

Undergraduates' Use of Online Forum in a Nigerian University of Education

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Abstract

This study investigated the use of the Students Online Forum by undergraduates of the Tai Solarin University of Education. A survey design was adopted for this study. A questionnaire designed by researchers was used to gather data from a sample of 731 undergraduates at Tai Solarin University of Education using a stratified sampling technique. The findings indicate that the major reason for the use of Online forum by undergraduates is it covers a wide range of audiences ($\chi = 3.62$; $SD = 0.98$). The undergraduates mostly used the online forum to get updates about social activities on campus ($\chi = 3.24$; $SD = 0.91$). The majority of the undergraduates used the online forum daily while the benefit mostly gained by the undergraduates for using the online student forum knowing activities going on camp. The study recommended among other things provision of wifi on the campus and strengthening its system administration to enhance the use of the online students' forum.

Keywords: Students Online Forum, Online Discussion Forum, Undergraduates Use of online Forum, Social Networks, Tai Solarin University of Education

Introduction

The 21st century is characterised by the rapid development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which has greatly influenced our society, thereby becoming a vital and integral part of our lives as individuals. ICT plays an important role in business, telecommunications, environmental forecasts, military intelligence, sports, and education. It has greatly influenced education, particularly by helping to increase the frontiers of data and enhancing teaching, learning, and research (Adesoji, 2012).

The emergence of the Internet and other information technology tools has brought numerous consequences and has increased our ability to support and expand social learning, that is

socially constructed learning that arises through participation in dialogue and interactions with others (Seely Brown & Adler, 2008). It is not disputable that a greater chunk of learners of today is tech-savvy. They are very used to the internet and availing themselves of the advantages offered by the superhighway. Sheahan (2005) described the new generation of students as the Y generation who have advanced knowledge of the practical application of technology, which they use in many aspects of their lives, including their social lives which is being enhanced with the advent of social media. The Y generation which of course includes undergraduates, who are always seen using mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets and other hand-held devices to explore opportunities made available to them by the internet and modern technology (Edeh, Edeh, Alhuseen, Quadri & Sumaya, 2019).

Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays a significant role in supporting efficient management and administration within the education sector. Among a number of the technology tools that may be deployed for such resource administration in universities are social media. Andreas and Michael (2010) described social as a collection of internet-based applications that construct the ideological foundation and permit the creation and exchange of users. The web usage effect of social media, as informed by (Kietzmann, 2012) is that internet users still spend longer on social media than any site. Kepios (2022) recently reported that there are 4.74 billion social media users around the world in October 2022, this figure represents 59.3 per cent of the world's population.

Internet users of today spend an average of two hours and 22 minutes socializing online (Deyan, 2020). William, Boyd, Densten, Chin, Diamond and Morgenthaler (2009) described social media as online communities of Internet consumers who interact with other users about areas of shared interest, whether from a private, or academic viewpoint. This online community also can be regarded as an internet forum where undergraduates can have access to information and also share knowledge in several forms.

The increased penetration of the internet and development in digital technology are enhancing interactions among different people in the world. One of the new technology tools students avail themselves of is Online Discussion Forum (ODF). An online Discussion Forum could be viewed as an electronic environment that is used for online learning discussion as well as for sharing of knowledge and dissemination of information. Alabo and Emmah (2004) affirm that Online Discussion Forum is a web-based platform which brings different people together, including students that have similar interests and mindsets. This forum gives members opportunities to post and share messages, interact and get answers from other members thereby getting a clearer understanding of the issues under discussion in the forum.

Çelik (2013) opined that an online forum is different from a chat room because messages in an online forum are more formal than in chat rooms. Unlike casual conversation in chat rooms, students in an internet forum post their thoughts and reply to others' messages in very more formal communication. Also, through the utilisation of online forums, undergraduates can have discussions with one another on course-related topics and contribute to the discussion by posting messages to an internet message board. An internet message board may be a communication forum like Facebook where friends can post or reply to others' messages within

the forum. Online forums are interactive tools that may assist in establishing a platform for college students' discussions after class in both asynchronous and synchronous ways (Nandi, 2011).

The advantages associated with the use of an online forum are numerous; responses can be very fast when students are engaged with this tool (Hew, 2016; Markel, 2001). Studies also established that online forum activity is a reliable predictor of academic performance when used appropriately by students for academic pursuits (Dawson, 2010; Morris, Finnegan & Wu, 2005). Online forums have been widely used for many years and studies have been carried out on the factors that influence the effective use of them by students. For instance, one of these elements of students' participation in online discussion forums is their fulfilment of communication and interaction functions required in some college-level instruction (Mokoena, 2013). Online forum benefits members in many ways. They afford members intellectual support as they share ideas, and opinions are freely expressed, ensures more participation when compared relatively with the face-to-face situation, and ensure social interaction among students which ultimately enhance participation in the building of course content by students (Tella & Isah, 2011).

The use of online forums has also had its challenges, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. A number of the challenges faced include a lack of trust in peer feedback, ownership issues regarding public and collaborative spaces, and inadequate technological infrastructure, (Schroeder, Minocha, and Schneider, 2010; Lester and Perini, 2010). Tella and Isah (2011) also pointed out that users of the online forum could be hampered by the epileptic power supply, inadequate time, inadequate access to computers and the internet as well as exorbitant cost to access the internet, especially in the third world countries. Posting of irrelevant information on the platform discouraged some members not to participate or could even lead to dismember of some members (Premegowriew 2014).

TASUED Student Online Forum was founded in September 2015 by Adigun Akorede Rasheed, an undergraduate of the Library and Information Science Department of Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED Facebook Website). Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED) Students Online Forum is an online social networking service that functions as a medium of communication among the undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education. It was created for disseminating information to any or all students in TASUED, to assist students to be better informed, and enlightened, and to keep them abreast of world developments and the advancement of data. It is used for creating profile entities, while groups act more like places for like-minded communication. Those that share common interests and need to air their opinions will either join or become a part of these online forums. Consequently, this study seeks to investigate the undergraduates' use of student online forums in Nigeria's premier University of Education.

Statement of the problem

The world today is a global market within which the internet is the most vital source of knowledge. Since the revolution of social media began in the 1990s, it is assumed in some quarters that the use of Facebook groups by students to communicate and work together in the

commission their group opinions (Andreas & Haenlein, 2010). Through their peer interactions, undergraduates may potentially use online forums to collaborate and build new understandings among themselves.

TASUED Student Online Forum, since its creation on September 1, 2015, has significantly changed the methods utilized by students in communication because it provides opportunities to interact, exchange updates and disclose various deliberation and team among students of TASUED. This can be a sign that TASUED Online Forum networks are fast becoming a mainstream culture that's being integrated into the daily lives of the many students of the Tai Solarin University of Education. Observation of the undergraduates on the campus suggests their increasing interest in the use of this student forum. In spite of establishment of the TASUED Student Forum and its use by the undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education over four years of existence and use by the undergraduates. It has also been observed by the researchers that there has been a dearth of studies on the use of this forum by undergraduates in this university, hence the need for this study.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the use of the TASUED Students Online Forum by undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education, while specific objectives are to:

1. find out reasons for the use of the TASUED Student Online Forum by undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education;
2. ascertain what the undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education use the TASUED Student Online Forum;
3. determine the frequency of use of the TASUED Online Forum by undergraduates of TASUED;
4. identify the benefits derived by undergraduates of TASUED from the use of the Online Forum, and;
5. identify the challenges affecting the use of TASUED Student Online Forum by undergraduates and recommend how the challenges encountered on the use of TASUED Student Online Forum by undergraduates could be ameliorated.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study;

1. What are the reasons for the use of the TASUED Student Online Forum by the undergraduates of TASUED?
2. What do undergraduates of TASUED use the TASUED Online Forum for?
3. What is the frequency of use of the TASUED Online Forum by undergraduates of TASUED?
4. What are the benefits derived by undergraduates of TASUED from Online Forum towards the information circulation among the undergraduate students of TASUED?
5. What are the major challenges affecting the use of the TASUED Student Online Forum by undergraduates?
6. In what way will the use of the TASUED Student Online Forum be improved?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are significant to undergraduates as it will create awareness of the importance of the use of an online forum. In the same vein, the findings will go a long way in creating awareness among the undergraduates about the communication forum available for use among the undergraduate of the Tai Solarin University of Education. Also, the study will increase the awareness and utilization of the TASUED Student Online Forum among the undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education as awareness will be promoted by this study.

This study is also significant as it will reveal challenges facing Tai Solarin University of Education undergraduates in the use of the forum and recommendations proffered could be of immense benefit to the use of the online forum. The finding will be of significance to the university management as it will help them to know the possible effects of this online forum usage on the undergraduates and then come up with a policy that will further enhance the proper use of this forum by the undergraduates. This study will enable the undergraduates of TASUED to be aware that, apart from the social benefit of this Online Forum site, other uses of the forum would be revealed. Finally, the research will serve as a reference tool to future researchers in Library and Information Science with special reference to online forums.

Literature review

The online forum gathers participants together to solve the common issues that they are facing. It is considered a promising application of utilizing collective intelligence to solve complicated real-world problems. To facilitate the discussions in an online forum to proceed smoothly and to build consensus efficiently, human facilitators are introduced into the system. Online forums are often anonymous and impose few restrictions and little content moderation, though, with many different types of users and interests, it can be challenging to predict who becomes influential and how influence manifests itself in online forums (Holt, Freilich & Chermak, 2022; Gu, 2021). An online forum can also serve as an information system where members can post, comment on a discussion, give advice, or collaborate. Most undergraduates rely on social network sites to communicate with one another and some reasons are responsible for this. According to Sanderson and Field (2018), there are possible reasons, undergraduates initially joined online forums. reported joining to seek information, to share information, find others to relate to, or because likely minded was not nearby.

The purpose of using student online forums cannot be overstated, Rekha and Venkatapathy (2015) reported that such purposes include getting solutions to problems they encounter, knowing and learning new concepts, casual browsing of questions and answers, getting suggestions on learning material, or learning a new subject of interest. Online forum has continued to witness a significant rise however a cursory look needs to be taken into the extent of the use of these online forums by students. Rekha and Venkatapathy (2015) investigated the use of online forums by students, and researchers in India. The findings of the study revealed that 40% of the respondents used online forums weekly, 43% of them use them daily, about 9% of them use them monthly and only 7% use them rarely. This inferred that the forum is

used more daily indicating that students are familiar with the forum and understand the benefits associated with using it.

Chinedu (2008) in a study carried out on online forums used by students in some institutions in Nigeria revealed that students have opportunities to develop self-sufficiency while learning a language; individual students are also availed of the privilege to lead a discussion in the way directed by their preferences. Also, the study revealed that forum members could willingly share knowledge and experience with other forum members. This then implies that every member of the forum can benefit from this sharing of free knowledge (Chinedu, 2008).

Similarly, Pavlina (2005) identified some benefits of the online forum which include knowledge sharing, learning new ideas and refining old ones, enjoying community membership, contributing to others, making new friends and contacts, new business leads, keeping up with current events and learning about new opportunities. Moreover, Pendry and Salvatore (2015) in their study submitted that a major advantage of online communication is that it allows undergraduates to fulfil needs that are not being met offline.

Choi, Land and Turgeon, 2005 cited in Kaur (2011) revealed that through online forums, students can develop their self-sufficiency in language learning. The individual student is given more authority to shape or lead the discussion in the direction they prefer. On the other hand, the use of student online forums comes with issues that make it impossible or difficult for students to relate with their colleagues. Impediments to using online forums include workload concerns for faculty and students, lack of trust in peer feedback, ownership issues regarding public and collaborative spaces and difficulty in adapting publicly available tools (Schroeder, et al., 2010). According to Lester and Perini (2010), third-party web-based innovations are a major concern for most universities because the information is stored outside secure campus servers, yet, an alternative arrangement such as the development of a social networking site may be too costly for most institutions.

In the same vein, Seethamraju (2014) carried out a study on problems encountered by students using an online forum in Australia. The finding submitted that the major setback includes an increase in students' workload, inability to freely express their ideas and views because of the assessment involved, restriction to the number of postings per student per question, inadequate number of responses by some students, poor integration and synthesis of others' ideas by students and insufficient moderation by the administrator.

Rekha and Venkatapathy (2015) investigated the use of online forums by students, and researchers in India. The findings indicated that the most frequent reason given for not accessing the forum as much as they desired was a perceived lack of time, inability to log in to the forum, competition with other electronic communication mediums, and speed of access to the forum.

Consequently, de Lima, Gerosa, Conte, and Netto (2019) in a bid to provide a solution to the challenges carried out a study on undergraduates in selected Universities in Brazil and recommendations proffered included motivating students within the educational environment,

adding files to the comments in the forum to complement the debate, integrating the forum with social media tools, improving the forum interface to make it more attractive and including features that assist them in evaluating the quality of the student's comments in the forum.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The research design used in this study is a descriptive survey that sought to examine the undergraduates' use of the Students' Online Forum at the Tai Solarin University of Education. The survey design was considered appropriate in this study as it allows the use of a questionnaire as a data collection instrument from a large population relatively quickly. This is in line with Ponto(2015) who affirmed that the study concerned with obtaining information from a sample of respondents by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to them needs the use of a descriptive survey.

Population of the Study

The population of the study was undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State. According to the Directorate of Academic Planning, Quality Assurance, and Research (DAPQAR) of the TASUED, undergraduates as of the 2018/2019 session are 24,297. This number cuts across the entire five (5) colleges that make up the university.

Table 1: Distribution of the Population of the Study

COLLEGES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGES
COSPED	5638	23.2%
COVTED	4056	16.7%
COHUM	5073	20.8%
COSIT	4441	18.3%
COSMAS	5089	21%
TOTAL	24,297	100%

Source: Directorate of Academic Planning, Quality Assurance and Research (DAPQAR), TASUED

Key :

COSPED - College of Specialised and Professional Education
 COVTED- College of Vocational and Technical Education
 COHUM- College of Humanities
 COSIT- College of Science and Information Technology
 COSMAS- College of Social and management Sciences

There are five (5) Colleges in the university. The total number of undergraduates in COSPED was 5638 (23.2%), COVTED has total undergraduates of 4056 (16.7%), COHUM has total undergraduates of 5073 (20.8%), COSIT has total undergraduates of 4441 (18.3%) and COSMAS has total undergraduates of 5089 (21%) as shown in Table 1

Sample and Sampling technique

The stratified Proportional Random Sampling Technique was used to select 731 undergraduates from the total population of Tai Solarin University of Education undergraduates for this study. This sampling technique was adopted because the population is divided into homogeneous groups known as strata. Each stratum is represented by a college in the university, bringing it to a total of five (5) strata.

Table 2: Distribution of sample of the study

COLLEGES	SAMPLE SIZE	PERCENTAGE
COSPED	170	23.2%
COVTEd	122	16.7%
COHUM	152	20.9%
COSIT	134	18.2%
COSMAS	153	21%
TOTAL	731	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

From Table 2, it could be seen that a sample of 731 students of the Tai Solarin University of Education, COSPED 170(23.2%), 122(16.7%) from COVTEd, 152(20.9%) represented COHUM, 134(18.2%) from COSIT and 153(21%) were from COSMAS.

Data collection instrument

A Questionnaire titled "Use of TASUED Online Forum by Undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education Questionnaire (UTOFUSQ)" designed by researchers was used as a data collection instrument. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A was for the collection of bio-data of the respondents while Section B consists of the data relating to the research questions set for this study. The development of the instrument was informed by the objectives set for the study and the literature reviewed.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire used in this study, a test re-tests reliability method of two-week intervals using Cronbach Alpha was adopted to determine the overall reliability. The correlation coefficient of 0.76 and above suggests the questionnaire was reliable and can be recommended for future use (Marsh and Hocevar, 1988). The questionnaire had overall reliability of 0.82, exceeding the minimum standard of 0.80 suggested for basic research (Wang & Tang, 2003).

Procedure for Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers to the selected respondents in all five (5) colleges in the university. The copies of the instrument were administered in August 2019. The administration of the instrument took ten working days. Out of the 731 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents 621(86.1%) copies were returned duly completed and found usable for this study.

Results

Demographic Information of the Respondents

Table 3: Demographic Information of the Respondents

Colleges	Frequency	Percentage
COSPED	150	24.5
COVTED	106	17.3
COHUM	120	19.6
COSIT	109	17.8
COSMAS	127	20.8
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	287	46.9
Female	325	53.10
Age	Frequency	Percentage
16-20yrs	304	49.7
21-30yrs	308	50.3
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	575	91.0
Married	46	9.0
Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	349	57.0
Muslim	263	43.0
Level	Frequency	Percentage
100l	153	25
200l	169	27.6
300l	184	30.1
400l	106	17.3

Table 3 shows the demographic information of the respondents. The table revealed the number of the respondents of the colleges surveyed 150(24.5%) were COSPED, 106(17.3%) were COVTED, 120(19.6%) were COHUM, 109(17.8%) were COSIT while 127(20.8%) were COSMAS. The table revealed the gender of the respondents 287(46.9%) were Male while 325(53.1%) were Female. The table revealed that 304(49.7%) fall within the age of 16-0 years, and 308 (50.3%) fall within the age of 21-30 years. The table revealed the marital status of the respondents 575(91.0%) were single while 46(9.0%) were married. The table also revealed the religion of the respondents 349(57.0%) were Christianity while 263(43.0%) were Muslim. The table revealed the level of the respondents 153(25%) were 100l, 169(27.6%) were 200l, 184(30.1%) were 300l and finally, 106 (17.3%) were 400l.

Research Question 1: What are the reasons for the use of the TASUED Student Online Forum by Undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education?

ITEM	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
I use it because it covers a wide range of audience	3.62	0.98	Significant
I use it because it allows a variety of media i.e. text, images, videos and links	3.43	0.96	Significant
I use it because it is available anytime and at any place	3.25	1.00	Significant
I use it because it is highly interactive	2.93	1.01	Significant
I use it to get feedback without delay	2.78	0.94	Significant
I use it because it is community-based	2.51	0.89	Significant
Grand Mean	3.09	0.96	Significant

Table 4 shows that the grand mean of 3.09 is greater than the accepted mean of 2.5 indicating that all the items in Table 4 have been accepted by the respondents as the reasons for the use of TASUED Student Online Forum by undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education. The results show a mean and standard deviation score of ($\chi = 3.62$; SD = 0.98) stated that they used it because it covers a wide range of audience, ($\chi = 3.43$; S D = 0.96) affirmed that they used it. After all, it allows a variety of media i.e. text, image, videos, and links, ($\chi = 3.25$; SD = 1.00) indicated that they used it because it is available any-time and any-place, ($\chi = 2.93$; SD = 1.01) signified that they used it. After all, it is highly interactive, ($\chi = 2.78$; SD = 0.94) stated that they use it to get feedback without delay and finally, ($\chi = 2.51$; SD = 0.89) stated that they used it because it is community-based.

Research Question 2: What do undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education use the TASUED Online Forum for?

Table 5: Mean Scores Use of TASUED Online Forum by the Undergraduates

ITEM	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
I use it to get updates about social activities on campus	3.24	0.91	Significant
I use it to get information relating to TASUED programmes and events organized by TASUED	3.11	1.02	Significant
I use it to get updated information about my Results on the portal, school resumption and academic calendar	3.06	1.13	Significant
I use it for the SUG campaign and other elections	3.02	1.10	Significant
I use it to solve my assignment and likely exam questions	2.95	0.97	Significant
I use it to express my mind on TASUED Management Policies	2.92	0.99	Significant
I use it to establish a relationship with students from other colleges	2.80	1.01	Significant
It gives me more opportunities to communicate with my friends	2.77	0.94	Significant
I use it to share information among students	2.76	0.94	Significant
I use it for research purposes	2.29	1.12	Non-Significant
I use it to get information about religious activities	2.18	1.04	Non-Significant
Grand Mean	2.87	1.02	Significant

Decision: Score of X=2.50 and above is significant.

Decision: it has been adjudged that a mean score of \bar{x} =2.50 and above is significant.

Table 5 shows that the grand mean of 2.87 is lesser than the accepted mean of 2.50 indicating that all the items in Table 5 have been accepted by the respondents as the use of TASUED Online Forum by undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education. The results shows a mean and standard deviation score of ($\chi = 3.24$; SD = 0.91) indicated that they use it to get updates about social activities on campus, ($\chi = 3.11$; SD = 1.02) they used it to get information

relating to TASUED programmes and events organized by TASUED, ($\chi = 3.06$; $SD = 1.13$) they use it to get updated information about my results on the portal, school resumption and academic calendar, ($\chi = 3.02$; $SD = 1.10$) affirmed that they used it for Student Union Government (SUG) campaign and other elections, ($\chi = 2.95$; $SD = 0.97$) stated that they used it to solve their assignments and likely exam questions, ($\chi = 2.92$; $SD = 0.99$) signified that it to express their mind on TASUED Management Policies, ($\chi = 2.80$; $SD = 1.01$) indicated that they used it to establish relationship with students from other colleges, ($\chi = 2.77$; $SD = 0.77$) stated that it gave them more opportunities to communicate with their friends, ($\chi = 2.76$; $SD = 0.94$) stated that they used it to share information among students, ($\chi = 2.29$; $SD = 1.12$) affirmed that they used it for research purpose and finally, ($\chi = 2.18$; $SD = 1.04$) stated that they used it get information about religious activities.

Research Question 3: How often do undergraduates of TASUED use the Online Forum?

Table 6: Frequency of use of TASUED Online Forum by Undergraduates of TASUED

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	312	50.2
Occasionally	97	15.6
Monthly	59	9.5
Twice a week	56	9.0
Fortnightly	38	6.1
Weekends	34	5.5
Once a day	25	4.0

Table 6 shows the frequency of use of the TASUED Online Forum by Undergraduates surveyed. The table revealed that 312(50.2%) of the respondents used it daily, Occasionally 97(15.6%), Monthly 59(15.6%), Twice a week 56(9.0%), Fortnightly 38(6.1%), Weekends 34(5.5%) and finally, Once a day 25(4.0%). It could be inferred that the majority of the undergraduates surveyed used the TASUED Online Forum daily.

Research Question 4: What are the benefits derived by undergraduates of TASUED from Online Forum towards the information circulation among the undergraduates of Tai Solarin University of Education?

Table 7: Mean scores of benefits derived by undergraduates of TASUED from Online - Forum towards the information circulation among the undergraduates.

ITEM	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
I have been able to know about social activities within the campus	2.89	0.90	Significant
It has help me in keeping up with current events that happen on campus	2.85	0.86	Significant
I have been able to use it to obtain information about assignments given to us when I am out of school premises	2.81	0.91	Significant
I have been able to connect to students in other departments from other colleges at the university	2.77	0.95	Significant
I have been able to connect with students with similar interests in social life	2.75	0.94	Significant
It has helped me in disseminating reliable information to my friends with ease	2.74	0.78	Significant
It has helped me in learning new ideas (Study Tips)	2.68	0.94	Significant
It has helped me in establishing new friends and contacts	2.62	0.83	Significant
It helps me in intellectual exchange	2.53	1.07	Significant
It has helped me to know about new business opportunities around the school	2.35	1.19	Non-Significant
It has helped me in marketing my goods and services	2.31	1.18	Non-Significant

It has exposed me to the latest information about happenings in the country	2.10	1.20	Non-Significant
It reduces my loneliness	1.97	1.15	Non-Significant
It is user friendly	1.91	1.15	Non-Significant
Grand Mean	2.52	1.00	Significant

Decision: score of X=2.5 and above is significant.

Table 7 shows that the grand mean of 2.52 is greater than the accepted mean of 2.5 indicating that all the items in Table 8 have been accepted by the respondents as the benefits derived by undergraduates of TASUED from Online Forum towards the information circulation among the undergraduates of the University of Education. The result shows a mean and standard deviation score of ($\chi = 2.89$; $SD = 0.90$) stating that they have been able to know about social activities within the campus, ($\chi = 2.85$; $SD = 0.86$) indicating that it helped them in keeping up with current events that happen on camps ($\chi = 2.81$; $SD = 0.91$) stated that they had been able to use it to obtain information about assignments given to them when they are out of school premises, ($\chi = 2.77$; $SD = 0.95$) stated that they had been able to connect to students in other departments from other colleges in the university. However, the lowest result shows a mean and standard deviation score ($\chi = 2.31$; $SD = 1.18$) signified that it had helped them in marketing their goods and services, ($\chi = 2.10$; $SD = 1.20$) indicating that it had exposed them to the latest information about happenings in the country, ($\chi = 1.97$; $SD = 1.15$) affirmed that it reduced their loneliness and finally ($\chi = 1.91$; $SD = 1.15$) stated that it is user friendly.

Research Question 5: What are the major challenges affecting the use of TASUED Online Forum by undergraduates?

Table 8: Challenges affecting the use of TASUED Online Forum by the undergraduates.

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate power supply	592	96.7
Lack of privacy	522	85.3
Inadequacy of ICT Skills	484	79.1
Incessant breakdown of ICT facilities on Campus	478	78.1
Inadequacy of time to use it	456	74.5
Posting of rumours and lies on the online forum	439	71.7
The unruly behaviour of some members of the TASUED Student Online Forum	416	68.0
Inadequacy of knowledge of how to use it effectively	369	60.3
Inadequate access to computers / other ICTs	333	54.4
Fraudulent activities (Scam)	216	35.3
Low bandwidth	208	34.0
High cost of Internet access (subscription)	203	33.2
Time Waster	107	17.5

Table 8 shows that the major challenges affecting the use of TASUED Online Forum by undergraduates are inadequate power supply 592(96.7%), Lack of privacy 522(85.3%), Inadequacy of ICT Skills 484(79.1%), Incessant breakdown of ICT facilities on Campus 478(78.1%), Inadequacy of time to use it 456(74.5%), Posting of rumours and lies on the online forum 439(71.7%), Unruly behaviour of some members on TASUED Student Online Forum 416(68.0%), Inadequacy of knowledge of how to use it effectively 369(60.3%),

Inadequate access to computers/other ICTs 333(54.4%), Fraudulent activities (Scam) 216(35.3%), Low bandwidth 208(34.0%), High cost of Internet access (subscription) 203(33.2%) and finally, Time Waster 107(17.5%).

Research Question 6: In what ways will the use of the TASUED Student Online Forum be Improved?

Table 9: Recommendations

Solutions	Frequency	Percentage
Provision of adequate power supply	612	100
Provision of adequate ICT infrastructure	610	99.7
Provision of Free Wi-Fi around the school premises	607	99.2
Increase bandwidth	601	98.2
Members behavior's should be control and monitored by the system administrator	586	95.8
Privacy and protection of users should be guaranteed	532	86.9
Discourage posting of irrelevant messages and pictures	499	81.5
Enhancement of system administrator to checkmate abuse from members	378	61.8
Providing training on online Gadget	269	44.0

Table 9 shows that the use of the TASUED Student Online Forum can be improved are the provision of adequate power supply 612(100%), provision of adequate ICT infrastructure 610(99.7%), provision of Free Wi-Fi around the school premises 607(99.2%), increase bandwidth 601(98.2%), control and monitoring of members by the system administrator 586(95.8%), privacy and protection of users should be guaranteed 532(86.9%), discourage posting of irrelevant messages and pictures 499(81.5%), enhancement of system administrator to checkmate abuse from members 378(61.8%), providing training on Online platforms 269(44.0%) and finally creating awareness for new students' 253(41.4%).

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed that the reasons that made undergraduates of TASUED use the student online forum is because it covers a wide range of audiences, allows a variety of media, and is available anywhere and at any time. This finding is partially consistent with the study of Sanderson and Field (2018) who reported that undergraduates had initially joined the online forum to seek information, share information, and find others to relate to. This implies that there are varying reasons why students use online forums and are no limits to a set of reasons.

The findings of the study revealed that undergraduates in TASUED use the online forum to get updates about social activities on campus and to get information relating to TASUED programs and events organized by the university. This finding corroborates the outcome of the study of Rekha and Venkatapathy (2015) who reported that getting solutions to problems they encounter, knowing and learning new things such as the information related to activities in their environment, casual browsing questions and answers, getting suggestions on learning material or learning a new subject of interest are the major purposes of using the student online forum.

The findings showed that the majority of the undergraduates surveyed used the TASUED Online Forum daily. This is consistent with the findings of Rekha and Venkatapathy (2015)

who revealed in their study that online forum is used more daily indicating that students are familiar with the forum and understand the benefits associated with using it. The findings of this study showed that the benefits derived by undergraduates in TASUED from using online forums include being able to have knowledge on social activities within the campus, keeping up with current events that happen on campus, obtaining information about assignments given to them when they are out of school premises.

Consequently, this agrees with the findings of Pavlina (2005); Pendry and Salvatore (2015) who revealed that the benefits of the online discussion forum include knowledge sharing, learning new ideas and refining old ones, enjoying community membership, making new friends, new business tips, contributing to others, getting updates on events going on on campus and learning about new opportunities, allowing undergraduate to fulfil needs that are not being met offline.

The findings of this study indicated among other things the major challenges facing undergraduates of TASUED on the use of student online forums include inadequate power supply, lack of privacy, the inadequacy of ICT skills, and incessant breakdown of ICT facilities on campus. The outcome of this also finds consistency with the findings of the study of Lester and Perini (2010) who revealed that students showed concerns over privacy while using online as information is stored outside secure campus servers. However, the findings from the study of Seethamraju (2014) is not completely in consonance with the findings of this study as it was reported that the major challenges facing students in the use of online forum included an increase in students' workload because of the online discussion forum, inability to freely express their ideas and views because of the assessment involved, restriction to the number of postings per student per question, inadequate number of responses by some students. The variation in findings could be a result of the environment or society where the studies were carried out as most of the challenges reported are mostly synonymous with developing countries while the latter is from a developed country.

The findings of this study submitted that the recommendations to the challenges facing the use of the online forum by TASUED students include the provision of adequate power supply, provision of adequate ICT infrastructure, provision of Free Wi-Fi around the school premises and increase in bandwidth. This is however inconsistent with an earlier finding of de Lima, Gerosa, Conte and Netto (2019) which proffered that more focus should be on the contents and features of the forum than the infrastructural deficiencies. Some of the recommendations proffered by de Lima, Gerosa, Conte, and Netto (2019) included motivating students within the educational environment, adding files to the comments in the forum to complement the debate, improving the forum interface to make it more attractive and including features that assist them in evaluating the quality of the student's comments in the forum and integrating the forum with social media tools.

Conclusion

The use of online student forums by undergraduates in educational institutions has been on the increase, especially in developed countries and the trend is becoming common in developing countries like Nigeria as more youth are using social media. This study examined, through a

descriptive survey, the use of an Online Student Forum among undergraduates of the Tai Solarin University of Education. The results, thus far, have revealed reasons that made undergraduates of TASUED use the students' online forum. The findings of the study also indicated that the majority of the respondents surveyed used the online forum daily. The findings of the study showed among other things that undergraduates in TASUED use the online forum to get updates about social activities on campus and to get information relating to TASUED programs and events organized by the University.

The major challenges facing undergraduates of TASUED on the use of the student online forum include inadequate power supply, lack of privacy, the inadequacy of ICT skills and incessant breakdown of ICT facilities on campus. With this paper, we contribute to the understanding of the use of Online Student Forum by undergraduates in Nigeria, few studies have been done in this area in Nigeria. The findings of this study are considered significant because it is one of the pioneer studies on the use of the TASUED Student Online Forum by undergraduates in this Nigerian premier university of Education. The study is however limited to the use of Online Students' Forum by the undergraduates, a longitudinal study could be conducted on the information-seeking behaviour of the undergraduates in the Online Students' Forum and more importantly, studies on the gender dimension of the use of Online Student Forum by undergraduates could be carried out in future.

Recommendations

Based on the outcome of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. The University management surveyed should supply adequate electricity, especially from alternative energy sources to enhance undergraduates' use of the TASUED Online Forum.
2. The library management should endeavour to provide adequate ICT infrastructure to improve the use of the TASUED Online Forum among the undergraduates surveyed.
3. The University management should install Free Wi-Fi around the school premises to encourage the undergraduates to use TASUED Online Forum.
4. There is a need to improve the bandwidths in ensuring faster access and connectivity that will save much of the undergraduates' time.
5. Members' behaviour should be controlled and monitored by the system administrator on the online forum.
6. There should be a checklist where users can register their addresses including e-mail addresses, and matriculation numbers to check anonymity on the online forum.

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