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INTERNET ACCESS BLOCKING AND DO-NOT-DISTURB MODE AS DIGITAL DETOXIFICATION PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT
The study investigated internet access blocking and do-not-disturb mode as digital detoxification predictors of students' academic improvements in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the correlational design. The population comprised 3680 students from the Departments of Educational Management of the three public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. A sample of 1,472 students, representing 40% of the total participants were drawn, using the stratified random sampling technique. The instruments for data collection were: Internet Access Blocking and Do-Not-Disturb Mode Scale (IABDNDMS) and Students Academic Improvement Scale (SAIS), designed by the researchers in the modified 4-point Likert scale model. The reliability coefficients of the instrument using Cronbach alpha methods were 0.76 and 0.89. Simple regression was used to answer the research questions and in the test of hypotheses, t-test associated with simple regression was used. The findings of the study revealed that internet access blocking and do-not-disturb mode as digital detoxification predictors, predict students' academic improvements in areas of regaining self-control, accomplishment of work effectiveness, boosts productivity, enhances the creative functioning of the brain, combats screen addiction, enhances healthy living, encourages high project work involvement, amongst others. The study concluded that internet access blocking and do-not-disturb mode as digital detoxification strategies are strong and viable predictors of students' academic improvements in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Consequently, the study recommended amongst others, that, school authorities and students should continue to utilize the different digital detoxification strategies in detoxifying students from digital technology devices in order to increase the tempo of their academic improvements.
KEYWORDS: *Internet Access Blocking, Do-Not-Disturb Mode, Digital Detoxification, Academic Improvements*

INTRODUCTION

As societies evolve due to the rapid growth in the surge of technological innovations, inventions, and advancements, nations have continuously witnessed rapid transformation occasioned by the new requirements constantly evolving with the dynamisms in technological developments, which has had positive and negative effects on the ways and pattern societies behave and operate in their social, economic, political, and religious undertakings. University education and its products (graduates) are not left out in this upsurge of technological development and advancements; as such, universities, as citadels of international studies are saddled with the responsibilities of teaching, research, community service and incidental functions, and as such, the graduates from the universities are expected to have sound knowledge and skill necessary to meet the expectations and aspirations of the world of work. Consequently, the practice of digital detoxification has been seen as essential to be imbibed in the universities to ensure effective and efficient academic improvements of university students.

In this digital time and age, the sources of knowledge have diversified and one of the ready source is the internet which has been made to be contained in the mobile phone devices and serve for greater advantage to give students ample opportunity to browse and surf the internet for materials to assist academic works, it provides student with immediate, portable access to many of the education-enhancing capabilities as an internet-connected computer, such as online information retrieval, file sharing, file storage,

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image and picture organizer and the rest. It also gives room for stress free and easy interaction with Professors, Lecturers and fellow students in situations of information gathering and dissemination (Nwafor, 2012).

Gone are the days one had to go through miles to get a computer to enable him/her access the internet to engage in desired online activities. Technology has made it very easy to have this innovation right with people on their mobile phones (Uche, 2020). This mobile phone device and its numerous features provide students with the ample opportunity of improving their knowledge and broadening their horizon outside what is thought in the classroom; it enables proper management of time and easy access to help in times of emergencies. With mobile phones and its features, learning goes on even when out of the classroom or school environment.

Conversely, researchers and leaders in the education industry have raised alarm over the misuse of mobile phone devices by students, especially, university students. This may be explained in the fact that students tend to spend more time fiddling with the phone which has adversely affected their academic performances. Jocobson and Forste (2011), in their research, suggest that students perceive the cell phone usage as a leisure device and most commonly, use mobile phones for social networking, surfing the internet for pleasure, watching videos, playing games, taking inappropriate photographs engaging in non-academic related activities amongst others. Again, Morgan (2017) posits that, students are becoming dependent on their mobile phone devices usage as a 'quick fix' for issues and information and it can keep them from developing the ability to 'think on their feet' in work situations. Stakeholders and educators have raised concern over the increased use of mobile phone devices by students during lecture periods on non-academic related matters.

The new inappropriate behaviour of sending explicit photos, videos, and text messages, appear to be on the increase by university students and these behaviours have been seen to distract them, almost completely from their academic activities. Lockie (2017), indicates that there are a lot of negative and unhealthy impacts and effects of mobile phone device on students' academic performance. According to the researcher, these include wastage of time and money, cheating in the examination hall, distractions during lectures and study time and also, its vibrations and use may be harmful to health. To this end, educators and leaders have expressed concern over the danger that the nation may face in the near future due to the low academic performance of university students caused by the continued and frequent use of mobile devices during teaching and learning hours. This gave the researchers the natural propensity to investigate into the application of internet access blocking and do-not-disturb mode as digital detoxification, with a view to ensuring its effective utilization by university students for academic improvement.

Digital detoxification refers to a period of time when a person refrains from using technological devices. It is a process of temporarily taking time off one's mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, computers, televisions and social sites. Digital detoxification which can also be called digital detox or detoxing is often seen as a way to focus on real-life situations, or task at hand, without distractions. By temporarily foregoing digital devices, people can let go of stress that stems from constant connectivity and avoid getting addicted to their mobile devices. By welcoming and engaging in digital detox, university students can stay focused on their academic activities without getting distracted by their technological devices, especially their smart phones. While technology addiction is not formally recognized as a disorder, many experts believe that tech and devices overuse represents a very real behavioural addiction that can lead to physical, psychological, social and academic problems (Scott, 2019).

Essentially, it is true that smart phones have made life much easier in so many ways, yet the technology on these devices has been dominating lives. According to Dscout as cited in Winnick (2016), most people tap their smart phones on the average of 2,617 times per day. This is a serious distraction especially for students who are going through training and development process. Studies have shown that powerful computers made in the form of mobile devices most people hold and keep in their pockets can be distracting for even the most disciplined adults not to mention students. Research in the educational sphere demonstrates that using mobile devices and social media while learning new material reduces comprehension and impairs academic performance (Jacobson & Fortse, 2011). Studies have also found that even if cell phones are turned off, turned face down, their mere presence reduces people's cognitive capacity (Ward, et al, 2017).

Internet Access Blocking for Students Academic Improvements

Digital devices such as smartphones, tablets and laptops are important tools, which, when used adequately in the classroom, supports learning. However, Fried (2008), in his survey, found that most students using digital devices in the class spend considerable times on activities not related to taking notes or to subject area being thought. Furthermore, the scholar identifies a negative correlation between students success in class and in-class laptop use. This goes to say that when students are allowed to use digital devices in the classroom, there is every possibility of using the devices for non-class related purposes, hence causing interference to the subject or task at hand. As more students use digital devices in the classroom, research shows that their use is causing more classroom learning distractions (McCoy, 2013).

The internet provides those connected to it an unprecedented amount of information through their digital gadgets: at home, school, office and so many other locations. The information available on the internet is limitless, both in quantity and variety. This

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limitless boundary of information creates avenue for anyone, from a school child to a corporate CEO, to be able to post anything in the cyber public view (Afangideh & Agha, 2019). With all the information, adverts, and what have you, popping up on mobile devices, it is then pertinent for university students to welcome the idea of internet access blocking on their mobile devices during school hours or periods of non-mobile use classes.

Therefore, Internet-Access blocking is a deliberate block or ban of the internet connectivity intended to restrict access to information or resources through the mobile devices (Simon, 2015). It is possible by means of hardware or software products that block specific targeted content from being received or displayed. This measure can be applied by university students at intervals during school hours to give room to maximum concentration to classes and lectures that does not require them to access their devices.

Along with the negative effects of digital media itself, excessive tech use, browsing and surfing the internet regularly results in sedentary behaviour (Khan, 2008). Students have been seen to sit for long periods of time using their mobile devices in gaming, chatting, Facebooking, video playing, among other things; this behaviour calls for great concern for it has been seen to have a lot of distracting effects on the students like the popping up of notifications on a constant basis that always calls the attention of the students. Mendoza, et al (2018) agree that these constant notifications distract the students while in the classroom or in any serious academic task; for the urge to inquire what the message that came into the mobile phone was all about, is a good enough distraction. Therefore, the activation of internet-access-blocking will shut down all internet enabled notifications and allow the students to give maximum concentration on the subject matter at hand.

Distractions from mobile devices or any other form of digital device as suggests by Fried (2008) might look minute, but, even the smallest distraction, like being interrupted by a quick message on a phone, chat app or any device, can cause twice as many errors in a focused-based task. Even worse, most university students tend to drastically overestimate their ability to continue to give maximum concentration as usual while these distractions go on. Jacobson (2011) indicates that, new technologies always bring new ideas, fantastic offers and new challenges, but as with any new technology, great solutions to this challenge are popping up to help one fight back. He goes further to outline some types of internet-access blockers that can be used to regain control and become more productive in school and at the workplace. They are:

Self-Control: This is an app designed to be a personal distraction blocker. It gives permission to add certain websites and apps to the 'blacklist' that one wants to block and allows one to set a timer. It is designed to be set for just the time needed to stay away from the distracting sites. **FocusBooster**: This works by challenging the user to focus on a task for a particular period of time and then take few minutes break. Hossain (2019), also suggests that, FocusBooster features automatic timesheet that indicates where productive time was utilized and allows for the option of a pause in situation where the user cannot prevent or ignore a distraction.

LeechBlock: LeechBlock is another extension that allows Mozila Firefox users to block disturbing apps or sites. It is a great internet-access blocking tool that allows one to block several sets of sites, with a specified time period for each set of site blocked. In agreement to this, Aktay (2018), opines that, LeechBlock can also be a bit confusing because it may not be user friendly for those who are not highly tech-savvy. But in any case, he went further to state that, it offers fantastic features that allows the user block multiple sets of sites and have each set of sites blocked for certain amounts of time, separately.

FocusMe: FocusMe is designed with features that includes a time tracker with convenient multi-coloured graphs to reveal where a user's time goes. It contains all the features in other web-blockers in one piece and also web blocks, scheduled settings, custom themes and reports for quick reading and visual representations, centralized management capabilities, and a lot more. With this plan, students can comfortably pay full attention to their classes and projects/homework at hand without having to face constant distractions from the numerous activities that goes on, on the web. However, any undertaking worth setting out on, requires the right tools and strategies for changing the game and creating the type of habits that would stick (Agabi & Uche, 2006).

In the light of the aforementioned, researchers and scholars like Hossain (2019), Willcockson, et al (2019), Trine and Gunn (2019), Aktay (2018), Mendoza, et al (2018) and McCoy (2013), have come up with suggestions on how internet-access blocking can be of benefit in the application of digital detoxification. These include regaining of self-control, accomplishment of work effectively, functioning of the brain for better creativity, enables brain relax for innovative ideas, allows for self-discipline, enables students remain focused, boosts productivity, encourages the defeat of procrastination, indicates areas productive time will be utilized, enables students remain accountable to their best intentions and gives room for more insights, suggestions and contributions. It is in this vein that the present study seeks to ascertain the extent to which internet-access blocking can be utilized as digital detoxification to predict students' academic improvement in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Activation of Do-Not-Disturb (DND) Mode for Academic Improvement

Rapid developments in cloud technologies, aided by the use of smartphones and other digital devices are boosting people's way of living in every area, be it academics, social, cultural, religious and political spheres. These digital devices, like smartphones and the rest, offer tremendous features like camera, email messaging, voice messaging, video apps, thumb and image capturing,

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creativity and productivity apps, amongst others, integrated into one rectangular revolutionary technology that keeps getting smarter and smarter day by day (Agha, 2016). Despite the efficiency and productivity level smartphones and digital devices possesses, they can really be a distraction when users need to focus or be productive with the aim of achieving desired goals. Hossain (2019), indicates that, these smartphones and digital devices can pop up thousands of notifications capable of reducing the attention of users, more especially, students in the classroom that are expected to give full attention to the lecture being thought or more or less, give attention to the project they are expected to complete within a speculated time frame.

The DND mode is one of the numerous features on the smartphone device, which, when activated, disables all calls, messages, notifications, alerts and other signals from coming in and causing distractions to the user. Danilo, et al (2019), are of the opinion that, for maximum concentration during lectures in the university and at the workplace, one can activate the DND mode to shut off all, or part of the notifications, messages and alerts that would normally pop into the device. This function, as suggests by Fernandez (2018), can be set to turn on and off automatically at scheduled intervals to avoid distractions while focusing on important tasks. He went further to state that, it can be very useful and productive when working on a serious task; while in the classroom or carrying out research; while working towards meeting a set goal and many other expectations.

The Do-Not-Disturb mode can be set to repeat at same time each day automatically and certain types of calls like emergencies can equally be set to come through at the period of DND. Hence, understanding the DND mode and how to effectively utilize the benefits towards predicting students' academic improvements in universities. These benefits include, but not limited to; enhances creativity, combats scree addiction, enhances productivity, improves students' learning, enhances healthy living, encourages class participations, attracts maximum attention to immediate surroundings, allows for willpower to sustain transformation and encourages high project work involvement. These enjoy empirical and scholarly backings from Danilo, et al (2019), Hossain (2019), Fernandez (2018) and Martin and Luz (2015). The finding of the present study will therefore debunk or confirm this as the case maybe in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Universities, as citadels of learning, exist to execute the functions of teaching, research, transfer of worthwhile knowledge and values, community development and the generation of highly skilled manpower to industries and societies at large. As societies keep evolving, and nations keep embracing technological advancements to enhance efficiency and productivity, convenience and communication, university institutions, as part of the society, have witnessed and equally accepted different innovative practices and embraced most technological advancement that have seen the exercise of teaching and learning, more interesting and productive. In all these evolutions and advances in technological developments, digital technology distractions have been identified as major source of distractors on students' academic effectiveness. Hence, the introduction of digital detoxification, which is seen as a period of time a person refrains from the use of technological gadgets, suffices.

Consequently, with the advances in technological developments in industries, institutions and the world of work, it has become imperative for educational institutions to welcome and embrace the use of technological devices, which have come to stay, into their academic activities, and comply with the new ways of doing things. However, the researchers and other stakeholders are worried that university students in general and Rivers State in particular, appear to be performing at a very low level in academics due to the increasing use of mobile devices which majority use for social networking, video watching, skyping, playing games, amongst others; while in school and lecture halls. This worry gave rise to this study which sought to investigate the extent to which internet access blocking and do-not-disturb mode as digital detoxification, predict students' academic improvements in universities in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study investigated internet access blocking and do-not-disturb mode of digital detoxification, as predictors of students' academic improvements in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. In specific terms, the study sought to:

1. Establish the extent to which internet-access-blocking predicts students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Find out the extent to which do-not-disturb mode predicts students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. To what extent does internet-access-blocking predict students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

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2. To what extent does do-not-disturb mode predict students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant prediction of internet-access blocking on students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant prediction of do-not-disturb mode on students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlational survey design, as it made to determine the extent to which internet access blocking and do-not-disturb mode, as digital detoxification variables, predict students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State. The population of the study comprised 3680 students from the Department of Educational Management of the three public universities in Rivers State, which are: University of Port Harcourt (1630 students), Rivers State University (1050 students), and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (1000 students). These population acted as total participants for the study, from which 1472 students, representing 40% of the total participants in the population, were drawn as sample size, using the stratified random sampling technique. There were two instruments for the study, titled: Internet Access Blocking and Do-Not-Disturb Mode Scale (IABDDMS) and Students' Academic Improvements Scale (SAIS), designed by the researchers in the modified 4-point Likert scale model of Very High Extent (4), High Extent (3), Low Extent (2) and Very Low Extent (1) respectively. The reliability coefficients of Internet Access Blocking and Do-Not-Disturb Mode Scale (IABDDMS) and Students' Academic Improvements Scale (SAIS), using Cronbach Alpha reliability statistics were 0.76 and 0.89. The various reliability coefficients were high and justified the use of the instrument for the study. Simple regression was used to answer the research questions while t-test associated with simple regression was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results of the study came from the answers to the research questions and results to test of hypotheses. Thus:

Research Question 1: To what extent does internet-access-blocking predict students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Simple Regression on the Extent Internet Access Blocking Predict Students' Academic Improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Decision
1	.890[a]	.792	.790	Internet access blocking predicts students' academic improvements to a very high extent

Scale: Very high extent (100% - 76%); High extent (75% - 51%); Low extent (50 - 26); Very low extent (25% - 0%)

Data on table 1 show the Regression Coefficient (R), Regression Square Coefficient (R^2), and decision on the extent to which internet access blocking predicts students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The regression co-efficient(r) and regression square co-efficient came out as .89 and .79 respectively, while the co-efficient of determination stood at 79% (as derived from a multiplication of regression square coefficient value .79 x 100%).

With the co-efficient of determination as 79% and the regression co-efficient and regression square co-efficient as 0.89 and 0.79**,** respectively and following from the scale of measurement, 79% falls in between 100% and 76% (high extent). This therefore confirms that digital access blocking predicts students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria to a very high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does do-not-disturb mode predicts students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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Table 2: Simple Regression on the Extent Do-not-Disturb Mode Predicts Students' Academic Improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Decision
1	.882[a]	.777	.763	Do-not-disturb mode predicts students' academic improvements to a very high extent

- Scale on Table 1 applies.

Data on table 2 show the Regression Coefficient (R), Regression Square Coefficient (R^2), and decision on the extent to which do-not-disturb mode predicts students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The regression co-efficient(r) and regression square co-efficient came out as .88 and .77 respectively, while the co-efficient of determination stood at 79% (as derived from a multiplication of regression square coefficient value .77 x 100%).

With the co-efficient of determination as 79% and the regression co-efficient and regression square co-efficient as 0.88 and 0.77**,** respectively and following from the scale of measurement, 77% falls in between 100% and 76% (high extent). This therefore confirms that do not disturb mode predicts students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria to a very high extent.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant prediction of internet-access blocking on students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test associated with Simple Regression on the Extent Internet-Access Blocking Predicts Students Academic Improvements

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized coefficients	T	Probability val.	Alpha Value	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(constant)	38.320	1.378		27.811	.000		
	Internet access blocking	.898	.038	.890	2.580	.010	.05	Significant

Table 3 showed that the t-test associated with simple regression is 2.58. The result revealed that the hypothesis is rejected because the probability value of .01 is less than the alpha value of .05. Therefore, there is a significant prediction of internet-access blocking on students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant prediction of do-not-disturb mode on students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test associated with Simple Regression on the Extent Do-Not-Disturb Mode Predicts Students Academic Improvements

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Unstandardized coefficients	T	Probability val.	Alpha Value	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(constant)	39.122	1.268		30.854	.000		
	Do-not-disturb	.920	.035	.892	3.438	.001	.05	Significant

Table 4 showed that the t-test associated with simple regression is 3.44. The result revealed that the hypothesis is rejected because the probability value of .00 is less than the alpha value of .05. Therefore, there is a significant prediction of do-not-disturb mode on students' academic improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS/IMPLICATIONS

Internet-Access Blocking as a Predictor of Students Academic Improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

The finding of the study here indicates that internet-access blocking predicts students' academic improvements in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria to a very high extent. Apparently confirming, a corresponding finding from the test of hypothesis, which established that, there is a significant prediction of internet access blocking on students' academic improvements in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

These findings are in congruence with Gunn (2019), Wilcockson, et al (2019), Hossain (2019), Trin and Gun (2019), Agabi and Uche (2006), Mendoza, et al (2008) and McCoy (2013), and Atkay (2018) who in their students and scholarly contributions establish the contribution of internet access-block to academic improvements of student's in learning institution. An explanation for these trends may be connected to the fact that students themselves have learnt to block internet access to enable them concentrate while learning and have experienced self-academic improvements. These findings imply that in institutions where students practice internet-access blocking, academic improvement is bound to be the results.

Activation of Do-not-Disturb Mode as a Predictor of Students Academic Improvements in Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

The finding of the study here, indicates that, activation of Do-not-Disturb mode predicts students' academic improvement in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria to a very high extent. Also, a corresponding finding from the test of hypothesis, found out that, there is a significant prediction of activation of do-not-disturb mode on students' academic improvements in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

These findings are in agreement with Danilo, et al (2019), Fernandez (2018), Johnson (2019), Martin and Luz (2015) who studies and scholarly presentation list the contributions of the activation of do-not-disturb mode on mobile devices to academic improvements. A possible reason for the trends in the finding may be that as students, the respondents, have compared the pro and the coin and found that it is proper to activate the do-not-disturb mode. These findings imply that, where the do-not-disturb mode are deactivated, students' academic improvements should be expected.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that digital detoxification strategies among them, internet access blocking and do-not-disturb mode, are viable and strong predictors of students' academic improvements in public Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the implications of the findings, and the conclusion, it is recommended as follows:

1. School authority should endeavour to do all that is necessary in ensuring the introduction of internet-access-blocking strategy, at periods when students should be seriously involved in academic activities, as this will help them in eliminating external sources of influence.
2. Students should continuously make use of the do-not disturb mode in controlling the influx of information into their digital devices as this would continuously help them concentrate on their studies for more recorded improvement.

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