

**Internet Usage and its effect on Senior High School Students in Bantama Sub-Metro in
Kumasi Metropolis of Ghana**

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ABSTRACT

The internet has become the fountain of information access for senior high school students and academics. Poor telecommunication infrastructure, difficulties in accessing relevant information, inadequate computers, high cost of bundle, system failure, low internet bandwidth, power fluctuation are some challenges Senior High students find in their quest to access information on the internet. The study sought to determine internet usage and its effect on students of three Senior High schools in the Bantama Sub- Metro in the Kumasi Metropolis. The study adopted the survey research design, and the quantitative research approach was used; hence questionnaires were the main instrument employed for data collection. A total of 360 students were conveniently sampled from three selected Senior High schools. From the results, it was found that students accessed information on the internet prominently for communication, recreation, and learning. The public internet café was the highest point of internet access followed by the home and availability of computer laboratories in the schools. However, confirming the effects of students regarding the use of the internet, the students were given limited hours to access information and different internet infrastructure in the schools. The majority of the students rated the internet access in their school computer laboratories as poor. By implication, Administrators and parents should adopt safety measures to monitor the internet content used by students, educating students on how to access and use information from the internet, provision of more computers in the school's laboratories, and high bandwidth to access the internet.

Keywords: Internet Use, Senior High Schools, Bantama Sub-Metro, Computer Laboratory, Kumasi Metropolis.

INTRODUCTION

Information is needed in our every day activities by all people such as lecturers, doctors, students, and a farmer. For students, information permits intellectual development which leads to academic credibility. In the past, students, researchers, and faculty members access the library resources as their key point of access to information. Today, information on any conceivable subject from all over the world is available to all once they can access the Internet (Ikpeba, 2010). With the introduction of the Internet, information can be accessed from different sources. Also, the Internet is a rich source of information in all fields of study and students have to utilize it effectively. The senior high school level of education occupies a very important position in the educational system as it is the bridge connecting the primary and the tertiary levels of education. Special attention given to this level will influence the quality of the products from the group that would either be pushed into the labour market or the higher levels of the national education system (Ikpeba, 2010).

In the past decade, the Internet has reached various places, often acting as an agent of change. It is now making major impacts in primary and senior high schools across the world. The Internet, as a key learning and teaching tool these days, is a new tool that significantly has an unlimited effect on our everyday activities (Ikpeba, 2010).

The Internet started in the United States in the late 1960s for use by the US Defense Department and later became known to the public domain as a means of communication. The major attributes of the Internet such as its volume, accessibility, and functionality have stimulated the general public to access it and have come to be an influential tool in this contemporary world (Jayousi, 2016 cited in Hijazi, 2002).

The Internet is a huge interconnected computer network system used worldwide to access, deliver, and use information. The Internet can also be used for many activities such as communication, research, entertainment, education, and businesses. It is understood that the unique attributes of the Internet like speed, ease of use, power, and inspiration of its content all complement its usage ((Jayousi, 2016 cited AlGhamidi, 2009). Ryan (2011) also stated that the most remarkable attributes of the Internet include interactivity, easiness, accessibility, abundant and current information. The desire of using the Internet has improved as a result of its

availability, accessibility, and affordability. Since the Internet was developed for the good of humanity, there must be some features that distinguish it from any other source of services. First, it does not need much money as the costs are constantly decreasing; a small website can bring much profit to its owners; and the Internet market has changed the entire globe (Ali, 2010). Currently, the Internet can link lots of people to interact nationwide and worldwide. With this, basic schools, second cycle schools, and tertiary institutions students' can access the Internet which would be a reliable source of information in all the fields of study.

Tarimo and Kavishe (2017) citing Olatokun (2008) indicated that access and effective use of Internet services in secondary schools give added reading opportunities for students, which as a result improves understanding as well as reading skills which in turn support students' academic performance. Thus, the Internet is playing a significant role in the field of education. Students are using it to make their learning process more flexible and easier (Singh and Bala 2014). Furthermore, the Internet allows students to gain skills related to social connections, discussions, expressing attitudes or opinions as these are limited inside the school itself due to crowdedness, the multiplicity of subject materials, and lack of rooms for social activities (Al-Saaedi, 2011).

Nobody can deny the positive applications and values of the Internet. It is used for communication, education, and social applications (Al-Sabbati, et al., 2010). The Internet also affects school children positively and negatively. As far as social networking sites are concerned, students keep in touch after school and they become close to each other. It also helps them get closer to their society as they exchange ideas and information, they get introduced to other cultures, it knows no limits for communication between countries, finally, it is considered as a means for practicing social and cultural activities that help to bring peoples into each other and facilitates interaction among different societies and states (Salem, 2013). Among the negative applications of the Internet are porn sites, pictures of nudes, and the possibility of having indecent relations among boys and girls. This is dangerous and may spoil or damage the decent morals of adolescents (Jayousi, 2016). This study is intended to determine Internet usage and its effect on students in the three selected SHSs in Bantama Sub- Metro in the Kumasi Metropolis within the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

In most of the African countries like Ghana, Internet dissemination and use by senior high school students are hindered by several factors comprising poor telecommunication infrastructure, difficulties in accessing relevant information, intermittent power supply, and inadequate computer literacy skills (Sife, 2013, Kira and Mahumbwe, 2015). Internet services in schools, colleges, and universities are still encountering challenges like system failure, low Internet bandwidth, insufficient computers, and irregular power supply (Sife 2013). The management of the three selected senior high schools understudy has integrated ICTs and Internet into the school system. This integration enables the students and staff to use the Internet services and also enhances the core functions of the school that is teaching, learning, and communication.

Oluwafemi's (2010) study on Internet use among public secondary school students in the Lagos State of Nigeria indicated that Internet access is quite low among the students. He further opined that 39.0% of the students cannot manipulate the computer and do not know anything about the Internet. A study conducted by Yebowaah (2018) on the effects of Internet use on senior high school students in the Wa Metropolis of Ghana also stated that access to the Internet for these students was inadequate.

However, no research has so far been conducted to assess students' usage of Internet resources delivery by the selected three senior high schools. There is an assumption that once the Internet services are accessible to students, its usage will increase to enrich their information needs. Also, the literature on user studies is deficient in Internet usage by Senior High School (SHS) students in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. With this gap in mind, this study aimed at determining the Internet use of SHS students from the three selected schools and also assessed its influence on their school performance.

4 Objective of the Study

The research objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the accessibility and usage of the internet by students in the three selected senior high schools.
2. To know the perceived importance of the internet among students of the three senior high schools.

3. To identify the effects of internet use among students of the three senior high schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Access and Usage of the Internet by Students

Internet access refers to how users connect to the Internet. Common methods of Internet access include dial-up, land-line (over coaxial cable, fiber optic, or copper wires). Places of access to the Internet include libraries, Internet cafes, and various places where a computer with Internet connections are available (Emeka and Nyeche 2016).

Access to the Internet is facilitated by so many factors, which include the presence of the Internet connections in schools and at home, an adequate number of computers, the level of information literacy on the part of the students, speed of access, cost, the stability of the network, power supply and satisfaction of information accessed. Students in schools are only interested in having access to the Internet when there is an enabling environment. With these above-mentioned factors, students and teachers are encouraged to make use of the Internet even at their most inconvenient times (Ukpebor and Emwanta 2012).

A study done by Almasi et al. (2017) indicated that the Internet is presently being used as a source of teaching and learning materials. They also stated that most private and some public secondary schools in Tanzania have computer laboratories used for teaching and learning. However, very few computer laboratories are connected to the Internet. Alternatively, teachers and students use their mobile phones to access Internet services for academic work. Aboderin, et al. (2011) indicated that the introduction of the computer into the classrooms will assist in solving educational problems and enhance students' achievement.

Yebowaah's (2018) study found that access to the Internet by SHS students in the Wa Municipality is inadequate. She further stated that those who access the internet improve on their academic work more than those who do not access the internet.

A study by Almasi et al., (2017) on internet use among secondary school students in Valencia, Spain reported that 54.8% of the students access the internet through a smartphone. They also

stated that searching related topics on the Internet improved students' school performance but the respondents of this study access the Internet for social reasons. A study conducted by Tarimo and Kavishe (2017) indicated that 48.3% of students from Morogoro, Tanzania rated internet access in the school as intermediate while 51.7% of the students rated it as high. They also indicated that (87.6%) used the Internet for entertainment. They recommended that students should be educated to search for educational materials rather than using them to entertain themselves.

Singh and Bala's (2014) study showed that students in private secondary schools in Varanasi City, India have more Internet access than public secondary school students. They further indicated that students from public secondary schools rely on Internet café' for only academic information. Ukpebor and Emwanta (2012) also indicated that some private schools in Benin City Nigeria have computer laboratories but lack Internet connectivity. However, they also indicated that few schools with computers connected to the Internet do not allow the students to have access to the system when they are in need. They further stated that cafes are the main source of Internet access for students. They concluded that school administrators should provide Internet connectivity to computer laboratories in secondary schools. A study by Vakkari (2012) also indicated that the rate of students in Tampere, Finland use the Internet gives the strongest predictor of library use. Quarshie and Ami-Narh (2012) study on the growth and usage of the Internet in Ghana indicated that 45.6% of the respondents use the Internet frequently for educational purposes, 33.8% frequently use it for news, and only 6.4% frequently use the internet for commerce.

Brafi and Arthur (2011) in their study in Ghana indicated that about 92.9 % of the students knew how to use the Internet services while about 7.1% stated that they did not know how to use the Internet. Oluwafemi (2010) study reported that Internet access is quite low among the students in the Lagos State of Nigeria. He further opined that 39% of the students cannot manipulate the computer and do not know anything about the Internet. He, therefore, concluded that there should be more computers with internet connection for the second cycle students.

A report by Pew Internet and American Life Project (2005) indicated that 22.2% of the children in America who access the Internet were beyond three (3) years while one fifth (1/5) of them access the Internet using their home computers. The findings also stated that the majority of school children used desktop computers to access the internet at school.

Importance of the Internet in Education

Education is both a basic human right and a core element of sustainable development. It is the theme of the United Nations' fourth Sustainable Development Goal, which seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." Education enables individuals to build more prosperous and successful lives and societies to achieve economic prosperity and social welfare. Access to the Internet is fundamental to achieving this vision for the future (Internet Access and education 2017). Education works a lot for grooming up students' personalities. Students get a high level of confidence and get a meaningful job for making their future bright. A student, being a well-educated person, will surely exercise decision-making power that improves his/her self-confidence which in turn stands as a motivation towards making progressive strides in his/her chosen field of life (Albashtawi, 2014).

The Internet represents an unavoidable source for different knowledge and information, for use in professional and personal learning purposes. Based on this fact, accessibility, richness, and diversity of the contents in each domain make the key characteristics of the internet. With the development of the internet, a new phenomenon is included in the field of education, the phenomenon of learning through the Web. Besides different models of learning applied in the process of institutional education, learning through the Web offers opportunities for purposeful and systematic enrichment of the process of education, which can significantly enable students to achieve better in any field of teaching and learning (Antonijsic et al., 2018).

The Internet has improved teachers' methods of teaching and also enhancing students learning techniques. The Internet when used judiciously by students can contribute to their academic work and improve their academic performance (Almasi, Machumu, and Zhu 2017). The Internet has led to important innovations in educational content. Open educational resources (OER) and Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) avoid intellectual property limitations by making course materials from one country accessible to students in another country. These can complement local educational resources, extending the range and quality of materials available to students (Internet Society, Internet for Education in Africa, 2017).

The report also stated that global experience has shown the importance of professional development in building teacher's capabilities in using the Internet and introducing new types of learning in the classroom and with individual students. The report further indicated that educational administrators also need to learn how best to use the data which online learning makes available to improve education standards and target resources. Building these capabilities will be crucial to maximizing the value of the Internet for education.

Yadav (2017) study on the importance of the Internet in the learning and teaching process of education in the rural and urban areas in Telangana, India indicated that 66.9 % of the students are using the Internet in their learning process among them 37.4 % are from the urban area and 29.5 % from the rural area. He further indicated that 77.6 % of teachers are using the Internet in their teaching process, among them 20.4 % are rural area teachers and 57.1 % are from the urban area.

Kumah (2015) compared Internet use and library use among students and the study revealed that students do not avoid the library in their search for information. The finding of the study also showed that the use of the internet was more in comparison with library use and that the students preferred the Internet source of information to the library.

Effects of Internet Use on Students

In the twentieth century, there was deliberation on the effects of Internet use among secondary school students and it is a bone of contention to this day. In some parts of the world, parents, teachers, and some groups of people were against Internet use in schools. The idea against Internet use in schools was started with the belief that the technologies were new to teachers, lack of know-how among teachers increased tension against Internet use, and that parents were against the extra cost of accessing the Internet. However, Internet use among school students increased rapidly in homes and schools.

Students' assessment of their learning was based on their self-expression of what materials they accessed, how they accessed it, and when they accessed it. Researchers determined students' learning using content analysis that is the content of the Internet materials that students accessed

frequently. The presence of pornography, issues of cybercrimes and cyberbullying, and chatting so much on the Internet were mentioned as negative effects of the Internet (Almasi, Machumu, Zhu 2017). They indicated that students learned things that were not beneficial to them and that they were even exposed to the kind of threat that they had never experienced before. Internet use was also mentioned to be a waste of studying time as students often spent time on non-educative websites. Despite the negative effects of the Internet access mentioned above, the Internet was positively declared to have helped students to learn and receive learning materials, receive and send information and documents. The Internet has enormously contributed to improving the academic achievement of students by providing them with a lot of information to understand certain topics better, read broadly to broaden their academic horizon, do assignments, and for extensive research (Duker, Bonney, and Adibi 2018). They further indicated that the Internet has a positive influence on the academic performance of students by greatly contributing to both students' and teachers' motivation for teaching and learning.

A study conducted by Adedokun et al. (2018) on Internet use and library patronage among secondary school students in Lagos State revealed that the Internet use saved time was more informative and less expensive with more useful resources. Ahmed et al. (2018) study on the influence of Internet usage on senior school students in Osun State in Nigeria indicated that Internet usage had a positive influence on the academic achievement of Biology students but it is not too significant. They further indicated that the students that use the Internet had a relatively higher score than students that do not make use of the Internet.

Gorkemli (2017) in his study on Internet and social media usage of secondary school students in the rural city of Konya in Turkey indicated that most of the students use the Internet to get information to do their homework others also use the Internet to play games, visiting social networking service (SNS), reading news and for chatting.

Torres-Diaz et al. (2016) indicated that Internet use has improved students' academic performance and students who often search for educational information on the Internet perform well in their examination. They further indicated that students who exchange ideas with colleagues and teachers have a remarkable mark in their academic performance. Emeka and Nyeche's (2016) study on the impact of Internet usage on the academic performance of students reveals that most of the students who use the Internet use it to obtain course-related information

which helps to aid their research, prepare for assignments and get access to current information sources. They further indicated that the Internet has a great influence on the academic performance of the students they understudied.

Alio and Aneke's (2015) study confirmed that access to the Internet is desirable among students. They continued that the Internet is a new technology which has some good and bad effect on Nigeria secondary school students because the youth tend to rush into things because of their natural characteristics. They concluded that teachers, parents, and counsellors should help students stay less on the Internet and also prevent the Internet to have negative effects on them.

A study by Aitokhuehi and Ojogho(2014) in Nigeria stated that students who have knowledge of computer use do better than those who do not have any computer skills. Chen et al. (2014) study indicated that not all information on the Internet is good for Internet users. They further stated that pornography and unnecessary conversation on the Internet among secondary school students hurts their academic performance and life after school. Mami and Hatami-Zad (2014) also indicated that if the Internet is not controlled then students' academic performance will be at risk.

Akin-Adaramola (2014) study reported that most of the students use the internet for entertainment and online shopping and that majority of the students expressed concern on incorrect grammar usage, poor spelling, and less time for studies because such students engaged on social networks contrary to their study time. Stanciu and Tinca (2014) in their study reported that browsing, recreation, and social media have changed individual's behaviour in the way they relate with other people.

METHODOLOGY

A survey method was used for the study. This was basically through the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to cover the research objectives. The target group for the study was the final year students of Asanteman SHS, Prempeh SHS, and Kumasi Girls SHS in Bantama Sub-Metro of Kumasi Metropolis within the Ashanti Region of Ghana. These students were selected because they were seniors and more likely to have expertise in using the Internet.

The population of the study was three thousand six hundred and two (3602) final year students. This study further adopted a quantitative methodology. Quantitative research as inferred by Bloomfield & Fisher (2019) provides exact statistical data for inference and supports larger sample sizes which translate to more generalizability over the population being studied.

Nwana (1981) pointed out that a population in many hundreds needs a sample size of 20%, few thousand needs a sample size of 10% and several thousand needs a sample size of 5% or less. From the foregoing recommendation by Nwana (1981), a sampling size of 10% was randomly used to select 360 students from the three selected schools to ensure fair representation of the population. A sample size of 360 being 10% of the total population was used. This is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Selected Schools and the Number of Respondents Sampled

Senior High School	Population	Sample size
Asanteman Senior High	979	98
Prempeh Senior High	1317	132
Kumasi Girls Senior High	1306	130
Total	3602	360

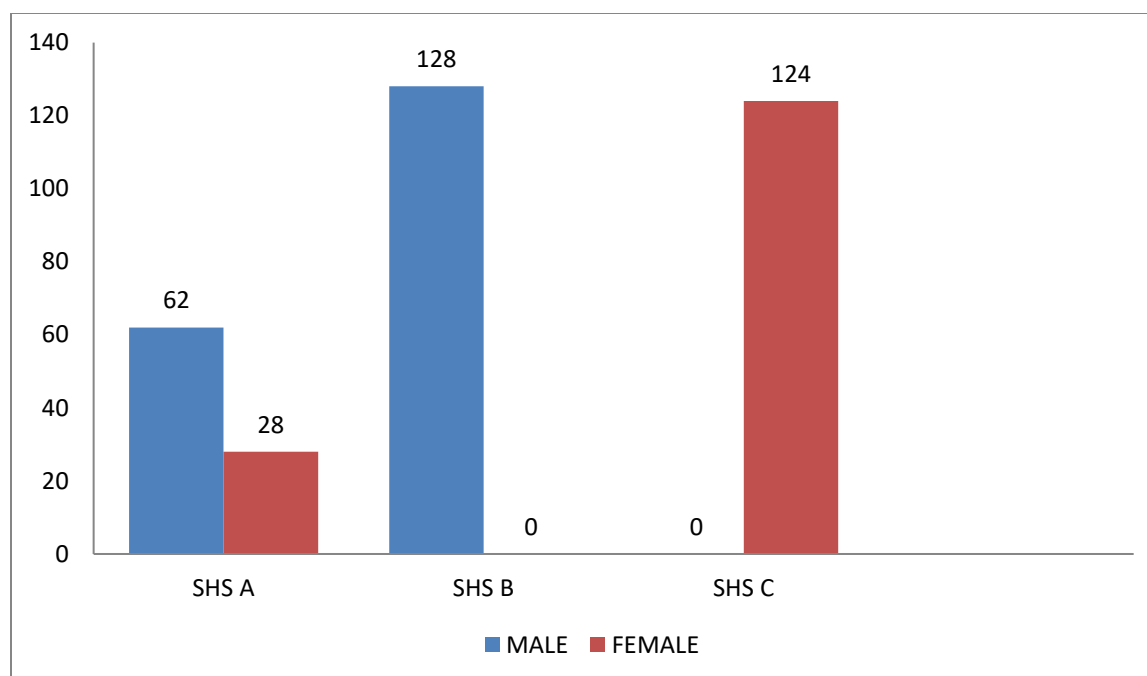
Source: Field Survey, 2019

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data collected for this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents Characteristics

Figure 1: Gender



Source: Field data, 2019

The results indicated that within the sample population of Asanteman SHS more male students were 62 (69%) as compared to the female students who constituted 28 (31%) in number. Generally, admission in institutions in Ghana is skewed in favour of males as compared to females. It is possible to conclude that this trend is the same as the students in Asanteman SHS. Unlike Prempeh SHS which is solely for boys and Kumasi Girls SHS, all the respondents were males and females and constituted 128 (100%) and 124 (100%) respectively.

Recchiutti (2003) opines that age is one of the essential demographic variables in researching Internet use. The age distributions of all the students indicated that within Asanteman SHS, 85(94%) respondents were within the 16 – 18 year range and were in their teenage. Findings from Prempeh SHS also showed that 121 (95%) were within the 16- 18-year group while the majority of 103 (83.0%) of the students in Kumasi Girls SHS were also within the 16-18 years' category. This finding shows that in the three selected schools, the third-year students were mostly within the age range of 16-18.

Concerning the programme of study, the most popular programme offered by the students in the three selected schools were Pure Science (PS) followed by General Arts (GA). Within

Asanteman SHS, 10 (11%) students offered Pure Science, 33 (26%) students of Prempeh SHS offered Pure Science while 32 (26%) of the students from Kumasi Girls SHS offered Pure Science. In the case of General Arts, 22 (25%) students of Asanteman SHS offered this programme with 27 (21%) from Prempeh SHS and 23 (19%) from Kumasi Girls SHS also offering this programme. From the responses gathered, 75 (21.9%) students from the three selected schools were Pure Science students. Generally, there were more 33 (26%) students who offered Science programme in Prempeh SHS than Asanteman SHS and Kumasi Girls SHS. The reason is that Prempeh SHS is noted for science since it has won the National Science and Maths Quiz Competition for conservative years. Table 2 below shows the programmes of study per School. The programmes have been denoted as Pure Science (PS), General Art (GA), Visual Art (VA), Agricultural Science (AS), Home Economics (HE), and Business (BU).

Table 2: Programmes Offered by Schools

SCHOOLS	PROGRAMMES						Total
	PS	GA	VA	AS	HE	BU	
Asanteman SHS	10 (11.1%)	22 (24.4%)	15 (17%)	13 (14.4%)	18 (20%)	12 (13.3%)	90
Prempeh SHS	33 (25.7%)	27 (21.1%)	25 (20.0%)	23 (17.9%)	-	20 (15.6%)	128
Kumasi Girls SHS	32 (25.8%)	23 (19.0%)	29 (23.3%)	19 (15.3%)	21 (16.9%)	-	124
Total	75	72	69	55	39	32	342

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Access and Usage of the Internet by Students

The extent of access and use are the key areas of internet services and this segment of the research was essential in the sense that internet utilisation is influenced by its accessibility. People are generally motivated by different circumstances to access information on the internet. However, in all these instances, the overriding motivation was to satisfy one need. This confirms

Davis (1989) observation that there must be Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use' (PEoU), to be the controlling factor of user acceptance to improve one's performance.

Point of Internet Access

The study established that the third-year senior high school students like any other students access and use the information on the internet. The respondents had several different venues that they can access information on the internet. The students from Asanteman SHS, Prempeh SHS, and Kumasi Girls SHS have shown that they have different venues to access information on the Internet but public café was found to be their highest point of access with a response rate of 70.0% followed by home with 23.0% and the least was the School Computer Laboratory with 7.0% response rate.

According to the findings of this study, 280 (82.0%) of the students from the three selected schools affirmed that they have Computer Laboratory with Internet connectivity. They revealed that 238 (70.0%) of the students indicated that they accessed the Internet from the public Internet café. This may suggest that the students were denied or did not access the Internet from the School Computer Laboratory. This may be attributed to the number of hours they spend in the Computer Laboratory which was less than two hours per session. Also, most (52.8%) of the students stated that they were unable to access the Internet from the School Computer Laboratory and therefore would not solely depend on the Internet from their school for their academic purposes.

The point that few (35.0%) students gain access to the Internet at their various homes may be due to the financial standing of the parents/guardians or the latter's lack of appreciation with regards to the importance of the Internet. This finding corroborates Yebowaa's (2018) study which also found that the majority (55.4%) of SHS students in the Upper West Region of Ghana access the Internet for information through Internet Café. Also, Olatokun (2008) conducted a study on Internet use by students in Nigeria and found that the school is the last place for students to access the Internet.

Internet Use by Students

The mandate of any School Computer Laboratory is to make students computer and information literate to find their way out in this modern society whereby information is in different formats. The respondents were asked whether they had used the Internet before. The results in Table 3 indicate that most of the students (322 ie. 94.0%) from the three selected schools had used the Internet before. Their responses are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 3 : Asanteman Internet Use	SHS	Prempeh SHS	Kumasi SHS	Girls	Total
Yes	89 (99.0%)	123 (96.0%)	110 (89.0%)		322 (94.0%)
No	1 (1.0%)	5 (4.0%)	14 (11.0%)		20 (6.0%)
Total	90 (100%)	128 (100%)	124 (100%)		342 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2019

In a probing question, it was indicated that most (314 (92.0%)) of the students from the sampled schools could operate the computer without any assistance. This is obvious because students of this era are computer literate and most of them are curious to learn new technology. This finding is in line with Oluwafemi's (2010) study which reported that 69.0% of public secondary school students in the Lagos State of Nigeria can operate a computer while 31.0% of them cannot operate the computer on their own.

Methods of Learning Computer and the Internet

There are various ways respondents can learn how to use the Internet. According to the findings of this study, 144 (42.0%) of them had taught themselves, 142 (42.0%) had learned from colleagues and 56 (16.0%) learned it from orientation done by the School Computer Laboratory. This finding also supports the findings of Ngulube et al. (2009) who reported that most of the students were self-taught. From the study, it emerged that the students acquired the needed skills through informal training. It can be assumed that formal training programmes were inefficiently promoted or the time allotted for the training was not suitable for the students. Self-tuition approach had its shortcomings since the students did not go through the rudiments of information literacy and studied only basic skills to enable them to access the Internet.

Payment for the Use of the Internet

Since Internet use goes with payment, the researchers thus sought to examine whether the students pay for the Internet services rendered to them at the School Computer Laboratory or not. The results show that the majority (253 (74%)) of the respondents from the three selected schools indicated that they paid for the services rendered to them at the Computer Laboratory because they paid for Computer Laboratory dues as well as Library dues so indirectly, they paid for all the services rendered to them at the School Computer Laboratory. This study is in line with Yebowaa (2018) research which stated that students paid for Internet use in their various schools in the Wa Municipality of Ghana.

Level of Internet Accessibility in the School Computer Laboratory

Concerning the level of Internet access by students, the results show that the majority (140 (41.0%)) of the students from the three selected schools rated the Internet access in their School Computer Laboratory as poor. The results are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Rating the Level of Internet Accessibility in the Computer Laboratory

Rating	Asanteman SHS	Prempeh SHS	Kumasi SHS	Girls	Total
High	2 (2.2%)	6 (5.0%)	15 (12.0%)		23 (7.0%)
Intermediate	4 (4.4%)	26 (20.0%)	30 (24.0%)		60(17.0%)
Poor	56 (62.2%)	53 (42.0%)	31 (25.0%)		140 (41.0%)
Not at all	4 (4.4%)	40 (31.0%)	23 (19.0%)		67 (20.0%)
No Response	24 (27.0%)	3 (2%.0)	25 (20.0%)		52 (15.0%)
Total	90 (100.2%)	128 (100%)	120 100%)		336 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2019

This finding is contrary to the study by Tarimo and Kavishe (2017) which found that, on the issues of access and use, 48.0% of the students surveyed stated Internet accessibility in their schools as intermediate while 22.0% stated it as high.

Perceived Importance of the Internet to the Students

Searching for information can be done from different sources and the Internet cannot be exempted. Access to the latest information in subject areas is one of the attributes of the Internet. E-learning is also one of the attributes of the Internet in education. The development of the Internet in senior high schools should focus on enhancing students' academic performance. With regards to the importance of the Internet to the students, the finding shows that 155 of the respondents representing 47.0% rated it very important, followed by moderate with 89 respondents with a response rate of 26.0%, important emerged third with 58 respondents representing 17.0% and satisfactory came last with 34 respondents representing 9.9%.

Effects of Accessing Information on the Internet

Information has a significant role in assisting, supporting, and improving people's life. It came out of the study that, students access information on the Internet for various reasons, but the most prominent is for communication with a response rate of 53%. Some also access information on the Internet for recreation with 27% and learning for a response rate of 21%. The reason why students indicated that they also use the Internet for learning may be that, the Internet gives more latest information than print. Singh et al. (2013) and Al-Ansari (2006) in their respective studies affirmed this reason when they reported that most of their respondents access the Internet for entertainment and for chatting at the expense of their educational work.

Positive Effects of the Internet on Students

It is obvious and cannot be overemphasized that the Internet has tremendous effects on all facets of education including basic education, second cycle, and tertiary institutions. The development of ICTs with Internet connectivity in second cycle schools can have a great impact on students' performance when the Internet is adopted as a tool in the educational method. It mostly offers the user the various latest information and gives solutions to user's queries (Olatokun, 2008).

From a sample size of 342 students, 334 (98.0%) of them reported that the Internet has a more desirable influence on their academic life. In a probing question, they were also asked to show the areas of academic improvement of the Internet to them. The result shows that 126 (37.0%) of the respondents gave access to current information as their number one preference, followed by seeking information from the Internet to improve on their studies, which attracted 80 (24.0%) of them while it helps us to look for information in our subject areas came third, with 76 students (22.0%) confirming it. This study confirmed the findings of Torres-Diaz et al. (2016) that Internet use has improved students' performance and those who often search for educational information on the Internet perform well in their examination.

Negative Effects of the Internet on Students

Despite the importance of the Internet to students, its adverse effects are several. In respect to the negative effects on the Internet, the following were proffered by the respondents: addiction appeared first with 236 (69.1%) of the students responding to this followed by moral corruption with 31 (9.0%) agreeing to this then cyberbullying involving 29 (8.4%) of the students, much of my time is spent in visiting irrelevant sites covering 20 (5.8%) students and it can distract you had 15 (4.3%) response rate.

Research by Alio and Aneke (2015) also revealed that the Internet has some good and bad effects on Nigeria secondary school students because the youth tend to rush into things because of their natural characteristics. They concluded that stakeholders should help students stay less on the Internet and also prevent the Internet to have negative effects on them. Also, in Chen et al. (2014) study, they stated that pornography and unnecessary conversation on the Internet among secondary school students hurt their academic performance.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that students from the sampled schools indicated that their schools have Computer Laboratory with internet connectivity but the students were given limited hours to access information on the internet. The study also found that students learn to use the internet

and computer through their initiatives and friends. Additionally, they also acquired the needed computer and Internet skills through informal ways.

Furthermore, they revealed that students from the three selected SHSs use the Internet for different purposes which include communication, recreation, and learning. It also came out that inadequate access points in their various schools affect their full utilization of information on the Internet to augment their learning to improve on their performance. This study is a call on the part of the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, and other stakeholders in education to consider students' access to the internet as an important contributing factor to academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study, therefore, recommends that:

1. **More Access Points:** Access to the internet is said to be one of the ways for students to obtain up to date information in their subject areas and it should be the main concern to the School Computer Laboratory. Management should furnish the Schools Computer Laboratory with computers with internet connectivity to increase the access points for the students.
2. **Searching for Academic Purpose:** Teachers in their respective schools should encourage their students to use the Internet effectively by referring them to access educational websites on the Internet which is related to their study areas.
3. **Provision of More Computers with Internet Connectivity:** There should be availability and accessibility of more computers with Internet connectivity in public SHSs to enhance teaching and learning the schools' Management.
4. **Policy on Internet Use at the School Computer Laboratory:** There should be a policy in place which addresses issues regarding access to the internet, allocation of time, and other privileges for the students in all Senior High Schools having Computer Laboratory by the schools' Management.
5. **Monitoring Internet Contents by Teachers:** There should be a monitoring team by teachers to encourage students to use the internet properly and effectively at the School Computer

Laboratory. Content selection devices and filters should be put in place to regulate the contents seen by students at the Computer Laboratory.

6. Training: There is a need for students to undergo training to improve their computer and internet skills. The School Computer Laboratory and the Library should corroborate to organise the training for the students.

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