

# AVAILABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCEPTANCE OF ADVANCED DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

The world has become a global village. It is now crystal clear that life at present is different from life few decades ago. Nowadays, every society is striving for apt knowledge that can be used as panacea to solve their myriad problems. In pursuance of this, major advances in Information and Communications Technology facilitate and improve the social, economic and political ways of life of everyone including individuals with special needs. Information is indispensable in man's life. If one is not informed, one will be definitely deformed. Thus, the availability, accessibility and acceptance of advanced digital technologies bring succor to everyone. It opens doors to access to information and communication helping individuals to be current with latest events globally. Advanced digital technologies also make interaction better and comfortable for everyone but for people with special needs, advanced technologies make things possible. Most previous studies concentrated on the use of rudimentary assistive technologies for persons with special needs. This paper will investigate the availability, accessibility and acceptance of advanced digital technologies among higher education students with special needs in Oyo State, Nigeria. Advanced digital technologies of interest in this study will include both softwares and hardwares. Examples of advanced digital technologies are text-to-speech rendition and speech/voice output, Braille displays, optical character or image recognition, electronic audio signage, screen reading software, GPS-facilitated navigation, closed and open captioning, subtitles for videos, TV programming, SMS, text messaging, Text Telephone or Telecommunication Device for Deaf (TTY/TDD), Telecommunications Relay Services, Synthesized voice output, virtual picture board, adapted and virtual keyboards, specialized augmentative communication (ACC) devices, multimedia, e-books, cell phones, tablets and others. A descriptive research method will be employed. Purposive random sampling will be used to select two higher education institutions that are owned by the government (one college of education and one university) from six tertiary education institutions in Oyo State. 100 participants with special needs will form the study sample. The researcher will structure a questionnaire on availability, acceptance and accessibility of advanced digital technologies by higher education students with special needs. The questionnaire will be of a modified Likert format and it will be administered to the participants. The instrument for the study will be validated and the reliability coefficient will be computed. The resulting data will be collated and analysed using the computation of descriptive statistics of percentages, means, standard deviations and inferential statistics. The implications and recommendations of the study will be discussed.

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