



# The Use of Internet Services by Female Graduate Students in Girls Colleges Central Library (GCCL), Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University

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In recent times, technology has rapidly infiltrated all aspects of life, including education. One of the indicators of a country's progress and development is the use of technology into their educational institutions. This study aimed to evaluate the internet services provided in the Girls Colleges Central Library (GCCL) from the point of view of female graduate students in the College of Education at Imam Abdul Rahman bin Faisal University. The current study used the survey approach to describe the students' perceptions about the internet services used by the university. A questionnaire with 13 items was used to collect data from the sample, which included (50) students. The results showed that most of the female students had an acceptable level of skill using the internet, and those same students relied on internet services to a large extent in the academic field. The current study recommends the need to pay attention to the development and improvement of internet services in university libraries.

**Key words:** *Internet services; female students; graduate students; library*

## 1. Introduction

The modern era is characterized by the spread of technology, the speed of the exchange of information, and the use of the internet in all aspects of life. Technology has aided in the accuracy and speed in obtaining information in a short time and with little effort (Bhoi, 2017;



Khairi, 2006). The internet is an important tool in the era of digital transformation and has helped make the world a small village characterized by ease of communication (Abdelzaher, 2020).

Many countries have introduced the internet and computers into the educational field, thus making it an essential element in the educational process (Muflih, 2010). The internet has helped in the development of education and has become an important tool for students' research and exploration (Bond, Fevyer & Pitt, 2006). The internet has also helped increase the possibility of sharing information among learners (Chanboulapha & Islam, 2012). Internet services have improved communication with universities, research centers, and libraries in various countries of the world (Trench, 2008).

The internet has contributed to improving the performance and achievements of teachers and students in the classrooms (Johnson, 2011). The use of the various services provided by the internet led to a greater motivation for students to accept and benefit from the information presented. The internet has also led to a shift from traditional education to individualized education, taking into account the individual differences between learners (Saadeh & Al-Sartawi, 2015). The widespread use of the internet has caused a debate in the world about the services it provides, the best way to use it, and the correct way to avoid its downfalls (Rayan, 2001).

Many studies have been conducted to measure the level of academic achievement of students when using the internet and electronic devices in the educational process. The results of many of these studies indicated that the level of achievement in the groups that used electronic devices was high compared to other groups. These studies encouraged the use of computers in the educational process (Eltodary, 2004; Sun & Bradley, 2010).

Universities were among the first educational institutions that benefited from the development of internet services, where they provided internet in their facilities in order to contribute to facilitating access to information (Hossain & Rahman, 2017). The availability of the internet in universities has also led to the spread of modern patterns and methods in university education and scientific research (Ali, 2010).

This study attempts to evaluate the internet services provided by the GCCL at Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University in Dammam in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the point of view of female graduate students.

## **1.1 Historical background**

Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University (IAU) is a Saudi public university located in the Eastern Province of Dammam established in 1975. The IAU contains 21 colleges and has



more than 45,000 students (Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University [IAU], n.d.). The total number of libraries at the IAU is 16, including 3 central libraries (IAU, n.d.).

The GCCL is affiliated with the College of Science, serving the college's various disciplines. Other colleges, such as the College of Arts and Education, have also benefited from library information sources. More recently, the GCCL came under the umbrella of the Deanship of Library Affairs of the IAU in 2009. Currently, the GCCL provides its services to the College of Science, the College of Arts, and the College of Education. The services include, but are not limited to, lending books and references. It also communicates with the rest of the IAU's libraries in case of the need to provide the students with resources that are not already available (IAU, n.d.).

## 1.2 Study Objectives

The purpose of the current study is to identify the extent of internet use by female graduate students in the GCCL, Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University (IAU), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. From this main objective, the following objectives are derived:

- Identify the internet services used by the female graduate students.
- Identify the extent of the female graduate students' use of the internet and the extent of their dependency on it.
- Identify the frequency of internet use.
- Identify the main reasons which trigger students to use the internet.
- Identify the hardships of using the internet and the students' suggested solutions to solve it.

## 2. Literature review

There are many definitions of the internet in the literature. Elfar (2002) defined the internet as a huge global computer network, connected to each other through cables, telephone lines and satellites. Others defined the internet as a global computer network that allows millions of users of those computers to communicate with each other and access information sources on that network from all over the world (Almomani & AL-Akhras, 2011).

The history of the internet goes back to the year 1969 when the USA linked its military and government locations electronically (Brisin, 2010). This network was then adapted to be used in different fields. In 1972, email was used as a service offered to a certain group of people. After that, the service expanded to include many centers and universities inside the USA. Email didn't stop at the centers and universities only, it went on to include each individual in the society where they can subscribe to any site and easily get information (Mufleh, 2010).

In the field of education, the internet provides many important services for both teachers and students. Teachers can obtain benefits from the internet by corresponding with many different



universities, by taking advantage of their libraries, and communicating with their professors. Through the internet, students can exchange opinions and experiences and search for information in different ways. Where the internet was imposed on teachers and students, new strategies that required them to use technology in education were formed and facilitated many educational processes (Mufleh, 2010).

## **2.1 The importance of using the internet in education process**

Many studies (e.g., Baljoon, 2008; Hadi, 2013; Papanis, Giavrimis, & Papani, 2010) indicate the importance of using the internet in education, such as:

- The internet helps students to get information, multimedia, shows, maps, etc. during their academic studies.
- The internet provides amusement and suspense in the learning process.
- The internet helps to gain effective positive skills like building a team to develop communication skills with others, problem solving skills, and critical thinking skills.
- The internet provides information that allows multiple learning choices for teachers and students.
- The internet helps to provide a free learning environment.
- Pedagogically, the internet can be useful in getting the latest information about curriculums, teaching methods, summaries of masters and doctoral theses, and summaries of research.
- The internet network has the potential to allow us to practice learning activities at high levels through email and registry at scientific journals and periodicals.

## **2.2 Justifications for using the internet in education**

The computer and the internet are among the most important innovations produced by technology in the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. Using the internet in education has resulted in a massive improvement in the educational field. It has greatly affected the way people learn and is an enriching resource that contributes to providing much educational potential and technical opportunities for learners (Antonijevic, 2018).

Due to the resources and information provided by the internet that facilitate the educational process, the help it provides in bettering communication between teachers and students, and providing information in various fields, the internet has become an essential element in the educational process. It also helps in developing learners' skills such as leadership, team building, critical thinking, good communication, problem solving, and answering questions (Hadi, 2013; Khode & Kumar, 2004).



In addition, the internet helps provide opportunities for distance education and e-learning, which has helped solve many problems faced by educational institutions by lowering education costs (Ali, 2010). Furthermore, the internet helps to control the way information is presented at the appropriate time and place for the learner, which makes it much better than other options (Hadi, 2013).

### **2.3 Domains of using the internet in the educational process**

Several studies (e.g., Dogruer, Eyyam, & Menevis, 2011; Hadi, 2013) have indicated that the importance of using the internet in the educational field can be summarized in the following points:

- The internet can be used to search the indexes of libraries and information centers.
- It provides access to research in various fields as it provides up to date information about that research, such as information and summaries about master and doctoral theses.
- It provides communication between researchers of different specialties around the world.
- It allows people to send and receive emails.
- It provides an enormous account of historical and modern sources and biographical data.
- It helps in getting the latest information.

### **2.4 Internet advantages**

The internet has multiple benefits. Saadeh & Al-Sartawi (2015) pointed out some of them, such as:

- Email: considered one of the most useful means of communication in the field of education, it facilitates students' communication with each other, the exchange of information and ideas, and communication outside the classroom.
- Educational sites: useful for visiting specialized sites in the field of education where people can benefit from their services.
- Educational forums: facilitates participation in specialized educational conversations that take place within international and local scientific and educational forums.
- Telecommunication service: a connection between teachers and students all over the world.
- Registration and admission services at universities.
- Access to international university libraries and benefits from their services.
- Competition between students: via comparing their work and achievements with others and the ability to publish them.
- Provide an atmosphere of suspense and motivation for students.



- Creation of personal websites: through scientific participation by specialists to communicate with others regarding their interests.
- Using the internet as a modern learning tool in classrooms.

## 2.5 Internet disadvantages

Makosa (2013) mentioned some internet disadvantages such as:

- No rules for indexing and organizing sources.
- Allows for the stealing of literature.
- Most electronic journals do not give importance to hard copies.
- Sitting for a long time on the internet affects students' sight and nervous system.
- The internet poses danger to teenagers, especially when it is misused.

## 3. Methodology

The current study used the descriptive approach to recount the opinions of the participants. The target population of this study was female graduate students who enrolled in the College of Education at the IAU and use the GCCL. This study used a questionnaire consisting of (13) elements and its validity was checked by three professional faculty members. The questionnaire was then distributed to a sample of (50) female graduate students in Dammam.

## 4. Results

The main aim of this study was to evaluate the internet services provided in the GCCL from the point of view of female graduate students in the College of Education at Imam Abdul Rahman bin Faisal University (IAU) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The results of Table 1 show that 20% of respondents were under age 26, 46% of respondents were aged 26-30, and 34% of respondents were over 30 years old.

Table 1: *Age and percentage of the participants*

Age	N	%
Less than 26 years old	10	20
26 to 30 years old	23	46
More than 30 years old	17	34
Total	50	100

The results of Table 2 show that the participants, when asked about their level of knowledge of electronic devices, indicated the following: 28% had a high level of skill dealing with

electronics, 28% had a low level of skill dealing with electronics, and 44% had a medium level of skill. This result indicates that the vast majority of participants need increased support to allow them to use technology effectively. Noting that if we include the percentage of those who have medium and low knowledge in dealing with technology, then 72% of the participants need increased training and support so as to better handle technology effectively.

Table 2: *Participants' level of knowledge of electronic devices*

Level	N	%
High	14	28
Medium	22	44
Low	14	28
Total	50	100

The results of table 3 show the tools that the respondents depend on to acquire internet skills: 18% of the participants indicated that they depended on self-learning only in acquiring internet skills, 46% of the sample depended on self-learning in addition to other tools, 1% depended on cooperation between friends only to acquire internet skills, 48% of them depended on cooperation between friends as well as other, 1% depended on university training only to acquire internet skills, 62% depended on university training as well as other means to acquire these skills, 43% depended on other sources in addition to all the previously mentioned tools, and finally, 1% of participants depended on sources which are not mentioned on the table. These results indicate that the questionnaire that was used in this study included most of the sources that were used by female graduate students in order to acquire internet skills.

Table 3: *Participants' methods to acquire Internet skills*

Method	Frequency	%
Self-learning	9	18
Self-learning with other methods	23	46
Cooperation between friends only	1	2
Cooperation between friends only with other methods	24	48
Training at university only	1	2
Training at university only with other methods	31	62

Other sources with all the previously mentioned	17	34
Other sources only	1	2

Table 4 shows the participants' assessment of their skills in using the internet. The results indicate that 34% of the participants had an excellent level in using the internet, while 20% of them had a good level, 32% had an average level, and 14% had a poor level. These results confirm what was confirmed by the results of Table 2, which is the need for female graduate students to receive increased support and training in order to master electronic skills and thus the possibility of benefiting from and handling technology effectively.

Table 4: *Participants' skills in using the Internet*

Skill	N	%
Excellent	17	34
Average/Medium	16	32
Good/Not bad	10	20
Poor	7	14
Total	50	100

The results of Table 5 show the reasons why the participants used the internet. It indicated that 64% of the sample used the internet for fun in addition to other reasons, while 2% of them used it for fun only. This emphasizes the importance of using the internet by individuals for non-research purposes. The results also show that 56% of the participants used the internet for communication in addition to other reasons, 66% of them used the internet for learning and other reasons, and 12% of them used it for learning only. The findings of this study display that 58% of respondents used the internet to obtain information in addition to other reasons and 2% of them used it to obtain information only.



Table 5: *Reasons why the participants used the internet*

Reasons	Frequency	%
Fun in addition to other reasons	32	64
Fun only	1	2
Communication in addition to other reasons	28	56
Learning in addition to other reasons	33	66
Learning only	6	12
Obtain information in addition to other reasons	29	58
Obtain information only	1	2

Table 6 indicates the services that the female graduate students used on the internet during their studies. The results show that 50% of the participants used regular search engines and other services, 36% used the web in addition to other sources, 20% used the Knowledge Bank in addition to other services, 60% of them used electronic libraries in addition to other services, 2% used electronic libraries only, 42% used the internet to communicate with the professors supervising their studies via the internet in addition to other services, 52% used electronic magazines in addition to other services, 32% used WhatsApp groups in addition to other services, 48% used the university's electronic platforms in addition to other services, 30% used electronic translation sites in addition to other services, 46% used the Scholar Engine in addition to other services, while 12% used dial-up via the internet, and finally 2% of the sample used dial-up via the internet only. These results indicate that female graduate students have benefitted from the services provided by the GCCL primarily in the field of research and education. These results also show the various services that the internet provides to students in the GCCL at IAU.

Table 6: *Services that participants used on the Internet during their studies*

Services	Frequency	%
Regular search engines and other services	25	50
The web in addition to other sources	18	36
Knowledge Bank in addition to other services	10	20
Use electronic libraries in addition to other services	30	60
Electronic libraries only	1	2
Communicate with the professors supervising their studies via the Internet in addition to other services	21	42
Use electronic magazines in addition to other services	26	52
WhatsApp groups in addition to other services	17	34
University's electronic platforms in addition to other services	24	48
Electronic translation sites in addition to other services	15	30
Scholar Engine in addition to other services	23	46
Use dial-up via the Internet in addition to other services	6	12
Use dial-up via the Internet only	1	2

Table 7 indicates the percentage of female graduate students who use the internet. The results indicate that 20% of the participants used the internet with less than (20%) usage rate, 8% of the respondents' usage ranged from (20%-40%), 18% of the respondents' usage ranged from (40%-60%), 26% of the respondents' usage ranged (60%-80%), and 28% used the internet at a rate (greater than 80%). The previous results confirm the high rate of internet usage among graduate students, which requires intensifying technical support at the GCCL in the IAU.

Table 7: *Internet usage rate among participants*

Usage Rate	N	%
Less than 20%	10	20
From 20 to 40%	4	8
From 40 to 60%	9	18
From 60 to 80%	13	26
More than 80%	14	28
Total	50	100

Table 8 shows to what extent the internet services provided in the GCCL can help the female students in their academic studies. The results show that 58% of the female graduate students were helped by the internet by more than 50%, and 42% of the participants were helped by the internet by less than 50%.

Table 8: *Extent to which Internet services help participants during their academic studies*

Response	N	%
Helped with less than 50%	21	42
Helped with more than 50%	29	58
Total	50	100

Table 9 shows the extent of participants' satisfaction about the internet services offered to them. The results show that 74% of the respondents are satisfied with the internet services while 26% of them are not, which indicates a high quality of internet services provided at the GCCL.

Table 9: *Extent of participant' satisfaction about the Internet services*

Satisfaction	N	%
Satisfied	37	74
Not satisfied	13	26
Total	50	100

The results of table 10 show the number of hours that the female students at Education College, IAU used the internet. The results show that 14% used the internet at a rate of less than two hours per day, while 54% used the internet at a rate of more than two hours a day. These results show to what extent the students depend on the internet. Additionally, the result indicated that 24% of the female graduate students don't use the internet daily, and 8% of them never use it.

Table 10: *Internet usage hours*

Satisfaction	N	%
Less than 2 hours a day	7	14
More than 2 hours a day	27	54
I don't use the Internet everyday	12	24
I never use the Internet	4	8
Total	50	100

Table 11 shows the participants' opinions on using digital libraries to enhance and support their academic performance. The results show that 70% of the sample thought digital libraries enhanced their academic performance, and yet 30% of them didn't think so. This result emphasizes the importance of digital libraries in enhancing and supporting the academic performance for female graduate students.

Table 11: *Using digital libraries in enhancing and supporting participants' academic performance*

Response	N	%
Supports academic performance	35	70
Does not support academic performance	15	30
Total	50	100

The results of table 12 show the problems which faced the students while using the internet. The results indicated that 16% of them faced problems with incorrect information along with other problems, 8% of them faced the problem of incorrect information only, 58% took a long time to access information among other problems, 16% faced the problem that it took a long time to access information, 36% of the respondents faced the problem of the high cost of the internet and other problems, 2% of the respondents faced the problem of high internet

cost only, 34% faced the problem of frequent network disconnection in addition to other problems, 4% faced the problem of frequent network disconnection only, 40% faced the problem of inexperience in dealing with electronics and other problems, 22% faced privacy issues in addition to other problems, and finally, 16% of the participants faced the problem of payment delays at the host site in addition to other problems.

Table 12: *Problems which the female students faced while using the internet during their academic studies*

Problems	Frequency	%
Incorrect information and other problems	8	16
Incorrect information only	4	8
Take a long time to access information and other problems	29	58
Take a long time to access information only	8	16
Internet high cost with other problems	18	36
Internet high cost only	1	2
Frequent network disconnection with other problems	17	34
Frequent network disconnection only	2	4
Inexperience in dealing with electronics and other problems	20	40
Privacy issues with other problems	11	22
Payment delays at the host site in addition to other problems	8	16

Table 13 shows the female graduate students' suggestions to improve the internet services provided by the GCCL. The results show that 66% of the participants suggested having a strong internet network at the university and other suggestions, 66% suggested a continuous survey of the systems and other suggestions, 2% of them suggested a continuous survey of the systems only, 64% suggested that more computers be available in the university library in addition to other suggestions, 62% of the respondents suggested organizing awareness programs to educate students about the existence of specific resources in addition to other suggestions, and finally 40% of respondents suggested imposing privacy laws in addition to other suggestions.

Table 13: *Participants' suggestions to improve the Internet services at the academic learning center*

Suggestions	Frequency	%
Having a strong internet network at the university and other suggestions	33	66
A continuous survey of the systems and other suggestions	33	66
A continuous survey of the systems only	1	2
More computers be available in the university library in addition to other suggestions	34	64
Organizing awareness programs to educate students about the existence of specific resources in addition to other suggestions	31	62
Imposing privacy laws in addition to other suggestions	20	40

## 5. Discussion

The aim of this study was to evaluate the internet services provided in the Girls Colleges Central Library (GCCL) from the point of view of female graduate students in Imam Abdul Rahman bin Faisal University (IAU). From the results of the questionnaire analysis distributed to female graduate students at the Education College in IAU, Saudi Arabia, the results confirmed that 28% of the participants had a high level of internet use and the rest needed further support and training to qualify them to work effectively with technology. This finding is consistent with what Aba et al. (2015) emphasized, that it is important to establish e-literacy centers in many countries to help raise their computer skills.

Moreover, the percentage of participants who used the internet for more than two hours a day was 54%, while 74% of them were satisfied with internet services, and 70% of respondents said that digital libraries enhance and support their academic performance. This finding is consistent with the results of the study of Khan, Bhatti, and Khan (2011) that the higher proportion of participants used the internet daily. However, it contrasts with Aba et al. (2015), finding that the majority of participants spent 2-4 hours per a week using the internet. Furthermore, the results of the current study agreed with what Maharana, Biswal and Sahu (2009) found, that the majority of participants are satisfied with the use of the internet. According to Maharana et al (2009), 78% of medical education students believe that technology services are important in making education more effective, therefore they are satisfied with internet services. In addition, the finding of this study is supported by the results of the study of Aba et al. (2015) that 87.41% of the participants reported that the

digital library had a positive impact in their academic studies. This means that the largest proportion of the participants preferred to use the internet in search of information and knowledge due to its speed and ease of use.

The results of this study also indicated an increase in the percentage of those who depend on internet services in their academic studies, while the percentage of those using various services on the internet has also increased. Previous results indicated the importance of using the internet in the educational field, especially academic education. The highest percentages of respondents' suggestions were divided into two points: (1) continuous survey of the systems, and (2) having a strong internet network at the university level. The results of this study are similar to those of Ugah and Okafor (2008), Genoni, Merrick and Willson, (2006), and Aramide and Bolarinwa (2010). Genoni et al (2006) reported that students are increasingly benefitting from internet services in research and education. Aramide and Bolarinwa (2010) illustrated the spread of some technical problems in national and university libraries that need a solution to increase the use of the services they provide. This means that there is an urgent need to increase the review and evaluation of the performance of electronic services provided in university libraries to ensure their readiness.

## 6. Conclusion

Many issues facing female graduate students were mentioned, such as poor internet speed and inexperience in dealing with electronics, among other things, which together hindered the best use of the services provided in the library. According to the above conclusions, some recommendations have been made:

- It is necessary to establish an electronic literacy center.
- It is necessary to improve internet services and network quality.
- It is necessary for librarians to assist and guide students using authentic resources and help them overcome internet problems.
- It is necessary to work on the problem of continuous internet network disconnection in libraries.
- It is necessary to care about digital education in schools and universities.
- It is necessary to supply libraries with more and better computers.
- It is necessary to improve and develop the library through technological innovations to keep up with the Renaissance era.
- It is necessary to provide an educational guide inside the library to show how to make the most of the available information sources.
- It is necessary to provide individuals with training courses regarding library tools to improve the staff quality.
- It is necessary to connect the curriculum with the library so that all students will refer to the library instead of neglecting it.



## 6.1 Limitation

There is a limitation in this study which is the small sample size ( $n = 50$ ), however, according to Kulik and Kulik (1989), studies with small size are important for some analyses, such as meta-analysis.

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