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Assessment of Undergraduate Students' Access to Google Workspace for Education (GWfE) in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Google Workspace for Education (GWfE) is a cloud-based suite of productivity tools designed to facilitate learning, collaboration, and communication in academic settings. However, disparities exist in its access across universities in Kwara State, influenced by institutional ownership, students' access to digital resources, and infrastructural constraints. This study comparatively examines the access to, and challenges of Google Workspace among undergraduates in three universities in Kwara State based on ownership. A descriptive design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The total population comprised 88,552 where a sample of 396 undergraduates was selected using Israel's (2013) model. Data was collected using a researcher-developed structured questionnaire titled "Access and Utilization of Google Workspace for Education Questionnaire (AUGWEQ)". The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Technology and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha, yielding an index value of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics; hypotheses tested using t-tests and ANOVA. Findings indicated that, while federal university students have relatively better access due to institutional support, State and private university students experience varying degrees of challenges, including internet instability, lack of training, and inadequate devices. The study concluded that, it is evident that access to Google workspace does not guarantee effective utilization hence institutions must address infrastructural, technical, and human capacity issues that affect the full adoption of digital educational tools. The study recommended improving digital literacy training, institutional investments in technology infrastructure, and policy frameworks to bridge disparities in digital resource adoption among others.

Keywords: Google Workspace, Digital Learning, Higher Education, Institutional Ownership, Technology Adoption

Introduction

The integration of digital technologies in higher education has transformed the landscape of teaching and learning, particularly in the 21st century where technology is central to academic engagement. The global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic further underscored the importance of digital platforms, as institutions rapidly transitioned to remote learning to maintain academic continuity (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). Among the tools that gained widespread attention is Google Workspace for Education, a cloud-based suite developed by Google to support collaborative, remote, and interactive learning environments. Its applications including Google Docs, Google Drive, Google Meet, and Google Classroom, have significantly contributed to knowledge sharing, communication, and productivity in academic settings (Bejinaru, 2019).

Despite its numerous benefits, undergraduates' equitable access to Google Workspace for Education (GWfE) remains a major concern, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria and in particular Kwara State. Factors such as internet instability, limited access to digital devices, lack of digital literacy, and infrastructural disparities affect students' ability to effectively utilize these tools (Mikre, 2011; Oke & Fernandes, 2020). In the context of Kwara State, the extent of access to such educational technologies is further influenced by the ownership status of the institution - whether federal, state, or private. Federal universities are often perceived to have more robust ICT infrastructure and government support, whereas state and private universities may face funding constraints that limit the provision of digital learning tools (Yusuf & Onasanya, 2022).

Furthermore, students' individual characteristics, such as field of study, gender, and level of digital competence, may influence how they interact with GWfE tools. For instance, students in technology-related disciplines might have greater exposure to digital platforms than those in non-technical fields (Ajadi, Salawu, & Adeoye, 2018). While some institutions have begun integrating digital tools into their academic structures, disparities in the quality and frequency of access persist, thus creating an uneven digital learning experience among students across different universities in Nigeria.

The significance of this study lies in its focus on assessing undergraduates' access to GWfE across three categories of institutions, this comparative approach is essential for identifying access gaps and common challenges experienced by the undergraduates. A better understanding of these dynamics can guide institutional stakeholders and policymakers in implementing evidence-based strategies to improve digital inclusion, especially in the post-pandemic academic era.

Research Objectives

The study assessed undergraduates' access to google workspace for education (GWfE) in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

1. examined how frequently students have access to the platform; and
2. identified the challenges students encounter while accessing and utilizing its features for academic purposes.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered in this study:

1. How frequent do the undergraduates' have access to GWfE?
2. What are the challenges faced by undergraduates on access to GWfE?

Research Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance in this study:

Ho_1: there is no significant difference in the male and female undergraduates' access to GWfE.

Ho_2: there is no significant difference in undergraduates' access to GWfE based on course of study.

Ho_3: there is no significant difference in undergraduates' access to GWfE based on institutional ownership.

Ho_4: there is no significant difference on challenges of undergraduates on access to and utilization of GWfE based on course of study.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design of the survey type, which deemed appropriate for assessing undergraduates' access to Google Workspace for Education (GWfE) in Kwara State. This method facilitated the collection of quantitative data from a representative sample of undergraduates, allowing for generalization to the broader population. The population for this study consisted of 88,552 undergraduate Students in Universities in Kwara State and the target population were undergraduates form three universities in Ilorin based on institutional ownership. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents for this study. One Federal and one State university selected, along with one purposively chosen private university that shared similar characteristics and geographical location with the public universities. The private university was selected based on students' access to digital devices and the use of GWfE. Faculties were purposively selected based on their common presence across the three universities. Proportionate sampling was then applied to determine the sample size per faculty, and simple random sampling was used to select 396 respondents across different courses. The total sample drawn from three universities, using Israel's (2013) model at a 5% confidence level and 95% significance level.

Results

This section presents the demographic distribution of respondents who participated in the study, beginning with their gender characteristics.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distributions of the Respondents based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	158	39.9
Female	238	60.1
Total	396	100.0

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distributions of respondents based on gender. Out of a total of 396 respondents, 158 are male, representing 39.9% of the sample, while 238 are female, making up 60.1% of the sample. This indicates that most respondents in the study are female, with females constituting a larger portion of the population than males. The distribution suggests a significant gender difference among the participants, which could

influence the outcomes or perspectives captured in the study. The total sample size is 396, with 100% representation across both genders.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distributions of the Respondents based on Course of Study

Course of Study	Frequency	Percent
International Law	41	10.4
Common Law	35	8.8
Islamic Law	23	5.8
Criminology	05	1.3
Psychology	06	1.5
Business Education	04	1.0
Public Administration	09	2.3
Counsellor Education	07	1.8
Sociology	06	1.5
Finance	20	5.1
Marketing	11	2.8
Arts Education	15	3.8
Computer Science	05	1.3
Political Science	23	5.8
Educational Management	26	6.6
Edu Technology	13	3.3
Science Education	15	3.8
Industrial Relations and Personnel Management	10	2.5
Primary Education	04	1.0
Adult Education	05	1.3
Telecommunication Science	05	1.3
Business Administration	10	2.5
Library and Information Science	26	6.6
Economics	28	7.1
Accounting	05	1.3
Chemistry Education	39	9.8
Total	396	100.0

Table 2 displays the frequency and percentage distributions of respondents based on their course of study. It reveals that respondents spread across a diverse range of disciplines. The most represented course is International Law, with 41 respondents (10.4%S), followed by Chemistry Education with 39 respondents (9.8%). Courses like Common Law (8.8%), Economics (7.1%),

and Library and Information Science (6.6%) also have significant representation. On the other hand, some courses such as Business Education, Primary Education, and Criminology have lower representation, each with only 1.0% to 1.3% of the total respondents. Overall, reflects a varied academic background among the 396 respondents, with certain fields having higher participation rates. The total distribution sums up to 100%, indicating that all respondents were accounted for across the listed courses.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage Distributions of the Respondents based on Institution Ownership

Institution	Frequency	Percent
Private	17	4.3
Public	170	42.9
Federal	209	52.8
Total	396	100.0

Table 3 illustrates the frequency and percentage distributions of respondents based on the type of institution they attend. Most respondents, 209 individuals, are from federal institutions, accounting for 52.8% of the total sample. Public institutions follow with 170 respondents, representing 42.9% of the sample. In contrast, private institutions have the smallest representation, with only 17 respondents, making up 4.3% of the total. This distribution shows that most respondents are affiliated with federal institutions, while private institutions are significantly underrepresented. The total sample size is 396, with all respondents accounted for across the three categories of institutions.

Analysis of the Research Questions

The following research questions were answered as raised in the study:

Question 1: How frequent do the undergraduates' have access to Google Workspace for Education in Kwara State?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Frequency of Access to Google Workspace for Education (GWfE)

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
1	I can access GWfE tools from any device (for examples, laptop, smartphone, and tablet) without difficulties.	3.10	.701	High
2	I have a reliable internet connection that allows me to access GWfE tools efficiently.	3.00	.447	High
3	I am satisfied with my access to GWfE tools provided by my university.	2.80	.602	High

4	I have easy access to GWfE tools (for examples, Google Docs, Google Drive, Google Meet) at my university.	2.70	.458	High
5	I can easily access GWfE tools both on and off campus.	2.51	.807	Moderate
6	My university provides me with a GWfE account without any issues.	2.50	.807	Moderate
7	The process to access Google GWfE tools is straightforward and uncomplicated.	2.50	.673	Moderate
8	There are no significant technical barriers that prevent me from accessing GWfE tools.	2.30	.639	Low
9	I have access to all the necessary GWfE tools needed for my coursework.	2.30	.639	Low
10	The university's IT support is readily available to assist with any access issues related to GWfE.	1.90	.298	Low
	Average Mean	2.56		

Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation of responses regarding the frequency of undergraduates' access to Google Workspace for Education (GWfE). The item with the highest mean score (3.10) indicates that respondents generally find it easy to access GWfE tools from any device without difficulties, suggesting relatively good access across various platforms. Following this, the reliability of their internet connection, which facilitates efficient access, has a mean score of 3.00, highlighting that internet access is reliable. Satisfaction with access provided by their university has a slightly lower mean of 2.80, indicating moderate satisfaction.

However, access to GWfE tools both on and off campus and ease of access at the university scored lower means of 2.51 and 2.70, respectively, pointing to potential challenges in these areas. The lowest mean (1.90) is associated with the availability of IT support for access issues, suggesting that students may struggle to get timely assistance with technical problems. The overall average mean of 2.56 suggests that while students have moderate access to Google Workspace for Education, there are significant areas for improvement, particularly in IT support and access facilitation.

Question 2: What are the challenges of undergraduates on access to and utilization of Google Workspace for Education in Kwara State

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Challenges of Undergraduates Access to and Utilization of Google Workspace for Education

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
1	The challenges I face hinder my effective use of GWfE in my academic activities.	3.60	.491	High

2	Limited device compatibility (for example, using mobile devices) poses a challenge when accessing GWfE tools.	3.59	.490	High
3	I face challenges in integrating GWfE tools with other software or platforms I use for my studies.	3.39	.490	High
4	Privacy and security concerns make me hesitant to fully utilize GWfE.	3.20	.749	High
5	I experience difficulty collaborating with peers using GWfE due to compatibility or access issues.	3.19	.748	Average
6	My internet connection is often unreliable, making it challenging to use GWfE tools.	3.00	.632	Moderate
7	I often encounter technical issues when using Google Workspace for Education tools.	3.00	.000	Moderate
8	I find it hard to keep track of multiple GWfE tools for different courses and assignments.	2.99	1.268	Low
9	There is inadequate support and training provided by my university on how to use GWfE effectively.	2.79	.749	Low
10	I find it difficult to navigate and use the different features of GWfE.	2.79	.980	Low
	Average Mean	3.15		

Table 5 provides the mean and standard deviation of responses regarding the challenges undergraduates face in utilizing GWfE. The highest mean score (3.60) suggests that students feel the challenges they encounter significantly hinder their effective use of GWfE in academic activities. Close behind, a mean of 3.59 indicates that limited device compatibility, particularly when using mobile devices, is a major obstacle. Other significant challenges include difficulties in integrating GWfE with other software or platforms used for studies (mean of 3.39) and privacy and security concerns that create hesitancy in fully utilizing these tools (mean of 3.20). Collaboration issues due to compatibility or access problems also pose a challenge, as reflected by a mean score of 3.19.

Unreliable internet connections and frequent technical issues (both with means of 3.00) further impede the effective use of GWfE. Additionally, students find it challenging to manage multiple tools for different courses and assignments (mean of 2.99), and feel that inadequate support and training from the university (mean of 2.79) contributes to their difficulties. Navigation and usability of the various features also present a challenge (mean of 2.79). Hence, an average mean of 3.15 indicates that, on average, students face moderate to significant challenges in utilizing GWfE, with technical, compatibility, and support issues being the most prominent.

Testing of the Hypotheses

This section presents the results of the hypotheses formulated to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in undergraduates' access to Google Workspace for Education (GWfE) based on gender and other selected variables. The hypotheses tested using independent sample t-tests and ANOVA. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

H_{01}: there is no significant difference in the male and female undergraduates' access to Google Workspace for Education (GWfE).

Table 6: t-test Result of Difference in the Male and Female Undergraduates' Access to Google Workspace for Education

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	Sig.	Remark
Male	158	25.5190	4.97346	394	.710	Not Significant
Female	238	25.6849	3.87754			

Table 6 presents the t-test results comparing male and female undergraduates' access to the utilization of GWfE. The analysis includes 158 male and 238 female respondents. The mean access score for males is 25.5190 with a standard deviation of 4.97346, while the mean for females is slightly higher at 25.6849 with a standard deviation of 3.87754. The t-test shows a significance value (Sig.) of .710, which is greater than the commonly used threshold of .05. This indicates that the difference in access to the utilization of GWfE between male and female undergraduates is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho_1) stating that there is no significant difference in the male and female undergraduates' access to the utilization of GWfE is not rejected. The result implies that both male and female undergraduates have similar levels of access to these educational tools.

H_{02}: there is no significant difference in undergraduates' access to GWfE based on course of study.

Table 7: ANOVA Result of Difference in Undergraduates' Access to GWfE based on Course of Study

	Sum Squares	**ofDf**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Remark**
Between Groups	.847	25	5.634	.285	1.000	Not Significant
Within Groups	7308.575	370	19.753			
Total	7449.422	395				

Table 7 presents the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) results comparing undergraduates' access to GWfE based on their course of study. The result shows that the total sum of squares is 7449.422, with .847 attributed to differences between groups (course of study) and 7308.575 attributed to within-group differences (individual variations within each course). The degrees of freedom (df) for the between-group comparison is 25, while the within-group df is 370. The mean square between groups is 5.634, and the mean square within groups is 19.753. The F-statistic value is .285, with a significance level (Sig.) of 1.000. Since the significance value of 1.000 is much greater than the typical alpha level of .05, the results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in undergraduates' access to GWfE based on their course of study. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho_2) stating that there is no significant difference in undergraduates' access to Google Workspace for Education based on course of study is not rejected. This implies that students from different courses have similar levels of access to GWfE.

H_{03}: there is no significant difference in undergraduates' access to Google Workspace for education based on institutional ownership.

Table 8: ANOVA Result of Difference in Undergraduates' Access to Google Workspace for Education based on Institutional Ownership

	Sum Squares	**ofDf**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Remark**
Between Groups	1.853	2	.926	.049	.952	Not Significant
Within Groups	7447.569	393	18.951			
Total	7449.422	395				

Table 8 presents the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) results comparing undergraduates' access to Google Workspace for Education based on institutional ownership (private, public, and federal). The total sum of squares is 7449.422, with 1.853 attributed to differences between groups (institutional ownership) and 7447.569 attributed to within-group differences (individual variations within each institution). The degrees of freedom (df) for the between-group comparison is 2, while the within-group df is 393. The mean square between groups is .926, and the mean square within groups is 18.951. The F-statistic value is .049, with a significance level (Sig.) of .952. The significance value of .952 is much greater than the typical alpha level of .05,

indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in undergraduates' access to Google Workspace for Education based on institutional ownership. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho_3) stating that there is no significant difference in undergraduates' access to Google Workspace for Education based on institutional ownership not rejected. This result suggests that students from private, public, and federal institutions have similar levels of access to Google Workspace for Education.

H_{04}: there is no significant difference on challenges of undergraduates on access to and utilization of Google Workspace for Education in Kwara State based on course of study.

Table 9: ANOVA Result of Difference on Challenges of Undergraduates on Access to and Utilization of Google Workspace for Education in Kwara State based on Course of Study

	Sum Squares	**ofDf**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Remark**
Between Groups	30.016	25	1.201	.092	1.000	Not Significant
Within Groups	4825.891	370	13.043			
Total	4855.907	395				

Table 9 presents the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) results comparing the challenges faced by undergraduates towards the utilization of Google Workspace for Education in Kwara State based on their course of study. The total sum of squares is 4855.907, with 30.016 attributed to differences between groups (course of study) and 4825.891 attributed to within-group differences (individual variations within each course). The degrees of freedom (df) for between-group comparison is 25, while the within-group df is 370. The mean square between groups is 1.201, and the mean square within groups is 13.043. The F-statistic value is .092, with a significance level (Sig.) of 1.000.

Since the significance value of 1.000 is much greater than the typical alpha level of .05, it indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the challenges faced by undergraduates based on their course of study. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho_4) stating that there is no significant difference in undergraduates' challenges towards the utilization of GWfE based on course of study not rejected. This result suggests that students across

different courses of study experience similar levels of challenges when using GWfE.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the state of undergraduate access to Google Workspace for Education (GWfE) across universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The analysis reveals a moderate level of access among students, with an overall mean score of 2.56. This suggests that while GWfE tools are available to undergraduates, several access-related barriers limit their optimal utilization. One of the most notable findings is that students reported relatively easy access to Google Workspace tools across various devices (Mean = 3.10) and moderately reliable internet connections (Mean = 3.00) these align with Bejinaru (2019), who reported that students' access to cloud-based tools in enhancing flexibility and accessibility in digital learning is moderately high. However, challenges such as poor Information Technology (IT) support (Mean = 1.90) and the complexity of access procedures highlight systemic issues within institutional infrastructure that hinder students' smooth engagement with GWfE tools.

In terms of challenges, the study revealed a high average mean score of 3.15, indicating that students face moderate to severe difficulties in utilizing GWfE effectively. Major obstacles include device compatibility issues (Mean = 3.59), integration challenges with other platforms (Mean = 3.39), and privacy concerns (Mean = 3.20). These findings corroborate previous studies such as Mikre (2011) and Oke and Fernandes (2020), who identified technological limitations and institutional policies as recurring barriers to digital tool adoption in African higher education.

Interestingly, the hypothesis testing revealed no statistically significant differences in access to or challenges associated with Google Workspace across gender, course of study, or institutional ownership. This contradicts assumptions that federal universities, typically perceived to be better funded, would offer more consistent access. The lack of significant difference suggests that while federal universities may have better policies or infrastructure on paper, practical access challenges remain common across all types of institutions. This also implies that interventions should be comprehensive and not limited to specific institution types.

The gender-related findings, which showed no significant differences in access, reflect the narrowing digital divide between male and female students. This was attributed to increased digital awareness campaigns and access to smart devices between both genders, aligning with global trends toward digital inclusivity (Nguyen & Tuamsuk, 2022). Overall, the results highlight that despite the availability of Google Workspace for Education, systemic issues such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient support, and training gaps undermine its effective use. To fully leverage the benefits of GWfE, universities need to invest in digital literacy programs, strengthen IT support, and ensure institutional readiness through proactive policy implementation and funding.

Conclusion

This study assessed undergraduate access to Google Workspace for Education (GWfE) in universities across Kwara State, focusing on the frequency of access and the challenges encountered. The findings revealed that while undergraduates generally have moderate access to GWfE tools, there are notable limitations that hinder optimal utilization. Students expressed relatively high ease of access via digital devices and stable internet connections; however, support structures such as IT assistance and training opportunities were significantly lacking. The challenges encountered - such as device compatibility, limited integration with other learning platforms, and inadequate institutional support - were found to moderately to severely impact students' ability to effectively use GWfE for academic purposes. Interestingly, the statistical analyses showed no significant differences in access and challenges across gender, course of study, or institutional ownership, suggesting that these challenges are widespread and systemic.

Based on these outcomes, it is evident that access alone does not guarantee effective utilization. Institutions must go beyond provision and address infrastructural, technical, and human capacity issues that affect the full adoption of digital educational tools. By doing so, universities in Kwara State can create more inclusive, supportive, and effective digital learning environments for their undergraduates' populations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study on undergraduates' access to Google Workspace for Education (GWfE), the following recommendations were made:

1. universities should invest in stable internet connectivity and robust ICT infrastructure to enhance students' access to GWfE tools in the campus;

2. institutions should establish responsive and accessible IT support services to assist students in resolving technical issues related to GWfE;

3. regular workshops and training programs should be organized to equip students with the necessary skills to effectively navigate and utilize various features of GWfE for academic purposes;

4. universities, particularly state and private institutions, should create initiatives or partnerships to improve students' access to compatible digital devices, such as laptops or tablets;

5. policy frameworks should be established at the institutional level to standardize the use of GWfE tools across faculties, ensuring uniform access and reducing course-based disparities;

6. lecturers should be encouraged and trained to incorporate GWfE tools into their teaching practices to promote consistent student usage and collaboration; and

7. institutions should provide clear guidelines and assurances about data privacy and protection when using cloud-based educational tools, to build students' trust in the platform.

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