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COMPUTER AND INFORMATION LITERACY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDO AND DELTA STATES OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Computer and information literacy are essential skills which are crucial for success in educational institutions at all levels. The need for these skills becomes expedient due to the rapid technological change and proliferating electronic information resources in this digital age. This study investigates the computer and information literacy skills of secondary school students in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted while the multistage sampling technique was used to select 1000 students from twenty secondary schools in the two states. Questionnaire was the major data collection instrument used and it was complemented with observation. Findings revealed that though the students acquired computer and information literacy skills from friends and relatives, the level of these skills among the students are fairly good. The study recommended that computer and information literacy instruction should be incorporated into the curriculum of secondary schools to increase the students' skills.

Keywords: Computer skills, Information literacy skills, Internet search, Nigeria

Word count: 150

INTRODUCTION

Computer literacy implies knowledge and an understanding of computers and the ability to make use of them effectively. Computer literacy also encompasses the ability to turn on a computer, and also get involved with the manipulation of complex applications. According to McCartan in Selwyn (1997), the ability to use the computer as a multipurpose tool appropriately is regarded as computer literacy. Karasz, (1991), proposed that "computer literacy could be considered to mean processing the

understanding and skills necessary to live in a society that depends upon computer technology".

Secondary schools are expected to have Information literacy embedded in their school curriculum irrespective of the level of development in the country. According to Narayan(2005),"becoming information literate is an active process, requiring the seeking out of knowledge from multiple sources rather than passively receiving and repeating back facts, the teachers' role must evolve from the giver of knowledge into being more of the coach or guide" Information literacy should occupy an important role in the school curriculum. Although most schools in the developed countries have considered these skills in their curriculum, but those who are yet to attain a minimal level of information society are still lagging behind. The teaching of Information literacy is so important that the American President, Barack Obama, declared October of 2009 as information literacy month. Obama, (2009), stressed that:

> educators and institutions of learning must be aware of and adjusts to these new realities. In addition to the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic, it is equally important that our students are given the tools required to take advantage of the information available to them. The ability to seek, find, and decipher information can be applied to countless life decisions, whether financial, medical, educational, or technical

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to:

1. ascertain students acquisition of computer and information literacy skills;
2. find out the various methods used by students in acquiring information literacy skills; and
3. determine the level of usability of computer and information literacy skills by students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cromber (1997) asserted that in recent years, rapid developments in information technology have made considerable impact in every aspect of society that a working familiarity with I.T is becoming increasingly important especially in the workplace. In support of this assertion, Zin, (2001) posited that knowledge; skill and competence with computer technology is now an asset for those entering the competitive employment market. However, every aspect of life from education to socio-

cultural and entertainment activities are being influenced by the computer. Against this background, there is the need for computer and information literacy for students at various levels of education so as to have meaningful participation of this modern age of information technology. Therefore, enhancement of computer literacy is the top priority of the social economic and educational policy of many international organizations and individual countries (Makauskante, 2006).

Information literacy is a concept that has evolved because of recent efforts to move technology-based instruction and research to a level above the long-held concepts previously associated with "computer literacy". The focus of information literacy education being the development of students' abilities to construct, collect and analyze information in a way that provides the basis for effective decision-making (Hignite, Margavio, and Margavio, 2009).

Information literacy skills are a fusion of library literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, technological literacy, critical thinking, ethics and communication which when acquired would empower individuals to become independent life-long learners. (Parang, Raine and Stevenson, 2000). Information literacy has been defined as a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information" (ACRL 2000). It has also been defined as a self empowering attitude and commitment by individuals and people, at all levels of society, to seek, access, analyze, translate, transform information and create knowledge to solve problems to achieve personal, social, occupational and learning goals for the improvement of their quality of life (IFLA/ALP 2007).

Shapiro and Hughes (1996) define information literacy as "A new liberal art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure and its social, cultural, and philosophical context and impact." Information literacy is becoming a more important part of secondary school education. It is also a vital part of university-level education (Association of College Research Libraries, 2007).

Information literacy also is increasingly important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources. Because of the

escalating complexity of this use information ethically and legally

The rapidly evolving information landscape means that education methods and practices must evolve and adapt accordingly. Computer and information literacy must become a key focus of educational institutions at all levels. This requires a commitment to lifelong learning and an ability to seek out and identify innovations that will be needed to keep pace with or outpace changes Eisenberg, Lowe, and Spitzer (2004). Educational methods and practices, within our increasingly information-centric society, must facilitate and enhance a student's ability to harness the power of information. Key to harnessing the power of information is the ability to evaluate information, to ascertain among other things its relevance, authenticity and modernity. The information evaluation process is crucial life skill and a basis for lifelong learning (Fitzgerald, 1999). Evaluation consists of several component processes including metacognition, goals, personal disposition, cognitive development, deliberation, and decision-making. This is both a difficult and complex challenge and underscores the importance of being able to think critically.

Information literacy is of crucial importance to institutions of post primary learning. One reason is that some students entering colleges and secondary schools have limited knowledge of fundamental research, computer and information competency skills. The preceding school of learning barely exposes the students to computers and information literacy programmes. In addition, they may not have learned how to use the computer, effectively, locate information, or evaluate, synthesize and integrate ideas; or may not have learned how to use information in original work or give proper credit for information used. Libraries, which could have, serve as a rudimental channel of enlightening the students on these skills are never available or just a storehouse of books in developing countries like Nigeria. Although some students may have picked basic computer skills to send electronic mail, chat, and download music, they may not have learned how to effectively search the Internet or use databases effectively for academic work (Kavulya 2003; Rockman, 2004). Thus, Information literacy programmes reinforce the educational process. Students who follow such programmes have fewer difficulties in writing papers; are better able to identify reliable sources of information and assess available resources and services provided by the library; and learn how to understand and draft

bibliographical references and avoid plagiarism (Malliari and Nitsos, 2008).

One major significance of computer and information literacy in secondary schools is that: today's young generation is growing up in a digital world where so much information is produced by the minute. Students are continually being inundated with a great deal of information or "data smog". Simply being exposed to so much information does not necessarily make one informed. One needs to learn how to use the information effectively, efficiently and ethically. Wilson (2004) describes this young generation of people as "digital natives" who are accustomed to being completely connected to each other via cell phones and the Internet all the time. They have a strong preference for online sources, but may not be aware of the types of information available from the library's electronic resources, how they are organized, how they can be retrieved or how the quality of the information can contribute to their information needs. This situation affirms the need for computer and information literacy skills in higher education (Dadzie, 2009).

Furthermore, students at secondary schools or university level cannot learn everything they need to know in their field of study within a few years in schools. Hence, they need to acquire critical Information literacy skills in order to become independent lifelong learners. Indeed, Bundy (2004) stresses that the need for information literacy in higher education is due to the 'use by' date of 10 years of many degree programmes. He intimates that the rapid obsolescence of much of the content in professional first degree programmes makes knowledge of how to learn and how to find, evaluate and apply new information that much important. Students need to be able to build upon the foundation of computers and information literacy knowledge by successfully transferring this learning from course to course, and from secondary school life to later life.

METHODOLOGY

The target population of this study will be students from twenty (20) private secondary schools in selected parts of Edo and Delta states. Private secondary schools are chosen for the study because they are at the forefront of adopting information communication technology in their schools' curriculum, its acquisition as well as some connecting to the information superhighway called the Internet.

State	Number of Selected Schools and Respondents	Names of Selected Private Schools
Edo State	10 (500 Respondents)	Adun Group of Schools, Dynamic Secondary schools, Travis Christian College, Ogunbor Secondary school, Sacred Wealth Secondary school, Paragon Comprehensive College, Southern Academy Centre, Auntie Maria College, Obaro Educational Centre, University Preparatory secondary school.
Delta State	10 (500 Respondents)	Auntie Rose Schools, Abraka, May Flower, Sapele, May Flower Warri, Oria Secondary school, Abraka, St. Peter College, Asaba, Evangel Sure Foundation school, FYBEN School, Sapele, Fountain Group of Schools, Success Group of schools, Katherine Group of Schools.
Total	**20(1000 Respondents)**	**20**

Methodology adopted is the research design. Multi-stage sampling method and simple random sampling were both employed in the research. The research instrument was the use of questionnaires for data collection as well as observation to know the state of ICT facilities on ground in the selected schools. The random sampling method was used to select six local governments from the two states. Thereafter, a same sampling method was used to draw one thousand (1000) students from the schools in the chosen local governments. Consequently, purposive sampling was used to administered questionnaires to students. The questionnaires were

administered during class hours (with the permission from the school administrators), consequently leading to 100 percent response rate. The questionnaire was divided into sections which include demographic distribution of respondents, learning information and retrieval skills/acquisition method as well as rating of computer skills among students.

DISCUSSION /ANALYSIS OF DATA

Table 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS IN THE SELECTED STATES

Table 2: Distribution of Students According to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	518	51.8
Female	482	48.2
Total	**1000**	**100**

From Table 2, 51.8% of the students are male which shows a less significant difference with their female (48.2%) counterpart.

Table 3: Distribution of Students According to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
10-12	64	6.4
13-15	422	42.2
16-18	447	44.7
19-21	67	6.7
Total	**1000**	**100**

Table shows that students within the ages of 16-18yrs (44.7%) are the highest, while others are; 10-12yrs (6.4%), 13-15yrs (42.2%) and 19-21yrs (6.7%).

Table 4: Distribution of Students According to Class

Class	Frequency	Percentage
SSS1	303	30.3
SSS2	547	54.7
SSS3	150	15.0
Total	**1000**	**100**

From table 4, the distribution shows that more of the students (54.7%) are in SSS2, while others are SS1 (30.3%) and SS3 (15.0%)

Table 5: Learning Information Retrieval and Internet Skills

Questions	Yes(2)	No(1)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers encourage the use of Internet	748 (74.8)	252(25.2)	1.75	44
School teaches how to get information from Internet	466 (46.6)	534(53.4)	1.46	50
Weighted Averag =	**1.61**			

From the table, 74.8% of the students claimed that their teachers encourage the use of Internet while 46.6% indicated that their school teaches how to get information from the Internet.

Above all, the weighted average of 1.61 out of 2.00 shows that the learning information retrieval and Internet skills in the schools are good.

Table 6: Method of Internet Skill Acquisition

Method	Frequency	Percentage
Self taught	462	46.2
From school teachers	357	35.7
From friends	561	56.1
From families/relatives	531	53.1

Table 6: response shows that 56.1%, which represent the majority, acquire Internet skills from friends. This is followed by 53.1% claiming families/ relatives. While the other acquisition method obtained low percentage with 46.2% indicating Self-taught and 35.7% acquiring from Schools teachers.

In conclusion, the method of acquisition of Internet skills by students is more of learning through friends and families/relatives.

Table 7: Ratings of Computer and Internet Skills

Skills	Very good(4)	Good(3)	Average(2)	Poor(1)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Internet	332 (33.2)	304 (30.4)	265 (26.5)	99 (9.9)	2.87	.99
Computer	301 (30.1)	342 (34.2)	251 (25.1)	106 (10.6)	2.84	.97
Search engines	193 (19.3)	207 (20.7)	317 (31.7)	283 (28.3)	2.31	1.1
Weighted Average		**=**	**2.67**			

From table 7, it is shown that students do not have the skills in the use of search engines (mean = 2.3; SD = 1.1). Notwithstanding, students with good computer skills has the mean = 2.84; SD = .97 and that of Internet skills shows the mean = 2.87; SD = .99.

However, overall response, the weighted average of 2.67 shows that the students are fairly good in computer and Internet skills.

Table 8: Use of Search Engines for Information Searching

Search Engine	Very Often(4)	Occasionally (2)	Often (3)	Never (1)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Google	438(43.8)	227 (22.7)	218 (21.8)	117 (11.7)	2.99	1.06
Yahoo	230 (23.0)	188 (18.8)	204 (20.4)	378 (37.8)	2.27	1.19
Lycos	47 (4.7)	82 (8.2)	169 (16.9)	702 (70.2)	1.47	.83
Mamma	52 (5.2)	81 (8.1)	150 (15.0)	717 (71.7)	1.47	.85
Alta Vista	64 (6.4)	89 (8.9)	143 (14.3)	704 (70.4)	1.51	.90
Others	112 (11.2)	100 (10.0)	223 (22.3)	565 (56.5)	1.76	1.03
Weighted Average				**=**		**1.91**

Table 8 shows that students do not use Yahoo (mean = 2.27; SD=1.19), Lycos (mean = 1.47; SD = .83), Mamma (mean = 1.47; SD= .85), Alta Vista (mean = 1.51; SD = .90 and others (mean = 1.76; SD = 1.03). However, students make use of Google as the mean = 2.99; SD = 1.06.

Therefore, the weighted average on the whole is mean = 1.91 out of 4.00, indicates that students do not significantly make use of search engines.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and their interpretations in this study, it is concluded that computer and information literacy skills are taught in the schools used as case study. Also, teachers teach and encourage the students how to manipulate computers and retrieve information from the Internet. Most students, according to the findings also acquire computer and information literacy skills from their friends and relatives. It is however recommended that computer and information literacy should form part of the secondary schools curriculum in the two states investigated and in other secondary schools in Nigeria. Again, computer laboratories should be built and equipped in secondary schools where such are not yet available.

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