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Cyber Citizenship and Learning Behaviour of Undergraduates of University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: As technology continues to advance, the concept of cyber citizenship has become increasingly important in shaping the behaviours and attitudes of individuals online.

Objectives: To investigate the relationship between cyber citizenship and the learning behaviour of undergraduate students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

Method: Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of study was 52,846. This was the total population of registeered undergraduates of the 2014/2015 session of UNN and EBSU. Australian calculator formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 385. Multi-step sampling technique was adopted to get the unit areas which included four departments from four faculties of the two universities. Questionnaire served as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts and reliability determined through a pilot study with 50 students at the NnamdiAzikwe University, Awka. The reliability and internal consistency index yielded a Cronbach alpha of 0.73 meaning that it has good reliability to produce good response on the subject matter. Data were analysed using Pearson Chi-Square test.

Results: Positive influence of cyber networks was observed among the undergraduate students of the two institutions studied but on a higher degree among the UNN students. This was accepted by the Pearson Chi-Square test that revealed a significant result of χ^2=616, 5.41 and p<.05.

Conclusion: The study concludes that there was need for introduction of cyber citizenship education as a general study in higher institutions in the country to improve online media literacy among undergraduates.

Key words: Cyber Citizenship, Learning Behaviour, Undergraduates, online media literacy, cyber citizenship education

INTRODUCTION

The emergency of the Internet world has provided series of cyber network platforms that form online, virtual or cyber community, where users now become cyber citizens (Ukonu, Okoro and Agbo, 2013). Some of the various variants or platforms of cyber or social networks include Facebook, Twitter, My space, Video, Vcontakte, Hyves, Inenti, Dreams village, Bebo, Linked in, Googlet, Youtube, Flicker, Skype, 2.0, Nurse contact, SOL, Monster, Blogs, Academia.edu, e-learners, My bloom among others, (Snyder, 2010).

The creation of these cyber networks via Internet has brought online/global village/community that is almost directly opposing the natural physical globe. The concept of cyber citizenship according to Adamu, (2013) was to encourage responsible technology use. The community has some features in common with the physical community among which its citizens and the activities they carry out. As a community made by technology, Ribble and Baily (2004) reveal that it has come to stay as an important aspect of human existence. But recent studies have called for safe and responsible use of the technology community (Acholonu, 2013) by the cyber citizens.

According to the Heyam, & Al-Tarawneh, (2014), the communities contain both inappropriate, as well as appropriate places to visit. Just like in the real community, inappropriate places on the cyber community are unsafe and should be avoided. Travelling in the cyber community is a lot like travelling in the community you live in. The university community is not left out in the use of cyber networks; it is one of the leading communities that rely much on cyber networks (Internet) for research, learning and teaching. The regular and committed use of cyber networks has consequently turned out to produce digital or online or cyber citizens.

Although there is a growing body of literature on cyber citizenship and its impact on learning behaviour (Odunayo, & Frank, 2013 and Olumide, & Victor, 2010), there is a distinct lack of research focusing specifically on undergraduates of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. This gap in the literature highlights the need for a comprehensive investigation into how cyber citizenship influences the learning behaviour of undergraduates in these institutions. By addressing this gap, the research provides valuable insights into the role of cyber citizenship in shaping the learning behaviours of students in these settings, ultimately contributing to the existing knowledge base on this important subject.

METHOD

Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of study was 52,846. This was the total population of registeered undergraduates of the 2014/2015 session of UNN and EBSU. Australian calculator formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 385. Multi-step sampling technique was adopted to get the unit areas which included four departments from four faculties of the two universities. Questionnaire served as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts and reliability determined through a pilot study with 50 students at the NnamdiAzikwe University, Awka. The reliability and internal consistency index yielded a Cronbach alpha of 0.73 meaning that it has good reliability to produce good response on the subject matter. Data were coded and analysed using Pearson Chi-Square test and presented in simple percentages using charts and tables.

Ethical Consideration

In the course of carrying out the study, there was full adherence to research ethics at all levels of the study: before, during and after data collection. Participants/respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study, their consent was sought and obtained. The participants' confidentiality was guaranteed and their participation was totally voluntary.

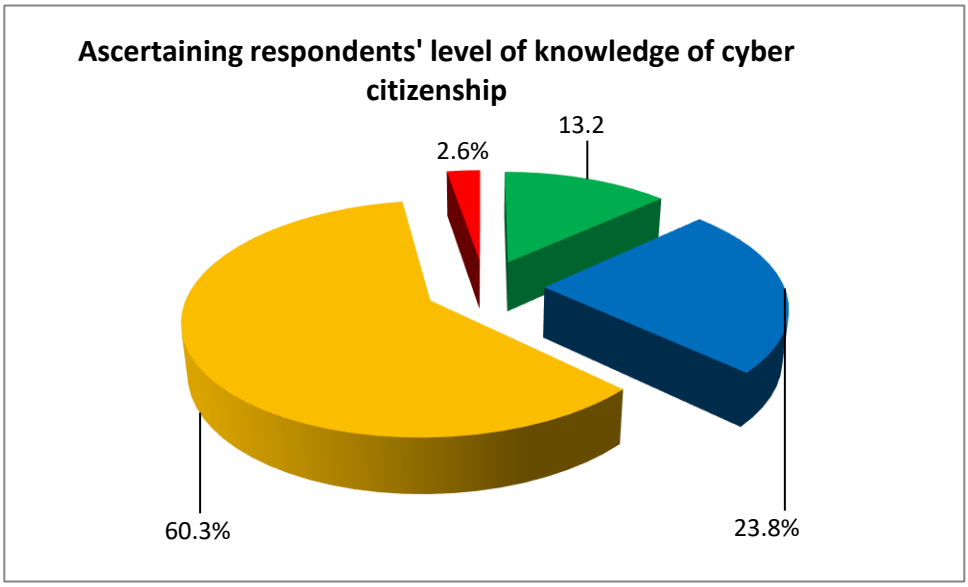
RESULTS

Table 1: Bio-data of the selected/sampled Respondents

S/N	**Respondent's Bio-data**	**Variable/option**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
1	Sex of respondents	Male	148	39.4
		Female	230	24.8
2	Age Bracket	17-20 years	62	16.1
		21-24 years	91	23.6
		25-27 years	101	26.2
		28-30 years	77	20.0
		Total	378	100.0%
4	Level/Year of Study	Year One	66	17.5
		Year Two	79	20.9
		Year Three	115	30.4
		Year Four	118	31.2
		Total	378	100.0%
5	Course of Study	Mass Communication	95	25.1
		Political Science	95	25.1
		Admin & Planning	94	24.4
		Crop Science	94	24.4
		Total	378	100.0%

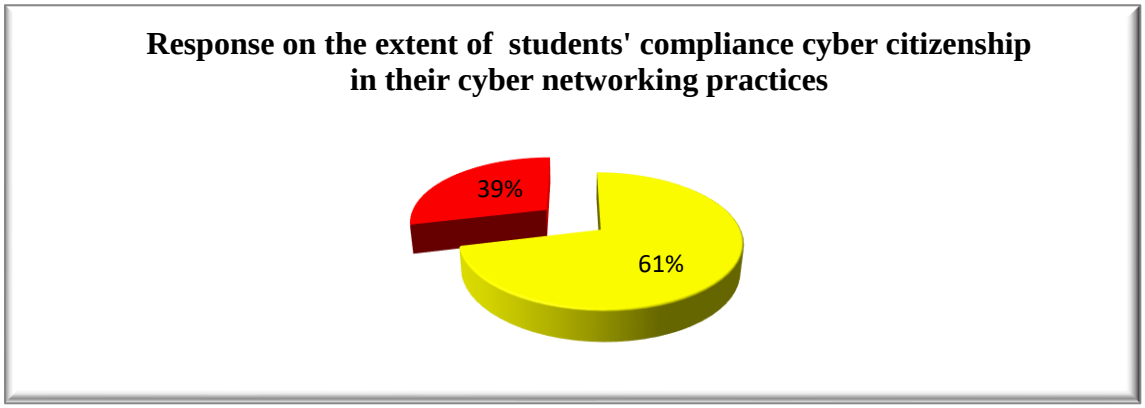
The above table contains the bio-data of the respondents on this study. Areas captured in their bio-data included their sex, age bracket, level or year of study and course/programme of study.On the respondents' sex, the findings revealed that 39.2% of them which made 148 numbers of the respondents were males while the females had 60.8%. by this, the number of females used in the study were more than those of the males. On the age bracket of the respondents, 20.4% were within 17-20 years, 24.1% were within the age bracket 21-24 years, while 28.8% were within the age bracket of 25-27 years and 26.7% were those between 28-30 years. Among these students, 25.1% were selected from the department of Mass Communication, another 25.1% from Political Science while 24.4% were selected from the departments of Administration and Planning and Crop Sciences of the two universities under study.

Figure 1: Respondents' level of knowledge of cyber citizenship



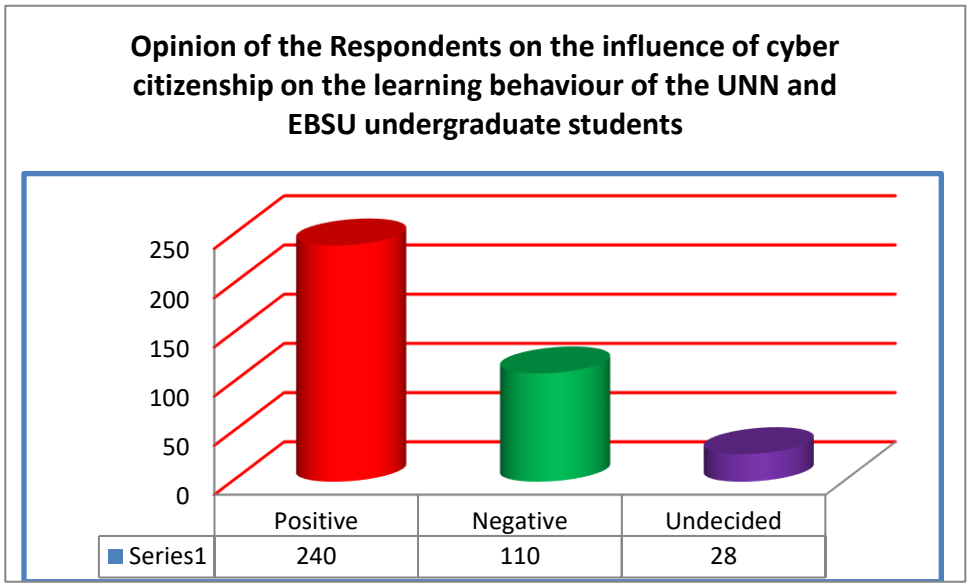
From the statistical chart presented above, it was deduced that out of 378 respondents 60.3% of them had high knowledge of cyber citizenship in the cyber networking practices. The other set of respondents representing 23. 8% had fair knowledge of cyber citizenship in the cyber networking practices while 13.2% number of the respondents had low and insignificant knowledge of cyber citizenship in the cyber networking practices. The last set of 10 respondents constituting 2.6% of the students did not make their stand known by not responding to the question.

Figure 2: Extent of students' compliance with cyber citizenship in their cyber networking practices



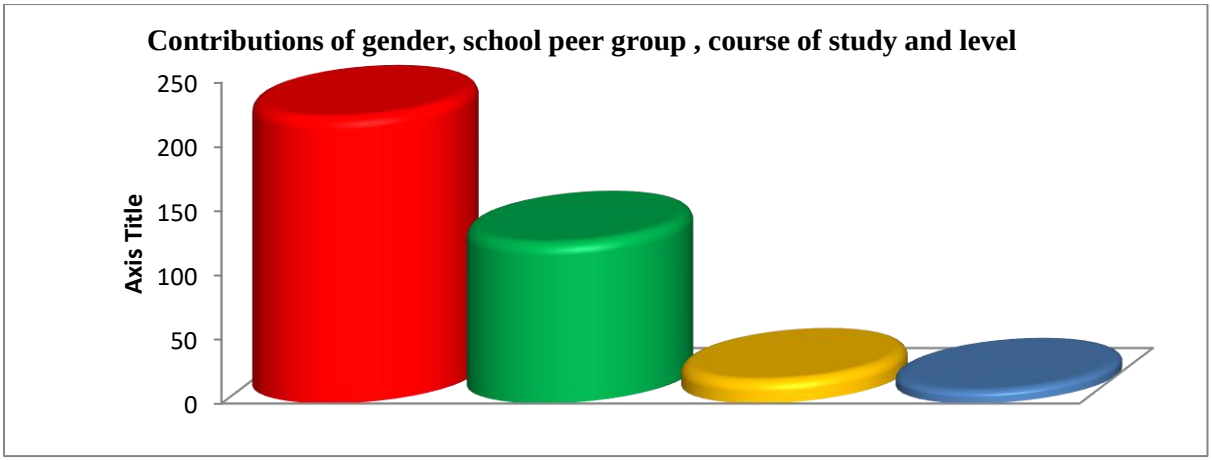
From the statistical chart presented above, it was observed that greater number of the respondents amounting to 61% of the total population agreed that they were cyber citizenship compliance in their cyber networking practices while the remaining 39% of the respondents did not agree. This is in accordance with their knowledge level n cyber citizenship.

Figure 3: Influence of cyber citizenship on the learning behaviour of UNN and EBSU undergraduate students



In the above chart presented, it is evident from the information obtained that 240 respondents amounting to 63.4% affirmed that they had positive/goodinfluence of cyber citizenship on their learning behaviour. Then, 110 respondents which constituted 29.1% said that they had negative or bad influence of cyber citizenship on their learning behaviour.. Unfortunately 28 numbers of the respondents did not give their view on this particular question asked. By and large the majority view has it and this shows that cyber citizen is a good idea to all cyber networks users especially the undergraduate students.

Figure 4: Factors that encourage influence of cyber citizenship on undergraduates' learning behaviour



From the data presented in the above table, it was ascertained that 223 respondents, amounting to 59.3% of the total population studied said that gender is one the factors that contributed to the influence cyber citizenship on the students' learning behaviour. Then, 125 respondents, amounting to 33.2% said that their course of study contributed to the influence of cyber citizenship on their' learning behaviour while 18 respondents, representing 4.5% said that their peer group contributed while 10 respondents amounting to 2.7% of the entire population studied were of the view that their level of study contributed.

Hypotheses Testing

The two hypothetical statements were subjected to Pearson Chi Square test to ascertain the likelihood ratio of the test.

i. **Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between the students' knowledge of cyber citizenship and their level of compliance as cyber citizens.

Pearson Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.408	1	.020		
Continuity Correction	4.998	1	.025		
Likelihood Ratio	5.497	1	.019		
Fisher's Exact Test				.024*	.012*
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.399	1	.020		
N of Valid Cases	616				

*=p<.05

The chi square table above showed that Pearson Chi-Square test revealed a significant result (χ^2=616) 5.41, p<.05). This means that UNN and EBSU undergraduates been cyber citizens were dependent on the extent they engaged themselves in cyber networking. We therefore accept the alternative hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between cyber citizenship and the learning behaviour of the undergraduate students of UNN and EBSU. Based on the result on the influence of cyber citizenship on the students' learning behaviour, the Pearson correlation table presented below revealed the hypothetical test.

Chi Square correlation test of cyber citizenship and students' learning

		Cyber citizenship	Students' learning Behaviour
Cyber citizenship	Pearson Correlation	1	.154**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	616	616

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).L

The Pearson correlation table shows that there is a positive relationship between students' learning behaviour and cyber citizenship [r(616)=0.15, p<0.05]. The relationship is significant. Therefore we accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the learning behaviour and cyber citizenship among the undergraduate students of UNN and EBSU and this is subject to good cyber networks knowledge and responsible usage or practices by the majority of the undergraduate students.

DISCUSSION

The study investigated influence of cyber citizenship on the learning behaviour of undergraduate students of UNN and EBSU. There is no doubt that cyber citizens have rules, duties, rights and privileges to make informed decision to promote the good and overall welfare of the online community (Bennett, 2005). Unfortunately, the use of cyber networks has been flooded with infidelity because of the free ways users enter the community, and commit crimes with the networks. This study was therefore undertaken as one of the possible ways of restoring sanity into the online community. The results of the study tends to achieve the goal of the study as findings indicate that majority of the students had knowledge of cyber citizenship. There was also significant level of compliance with responsibility in the use of the cyber space as well as positive influence of cyber citizenship on majority of the students' learning behaviour. This is consistent with Freedom, (2015).

The first hypothesis tested using Pearson correlation showed that students' knowledge level of cyber citizenship was dependent on their use/engagement in cyber networks practices. In the test, the undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) have significant higher cyber citizenship than Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki (EBSU). This could be justified by the Media Ecology Theory as enunciated by Postman, (1970). The enabling environment created by the school administration made it convenient for students to use the school's wireless network to connect online, thereby encouraging a lot of cyber activities and involvement. Also, the social learning theory by Bandura makes it possible for them to observe the lives of their fellow students and thereby desire to get involved.

The second hypothesis tested showed significant relationship between cyber citizenship and the learning behaviour of the students. It showed that responsible cyber networks practices influence good and positive learning behaviour of the students. There was also correlation between what they do in the net and their academic learning behaviour. The good i-citizens have good behaviour while the bad i-citizens have bad behaviour. This finding is consistent with the findings of Olayemi (2014) in his study on "a socio-technological analysis of cybercrime and cyber security in Nigeria" which found that "cyber security is a reality that has to be dealt with now, as it would determine how we are conceived in a global village".

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there was need for introduction of cyber citizenship education as a general study in higher institutions in the country to improve online media literacy among undergraduates. The universities' authorities should collaborate with National Technology Education, Information and Communication Technology agencies and other media and security agencies to create and implement policies on cyber usage rules, capable of addressing problem of cyber security and cyber-crime activities and as well promote a healthy and responsible cyber citizenship atmosphere that will guide and guard the undergraduate students of universities in line with their academic learning behaviour. Enforcement of legal and ethical online practices to suit the academic learning behaviour of the students. These will guide against plagiarism, copyright, fake and sharp academic practices especially when students are given assignments to do in their schools. The universities' management should checkmate the negative online activities and behaviours such as cyber bullying, cyber scam, cyber threat of the students through assignment, project supervisions and students' excursion trips, among others.

Funding

The study was not funded

Conflict Interest

There was no conflict of interest

Authors Contributions

Nelson Ogbaeja conceived the study and its design. Stella Nelson-Ogbaeja collected the data and was supported by Chinedu Onah for the analysis. Nelson Ogbaeja developed the manuscript while all the authors collaborated in reading and proofreading of the study. They also unanimously approved that the paper be published in its current form.

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