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CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF ONLINE REGISTRATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN AS PERCEIVED BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

• O. J. OJO, F. J. ADEDOKUN & M. F. TUNDE •

Abstract

The introduction of online registration in the university of Ilorin has been embraced by both the management and students as a way of reducing the high incidence of challenges experienced during registration exercise. It is on this basis that this study examined the challenges and prospects of online registration as perceived by undergraduate students of the university of Ilorin. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study is all the undergraduate students in the 13 faculties in the University of Ilorin. Thereafter, purposive sampling technique was used to select the 11,677 respondents used for this study. A researchers-designed questionnaire tagged "Challenges and prospects of online registration questionnaire" (CAPORQ) was used to collect data from the respondents. The validity and reliability of the instruments were ascertained and the coefficient of reliability obtained was 0.62. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics for the research questions and the hypotheses respectively. The study revealed that both male and female undergraduate students of University of Ilorin have the same perception on the challenges and prospects of online registration.

Keywords: Challenges, Prospects, Online Registration, Undergraduate Students.

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have a lot of influence on the operations of any society and has a lot of consequences on the ways things are done in any social systems. The introduction of online registration systems in most higher education since the beginning of the last millennium is a right step in the right direction. Online registration is a component of ICT integration in the educational institutions. According to Mureen Raed & Jamshed (2013), ICT tools such as hardware and software are needed during the process of online registration.

Since the inception of higher education in Nigeria, there has been series of challenges confronting both the management, staff and students and all these challenges have implications for educational management. In the words of Okoli (2015), part of the challenges facing Nigerian universities from the beginning includes the issue of admission, accommodation, student unionism, funding, strike and the likes. Going by the challenges listed above, some of them are students bound while others are institutional bound. However, the present researchers have identified a peculiar challenge with which students of universities in Nigeria and in particular the university of Ilorin are confronted with year in year out or session by session. This challenge is the one brought about by online course registration.

The introduction of online registration procedures in the Nigerian universities is a welcome development because the school administrators, academic and non-academic staff as well as students are all happy that this new innovation will help to ameliorate or put a stop to the challenges brought about by the manual registration procedures. The introduction of online registration was seen as a form of relief for the hitherto redundant, costly, extortionary, and time wasting manual registration practiced earlier (Adepoju & Alhassan, 2008). The need to move along with the other world has necessitated the introduction of online registration among Nigerian tertiary institutions and in particular the university of Ilorin. With the introduction of online registration, school fees payment is effected through e-transact, courses are registered and taken online and examination is conducted online by Computer Based Test (CBT). All of these have a way of improving the efficiency of the educational system.

Okoye (2015) conducted a study which focused on the online registration challenges faced by Distance Learners of National Open University of Nigeria, NOUN, Enugu Study Centre. The findings revealed that online registration challenges are lack of internet service, computer illiteracy, high cost of internet services, network problems, insufficient power supply and delay in posting of money from the bank to student e-wallet and variations in course codes and course titles. A study which examined the prospects and challenges of Internet usage by post graduate students of Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye was carried out by Okunlaya, Amusa and Ogunlana (2015). The study found out that students use the internet mostly for chatting, mailing and entertainment. It was also revealed from the study that only a few of them navigate the internet for research purposes.

Higher institutions in Nigeria today all have a portal on which students, staff and the world at large can access information about their vision, mission, programmes and academic calendar. It is in line with these statements that Sadiq, Momodu & Aladejubelo (2008) opined that a school portal offers variety of services that can be accessed by students, prospective students and the world at large. Services such as student registration, course registration, as well as students' application can be carried out online (internet services).

The university of Ilorin has on its portal the online registration procedures which are in four stages for the different categories of students of the university. Most of the times, students often neglect the instructions given to them on the portal with respect to their registration and at the end are faced with a lot of challenges during the course of their registration. For hitch free online registration, the university on its portal has mandated students to interact with their Level Adviser and/or HOD on the Courses to be registered for in their programme and when the information on the portal with respect to registration is dogmatically followed by the students, registration errors are minimal.

Sometimes, students disregard this information by registering for courses without due consultation with the appropriate authorities.

In a bid of ensuring that the challenges of online registration among undergraduate students are surmounted, the university portal management has outlined the steps that can be followed by the students. COMSIT (2017) has listed the following steps for the students who are in good standing as part of their online registration procedures:

- i. register for appropriate and relevant courses. Students are to register for courses failed before registering for current level courses and are to seek guidance of their Level Adviser; ii. print out preliminary course registration form and present to your Level Adviser, who should authenticate the courses selected before making payment; iii. after authentication, students are to go back to the website and register as advised by your Level Adviser; iv. charges and levies would be displayed and students would be requested to make online payment for approved charges, using your ATM Verve or Master Card; v. once payment is successful, students are to print the payment receipt and four copies of the final course form and vi. present the copies of the registration form to their Level Adviser and Faculty Officer for appropriate signatures and collect personal copy from the Faculty Office.

In spite of all the steps outlined by COMSIT (2017), some students of the university are still complaining that they still experience a lot of challenges with regards to online course registration. It is on the basis of this background that this study was carried out to examine the challenges and prospects of online registration in the university of Ilorin as perceived by undergraduate students.

Statement of the Problem

Undergraduate students of university of Ilorin since the inception of online registration are confronted with numerous challenges of selecting their courses and payment of fees. Weak access to internet server, double deductions by banks, management policy of opening and shutting down the portal at specified time all constitutes a challenge of online course registration as experienced by undergraduate students of university of Ilorin. Some pay their school fees and will find it difficult to generate receipts while others take courses in error and are confronted with the issue of "add and drop" which often is at an extra cost on the part of the students. Sometimes courses registered online in error leads to excess workload for the students which most of the times make them to overshoot the number of units needed for graduation. It is on the basis of all this problems that this study examined the challenges and prospects of online registration in the university of Ilorin as perceived by undergraduates' full-time students.

Purpose of the Study

The main objectives of the study were to examine:

- i. the challenges of online registration in the university of Ilorin as perceived by undergraduate full-time students.
- ii. the prospects of online registration in the university of Ilorin as perceived by undergraduate full-time students.

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges of online registration?
2. What is the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the prospects of online registration?
3. Is there any significant relationship in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges of online registration on the basis of gender?
4. Is there any significant relationship in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the prospects of online registration on the basis of gender?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges of online registration on the basis of gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the prospects of online registration on the basis of gender.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was a descriptive type. The choice of this design was based on the fact that this study described phenomena the way they exist without any external manipulation. The population of the study consisted all the 30,440 undergraduate students in the 15 faculties in the University of Ilorin. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select four faculties from the 13 faculties. Thereafter, purposive sampling technique was used to select the 11,677 respondents used for this study. A researchers-designed questionnaire tagged "Challenges and prospects of online registration questionnaire" (CAPORQ) was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was based on the Likert 4 – points rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SA) and Disagree (D)

The draft of the questionnaire was presented to expert in Educational management and test and measurement expert in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin for both

face and content validity. The reliability of instrument was done by administering the questionnaire on 30 undergraduate students of university of Ilorin whose faculties were not selected for the study. The reliability co-efficient yielded 0.62 which was considered high enough for the study. The analysis was done in line with the research questions and hypotheses earlier postulated for the study. The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics for the research questions and the hypotheses respectively.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges of online registration?

Table 1: Challenges of Online Registration as Perceived by Undergraduate Students

S/N	Challenges	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Online Registration is difficult	5012 (42.9%)	3391 (29.0%)	3286 (28.1%)	-	3.15
2	Online registration promotes double payment	4804 (41.1%)	3623 (31.0%)	3262 (27.9%)	-	3.14
3	Online payment leads to over-payment	5024 (43.0%)	4548 (38.9%)	2105 (18.0%)	12 (.1%)	3.25
4	Fees paid in error may not be easily collected	1517 (13.0%)	5485 (46.9%)	2105 (18.0%)	1169 (10.0%)	2.63
5	Unavailability of internet connection during online payment/registration	3611 (30.9%)	6665 (57.0%)	1413 (12.1%)	-	3.19
6	Multiple concurrent usage leads to heavy traffic on the website which prevents me from accessing my portal	3739 (32.0%)	4431 (37.9%)	3519 (30.1%)	-	3.02
7	Online payment and registration is a waste of time	3843 (32.9%)	5729 (49.0%)	1052 (9.0%)	1065 (9.1%)	3.06
8	Online registration leads to additional cost eg collection of add and drop form	3391 (29.0%)	5012 (42.9%)	12 (.1%)	3274 (28.0%)	2.73
9	Management policy of opening and shutting down the portal at specified time	1517 (13.0%)	5485 (46.9%)	2105 (18.0%)	1169 (10.0%)	2.63
	Grand Mean		2.97			

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Key:

X: 1.00 -1.59 Low: 1.60 -2.59 Average: 2.60 - 5.00 High

Table 1 shows the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges of online registration. On item 1, 5012 representing (42.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 3391 representing (29.0%) showed their agreement, and 3286 representing (28.1%) of the respondents disagreed with the mean score of 3.15 which is more than the average score of 2.50. On item 2, 3611 representing (30.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 5012 representing (42.9%) showed their agreement, and 1413 representing (12.1%) of the respondents disagreed with the mean score of 3.19 which is more than the average score of 2.50. Since the mean scores for items 6, 7, 8 and 9 are greater than the average score of 2.50, it shows that the respondents indicated that multiple concurrent usage leads to heavy traffic on the website which prevents students from accessing their portal, online payment and registration is a waste of time, online registration leads to additional cost e.g collection of add and drop form, and management policy of opening and shutting down the portal at specified time are perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges of online registration. The findings indicated that perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges of online registration are virtually the same because their opinions towards those items are not different. The findings of this study is in consonance with earlier findings by Okoye (2015) who found that online registration challenges are lack of internet service, computer illiteracy, high cost of internet services, network problems, insufficient power supply and delay in posting of money from the bank to student e-wallet and variations in course codes and course titles.

Table 2: Prospects of Online Registration as Perceived by Undergraduate Students

S/N	Prospects	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	It saves time because students do not have to carry form or files around	4444 (38.0%)	5012 (42.9%)	2221 (19.0%)	12 (.1%)	3.19
2	Reduces stress of moving from one office to another	4548 (38.9%)	7129 (61.0%)	12 (.1%)	-	3.39
3	It reduces administrative bottlenecks created by manual registration	6885 (58.9%)	4676 (40.0%)	128 (1.1%)	-	3.58
4	It increases service delivery in the areas of registration	3379 (28.9%)	5856 (50.1%)	2338 (20.0%)	116 (1.0%)	3.07
5	It is used for promoting accountability	4548 (38.9%)	5844 (50.0%)	1285 (11.0%)	12 (.1%)	3.28
6	It eliminates wastages i.e add and drop	4559 (39.0%)	4780 (40.9%)	2350 (20.1%)	-	3.18
7	It helps to eliminate manipulation in the areas of course unit/load	5728 (49.0%)	2326 (19.9%)	3519 (30.1%)	116 (1.0%)	3.17
8	It is cost effective for the student	4548 (38.9%)	5844 (50.0%)	128 (1.1%)	1169 (10.0%)	3.18
9	It minimizes errors	3506 (30.0%)	3379 (28.9%)	4676 (40.0%)	128 (1.1%)	2.88
Grand Mean		3.21				

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Key: X: 1.00 -1.59 Low; 1.60 -2.59 Average; 2.60 - 3.00 High

Table 2 shows the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the prospects of online registration. On item 1, 4444 representing (38.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 5012 representing (42.9%) showed their agreement, 2291 representing (19.0%) of the respondents disagreed while 12 (.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the mean score of 3.19 which is more than the average score of 2.50. On item 2, 6885 representing (58.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 4676 representing (40.0%) showed their agreement, and 128 representing (1.1%) of the respondents disagreed with the mean score of 3.58 which is more than the average score of 2.50. Since the mean scores for items 6, 7, 8 and 9 are greater than the average score of 2.50, it shows that the respondents indicated that it eliminates wastages i.e add and drop, it helps to eliminate manipulation in the areas of course unit/load, it is cost effective for the student, and it minimizes errors are the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the prospects of online registration. This finding was in agreement with that of Adepoju & Alhassan, (2008) who found that the introduction of online registration was seen as a form of relief for the hitherto redundant, costly, extortionary, and time wasting manual registration practiced earlier

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges of online registration on the basis of gender.

Table 3
Perception of Male and Female Undergraduate Students on the Challenges of Online Registration

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	6065	2.44	.42	11675	6.465	1.68	Ho ₁ Rejected
Female	5612	2.38	.48				

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Table 3 shows a calculated t-value of 6.465 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.68 at 0.05 level of significance for 11675 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges of online registration on the basis of gender is upheld. Hence, there is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges of online registration on the basis of gender. This shows that both male and female students have the same perception on the challenges of online registration.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the prospects of online registration on the basis of gender.

Table 4: Perception of Male and Female Undergraduate Students on the Prospects of Online Registration

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	6065	3.19	.35	11675	5.550	1.68	Ho ₀ : Rejected
Female	5612	2.38	.48				

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Table 4 shows a calculated t-value of 5.550 is less than the critical t-value of 1.68 at 0.05 level of significance for 11675 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the prospects of online registration on the basis of gender is upheld. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the prospects of online registration on the basis of gender. This shows that both male and female students have the same perception on the prospects of online registration. The finding was in agreement with the views of Adepoju and Alhassan (2008) who stated that the introduction of online registration was seen as a form of relief for the hitherto redundant, costly, extortionary, and time wasting manual registration practiced in most higher institutions in the past.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the study that there is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduate students of university of Ilorin on the challenges and prospects of online registration on the basis of gender. This shows that both male and female students have the same perception on the challenges and prospects of online registration.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made among others;

1. The university administration should organize training programmes for both the male and female students of the university on the use of online registration at the beginning of each session.
2. The COMSIT department of the university should endeavor to have trained personnel put in place in all the faculties to attend to students during registration period so as to minimize the challenges usually faced by the students.
3. The university administration should print out a bulletine to be distributed to students at the beginning of the registration period to keep them abreast of the prospects involved in online registration.

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