



**AWARENESS OF ICT AMONG GRADUATE STUDENTS WITH REFERENCE TO
COMPUTER ATTITUDE AND INTERNET USAGE**

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ABSTRACT

The combination of information and communication technologies has created ICT, possibly one of the most powerful technologies devised by humanity. But disparities exist in access to, and use of ICT between countries and between groups within countries, a phenomenon popularly referred to as the digital divide. The digital divide is not one dimensional it involves a complicated patchwork of varying levels of ICT access, basic ICT usage, and ICT applications among countries and peoples (Bridges.org, 2001).

KEY WORDS: *powerful technologies , combination of information and communication technologies.*

INTRODUCTION

While the impact of ICT on sectors such as banking, tourism, medicine, engineering etc. have been enormous, the uptake of ICT in education is fraught with difficulties (Oliver, 2002). Lack of funding, training among practitioners, motivation and perceived need among teachers and students to adopt ICT as teaching tools impede the required uptake of ICT in education (Starr, 2001). Monitoring the computer attitudes and developing an understanding of the factors that affect computer attitudes will assist educators in providing appropriate learning experiences to students. The successful integration of computers in educational environments depends, to a great extent, on students' attitudes towards them.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) encompasses the effective use of equipment and programs to access, retrieve, convert, store, organize, manipulate and present data and information (Gay and Blades, 2005). E learning, which is described as the use of ICT to enhance or support learning and teaching in education, has become increasingly important in tertiary education (OECD, 2005). Computers are increasingly widespread, influencing many aspects of our social and work lives, as well as many of our leisure activities. As more tasks involve human computer interaction, computer skills and knowledge have become more positively correlated with both occupational and personal success.



In India, the need for reforms in education by harnessing new ICTs is increasingly being accepted as essential by universities and cultural organisations across India. The University Grants Commission (UGC), the apex body responsible for maintaining standards in higher education in India, has acknowledged the role of ICT in improving teaching-learning paradigms, building new knowledge, collaborating with peers and in the governance of education in universities.

Given the growing importance attached to ICT at the ideological and policy levels, we wanted to study how P.G. students of arts and science faculties fared in terms of ICT awareness with the factors that influenced their Internet usage and their attitudes towards computers. The study also looks into the gender differences in their perceptions, attitude and access.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This study sought to explore the attitude towards computers and usage of Internet among Graduate students at the Jnana Sahyadri Campus of the Kuvempu University, in Shimoga, Karnataka. The present study addressed four main research questions:

- a. What are the attitudes of Graduate students towards computers?
- b. To what extent do students use Internet?
- c. To study the significance difference in the attitude and Internet usage among arts and science Graduate students.
- d. How does gender impact on the use of internet and attitudes towards computers?

1. Sampling:

200 Enrolled Students of Graduate students of Gulbarga University were randomly selected for the present study. Since the problem under study is mainly confined to Arts and Science Faculty 100 students from arts and science with 50 from each gender was selected as sample. The data consists of only 150 students who have filled up the scale properly.

2. Tools:

The tools used for the present study in order to collect the data were:

a. Attitude scale:

The investigator has adopted the Computer attitude scale CAS constructed by Dr. Tahira Khatoon and Manika Sharma, which is modified by the author himself in year 1995.

b. Personnel Information Schedule

The investigator prepared this schedule. It consisted of personal information like gender, streams of education, A questionnaire was prepared in English containing 12 items pertaining to existing trend internet usage.

3. DATA ANALYSIS:

In order to study the difference in the mean attitude among boys and girls and arts and science- 't' test and analysis of variance was computed (ANOVA).

4. FINDINGS:

From the data analysis, interpretation and discussion the major findings are as follows :

- a. 78% of students found to have high favorable attitude, 19.6% of students have medium favorable attitude and 2.4% of students have low favorable attitude towards computers.
- b. With respect to Internet usage 27% of students found to have less usage, 44% of students have moderate usage and 28.4% of students have high internet usage.
- c. The male and female students differ in computer attitude ($t=3.174 > \text{at } 0.05\text{level}$). i.e Attitude of students towards computers have-significant relationship with respect to sex.
- d. The male and female students did not differ in internet usage ($t=1.55 < \text{at } 0.050\text{level}$). i.e. internet access of students did not have-significant relationship with respect to sex.
- e. The Arts and Science students did not differ in their attitude and internet usage ($F=2.874 < \text{at } 0.05 \text{ level}$).

5. CONCLUSION:

Keeping in view the above-mentioned findings of the study following conclusions were drawn: All students found to have favorable attitude towards computers. The findings from this study indicate that Graduate students used the Internet frequently and spent long hours online. The present study has been concluded that the background factors like sex, do have influence on the attitude of students, and streams of education do not influence on attitude and internet usage.

Based on the above findings, it is recommended that academicians and course administrators pay more attention to gender and age differences regarding the use of ICT resources as a major component in classroom teaching. This should serve to attract greater support for ICT and e-learning among all categories of students. Secondly, it is recommended that university administrators to maintain the high levels of ICT usage among students through continuous education and promotion of the benefits attached to ICT resources.

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