

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' ON THE BENEFITS OF MOBILE PHONES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN GWAGWALADA AREA COUNCIL OF FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY

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Abstract

The thrust of the study was to investigate students' perceptions of mobile phone use in the learning of English Language in Gwagwalada Area Council of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A descriptive survey research design approach was applied. The population comprised of English language students and teachers at Senior Secondary School level. A mixed-gender sample of English Language students aged 14 to 18 years and their teachers participated in the study. The instrument used to collect data was questionnaire. Mean and Standard deviation were used to analysed the data. The data collected revealed that the students had predominantly positive perceptions of the use of mobile phones in the learning of English Language. Consequently, the study recommended among others that English Language teaching and learning should involve the use of mobile phones with internet services in order to give students quick references and quick responses to questions, to meet the needs of students who are reticent or shy in open discussions, and to provide the means of learning anywhere and at any time and teachers should always closely monitor and manage students in their use of mobile phones with internet services to try to minimize misuse on non-educational things.

Keywords: mobile learning; perceptions; benefits; drawback; students

Introduction

Most secondary schools in Federal Capital Territory experience a high failure rate, particularly in English Language (WAEC, 2018). Recently there have been initiatives by government, the private sector and civic groups aimed at positively influencing English Language performance. These include the initiative by the Department of Education Sector Analysis (2003), which bring together stakeholder together on how to improve education through implementation of the scheme. Library Association of Nigeria also holds stakeholders meeting on developing the Reading Habits of Secondary School Students in Nigeria especially among *students of English language* (Akande & Oyedapo, 2018). There was also an initiative on *training of English language teachers on effective implementation of curriculum* (Adebile, 2009). The New Media Consortium and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (2008), Goh and Kinshuk (2006) and Kenning (2007) observe that the use of mobile phones in teaching and learning has gained ground in schools. Many schools the world over are now using mobile phones in teaching and learning (HumbleThaden, 2012; Vanska & Robertson, 2011). Frand (2000), and DuVall, Powell, Hodge and Ellis (2007) state that students always get connected via short-message services, chat rooms and emails regardless of location. Ally (2009) and Brown (2005) state that students of today have an information technology mind-set which is adapted to continuous multitasking.

Prensky (2001) describes today's students as 'digital natives' because they are computer-literate and enjoy a life of using computers. In addition, Dede (2005) and Montgomery (2009) report that students today have developed a 'neo-millennium learning style' which confines them to internet use. In light of this, the use of mobile phones in education becomes inevitable and helps to harness the interest of students and possibly raise English Language performance

in school and colleges. The use of mobile phones with internet services in teaching and learning is a new paradigm providing a shift from the traditional way of teaching, which uses paper and chalkboard, to paperless technology

Students today concentrate on social intercourse and connectedness with friends, and enjoy group-based approaches to studying (Horrigan, 2008; Aderinoye, Ojokheta & Olojede, 2007; Kim, Mims & Holmes, 2006). Thus the use of mobile phones captures their interest and self-empowers students (Humble-Thaden, 2012; Hennessy et al., 1989; Bryan, 2004). This study explores the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the use of mobile phones with internet services as instructional tools with a specific focus on secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT.

Statement of the Problem

The poor performance of students in English Language is cause for concern. Various factors such as material resources, teachers' mastery of the subject and the pedagogical strategies used have been widely reported (Milner & Khoza, 2008). Little has been done in Nigeria to explore the possibilities of using mobile phones with internet services as a resource which can assist in the teaching of English Language. Yet the Nigerian education system is faced with the challenge of improving the performance of students in English.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to examine students' perceptions of the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language. Specifically, the study sort to:

- (i) Determine the benefits perceived by students in the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language.
- (ii) Determine the drawbacks perceived by students in the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language.

Research questions

- (i) What benefits do students perceive in the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language?
- (ii) What drawbacks do students perceive in the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design approach. Descriptive design entails the use of scientific and systematic approaches such as the quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell *et al.*, 2011; Ngulube, 2013). According to Creswell *et al.*, (2011), descriptive design involves mixed approaches in a triangulation format. The population comprised of 340 senior secondary school students in Gwagwalada Area Council of FCT. The researcher gauged qualitatively the opinions, experiences, attitudes, values and interpretations among other responses the respondents gave regarding the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language. The researcher used the questionnaires to solicit statistical data quantitatively to provide facts in making predictions and to gain meaningful insights into students' perceptions of the use of mobile phones.

Data were collected via five-point scale of strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), Disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) questionnaires. The research assistants administered the questionnaires to the students. The research assistants explained and elaborated on all areas that needed further explanations as well as the rationale for the study. The assistants told the participants that the data collected would be treated confidentially and analyzed

anonymously. To encourage truthfulness in the survey responses, the research assistants instructed the respondents not to write their names on the questionnaire. Participants were given a full day to complete the questionnaire. The research assistants collected the questionnaires the following day: all nine from the students, 340 out of the total of 345 issued, with five questionnaires spoilt by the students who had received them. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation

Results

The following sub-questions of the research question were addressed:

Research Question One: What benefits do students perceive in the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation analysis on benefits that students perceive in the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean	SD
1	I have a good knowledge of the use of a mobile phone with internet services.	4.59	0.684
2	I enjoy studying English Language using a mobile phone with internet services.	4.48	0.681
3	Mobile phones with internet services are fun, interesting and convenient in English Language learning.	4.39	0.703
4	Mobile phones with internet services help me to study English Language at and in my own pace and time.	4.50	0.694
5	I use my mobile phone with internet services to read English Language before I get to class.	3.80	1.094
6	I communicate English Language ideas with my friends using my mobile phone.	4.20	0.918
7	A mobile phone with internet services helps me to understand English Language ideas better.	4.42	0.723
8	Mobile phones with internet services can help to improve English Language performance.	4.50	0.598
9	Mobile phones with internet services improve communication between a student and the teacher.	4.24	0.725
10	Mobile phones with internet services are a quicker method of getting feedback in English Language.	4.62	0.625
11	I do many English Language exercises through my mobile phone with internet services.	4.22	0.812
12	SMSs received from my teacher help me to study English Language better.	3.93	1.100
13	I sometimes use a mobile phone with internet services in class for things not related to learning.	2.20	1.276
14	Mobile phones with internet services cannot be used in Physical Sciences learning due to expenses involved.	2.53	1.361
15	Mobilephone learning cannot be used due to poor network in the villages.	2.53	1.435
16	Mobilephone learning cannot be used because it takes teachers' jobs.	2.34	1.378
17	Most people who are important to me think that a mobile	4.10	0.919
18	I enjoy participating in mobile Physical Sciences competitions.	4.10	0.919

The mean scores of items. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, were very high, ranging from 4.10 to 4.59. This shows that students agreed with the statements on the benefits or the utility of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language. The mean scores on item 5 (3.80) and item 12 (3.93), which measured usage and communication, were comparably high. However, Qq. 13, 14, 15 and 16 produced low means, indicating that students did not worry much about them. Qq. 13, 14, 15 and 16 referred to the perceived disadvantages, which students thought were not strong enough to hinder them from using mobile phones. The standard deviations for Qq. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17 and 18 were similar, reflecting very little variability. The standard deviation for Q15 was very high (1.435), suggesting more variability for this item, which signifies that the students were not worried about poor networks. By contrast, Q8 had the lowest standard deviation (0.598), signifying low variability and suggesting that the students strongly believed that the use of mobile phones with internet services would help them to pass English Language despite the disadvantages they faced.

Research Question Two: What benefits do teachers perceive in the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation analysis on benefits do teachers perceive in the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Mean	SD
1	I have a good knowledge of the use of a mobile phone with internet services.	4.44	0.527
2	I enjoy reading Physical Sciences using a mobile phone with internet services.	3.89	0.928
3	Mobile phones with internet services are fun, interesting and convenient in Physical Sciences teaching and learning.	3.67	0.707
4	Mobile phones with internet services help learners to understand Physical Sciences concepts better.	4.22	0.667
5	Mobile phones with internet services give learners the opportunity to study Physical Sciences at their own pace anywhere and at any time.	4.44	0.726
6	I always communicate with my learners doing Physical Sciences with my mobile phone with internet services.	3.78	0.441
7	Mobile Physical Sciences is an effective and efficient method of learning physical sciences.	3.67	0.500
8	Mobile phones with internet services can improve Physical Sciences performance.	3.78	0.441
9	Mobile phone programmes give me more time to help my Physical Sciences learners.	3.89	0.928
10	A mobile phone with internet services is a quicker method of getting feedback in Physical Sciences.	4.11	0.928
11	Learners do many Physical Sciences exercises because mobilephone use is interesting to them.	3.33	0.866
12	Mobile phones with internet services improve communication between a learner and the educator.	4.00	0.500
13	Mobile phones with internet services cannot be used due to unavailability of mobile phones to learners.	2.44	1.130
14	Mobile phones with internet services cannot be used due to expenses involved in mobile learning.	1.89	0.928

15	Mobile phones with internet services cannot be used due to poor network in the villages.	2.44	1.014
16	Mobile phones with internet services cannot be used due to abuse by learners in the schools.	2.44	0.882
17	Mobile phones with internet services cannot be used because they take teachers' jobs.	2.00	1.323

The mean scores of items, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17 and 18 were very high, showing that educators agreed with the statements given regarding the benefits or the utility of mobile phones in the teaching and learning of English language. The mean scores on item 5 and item 12, which measured usage and communication, were comparably high. However, for items 13, 14, 15 and 16 the mean scores were low, indicating that educators did not consider the matters raised in these questions a serious hindrance to the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching of Physical Sciences. The standard deviations for item 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17 and 18 were similar, reflecting very little variability. The standard deviation for item 15 was very high (1.435), suggesting more variability for this item. By contrast, item 8 had the lowest (0.598), signifying low variability and suggesting that the educators strongly believed that the use of mobile phones with internet services might help them to improve the pass rate in English language despite the disadvantages faced.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the students supported the use of mobile phones with internet services in the learning and teaching process. They concurred that it could be pivotal in raising pass rates in English Language. The perceptions expressed by the students regarding the use of mobile phones were positive. Almost all of the students concerned viewed mobile phones as indispensable tools for the learning processes in schools. This is in agreement with Attewell (2005), who argues that mobile phones with internet services benefit students of all ages. The use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of Physical Sciences could be a way to improve pass rates in the subject. The researcher of this study wanted to throw some light on this problem because researchers and educators such as Paul (1995), Prensky (2001) and McDaniel (2012) point to a lack of adequate research on the use of mobile technology in the teaching and learning process. Young (2012), Traxler (2010) and Swan, van 'tHooft, Kratcoski and Chenker (2007) have concentrated on, respectively, barriers to technology, potential use of technology, and acceptance of technology, but they ignore the perceptions of learners and educators regarding the use of mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of Science in high schools.

Conclusion

The advantages of using mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language are seen to outweigh the disadvantages that come with using them. Therefore, students want to use mobile phones with internet services for learning. Harnessing the capabilities of mobile phones with internet services would provide great opportunities to students to achieve unlimited educational heights. Students in this research study expressed strong positive perceptions of using mobile phones with internet services in the teaching and learning of English Language. However, there is need for effective monitoring and control of its usage in order to achieve the desirable results. The majority of students believed that mobile phones with internet services would help them improve pass rates in English Language.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this research study, the following recommendations were made:

- (i) English Language teaching and learning should involve the use of mobile phones with internet services in order to give students quick references and quick responses to questions, to meet the needs of students who are reticent or shy in open discussions, and to provide the means of learning anywhere and at any time.
- (ii) Teachers should always closely monitor and manage students in their use of mobile phones with internet services to try to minimize misuse on non-educational things.

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