand Total =		690	

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section 1 contains students’ bio-data information while section 2 contains questions on the use of the Internet among the students and its effects. . The results of the study were analysed using simple percentages and tables. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw sample of three hundred (300) for the study therefore three hundred (300) questionnaire was drawn to elicit the needed information from the students of the five schools under studied. Out of the 300 questionnaire that was distributed, 289 were returned. This represents 96.33% response rate. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used for analyzing the questionnaires. The distribution is as indicated in the table below:

Table 2: Rate of Returned and Valid Questionnaire

S//N	Name of Schools	No. Distributed	No. Returned & Valid		Total
			Male	Female	
1	Timi Agbale Grammar School	65	27	35	62
2	C.A.C Grammar School	65	30	33	63
3	Muslim Grammar School	60	32	26	58
4	Command Day	50	28	20	48
5	Mapo Aro Grammar School	60	24	34	58
	TOTAL	300	141(48.8%)	148(51.2%)	289 (96.3%)



Rate of Returned and Valid Questionnaire

The rate of distributed, returned and valid questionnaire is presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Rate of distributed and returned questionnaires

From Table 1, out of the 300 questionnaires that were distributed, 289 were returned. This represents 96.33% response rate.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents according to Age Bracket

Schools	Age Bracket		Total
	10-15 years	16 –18 years	
Agbale Grams	41	21	62
C.A.C. Grams	35	28	63
Muslim Grams	22	36	58
Com. Day sec	29	19	48
Mapo Arogun	27	31	58
Total	154 (53.29%)	135 (46.71%)	289

From Table 2, 154 (5.29%) respondents are between the ages of 10 – 15 years, while 135(46.71%) fall between the age bracket of 16 -18 years.

Table 4: Availability of Internet Services in the Schools

Schools	Internet Availability
Timi Agbale	No
C.A.C. Grams	No
Muslim Grams	No
Com. Day Sec.	Yes
Mapo Arogun	No

Table 4 shows that only command day secondary school has internet facilities which is one out five schools representing 20%.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents on media of accessibility to the internet

Schools	Personal computers	Cell phones	Cybercafé
Timi Agbale	2	1	12
C.A.C. Grams	0	5	12
Muslim Grams	0	11	18
Com. Day Sec.	7	38	9
Mapo Arogun	1	17	21
Total	10(6.49%)	72(46.75%)	72(46.75%)



Table 5 indicates the distributions of respondents based on the source they use in accessing the internet. The use of cell phones and cybercafé have 46.75%, while the use of personal computer returns only 6.49%. This shows low access to personal computers by the students.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents according to Frequency of Internet Usage

Schools	Frequency of Usage	
	Regularly	Not Regularly
Timi Agbale	9	6
C.A.C.Grams	9	9
Muslim Grams	16	13
Com. Day Sec.	21	33
Mapo Arogun	24	14
Total	79 (51.30%)	75 (48.7%)

N = 154

Table 5 shows that 51.30% of the Internet users among the students use it regularly, whereas 48.7% do not use it regularly. This is a clear indication of low usage of internet.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents on how they got to know about using the Internet

Schools	Friends/Classmates	Mass Media	Teachers	Personal Effort
Timi Agbale	4	7	2	2
C.A.C. Grams	7	3	1	7
Muslim Grams	15	3	3	8
Com. Day Sec.	14	7	2	31
Mapo Arogun	9	12	3	14
Total	49 (31.82%)	32 (20.78%)	11 (7.14%)	62 (40.26%)

N=154

Table 7 shows that majority of the respondents (40.26%) got to know about using the Internet through their personal effort, followed by 31.82% who were made to know its use through friends/classmates. Only 7.14% got to know about it through their teachers. This may be as a result of lack of ICT facilities in their various schools.

Table 8: Distribution of Respondents on the purpose of using the Internet

Schools	News	Commercials	Entertainment	Academic	Relationships	Sports	Others
Timi Agbale	4	2	6	1	2	-	-
C.A.C. Grams	3	3	6	4	2	-	-
Muslim Grams	9	3	8	7	1	1	-
Com. Day Sec	18	1	32	22	2	-	-
Mapo Arogun	14	5	25	7	-	1	-
Total	48	14	77	41	7	2	0

N=154



Table 8 indicates various purposes of using the Internet by the respondents. Main purpose is for Entertainment, followed by News and Academics. Only few of the students use the Internet for online relationships and supports.

Table 9: Frequency of Visiting certain Sites by the Respondents

A=Always, NA=Not always, NAA=Not at all N=154

Schools	Mail sites			Gambling sites			Pornographic sites			Social networking sites			Games sites		
	A	NA	N	A	N	N	A	NA	NAA	A	NA	NA	A	N	NA
Timi Agbale	2	2	8	-	2	8	6	-	8	10	1	2	10	-	2
C.A.C. Grams.	4	4	10	2	6	10	3	3	12	13	1	4	15	-	3
Muslim Grams.	10	5	10	6	5	9	1	7	12	16	5	5	13	6	4
Com. Day Sec.	12	22	12	3	5	34	1	4	42	23	22	-	19	27	2
Mapo Grams.	11	12	13	4	5	28	7	16	14	29	11	1	25	10	4
Total	39(25.33%)	45	53	15(9.74%)	23	89	18(11.68%)	30	88	91(59.1%)	40	12	82(53.25%)	43	15

Table 9 indicates the frequency of visiting various sites by the respondents. Majority of the respondents [59.1%] make use of social networking sites followed by the use of games sites [53.25%] and mail sites [25.33%] while pornographic and gambling sites are [11.68%] and [9.74%] respectively.

Table10: Distribution of respondents on the effect of Internet on their academic lives

Schools	Positively	Negatively
Timi Agabale	12	3
C.A.C.Grams	12	6
Muslim Grams	22	7
Com. Day Sec.	48	6
Mapo Grams.	28	10
Total	122(79.22%)	32(20.78%)

N=154

Majority of the students, representing 79.22% responded that the use of Internet has positively affected their lives, while some 20.78% responded that the use of Internet on them is the reverse.

Table 11: Internet Services that catch the Students' Attention



Schools	Entertainment	Internet Chatting	E-mail	Religious	Academics	Online dating
Timi Agbale	6	4	2	3	4	-
C.A.C. Grams	7	-	2	5	5	-
Muslim Grams.	11	6	8	4	2	2
Com. Day Sec.	43	34	35	24	18	3
Mapo Arogun	16	8	2	4	11	2
Total	83(53.90%)	52(33.77%)	49(31.82%)	40(25.97%)	40(25.97%)	7(4.55%)

N=154

Table 11 shows various services that catch the respondents’ attention on the Internet. The most prominent among these is entertainment (53.90%), followed by Internet chatting (33.77%) and e-mail (31.82%). Religious and academics take 25.97% each. The least on the rank is online dating (4.55%). The choice of “entertainment” can be connected to the need to satisfy their social curiosity, a major characteristic of the youthful age.

Table 11: Distribution of Respondents based on the Time of the Day Spent on the Internet

Schools	School hours	Evening	At night
Timi Agbale	-	8	7
C.A.C. Grams	-	15	3
Muslim Grams.	3	11	15
Com. Day Sec.	-	36	18
Mapo Arogun	4	18	16
Total	7(4.55%)	88(57.14%)	59(38.31%)

Table 11 above indicates that 57.14% of the respondents use the Internet in the evening time, having worked tirelessly at school and needed to rest for some time at home. So also 38.31% use the internet at night when they should be sleeping and get refreshed for the next day academics activities.

The Interview Responses

From our interaction with the Principals of all the schools under study, it was clear that only the Command Day Secondary School has computers and internet service available for the use of the student. There were ten computers but are not all of them are functional for students’ use, couple with unstable and unreliable internet facilities. It should be noted that all the principals established the fact that the National Policy on Education include in the curriculum computer science as a subject which they offer, only in theory since there is no provision for computers except the ones they use in the Principals’/ administrative offices.



Discussion of the Findings

The study revealed that the level of Internet usage among the youth is still low in this part of the country. Only 154 students, representing 53.29% across the 5 Senior Secondary Schools use the Internet, whereas 135 students, representing 46.72% do not use the internet. From the 154 students that use it, only 51.30% use it regularly, whereas 48.7% do not use it regularly. The reason is attributed to non-availability of computers in all the schools under study except for the Command Day Secondary School as investigated under interview. However, it should be noted that Command Day Secondary School has the highest percentage of Internet users with 94.74% of the total respondents and with Timi Agbale Grammar School as the least with 25% from the total respondents who use or access the internet from sources other than the schools. Findings also revealed that the purposes of using the Internet among the students in order of importance are: Entertainment, News and Academics. Only few of the students use the Internet for online relationships and supports. This is corroborated by their response on the kinds of Internet services that they find most fascinating as 83 of the 154 respondents prefer entertainment to other internet services. This could be attributed to their youthful age when, naturally, they are always curious about their social environment.

The study further revealed that majority of the respondents (40.26%) got to know about using the Internet through their personal effort, followed by 31.82% who were introduced to it by their friends/classmates. Only 7.14% got to know about it through their teachers. This may be associated with lack of personal computers / ICT facilities in their various schools. However, getting to know the use of internet through friends may influence them to be visiting such uncultured sites. Majority of the students, representing 79.22% responded that the use of Internet has positively affected their lives, while with 20.78% respondents, gave negative responses. Also, the study showed that 57.14% of the respondents still use the Internet in the evening time, when having worked tirelessly at school needed to rest for some time at home. And 38.31% use the internet at night when they should be sleeping and get refreshed for the next day academics activities.

The use of the social networking and games sites by 59.1% and 53.25% respondents respectively may in one way or the other influence their social lives as well as academic performance either positively or negatively, depending on what they are actually doing on the sites. Visits to gambling and pornographic sites which are 11.68% and 9.74% respectively again revealed the negative influence the internet could pose on both the students and the society. The use of the internet for chatting with unknown people and online dating which carry 33.77% and 4.55% respectively could also expose the youth to the risk of internet bullying, sexual exploitations, initiation into witchcrafts among others, as pointed out by Lawler (2000).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that low Internet usage is recorded among the secondary school students in Ede North Local Government as most of them are yet to exploit this technological breakthrough due to non availability of computers and internet facilities in most schools under study. It was also concluded that the use of Internet has both positive and negative effects on the youths' development in Ede North Local Government Area. The negative impact could be attributed to the students' frequent visits to the social networking and games sites and night browsing. It was therefore recommended that stake holders especially educational administrators, should agitate for the procurement of computers, make teachers available and fully implement the content of National Curriculum of Education, (2004) on teaching of computer education as ICT has become considerably indispensable in keeping with the dynamics of social change and demands in education. Also, computers allocated for students' use should not be under 'Lock and Key' (i.e. in the



principal's office). They should be made available to students for practical use and properly maintained. Teachers should be encouraged to attend seminars/workshops to training and retraining as technology keeps changing and its use has become an indispensable tool in the education sector. By this students will be much guided in the use of the positive aspects of the internet which will later in live develop them into good citizens. Finally, government should provide internet (wireless) services with uninterrupted power supply to various schools as this will enhance both students and teachers access to global information.

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