

Internet Entertainment and Collaborative Learning as Correlates of Internet Use among Undergraduate Students in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined internet entertainment and collaborative learning as correlates of internet use among undergraduate students in Enugu State, South East Nigeria. The study adopted correlation survey design and used two researcher developed questionnaires to collect data from a sample of 1,199 undergraduates in the federal and state universities in Enugu State. The instruments were face validated by experts in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, while their internal consistency was established using Cronbach Alpha. The findings indicate that there is significant positive relationship between the aforementioned social factors and internet use among undergraduate students. Based on these findings, the study made some policy recommendations, among which are that parents, guardians, academic advisers and counsellors should continuously encourage students to use the internet moderately for entertainment purposes so that they can have time for their studies, while students should endeavour to exploit internet facilities to engage in collaborative learning with classmates, lecturers and other professionals in order to enhance their performance.

Key words: Internet entertainment; Collaborative learning, Internet use; Undergraduate students; Correlation survey

1. Introduction

Undergraduate students are university students that are still studying to earn their first degree (Oyeboade, 2017; Alabi, 2013). Such students widely use the internet for various purposes through their mobile phones, computers, personal digital assistants, games machines, digital televisions, and other electronic devices. For instance, undergraduate students can use the internet for entertainment purposes like playing games, listening to music, watching movies and other entertainment purposes, or for learning purposes like completing school work, carrying out research, or collaborating with schoolmates and lecturers. Apart from entertainment and learning, they can also use the internet to maintain their social networks by chatting with other people and sending and receiving emails, or for economic purposes like shopping for goods and services and perform numerous business transactions such as online banking, hotel and air ticket reservation, and job seeking and application (Alio & Aneke, 2015;

Adiele & Olatokun, 2014). Hence, the internet confers enormous entertainment, educational, social, and economic benefits on these students, and has thus become an indispensable part of their everyday life (Choi & DiNitto, 2013).

The foregoing paragraph indicates that internet entertainment is an important social factor that can predispose undergraduate students to the use of the internet. Indeed, studies like Pavel (2012) and Macarie, Ștefănescu, Tebeanu and Chele (2012) indicate that these students often use the internet for entertainment purposes, especially in playing computer games, watching videos or movies, playing music, and watching football matches and other sporting competitions. Currently on our campuses, it is quite common to see many undergraduate students who use earpiece to block their ears while playing music or watching video on the internet for long hours. Sometimes, they assemble in their hostels to stream live football matches online, especially when their favourite teams in the English Premier League are playing live matches. Some studies in the extant literature, such as Gross (2004) and Anderson (2001), have also shown that many of these students use the Internet more for entertainment purposes than for educational purposes. However, of more concern to the present study is how internet entertainment relates to undergraduate students' disposition to use the internet. Hence, internet entertainment is investigated in this study as an important social predictor of internet use among undergraduate students in Nigeria.

Another social factor that could predict internet use among undergraduate students is collaborative learning. Collaboration involves working together to create something new in support of a shared vision (Gilbert, 2016). A key point here is that collaboration requires joint, not individual effort. Hence, collaborative learning may be explained in terms of the teaching and learning approach which involves students working together in order to solve a problem or learn something together (Laal & Laal, 2012; Lai, 2011; Sharratt & Planche, 2016; Roselli, 2016; Le, Janssen & Wubbels, 2018). Roselli (2016) further explained that collaborative learning promotes exchange and participation of each member in order to build a shared cognition. An essential component of collaborative learning is interpersonal communication, especially through internet-based digital media that predisposes the students to staying on the internet for long hours. In the collaborative learning environment, email and online chatting platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and other internet-based groups are used by students to disseminate information among themselves and with their lecturers. This means that