

Challenges and Prospect of E-Registration in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

SHEHU JAFARU SALISU

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

Abstract. E- Registration system allows students through the internet to register, drop, or add courses within the registration period, E-registration site can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. The education system requires a great amount of data and documentation, and this e-registration solution allows institutions to focus less on processing paperwork and more on what matters most such as meeting the educational needs of their students by having a cost-efficient, secure registration process that allows for easy access to student's files. Many institutions in Nigeria have recognized the powerful transformational potential of portals and have developed and implemented their own. One of such is the portal of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. This paper tries to examine challenges and prospect of e-registration in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The research relies on a quantitative analysis of the results gathered through questionnaire survey. The finding indicates that students faced some challenges during e-registration.

Keywords: E- Registration, Students, Challenges, Prospect, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

1. Introduction

The rapid change of technology effect almost all area of life, this changes necessitate universities and other tertiary institutions to change their registration system from offline or conversational system to e-registration. E- Registration system allows students through the internet to register,

drop, or add courses within the registration period, E-registration site can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. The education system requires a great amount of data and documentation, and this e-registration solution allows institutions to focus less on processing paperwork and more on what matters most such as meeting the educational needs of their students by having a cost-efficient, secure registration process that allows for easy access to student's files. Many institutions in Nigeria have recognized the powerful transformational potential of portals and have developed and implemented their own. One of such is the portal of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. E-registration or online registration have lot of advantage to university and students, it reduced paper work and save time among others. Despite the advantages of online registration, students yet face some challenges. This study is aim at examining the challenges and prospect of e-registration at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

2. Statement of the Problem

Electronic registration emerged because of the problems associated with manual handling of registration and student records. Such problems included mismanagement of students' academic records, mismanagement of courses registered for, etc. This is irrespective of several efforts to improve on manual registration in the University. It should be noted that in Africa, governments, corporate bodies and academic institutions decided to adopt e-solution in order to overcome the problems of manual operations.

This relates to the position by Sore (2005), who pointed out that e-government and associated paraphernalia were ways of getting things done electronically to overcome manual problems. This exactly is the rationale behind the creation of Ahmadu Bello University portal. Since the portal was created, students and staff have been using it; it is considered important to examine its level of acceptance and use for registration by the students of the university. Despite the enormity of the portal/e-registration students have issues in the process of registration or in accessing the portal. This study will provide a framework for the challenges and prospect of online registration at Ahmadu Bello university.

3. Literature Review

3.1 E-Registration:

E-registration is a system that could easily manage its student body while also providing added bonuses, with a main goal being to ease the transfer of information. The education system requires a tremendous amount of data and documentation, and this e-registration solution allows institutions to focus less on processing paperwork and more on what matters most meeting the educational needs of their students by having a cost-efficient, secure registration process that allows for easy access to student files (Olasina, 2011). Portals are supposed to provide an infrastructure through which end-users can gain effective access to information sources needed to assist in daily tasks such as effective decision making, planning and research (Brakel, 2003). Furthermore, Pena-Lopez (2007) describes a web portal as a site that functions as a point of access to information on the World Wide Web and portals present information from diverse sources.

Scope of e-registration include programmes which will contain a detailed information of the students since first date of enrolment and up to the graduation day including all student information and procedures required by the

students during study semesters. (Olasina, 2011).

Lakos (2004), gives the key principles that should govern a portal rollout. These are:

Simplicity: This means that users want a simple and clear web environment.

Dependability: This means that the site and its contents should be available always and should be predictable.

Quantifiable value: Users should feel self-sufficient and realize added value from using the portal.

Personalization: the portal should be in a way that users can be able to change the site to their personal preferences.

Systematic management: long term success requires a systematic approach and long term commitment.

Adeyegbe (2007), argues that apart from the supply and configuration of hardware, there are other considerations as far as the system design and operation were concerned. First, the system had to be robust and self-validating, to reduce errors to the barest minimum. Secondly, the system should also be flexible as far as the mode of registration of school candidates (availability of offline or online options) is concerned. Thirdly, it should have an assurance of the security of the network, application, database and payment system. Fourthly, the system should have unified integration of the infrastructure with the existing resources.

Another consideration is that the system should have scalability and compliance of the architecture to ensure that it would be capable of handling future increases in volume of data and procedural changes. The system should also be user-friendly, easy to follow instructions worded in simple, precise language with help line support, eliminating the need for students to visit Offices to resolve any difficulties related to e-registration.

E-registration provides information in a real-time, electronic format that allows confirmation of students' enrolment status; Students are also able to find and schedule more of the courses

they need; it is used as confirmation of a student's intent to remain enrolled for the semester. E-registration is a system that could easily manage its student body while also providing added bonuses, with a main goal being to ease the transfer of information. It simplifies the registration process through a Web-enabled, user-friendly wizard and digitizes all supporting documents using intuitive processes and tools.

The education system requires a tremendous amount of data and documentation, and this e-registration solution allows institutions to focus less on processing paperwork and more on what matters most meeting the educational needs of their students by having a cost-efficient, secure registration process that allows for easy access to student files. Intranets and portals are supposed to provide an infrastructure through which end-users can gain effective access to information sources needed to assist in daily tasks such as effective decision making, planning and research (Brakel, 2003).

Gbola (2010), postulates that online/e-registration include programmes which contain a detailed information of the students since first date of enrolment and up to the graduation day. The registration includes all students' information and procedures required by the students during study semesters. For one to be recognized as a bonafide student of any institution, such a person must go through the registration procedures stipulated by the institution. He added that online registration allows institutions to focus less on processing paper work and more on what matters most meeting the educational needs of their students by having a cost efficient and secure registration process that allows for easy access to student's files.

Odero & Okoko (2013), supported Gbola that online registration emerged because of problems associated with manual handling of registration and student's records. Such problems according to them include mismanagement of students' academic records, mismanagement of courses registered for, among others. Manual registration brings about wear and tear during file handling

and in most cases data are lost. This equally makes data sharing very difficult and reproduction cost is always very high. It is in view of these and other reasons that online registration was welcomed as a remedy to obsolete manual registration.

Many institutions in Nigeria including Ahmadu Bello University, have been somewhat quick to recognize the powerful transformational potential of portals and have developed and implemented their own. Broadly one could argue that an institution with large number of student, operating in a society with an increasing desire for instant access to information, needs to carefully consider new ways in which it can interact more effectively with its students.

4. Methodology

Survey research method is adopted for this research, and it is most suitable for this research because it allows for the study of a fair random representation of the entire population. Survey method is mostly used to assess thoughts, ideas, opinions and feelings. The instrument of data collection for this study is 'questionnaire.' Questionnaire elicits information that enables the researcher to answer objectives of the survey (Brace, 2013). The target population of the study was undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. This approach of research is most appropriate to gather accounts of students' experiences and communication gap on use of the e-registration portal and identify user requirements to further improve acceptability and use in the university. The sampling techniques employed for this research is 'simple random sampling'. As traditionally accepted in random sampling technique, each person is chosen randomly and entirely by chance, this means that each person has the same probability of being chosen at any stage during sampling process.

5. Result and Discussion

The students were required to indicate the nature of challenges they encountered in the process of doing online registration. This is in view of the fact that the problems encountered by students

may vary from student to student. In all a total of 11 problems were identified by the students in

relation to online registration system.

S/N	NATURE OF PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY	%
1	Wrong registration of courses	16	16.9
2	Lack of frequent update of files	6	6.4
3	Financial details (Acceptance of School fees)	6	6.4
4	Insufficient/inadequate system	16	16.9
5	Invalid matric number/Missing Names	15	15.9
6	Slow download time of the websites	25	26.5
7	Server is down/ slow system/service	19	20.1
8	Delay from bank	2	2.1
9	Lack of security of student data	2	2.1
10	Inaccessibility of the site	2	2.1
11	Electricity	1	1.1

From the study it was discovered that the numbers of systems available to use by students either within the campus or even in the cybercafé are not adequate. This often leads to congestion, long and unnecessary queue, and wasting of time. All these will eventually lead to the delay in the completion of the registration process. A similar study conducted by Chinve (2006), indicated that unavailability of internet facilities is an impediment to its use. If the systems (facilities) are not readily available, certainly the process of registration will be further delay. Chinve further identified power failure, poor environment, and slow speed of server, system breakdown, and insufficient workstation as some of the problems affecting internet access in institution of higher learning. From the study lack of frequent updates of the websites is another major problem. Because of incidences of wrong data entry and wrong allocation of credits to courses, it is expected that the website should be updated from time to time once the complaints are made known to the authority. However, this is not often the case as the students keep on making the same complaints over and over.

The slow speed of the server which is as a result of either low bandwidth used by the cybercafé operator or the school is another major challenge. When there is traffic congestion accessibility to the site is at a snail speed. This tends to hamper the registration procedure. Commenting on the operation of existing and associated problem in relation to college portal, Sadiq, Momodu & Aladejubelo (2008), describe

the epileptic nature of the electricity power supply in the country as a major constraint in the usage of internet application which online registration depends on mainly. Furthermore students majorly access the portals by visiting public internet centers popularly known as cybercafé. This may involve transportation from one place to another on the part of the students which is usually not convenient. Another challenges that the study figure out is the wrong registration of course. This involves a student being registered for a course that he/she has not been learning. More often than not, this occurs erroneously during the registration process. This inconveniences the student since they are not only unable to attempt the course(s) but are also irrelevant to his or her career. This eventually leads to incomplete examination result because some of the courses the student was not tested in some of the course he undertook in the course. The end result is that the student spends another year to re-sit the examination.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The results from this study clearly indicate that many problems are still militating against the students' online registration system. An exercise that is supposed to be simple, easy and stress free is nothing but rather tedious, time consuming and cumbersome despite the widely acclaimed technological innovation and advancement. Introduction of technology or more precisely an automated system should be devoid of most problems identified in this study. Therefore, in order to make this system usable,

accessible and interesting, the study recommends the following:

There should be adequate provision of enough systems for use for online registration. No doubt the population of the students is increasing session by session, so it is expected that there should be corresponding increase in the number of access points for students to do online registration. This will not only avoid congestion on the few available systems but it will also hasten the registration process.

A very good alternative is that the management should make concerted effort to partner with private or public organization so as to make laptop available for students at a very affordable price. This will allow students to do online registration on their own at any convenient time 24/7 using wireless network at any convenient location. There should also be increase in the bandwidth used for internet access.

There is need of proper and intensive orientation for fresh and returning students on how to register courses in order to avoid wrong registration of courses, most of the students identified such problems when they collected their exam card.

References

- Adeyegbe, (2007). 2 Years of E-Registration: Keeping Pace with IT Revolution in Testing: The WAEC Experience Retrieved from http://www.iaea.info/documents/paper_1162a16530.pdf
- Brace, I. (2013) "Questionnaire Design: How to plan, structure and write survey material for effective market research" Kogan Page Publisher: UK
- Brakel, P.V. (2003). Information Portals: A strategy for importing external content, Electronic Library, Vol. 21 ISS: 6, pp. 591-600
- Chinve V.A. (2006): Survey on impediment to students' use of internet facilities. The Information Technologist 3(2) Pp40-50
- Gbola, O. (2010). Students' Perception of e-registration at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology. Ogbomosho, Nigeria. Information Technology, 7 (2) retrieved www.ajol.info/index.php/ict/article/view/65642
- Lakos, A. (2004). Implementing a "Culture of Assessment" Within the Information Commons. Retrieved from <http://personal.anderson.ucla.edu/amos.lakos/index.html>
- McQuail, D. (2005). Mass Communication Theory. London: SAGE production Ltd.
- Odero, T.A. & Oloko, M.A. (2013). Effect of Online Registration Exam Performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Enrolment. A Case Study of Sotik District Kenya. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 3 (7) Pp 118
- Pena-Lopez, I. (2007) The Personal Research Portal: Web 2.0 Driven Individual commitment with open access development, *Knowledge Management for Development Journal*, Amsterdam. 3 (1) 35-48.
- Ralph, C. (3rd Ed). (2007). Four Levels of Communication. London: The Daily Telegraphion.
- Sadiq F.I, Momodu I.B and Aladejubelo O.S (2008) Framework for Mobile Portal in Nigerian Higher Institutions in Proceedings of Nigeria Computer Society Vol 19 Pp97-104