


Chapter 12

Influence of Personal Characteristics and Motivation Factors on Internet Use: A Case of Postgraduate Students in Three Selected Nigerian Universities

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of personal characteristics such as age, gender, level of study, years of experience using the internet, internet self-efficacy, as well as motivation factors, which are perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, perceived innovativeness in IT, and perceived usefulness on internet use among 404 purposively selected postgraduate students' in three selected universities in South-Western Nigeria: University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso; and Bowen University, Iwo. The result showed that some personal characteristics which are age, years of experience using the internet, and internet self-efficacy have significant relationships with internet use among postgraduate students in the selected universities. Furthermore, personal innovativeness in IT of postgraduate students significantly influenced their internet use in the selected universities. The result revealed there was a significant influence of both personal characteristic and motivation factors on Internet use in the selected universities.

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INTRODUCTION

The Internet is the worldwide network of interconnected computer networks using a standardised set of communication protocols called transmission control protocol/Internet protocol (TCP/IP), which together carry various forms of information (Fuchs, 2008). As an expansive information infrastructure, the influence of the Internet is not limited to computer communications alone. It also assists the increasing use of online applications to accomplish information acquisition, dissemination and retrieval; as well as electronic commerce, education, entertainment and community operations (Leiner, Cerf, Clark, Kahn, Kleinrock, Cynch, Postel, Robert and Wolff, 2010).

The Internet provides access to the most diversified source of information hosted by individuals and various organisations worldwide on a vast network of servers. Through the Internet, services such as e-mail; the World Wide Web (WWW); mailing lists; Instant messaging; video conferencing; newsgroups; and social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook and MySpace are accessed by users. Alade and Ogunsola (2008); Thanuskodi (2013) assert that the Internet, a powerful means of information dissemination, has become a major part of the research and academic activities. Hayat (2016) observed that the Internet has also become an academic resource for the majority of higher education students all over the world. It is a functional tool that has greatly changed the way students interact with others and share information about their studies. Many students use the Internet to accomplish a wide range of academic tasks: prepare course assignments, make study notes, tutor themselves with specialised multimedia, and process data for research. Most students exchange emails with lecturers, peers, and remote experts. They keep themselves up to date in their fields of study on the Internet, access newsgroups, bulletin boards, listservs, and websites from various organisations. Most students access library catalogues, bibliographic databases, and other academic resources in text, graphics, and imagery on the World Wide Web (Luambano and Nawe, 2004). They also use the Internet for entertainment, purchasing and dating (Aba, Beetseh, Ogban and Umogbai, 2015; Scannell, 2019).

Though the capabilities and functionalities of the Internet in learning, teaching and research continue to evolve in educational institutions (Ogunsola and Alade, 2016), the effective use of the Internet among students of the higher institution is seen as a complex, multifaceted process that involves not just technology but other factors. These factors have been categorised in IT literature as institutional, and systems factors (Buabeng-Andoh, 2012; Ogunsola and Adekola, 2019); and demographics and motivation factors (Rizwan, Kumail and Masood, 2016; and Ojo, Arasanmi, Raman and Tan, 2019). However, research on factors relating to Internet use is generally sparse and the few previous studies conducted on demographics and motivation factors influencing the Internet use were conducted in the United States

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