



## GENDER GAP IN USAGE OF INTERNET APPLICATIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

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### ABSTRACT:

*Internet is the most important technological advent of information technology in the modern times. It plays a vital role in education towards teaching, research and learning process. It provides uplift to the capacity of teachers and support for the teachers in enhancing their work related skills. The present study is an attempt to investigate the gender gap in usage of internet among university teachers. For this purpose, 279 university teachers from various faculties of different state, central, aided and deemed universities from Tamil Nadu were selected. The data was collected using survey monkey online portal. Hence, the collected data was analyzed using independent sample t-test. Finding showed that the gender does not influence usage of internet among the selected university teachers and can be concluded that gender gap in usage of internet has reduced over the past years.*

**KEYWORDS :** Usage of Internet, Gender Gap, University Teachers.

### INTRODUCTION

One of the key determinants of access to the Internet and frequency of its use is invariably gender. Fewer women than men are internet users, and those who do go online use it on average for shorter periods than men and spend less time online (usually computed as numbers of hours spent online in a week) (Dholakia et al. 2003; Fallows 2005; Kennedy et al. 2003; Seybert 2007). But it should be noted that the situation is dynamic in the most developed countries the percentage of women using the internet is nearly or exactly the same as men (Pew Research Center 2012). Nevertheless more women than men are still “newbies” (though differences in the average period of internet usage in some countries are only a few months), and they use the internet less frequently than men.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Adams (2002) found that female teachers applied internet more than the male teachers. Research studies revealed that male teachers used more ICT in their teaching and learning processes than their female counterparts (Kay, 2006; Wozney et al., 2006). Jamieson-Proctor, Burnett, Finger and Watson (2006) conducted a study on teachers’ integration of ICT in schools in Queensland State. Results from 929 teachers indicated that female teachers were integrating technology into their teaching less than the male teachers. But the situation was different in mid-western US basic schools where Breisser (2006) found that females’ self-perceptions about technology competence improved while males’ self-perceptions about technological dominance remained unchanged in a lego-logo project. This study confirms report by Yukselturk and Bulut (2009) that gender gap has reduced over the past years, presently, a greater number of females than males have used internet and web 2.0 technologies. However, some studies revealed that gender variable was not a predictor of ICT integration into teaching (Norris, Sullivan, Poirot & Soloway, 2003). In a research

conducted by Kay (2006), he found that male teachers had relatively higher levels of computer attitude and ability before computer implementation, but there was no difference between males and females regarding computer attitude and ability after the implementation of the technology. He claims that quality preparation on technology can help lessen gender inequalities. The present study confirms the report by Alshankity and Alshawi (2008) who found that there is no significant difference in the Internet usage among faculty members in Saudi Arabia based on gender.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The teaching learning environment has always involved resource search and collection by all classroom practitioners. Of which, the internet is changing the manner in which academics teach, conduct research and disseminate research findings. Also, the Internet offers teachers the opportunity for collaborative professional development through various online activities such as online sharing, online collaboration, and online researching, all of which that contribute to better classroom practices in terms of teaching and learning. (Olatomide Waheed Olowa 2012). This is why it is necessary to understand user interactions with search engines, search context and tasks that drive users to search information. But, this study helps to understand the gender differences among teachers in university.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

As of currently, most universities are introducing a variety of internet services to their faculties in order to cope with new technology trends and to advance knowledge. Indeed, the internet service has become available to all teaching staff. The number of teachers who utilize this service is notably increasing. However, this may create a problem among teachers who have different computer abilities, different degrees in internet usage, and different training for internet use. The authors of this paper have noticed that there are differences in terms of gender among the teachers in their use of internet in university. This is what gave rise to the present study, for it aims to study the gender gap in usage of internet applications among university teachers.

### **OBJECTIVE**

- To find out the gender gap in usage of internet on among university teachers.

### **HYPOTHESIS**

1. There is no significant mean score difference in usage of internet among university teachers with respect to gender.

### **DELIMITATION**

- This study was restricted only to University Faculty working in state, central, deemed and aided universities in Tamil Nadu.
- Even though there are many universities in Tamil Nadu, Only 19 universities were selected for this study.
- Considering the limited resources, the study was delimited to include the faculties of Arts and Humanities, Science, Commerce and Management only.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Normative survey method was used for the study. A sample of 279 university teachers from state and deemed universities of Tamil Nadu was selected. The investigators developed a questionnaire on Usage of Internet Application. The reliability co-efficient for usage of internet application questionnaire is established by split- half method and the correlation of was calculated as 0.716. After pilot study, both the tools were given to the experts in the field of education to get their valuable suggestions and opinions with

regard to construction. The factorial validity was established the validity coefficient of questionnaire for usage of Internet Application is 0.816.

## DATA ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Usage of Internet Applications among University Teachers based on Gender**

| Factors in Usage of Internet                            | Gender | N   | Df  | Mean | SD   | t-value | Remark                    |
|---|--------|-----|-----|------|------|---------|---------------------------|
| Perception Of Teachers About Internet                   | Male   | 155 | 277 | 2.59 | .324 | 2.033*  | Significant at 0.05 level |
|   | Female | 124 |     | 2.51 | .311 |         |                           |
| Internet Applications For Teachers Pedagogical Approach | Male   | 155 | 277 | 2.54 | .345 | 2.070*  | Significant at 0.05 level |
|   | Female | 124 |     | 2.46 | .311 |         |                           |
| Utilizations Of Internet Applications                   | Male   | 155 | 277 | 2.37 | .404 | 1.743   | Not Significant           |
|   | Female | 124 |     | 2.29 | .366 |         |                           |
| Online Communication                                    | Male   | 155 | 277 | 1.98 | .604 | -.754   | Not Significant           |
|   | Female | 124 |     | 2.04 | .628 |         |                           |
| Preference Of Internet Application                      | Male   | 155 | 277 | 2.51 | .364 | 1.176   | Not Significant           |
|   | Female | 124 |     | 2.45 | .371 |         |                           |
| Internet Technologies                                   | Male   | 155 | 277 | 2.31 | .456 | -.905   | Not Significant           |
|   | Female | 124 |     | 2.36 | .461 |         |                           |
| Usage Of Internet (TOTAL)                               | Male   | 155 | 277 | 2.42 | .229 | 1.711   | Not Significant           |
|   | Female | 124 |     | 2.37 | .218 |         |                           |

Table-1 shows that the 'Perception of Teachers about Internet' (t-value=2.033) and 'Internet Applications for Teachers Pedagogical Approach' (t-value=2.070) are significant at 0.05 level; and 'Utilization of Internet Applications', 'Online Communication', 'Preference of Internet Application', and 'Internet Technologies' are not significant at 0.05 level.

Table-1 also depicts that the t-value 1.711 is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence the hypothesis is accepted. Thus gender does not influence usage of internet among university teachers.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study found that the factors perception of teachers about internet and internet applications for teacher's pedagogical approach showed difference among the selected male and female university teachers and there is no gender gap among the selected male and female university teachers. There are also a growing number of studies indicating that the "gender gap" in Internet usage is closing in the most digitalized societies (Fallows 2005; Hu et al. 2009; Li, Kirkup 2007; Thayer, Aray2006; Weiser 2004; Wilson et al. 2003). Women's online skills are becoming comparable to men's, and as women become more self-confident Internet users their usage of the Internet becomes more diversified (Hu et al. 2009).

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- The present study is a valuable addition to body of theoretical knowledge in the field of education.
- The findings of the study would be supportive for the educational policy makers, academic community and the researchers in the field of education.

## CONCLUSION

This study has revealed that perception of internet usage among university teachers is positive and they use internet applications for pedagogical approaches. The most recent studies done in the countries with the highest levels of Internet adoption yield ambiguous results - the majority of them show a diminution in the gender differences in Internet access and usage, while some reveal persisting

dissimilarities or even the engenderment of new disparities (Ilie et al. 2005). With the progressive popularization of ICT applications in the everyday life of university teachers one can expect a further narrowing of the existing gender gap.

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