

Media Usage in Academia: Exploring the Preferences of Public Sector University Teachers

Muhammad Ilyas

Abstract

The present study was carried out to investigate the media usage in academia by teachers. The researcher of current study utilized the Uses and Gratification Theory for conducting research and took this theory as guideline. The researcher used survey research method and formulated a questionnaire which consisted of close-ended questions. The 'available sampling technique' was used for the selection of instructors. The target population was the instructors of different departments of Govt. College University Faisalabad, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad and National Textile University, Faisalabad. The researcher distributed 150 questionnaires among the instructors of different faculties and departments of the above mentioned three universities. With the help of the results of questionnaires, the researcher came to know the media preferences of university instructors that how they use different mediums on daily basis for educational purposes. Frequency distribution was calculated by using SPSS (statistical package for social science). The researcher figured out that majority of the teachers of public sector universities in Faisalabad preferred the Internet on any other medium for education. Those teachers used the Internet for social interaction, getting information and entertainment, but their primary and main objective to use the Internet was educational.

Introduction

The media and its contents have occupied the world and performing major roles in the lives of audience. The media has been successful to grab the attention of audience and the audience consumes the media contents to satisfy their needs. Dominick (1999) reported that mass media plays a vital role for changing the values, explaining the actual meaning of things, close observation, linkage and entertainment function for society. Now-a-days, students as well as teachers are attracting towards latest media technologies not only for entertainment but also for gaining knowledge and information for education purposes rather than traditional sources of reading.

Lewis (1990) asked fifteen questions to find out teachers' media perception regarding to education. He found that teachers give more preference to that material which is readily available to them and that's why some time they mixed formal training with audio-visual instruction where it is unnecessary. Eichoiz and Rogers (1994) found out that teachers have psychological components while media perception for education. Similarly, Aquino (1994) suggested that there is an important personality difference between accepters and rejecters of new media, as other researchers perceive that there are some teachers who consider media as a threatening for people.

Bruner (1997) reports that the electronic media is spreading speedily among new generation and new generation are accepting it very rapidly. According to Livingstone and Bober (2003) the new generations of students are more expert to use the Internet than their parents. The wide spread of the Internet especially World Wide Web (www), is attracting the students to get information regarding their studies and also it attracts the teachers to get data and information regarding their subjects.

The arrival of new media creates competition between print and electronic media which is taking attention and time of students and it is also capturing attention and time of teachers too. Different electronic mediums are performing roles just like time eating machines and they are trying to show themselves superior to each other (Loan, 2009).

At the moment, the Internet is very awful and difficult challenge for print media. According to the researchers, the Internet is increasing and spreading very quickly and on the other hand the traditional sources diminishing and decreasing with the same pace (Rogers, 2001; Pierce, 2009).

The all above discussion illuminates that the Internet has been used extensively by teachers whereas the traditional methods of teachings are dying day by day. All above studies have been presented as background and the purpose of current study is to rescue the traditional method of teaching and overcome the extensive use of the Internet for education purpose.

Literature Review

Agnihotri and Singh (2012) reported that teaching through only a mentioned or specified text book does not give guarantee in the process of required language learning subject. Biset Ayalew Nigatu (2014) conducted a research about media preferences in which he used survey method, random sampling techniques for choosing correspondents and questionnaire for data collection. He found out that television, radio and websites are the main sources of information of university instructors. The researcher also revealed that instructor use the Internet for three major reasons, (i) searching for information related to their subject area, (ii) sending and receiving emails, and (iii) searching for daily news. The media contents that instructors regularly consume are social issues, sports and politics.

Rafiq and Ameen (2009) reported that the teachers of National Textile University of Pakistan depends on Google, Yahoo, MSN for information and knowledge satisfaction and they prefer Hotmail and Yahoo as email servers than Gmail. Jackson et al. (2007) reported that both print and online media are effective for information sought by health and social care professionals.

Ziming (2005) studied that the people emerging more toward screen based reading documents, while it takes more time on screen based reading, like browsing, finding, scanning for one time reading which is non linear. On the other hand less time spent on reading through traditional (library, printed documents) ways for in-depth reading.

Chen and Bryer (2012) reported that 57 faculty member of 28 different universities of US, used 100 % social media for personal, academic, research and for professional purposes. Junco, Heiberger, and Lonken (2010) reported that social media, especially twitter use for co-curricular discussion, campus activities reminder, faculty and student connections.

Teachers should know the attention of students before introducing technology in class rooms; they should also know what impact it can have on students' learning process (Higgins & Moseley, 2011). Teachers prefer to use technology more than using computer for practices. Teachers use such technology to enhance the learning of students and for motivating them for presentations (Lam, 2000).

In the study of Fayaz Ahmad Loan, (2011), the researcher revealed that there is a strong competition between print and electronic media in attracting students' time and attention. The habits of reading among children are dying and the reason behind it is that reading habits are being replaced by new technologies (CopperWiki, 2008). The main things which are attracting the students' attention over reading are television and the Internet (Pivec, 1998).

Findings of above research studies give us enough evidence that reveal the media preferences of teachers as well as students from academia.

Objectives

- To examine media preferences of the instructors of different universities of Faisalabad.
- To explore the type(s) of media used by university instructors.
- To find out what media content(s) the university instructors consume more.

Scope of Study

This study intends to explore pedagogic preferences of university instructors. The Internet has broadened the learning ways that could not be imagined a few decades back. Currently, everyone wants to get maximum advantage out of this new media called the Internet. This particular theme has motivated and provoked the researcher to figure out that how university teachers get in touch with new media. The researcher also wants to reveal that how this specific medium is going to be beneficial for them for these academic activities. It can be hoped that this study will help to understand the media preferences of the university teachers in Faisalabad.

Hypotheses

- 1) The university instructors of Faisalabad prefer the Internet for educational purposes than books.
- 2) The university instructors of Faisalabad use more bookish material for educational purpose than the Internet.
- 3) The university teachers of Faisalabad consider such applications (media) more reliable and easy to manage as compared to conventional tools of learning.

Methodology

There are three basic approaches to scientific research, quantitative, qualitative and status quo. Here, the researcher selected the quantitative methodology. The reason for choosing this methodology was that many of previous studies that used the same methodology which was related to present study. The research studies of Guy, Retta (2012), Biset Ayalew Nigatu (2014) and Fayaz Ahmad Loan, (2011) etc. can be quoted as specimen.

This research is based on survey in which a gradually prepared questionnaire was used as a tool of data collection. The researcher specifically included the close-ended questions. As reported by Wimmer and Dominick (1991), the survey of audience and consumer considered a common place for all areas of life.

The researcher chose the instructors of public sector universities of Faisalabad as the universe. There are three main public sector university campuses in Faisalabad, named Government College University, National Textile University and Agriculture University.

The researcher has used 'available random sampling technique' and selected 150 correspondents of all above mentioned universities. So, fifty participants were selected from each university to maintain the level of uniformity.

The obtained data was analyzed quantitatively and data analyzed by using simple percentage method. Frequency distribution has been calculated by using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) because the more accurate results are extracted by using SPSS as compared to manual calculations.

Theoretical Framework

The Uses and Gratification model explains that mass media has cognition, diversion, social utility and withdrawal functions, (Blumler and Katz, 1974).

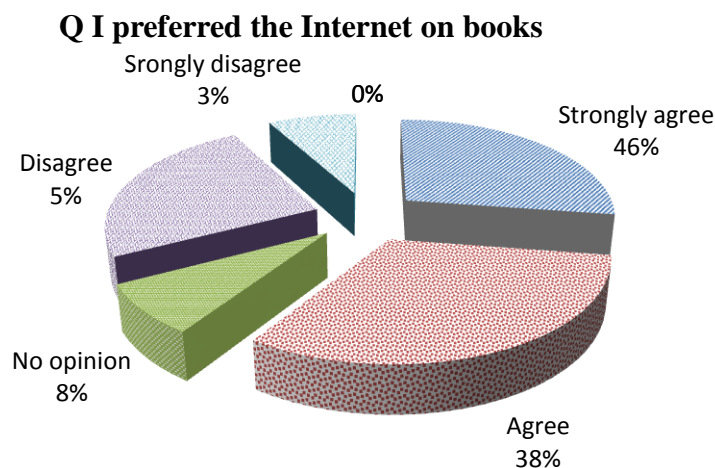
Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratification Theory explains how people use media to satisfy their specific needs. This theory puts question what people do with media rather than what media do with people

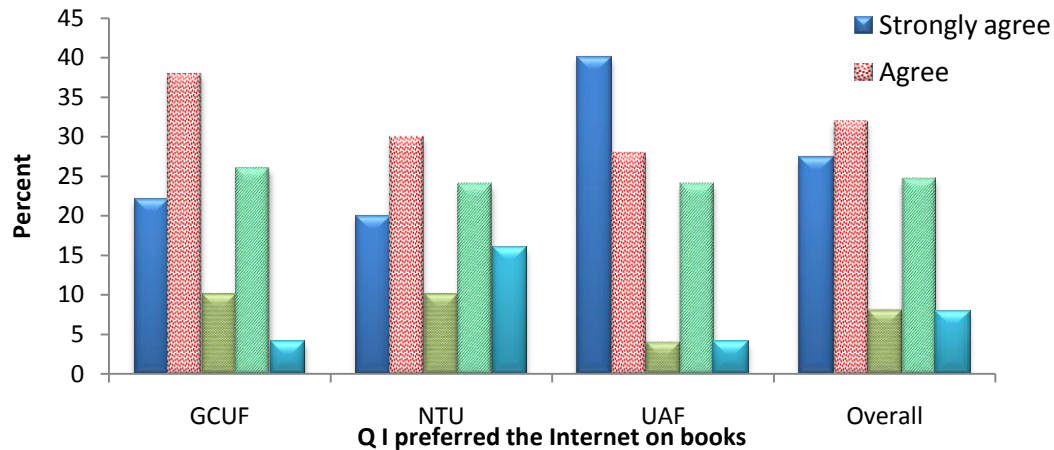
The theorists of Uses and Gratification Theory said that media users seek out specific media source which fulfill the need of the users. This present study has tried to obtain guidance from this model as Uses and Gratification Theory has great significance to explore the above mentioned topic.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1: The university instructors of Faisalabad prefer the Internet for educational purposes than books.

This study figured out that the university teachers used Internet more than books, 46% respondents strongly agreed that they preferred the Internet on books for education purpose and 38% selected the option of 'agreed' in response of the same statement.





So, with the help of these results the researcher found out that the university teachers preferred the Internet on books. Similarly, when the researcher asked respondents which media do you prefer more? Following results came out.

The majority of teachers of public sector universities of Faisalabad are habitual to use media for education purposes as well as for leisure. When the choice given to them to select the media which they prefer more, then 65.33% chose the Internet, 32% television, 4% newspaper and 0% chose radio.

The researcher figured out that majority of the teachers of public sector universities of Faisalabad preferred the Internet than any other medium and maximum number of teachers used the Internet on daily basis. It was also found by the researcher that television is 2nd medium which is used more after the Internet and then newspaper and radio used respectively.

27.33% teachers used the Internet for education, 6% for entertainment, 19.33% for information, 12% for social interaction and 0% select the option of popularity. On the other hand 4% teachers at university level used newspaper for information and 0% for entertainment, education, popularity and social interaction. To some extent, the usage of the Internet and newspaper for information also comes in the perspective of education, as in some subjects, current issues and current affairs are the part of studies.

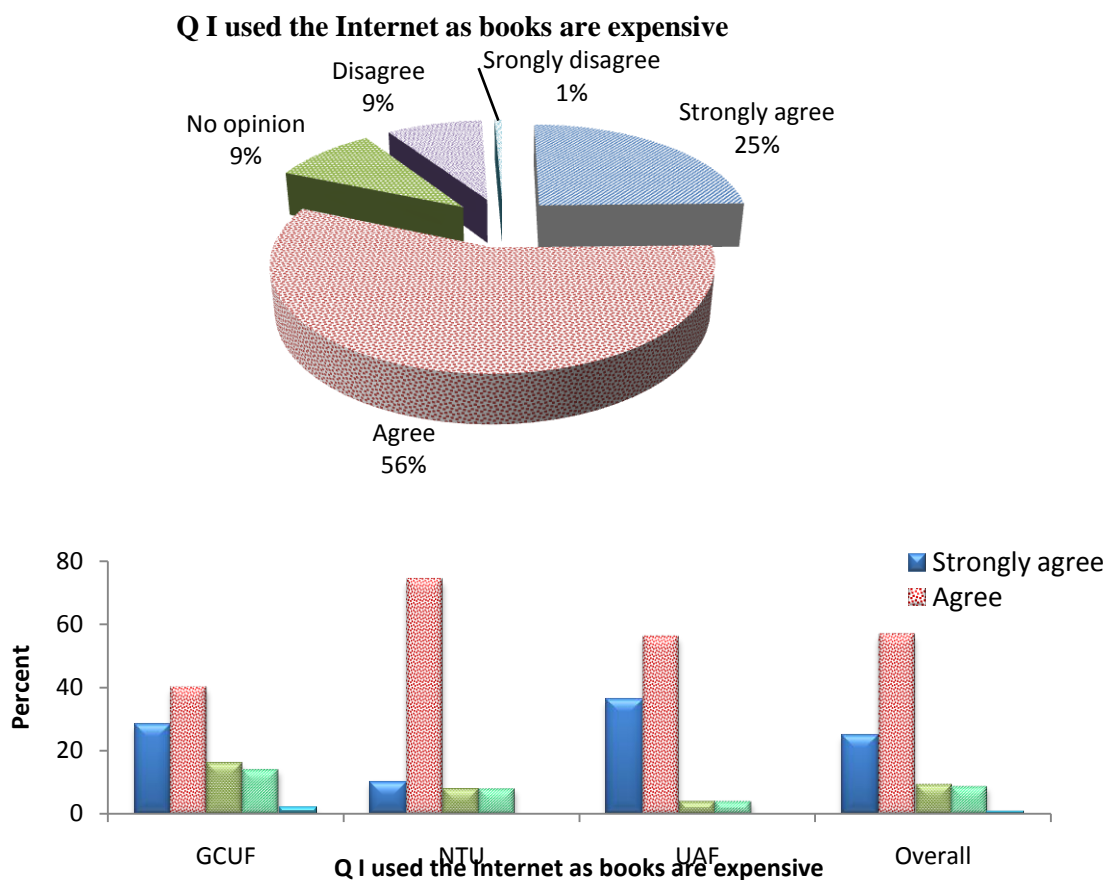
So on the behalf on these results the researcher finds out that the Internet is used by the maximum number of teachers for the purpose of education, while the Internet also used by faculty for information, social interaction and for entertainment. These findings were as same as founded by Biset Ayalew Nigatu (2014). According to his findings, the Bahir Dar University's instructors used the Internet for getting information regarding their subjects and sending/receiving emails and for daily correspondence.

31.33% teachers used social issues websites for getting help in their teaching, 15.33% used political websites, 9.33% entertainment websites, 4% sports websites and 40% selected the option none of the above which means they did not use social issues, politics, sports and entertainment websites for getting helped in their teaching. It is also found that websites related to sports, politics, entertainment and social issues were used by the teachers for education purposes.

44.66% teachers agreed that the knowledge gained through the Internet is authentic and 21.33% strongly agreed with the same statement, 16% gave no opinion, while 8.66% disagreed and 9.33% strongly disagreed with this statement.

Hypothesis2:

The Faisalabad universities instructors use more bookish material for education purpose than the Internet. Although 48% respondents agreed and 22% strongly agreed that they preferred books on the Internet but the researcher also found out that majority of the teachers preferred the Internet on books and all other mediums. It happens because of unavailability and expensive rate of books, while on the other hand the material on the Internet is not only readily available but also it is latest/updated, comprehensive and beneficial. As results shown below,



The maximum 56.66% teachers agree that they use the Internet as books are expensive, 24.66% show that they 'strongly agreed' with the statement, 9.33% have given no opinion, 8.66% disagree and 0.66% strongly disagree with this statement.

Similarly, 60.66% teachers agreed that they used the Internet as books were not available, 30.66% showed strongly agreed with this statement, 5.33% gave no opinion, 3.33% disagreed with this statement and 0% strongly disagreed with given statement.

48% teachers agreed that the material on the Internet is readily available, 29.33% strongly agree with this statement, 9.33% gave no opinion, 12% selected the option of 'disagreed' and 1.33% showed that they strongly disagree with this statement

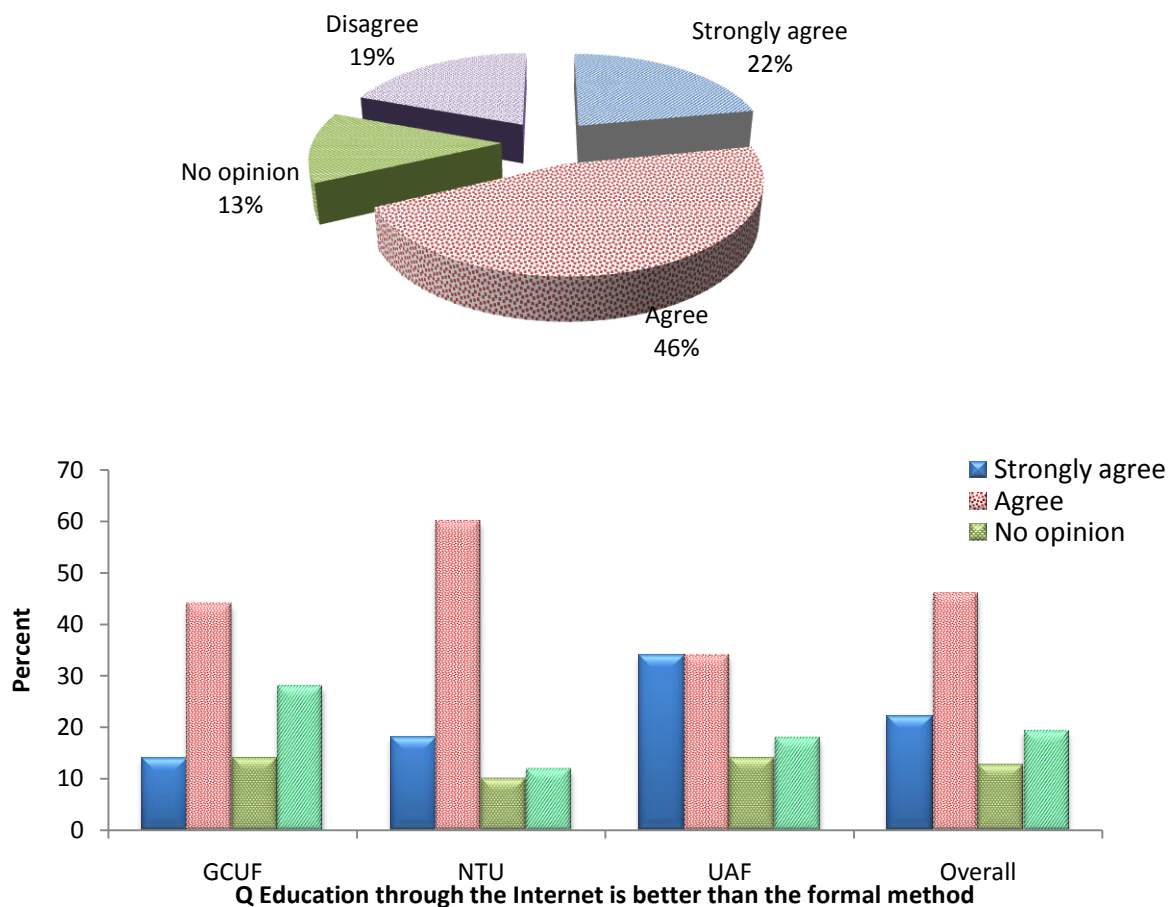
50% teachers agreed that they used the Internet for latest/updated knowledge, 47.33% strongly agree, .66% gave no opinion, while 2% disagreed with this statement and 0% strongly disagreed. 37.33% agree that the Internet knowledge in beneficial and comprehensive, 30.66% agree with the same statement,

while 17.33% gave no opinion, 14.66% disagreed with this statement and 0% selected the option strongly disagree for the same statement.

These results shows that the maximum numbers of teachers use the Internet as books are expensive and most of the teachers agree that they use and prefer the Internet as sometime books are not available. Similarly, mostly teachers use and prefer the Internet on books and all other mediums because the material on the Internet is readily available and most of the teachers used the Internet for latest/updated knowledge.

Hypothesis 3: University teachers consider such applications more reliable and easy to manage as compared to traditional tools of learning.

Q Education through the Internet is better than the formal method



22% teachers strongly agreed that education through the Internet is better than the formal method of study and 46.66% tick the option of 'agreed' for the same statement. While only 18.66% disagreed with this statement.

The researcher found out through the above result that the universities' teachers like the modern way of teaching. In this way of teaching, projectors are used for delivering lectures and slides and other material can downloaded through the Internet and then as it is or after with little editing this material can be presented before students.

Similarly, 36.66% teachers listen to national radio programs for education and the same percentage selects the option of 'none' which means 14.66% listen to regional radio programs and 12% teachers listen to national radio programs for education.

All 100% teachers at university level used newspaper for information and 0% for entertainment, education, popularity and social interaction. 16.66% teachers used television for information, 8.66% for entertainment, 6% for education and 0% for social interaction and popularity. 38% teachers watched national television channels for education, 22% watched foreign television channels, 4.66% regional and 34.66% teachers selected the option of 'none'

All these results are about the modern way of providing education, which means that majority of teachers listen to radio programs specifically made for education. On Such radio and TV channels, different topics are discussed regarding different subjects as Buitems Radio, Radio of Baluchistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences, Virtual University Radio and Virtual University Educational TV Network. Although the results show that the amount of time for usage of TV for education is low but it is increasing gradually. Results also show that national TV channels are watched more than foreign and regional ones.

The researcher also found out that the newspaper is purely used for the purpose of seeking information and the usage of television is low for the purpose of getting information as compared to newspapers. 14.66% watched television for 2 hours on daily basis, 6.66% for 3 hours, 5.33% for 1 hour, 3% for 4 hours and 0.66% watched television for more than 4 hours. 3% teachers spend 1 hour for reading newspaper on daily basis and 0.66% read newspaper for 2 hours in their daily routine.

50.66% teachers agree that the students are attracted towards the Internet to get material for education because of teachers' own media preferences towards the Internet. 22.66% strongly disagree, 13.33% give no opinion, while 12% disagree with it and 1.33% strongly disagrees with this statement.

It is also found that the students are attracted towards the Internet to get knowledge because teachers own preference towards the Internet.

This study figured out that the university teachers use more Internet than books and they are attracting more day-by-day towards the Internet which is creating more distance between books and teachers. Such methods of studies are also creating distance between students and books, which may take off the habit of hard working among the students and making them lazy.

Conclusion

It is observed through this study that 65.33% teachers prefer the Internet, 32% television, while 4% newspaper and 0% prefer radio for their academic preferences. 74.66% teachers use the Internet on daily basis and 46% teachers agree that they prefer the Internet on books.

50.66% teachers agree that the students are attracted towards the Internet because teachers' own preference towards the Internet. 46.66% teachers agree that getting education through the material gained through the Internet is better than the formal methods of study.

It can be concluded that majority of the teachers prefer the Internet on all other mediums and most of them use the Internet on daily basis. Mostly teachers agree that the knowledge gained through the Internet is authentic and they also agree that they use the Internet because books are expensive and sometimes are not available. While the material on the Internet is readily available.

So, the Internet is attractive and acceptable not only among the teachers but also among the students for education purpose. No doubt such attraction and acceptable behavior towards the Internet is

beneficial to get latest and readily available material. But our attitude toward the Internet pushing back the traditional methods of study and taking us away from the books, which may demolish our hard working habits.

Recommendation

Here are some suggestions regarding to this research,

- We should limitize the usage of the Internet.
- Teachers should recommend books to the students rather than only notes and online links.
- Teachers should also keep in touch with the traditional method of studies so that the traditional methods of education can run together.
- Teachers should use the authentic educational websites for education rather than Wikipedia and other unauthentic websites.
- Universities should arrange and provide latest books to teachers and students on reasonable price.

About the Author

Muhammad Ilyas did his Masters in Mass Communication from Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan.

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