

**The Reality of Internet Use among a sample of University
Students and their attitudes towards its use as an Educational
Tool to conduct Academic Research
University of Ghardaia as a model**

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Submitted

22/06/2022

Accepted

30/09/2022

Published

01/12/2022

Abstract: The present study aims at identifying the reality of the Internet use among a sample of university students and their attitudes towards it as an educational tool in conducting their academic researches at the University of Ghardaia. The study also seeks to reveal the differences in these attitudes according to the following variables: The student's gender, his majors. The sample consists of one hundred and thirty (130) students. The researcher relies on the descriptive approach. I have adopted the questionnaire as an instrument in the study. I have also used a set of methods in the data analysis. Besides, I have adopted the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS. V20).

The study concludes that: there is a large proportion of Internet use in the study, as well as they are using it positively. There are no crucial differences in students' grades/levels in the use of Internet as an educational tool in conducting their academic researches attributed to the gender variable, while there are statistically significant differences attributed to the major variable in favor for those who are majoring in scientific disciplines(majors).

Keywords: *Attitudes; attitudes towards the Internet; academic research; university students*

1. Introduction:

In recent years, the world has witnessed radical changes as a result of the information and communication revolution until it has become like a small village, which it has resulted in this amazing development in all fields.

Education is a continuously renewed process which it copes with today's evolution and it has also witnessed a cognitive change over time, especially with

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the emergence of the Internet, which is one of the most important signs of educational technology which aims to reach users to various information with the least effort and lowest cost, in addition to providing better data in terms of quantity and quality. (El-Hila, 2001, p499).

In other words, education in the era of the Internet that must be relied on the educating the individual as a key part of the educational-learning process, so that his personality grows in its various aspects, to be able to act independently, to judge correctly, and personal liability, thus embodying a better openness to his personality, and an expansion of his abilities and self-status. (Al-Hadi, 2005, p120).

This is what Mohamed Mekdad has recommended in his book "The University in the Era of Globalization", he stressed that university education is required to adapt to the demands and desires of learners, and to be centered on the learner (Mekdad, 2005, p38). By focusing on increasing his motivation to learn, as well as developing his self-efficacy as it is in line with his level of ambition, as the basic psychological foundations of his self-learning, this is also pointed out by "Ibrahim Al-Far" where he stressed that "the Internet has an effective role in the development of self-learning". (Al-Farr, 2002, p192).

Especially since it provides new and diverse tools for the student, enabling him to obtain information, as well as opening a dialogue between him and other students, friends or professors in different places.

The exploitation of the Internet by students and the utilization of its enormous information services is still slow, and may be limited to some recreational aspects without optimizing its exploitation in the development of getting the knowledge of learners.

As it is obvious that use of computers in schools and universities helps to achieve the great deal of educational goals desired in those schools and institutions, and brings benefit from modern technology and there is no doubt about the benefits of using modern technologies in providing them with scientific skills that help them out in the future of their lives, especially the educational academy.

Former US Vice President Al Gore says of the communications revolution, especially the Internet, "It is a universal service that is accessible to all members of societies, in which everyone says his word, it encourages the real practice of democracy by raising the participation rate of citizens in decision-making, and also encourages the cooperation of nations, I see in it a new era of democracy", that is, the Internet is the way to produce knowledge and then distribute it, and communication technology is today the infrastructure of developed countries in

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terms of its comprehensiveness and ease, its purpose and knowledge, it is the basis For the process of economy.

Technology also has a pivotal role, but it does not solve all the problems of the new technology, which includes the computer, which makes foreign waste drown local waste because of its service at the level of workmanship and marketing, and it differs somewhat from the disparity between societies (the digital gap), which is due to the occupation of the trio of the United States of America, Europe and Japan, 80% of the volume of scientific production in it, and 83% of the volume of fruition in this field, and the problems of generations are not solved by computer but by education, it is only way to do so that it develops human capacity To distinguish by three principles: self-control - critical thought and creation

Assuming that the university student finds it easy in conducting his research when surfing in to the Internet, this is because he considers from his point of view the main source of knowledge because of his availability of information as elements, research, ready-made books, periodicals, articles... In various fields and disciplines, he resorts to it as a source to acquire from him what he wants to meet his needs, and therefore he finds himself getting a huge amount of information that makes it easier for him doing alot of efforts and less time, instead of acquiring books and browsing them, so the student today has become his only and most important obsession in meeting his academic, cultural or even recreational needs ... And other needs by resorting to the Internet as a quick and guaranteed solution. Both Hadi and Ammar point out, "On the Internet there are a number of directories or search engines such as Yahoo, School Bell Answers: Homework and Science Site: Ask a Scientist... Etc. By the use of learners or students to these sites, they can get answers to their questions in any field through the use of email. (Al Hadi and Amar, 2005, p258).

Jean has recently stressed the importance of assignment , "The primary and main purpose of giving assignments is to train students to apply what they have learned to new situations, and the assignment is often a repetition of the elements of the lesson, which leads to the solidify of information in students' minds , and to deepen their understanding of the main elements in it, and leads to the ease of recalling it on the one hand, and to the possibility of benefiting from it in natural situations in the real world, on the other hand". (Jean, 1998, p208).

Zaytoun adds that these tasks and homework activities are varied according to the function or objective of the teaching and learning process, and are divided into tasks and preparatory activities, training tasks and activities, practical tasks

and activities, enriching tasks and activities and assessed or evaluated activities. (Zaytoun, 2006, p524).

However, although this topic is important, it has not received sufficient attention from researchers. Therefore, there is a need for conducting a lot surveys and researches in this area, which is what we aim to achieve through this study.

2. Statement of the problem:

This study aims to identify the reality of Internet use by university students and their attitudes towards it as an educational tool to conduct their academic researches, and the study also tries to answer the following questions:

- What is the reality of Internet use among university students?
- What are the attitudes of students' university towards using the Internet as an educational tool to conduct their academic researches ?
- Are there differences in students' attitudes towards using the Internet as an educational tool to conduct their academic researches attributed to the gender variable?
- Are there any differences in students' attitudes towards using the Internet as an educational tool to conduct their academic researches attributed to the major variable (scientific-literary)?

3. The hypotheses of the study: In the light of the above and according to statement of the ,study we can suggest the following hypotheses:

- The first hypothesis:** the use of the Internet in large proportions among university students.
- The second hypothesis:** students are positively oriented towards using the Internet as an educational tool to conduct their academic researches.
- The third hypothesis:** There are no statistically significant differences in students' tendency to use the Internet as an educational tool to conduct their academic researches attributed to the gender variable.
- **Hypothesis IV:** There are no statistically significant differences in students' tendency to use the Internet as an educational tool to conduct their academic researches attributed to the major variable (scientific-literary).

4. Operational definition to variables of the study:

4.1 Attitudes : It s a psychological inclination, which refers to the character's attitude to a particular thing, or his assessment of a particular subject, with a degree of preference or disadvantage, and the presentation refers to the cognitive, affective and behavioral preferential responses, whether explicit or implicit.

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4.2 attitudes towards the Internet: It is a pattern of beliefs (positive or negative), feelings (preferential or non-preferential), and the tendency to act (by approaching or moving away) towards the Internet as a source of information, and this system affects the determination of the student's attitude towards the Internet, and its use as a means of preparing academic research and meeting the requirements of university education. It is the score obtained by the student in the questionnaire used for this purpose.

4.3 Internet: It is a huge network of computers spread across the world, connected to each other by multiple protocols, and also represents a strong educational structure, through the fact that it combines many means, tools, technologies, humans and places in a single digital environment, designed to meet the needs of users for it, with its flexibility in time and space and thus allows an increase in the opportunity to learn.

4.4 Homework: Bond and Smith define homework as: "They are the duties that a student performs in their own time after school hours as an extension of class work". (Angelan and Flatley, 1423, p13).

4.5 operationally academic researches : These are research (duties) or student-commissioned achievements, which require a deliberate procedural process, which includes a range of activities undertaken by the student based on a set of online references with a particular desire to obtain reliable information to successfully complete this research or assignment.

5. Field of research/study:

5.1 Curriculum: The current study belongs to the descriptive approach, which is based on the study of the phenomenon as it actually exists and is concerned as an accurate description and expressed as qualitative or quantitative expression (Obeidat and al, 2003, p310).

5.2 Sample study: The sample study consisted of (130) students from The University of Ghardaia, including (49) males and (81) females, distributed as follows:

Table 1

Illustrates the distribution of the sample by study variables

	Total sample for students/n = 130	
Student gender	Male/n = 49	Female/n = 81
Academic specialization	Scientific majors/n = 82	Literary majors/n = 48

6. Instruments of the study:

The researcher prepared a questionnaire consisting of (40) report sentences to measure the reality, beliefs and feelings of students towards the use of the Internet as an educational tool of conducting research. I have used alternatives to answer in a "likert" way (very agree, agree, neutral, disagree, completely disagree). The overall score was calculated in the views of the preferential attitudes by adding the scores of each researcher on the questionnaire items, after reversing the coding of their scores on negative items.

The questionnaire was used as instrument in the field of study which it has been estimated at (60) students from the Faculty of Sciences and Arts of the University of Ghardaia, in order to ensure that the questionnaire is understandable and clear to students, that there is no difficulty in answering them, as well as to ensure that the questionnaire is reliable and valid in the field of the study. The results were as follows:

6.1 Validity :

The validity of the questionnaire was calculated by presenting it to seven proof readers (peer review) who are professors in psychology, and most of the items of the questionnaire were agreed upon by more than (80%) of the proof readers (peer review), so the questionnaire is characterized by a great degree of validity.

The items of the questionnaire were also analyzed by applying it to a survey sample, and calculating the correlation coefficient "Pearson" between the grade on the item and the total score of the questionnaire, and in the light of these results eight items were excluded for their weak correlation with the total score, while the rest of the items had correlation coefficients with the total score high and a function at the level of (0.01), and then the number of questionnaire items that underwent to the procedures of final statistical analysis (32) items.

6.2 Reliability :

We calculated the coefficient of "Alpha Cronbach" among the questionnaire items in its final form, and its value was (0.89), which indicating a high degree of internal consistency between the items, and this demonstrates that the questionnaire has a high degree of stability.

7. Presentation and discussion of the results of hypotheses:

7.1 The first hypothesis: the use of the Internet in large proportions among university students.

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To confirm the validity of the hypothesis, we calculated the frequency of students' answers to each of the five alternatives to the scale and obtained the following results:

Table 2

Illustrate the distribution of sample members by percentage of their use of the Internet

Alternatives	Repeats	Percentage
Very agree	79	60,77%
Agree	43	33,08%
Neutral	06	4,62%
Disagree	02	1,54%
Completely disagree	00	0%
Total	130	100%

The above table illustrates the repetition of students' answers on the scale, the percentage of the answer to the alternative is very agreeable was (60.77%), which is a very large percentage compared to the other percentages, followed by the percentage of the answer to the alternative agreeable, which amounted to (33.08%), which is average, while the percentage of the answer to neutral was estimated at (4.62%), which is weak, the answer to the alternative disagreeable was (1.54%), which is a very weak percentage, and finally the percentage was non-existent on the alternative is completely disagreeable, which indicates the high turnout in the University students to use the Internet, and therefore the research hypothesis that states that university students use the Internet in large proportions can be accepted.

The results of our study agreed upon with the results of study of Alian and Qaisi (1997) on the use of the Internet by students and professors of the Bahrain University, it found that the majority of the sample and their percentage (95.3%) use the Internet to search for information and for conducting their researches and studies, use e-mail, follow-up news, reading newspapers and others.

The Mansour Tahsin Study (2004) revealed that the motivations for the use of the Internet in a sample of students from the University of Bahrain consisting of (330) students. The study concluded that: The first motivation for the use of the Internet by students is to seek knowledge, followed by the motivation for pleasure and promotion, and making social relations.....

While we find a Sami Tabea study (2000) on the use of the Internet in the Arab world on a sample of (5000) university students in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait, the results have revealed that (72.6%) of the sample use the Internet, and they consider it an important source of information for the majority of users (91.5%), and entertainment and leisure time were in the second

area of Internet use (88.7%). Contacting or dealing with others through email came third (59.3%) and there are no gender differences in different fields of use. (<http://www.geocities.com/ishawky,200/internet.art.stud.htm>)

The reason for this result can be attributed to the fact that Internet today is used by children, adults and older people, that is, all age groups of society, as well as all classes of society that are high and low-income. The Internet is occupying all the areas of social life as a means of communication and exchange of ideas and information, as well as economic, political and other areas or fields. It is also an excellent source for students to overcome the problem of monopolies of knowledge and scientific, economic and social progress. In the light of what has been mentioned, we conclude that most members of the sample are aware of the importance of the Internet and are aware of its great role in enriching their scientific research, enriching their culture and developing their public information so that they are better able and stronger to cope and coexist positively with the changes in life. This is confirmed by the study of Ziad Barakat and Wissam Salah, whose results indicated the importance of the Internet in obtaining information for scientific research, in addition to that the student today have found that the Internet is the most appropriate and effective solution to the problem of lack of university books, because the economics of electronic encyclopedias outweigh those publications in hard books, which encouraged students to search for information through the network and not rely entirely on a specific curriculum through a systematic book, where It has become an important source of learning with the recent information and its constant renewal, which has made the Internet spread among the university education to a large extent.

It may also be due to the fact that the majority of students own mobile phones, if not all university students without exception, which made it easier for them to obtain information everywhere and all times.

7.2 The second hypothesis: students are positively oriented towards using the Internet as an educational tool to conduct their academic researches.

To confirm the validity of this hypothesis, we calculated the statistical test "T" for one sample, knowing that the hypothetical average for this test is (96), the value of the difference between the two averages was calculated: the arithmetic average, and the hypothetical average through the Statistical Programme for Humanities and Social Sciences (SPSS. v20), and we may get the results in the following table:

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Table 3

Indication of results of one sample "T" test of students' attitudes towards the use of the Internet as an educational tool of conducting academic research

	The hypothetical average test "T" = 96					
Questionnaire of students' attitudes	Sample Size	Arithmetic Average	Standard deviation	Value of " t "	Degree of freedom	Indicative level
	130	132,60	33,61	2,43	129	D at 0,001

The above table shows the results of the "T" test for one-sample for the students' attitudes towards using the Internet which is approximaly at (132.6), the value of the hypothetical average of the questionnaire as a whole (96), the standard deviation was estimated at (33.61). While the difference between the averages "T" was estimated at (2.43), which is a statistically significant value at the level of significance (0.01). This demonstrates the realization of the hypothesis that provides for the positive attitudes of students towards to use of the Internet as an educational tool to conduct the academic research.

The positive attitudes of students in using the Internet can be explained by the fact that the latter is changing the way we obtain information from recent research from universities and specialized research centres or institution, through the transfer of files "FTP", as well as its adoption as a means of transferring information to and from universities, such as sending printed materials such as texts, maps... etc. (Obeidat, 2004, p122), thus influencing the formation of our attitudes towards him, and through our study, we can infer the value of students' average orientation towards to use of the Internet as an educational tool of achieving academic research and estimated "132.6", which is a statistical function, which indicates that students have a positive attitudes towards the Internet in their achievement of research and in solving educational problems that stand towards their education

This result is consistent with the study of both (J, Slay, 2003), (Beketh, 2000) in the UAE , and study (Hang, Ridziaz & Tuek, 2003), which has been in the positive attitudes of the Internet in their research sample.

7.3 The third hypothesis: There are no statistically significant differences in students' tendency to use the Internet as an educational tool to conduct their academic researches attributable to the gender variable.

Table 4

Results of the "T" test of two separate samples of gender differences in the attitudes towards the use of the Internet

Student Gender	Sample Size	Arithmetic Average	Standard deviation	Value of "T"	Degree of freedom	Indicative level
Male	49	93,6	15,04	1,33	128	Non-D at 0.05
Female	81	94,5	16,7			

The table above shows that the value of the "T" test for two independent samples for gender differences in the attitudes towards Internet use was estimated at (1,33); At the degree of freedom (128), It is a statistically insignificant value at the significance level of 0.05, which demonstrates the realization of the hypothesis that there are no statistically significant differences in students' attitudes towards the use of the Internet as an educational tool of conducting academic research attributable to the gender variable.

The result of the study is consistent with the study of Hang and his colleagues (2003), and the reason for this result can be explained by the fact that the university student of both genders has reached an educational stage that qualifies him/her to assume his/her own responsibility in obtaining knowledge, using modern technological tools with a type of freedom and flexibility, which may be reflected in his/her tendencies towards the use of the Internet as a modern educational tool.

University education does not take into account the gender variable in determining its sources of learning but it seeks to provide all educational opportunities to access knowledge and experience of both genders, From these perspectives, the Internet is designed in a way that takes into account the psychological characteristics of both genders in terms of opportunities for direct or indirect interaction with information or individuals in different environments. in line with their motivation to learn, and in order to achieve their level of ambition and future aspirations.

7.4 Hypothesis IV: There are no statistically significant differences in students' tendency to use the Internet as an educational tool to conduct their academic researches attributable to the major variable (scientific-literary).

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Table 5

The results of "T" test results for two separate samples of differences in the attitudes towards the use of the Internet attributable to the variable academic major

Academic major	Sample Size	Arithmetic Average	Standard deviation	Value of "T"	Degree of freedom	Indicative level
Scientific majors	82	96,55	17,4	2,77	128	D at 0,01 for scientific majors
Literary majors	48	89,06	12,4			

The above table shows the results of the "T" test for two independent samples for the differences in the attitudes towards Internet use by type of majors, the arithmetic average of the scientific majors was estimated at (96.55) with a standard deviation (17.4) while the arithmetic average for the literary majors was (89.06), with a standard deviation (12.4), and the value of the "T" test for the two samples was estimated at (2.77) at the degree of freedom (128), which is a function value at 0,01 In favor of scientific majors. Therefore, it rejects the hypothesis that there are no differences between the two majors in the attitudes of students to use of the Internet, and accepts the alternative hypothesis, which acknowledges the existence of significant differences between the two majors in favor of the scientific disciplines.

This result is consistent with Anderson's study in New York (2001), and this finding can be explained to the fact that the language adopted in scientific disciplines is mostly the foreign language that allows the student to have a wide view of the various studies and research available on the network, and to follow the developments in majors, in addition to the positive attitudes towards it, and follows all the developments in his field of majors or interest along with representing the most appropriate tool for his current and future educational need. While we find its counterpart from the literary disciplines, the dominant language is Arabic and his lack of interest in the foreign language, the student when browsing the Internet will find that the data available in the network in this language does not exceed some of the articles available on blogs, which is often doubtful of their credibility, and many forums that require registration to participate, which in turn requires the e-mail address of the participant, username, password... They are often obstacles for the university student, and most of their data do not really represent reliable sources of their researches and credibility, which makes them avoid using them.

8. CONCLUSION

Our study attempts to seek the reality of the university student's use of the Internet and his attitudes towards it as an educational tool to conduct his academic researches at the University of Ghardaia, and it also seeks to reveal the differences in his attitudes according to the following variables: the student's gender, his academic major. The study comes up with a set of results: that there is a large percentage of Internet use in the study sample. Their attitudes towards it are also positive. There are no fundamental differences in students' grades in using the Internet as an educational tool for conducting academic research attributed to the gender variable, while there are statistically significant differences targeted to the academic majors variable in favor of students of scientific disciplines(majors).

In the light of these findings, a series of important recommendations have been required which are as follows:

- Popularize and mainstream of the Internet in all faculties, universities and other research and scientific institutions, and activation of its role in all activities, teaching methods and evaluation.
- The planning of the site's interface should be simplified and consistent, with emphasis on the social interaction dimension of communication, emphasis on assistance and technical and educational work.
- The need to be contained pieces of information on the use of the Internet in order to enhance awareness of the methods of rational handling of the data of the Internet, thus constituting a means of construction rather than demolition, a machine of learning, education and space for creativity and excellence.
- Call for free use of websites and specialized libraries.

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