
Internet Usage among Rural Dwellers in Nigeria: A Case Study of Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State

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ABSTRACT

The study x-rays internet usage among rural dwellers in Nigeria using Ukwuani local government area of Delta State as case study. It employs the descriptive survey design. Data are collected through a structured questionnaire entitled: Internet use questionnaire (IUQ) and a guided interview items administered on two hundred and seventy (270) respondents. Data are analyzed using the simple percentage and frequency counts. The results reveal that most of the rural dwellers in Ukwuani Local Government Area use google search engine especially for online examination registration, browsing the web pages, and job searching. Consequently, it is recommended that more intensive training on the use of the internet should be put in place for the rural dwellers to enable them acquire more information and communication technology (ICT) skills to improve their usage of the internet.

Keywords: *Internet Usage, Rural Dwellers, Google.*

INTRODUCTION

Libraries and information centres are agents of economic, social, political and educational changes in the community where they exist. They provide unique and essential services that are accessible to everybody irrespective of race, age, educational background, sex and political inclination. Information is a highly priced resource in an economy. Olowu (2004) observes that information plays the most critical role in the policy process and by extension in governance. Information is a major driver of the economic change, restructuring, business, affecting skills and employment, contributing to growth and facilitating the

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opening of markets through the wider and faster flow of information and knowledge. The internet is a global system of interconnected computer network (Opoku-Mensah, 2007).

The study of the internet is undoubtedly one of the most significant technological developments of the late 20th century. Its revolution has become one of the greatest changes as well as the fastest growing consumer services the entire world has ever experienced since the industrial revolution. Zickuhr, Rainic, and Purcell (2013) note that the internet has already had a great impact on how people find and access information as well as how the rising popularity of e-books, electronic projects, e-journals and others helped transform library users reading habits. Internet is relatively fast and accessible from anywhere. Kumah (2015) studies the use of the library and internet and notes that the internet is a source of information available to graduate students and concludes that majority of the students use the internet. The concept of internet is dependent on access to information as well as sharing the accessed information. Veltman (1997) notes that one of the paradoxes of human nature is the frequent use of new technologies to spread up old task rather than as tools to explore new responsibilities. Echezona and Ugwuanyi (2010) note that the internet facilitates information exchange across the globe. The internet has indeed great and pervasive effects on every aspects of human live; education, occupation, health, communication, transportation, and many others.

The rural dwellers rarely use the internet for online shopping, banking, and stock trading undertakings. Therefore, the use of the internet among rural dwellers is imperative. Adomi (2005) reports that in the rural communities, there is lack of telecommunication infrastructure, lack of electricity and reluctance on the part of service providers, cybercafé operators and other stakeholders to extend their internet services in Nigeria. However, Clement (2020) states that as of December 2019, Nigeria had more than 126 million internet users. Second-ranked Egypt had 49.23 million users. The majority of web traffic in leading digital markets in Africa originated from mobile devices in Nigeria, one of the countries with the biggest number of internet users worldwide, 74 percent of web traffic was generated via smartphones and only 24 percent via personal computer devices. This is connected to the fact that mobile connections are much cheaper and do not require the infrastructure that is needed for traditional desktop PCs with fixed-line internet connections.

On the importance of internet, Stefanidis and Tsakonas (2015) note that libraries must be equipped with the right technology infrastructure, such as internet connectivity. People all over the world now have access to the information



superhighways better referred to as the internet. As a result, a wide range of information is achieved electronically.

The internet creates a global research village potentially and practically, thus functions as a global network of computers which led to the concept of globalization and localization. The use of internet has completely changed the method of access to information for the business world, the library as well as the individual. Aniogbolu and Nwabudike (2017) note that the internet is a global systems of interconnected computer network that use the standard internet protocol suite to serve billions of users worldwide. They added that the internet has revolutionized the computer and computer communications and that the invention of the telegraph, telephone, radio, and computer sets the stage for this unprecedented integration of capabilities. On the issue of rural communities information provision, Issa and Salman (2011) study rural information provision for National Development using Kwara-North Senatorial district as case in point observe that the development of a nation can hardly be achieved without a corresponding development of its rural segment considering the fact that 75% to 80% of the inhabitants in developing countries are in the rural areas.

Ideal library in modern times acquires, processes, stores, preserves, organizes and disseminates information and knowledge in both print and electronic format. Libraries are social mobilization as well as agents of educational, social, economic and political changes in the communities where they exist. They promote the economic, social, educational, effective and efficient delivery of information to all and encourage cooperative efforts among urban and rural communities. However, it is observed that there is dearth of information and communication technology in rural communities. These are connected with the problems of location, poor accessibility and related absence of infrastructures in the communities. Thus, remote rural communities, and even poorly accessible urban suburbs and hinterlands are usually less informed, backward and retarded in learning, and indeed enmeshed in information ignorance and lost from the mainstream of current news and information and modern information and communication technological development. This study x-rays the information needs of Ukwuani rural dwellers and scope of available internet services in the area. This study is designed to find out the sources and types of internet services available to Ukwuani rural dwellers, and the associated problems in the provision and use of internet services in the area as well as identify strategies for better service provision in order to improve the flow of information and enhance learning and acquisition of internet skills



METHOD

Ukwuani local government area as the empirical setting of this study is one of the local government areas created in Delta State in 1991 by the then General Babanigida led military government. It was carved out from Ndokwa local government area. Ukwuani local government is made up of 16 communities. These are Obeti, Umuaja, Akoko, Umutu, Ebedei, Obioluku, Obioeocha, Owah-Abbi, Obinomba, Obiedike, Obiaruku, Umukata, Ezuokpe, Esunmi, Umuebe and Amai communities. The culture of the people is traditionally known as the Ndokwa culture, and her occupation is mostly farming and trading. The area has some good access roads but suffers from the absence of other critical infrastructures. It is actually rural in nature. The research methodology used for collecting data for this study consists of visits to the rural communities in Ukwuani local government area. Two research assistants were also used to facilitating the collection of data. Questionnaires and interviews were the instruments used for data collection. The respondents include a total of 270 respondents which is made up of community leaders, traders, farmers and civil servants among others. The data were analyzed using frequency count and simple percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table 1 is on the breakdown of the age distribution of respondents. Table 1 shows that the age range of 18-38 years (48.15%) dominated the respondents of the study. Others include 38-40 (33.34%) and 59 and above (18.51%). The age range of 18-38 years, 130(48.15%) dominated the respondents of the study. Others include 38-40, 58 (33.34%) and 59 and above, 50(18.51%), the male respondents dominated the number of female respondents.180 (66.6%). and 90(33.4% respectively. The table 2 highlights the Sex Distribution of Respondents. The table 2 shows that male respondents dominated the number of respondents. 18 (66.6%). The table 3 shows the educational distribution of respondents.

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents are secondary school leavers, 130(48.15%) of the respondents. Others are higher school leavers, 90 (33. 34%) primary school leavers, 50(18.51%) and respectively. The study also shows that majority of the respondents are secondary school leavers, 130(48.15%) of the respondents. Others are higher school leavers, 90 (33. 34%) primary school leavers, 50(18.51%) and respectively. The table 4 shows the occupation of Respondents. Table 4 reveals that student dominated the occupation of the respondents, 79(29.25%). This followed by trading 76(28.15%), farming 62(22.96), Artisans 43(15.92%) and civil servant, 10(3.72) of the respondents.



The study also revealed that students dominated the occupation of the respondents, 79(29.25%) of the respondents. This followed by trading, 76(28.15%), farming, 62(22.96), Artisans, 43(15.92%) and civil servants, 10(3.72) of the respondents. The table 5 shows the frequency of use of the internet by respondents. The table 5 shows that most of the respondents use the internet frequently. Table 6 shows that most of the rural dwellers use the internet mostly for playing games and for browsing the web. Table 6 shows the breakdown of the reasons for using the internet. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option. Table 7 deals with the means of acquiring internet skills. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option. Table 7 shows that the rural dwellers acquire internet skills mostly through formal education and computer training respectively. Table 8 shows that most rural dwellers use the google, gmail and yahoo to access the internet. Table 8 shows the search engine mostly used by rural dwellers. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option. Table 9 is on the problems associated with the use of internet. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option. The table shows that although the rural dwellers are aware of the existence of the internet and are also interested in the use of the internet but the problems of absence of internet services providers, lack of skill, poor internet infrastructure, lack of fund, and lack of regular power supply, militate against the use of the internet in the rural communities of Ukwuani local Government Area of Delta State.

The study also shows clearly that most of the respondents use the internet frequently and that most of the rural dwellers use the internet mostly for playing games and for browsing the web. The study further shows that the rural dwellers acquire internet skills mostly through formal education and computer training respectively. From the results of the study it is clear that although, most rural dwellers use the google, gmail and yahoo to access the internet and are aware of the existence of the internet as well as interested in the continuous use of the internet, they are faced with the problems of absence of internet services providers, lack of proper skill, poor internet infrastructure, lack of fund, and lack of regular power supply.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Options	Responses	Percentage
18-38	130	48.15
39-58	90	33.34
59 and Above	50	18.51
Total	100	100

Source: Survey, 2019



Table 2: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Options	Responses	Percentage
Male	180	66.6
Female	90	33.4
Total	270	100

Source: Survey, 2019

Table 3: Educational Distribution of Respondents

Options	Responses	Percentage
Primary School Leavers	50	18.51
Secondary School leavers	130	48.15
Higher School leavers	90	33.34
Total	100	100%

Source: Survey, 2019

Table 4: Occupation of Respondents

Options	Responses	Percentage
Student	79	29.25
Farming	62	22.96
Trading	76	28.15
Civil Servant	10	3.72
Artisans	43	15.92
Total	270	100

Source: Survey, 2019

Table 5: Frequency of Use of Internet

Options	Responses	Percentage
Daily	90	33.33
Once a week	50	18.52
Not often	80	29.63
Not at all	50	18.52
Total	270	100

Source: Survey, 2019

Table 6: Reasons for Using Internet

Options	Responses	Percentage
Online Examination Registration	130	48.14
E-mails	100	37.04
Job Searching	50	18.51
Browsing	270	100
News	150	55.55
Entertainment	100	37.04
Games	270	100
Total	270	100

Source: Survey, 2019



Table 7: Means of Acquiring Internet Skills

Options	Responses	Percentage
Formal education	270	100
Computer training	250	92.59
Colleagues	30	11.12
Friends	30	11.12
Use of manual	20	7.40
Total	270	100

Source: Survey, 2019

Table 8: Search Engine Mostly Used

Options	Responses	Percentage
Google	250	55.55
Gmail	270	100
Yahoo	270	100
Ask me	50	18.51
Others	150	55.55
Total	270	100

Source: Survey, 2019

Table 9: Problems Associated with the Use of Internet

Options	Responses	Percentage
Lack of Awareness	-	-
Lack of Skill	270	100
Poor Internet Infrastructure	200	74.07
Lack of Fund	270	100
Lack of Interest	-	-
Absence of Internet Services Providers	-	-
Lack of Regular Power Supply	270	100
Total	270	100

Source: Survey, 2019

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is a known fact that rural communities are faced with the problems of absence of internet services providers, lack of proper skill, poor internet infrastructure, lack of fund, and lack of regular power supply. In the light of these, the government should encourage the use of the internet in rural communities by equipping libraries in rural communities with the right internet technology. This agrees



with Stefanidis and Tsakonas (2015) when they note that libraries must be equipped with the right technology infrastructure, such as internet connectivity. The government should intensify the training and retraining of rural dwellers in ICT skills in order for them to be competent in the use of the internet. The power supply should be improved to ensure regular power supply. The government should also ensure adequate funding of in rural libraries.

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