Awareness, Readiness and Attitude towards Mobile Learning among Social Studies Pre-service Teachers in Colleges of Education in Niger State

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Abstract

This study examined social studies students' awareness, readiness and attitude towards mobile learning in colleges of education in Niger state. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and questionnaire was used for collecting data. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. A grand mean of 2.50 was used for decision making. The findings of this study revealed that students' awareness was high, ready to utilize and have positive attitude towards mobile learning. It was therefore recommended among others academic and instructional activities should be delivered to students via mobile devices. To achieve this, lecturers must be aware, trained and adopt mobile teaching. Mobile teaching adoption by lecturers will encourage mobile learning adoption among social studies pre-service students.

Keywords: Mobile learning, Pre-service teachers, Social studies, Colleges of education

1. INTRODUCTION

Social studies is one of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) core school subject which can contribute to nation building efforts in Nigeria (Ezudu & Ezegbe 2005). They argued that social studies ensure acquisition of relevant body of knowledge which can develop in student's positive values, attitude and skills. Supporting this assertion, Ezegbe and Nwaubani (2009), observed that social studies objectives are

meant to achieve the national objectives in Nigeria. As an integrated holistic approach to learning, social studies offers effective citizenship training needed for national cohesion.

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), (2004), the following objectives and goals are to be achieved for the nation through the study of social studies: the development of an understanding of the relationship between human beings and their environment in past and present; the development of an understanding of the interrelationships and effects of beliefs, values and behavioural patterns and the application of this knowledge to new situations; the development of the ability to examine one's own beliefs, values and behaviours and the relationship between them; the development of human relations, skills and attitudes that enable one to act in the interest of self and others; the development of positive self-concept; and the development of the competencies to acquire, organic, assess and present information of the purposes of problem solving and issue classification. In order to effectively implement teaching and learning of social studies in this era, there is need for the use of technological tools. (Falode, *et al.,* 2018) noted that mobile devices can be adopted to improve students' achievement in school subjects.

Mobile learning (M-learning) refers to the use of mobile and handheld IT devices, such as Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), mobile telephones, laptops and tablet PC technologies, in teaching and learning. According to Ally (2004), mobile learning is the delivery of electronic learning materials on mobile computing devices to allow access from anywhere and at any time. Mobile phones are mainly used for completely communication purposes, but fortunately, some people have begun to regard them as a core pedagogical activity in higher educational institutions (El-Hussein & Cronje, 2010). By using mobile technology, students can easily and quickly access and use learning resources anytime, anywhere. Mobile Learning can deliver the right information to the right person at the right time better than any other learning/teaching technology yet devised (Little, 2012). Besides, students' interest to use all available resources of mobile learning through their mobile phones and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) to access information anytime and anywhere has also played a significant role in the success of mobile learning prevalence (López, 2009). The

adoption of mobile learning by pre-service teachers will depend on their level of awareness (Falode & Ajala, 2014).

Awareness can be regarded as the state of being informed about the existence of an innovation. It can be described as the state of consciousness of a thing and it can to a large extent determine whether an individual will accept or reject such thing (Falode, et al. 2018). The concept is often synonymous to consciousness and is also understood as being consciousness itself (Chalmers, 1997). Students' awareness of the academic benefits will influence their readiness to use it for learning.

Readiness refers to the state or condition of an individual that makes it possible for him or her to engage profitably in a given activity (Falode, *et al.,* 2018, West, 2013). It can be regarded as the preparation and anticipation for a task. Borotis and Poulymenakou (2008) described readiness as the mental or physical preparedness of an individual for electronic teaching and learning. One other important factor that determines successfully utilization of learning technology as stated by Folarin (2016) is referred to as attitude. It is the disposition and beliefs of students towards mobile learning. For instance, if they have negative attitude towards the innovation, they are likely not going to benefit from the usage. However, if their attitude is positive, they are going to benefit from the usage. Hence, the study sought to determine the level of awareness, readiness and attitude towards mobile learning in order to make appropriate recommendations.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The recent events globally (for instance, Covid-19 pandemic) has necessitated the needs for innovative learning approaches that allow students to engage in independent learning while still connected online to instructor or educational provider. In Colleges of Education, nearly all students possess one more mobile devices they use for communicating with others. These devices can also be used for learning, thereby reducing the effects of school closure, distance from school and problem of over crowdedness in class. However, it is important to know whether pre-service social studies teachers are aware of the academic benefits of mobile learning, determine

their readiness for its' usage and their attitude towards its' adoption and teaching and learning process. Hence, the need for this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Are social studies students in Colleges of Education in Niger State aware of the academic benefits of mobile learning?

2. How ready are social studies students in Colleges of Education in Niger state for the adoption of mobile learning approach in teaching and learning process?

3. What is the attitude of social studies students in Colleges of Education in Niger State towards the use of mobile learning in teaching and learning process?

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design is considered appropriate when it becomes important to select representative sample from a given when it is too difficult to select all. The variables of the study included awareness, readiness, attitude and mobile learning.

The targeted population for the study comprises of 350 students from social studies department from the two colleges of educations in Niger state. The entire population was used for the study because of the manageable size of the population.

The research instrument that was used for the study will be a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two parts (part one and two). Part one focused on respondents' personal data and part two was divided into three sub-sections. Section A consists 10 items on awareness of mobile learning, Section B consists 10 items on students' readiness for mobile learning while Section C consists 10 items which sought the attitude of respondents on attitude towards the adoption of mobile learning. All the items were presented using 4-point rating scale with the respondents categories of Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2), Strongly Disagree (SD=1). The instrument was validated by three in social studies education and two educational technology practitioners. Their suggestion was used to modify and produce the final copy of the instrument that was used for the data collection.

In order to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted using 15 students who were part of the population but that did not participate in the main study. The data collected was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha formula and reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. This value obtained indicates that the instrument was reliable and was therefore adopted for data collection for the study.

Mean and standard deviation were the descriptive statistics used to analyze the data collected for the purpose of answering the three research questions raised. A decision mean score of 2.50 was used. Every item with a mean score below 2.50 was considered as Disagree while an item with mean scores of 2.50 and above was considered as Agree.

4. RESULTS

Research Question One: Are social studies students in Colleges of Education in Niger State aware of the academic benefits of mobile learning?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation on mobile learning awareness

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1	I am aware of utilizing mobile learning in my coursework.	3.58	0.52	Agreed
2	I am aware that lecturers can contact me with class related information, announcements, alerts and reminders about assignments on my personal mobile device.	3.44	0.52	Agreed
3	I am aware that mobile devices can help me stay on top of assignments and instruction	3.38	0.49	Agreed
4	I am aware that using mobile learning in my coursework.	3.45	0.53	Agreed
5	I am aware i can use my mobile device to learn all my course content.	3.48	0.50	Agreed
6	I am aware that I can receive educational content on my mobile device	3.50	0.55	Agreed
7	I am aware that mobile devices can improve my ability to learn.	3.33	0.47	Agreed
8	I am aware that learning on a mobile device can meet the needs of my current instruction.	3.28	0.55	Agreed
9	I am aware that mobile devices can help me get my assignments completed more quickly.	3.40	0.61	Agreed
10	I am aware that including mobile learning in coursework is a good idea.	3.44	0.52	Agreed

Table 1 shows that students agreed to all items (1 to 10). This is because none of the mean response was below 2.50 which was agreed on the 4-points response options. The standard deviation score ranged between 0.47 and 0.61. This indicates that social studies students are aware of mobile learning.

Research Question Two: How ready are social studies students in Colleges of Education in Niger state for the adoption of mobile learning approach in teaching and learning process?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on students' readiness for mobile learning

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1	I am ready to utilize mobile learning in my coursework.	3.29	0.56	Agreed
2	I am ready to contact my lecturers for class related information, announcements, alerts and reminders about assignments on my personal mobile device.	3.31	0.57	Agreed
3	I am ready to use mobile devices for my assignments and instructions	3.25	0.61	Agreed
4	I am ready to use mobile learning in my coursework.	3.24	0.56	Agreed
5	I am ready to use my mobile device to learn all my course content.	3.31	0.54	Agreed
6	I am ready to receive educational content on my mobile device	3.34	0.50	Agreed
7	I am ready to improve my ability to learn mobile devices.	3.46	0.55	Agreed
8	I am ready to learn with a mobile device to meet the needs of my current instruction.	3.46	0.64	Agreed
9	I am ready to use mobile devices to do my assignments.	3.14	0.61	Agreed
10	I am ready to include mobile learning in my coursework.	3.18	0.52	Agreed

Table 2 shows that students agreed to all the items (1 to 10). This was because none of the mean response was below 2.50 which was agreed on the 4-point response options. The standard deviation score ranged between 0.50 and 0.64. This indicates that social studies students in Colleges of Education are ready for the adoption of mobile learning in teaching and learning process.

1. **Research Question Three:** What is the attitude of social studies students in Colleges of Education in Niger State towards the use of mobile learning in teaching and learning process?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of responses on attitude towards mobile learning

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1	I think I can utilize mobile learning in my coursework.	3.34	0.50	Agreed
2	I think I can contact my lecturers for class related information, announcements, alerts and reminders about assignments on my personal mobile device.	3.31	0.54	Agreed
3	I think I can use mobile devices for my assignments and instructions	3.31	0.52	Agreed
4	I think I can use mobile learning in my coursework.	3.28	0.45	Agreed
5	I think I can use my mobile device to learn all my course content.	3.24	0.46	Agreed
6	I think I can receive educational content on my mobile device	3.29	0.48	Agreed
7	I think I can improve my ability to learn mobile devices.	3.29	0.51	Agreed
8	I think I can learn with a mobile device to meet the needs of my current instruction.	3.40	0.61	Agreed
9	I think I can use mobile devices to do my assignments.	3.35	0.59	Agreed
10	I think I can include mobile learning in my coursework.	3.35	0.53	Agreed

Table 3 shows that the students agreed to all the items (1 to 10). This was because none of the mean response was below 2.50 which was agreed on the 4-point response options. The standard deviation score ranged between 0.45 and 0.61. This indicates that the attitude towards the adoption of mobile learning among Colleges of Education students was positive.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

The findings on the awareness of social studies students on the academic benefits of mobile learning reveals that the participants already have awareness. This is likely

because, in addition to using mobile devices for interaction, they must have also been using them to share educational resources, assignment and other school related issues.

With regards to readiness and attitude of social studies students towards the adoption of mobile learning, findings revealed that there is high level of readiness and positive attitude among participants. This is probably because they believe that the approach will enhance their academic performance and afford them opportunities to relate more meaningfully and independently with their studies at their own pace and time.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students are regarded as active users of mobile devices, smart phones and internet. The usage facilitated their high levels of awareness and awareness and readiness as well as their positive attitude towards the adoption of mobile learning for academic activities. Measures should therefore be taken to ensure that these findings translate to improvements in the academic endeavors of social studies in Colleges of Education. This can be achieved by ensuring that:

i. academic and instructional activities are delivered to students via mobile devices; To achieve this, lecturers must be aware, trained and adopt mobile teaching;

ii. internet facilities should be provided for students both on and off campus in order to have unlimited access to mobile learning;

iii. measures are put into place to monitor activities that students carry out while using their mobile devices; and

iv. regular trainings and workshops are organized for students in order to sustain their positive attitude towards the adoption of mobile learning.

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