Distance Education In Nigeria And Gender Difference On The Experience Of Hidden Curriculum Using Mobile Phones

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ABSTRACT: The study aimed at determining the National Teachers Institute (NTI) students’ general use of mobile phone based on gender. Two hundred and sixty-eight of the subjects were randomly sampled comprising 137 males and 131 females from Oyo State, Nigeria. Structured questionnaires were used to determine the interests and frequency of use of mobile phones for diverse of operations as medium of experiencing hidden curriculum. The findings revealed that distance learners had flair and interest for general use of mobile phones, watches movies/videos, listens to music and frequently surfs the internet for fun, entertainment, making friends, chats, and the like; than surfing through educative, job or profession related sites to broaden their knowledge horizons regardless of their gender. It was recommended among others that the use mobile devices could be adopted by distance learners in re-channeling students’ flairs and interests towards academic/educative forum for learning collaborations, assignments and the related pedagogical experiences. This could be achieved by organizing seminars, workshops and trainings for distance learners on how to harmonize the use of mobile devices for effective teaching and learning, usefulness and ease of use of mobile technologies for accessing cutting edge discoveries, useful and current information that will help to broaden their knowledge-base.

Keywords: Distance learners, Gender difference, Hidden curriculum, National Teachers Institute

1. Introduction

Education is a universal transformational instrument for societal, national and global development via conventional or distance education. Distance learning is a form of education and training delivery in which students are inaccessible from the education institution. Aderinoye (2002) remarked that distance learning as a medium of instruction has revolutionized the provision of educational opportunities for millions of people that have been left out of the conventional system worldwide. Ajadi, Salawu and Adeoye (2008) described distance learning as a system of education that is delivered through a variety of media and do not need the mandatory presence or manifestation of the teacher and the learner. It offers great opportunities for interaction with students and ensures equity in education irrespective of the gender differences (Barron, 1999). According Ajadi, Salawu and Adeoye (2008), National Teachers’ Institute (NTI) started as a distance education institution in 1976 to address the challenges of unqualified and under qualified teachers via training to upgrading Grade II teachers ‘certificates to Nigeria Certificate in Education levels thereby producing number of teachers required for the successful implementation of the National Policy on Education. The course provides students with self-instructional materials such as recorded audio and video cassettes, CDs, science kits, maps, charts, computers, internet services, library services, etc, to complement face-to-face tutorial contacts at the various study centres (NCE-DLS, Students’ Handbook, 2013). However, the uses of mobile technologies such as tablets pc, Ipads, laptops and mobile phones are portable and accessible to majority of students in facilitating easy access to information. Yusuf (2006) attested that the use of technological-based devices via multimedia, interactive learning technologies and collaborative learning are the new method that is gradually replacing the traditional method of ‘chalk and talk’ method of learning. The uses of mobile devices are not tied to specific physical locations in increasing range of products that links learning to classrooms and curricula. The access to mobile phones and the Internet by the students has been an instrumental phenomenon to the increase and growth of telecommunications globally. Mojaye (2015) opined that the ownership of a mobile phone has social, economic, psychological and educational consequences on students as it usually influences their attitude and behaviour to teaching and learning irrespective of gender lacuna. There seems to be natural gender role distinctions all over the world vis-à-vis diverse of professions and opportunities. This identified difference has constituted what is generally regarded as gender disparity among gender advocates. Wahid (2007) findings revealed that differences exist in the pattern of use of the Internet for chatting and study-related activities in favour of the female than their male counterparts; while male often uses the Internet for reading news online, downloading software, entertainment, seeking job vacancies and visiting pornographic sites. Yusuf and Falade (2005) investigated the use of media by National Teachers Institute of distance programme learners and the constraints militating against the effective use of media. However, the domain of determining gender difference on the use of media was not investigated. Kolb (2008) study showed that women have more attachment to their mobile phones and to send text messages than men do. Onasanya, Nathaniel, Sofoluwe & Onasanya (2014) findings revealed that the female students had keen interests for internet surfing than their male counterparts. The portability and ease of use of mobile technologies (Traxler, 2009) to acquire learning experiences in leisure contexts through peers, teachers and within the school environment termed hidden curriculum is...
prevalent among the youths irrespective of their gender differences. Hidden curriculum was variously defined by diverse authorities. Otewa (2016) and Abbott (2015) define hidden curriculum as unwritten, unprinted, unofficial, and unintended experiences, values and perspectives that the students learn in schools. Alsubaie (2015) refer hidden curriculum to unspoken or implicit values, behaviors, procedures, and norms that exist in the educational setting. For Jerald (2006) hidden curriculum is an implicit curriculum that expresses and represents attitudes, knowledge and behaviors that are conveyed or communicated unconsciously by words and actions that are parts of the life of everyone in a society. According to Giroux and Papis (1983) in Hashemi, Fallahi, Aojinejad, & Samavi (2012), the concept of hidden curriculum was variously described with terms such as unstudied, covert, latent, unwritten, unintended, invisible curriculum, nonacademic outcomes of schooling, by products of schooling, residue of schooling and everything taught in school. Anderson (2011) described hidden curriculum as covert knowledge and practice with unstated rules that is useful for successful completion of formal taught curriculum. Hidden curriculum is unintended knowledge, values and beliefs that are learnt in schools and classrooms, however not officially stated in the curriculum (Horn, 2004). For Gordon (1998) it is unintentional learning outcomes and messages. This means that hidden curriculum is unspoken, unwritten and untaught experiences by a teacher, but is learnt in the educational environment unconsciously. The interest cultivated for the use of mobile technologies facilitates spending considerable time consciously on their usage. Hidden curriculum experiences are self-tutored learning that are often learned via newer communication technologies and the internet surfing for accessing information, listening to radio, watching of movies on television and audio-visuals, reading of ebooks, novels, newspapers, magazines, etc. This kind of learning is esoteric in nature that afforded knowledge acquisition anytime and anywhere with and without the use of mobile phones. Ling (2004) asserts that rapid advances in technology have transformed communication methods in terms of personal interaction and the use social networking media tools such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Texting, YouTube and the like. Cheung (2008) study revealed that boys tend to use mobile phones for recreational and communicative purposes such as playing games, listening to music, sending or receiving e-mails and accessing the internet; whereas girls use the device for maintaining social contacts by using features such as text-messaging or using the phone as a phonebook. Young (1998) studied students’ attitudes towards the use of mobile phones and revealed high use of mobile phone, pleasant, helpful and easy; while some students experience feelings of anxiety and distraction. This study investigates the students’ frequency of access, use and attitude developed based on the interest cultivated towards the utilization of mobile phones to acquire pedagogical and esoteric experiences based on the students’ gender.

Statement of the Problem

Myriads of literature reviewed investigated both theoretical and empirical studies vis-à-vis the distance studies learning and the use of media to facilitate learning. Several studies showed that natural gender distinctions exist in opportunities and use of technological devices between male and female all over the world. The predominant use of mobile phone as media for accessing and dissemination information is high due to access and the interest cultivated for fiddling with them consciously and unconsciously. Therefore, this study investigated the esoteric experiences that the National Teachers Institute (NTI) distance learners are acquiring while using mobile phones for internet surfing termed the hidden curriculum based on their gender. The NTI distance learners’ frequency of access and use of mobile phones and the rate of interest cultivated for accessing various internet sites were explored.

Purpose of the Study

The main thrust for this study was to determine the influence of general use of mobile phone, frequency of access and interest cultivated by the distance learners toward internet surfing via mobile phone to acquire hidden curriculum.

Research Questions

Three research questions were answered this study.

1. Do distance learner’s frequency of access and use of mobile phones influence acquisition of hidden curriculum experiences based on their gender?
2. Do distance learner’s interest cultivated for internet surfing using mobile phone influence acquisition of hidden curriculum experiences based on their gender?
3. Do the distance learner’s interests for general use of mobile phones and internet surfing via mobile phone influence acquisition of hidden curriculum experiences based on their gender?

METHODOLOGY

Materials:

Subjects: The study comprised all National Teachers Institutes undergoing the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) programmes via distance learning in various study centres in Oyo State, Nigeria as at the time of study. However, a total of two hundred and sixty-eight (76.57%) male and female distance learners were randomly sampled out three hundred and fifty copies of questionnaires that were administered at the various study centres participated in this study. This sample consisted of 137(51.12%) males and 131(48.88%) females NCE distance learners.

Instruments

The researcher-designed questionnaire was used to ascertain the respondents’ opinion on the use of mobile phones, interests and frequency of internet surfing as medium for experiencing hidden curriculum. The instrument was segmented into four sections to gather the respondent’s biodata, frequency of access of mobile phone’s usage, internet surfing and the rate of interests cultivated for various internet site’s surfing. The developed rating scale used for access and general use of mobile phones and internet surfing was Most Frequent (MF), Frequently (F) and Not Frequent (NF). Responses to Most Frequent (MF) and Frequently (F) access were collapsed as frequently. The rate of interests was Highly Interested (HI), Interested (I) and Not Interested (NI), which was later collapsed as Interested (I) and Not Interested (NI). The term ‘frequently’ connotes the regularity of access and
use mobile phones by the distance learners, while the rate of interest cultivated for using mobile phones were responded as Interested (I) and Not Interested (NI). The draft of the instrument was given to experts of educational technology and distance education to ensure its suitability, face and content validity of the items. The reviewed draft of the instrument was pilot tested and yielded reliability coefficients $r=0.76, \ p<0.00$ for frequency of general use of mobile phones, $r=0.78, \ p<0.00$ for frequency of internet surfing and $r=0.82, \ p<0.00$ on distance learners’ interests for general use of mobile phones and internet surfing using cronbach alpha statistical instrument.

Research Design and Sampling Technique:
The study was a descriptive research of the survey type and employed the use of questionnaire’s administration to elicit responses from the respondents as means of gathering the required data. Random sampling technique was employed to sample the subjects that were involved in the study. This was done to obtain a fair representation of the respondents in the various study centres.

Procedure:
The researchers and research assistants visited the various study centres to administer the copies of the questionnaire. This afforded the researchers the opportunity of clarifying some terms that looked vague to respondents’ comprehensions. The items on the student’s frequency of general use mobile phones and internet surfing via mobile phones were scored as frequently and not frequent. While statements on the frequency of the distance learner’s for general use the mobile phones and operations especially internet surfing were rated as interested and not interested.

Data Analysis:
The raw data were generated for the general use of mobile phones for various functions such as making and receiving calls, sending and receiving text messages, use of mobile phone’s calculator, watching movies/videos and listening to music and radio programs. Similarly, students’ responses on the frequency of using mobile phones for various operations based on interest were analyzed using frequency counts, means and simple percentage.

Research Question 1
Do distance learner’s frequency of access and use of mobile phones influence acquisition of hidden curriculum experiences based on their gender?

Results
The responses on frequency of access and use of mobile phones for general operations (calling and receiving calls, sending receiving text messages, watching movies/videos, listening to radio, music, etc.) were collected, collated and analyzed using frequency counts, means and percentages.

Table 1: Male and female student’s frequency of access and use of mobile phones for diverse of operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>General Use of Mobile Phones</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>Not Frequent</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How often do you make calls with your mobile phone?</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How often do you receive calls with your mobile phone?</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How often do you text and receive SMS messages?</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How often do you use the calculator section of the mobile?</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How often do you watch movies/videos with your mobile phone?</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How frequently do you listen to mobile phone’s radio?</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 showed the comparison of male and female distance learners’ frequency of access and regularity of using mobile phones for diverse of operations. The analyses showed that the frequency counts of males for making calls were 131(48.88%) while the females distance leaners were 125(46.64%) out of 268 respondents. Also, for receiving calls by the male and female distance learners were 123(45.90%) and 126(47.02%) respectively. For sending and receiving text messages by the male and female distance learners was 68(25.37%) and 99(36.94%) respectively. Moreover, the males and female’ frequency counts for using calculator section of the mobile phones were 81(30.22%) and 51(19.03%). For watching of movies/ video and listening to music via mobile phones by the distance learners were 125(46.64%) and 118(44.03%) male and female respectively. Subsequently, the male and the female frequency of listening to mobile phones’ radio was 129(48.13%) and 55(20.52%). The collapse of responses for general use of mobile phones for male and female distance learners were 110(40.90%) and 96(35.70%) respectively. This indicates that the male distance learners averagely fiddles and use their mobile phones for making calls, receiving calls, sending and receiving text messages, watches movies/video and music, etc. than their females counterparts consciously and unconsciously. This implies that the use mobile phones influence distance learners’ experiences of hidden curriculum. Figure 1 vividly showed the composite bar charts of males and females distance learners’ frequency of using mobile phones for diverse of operations.

Figure 1: Male and female distance Learners’ frequency of access and use of mobile phones
Key:
1. Making calls mobile phones.
2. Receiving calls via mobile phones.
3. Sending and receiving text messages.
4. Use of calculator section of the mobile phones.
5. Watching of movies/videos and listening to music.
6. Use of mobile phones’ radio.

As vividly illustrated in table 1, both male and female distance learners showed similarity of disposition in conscious and unconscious use of mobile phones for diverse operations. Figure 1 indicated that male distance learners averagely fiddles and use their mobile phones to experience hidden curriculum {110(40.90%)} against their female counterpart {96 (35.70%)}. This inferred that the male’s use of mobile phones as media of experiencing hidden curriculum was higher than their female counterparts.

Research Question 2
Do distance learner’s interest cultivated for internet surfing using mobile phone influence acquisition of hidden curriculum experiences based on their gender?

Results
Responses to distance learners’ frequency of interest for internet surfing of academic/educative, professional and social networking sites were collected, collated and analyzed using frequency counts, means and percentages as shown Table 2.

Table 2 showed the NTI’s male and female distance learners’ rate of interest cultivated for internet surfing with mobile phone. The data analysis revealed that the frequency counts of 48(17.91%) males and 21 (7.84%) females distance learners affirmed reading of electronic newspapers via mobile phones. Male and female surfing of the internet to access job and profession related materials was 09(3.36%) and 05(1.87%) respectively. Also, browsing to search for solutions for the given course (s) assignment(s) was 28(10.45%) and 19(7.09%) for male and female respectively. The male and female frequency of downloading of related course materials were 23(8.58%) and 16(5.97%). The collapse of the frequency counts of the males and female distance learners for accessing social network sites were 66(24.60%) and 75(27.80%) respectively. Thus, indicating that both don’t have flair for surfing through social media platform; though the female surfs the social networking sites more than their male counterparts. Subsequently, the mean score for the collapse of the educative sites revealed that the male had the frequency counts of 18(6.7%) while their female counterparts were 10(3.8%). This inferred that both male and female distance learners does not frequently surfs the educative sites. Table 2 revealed that the collapse of mean score for males and females distance learners for internet surfing were 32(16.9%) and 24 (9.1%) respectively. This implies that both males and females frequently browse through diverse of internet sites consciously and unconsciously as medium of experiencing hidden curriculum.
As vividly illustrated in figure 2, both male and female distance learners showed less interest in surfing through reading online papers, browsing for job/profession related material, online searching for solutions to the given courses’ assignment, downloading of the related course materials and surfing through educative sites like Google, Wikipedia, askanexpert, etc. However, the distance learners frequency of surfing through social networks sites like: 2go, facebook, etc. was higher than any other sites. Therefore, it inferred that social networking sites greatly influence the distance learners’ experiences of the hidden curriculum than any other educative/academic inclined sites.

Research Questions 3
Do the distance learner’s interests for general use of mobile phones and internet surfing via mobile phone influence acquisition of hidden curriculum experiences based on their gender?

The responses to distance learners’ frequency of interest for general use of mobile phones and internet surfing via mobile phones based on the moderating effect of gender were collected, collated and analyzed using frequency counts, means and percentages as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Male and female distance learner’s interests for general use of mobile phones and internet surfing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items on students’ interest on the use of mobile phones</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making calls, receiving calls, sending and receiving text messages</td>
<td>129 (48.13%)</td>
<td>114 (42.52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching of videos/movies, listening to music and radio programs</td>
<td>131 (48.88%)</td>
<td>117 (43.66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading of electronic newspapers like, The Nation, Tribune, Vanguard, BBC etc.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing for job/professional related materials</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing to search for solutions for the given course assignment(s)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downloading of related course materials</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing through social networking sites like, 2go, facebook, etc.</td>
<td>91 (33.96%)</td>
<td>91 (33.96%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing through Academic/Educative sites like Wikipedia, dictionary.com, askanexpert.com, google.com, etc.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 showed the frequency of interests for general use and internet surfing by the male and female NTI’s learners via their respective mobile phones. The data analysis showed that the frequency of males and females distance learners’ interests for making calls receiving calls, sending and receiving text messages were 129(48.13%) and 114(42.52%) respectively, watching of videos/movies, listening to music and radio programmes was 131(48.88%) and 117(43.66%) for males and females respectively. Also, for reading of electronic newspapers (The Nation, Tribune, Vanguard, BBC, etc.) via online were responses of 59(22.12%) and 70(25.78%) males and females respectively. Subsequently, the males and female frequency counts for accessing job/profession related materials was 11(4.10%) and 12(4.42%) respectively. For, surfing the internet to access solutions to the given course assignment(s) were 32(11.94%) males and 21(7.84%) females distance learners. While males and females distance learners that showed interest in downloading the related course materials were 23(8.42%) and 14(5.10%) respectively. Moreover, the male and female responses for surfing through social networking sites (facebook, 2go, eskimi, etc.) were 91(33.96%) and 91(33.96%) respectively. This indicated that the female distance learners had flair and interests for surfing through social network sites than their male counterparts. The male students signified their interests for surfing through academic/educative sites (Wikipedia, dictionary, askanexpert, google, etc.) with frequency counts of 44 (16.42%), while females’ response of interests was 23(8.58%). The collapse of distance learners’ interest for the general operations and the internet surfing via individual student’s mobile phones revealed the frequency counts of 65 (24.20%) and 55 (20.50%) for males and females respectively. This inferred that both male and female distance learners do not frequently access the internet to access information due to less interests they have for internet surfing. However, distance learners more often use mobile
phones for making calls, receiving calls, sending and receiving text messages, watching of video/movies, listening to music and radio programmes and surfing through social networking sites to acquire experiences of hidden curriculum. Figure 3 showed the composite bar chart of male and female interests for general use and internet surfing by distance learners.

![Figure 3: Frequency of NTI's Interests for Mobile Phone Usage and Internet Surfing](image)

**Key:**
1. Making calls, receiving calls, sending and receiving text messages
2. Watching of video/movies, listening to music and radio programmes.
3. Reading of electronic newspapers like: The Nation, Vanguard, BBC, etc.
5. Surfing to search for solution for the given course assignments.
6. Downloading of related course materials
7. Surfing through social network sites.
8. Browsing through academic/educative sites.

As vividly illustrated in figure 3, the distance learners showed average interests for making and receiving calls, sending and receiving texts messages, watching of videos/movies, listening to music and radio programmes and surfing through the social networking sites. While less interest was shown for electronic newspapers reading, browsing for job/professional related materials, downloading of related course materials and browsing through academic/educative site. The female had greater interest for surfing through the social networking sites (facebooking, tweeting, 2going, etc.) and had less interest on other internet activities. This invariably commotes that distance learners cultivates great deal of interests for fun, leisure and entertainment than reading and surfing through academic/educative sites to upgrade and update their knowledge bank. This conscious and unconscious activities influence the distance learners’ experiences of hidden curriculum via usage of their respective mobile phones.

**DISCUSSION**

This study agreed with Mojaye (2015) that ownership and frequent use of a mobile phone has social, psychological, attitude and behavioral influence on students’ diverse of experiences to acquire hidden curriculum, however not on the domain of educational influence on students to update their knowledge bank. The results obtained from this study showed that the male 110(40.90%) averagely fiddled and frequently use their mobile phones for diverse of operations than their female 96(35.70%) counterparts out of the 268 distance learners to acquire experiences of hidden curriculum. The males and female frequency of the internet surfing through educative, professional/job and academic sites were 32(16.90%) and 24(9.10%) respectively out of 268(100%) responses. This showed that distance learners frequently access the internet surfing for fun, entertainment, chatting, and watching of audio/visuals due to a great deal of interest cultivated for such to acquire experiences of hidden curriculum. The study agreed with Cheung (2008) that boys use mobile phones for recreational and communicative purposes, playing games, listening to music, sending or receiving e-mails and accessing the internet; whereas girls use mobile phones for maintaining social contacts and entertainment. Students’ interests and frequent access of social networking sites for chatting, fun, entertainment, uploading and downloading of pictures or themes, watching of movies/videos and listening to music and radio programmes via mobile phones exemplified esoteric learning experiences they unconsciously acquired due to time spared for their use to upgrade human knowledge-bank (Onasanya, Nathaniel, Sofoluwe&Onasanya, 2014).

**CONCLUSION**

The study showed that irrespective of gender difference, distance learners perform myriads of function via mobile phones to acquire covert learning experiences. However, male distance learners averagely fiddles and use mobile phones for making calls, receiving calls, sending and receiving text messages, watches movies/video and music, etc. than their females counterparts consciously and unconsciously. Female distance learners more often surfs through the social networking sites such as facebook, eskimi, 2go, etc. as medium of communication for making friends, chatting, fun, entertainment, dating, watching of videos/movies, listening to music and radio programmes and general use of mobile phones due to interests cultivated for such operations than their male counterparts. Therefore, distance learners should be encouraged to access educational and academic sites with their mobile devices irrespective of gender difference. It was recommended among others that the use mobile devices could be adopted by distance learners in re-channeling students’ flairs and interests towards academic/educative forum for learning collaborations, assignments and the related pedagogical experiences. This could be achieved by organizing seminars, workshops and trainings for distance learners on how to harmonize the use of mobile devices for effective teaching and learning, usefulness and ease of use of mobile technologies for accessing cutting edge discoveries, useful and current information that will help to broaden their knowledge-base.

**References**


Authors’ Profile

Dr. Nathaniel SAMUEL is a Nigerian. He bagged his Master and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Educational Technology in the year 2011 and 2016 respectively from University of Ilorin, Nigeria; Bachelor of Science (Ed) degree in Technical Education (2006) from Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria and Nigerian Certificate in Education (N.C.E) Technical Education (1998) from Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, Adamawa State. Dr. Samuel had participated in the lecturing of undergraduate student courses...
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Dr. Gloria Olusola ADEDOJA is a Nigerian. She completed a Bachelor of Education in Adult Education and holds a master and Ph.D. in Educational Technology from the University of Ibadan in the year 1991 and 1998 respectively. She currently lectures in the department of Teacher Education, Educational Technology Unit at the University of Ibadan. Her area of research is integrating technology into all levels of education with special bias in Mobile learning. She is also interested in blended learning. She has participated and facilitated several trainings and researches on E learning, Mobile learning and best practices in Open and Distance Learning. She a member of National educational and Media Technology (NAEMT) and Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSAN)