

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MOBILE PHONE USAGE AND GRATIFICATION AMONG ARTISANS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The aim of this study was to find out the predictive value of socioeconomic characteristics of artisans, such as, age, education and work experience in mobile phone usage and gratification with a view to providing an empirical guide for stakeholders in the industry. The descriptive design in form of an ex post-facto approach was used. A total of 200 participants were purposively selected from various groups of automobile artisans including mechanics, rewire, battery chargers, panel beaters and painters operating in Ogun state. Findings revealed significant composite contribution of the three variables to the prediction of mobile phone usage and gratification among artisans. However, only age independently predicted mobile phone usage and gratification among artisans while education and work experience did not. Therefore, it was recommended that artisans of varying ages should be encouraged to use mobile phones in order to boost their trades in the state.*

KEYWORDS: Artisans, Age, Education, Work Experience and Mobile Phone

INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges facing sub Saharan Africa, which includes Nigeria, is the high incidence of poverty. About 54.4% of the population live below poverty line, while over 21 out of 100 working age people are unemployed and dehumanizing hunger remains pervasive (Akanbi and Akanbi, 2012; Oye, 2012; UNDP, 2012; and National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The capacity of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to alleviate poverty, improve socio-economic status, standard of living and elevate the disadvantaged poor from their state of ignorance to knowledge has been copiously documented as a result of various researches, reports and historical works.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ICTs in poverty reduction have recorded a range of benefits that can accrue to users in the informal and formal sectors, serving as productive input thereby improving income generation; savings in money and travel time; access to market information, government services, such as health care and political empowerment and act as a catalyst for improved information sharing and greater

participation more generally at the community level (Sey, 2011; Gigler, 2006; Robert and Slaymaker, 2000).

There is a strong connection between ICTs and socio-economic development. However, it has been difficult to establish the basis for the connection. Yet, the usefulness of these ICTs tools cannot be denied. What is the precise nature of the link, if any, between ICTs and poverty reduction? And how does it work? Essentially, is there a general formula we can apply such that use of ICTs by poor people results in poverty reduction? If no such formula exists, how does one justify the investment of time, resources and hope in these technological systems? (Sey, 2011).

Since the liberalisation of the telecommunication landscape and the freeing of the industry from the hold of the state owned telecommunication company- NITEL in Nigeria; the now market determined communication industry has unleashed various products on the populace. As a result of the liberalisation, the pervasiveness of mobile communication and its adoption as a major medium of communication in Nigeria is such that by June 2013, the mobile phone Subscriber Data shows that the total connected mobile phones lines (both GSM and CDMA) was 178, 893, 256, while active lines is 119, 979, 540 ((NCC, 2013).

The poor socio-economic status of automobile artisans has often been associated with the unregulated nature of their services, their low literacy level and lack of access to modern technology. The mode of training undergone by many of the automobile artisans follows the apprenticeship model which in most cases is not formalized and this makes it difficult to categorize automobile artisans on the basis of the certificate they hold. Similarly, low literacy level often makes it difficult for automobile artisans to adjust to modern development and rise up to contemporary challenges in their fields. This tends to impact negatively on their socio-economic status. Perhaps, the greatest impediment to socio-economic development of automobile artisans is their lack of access to modern technology. In this age of computers, mechanical or electrical faults in a vehicle or gadget are easily detected and repaired through the use of computerized gadgets. Many of the automobile artisans in Nigeria still depend largely on the traditional methods of doing things and this impact greatly on their socio-economic status

The objective of the study therefore is to investigate the composite and relative contributions of age, education and work experience as predictors of mobile phone usage and gratification among artisans in Ogun state, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study made use of the descriptive research design in form of an ex-post facto approach. The descriptive design involves an objective, unbiased description of a phenomenon, event or human characteristics. The population of the study consisted of automobile artisans in the selected urban and rural areas of Ogun state. The automobile artisans included mechanics, rewire, battery chargers, panel beaters and painters who have had at least five years work experience.

The study adopted a proportional sampling technique between the selected categories of artisans to arrive at 200 artisans which constituted the sample of the study. The sample was selected in such a way that all the known groups of automobile artisans were included.

Instrument for Data Collection

The data for the study was collected from primary sources through the use of structured interview schedule to obtain information from the target population. The structured interview was an adaptation of Leung and Wei's (2000) gratifications sought in cellular phone use instrument.

The interview schedule was divided into five main parts:

Section A: Socio-economic Characteristics of respondents

Section B: Accessibility, affordability and uses of mobile phones

Section C: Level of gratifications derived from the use of mobile phones by respondents

Section D: Constraints encountered by respondents in using mobile phones

Section E: Perception of the respondents about use of mobile phones

The instrument was pre-tested on a sample selected outside the study area. Twenty artisans were randomly selected for the pre-testing. To ensure a high level of validity, face validity was established. Experts in social science field perused the instrument and made corrections which had been used to restructure some of the items. To ensure concurrent validity, the instrument was administered along with Leung and Wei's (2000) structured interview measuring gratifications sought in cellular phone. The data generated from the two instruments were correlated using Pearson Product Moment correlation. The test-retest method of reliability was used to determine the reliability level. The instrument was administered twice within a time interval of three weeks on twenty artisans selected during the pre-testing exercise outside the study area. The data generated from the two administrations were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation yielding 0.86 co-efficient of reliability. The researcher personally administered the instrument on the participants in their various workshops. Those who could read and write were given copies to complete while those who could not responded to the items orally and their responses inputted in the questionnaire

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Table 1: Analysis of the Prediction of Automobile Artisans' Usage and Gratification of Mobile Phones

<p>R = .655^a R square = .430 43% Adjusted R square = .426 Standard Error of Estimate = 2.88745</p>

Table 1 reveals a not too significant contribution of age, education and work experience to the prediction of automobile artisans' use of mobile phones. This means that age, education and work experience taken together may not significantly predict artisans' usage and gratification of mobile phones. The table also reveals co-efficient of regression $R = .655^a$ and the $R^2 = .430$. When the R^2 value is converted to percentage, it yielded 43.0 % indicating that age, education and work experience taken together jointly accounted 43.0 percent of the variance in artisans' usage of mobile phones.

Table2: Relative Contribution of Age, Education, and Work Experience to the Prediction of Automobile Artisans' Use and Gratification of Mobile Phones

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.991	.772		-1.284	.200
	age	.350	.137	.085	2.550	.011
	educational qualification	-.293	.179	-.042	-1.640	.101
	work experience	.119	.167	.023	.714	.475

Table 2 reveals that only age independently predicted artisans' usage and gratification of mobile phones. However, education and work experience were not potent independent predictors of mobile phone usage and gratification among artisans.

DISCUSSION

The finding on the first hypothesis revealed a not too significant composite contribution of age, education and work experience to the prediction of automobile artisans' use and gratification of mobile phones. This implies that age, education and work experience taken together do not significantly predict artisans' usage of mobile phones. These demographic variables jointly yielded 43.0 % indicating that age, education and work experience taken together jointly accounted 43.0 percent of the variance in artisans' usage of mobile phones. The implication is that these factors should be put into consideration while designing and producing phones for the use of artisans. It also has some implications for network providers and communication experts as these factors would guide in the choice, packaging and presentation of information meant for artisans. The present finding corroborates Chapman and Slaymaker (2008) who opined that demographic variables of age and work-experience are influential in the rate at which people use cell phones. It also supports Anaeto, Onabanjo, & Osifeso, (2008) conclusion that there was a general agreement that modern economy with its encapsulating means of production and consumption and with the attendant social relations require information before any appreciable impact can be felt.

The finding on the second hypothesis revealed significant relative contributions of age, but no significant contribution of education and work experience to the prediction of automobile artisans' usage and gratification of mobile phones. Thus, artisans' gratification of mobile phones is influenced by their age. This has a lot of implications for phone producers as it means that this factor should be put into consideration while designing and producing phones for the use of artisans. It also has some implications for network providers and communication experts as these factors would guide in the choice, packaging and presentation of information meant for artisans. The present finding supports Akinyele (2005) who opined that age is influential in the rate at which people use and derive satisfaction from cell phones.

IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The following are implicated based on the findings for Research and Practice;

- i. That, artisans of varying ages should be encouraged to use mobile phones in order to boost their trades in the state. That, artisans should be empowered to conveniently own mobile phones.
- ii. Through the various government and non-governmental poverty eradication efforts, Standard Organisation of Nigeria should ensure that only quality mobile phones are available in the market in the state. Artisans should be given soft loans through Cooperative Societies to boost their trade so that on their own they could purchase quality mobile phones.
- iii. That, artisans should be given periodic seminars and workshops on how to effectively use their mobile phones for other productive ventures apart from just using it for making or receiving calls. Such seminars should be organized by telephone network providers while experts in mass communication are invited to use their expertise to enable artisans use their phones for productive ventures.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it may be concluded that artisans use mobile phones for their trades. It is also clear that several demographic variables including age, educational qualifications and work experience exerted significant influences on artisans' usage and gratification of mobile phones.

FUTURE RESEARCH

There is a need to replicate this study among other category of artisans in the field of Tailoring, Carpentry, among others, in order to determine any correlation as it relates to socioeconomic characteristics of mobile phone usage and gratifications among different categories of artisans.

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