

STATUS ON USAGE OF ELECTRONIC-RESOURCES BY STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the status on the usage of electronic resources by students at the College of Business Education (CBE). Specific objectives were to find out the factors that promote students to use internet services, to find out the extent to which CBE students are accessing electronic resources, to identify challenges that CBE students are facing in the process of accessing electronic resources. The study was carried out at CBE main campus library in Dar Es Salaam. Simple random sampling was used to select 100 respondents. The study employed case study design and used a multmethods. Data were collected by using questionnaires, interviews and personal observations. The findings reveal the lack of awareness of the educational e-resources offered at the institution, students not using the academic and learning resources. Students were facing several challenges such as, the lack of connected computers, lack of searching skills, tendency of frequent closing computer labs. Finally, the study recommends improving the computer labs' environments, guaranteeing a stable wireless connectivity, frequent computer repairs and other related ICT equipment and finally the College has to ensure the reliable standby generators.

Key words: *Electronic Resources, Internet Usage, CBE Students, ICT, OPAC, Tanzania.*

INTRODUCTION

Today, the use of internet in the educational organizations develops an important component that promotes the use of electronic resources for an individual to meet information requirements. The internet facilitates all educational institutions to retrieve informational materials from a broader audience around the world via different world webs (Cronin, 1998). Culver, Gerr & Frumkin (1997) underscore that, the internet is an instrument which enables students in different locations all over the world to access digital materials that are connected to many fields of specializations. For example, students in academic institutions may be able to access relevant information, regardless of the context, time and distance where the material is located. The internet has to be regarded as an essential tool for promoting the quality of teaching and learning for students, government, private organizations and other academic institutions .

Consequently, the use of the Internet is emphasized since it save time, labour and distance thus diversifying communication between distant regions in a country and worldwide. The Internet has broken down communication barriers between cultures in a way that could only be dreamed of in earlier generations. In addition, Richardson (1998) underscored that, the use of the internet had great effect to the information society that promotes the use of e-commerce, e-teaching, e-healthcare, e-security, and other community collaborations.

The College of Business Education has invested much in ICT and enabled the presence of Internet connectivity to facilitate teaching and learning processes in all campuses. The origin of the College of Business Education (CBE) is closely linked to the history of the nation itself. It was soon after Independence on 9th December 1961, that the newly independent state found itself in need of trained personnel to undertake Commercial and Industrial activities in Tanzania. At that time, there were very few citizens with commercial education and expertise. The need to train citizens in a commercial education contributed much to the birth of a business education training institution in the country.

In order to develop professionals in business studies in Tanzania, the parliament of Tanzania in 1965 approved the Business College Act, No. 31 in (1965). The said Act gave the College its legal status as an autonomous institution to become the hub that promotes development of Business education in the Country. The mission of the College was/is to train highly knowledgeable and practice oriented professionals in Business Administration, Accountancy, Marketing, Procurement and Supply Management, ICT, Entrepreneurship, Industrial and Legal Metrology and other related fields at a lower level to higher levels. Further, the College undertakes relevant Basic and Applied Business Research, providing consultancy and business advisory services as a way of promoting business development in Tanzania. The CBE Dar es Salaam Campus has a total population of over 7000 students. This population includes both degree and non-degrees students. The College has networked computers in three computer labs, library, and in almost every office in the College. The purpose of the College is to invest much in ICT for enabling the presence of internet connectivity to facilitate teaching and learning processes. It is important to realize that, the internet enables scholars to use electronic- resources to meet their information needs.

Despite the fact that, CBE Campuses are connected to the Internet, the extent to which students have benefited from the use of internet to access electronic resources is not clearly known. Similar studies conducted in other institutions of higher learning in Africa revealed that the majority of students have limited access to computers due various factors/reasons such as; shortage of computers (Usun, 2004), poor internet connectivity; limited knowledge for using the internet (Sivaraj & Esmail, 2007) hinders the students access and budget limitations in the institutions of higher learning (Wema & Manda, 2003). Therefore, the failure or lack of the internet uses, especially in the developing countries like

Tanzania may obstruct the quality of education, acquisition of new knowledge, and development of new research.

The study was guided by three objectives.

- i. To find out the factors that promote students to use internet services;
- ii. To find out the extent in which students access electronic resources to meet their information needs;
- iii. To identify challenges that students are facing in accessing electronic resources in the College.

Significance of study

The paper expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the literature on utilization of e-resources usage in academic institutions, also the paper intends to notify on the needs, tools and factors that promote the uses of electronic Resources in Academic Institutions. Moreover, the findings will generate information of value to librarians and information professionals on the importance of promoting E-Resources available. Moreover, the findings will come up with strategies that would be useful in the development of information infrastructures that supports the usage of e-resources in academic and researches

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been the higher rate in the acquisition and uses of e-resources in Tanzania. However, through these initiatives some resources obtained free and others are offered at subsidized costs through support from the Consortium of Tanzania University Libraries (COTUL) contributions. The College of Business Education (CBE) is among the members who contribute to these resources. Through this cooperation the College has been able to exploit over forty five (45) electronic resources that include: HINARI; OARE; AGORA; AJOL; AIM; Medline; PERii; and so many others. The Consortiums' member contribution was sought since donors stopped funding e-resources subscriptions projects in Tanzania. Among other.

COTUL roles were to initiate and promote resource sharing among consortium members in all aspects relating to resources, including human, material and infrastructures and facilities.

Luambano and Nawe (2004) viewed the electronic resources as one of the many formats that the library collects to support the entire library collection. Therefore, the electronic resource refers to any work encoded and made available for access through the use of a connected computer networks. This includes data available by remote access and direct access (fixed media). On the other hand, David (1994) informed that, electronic resources have two dimensions. First dimension is the remote access

via computers and second dimension is the direct access resources such as CD-ROM, disks, cassettes, etc. However, the use of direct access resources depends on the availability of computers.

The internet has undoubtedly had a great significance to every person. Many students in this generation rely on internet to do a lot of different tasks. For example, in academic institution, students are found holding sorts of connected gadgets using the internet for learning and for entertainment. In connection to that, Wema and Manda (2003) indicate that, today, many students in academic institutions are using the internet to facilitate research and complete their assignments.

According to Usun (2004) since the internet is full of information, most students in learning institutions use the internet as a source of education. For example, Kiondo and Nawe (2004) put clear that, via the internet, conducting online programs has become possible. Thus, online program allows students to have easy access to distance education studies. In connection to that, Nwangwu, Janet and Olayiwola (2009) provided the best example of students in the open university environments that the Internet plays a fundamental role in education as 60 percent of North American schools and universities use the internet while 45 percent of Americans benefit with the distance education (NEA, 2000).

Furthermore, the effective internet use promotes “learning structure” as it organizes learning and teaching (Watson & Watson, 2007) and internet supports education and innovations (Kim & Lee, 2008). Similarly, internet in an academic institution like CBE is expected to promote the information sharing among the scholar’s and other community in different places. This, sharing may be done through emails, online group’s discussion, and online question–and–answer sessions. Likewise, the integration of ICT in learning strives to build an easy learning environment for a reliable information access amongst communities (Sabherwal & Newman, 2003). In this regard, the effective information sharing activities are expected to be done without limitations, especially when students are using networked computers. Several empirical studies have been conducted all over the world regarding the factors/reasons that influence the students’ use of e-resources in educational institutions. A study conducted by Nwangwu, Janet & Olayiwola (2009) on the factors influencing the use of the internet reveals students’ age, gender, education levels as among the factors that affects the use of a variety of ICT tools as well as influences sharing information. For example, the study revealed that, students below 24 years old employed chat rooms mostly. However, educational trend drives and dominate the use of the internet in academic institutions, but it varied within student levels, faculties and student specializations.

A study conducted by Luambano and Nawe (2004) revealed that, the internet is one of the important components of ICTs that supports education. In this regard, if the internet is used effectively in academic institutions can result to changes in locating information and improve the quality or standard

of education. In line with that, Kiondo and Nawe (2004) underscore the role of the internet that, it has enabled scholars to exchange information widely by using various gears such as emails, websites, blogs, Wikis and other 2.0 tools. A survey conducted by Thanuskodi (2014) on the use of electronic resources by faculty, students and research scholars of Monomania Sundaranar University indicates that, most of the faculty members and research scholars (67.14 %) were familiar with the use of digital resources.

A study conducted by Usun, (2004) on the use of internet and e-resources by the students of business management; students in business administration of Sambalpur University, India revealed that, most of the students were in favour of the internet usage, because it saved time, less expensive, had the reliable information, and more preferable tools that is inevitable for managing education as well as research practices.

In the same manner, Sivaraj and Esmail, (2007) examination of the internet users in the Manipur university library indicated that, the research scholars were motivated to use the electronic resources during their research projects rather the use of printed resources.

A study on the internet access conducted by Kalemera (2014) in East Africa countries indicate the extent of internet access in mobile phone by drivers as: Kenya- 50%; Rwanda-(20%) ; Uganda (20%); and Tanzania (11%). Comparison of ICT access between Ethiopia and Burundi was shown to be on the low side. Approximately 20% used the internet and more than 25% used mobile phones. However, the use of mobile phone in developing countries did not support academic activities, but rather people used the popularity of social network sites (SNS), such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Mumtaz (2000) study on the knowledge management in academic libraries, and the study, revealed that, due to the impact of globalization, economic competition and revolutions of ICT, libraries are undergoing tremendous changes. Since the ICT tools, techniques of knowledge management systems, internet, web resources, digital libraries have made significant changes and increase the existing library systems and services provided. This change was noted by Swain and Panda (2009) when assessing the use of electronic resources in business school libraries of an Indian state. The finding revealed that, the attitudes of information users are gradually shifting from the printed document to e-resources. Also, this attitude influences the changes in the information seeking behaviour of these users, particularly in the higher learning institutions where the need of e-recourses is higher. Also, the shift from printed to electronic resources has also needed to go concurrently with instructing users and imparting of new knowledge related to searching skills and create awareness on the available electronic sources (Swain and Panda, 2009). In line with that, Singh, (2009) and Ani (2010) studies suggest that, the Information Communication Technologies (ICT) have brought a tremendous change by its nature, boundaries and information structures.

As far as the information seeking behaviour changes is concerned, the scholars' are restricted by the geographical location, finances and lack of the wide links to the additional resources or related content. Specific to Tanzania, Wema and Manda (2003) noted that, budget constraint is among the factors that lead Libraries and information centres fail to acquire relevant and update educational materials as well as to subscribe to various e-resources. Consequently, it is expected that, a proper usage of internet helps students to substitute or compensate for the scarcity of learning resources. Supported by Wema and Manda (2003); Selim (2007); Sivaraj and Esmail (2007); Usun (2004) and Watson (2007) the internet creates an environment in which students access up-to-date data, from many scholarly databases and other information depositories around the world.

Ruzgar's (2005) study on the assessment of the purpose of internet usage and learning via Internet, revealed some challenges related to internet usage such as slow Internet connectivity, inadequate networked computers, lack of access to low cost printers in the library, lack of using advanced search strategies of most databases and lack of awareness for most of the available e-resources. The literature has highlighted the extent to which students are accessing electronic resources, the factors fostering the use of internet and finally, the challenges that may hinder the full utilization of e-resources.,

However, much literature has reviewed the importance internet as a significant educational tool, but it has not been fully utilized in Tanzania and in Africa generally. The identified challenges in the literature are: Affordability of ICT facilities, lack of ICT policies and poor internet speed or connectivity, inadequate (computer workstations), lack of awareness (poor and or inadequate searching skills, power surges and off-campus access, poor telecommunications infrastructure, limited IP address and password due the lack of trust (Mutula, 2001; David, 1994; Usun, 2004; Watson, 2007; Ani, 2010; Wema & Manda, 2003.) These studies were conducted for the purpose of identifying the status of internet use in developing countries practically in Tanzania, little is known about the internet use in the case of the College of Business Education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A cross- sectional research design was employed in the study. This research design allows a researcher to collect data at once in a single unit. The nature of this study dictates the adoption of such kind of research design. The study was conducted in Dar Es Salaam. The selection of the College of Business Education (CBE) was based on the fact that, it is an academic institution which has invested much in computers and internet connectivity to support academic and administrative use. The population of the study involved only students. Purposive and convenience sampling techniques was used to select respondents. Hundred (100) respondents from various fields were involved in the study. Primary data were collected, through the use of questionnaires, interviews and observations. A questionnaire was

used to collect information related to factors promoting the use of internet services from students found in the library and in the computer labs. While interviews were used to obtain information about challenges that students were facing in accessing electronic resources. Structured interview questions guided the face to face conversations with students. Observation was also conducted in computer laboratories and library where students were accessing electronic resources to identify the extent to which e-resources are utilized. The data collected was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data, while the content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Background Characteristics of Respondents

Due to the sampling technique adopted, majority of students were male (60%); the implication of the finding is that, at CBE-DSM male students are using the internet than female student. This may be caused probably by the time factor. The researcher observed that the College internet connectivity was stable in the evening when the female students could have been engaged in other activities.

Age Category of Respondents

Distribution of students according to age category is shown in Table 1. Although the age category was not among the objectives of this study, the Author found it important to understand the age distribution from the fact that ages influence the effective internet uses (Ani, 2010).

Table 1: The Age Category of Respondents involved in the Study N=100

Ages	Frequency	Percentage
Ranged 18-28 years	68	68
Ranged 29-39 years	30	30
Ranged 40-50 and above	12	12
Total	100	100

The majority of students who were found in either computer lab or in a library using internet services were the young students aged from 18-28 years old. Most of these students found using the internet were non- degrees that is those pursuing certificate and Diplomas. It was observed that the young students who were found using internet in the labs was accessing other information not related to academic, such as Facebook, e-mails etc.

However, the majority who was found using the internet were from the ICT department (35%). The implication is that, ICT students were found using internet probably because of their nature of specialization which allows them to have enough knowledge with computers; another reason perhaps

is because there no restrictions, especially when ICT students are using computer labs as their normal classes unlike to students of other departments.

To address the first objective on the factors that promote students to use internet services; results in Table 2 were obtained.

Table 2: The Age Category of Respondents involved in the Study N=100

Ages	Frequency	Percentage
Communication purposes	48	48
Entertainments(video& music)	30	30
Education purposes(searching materials)	12	12
E-resources(access databases)	06	06
Others	02	02
Total	100	100

Table 2 reveals that, the majority of students were motivated to use the internet for communication (48%) (emails, skype etc) and entertainments 30%(video, music etc.) The implication here is that, students mostly preferred the use of modern technologies for other activities but less in academic purposes. The reason for student at CBE was appeared to be no incentives to use the internet form their teachers, absence of developed system to motivate the students to use the e-resources. On top of all this, the College system does not currently invest much money in ICT equipment that satisfy the needs.To address objective two on the extent of students' access of electronic resources to meet their information needs, results in Table 3 were obtained.

Status of Internet Usage at the College

Table 3: Status on the Usage of the Internet to support Academic Knowledge N=100

Do you use the internet	Respondent	Percentage
Yes	90	90
No	10	10
Total	100	100

Table 3 reveals that, the majority of students were using the internet (90%). The implication here is that, students mostly preferred the use of modern technologies regardless of the challenges there they were encountering. It was also observed that, due to the lack of ICT facilities in the College, only few students managed to use their personal gadgets like laptops, mobile phones to be connected.

Types of Electronic Resources used by Students

Table 4: Types of electronic Resources Used by Students at CBE N=100

Types of Electronic resources used	Frequency	Percentage
E-mails	40	40
Electronic books	6	6
Electronic journals	8	8
Scholar database	4	4
Internet sites	10	10
Searching engines	30	30
Others	2	2
Total	100	100

Table 4 revealed that, the majority of students were using internet mostly for e-mails services, and searching other information through different searching engines, like Google, Yahoo and others. The purpose of the questionnaire was to establish if students were aware with all e-educational resources such as electronic journals and other academic databases which were subscribed by the College funds. That the results show that most students were not familiar with the available e-resources subscribed by the College. Although it is obvious that, students have enough skills to use the internet and some of them to afford the use of personal gadgets, still they fail to utilize e-resources fully due to the lack of awareness, searching skills and limitation of passwords and other technicalities.

Challenges that Students are facing during the use of the Internet

To address the objective three concerning the challenges that students face in accessing electronic resources in the College, the factors are shown in Table 5. This was in response to questionnaire items posed to students in order to establish a number of challenges that may hinder the effective use of electronic resources.

Table 5: Challenges faced by CBE students during the use of the Internet N=100

Challenges that students are facing	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of computers	40	40
Poor internet connectivity	6	6
Labs are closed most of the time	8	8
Labs are used as normal classes	14	4
Power instability	10	10
Lack of searching skills	20	20
Too much restriction in computer labs and library	2	2
Total	100	100

The findings reveal that, the major challenge facing students at the College is inadequacy of ICT facilities including computers. Other challenges highlighted were lack of searching skills, using computer labs as normal classes, insufficiency of the power supply, poor internet connectivity limits the degree of the content of e-resources to be accessed and other human restrictions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to assess the status on the use of electronic resources in the College of Business Education, the study was guided by three objectives; to find out the factors that promote students to use internet services; to find out the extent in which students access electronic resources to meet their information needs; to identify challenges that students are facing in accessing electronic resources in the College. A total of 80 questionnaires were distributed and returned for analysis of which twenty (20) students were interviewed. The findings revealed that the majority involved in the study were male students and the majority who were found in either computer lab or in a library using internet services was the young generation students aged from 18-28 years old, this was also noted by Ani, (2010) that, the internet and e-resources, assists to serve time for the young generation who seeks information.

Also, the study revealed that, the factors promote the student usage were communication 48% (emails, skype etc) and entertainments 30% (video, music etc. and Education purposes motivate students' internet usage for less than 30% while educational activities fostering internet use for less the 30%. This situation was also notified by Nwangwu, (2009) that, the higher educational levels is associated with less use of the internet to support their learning and teaching, particularly in the developing countries. And to make it clear a study by Mumtaz, (2001) concluded that, internet in the educational environment should not be used for leisure and entertainment rather for the academic and research purposes.

Moreover, the Status of Internet Usage at the College was revealed to be 90%. However the implication here is that, students mostly preferred the use of modern technologies regardless of the challenges they were encountering. For that matter, it is expected for the College to invest much in the use of internet due the benefit of it. However, the study shows that, the majority was not using the internet to support the academic and this is because the students are not aware with the available educational e-resources available at the institution, lack of ICT facilities as the results of only few students managed to use their personal gadgets like laptops, mobile phones to be connected.

Finally, the study highlighted some challenges hinder to the effective use of internet at the college such as; lack of searching skill, using computer labs as normal classes, insufficiency of the power supply,

poor internet connectivity and restrictions in the access. This is contrarily with Kiondo and Nawe (2004) the absence of limitations enhances the internet is to serve labour and distance that diversifying resources easy and fast among distant regions. Decreasing the internet use barriers in the societies allows a community to use of electronic-journals, Electronic commerce (E-Commerce), E- reference services, educational information retrieval services, Online Public Access Catalogues (OPAC) , e-healthcare, e-security, and the community collaborations (Kalemela, 2014))

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations were made as follows;

The management of the College of Business Education should improve the computer labs creating a suitable environment, sufficient tools that will motivate students to use internet to seek electronic resources mostly. Besides, there is the need to strength the wireless connectivity and to have a frequency repair of computers, air conditioners, internet cables. As advocated by Ani, (2010) that, the effective connectivity facilitates the proper access and necessary maximization of the use of e-resources. The searcher believed that the stable connectivity will facilitates female to increase usage as it was noted in the evening engaged in other domestic activities.

The librarians and other information professionals to improve their marketing strategies so as to create customers' awareness and user motivations. The same recommendation also was made by Luambano and Nawe's (2004) who asserted to have a marketing strategy that will meet the new needs.

The librarians also needed to plan and provide the effective user education periodically to keep them aware with the available E-resources as well as impart searching skills and skills for evaluating information from the internet sources.

This and other libraries need to have operational strategies for meeting the pressure of providing internet services to all clientele regardless their interest, age, and educational background. Therefore, it is appealing for an increase in budgetary resources for library resources, particularly printed and non-printed resources.

The CBE Management is needed to create the suitable and more user friendly environment and information infrastructures that support for easy access and sharing of e-resources among community in order to attracts student and other scholars in cultivating their information needs.

Finally, it was noted that, majority of libraries in developing countries like Tanzania has limited facility to tap the new technological environments and are financially constrained in upgrading to automated or establish digital systems. Therefore, academic libraries, particularly in CBE library has to make efforts and ensures a tangible strategy that enhances to the effective uses of the electronic

resources offered with the collaboration with other libraries through the Consortium of Tanzania University Libraries (COTUL) contributions.

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