



Influence of Undergraduates Gender on the Use of Blog for Learning in University of Ilorin Nigeria

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Abstract

The impact of undergraduate gender on the usage of blogs for learning at the University of Ilorin in Nigeria was investigated in this study. The research used survey-style descriptive research. The participants in this study were all undergraduates at the University of Ilorin. Using the Israel Model, proportional sampling procedures were employed to assign a number of responders to each school depending on their anticipated population (2012). An customized questionnaire served as the data gathering tool. With the help of statistical product and service solution (SPSS) version 20.0, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to answer the research question and test the stated hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The studies revealed that students at the University of Ilorin utilize blogs well for learning. There was no significant difference in the usage of blogs for learning by male and female students ($t(362) = 0.00, p > 0.05$). According to the findings, if appropriate technologies are used for education, learning can be boosted and teaching can be effective among undergraduates. As a result, it was suggested that all undergraduates, regardless of gender, be encouraged to use blogs for learning.

Keywords: Blog, Gender, Use

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The average Nigerian student is familiar with the usage of information and communication technology (ICT); the question is how much ICT is used in Nigerian educational institutions. As society becomes more oriented to the use of ICT, the globe is experiencing a wave of social and technological transformation. We now live in an age where immediate global communication via electronic media (internet, computer, etc.) is commonplace. However, the pervasiveness of these electronic instruments in our daily lives has a tendency to demolish underdeveloped countries. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have blurred the lines between our personal and professional lives. People are today more culturally, materially, mentally, and especially engaged with the lives of people in other countries than they have ever been before, despite living as citizens of a single nation (Adekannbi, 2022). Rapid improvements in information and communication

technologies have resulted in innovations in communication and information exchange in recent years.

The use of Internet and Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools in education has grown in popularity. While ICT is widely used in distance and online education, it is increasingly being used in conjunction with face-to-face lectures to supplement and support classroom learning. The use of online discussion forums has emerged as a common tool and effective way of engaging students outside the classroom (Kocdar et al., 2021). These rapid advancements in ICT have resulted in activities that either replace face-to-face education (such as virtual courses) or enhance the face-to-face learning experience (that is online learning activities that are part of a course given face-to-face).

Barrett (2021) defined online learning, often known as web-based learning or e-learning, as a novel method of delivering classroom teaching to a remote audience via the internet. According to Singh (2021), online instruction contains the following characteristics: Because learners are different, communication is via computer and the World Wide Web, participation in the classroom by learners is different, the social dynamics of the learning environment are changed, and discrimination and prejudice are minimized, it provides a learning experience that is different than in the traditional classroom. To expand the versatility of web technology, more applications are being developed. These Web 2.0 apps have been integrated into teaching and learning to provide asynchronous and synchronous communication, multimedia components, and ease of use. However, Web 2.0 apps have opened up new learning opportunities for educational programs, and blogging is one of the most promising of these new applications (Lv, & Luo, 2021).

Millions of bloggers have used blogs to communicate their personal views, opinions, and knowledge on the internet. Educators are interested in blogs because of its versatility as a communication medium. Learners and teachers can use the Internet to access a blog service that provides them with engaging activities and opportunities for social engagement. Users can create web pages without any design skills, publish their ideas on the sites, and leave comments on the pages using blog technology. A blog, short for "weblog", is a web site in which items are posted on a regular basis and usually displayed in reverse chronological order. Like other media, blogs often focus on a particular subject, such as education, technology, or politics (Hans, 2021). A blog is "a frequently updated website consisting of dated entries called posts arranged in reverse chronological order so the most recent entry appears first" (Wagh, & Lihitkar, 2021). There are many types of blogs such as library and education blogs. Personal, Group, Press, Project management, Library, Institutional, and Instructional blogs were classified by Yu, et al., (2022) as Personal, Group, Press, Project management, Library, Institutional, and Instructional blogs. The contents are available online, and individuals who have registered to the blog will be able to publish new posts, which visitors can read and comment on. The majority of blogs are text-based, although audio, video, and photo blogs exist as well (Tomáková, 2021). Since the inception of the blog, it has provided various possible benefits to the learning process. They play an important role in higher education since they encourage students to dig deeper into academic themes. Teachers can utilize a variety of tasks to create engaging blog activities. Analyzing, brainstorming, documenting, collaborating, communicating, and comparing are some of the skills that these activities are based on (Kompen, et al., 2019). Students utilize blogs in the classroom as "online diaries" where they write about their own experiences or offer their thoughts on course topics. The strength of a blog, on the other hand, comes when people participate with an individual's posts, offering a venue for debate and discussion. Blogs may feature the written word, but increasingly blog providers, such as blogger.com, offer capabilities such as uploading multimedia files and publishing photographs and linking to other websites (Sun et al., 2021).

In contrast to more typical online discussion forums, blogs are publicly accessible. This gives pupils a platform to share their views with the rest of the world. Blogs are natural in corporate communication courses, according to Sheffield (2020), since they allow students to

express their ideas with a bigger audience. Students utilized the class blog for purposes other than those intended, according to Graus et al., (2022), prompting them to build a new blog with a broader readership. Blogs also offer the ability to allow readers to interact with the page, which is not a typical feature of traditional web pages. By contributing their thoughts and comments to blogs, readers become co-authors. Learning activities that are supported by blogs provide democratic environments in which students can openly express their thoughts and comments. In traditional educational environments, negative consequences resulting from instructor attitudes, course content, student traits, and class size obstruct students' capacity to effectively communicate their ideas (Iglesias-Pradas, et al., 2022).

Students prefer the virtual environment to express their thoughts and remarks, according to Erkan (2022), because they believe in-class conversations are insufficient. In this way, blogs may be utilized as interactive tools where people can share their ideas and experiences while also effectively presenting themselves to the social environment. Outside of the classroom, instructional blogs can be used to offer students with continual feedback. Significant statements in feedback about students' in-class efforts may have an impact on students' future learning endeavors. Because blogs are time and location independent, they can also be used to offer students with feedback outside of the classroom. Another key element of blogs is their structure, which encourages professors and students to connect socially. Many cognitive learning theorists believe that giving meaning to knowledge is best accomplished through people's interactions with their social environment. According to studies on cases where blogs have been used in the classroom, blogs can enhance a number of courses in a variety of ways.

Glogoff (2003) introduced the use of a blog in communication distant learning courses with students from all around the country. Students said that using a blog in class allowed them to understand more about technology while also making the course material more relevant to them. Similarly, producing and reading blogs in a foreign language class is one way for students to obtain multiple viewpoints on the culture they are learning (Ducate, 2005).

Despite their numerous benefits, Al-hebaishi (2012) claims that blogs have some drawbacks in higher education. Limited access to the Internet outside of the campus; some students may go to an Internet café to work on their assignments; the frequent need to develop more advanced computer programs in order to fully utilize the content published in a particular blog; technical issues caused by Internet outages, such as poor connection, speed, and difficulties logging onto the blog or posting other types of files such as pictures, videos, and so on; Lack of feedback and correction, which increases the effort of instructors when giving corrections and comments, especially in big classrooms; certain learners' use of inadequate language because they are unable to express themselves in a persuasive, precise, and clear manner; Due to a lack of privacy, students should be taught not to upload personal images or information online, nor to leak sensitive information to the public. Because blogs are written and published by individuals, they may contain biased or erroneous material. The issue of accessibility arises because blogs are open to the public, allowing outsiders to read posts or leave offensive comments.

Several studies looked into students' perceptions on the use of blogs in higher education. Coutinho is a Brazilian footballer (2007). According to William and Jacobs (2004), the majority of MBA students at Harvard Law School and Queensland University of Technology had a favorable attitude regarding the use of blogs in teaching and claimed that blogs aided their learning. Teachers and pre-service teachers are similarly enthusiastic about using blogs in teaching and learning.

Teachers of Taiwanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) welcomed the use of blogs to promote critical thinking skills, according to Yang (2009), who said that using blogs for debate was more beneficial than using face-to-face conversation. Similar findings were found by Coutinho (2007) and Zeng and Harris (2005). Gender appears to be a key category for categorizing and organizing social relationships around the world (Evans, 1994). Over the

years, studies have revealed that males outnumber women when it comes to computer use. Even when both men and women have equal access to computers, men are more likely to be the primary users of ICT (Pitler, 2007).

According to studies, the gender gap in computer and Internet use has narrowed to the point where it no longer exists. Men and women use these technologies in various ways, according to DiMaggio, Hargittai, and Celeste (2004), Hargittai (2008), and Feller (2006). Men are more eager consumers of online information than women, according to Fallow (2005), but women are more enthusiastic communicators. According to a cursory review of various sources, male and female bloggers are now more visible on the internet. Blended learning is a realistic framework for encapsulating a variety of effective learning and teaching methodologies. It promotes the use of modern technology to enhance learning as well as the creation of flexible course design approaches to increase student participation. The study of the use of blogs among undergraduates in Nigerian universities is important and worthwhile to investigate regardless of gender, therefore this study examines the impact of undergraduate gender on the use of blogs for learning at the University of Ilorin in Nigeria.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Despite the fact that blogs are one of the finest ways to combine Information Communication Technology (ICT) with teaching and learning approaches in the classroom, academic blogging in higher education, particularly in Nigeria, is still in its early stages. The majority of Nigerian pre-service teachers are unfamiliar with and inept at using this technology in the learning process. It is critical that traditional lectures be supplemented with online innovation tools such as blogs that can inspire and raise students' interest in learning efficiently, which will have a significant positive impact on their academic performance regardless of gender. In light of this, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of undergraduate gender on the use of blogs for learning purposes.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The major goal of this research was to look into the impact of gender on undergraduates' use of blogs for learning at the University of Ilorin in Nigeria. This study, in particular: (1) Determine the real use of a blog for learning by undergraduates at the University of Ilorin; (2) Gender differences in the usage of a blog for learning at the University of Ilorin.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The researcher used a survey-type descriptive study design. This is due to the fact that a survey's descriptive research design entails gathering data from a large population at once or over time in order to describe the characteristics of members of the population based on the phenomenon under study without incorporating any external manipulations. As a result of the survey type, the researcher was able to collect relevant data from the respondents on the impact of undergraduate gender on the usage of blogs for learning at the University of Ilorin in Nigeria. All undergraduate students at the University of Ilorin were included in this study. The target demographic consisted of undergraduates from the university of Ilorin's three (3) carefully chosen faculties. For this investigation, a multi-stage sampling approach was used. The three universities chosen for this study were chosen using a purposeful selection strategy because they are the only three universities with acceptable ICT facilities for their students. Using the Israel Model, proportional sampling procedures were utilized to distribute the number of respondents in each school based on their anticipated population (2013) Simple random sampling procedure was utilized in the selected school to pick three hundred and sixty-four (364) undergraduates from sampled institutions to act as respondents in this study at a 5% level of precision.

2.2 Research Instruments

A researcher-designed questionnaire titled Influence of Undergraduates Gender on the Use of Blog for Learning in University of Ilorin Nigeria was used to collect data. The questionnaire was designed to reflect directly on the study's many research issues. There were three sections to the questionnaire. Section A contained demographic information about the respondents, whereas Section B used a likert response method to collect information about the respondents' usage of blogs for learning at the University of Ilorin.

2.3 Validation of the Research Instrument

Three lecturers from the Department of Educational Technology tested the questionnaire for both face and content validity to ensure that the questionnaire items were arranged in accordance with the research's main goals. The items in the questionnaire were modified based on their recommendations and advice to develop a final draft. The questionnaire's reliability was assessed on ten randomly selected lecturers from the University of Ilorin's Department of Educational Technology in Ilorin. The data from the pilot study was assessed to see if there was any internal consistency of reliability, and the Cronbach alpha on awareness was 0.76.

2.4 Ethical Consideration

Three lecturers from the Department of Educational Technology tested the questionnaire for both face and content validity to ensure that the questionnaire items were arranged in accordance with the research's main goals. The items in the questionnaire were modified based on their recommendations and advice to develop a final draft. The questionnaire's reliability was assessed on ten randomly selected lecturers from the University of Ilorin's Department of Educational Technology in Ilorin. The data from the pilot study was assessed to see if there was any internal consistency of reliability, and the Cronbach alpha on awareness was 0.76.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The data was evaluated using descriptive and statistical methods. With the help of Statistical Package for Social Science, the mean and standard deviation were used to evaluate the acquired data (SPSS). An independent t-test was used to evaluate the lone hypothesis.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Research Question One

What is the undergraduate actual use of Blog for learning in University of Ilorin?

Table 1. Mean Scores on Undergraduate Actual Use of Blog for Learning in University of Ilorin

S/N	Statement	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	I found the blog useful for any concept in my area of discipline	30	30	0	0	0	4.0	Agree
2	I found the blog to be entertaining in learning	30	27	7	1	0	3.7	Agree
3	I found the blog useful because it helped clarify and/or enhance my understanding of any concepts	30	19	11	0	0	2.4	Agree
4	I felt that use of blog was not a productive use of time	30	9	6	3	12	3.5	Agree

5	I wanted to give the blog my undivided attention and concentration during learning	30	15	15	0	0	3.5	Agree
6	I felt comfortable using the blog.	30	19	11	0	0	3.37	Agree
7	Writing on blog was enjoyable and interesting.	30	12	18	0	0	3.4	Agree
8	Responding to the comments received on my blog improves my writing.	30	12	18	0	0	3.4	Agree
9	I am aware that blog can be used for educational purposes.	30	12	18	0	0	3.6	Agree
10	I like having my instructor make written comments on my post.	14	16	0	0	0	3.47	Agree
Grand Mean							3.73	

The responses of students to their attitudes toward the use of blogs are shown in Table 1. The table shows that the mean score for each of the ten questionnaire items is greater than 3.0, with a total mean score of 3.73. This demonstrates that students are enthusiastic about using blogs.

3.2 Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduates in the use of blog for learning. The null hypothesis was examined using a t-test to see if there was a significant difference in the use of blogs for learning between male and female undergraduates, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. T-test result on Student's Attitude Towards the Use of Blog

Gender	N	X	SD	Df	T	Sig	Remarks
Male	204	13.73	1.486	362	0.00	0.640	Not Sig.
Female	160	13.73	1.624				

Table 2 shows that there was a substantial difference in the usage of blogs for learning between male and female undergraduates. The result reflects this: $t(362) = 0.00, p > 0.05$. As a result, the idea was not disproved. By implication, the stated null hypothesis was confirmed: there was a substantial difference in the use of blogs for learning between male and female undergraduates. Based on the mean scores in table 1, both male and female students used blogs for learning in a favorable way.

3.3 Discussion

The use of blogs by undergraduates was investigated using research question 1. The mean scores revealed that the students were making good use of the blog. The findings were consistent with those of Ellison and Wu (2008), who found that students' attitudes on the use of blogs were favourable. It also supports William and Jacob's (2004) findings, which found that students' attitudes on the use of blogs were favourable. Yang (2009) found that learners had positive attitudes toward utilizing blogs to learn English vocabulary, which is consistent with the outcomes of this study. It also aligns with Wilczak's (2013) findings, which showed that students had a favourable attitude regarding the use of blogs. Based on the findings, incorporating a blog as a supplement to teaching and learning in the university will be a popular proposal among students. All stakeholders at the higher institution level should work together to make it work.

The hypothesis was used to investigate the impact of gender on undergraduates' attitudes on the use of blogs. The t-test revealed that there was no significant difference in blog usage between male and female students. The findings contrast those of Fallow (2005), who found

that there was a significant gender difference in students' attitudes toward the usage of blogs in his study. Males were found to be more ardent consumers of internet information than females, according to the study.

This finding also contradicts a previous study (Herring, 2000) that found that male students generated more blog posts than their female counterparts. The study, however, supported the findings of DiMaggio, Hargittai, and Celeste (2004), who found no gender differences in attitudes toward computer use between male and female students. As a result, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference in attitudes on the usage of blogs between male and female students. As a result, gender should not be a major determinant in the integration of blogs into higher education.

4. CONCLUSION

According to the findings, if appropriate technologies are used for education, learning can be boosted and teaching can be effective among undergraduates. As a result, it was suggested that all undergraduates, regardless of gender, be encouraged to use blogs for learning.

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