USES AND GRATIFICATIONS OF THE INTERNET AMONG UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS UNDERGRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to ascertain how UNILAG students use the internet and the motivation behind the usage pattern. The study was guided by four research questions that sought to establish the level of internet usage among the students; major activities carried out on the internet; the gratifications derived from the online activities and; whether or not their internet activities have any link with the gratification they hoped to derive from such activities. The study is anchored on the uses and gratifications theory which perceives audiences to be active, rather than passive users of media and their messages. The survey research design was used, and data was collected using a questionnaire targeted at 220 respondents selected using the multi-stage sampling technique. The study's findings were analysed using SPSS and presented in basic frequency tables and percentages. Findings from the study showed that all UNILAG undergraduates use the Internet with 75. 4 per cent of them using it on daily basis with the major access point being the mobile phone. The most practised internet activity was social networking with a 35. 5 per cent response. A majority (93.1%) said their online activities are informed by the gratifications they hope to derive, while 6.9 per cent disagreed affirming the relevance of the uses and gratifications theory. This study recommends that UNILAG students should maximize the opportunities provided by the internet for academic purposes.

Keywords: internet, uses and gratifications, new media, UNILAG, Nigeria

The advent of the internet has revolutionised the communication sphere. Right from the 1990s when the internet began to permeate global information landscape, its use has become a topical issue among researchers. Internet is basically

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a communication network through which people can share news and information easily amongst other uses. Across the world, no other communication vehicle or technology has spread among people as fast as the internet. It is one of the greatest advancement in the world of information technology and has become a useful instrument that has fostered the process of making the world a global village. The number of internet users has increased worldwide to 4 billion with a majority accessing through smartphones and mobile devices (McDonald, 2018)

Olatokun (2008) observes that the internet is a global network of computers linked together over large distances and it was created by the American military as a means of communication. He posits that it has been in existence since the 1950s and up until the mid-to late eighties, mainly commercial organisations and educational institutions used the internet. This was due to high costs. The rapid development of technology has seen improvement in communication links and a lowering of costs. The implication is that the internet is now more widely available. The availability and the process by which an effort to use the internet through an electronic communications system is carried out is referred to as internet access. The internet has had a far larger and more serious impact on our society than the introduction of television; possibly as great an influence on history as the industrial revolution or the printing press (Osunade, 2003).

Ojedokun (2001) cited by Olatokun (2008) notes that the internet has broken down barriers of communication and information access. It is fast, reliable and does not have restrictions on content or format. It also has a limitless range of facilities, which assist users to access almost infinite amounts of information. It offers the opportunity for access to up-to-date research reports and knowledge globally. It has thus become an important component of electronic services in academic institutions (Ojedokun, 2001).

Otunla (2013) observes that the internet allows a wide range of materials to be accessed by people across the globe irrespective of their location. It is also a publishing medium which allows access to a large pool of information which was not possible in the past, thereby reducing the information gap between students in developed and developing countries. It is user friendly, fast and enables access to information from anywhere around the world with no time limitation. Apart from using the internet to obtain academic information, it is also a platform where students socialize with friends and family. Today, the internet has become a medium that many students cannot do without because they can read and listen to news, watch videos, chat with family and friends, send and receive mails and do many other things. The issue of internet access may no longer be a problem to undergraduate students, as many telecommunication operators now provide access via mobile phones or modems that can be connected to laptops.

The growth of the internet in Nigeria has been on the increase. Adeya and Oyeyinka (2002) however observe that the level of internet access in Nigeria is far below that of developed countries. In late 2003, Nigeria had a total of 750,000 internet users (ITU, 2004). As at June, 2009, the figure increased significantly to 11 million internet users, representing about 5,400 per cent increment from 200,000 in December, 2000 (Internetworldstats, 2009). However, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has announced a record 103 million Nigerian internet users as at 2018. This shows high penetration rate of the internet among Nigerians.

The ubiquity of the internet has given media audience more sources from which they can access information - magazines, television, radio, books, and the internet. Users may now access all these mass media options and more online. It is important to note that users of the internet use these sources for different reasons. They may choose mass media to satisfy their communication, information, escapism, companionship or entertainment needs. In addition, consumers are now more in control of their information sources and therefore it is necessary to assess who, why and for what reasons the internet is used. This information is vital to marketers and advertisers attempting to reach a specific market, for news media personnel informing mass audiences about current events, and for businesses identifying and reaching their target markets (Stafford & Stafford, 1998, p. 174).

Mass communications researchers and theorists have been interested in determining why audiences choose to use a particular medium and how they use this medium to gratify their needs for decades. Researchers have linked mass media and their audiences' media uses to the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The thrust of the Uses and Gratification theory is the assumption that media audience are active, and thus select or expose themselves to the media that meet their specific needs. Hence, the theory assumes that media use is in tandem with the expected benefits or gratifications the user hopes to achieve (Turner, 2010).

Scholars (Jagboro 2003; Otunla, 2013; Udenze & Azeez, 2010) have identified high internet penetration among students who use it for various reasons such as academics, news and information, entertainment, escapism, etc. On the backdrop of the tenets of the Uses and Gratifications theory, this study sought to determine the internet usage pattern among undergraduates of the University of Lagos as well as ascertain whether or not their internet activities are triggered by the gratifications they hope to derive from them. This study will not only contribute to the pool of existing literature in this field, it will also be a timely work in ascertaining the relevance of the Uses and Gratifications theory in the internet age.

Statement of the Problem

It is generally agreed that that the internet has become an established platform for multi-faceted activities. These include academic-related activities, online shopping, social networks, online videos, online gaming, downloads, electronic mails, internet banking, among others (Otunla, 2013). Scholars (Harrel, 2000; Olatokun, 2008) have identified other uses such as for maintaining social contact, reducing personal insecurity, gaining valuable support, seeking advice, accessing current news and escaping reality. When streamlined to how students use the internet, studies have shown that the primary use of the internet was for communication, entertainment, and leisure [e.g., reading and sending e-mail, online chatting, instant messaging, playing and downloading music and games and reading newspapers] (Ojedokun, 2001).

Interestingly, despite the numerous literature on the usage pattern of the internet among students, there is a dearth of empirical research on whether the usage pattern is directly triggered by the gratifications they hope to derive from its use or whether it is based on the options presented to them by the internet. This study thus sought to fill this gap. It is a known fact that the uses and gratification theory traced to Blumler and Katz (1974) has become a resounding voice in the field of media audience research. This is because the theory does not only assume that media audience are active in reception of media messages, it also bequeaths to them the ability to select media platforms that directly meet their identified needs. When the theory was advanced in 1974, the prevalent media of communication in vogue then were newspapers, magazines, radio and the emerging television. The internet was yet to assume the strong communication role it currently holds. Thus, this study was geared towards ascertaining the internet usage pattern among University of Lagos (UNILAG) undergraduates as well as establishing whether their online activities are inspired by their need for specific gratifications. The study will thus be a key contribution towards examining the relevance of the Uses and Gratifications theory in the internet age.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the internet usage rate among University of Lagos undergraduates?

2. What are the online activities carried out by University of Lagos undergraduates?

3. What specific gratifications do University of Lagos undergraduates derive from internet use?

4. To what extent are online activities carried out by University of Lagos undergraduates triggered by gratifications to be derived?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Online Activities and Gratifications among Students

Undergraduate students like people in the general population access and use the internet for various reasons (Otunla, 2013). Gagnon and Krovi (2000) carried out a survey of internet usage among undergraduate management science and operations management students and found that most respondents were searching for information/data gathering, retrieving articles, reading and downloading information etc. Tella's (2007) findings revealed that majority of the respondents used internet between 1-5 hours per week. A similar study conducted in New Zealand found that 73% of the students access the internet on a daily basis while 25% access it at least once in a week (Waldman, 2003)

On its part, Jagboro's (2003) study on internet usage in Obafemi Awolowo University shows that 53.4% of students used the internet for research materials and 39.7% for course materials. Similarly, Kumar and Kaur's (2005) study reveals that 69.4% use internet mainly for educational purposes and 34.7% use internet for entertainment purposes. Udende and Azeez (2010) conducted a study on internet access and use among students of University of Ilorin and found that 80.8% respondents admitted that they mostly use the internet for academic purpose, 14% used for mails while 4.9% used it for fun. In the same vein, Awoleye, Siyanbola and Oladipo's (2008) findings reveal that 70% of students use the internet mostly for e-mail, 65% use it for information search and 20% use for on-line chatting; all of which were found to have a significant impact on their academics and social life. Anasi's (2006) study on internet use pattern of undergraduate students at the University of Lagos showed that internet use has very high impact on the academic/career-related activities of the students

Korgen, Odell and Schumacher's (2001) research show a connection between study habits and internet use. Students who dedicated more hours per week studying are also logging more hours on-line than those who devote less time to their academic work. For instance, those who study for 25 hours per week registered the highest mean score of 11.29 internet hours while those who study for 5 hours per week have internet hour mean score of 4.85.

On internet experience, Bankole and Babalola (2012) found out that 34.8% of undergraduate students have been using the internet for 5-6 years. Similarly, Fasae

and Aladeniyi (2012) also reported that 65% had more than 3 year's internet use experience. Otunla (2013) found that students' major access to the internet are through their mobile phones (52.7%), 33.9% access it from their laptop using modems, 8.1% home network, only 6.4 % access through the university digital centre while none accessed through the University Library. The purpose of using the internet by the respondents is mainly for academic purpose with the highest mean score of 3.40; meanwhile on line shopping is the least purpose of use with the mean score of 1.70. On using the internet for various academic activities, respondents used internet mainly for searching out information on their assignments with a mean score of 3.60 followed by finding information for their research work with mean score of 3.16. The least is searching for information on universities with the mean score of 1.77.

Biradar, Rajashekhar and Sampath (2006) conducted a study on internet usage by the student and faculty members in Kuvempu University. Results of the study indicated that 42.1 % students use the internet twice a week and 31.2% of faculties use it every day. The majority of students as well as faculty staffs use internet for study and teaching purposes. It was also used to replace the traditional classroom lectures or supplement traditional teaching methods. Other findings were that internet usage enables students to communicate with other students abroad and thus share each other's ideas, knowledge, experiences and cultures. More importantly, capability of internet use enhances skills and potentials of students which assist them in their studies. In a related study of internet access and utilization by the students at the University of Botswana, it was found that inadequate computers denied students access to internet facilities (Ojedokun, 2001).

Ani (2010) investigated the extent and level of internet access as well as the use of electronic resources by undergraduate students in three Nigerian Universities. Ani's findings revealed that undergraduate students use the internet extensively. However, access to the internet was hampered by lack of adequate infrastructure. Due to the poor infrastructure, the majority of the respondents relied on private, commercial internet services, and cybercafés. It was also found that internet education for the respondents is needed for the use of electronic resources and databases. The results show that most of the students use this technology for course-related reading and research even if they are new users of the internet.

According to Berson (2000), it is a universal fact that the use of internet has a great impact on the student's academic career. Internet usage has become very popular in many areas as well as in education in recent years. Accordingly, internet access in schools has increased greatly over the last 20 years (Berson, 2000, p. 486-499).

These studies show that more students are relying on the internet more for their academic needs than any other need.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
The Uses and Gratifications theory

Baran and Davis (2009) observe that the Uses and Gratifications theory came about within the framework of the revival of the limited effects paradigm of the mass media. Citing Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974), Baran and Davis (2009) note that the theory assumes that the audience is active and their media use is goal oriented. The theory further assumes that the initiative in linking need gratifications to a specific media choice rests with the audience member. This means that the use of media by the audience is directly linked to the expected gratification. It also assumes that media compete with other sources for need satisfaction. This aligns with Joseph Klapper's (1960) assertion that the media function through a nexus of mediating factors and influence. Thus, the needs of the audience is one of the mediating factors and influence that the media contend with. The theory buttresses the fact that people are aware enough of their own media use, interests and motives to be able to provide researchers with an accurate picture of that need. This explains why they are most likely to search for media avenues that would gratify the identified needs.

In his analysis of the Uses and Gratifications theory, Griffin (2012) submits that the theory's fundamental assumption was revolutionary at the time Katz proposed it because prior to this proposal, the prevailing view was that audiences were passive targets waiting to be hit by a magic bullet (the media message) that would affect everyone in the same way. In uses and gratifications theory, audiences are seen as anything but passive. They decide which media they want to use and what effects they want the media to have. Audiences are strong; they play a pivotal role in determining how any influence of media will play out.

He stresses further that in the history of media theory, Uses and Gratifications theory is known for its deliberate shift away from the notion that powerful media messages have uniform effects on large audiences (passive receivers). Instead, the theory emphasizes the personal media choices consumers make to fulfil different purposes at different times. Just as people eat in order to satisfy certain cravings, uses and gratifications theory assumes that people have needs that they seek to gratify through media use. The deliberate choices people make in using media are presumably based on the gratifications they seek from those media. Thus, uses and gratifications are inextricably linked.

According to Cruickshank (2011), the Uses and Gratification theory places more focus on the consumer, or audience, instead of the actual message itself by emphasizing what people do with media rather than what media does to people. It assumes that members of the audience are not passive but take an active role in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. The theory also holds that audiences are responsible for choosing media to meet their needs. The approach suggests that people use the media to fulfil specific gratifications. This theory would then imply that the media compete against other information sources for viewers' gratification.

Matei (2010) argues that Blumler and Katz, who formulated some of the earliest conceptualizations of the theory, take a non-prescriptive and non-predictive perspective on media effects. They, according to Matei, postulate that individuals mix and match uses with goals according to specific context, needs, social backgrounds and so on. Thus, individuals are seen as active participants in the media consumption process. He also quoted Derek Lane who said that Uses and Gratification theory suggests that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. Thus users play an active part in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media use.

Uses and Gratifications theory in the Internet Age. What then is the relevance of Uses and Gratification theory in the age of the Internet? Because the approach was developed in the 1940s, there have been concerns over its relevance in the digital age. In the age before the internet, the odds were between the media and the audience but with the multiplicity of channels provided by the internet do people make use of such messages according to their preferences or are they overwhelmed by the ubiquitous nature of the internet and just subscribe to whatever it offers? These are the main contention under this issue. Quan-Haase (2012) argues that

> the digital landscape makes it clear that individuals employing multiple sources of information, are members of diverse and specialized interest groups, and access both online and via mobile applications a wide range of media. This proliferation of media types and sources suggests that different media outlets fulfil distinct and unique needs, making an analysis of the theory essential (par. 4).

The concept of demassification has lent credence to the relevance of the uses and gratifications theory in the age of the internet. Williams, Rice and Rogers (1988) defined demassification as the control of the individual over the medium which makes for a fair comparison between the new media and face-to-face interpersonal communication. Demassification is the ability of the media user to select from a wide menu. Chamberlain (1994) argued that we have entered an era of *demassification* in

which the individual media user is able, through newer technologies, to pick from a large selection of media, previously shared only with other individuals as mass media. Unlike traditional mass media, new media like the internet provides selectivity characteristics that allow individuals to tailor messages to their needs.

In addition, the concept of interactivity has significantly strengthened the uses and gratifications notion in its classification of users as being active (Ruggeiro, 2000, p. 15). The concept of interactivity in mass communication has been defined by McQuail (2005,) as the "capacity for reciprocal, two-way communication attributable to a communication medium or relationship…it allows for mutual adjustment, co-orientation, finer control and greater efficiency…" (p. 558). Williams, Rice and Rogers (1988) define interactivity as "the degree to which participants in the communication process have control over, and can exchange roles in their mutual discourse (p.10)

The conceptualization of asynchroneity by Ruggieo (2000) also lends credence to the relevance of the uses and gratification in the internet age. Asynchroneity refers "to the notion that an individual, with the internet, has the potential to store, duplicate, or print graphics and text or transfer them to an online web page or e-mail for another individual" (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 16). It can be added though that when a message is duplicated or modified and then later transferred to an online page the audience here plays a dual role – the role of a sender and that of recipient. On this note therefore, asynchroneity allows the audience to play the role of both consumer and producer of media messages (Emmanuel, 2014).

Methodology

The survey research design was used for the study. This was due to the need to collect large information from a reasonably large number of respondents (Tejumaiye, 2003). The research instrument was a structured questionnaire.

Sampling was done using the multi-stage sampling technique. The unit of analysis for the study was the undergraduate students of the University of Lagos. The first sampling stage involved the selection of four faculties from the eight faculties at the main campus of the University of Lagos. The eight faculties are Arts, Business Administration, Education, Environmental Sciences, Engineering, Law, Science, and Social Sciences. From these, four faculties were drawn using the simple random sampling technique. The four faculties were- Arts, Business Administration, Social Sciences and Education.

The second stage was the selection, using the simple random sampling technique, of three departments from each faculty. The third stage was the selection of two levels- 200 and 400- from each department using the simple random sampling technique. The last stage was the administration of questionnaire to 10 students from each sampled level using the convenience sampling method. In all, 20 respondents were selected from each department. This summed up to 60 respondents from each faculty and 240 respondents across all faculties. The study recorded a 91.7 per cent (220) return rate for the questionnaire. The 220 questionnaires that were returned and considered valid for the study were analysed.

Findings

Table 1 indicates that a majority of respondents were female (63.6%). Also, most of the respondents are between the ages of 20-25. This age bracket accounts for 38.6 per cent of the total respondents. The least age bracket is that of 32 years and above having 5.0 per cent of respondents. A majority (76.4%) of respondents are single.

Table 1

Respondents' Demographic Distribution

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	80	36.4
Female	140	53.3
Total	220	100
Age (in years)		
16-19	77	35
20-25	85	38.6
26-31	47	25.4
32 and above	11	5.0
Total	220	100
Marital Status		
Single	168	76.4
Married	52	26.4
Others	0	0
Total	220	100

Internet Usage Rate among University of Lagos Undergraduates

All the surveyed students use the internet. A majority (75.4%) use the internet daily while a minority (6.4 per cent) use it once in a week (see Table 2). This shows high frequency rate of internet use among UNILAG undergraduates.

Table 2

Respondents' Frequency of Internet Use

	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	166	75.4
Two to three days	27	12.3
Four days and above	14	6.4
Once	13	5.9
Total	220	100

Table 3

Medium of Internet Access

	Frequency	Percentage
Mobile Phone	168	76.4
PC/laptop	39	17.7
Cyber café	11	5.0
University library	1	0.5
Others	1	0.5
Total	220	100

Mobile phone was the medium through which most of the respondents (76.4) access the internet. This is followed by personal computer/laptop with 17.7 per cent. The least used identified medium is the university library with 0.5 per cent (see Table 3).

Online Activities Carried out by University of Lagos Undergraduates

Social networking was the most practiced activity by UNILAG students (35.5%). This is followed by entertainment and academic purposes with 21.4 per cent

and 19.1 per cent respectively. It is also noteworthy that 8.6 per cent of the respondents use the internet mostly for news (see Table 4).

Table 4

Respondents' Most Prevalent Internet Activities

	Frequency	Percentage
Entertainment	47	21.4.
Social Networking	78	35.5
Email	9	4.1
News	19	8.6
Internet banking	4	1.8
Online shopping	15	6.8
Academic activities	42	19.1
Online gaming/betting	5	2.3
Others	1	0.5
Total	220	100

Table 5
Respondents' Preferred Internet Sites

	Frequency	Percentage
News sites	23	10.5
Entertainment sites	54	24.5
Social networking sites	86	39.1
Academic sites	40	18.2

Betting sites	5	2.3
Corporate sites	8	3.6
Others	4	1.8
Total	220	100

As regards the most preferred site for UNILAG students, this table shows that the social networking sites lead with 39.1 per cent of the respondents. Entertainment sites follow with 24.5 percent, while academic sites are third with 18.2 per cent. News sites are visited by 10.5 per cent of the respondents.

Gratifications that University of Lagos Undergraduates Students Derive from Internet Use

Respondent's needs that are mostly gratified through their internet activities are information which accounts for 30.5 per cent. This is followed by entertainment needs with 28.6 per cent, academic needs and keeping in touch with families and friends rank next with 17.3 per cent and 14.5 per cent respectively.

Table 6

Respondents' Needs Gratified Through Internet Activities

	Frequency	Percentage
Information needs	67	30.5
Academic needs	38	17.3
Keeping in touch with family and friends	32	14.5
Business/commercial needs	9	4.1
Leisure	5	2.3
Others	6	2.7
Total	220	100

Table 7

Response as to Whether or not Respondents go Online to Meet Specific Needs

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Yes	203	93.1
No	15	6.9
Total	218	100

From this table, it is evident that majority of the respondents go online for the purpose of meeting their specific needs. While 93.1 per cent of the respondents said they go online to meet their needs, 6.9 per cent replied in the negative.

Table 9

Extent of Respondents' Agreement with Whether or not They go Online to Meet Specific Needs

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	94	42.9
Agree	66	20.1
Undecided	26	11.9
Disagree	24	11.0
Strongly disagree	9	4.1
Total	219	100

Information presented in table 9 shows that majority of the respondents are favourably disposed to the statement: "I *only visit the sites that meet my needs*". It is

seen that 42. 9 per cent strongly agreed while 30.1 per cent agreed with the statement. These amount to 73 per cent general agreement rate.

<div align="center">**Discussion of Findings**</div>

This study examined internet usage pattern among University of Lagos (UNILAG) undergraduates. It mainly sought to discover the extent to which UNILAG students use the internet, as well as determining whether or not their use of the internet has anything to do with expected gratifications. The latter becomes imperative as the study sought to ascertain the relevance of the Uses and Gratifications theory in the internet age.

Findings from this study show high internet use rate among UNILAG undergraduates. All respondents (100 per cent) for this study have access to, and use the internet. This shows the high permeability rate of the internet among UNILAG undergraduates. This finding aligns with Ani (2003) whose study on internet use among Undergraduates of Nigerian universities points out extensive use of the internet.

On the frequency of internet use, this study found out that 75.4 per cent of respondents use the internet daily, even as 12.3 per cent said they use it between two to three days interval. It is also noteworthy that most (76.4 per cent) of the respondents access the internet through their mobile phones. This is also in tandem with Otunla (2013) whose findings reflect major access to the internet through mobile phones.

As regards the online activities mostly carried out by the respondents, findings show that social networking is the highest online activity (35.5%). Entertainment and academic purposes followed with 21.4 per cent and 19.1 per cent respectively. It was also discovered that 8.6 per cent of the respondents mostly read news online. One would think academic purpose would emerge as the highest activity considering that UNILAG is a citadel of learning. However, this research discovered otherwise, as more students use the internet for social networking rather than for academic purposes. These findings also reflect in the types of sites that respondents mostly visit. Again, social networking sites are the most visited with 39.1 per cent. Entertainment sites follow with 24.5 per cent, academic sites and news sites are next with 18.3 per cent and 10.5 per cent respectively. These findings align with Jagboro (2003), Udenze and Udenze (2012) and Anasi (2006) whose studies discovered that undergraduates in Nigerian institutions use the internet for various purposes.

One of the core objectives of this study was to ascertain the needs respondents hope to gratify with their internet use. The findings of this study show 'information needs' as the most gratified respondents' needs through the internet as

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it accounts for 30.5 per cent. This means most activities embarked on by the respondents are targeted at getting information about diverse issues. This is followed by entertainment needs with 28.6 per cent. Curiously, academic needs are third with 17.3 per cent, while 14.5 per cent said they derive gratification from keeping in touch with family and friends.

In ascertaining whether or not respondents' online activities are triggered by the gratifications they hope to derive, 93.1 per cent said they go online purposely to meet certain needs. However, 6.9 per cent of the respondents observed that their adventures on the internet are not based on the needs to be gratified. Also, while presented with the statement, *'I only visit the sites that meet my needs'*, 73 per cent of the respondents responded in the affirmative as opposed to 15.9 per cent with negative reply. The high rate of agreement with the purposive use of internet by respondents re-echoes the central assumption of the Uses and Gratifications theory which posits that media audience are active, and not passive users of the media, and that media audience purposively use the media to gratify their identified needs (Griffin, 2012). The theory assumes that the audience is active and its media use is goal oriented. It further assumes that the initiative in linking need gratifications to a specific media choice rests with the audience member (Baran & Davis, 2009). Just as people eat in order to satisfy certain cravings, uses & gratifications theory assumes that people have needs that they seek to gratify through media use. The deliberate choices people make in using media are presumably based on the gratifications they seek from those media. Thus, uses and gratifications are inextricably linked. The findings of this study support the basic assumptions of the theory. Thus, it is safe to note that the Uses and Gratifications theory is indeed relevant in the age of the internet.

CONCLUSION

This study examined internet usage pattern among UNILAG undergraduates. It also delved into ascertaining the relevance of Uses and Gratifications theory in the internet age. The findings of this study have shown high internet use among UNILAG undergraduates. Majority of the respondents access the internet via their mobile phones, while they hardly use the internet facilities in the university library. It was also discovered that most of the respondents use the internet to meet specific needs. In a direct re-echoing of the Uses and Gratifications theory, a very high percentage of respondents are active users of the internet, and they channel it to meet their identified needs. This study is a contribution to the existing literature on information and communication technologies. It shows how fast the internet has permeated the institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. It also shows the varying activities that youths carry out on the internet. Having established that internet usage

among UNILAG undergraduates is driven by the expected gratification, this study concludes that the Uses and Gratifications theory is very much relevant in the internet age.

Recommendations

1. This study recommends that UNILAG students should maximize the opportunities provided by the internet for academic purposes. Their primary purpose of seeking admission is to acquire knowledge, and this should be vigorously pursued.
2. The fact that only 0.5% of students use the e-library of the University for browsing even as 19.1% go to the internet for general academic purposes indicates that students do not find the e-library appealing. The University can initiate a campaign to encourage students' use of the e-library.

Limitations of the Study

This study looked into internet usage pattern among undergraduates of the University of Lagos. Convenience sampling was used to pick the final respondents for this study. While this boosted the return rate it has its limitations: The findings do not fully represent the views of UNILAG undergraduate students. Other researchers using multistage sampling should also allow for generalization of findings by giving all respondents an equal chance of been selected through systematic or other forms of probability sampling. It would also add value to conduct a similar study among other demographics to ascertain whether or not their internet usage pattern is informed by the expected gratifications.

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