

A Study on Students Attitudes towards Internet

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Abstract

Although there has been much publicity about the Internet, empirical research focusing on it is still relatively sparse. Much of the existent research on the Internet has been predicated upon data collected in Europe and America. To date, there is a dearth of published studies on the Internet in the Asian context, especially in India. This study examines the students' attitudes towards Internet and their usage patterns. Data were collected from Post graduate students (MBA & MCA) through questionnaire.

Introduction

Internet use is spreading rapidly into daily life and directly affecting people's ideas and behaviour. Internet has an impact in many areas, of course, including the higher education system. Internet is playing a key role in learning process and preparing students to effectively participate in the 21st century workplace

Internet use has become a way of life for the majority of higher education students all around the world. For most college students the Internet is a functional tool, one that has greatly changed the way they interact with others and with information as they go about their studies. They use computers to accomplish a wide range of academic tasks. Many students prepare course assignments, make study notes, tutor themselves with specialized multimedia, and process data for research projects. Most exchange emails with faculty, peers, and remote experts. They keep up to-date in their fields on the Internet, accessing newsgroups, bulletin boards, and web sites posted by professional organizations. Most access library catalogs, bibliographic databases, and other academic resources in text, graphics, and imagery on the World Wide Web. Researchers have proposed that attitudes toward Internet may directly affect Internet adoption and use.(Grabe, et al., 2001)

Review of Literature

The education sector has been an early adopter in the world, continually pushing the capabilities of the network and its applications. Internet has grown from an exclusive environment populated by technophiles and a typical communication tool and information delivery. Internet became a suitable tool to support various activities of universities, ranging from research on teaching of routine administrative tasks (Bell, 2000). Almost all students at various levels have certain experiences of using the Internet. With the wide application of teaching Internet-based learning, these students may have more and richer learning environments based on Internet. However, studies on the fundamental nature of student use of Internet have not kept pace with their Internet use (Metzger et al., 2003). Good performance of university students using the Internet in education encourages students to contact teachers, encourage cooperation among students, encourages active learning, gives feedback of time, emphasizes time on task, expectations of positive communication and respects diverse talents and ways of learning. The Internet has become such an integral part everywhere and a potent communication tool, it is worth investigating exactly how the Internet fits into the daily lives of staff and students of educational institutions. There is a strong expression of the availability 24 / 7 on the Internet, i.e., every hour of every day, allows students and scholars for study and research, self-determination of the normal hours of work (Kashif et.al., 2010). The main function of the Internet is used in most conference rooms is an instrument to gather information for teachers and students and has become one of the first places where teachers and students will collect data on almost any subject, whether at home or at school, college or University (Aydin, 2001). There is a lot of training available in the form of texts, primary sources, images, articles, online periodicals, multimedia presentations, books, maps, databases of almost anything you can think of almost any topic. Also, teachers and students are quite competent in the access to this information (Iakushina, 2002; Shiveley & VanFossen, 2000).

In a recent study conducted by Asan and Koca (2006) concluded that majority of the students have positive attitudes and they concentrated on positive and consciousness about Internet.

Great percentage of students was thinking that Internet is a universal digital library, provides easy life, and is a fastest way to reach knowledge. In this study, 34 items had been considered in the instrument, 11 items related with personal information and 23 items with internet attitudes to analyse the tendencies of students towards Internet at Oman.

A similar study by Kashif et.al., (2010) has considered 17 items to analyse students' attitude towards the uses of Internet, and found that students uses internet primarily for educational and research purposes. The study also concluded that students feel comfortable using the Internet.

Sample:

The sample size consisted of 200 students pursuing Post graduation programs from Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh). Potential respondents were students of Business and Computer science both men and women aged between 20 – 25 Years.

Instrument and Measures:

The scale of 49 items to measure students' attitude towards Internet application was developed by Slate et al., (2002) and utilised by Usun (2003) to quantify undergraduate students' attitudes towards educational uses of Internet, Aytakin (2004) reduced these items to 23 to study the attitudes of graduate and post graduate students towards Internet. For this research study, questionnaire was designed by considering 18 items adopted from Kashif et al., (2010), which are appropriate in present situation. The questionnaire consists of two sections, the first section contained general information about respondents including gender, age and education. Whereas the second section consists of 15 items related to students' attitude toward using Internet. These items were measured on Likert type 5 – point scale, where 5 was most degree of agreement and 1 was least degree of agreement. The statistical package Minitab15 was used for analysis.

Procedure:

The questionnaire was self-administered and distributed among the 200 respondents. Before giving the questionnaires, all questions were explained to the participants so that they can easily complete the questionnaire. Only one questionnaire was given to each respondent. Due to the time constraints, lack of resources and budget, a convenience sample was used for the study.

Results and discussion

This section discusses the results of the study and compares those with earlier studies.

Results

Table 1 reveals that out of 200 respondents 137 or 68.5% are male and 63 or 31.5% are female respectively. The table also shows the age group data. Out of 200 respondents, 162 or 81% are in between 20-22 years, and 38 or 19% are in between 23-25 years. Further the table shows the Courses the respondents pursuing. 100 respondents were from MBA Course and 100 respondents from MCA Course.

The table 2 demonstrates that with respect to, “knowledge of Internet is essential for students”, 165 pupils have agreed with the statement, where as 16 are neutral and 19 are disagreed, (Mean = 4.115, S.D. = 0.0835). It is evident from the analysis that majority of the students are towards that knowledge of Internet is essential for students. In the response to “Internet is important source for research”, out of 200 respondents, 153 are agreed with the statement, whereas 9 are neutral and 38 are disagreed with the statement, (Mean = 3.865, S.D. = 1.059). The degree of agreement regarding the third statement that “Internet is easier to use than Library”, data depicts that 177 students are agreed, 6 are neutral and whereas 17 respondents disagreed with the statement, (Mean =4.075, S.D. = 0.7403). The table further analyze that with respect to “Internet to be as informative as teachers”, 156 participants are agreed with the statement, whereas 38 pupils are disagreed with the statement, (Mean = 3.88, S.D. = 1.0363). It is evident from the above analysis that majority of the students find Internet to be as informative as teachers. The statement “Internet is enjoyable than written material”, data shows that 43 students are agreed, 12 are neutral, whereas 145 are disagreed with the statement, (Mean = 2.21, S.D. = 0.9558). The survey of 200 respondents with respect to “use of Internet for learning fun”, the analysis reveals that 164 subject are agreed with the statement, 6 are neutral, and 30 are disagreed, (Mean = 4.005, S.D. = 0.9307). So, more than two third of respondents are agreed that Internet is used for learning fun. The analysis further shows that, “Using the Internet as an integral part of the educational process”, majority of respondents i.e. 159 reply positively, where as 6 are neutral and only 35 disagreed with the statement, (Mean = 3.835, S.D. = 0.9135). The degree of agreement regarding the statement, “feel comfortable in using Internet”, majority of subjects i.e. 163 reply positively, whereas 6 remain neutral and only 30 respondents are disagreed with the statement, (Mean = 3.9, S.D. = 0.8577).

The table 3 reveals that with respect to “Internet contains useless information” 165 students are disagreed with the statement, where as 10 are neutral and only 25 are agreed, (Mean = 1.96, S.D. = 0.8572). It is evident from the analysis that majority of the student are opposing the statement that Internet contains useless information. In the response to “Internet is difficult to use”, Out of 200 respondents 56 are agreed with the statement, where as 47 are neutral and 97 students are disagreed with the statement, (Mean = 2.715, S.D. = 0.8935). The degree of agreement regarding the third statement that, “I don’t like using Internet for education”, data depicts that 113 students are agreed, 4 are neutral and where as 83 respondents are disagreed with the statement, (Mean = 3.24, S.D. = 1.2247). When asked that “Security concern about using the Internet”, the analysis reveals that 147 students are disagreed with the statement, 8 are neutral, where as only 45 are agreed with the statement, (Mean = 2.205, S.D. = 1.0159). So more than two third of respondents are disagreed that they are security concern about using the Internet. The analysis further shows that, “Internet connection is slow”, majority of respondents i.e. 121 responded positively, where as only 6 are neutral, and 73 disagreed with the statement, (Mean = 3.4, S.D. = 1.1421). The degree of agreement regarding the statement “Browsing and accessing the Internet is confusing”, data shows that out of 200 subjects 152 are disagreed with the statement, 10 are neutral, where as 38 students are agreed, (Mean = 2.135, S.D. = 0.9526). Finally 135 students disagreed to the statement “Internet browsing is irritating”, where as 35 are neutral and 30 are agreed with the statement, (Mean = 2.245, S.D. = 0.9342)

Discussion

The results of this study are in line with Slate et al., (2002), Usun (2003), Aytakin (2004) and Kashif (2010) and coincide with remarkable consistencies. In all these studies, students agreed strongly that the Internet was as important as other research tools, knowledge of Internet is essential for students and feel comfortable in using the Internet. In this study, the sensitivity of respondents is more as compared to previous studies. Aytakin(2004) results shows that Internet is a universal library, similarly Selwyn et.al., (2000) results shows that Internet is easier as compared to use of the library, which is the third most popular item, in focus group interviews with 77 students in two UK universities. Selwyn et.al., (2000) found that, many students did not feel altogether at ease with using the Internet as an educational tool. In contrast, the present study observed that more than two third students find Internet using easier.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This research was conducted on the students' attitude towards Internet applications. The research objective is to identify factors influencing student Internet use. Information was gathered through the questionnaires on students using the Internet. The study found that the internet is an essential knowledge for students. As the respondents are from MBA and MCA courses, Internet provides extensive information on the required assignments, and thus covers many dimensions that meet educational needs.

Students find the Internet more informative as teachers, and majority of students feel comfortable in using the Internet. 88.5% respondents responded that the internet is easier to use than a library and is important for their education. Respondents enjoy Internet more than written materials. Respondents also expressed great confidence and satisfaction in using Internet for educational purposes.

Recommendations

It is recommended that students should align their potential for significant and positive use of the internet. Students must realize that the Internet is a medium. It is recommended that students should not waste their time on useless activities. Basis Internet tools may be introduced to students in their early stages of education. The benefits of Internet should be disseminated to all the students. Institutions should provide better infrastructure to facilitate students. Universities should organize courses that build up internal capacity of students require to use Internet in efficient and effective way. The courses organized by Universities should highlight the use of Internet research techniques and course materials, syllabus, results etc., should be situated on the web to facilitate access by students.

Contribution

As we are living in the era of modern technology, there must to address the future needs and requirement of students. The present study will enable future policy makers to provide internet facilities to future generations. The study reveals that computer and Internet is playing vital role in educational projects and especially for research. It is easier to search through Internet as compare to sit in the library and collect information. The present study will send a strong message to publishers and writers to shift their attention from hard binding books to soft copies of their finding and make available on the Internet so that more people can get access to their invaluable information. A vast majority of the student is using

Internet in their educational life. This study provides a solution to elderly and handicapped people, who can access the information in their area of interest, find interesting things according to their own choice for reading and enjoying, without help. The Internet use will encourage our younger generations to make use of modern technologies to accomplish their ambition, by saving time and resources that is going to be scarce in 21st millennium. The present study will encourage those students who do not use Internet because of various reasons like not having enough knowledge, afraid of computers or Internet, Insufficient skills.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study is conducted during September '2012 in Tirupati, an educational hub in Andhra Pradesh, the sample may be inadequate to make clear predictions of the study. Since, the present study considered PG level students, this sort of study may be conducted at higher levels like software professionals, business executives, Research scholars, professors etc. The same may be conducted at graduate level students too. Another important issue in this regard is privacy. The research has shown that privacy is a paramount concern for Internet users. The future researcher can further explore and deal with the privacy issue. The last direction for future research is to address misuse of Internet or Internet addictions by young students. It is very serious problem and affects both students and parents. Instead of stop using Internet it is the duty of the future researcher and scholars to find out safe and sound ways of using Internet.

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Table No. 1

Table No. 1

Gender	Freq.	%	Age	Freq.	%	Course	Freq.	%
Male	137	68.5%	20-22	162	81%	MBA	100	50%
Female	63	31.5%	23-25	38	19%	MCA	100	50%
Total	200	100%	Total	200	100%	Total	200	100%

Table No. 2

Items	Frequency Distribution with respect to students attitude towards the Internet Usage (N = 200)						
	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std. Dev
<i>Knowledge of Internet is essential</i>	84	81	16	12	7	4.115	0.0835
<i>Internet is important source for research</i>	78	75	9	18	20	3.865	1.0590
<i>Internet is easier to use than library</i>	61	116	6	11	6	4.075	0.7403
<i>Internet is Informative as teachers</i>	76	80	6	20	18	3.88	1.0363
<i>Getting information from written material is more enjoyable than Internet</i>	7	36	12	82	63	2.21	0.9558
<i>Internet for learning fun</i>	78	86	6	19	11	4.005	0.9307
<i>Internet is an integral part of education</i>	54	105	6	24	11	3.835	0.9135
<i>Comfortable in using Internet</i>	55	108	7	22	8	3.9	0.8577

(5 – Strongly agree, 4 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1 – Strongly Disagree)

TABLE NO. 3

ITEMS	Frequency Distribution with respect to students attitude towards the Internet Usage (N = 200)						
	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std. Dev
<i>Internet contains useless information</i>	7	18	10	90	75	1.96	0.8572
<i>Internet is difficult to use</i>	9	47	47	72	25	2.715	0.8935
<i>I don't like using Internet for education</i>	53	60	4	48	35	3.24	1.2247
<i>Security concern about using Internet</i>	12	33	8	78	69	2.205	1.0159
<i>Internet connection is slow</i>	54	67	6	51	22	3.4	1.1421
<i>Browsing the Internet is confusing</i>	9	29	10	84	68	2.135	0.9526
<i>Internet browsing is irritating</i>	12	18	35	77	58	2.245	0.9342

(5 – Strongly agree, 4 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1 – Strongly Disagree)