

Assessment of I.C.T. Driven in Emerging Social Work Education and Practice in Nigeria: Implication for Policy Development



Education

Keywords: Information technology, social work education, Internet services, Knowledge, communication.

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Abstract

This study explores the need to develop information technology by the students of social work in Nigeria in tandem with technological change. The survey design was adopted for the study. The population of study was the students of the Department of Social Work. The questionnaires were administered to a total of 250 undergraduates' participants. The primary data collected was analysed and results presented in tables, frequency distribution and simple percentage. The variables were cross-tabulated and tested with chi square. The results of the analyses show that the students are very abreast of information technology and internet based knowledge, but the underdevelopment status of Nigerian society permeates every facet of human endeavours and hence is negatively impeding the full utilization of internet and computer services for their studies.

Introduction

Globalization and technological change processes that have accelerated in tandem over the past years have created a new global economy and knowledge powered by technology, fuelled by information and driven by knowledge. The emergence of this new global economy has a serious implication for the nature and purpose of education of modern society. In this technology age, access to information continues to grow exponentially; schools and professional disciplines cannot remain mere venues for the transmission of prescribed sets of information from teacher to student over a fixed time. Schools and professions must promote the acquisition of knowledge and skills that make possible continuous learning over life time and to always imbibe the tenets of best practice philosophy (Heimlich, et al, 1996; Gardner, 1993).

Today's world is a world of information explosion. This information explosion is taking place in such a fast speed that even a literate or well educated professional may feel as if he/she is illiterate being not able to cope with such an information explosion (Umme, 2008). Education has been heavily influenced by the entrance of internet-based technologies. The possibility of providing education unrestricted by boundaries of geography or loci of the students and teachers and time is an attractive prospect for students as well as institutions (Garrison, 2009; Petrachi et al, 2005), and the collaborative nature of online learning (an aspect of information technology) has the potential to foster the critical thinking that is an essential aspect of social work profession (Hawkrigde, 2013).

The evolution of technology in education has been accompanied by a range of words and phrases to describe the union of technology in education (Guri-Rosenblit&Gros, 2011; Moore et al, 2011).

Fourier (2010), suggest that the variety of terms reflects the cultural and organizational differences within which educational technologies are employed. Sangra et al, (2012) propose that the various terms indicate that the field of technology in education is still evolving.

Sangra et al, (2012) in their review of literature defining e-learning and information technology in education, identified four categories of definitions; technology-driven, delivery-system oriented, communication-oriented and educational-paradigm-oriented definitions. Educational-paradigm-oriented definitions tend to be used by persons in the education sector and reflect a perception of e-learning and information technology as a new way of learning or as an improvement on an existing educational paradigm (p. 149).

Bulut (2003) aptly notes that social work education is informed by humanistic values and encompasses knowledge of social problems, an understanding of individuals and their environment in interaction and method of interventions into social and human difficulties (p. 128). Consistent with its focus on intervention in the life of peoples with problems, social work education has traditionally favoured face-to-face format, in which educators play a mentoring and modelling role to students, who are socialized into the knowledge and skill base of social work (Siegel et al 1998). In keeping with the global trend in education, the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), in social work education and services has grown steadily and significantly (Ayala, 2009; Ouellette et al, 2006).

This study focuses on the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) driven in social work education and services in a developing nation. The paper also examines the perceptions of Information Communication Technology (ICT) by social work students, and explores how they are coping and imbibing the tenets of information technology, e-learning education and applying it to their training as budding social work professionals.

Statement of the Research Problem

Communication is an integral part of human existence. It is communication that decides the very identity of human beings. Modern society is turning into an information society and communication is the exchange of information. Communication technology implies the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to exchange information verbally or non-verbally. Communication technology is the electronic systems used for communication between individuals or groups who are not physically present at the same location. Systems such as telephone, telex, fax, radio, television, video as well as more recent computer based technologies including electronic data, interchange, social media and e-mail amongst others are forms of communication technology, (Shield, 2000). Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are broadly defined as technologies used to convey, manipulate and store data by electronic means. This can include e-mail, SMS text messaging, video chat (e.g., Skype), and online social media (e.g., Face book).

It also includes all the different computing devices (e.g., laptop computers and smart phones) that carry out a wide range of communication and information functions. ICTs are pervasive in developed countries and considered integral in the efforts to build social, political and economic participation in developing countries. For example, the United Nations (2006) recognizes that ICTs are necessary for helping the world achieve eight time-specific goals for reducing poverty and other social and economic problems. The World Health Organization also sees ICTs as contributing to health improvement in developing countries in three ways: (1) as a way for doctors in developing countries to be trained in advances in practice; 2) as a delivery mechanism to poor and remote areas; and 3) to increase transparency and efficiency of governance, which is critical for the delivery of publicly provided health services (Chandrasekhar & Ghosh, 2001).

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) include the use of radio, television and newer digital technologies such as computer and the internet. These devices have been proven as potentially powerful tools for education. With the advent of the World Wide Web, mass communication was transformed right down to its defining principles. Here was a tool that was both powered and propelled by individuals, creating an exchange of ideas in multiple directions. The World Wide Web is now a connector of thoughts, ideas and motivations. The face of human interaction has changed. In some cases, it has become bigger and more expensive, where potential for knowledge exchange is tremendous (United Nations, 2009).

As e-learning grows in use among institutions of higher learning, social work education continues to debate the role of internet-based technologies in social work education. While studies about this issue have been conducted in developed countries, there is a dearth of relevant literature in developing nations (Bailey and Johnson, 2014). All over the world, technology has created new ways of educating people and of working in many workplaces including social welfare agencies. The introduction of computers, and more recently ICT into social life is referred to as 'computerization' or the process through which computers become integrated into the ways that human handle information (Hakken, 1991:407).

In Nigeria, as a Third World Nation, the use of computer, computerization and I.C.T. compliance practices in education and work places is still very much on the lowest ebb. The use of and access to web based information is far behind the practices in the developed world. This is because the underdevelopment nature permeates every facet of human endeavour including the use of I.C.T. Norris (2001) posited that social work services and systems that are based on the use of ICTs must necessarily exclude those who do not have access to them hence there are digital divides between and within countries in relation to access to ICTs that broadly match other well established inequalities. This paper explores the use of I.C.T. including the e-learning centre by the social work students of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. The paper examines the students' embrace of digital world, whether or not they (students) are active users of the internet, desire for and use of new technology to communicate their experiences as social work students and the desire for best practice in the professional contexts.

The study also explores the students' knowledge of computer, access to computer based information and play a full role alongside I.C.T. specialists, in developing I.C.T. infrastructure and tell the story of their work with service users in ways that make a narrative sense.

Literature Review

The term information refers to any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts, data or opinion in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic cartographic, narrative or audio-visual forms. Information technology is any equipment or interconnected system or sub-system of equipment that is used in the acquisition, storage manipulation, management transmission or reception of data or information. In other words, information technology is a scientific technological and engineering discipline and management technique used in handling the information, its application and association with social, economic and cultural matters (UNESCO, 2001; Stables, 1997).

Information technology has the following characteristics: Acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, transmission or reception of data or information; real time access to information; easy availability of updated data; connecting geographically dispersed regions and wider range of communication media.

At the heart of technology lie two main or branches of technology: Computing and telecommunication. The ICT covered the computer system, internet/electronic mail (e-mail), mobile phone browsing and fax machine. The internet is a global collection of many types of computers and computer networks that are linked together. It is increasingly becoming the solution of much information, problems-information exchanged and marketing (Adesanyan, 2002). Eseyin (1997), describes the internet as a mixture of many services with the two most commonly used being electronic mail (e-mail for short) and the World Wide Web (www).

According to Anyakoha (1991), information technology is the use of man-made tools for the collection, generation, communication, recording, re-management and exploitation of information. It includes those applications and commodities, by which information is transferred, recorded, edited, stored, manipulated or disseminated. Hawkrige(1983) describes information technology as a revolution which has penetrated almost all fields of human activity. UNDP (2001) asserts that even if sustainable economic growth can be used to support growth and development, ICTs are credited with the ability to transform, and deep provide and significant changes expected from their widespread use in Africa. Social work has not been immune to the development and utilisation of ICT driven societal processes. There is a tendency to see a new development in the field of ICTs, and possibly its application elsewhere in business, commerce or industry, and to ask how the advantages of this new technology can be brought to social work. This can be regarded as a technology-led approach i.e. ICT driven social work education and services.

One of the dangers of a technology-led approach is that social work comes to be understood primarily in the light of the aims of ICT developers, and evaluated in their terms. For example, recent advances in networking mean that it no longer makes sense for workers in large social work organizations to store information on the hard drives of individual computers. Common practice is to use a central file store that can be accessed by any authorised user from any computer on the network (or sometimes over the internet). This means that there are reliable systems for data backup, and it allows rapid sharing of information. But it also means that social workers no longer need their own office computer – any will do – so that the sharing of computer terminals (often called hot-disking), and mobile and home working have become widespread. This makes sense from an ICT perspective, but what of the changes to social work practice (Sapey, 1997).

The reaction to ICT implementation in social work more generally, has several explanations. Some propose that reluctance to engage with ICT has been founded on realistic concerns that ICT might play a role in de-professionalizing and depersonalizing the social work task (Parrott&Madoc-Jones, 2008:186). This is ironic, given that ICT implementation was undertaken in agencies that expressed a commitment to re-professionalize social work. This is because research shows that far from supporting a practice which is centred on the contexts of social work, the concern which professionals might have about them, the new ICT systems are having the effect of distancing professional social workers from the lived day-to-day experiences of the people with whom they work and who depend on them as clients (Hall et al, 2010).

ICT (information and communication technologies) in education lives a life at the cross roads between evidence based policy making, learning and the fast changing world of technology. ICT in education has in recent years, emerged as a policy area. Many countries have developed ICT strategies, either as separate strategies or as strands embedded in national strategies for education or for the development of the information society at large in the country.

Kozma (2008) has identified important reasons for investing in ICT for education as following;

- To support economic growth mainly by developing human capital and increasing the productivity of the workforce.
- To promote social development by sharing knowledge, fostering cultural creativity, increasing democratic participation, improving access to government services and enhancing social cohesion.
- To advance education reform i.e. major curriculum revision, shifts in pedagogy or assessment changes, and
- To support education management and accountability, with an emphasis on computer-based testing and the use of digital data and management systems.

These features relate the issue of ICT in education to its function in a broader, societal context. The role of ICT in education must also be linked to educational needs. In many countries, the role of ICT is linked to issue of educational attainment and the importance of ICT for advancing robust learning strategies on the side of the students. A second area is ICT as a tool can also be used to increase visualization and variation in many subjects. Education has a role to play in the acquisition of the up-to-date skills in ICT and knowledge based on pedagogical principles. Our educational systems should bear in mind that ICT should be an integral part of learning (Haddad, 2007).

Theoretical Orientation

The theory that informs this study is the socio-technical theory which elucidates the responses and attitude towards technological innovations and computer applications in everyday life of individuals and organizations in modern societies. Technological Abbreviations and usage by people and organization, institutions or even attitude towards a technological system represents a blend of social and technological systems, where authors and technological systems interact. Socio-technical theory posits that complementarities explain the relationships between the authorities and actions of people and the usefulness of information technology (Segars and Grover, 1993) the socio technical theory refers to the synergistic and integrated view of a number of variables in enhancing institutional processes and information technology usage by students the development conceptualization and usage of information technology considered as part of integrated system of factors that are mutually reinforced (Palou & Chia 2002). The complimentary variables of learning in the educational systems the classroom lectures, knowledge from textbooks and field practicum experiences (Warne and Holland 1999).

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for the study. According to Kumar (2005), a research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. It is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher(s) to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically.

The population of this study consists of the entire students of the Department of Social Work, University of Benin. The total population of the students in the Department of Social Work is 1264. These comprise 850 full-time and 414 part-time students. The sample size for the study is 250 research participants. This comprises 150 full-time students and 100 Part-time students and this total 250.

The cluster method of sampling was used in selecting the population for this study. The Department of Social Work was disaggregated into the constituent class/levels of study. The full-time students have 4 levels: 100, 200, 300, and 400 levels.

In the full-time, thirty research participants were selected from each class and this totalled one hundred in all i.e. $4 \times 25 = 100$ (one hundred). From the part-time programme, twenty-five research participants were selected from each level.

The students' participants were selected during lectures. The sitting arrangements of the class were utilized. From each row, two students were selected and administered the questionnaire. A row has eight seats; hence to get the two students, the 4th and 8th students clock-wise were selected and administered the questionnaires.

The questionnaires were completed and returned at the end of the lectures. The lecturers in the Department were however interviewed by the researchers. Four academic staff was interviewed to sample their opinion about ICT utilization by the academic staff and how students have been responding to internet usage in terms of sourcing for materials, downloading and carrying out research/assignments with the aid of ICT.

Data collected in this study were resolved into their constituent components so that major characteristics, themes and patterns of responses can be handled effectively. In addition to the above, raw data were coded to make electronic analysis easy. Frequency distribution, simple percentages and tabulations were some of the statistical techniques adopted in analysing data for this study. Cross tabulation analyses were carried out to ascertain the extent to which variables influenced one another.

The SPSS (2.0) was used to analyse the data collected from participants after the data were screened to ensure that errors that were contained in them were revisited for correctness and processing. The spearman-rank and chi square were used to test the hypothesis and cross-tabulate the variables.

The instrument of data collection for this study was the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire had two (2) sections (A & B). Section A covered the socio-economic bio-data profile of participants such as age, marital status, sex, etc. Section B dealt with participants' knowledge, use and perceptions of ICT driven social work education and services.

Analysis of Data and Discussion of Findings

The data collected from the field work were analysed with the SPSS after resolving them to their constituent themes. The results of the analysis are presented hereunder.

Table 1: The Socio-Demographic Characteristics of All the Respondents

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Response	Frequency	Percentage
SEX OF PARTICIPANTS	Male	131	52.4%
	Female	119	47.6%
	Total	250	100.0
AGE OF PARTICIPANTS	18-25	91	36.4%
	26-30	90	36.0%
	36-40	14	5.6%
	31-35	40	16.0%
	41-45	12	4.8%
	46-50	3	1.2%
	Total	250	100.0
MARITAL STATUS	Single	178	71.2%
	Married	67	26.8%
	Divorce	2	0.8%
	Widows	2	0.8%
	Total	250	100.0
participants by level	100 level	21	8.4%
	200 level	27	10.8%
	300 level	40	16.0%
	400 level	162	64.8%
	Total	250	100.0
Participants who have email addresses	Yes	212	84.8
	No	38	15.2
	Total	250	100.0

The data shows that there are 131 (52.4%) male participants and 119 (47.6%) female participants. This indicates that more females were used in the research than males. Table 1 also shows that those between the age 18-25 participants are 91 (36.4%) while those who are between 26-30 are 90 (36.0%) then those between the age of 31-35 are 40 (16.0%), also those between the age of 36-40 are 14 (5.6%), those between the age 41-45 are 12 (4.8%) and those between the ages of 46-50 are 3 (1.2%). The results of this finding indicate that the minimum age of the participants was 18 while the maximum was 50 years.

The table also shows that participants that are single were 178 (71.2%) while married participants are 67 (26.8%). Similarly divorced participants were 2 (.8%) and participants that are widows were 2 (.8%). The result of this finding implies that majority of the participants in this research are singles and married couples. Table 1 further shows that participants that belong to 100 level are 21 (8.4%) while participants that belong to 200 level are 27 (10.8%) similarly participants who belong to 300 level are 40 (16.0%) and participants that belong to 300 level are 162 (64.8%). The result of this finding implies that majority of the participants used for this research are the 400 level students

Moreover, table shows that 212 (84.8%) participants agreed they have email address while 38 (15.2%) participants disagreed to have email address. The findings indicate that majority of the participants have email address whether used or not.

Table 2: Awareness and application of I C T Related usage for Social Work Education and Research

Personal computer	Frequency	Percent
Yes	112	44.8
No	138	55.2
Total	250	100.0
Is it PC or Laptop	Frequency	Per cent
PC (Personal computer)	144	57.6
Laptop	49	19.6
Not applicable	57	22.8
Total	250	100.0
Reason browsing internet	Frequency	Per cent
Research	193	77.2
Entertainment	6	2.4
Communication	51	20.4
Total	250	100.0
Google awareness	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	219	87.6
No	31	12.4
Total	250	100.0
Google scholar	Frequency	Percent
Yes	62	24.8
No	188	75.2
Total	250	100.0
Engages Chatting services	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	193	77.2
No	57	22.8
Total	250	100.0
Problem encountered using internet	Frequency	Percent
Slow access speed	139	55.6
Difficulty in finding relevant information	38	15.2
Overload of information on the internet	6	2.4
It takes too long to view/download pages on the internet	26	10.4
Privacy problem	41	16.4
Total	250	100.0
Period of using the internet	Frequency	Percent

Less than six months	45	18.0
Six months-1 year	24	9.6
1-2 years	38	15.2
2-4 years	49	19.6
More than 4 years	94	37.6
Total	250	100.0
Frequent use of internet	Frequency	Percent
Daily	92	36.8
2-3 times a week	80	32.0
2-3 times a month	42	16.8
Once in a month	36	14.4
Time spent on browsing the internet	Frequency	Percent
30min - 1hour	64	25.6
2 -3hours	89	35.6
4 - 5hours	44	17.6
6 - 7hours	53	21.2
Total	250	100.0
Location of internet facilities	Frequency	Percent
At cybercafé	105	42.0
At home	143	57.2
At the library/e-learning center	2	.8
Total	250	100.0
How did you learn internet/computer skills	Frequency	Percent
Trial and error method (Self instruction)	93	37.2
Help of colleagues and friends	71	28.4
Training at the University	3	1.2
Computer school training	83	33.2
Total	250	100.0
Compilation of conversational document and internet	Frequency	Percent
Time saving	13	5.2
Time consuming	8	3.2
More informative	33	13.2
More useful	6	2.4
More preferred	190	76.0
Total	250	100.0
Rate on internet use on academic performance	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	94	37.6
Effective	112	44.8
No difference	24	9.6
Ineffective	9	3.6
Very ineffective	11	4.4
Total	250	100.0
Satisfaction with internet facilities	Frequency	Percent

Fully	34	13.6
Partially	78	31.2
Least satisfied	88	35.2
No comment	50	20.0
Total	250	100.0
Whether can replace library services	Frequency	Percent
Yes	88	35.2
No	162	64.8
Total	250	100.0
Other suggestion	Frequency	Percent
The internet services and the facilities should be improve upon	66	26.4
The management should make it compulsory for students	8	3.2
It should be available and accessible to the general public	44	17.6
The cost of internet services should be reduced	22	8.8
Internet service should be afforded for free since students pay their fees	10	4.0
To create awareness of effectiveness of internet to the pursuit of academic performance	26	10.4
To prevent children from browsing pornographic site	4	1.6
Not applicable	70	28.0
Total	250	100.0

Table 2 shows that 112 (44.8%) participants have personal computer, while 138 (55.2%) participants do not have a personal computer. The finding indicate that majority of the participants do not have personal computer to access internet. Table 2 shows that 144 (57.6%) participants have personal PC while 49 (19.6%) participants have laptop. The finding indicate that majority of the participants have personal computer to access internet.

Table 2 shows that 193 (77.2%) participants agreed browse for research purpose while 6 (2.4%) participants agreed to browse for entertainment and 51 (20.4%) participants agreed to browse for communication. The finding indicates that majority of the participants browse for the purpose of research.

Table 2 also shows that 216 (86.4%) participants agreed they are aware of yahoo mail/G-mail while 34 (13.6%) participants were not aware of yahoo mail/G-mail. The finding indicates that majority of the participants are aware of yahoo mail and Gmail. Also 219 (87.6%) participants are aware of Google while 31 (12.6%) participants are aware of Google. The finding indicates that majority of the participants are aware of and uses Google services.

Table 2 shows that 62 (24.8%) participants agreed they are aware of Google scholar while 188 (75.2%) respondents are not aware of Google scholar. The finding indicates that majority of the participants are not aware of Google scholar. Also 70 (28.0%) participants agreed they have had discussion group while 180 (72.0%) participants have not join any discussion group. The finding indicates that majority of the participants have participated in any discussion group.

Moreover, table 2 shows that 193 (28.0%) participants agreed they have used the chatting facilities while 180 (72.0%) participants have not used the chatting facilities. The finding indicates that majority of the participants always use the chatting facilities. Similarly, 139 (55.6%) of the participants agreed that they have encountered slow access speed, while 38 (15.2%) participants said they always experience difficulty in finding relevant information in the net. 6 (2.4%) participants agreed having the problem of overload of information on the internet. However, 26 (10.4%) agreed that it takes longer time to view/download pages on the internet and 41 (16.4%) agreed that it has privacy problem. The finding indicates that majority of the respondents' encountered one form of problem or the other.

Table further shows that 45 (18.0%) participants have been using the internet in less than six months while 24 (9.6%) participants have been using the internet for six months to 1 year. Similarly, 38 (15.2%) participants have been using the internet for 1 to 2 years, while 49 (19.6%) respondents have been using the internet for 2 to 4 years and 94 (37.6%) participants have been using the internet for more than 4 years. The finding indicates that majority of the participants have been using the internet for relatively long time. In the same vein, 92 (36.8%) of the participants use the internet daily while 80 (32.0%) participants use the internet 2-3 times a week. Similarly, 42 (16.8%) participants use the internet 2-3 times a month while 36 (14.4%) of the participants use the internet once in a month. The finding indicates that majority of the participants use the internet daily and frequently.

Table 2 above shows that 64 (25.6%) of the participants spent 30 minutes – 1 hour on browsing the internet while 89 (35.6%) participants spend 2-3 hours daily on browsing the internet. Similarly, 44 (17.6%) participants spent 4 – 5 hours on browsing the internet while 53 (21.2%) participants spend 6 – 7 hours on browsing the internet. The finding indicates that majority of the participants spend 2 – 3 hours on browsing the internet daily. Also 105 (42.0%) participants frequently use cybercafé while 143 (57.2%) participants frequently access the internet at home and 2 (.8%) participants frequently use the library. The finding indicates that majority of the respondents use their personal computer to access the internet at home. In table 2 above, 93 (37.2%) of the participants learned internet/computer skills by trial and error method (self-instruction) while 71 (28.4%) participants learned internet/computer skills through the help of colleagues and friends also 3 (1.2%) participants learned the internet/computer skills through training in the university. However, 83 (33.2%) participants learned the internet/computer skills through computer training. The finding indicates that majority of the respondents learned the internet/computer skills through trial and error method (self-instruction) and help from friends.

In table 2 above, 13 (5.2%) participants agreed that internet usage is time saving compare to conversational document while 8 (3.2%) participants agreed that is time consuming. Similarly, 33 (13.2%) participants agreed that it is more informative while 6 (2.4%) participants agreed that it is more useful and 190 (76.0%) participants agreed that internet is more preferred than using conversational document. The finding indicates that majority of the participants preferred to use the internet than the conversational document

In table 2 above, 94 (37.6%) participants agreed that the impact of internet on academic is very effective while 112 (44.8%) participants agreed that it is effective. Also 24 (9.6%) participants said there is no difference while 9 (3.6%) participants agreed that it is ineffective and 11 (4.4%) respondents agreed that the internet has positive impact on academic is very ineffective. The finding indicates that majority of the participants overall rating of the internet use on academic performance as effective. Also 34 (13.6%) participants fully agreed to be satisfied with internet facilities while 78 (31.2%) participants said they are partially satisfied with internet facilities. Also, 88 (35.2%) participants are least satisfied with internet facilities and 50 (20.0%) participants have no comment whether satisfied or not. The finding indicates that majority of the participants are least satisfied with internet facilities.

Finally, table 2 shows that 88 (35.2%) participants agreed that internet can replace library services while 162 (64.8%) of the participants disagreed that the library cannot replace internet services. The finding indicates that majority of the participants preferred to use internet services than library services. And 66 (26.4%) participants suggest that internet service and the facilities should be improve upon while 8 (3.2%) participants suggest that university management should make it compulsory for students also 44 (17.6%) participants suggest that it should be available and accessible to the general public. However, 22 (8.8%) participants suggest that the cost of internet services should be reduced while 10 (4.0%) participants suggested that the internet services should be made free since students pay their fees. Also, 26 (10.4%) participants suggested that awareness of internet should be created for the effectiveness of the internet to the pursuit of academic performance, 4 (1.6%) participants suggest that children should be prevented from browsing pornographic site and 70 (28.0%) participants suggest not applicable. The finding indicates that majority of the participants suggested that the internet services and the facilities should be improved upon.

Summary of Findings

The study reveals that staff and students are embracing the use of computer and internet to do their academic work and source for information. Many of the research participants expressed frustration and difficulties in using computer and sourcing the internet for information. Findings shows that the systemic problem of underdevelopment of the Nigerian state permeates all facet of human endeavors including social work education and services.

The study reveals that at this point in time, information technology cannot be utilize to deliver social work services directly to the service users. This is because of the low level of illiteracy and computer appreciation of the Nigerian people. The rural areas of Nigeria and many of suburban communities have no access to electricity and computer hardware. This impede on the direct delivery of social work services to the members of such areas and communities in Nigeria. The study also reveals that students and staff patronage of internet goes beyond sourcing for educational information. Many of the students in particular use the internet for other social purposes. Many spend hours ping and actively participating in charting or other social media

activities. The prospect of positive improvement of internet usage by student and staff of Universities in Nigeria and the University of Benin in particular is very evident from this study.

Implication for policy development

Information technology and the internet usage in education is attracting the attention of both educationists and policy makers. This is while a study of this magnitude has serious policy implication for both social work education and services in a developing Nigerian society. There should be serious policy development on the side of the Universities and the Government in the context of training of social workers in the school and the field practicum.

There should concerted effort by all stakeholders to computerized most aspects of education in Nigeria especially at the university level. The E- learning center and automated libraries should be established in all universities to enhance the education of social workers and social services delivery systems.

Recommendations

The world is fast developing in computerization and internet usage in socioeconomic and educational development and service delivery in social welfare units of the government, we therefore make the following:

- The supervisory ministries and agencies like Federal and state ministries of education and National University Commission (NUC) should make computer education compulsory in all disciplines in all universities in Nigeria throughout the duration of a programme in the university. This will make the graduates of any discipline including social work to be computer literate and proficient;
- Social work students should be exposed to the intricacies and benefits of the internet so as to be abreast with latest best practice as obtains in Europe and North America universities;
- There should be collaboration between agencies and the university on how to expand the horizon of information technology during field practicum placement. This will encourage internet and computer usage by the agencies and the students. This in turn will stimulate the development of computer based social work service in agencies;
- The faculty and students of Nigerian universities should liaise with other faculty members and students of other universities in Europe and North America for cross-fertilization of ideas and ideals of social work education and services.

Conclusion

The importance of information technology and the internet services in service delivery in all profession today cannot be over-emphasized. It is therefore absolutely important for social work profession in Nigeria to strive to embrace modern information technology so that the service delivery, planning, evaluation and even research can be enhanced. It is a good starting point for some universities like the University of Benin to have good and well equipped E-Learning Centre and automated Library. There is good prospect for social work to grow in Nigeria within the next decade and be able measure up with other universities in advanced nations of the world.

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