



## FACTORS AFFECTING THE USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AMONG UNIVERSITIES' ADMINISTRATORS IN NIGERIA

By

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### ABSTRACT

*Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays an important role in the administration of the University system. This paper addressed the roles ICT plays in the administration of universities in Nigeria as well as the factors that hinder the effective use of ICT in the administration of the universities. These roles range from; financial constraints, administrative constraints, lack of awareness/orientation and so on. Possible suggestions were made which include among other things that there is the need to allocate a percentage of University budget to deployment and there should be orientation and reorientation of staff in the use of ICT facilities.*

**Keywords:** Information, Communication, Technology, Universities and Administration

### Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is as old as man. It can be traced towards the creation of God. God has always created ways and means of communicating with man. The development of gadget handle and transfer information was due to the quest to be reliable, accurate, complete, precise and sufficiently up-to date. Ogbonnaya (2018) referred to information and communication technology as a systematic process of gathering, processing, storing, sending and retrieving of information through the print, broadcast, computing and telecommunication.



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2002) in Ofoegbu (2011) defined information communication technology (ICT) as the range of technologies that are applied in the process of collecting, storing, editing, retrieving and transferring information in various forms. It comprises organized system and can access, retrieve, store, organize, manipulate, produce, present and exchange information by electronic and other automated device (UNESCO, 2003).

The definition indicates that a wide range of telecommunication equipment and facilities including computer, mobile telephone, Ipods, satellites and World Wide Web(WWW) are used for the dissemination and exchange of information among people, society and organizations. The most important service to subscribe to is the electronic mail (e-mail).Akuegbe (2005) acknowledged that the basic characteristics of ICT is that it has the capacity to handle, manipulate and relay data and information at an unimaginable speed and accuracy at our convenience.

Obiweluzor and Ofegbu (2013)observe ICT as the utilization of modern electronic equipment aimed at facilitating communication and dissemination of information ideas, knowledge and skills in which such information is conveyed thereby enabling the users including, administrators, lecturers, staff and students to collaborate more effectively in the acquisition and sharing of knowledge.

Information and Communication Technology according to Tuanyerinia, Festus, Oghorodi and Festus (2007) is the application of computers and other technology facilities to the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in the form of data, text, and images. The information according to them is stored in database which is a collection of files of information organized in such a way that the said information can be accessed from the computer system at different locations. Similarly, Noah, Akpabio and Sammy (2004) affirmed that ICT refers to diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate and disseminate, store and manage information.

Information and communication technology are tools used in handling information can be used to generate, process, store and retrieve, distribute and exchange information. ICT has become the most powerful tools for global communication in recent times and it helps in delivery of services both locally and internationally.

School Administrators/Managers are expected to perform management functions in order to control the activities of members within the schools' environment. Management refers to the sets of activities which could be classified as planning, organizing, heading (coordinating and directing)and controlling (Gibson, Ivancevish, John, Donnelly and James, 1976). In order to use the available resources to achieve a process concerned with the information of strategies, planning policies and programming with a view of achieving organization set goals. No Organization (formal and informal) can survive without the use of information and communication technology. It is vital in the administration of universities; ICT tools are used to enhance the quality of programmes of universities, that are based on student centered learning; The internet for instance, helps to educate students about the current educational programme offered in the universities within and abroad. This will help higher institution particularly the universities through Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) to adopt practices that are useful in the universities to improve the quality of education offered. ICT facilities can be of great help in the universities to enhance quality



Assurance. Teachers will always improve and upgrade their knowledge in the area of specialization using the internet.

Information and Communication Technology is relevant in the administration and management of universities. It is crucial in the areas of admission process in the Universities. The quality of students admitted (input) in the university determines the quality of graduates that would be produced (output). The use of ICT gadgets in the university system and other educational bodies brought about quality changes.

Unified Joint Tertiary and Matriculation Examinations (UTME), online applications, registration of the student through the University Portal, Marking of Scripts, collation and dissemination of results improves the efficiency, accuracy and transformation of admission process. On the other hand ICT facilities would make it easier for the best pedagogical approaches in the field to be assessed and adopted. The conference marking of examinations and treatment of results by ICT would help to discourage examination malpractice on the part of teachers and students. ICT is also relevant in students' assessment. The federal government of Nigeria (NPE, 2004) in its National Policy on Education has properly contradicted the issues of assessment. It takes place to dimension at two levels in universities, these are continuous assessment which usually accounts for 20% or 30% of a student's grade and the end of semester examinations which account for 70% of the grade which gives a total of 100%. Information and communication technology facilities help to facilitate the nature and mode of assessment and its administration which is very crucial in the administration of the university. The ancient way of marking, processing and collating of results has been improved and made a lot easier through the use of information and communication technology, computer software and this has made it possible in the areas of Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor Domain.

Electronic learning has been made a lot easier in the higher institutions (universities) through individual learning. It makes learning more attractive and interesting, like in the area of conference, the area of using Zoom; email to send memos, WhatsApp to deliver lectures and assignments. This has improved the traditional classroom settings in the universities and makes learning easier.

Information and communication technology helps the university in the areas of storing, retrieving and sending files (Records). In the Administrative Records of the university, all these can be found there: Personnel records, physical resource records, admission records. The personnel records provide the information on the employment and duty post of staff. The physical resource record, has to do with the facilities on ground and their locations and the admission records are permanent records showing from the first of admission to the graduation day of the student. This has yielded great result because of the continuous and improved ICT in the Universities (Obiweluzor & Ofoegbu, 2013).

There are several benefits of integrating ICT in the University Administration in Nigeria. They are as follows:

- It helps to improve data and information security
- It helps to get rid of using paper
- It is cost efficient; minimizes cost and saves time



- It makes it easy for the universities in the area of student management in terms of Registration and Administration
- It enhances the mode of communication
- It is an improved way of teaching and learning.

Information and Communication Technology plays a crucial role in efficient management and administration in educational sector; ICT has played an important role in the universities by reducing operational inefficiency and also help improve decision making in many areas in administration. Challenges faced by the Universities Administration in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

### **Problems affecting the use of ICT by Universities Administrators**

Universities administrators in Nigeria are faced with numerous challenges in the use of ICT ranging from, technological network problems, financial problems, and attitude of staff (Academic and Non-academic staff) towards embracing ICT. Administrative constraints, lack of awareness/orientation and poor policy implementation, manpower problems, lack of power source.

- **Technological/Network Problems:** Nigeria is among the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Country. We are trying to meet up the demand of technological know-how and there are lots of hindrances. With various Faculties and Departments in the Universities, there ought to be a central communication system linking the offices in every Faculty and a front desk telephone system manned by an officer to connect the University and the outside world for effective communication. Most Universities still do not have this in place. Where there is access to communication gadgets in some Universities, the dearth of adequate technological equipment has caused frequent breakdown of network services. This poses a big challenge in the administration of universities in Nigeria.
- **Financial Problems:** The inability of most Universities to raise funds for acquisition of modern (ICT) equipment, has become a major challenge for University administrators in utilization of ICT facilities for administration of Universities. There is need for adequate budgetary provisions for deployment of ICT in the University system. Education largely depends on grants from government for most of its capital and recurrent expenditures. Funding in this sector has been reduced drastically by Government over time and this have drastically affected the financial base of the Universities. Reduction in funding of education is a global phenomenon, according to (Ogbonnaya, 2018). Universities have been hugely affected by this trend and most of them no longer purchase ICT facilities to pay for ICT resources subscribed from their own budget.

Ogbonnaya(2018) acknowledged that lack of funds for ICT infrastructure is the major reason why in some universities the first computers and library –automated system installed in most universities were donations from external organizations. Some universities in Nigeria are yet to complete the process of migrating to modern or updated school ICT system to replace the old ones (Ochai, 2012; Ogbonnaya, 2012). Unfortunately, in Nigeria universities, there is low or no access to reliable and sustainable internet facilities and in some cases is still not widely spread in the Universities because most units and departments cannot afford to pay for adequate maximum data carrying of network connections.



- **Administrative Constraints:** The university administrators, lecturers, students, non-academic staff (senior and junior) have recognized the importance of the ICT sector in the administration of universities as well as teaching and learning processes.

Ogbonya (2018) noted that despite the major role ICT plays in the management of universities, the staff and student find it difficult in the application, due to high cost of maintenance, no accessibility to internet facility and laptops, could affect teaching and learning. Lecturers are not able to send mails to students either due to no data on the internet facility. It hinders the communication.

Application of ICT in the University has the potential to improve the academic and social wellbeing of administrators, lecturers and students. However the implementation of ICT in the university administration has been slowed because of the inadequate or inaccessible complementary infrastructure and services such as electricity, telephone, data services and financial resources

- **Lack of Awareness/Orientation:** Awareness refers to the knowledge or perception of a situation or fact. It is observed that the potential of ICT at the decision making and project formation levels has been the key constraint in schools. Recent times in the administrative offices, connection is poor from the central administration to the other part of the universities due to no internet connection at the faculties. So papers, memos are the ways of disseminating information due to the fact that most staff are not trained or given orientation on how to use ICT gadgets. Ogbonaya (2018) acknowledged that lack of awareness leads to lack of ownership and if this happens at the government levels where there is no awareness and ownership, there will be implementation failure, not necessarily due to lack of resources. Ownership stems from involvement in the formulations, playing and implementation processes. Lack of awareness is a threat to sustainability.
- **Attitude of Staff toward ICT (Academic and Non-academic Staff):**The attitude of the universities staff poses a challenge towards teaching and learning, Mikre (2011);Oladosu (2012) asserted that teachers' attitude plays an important role in the teaching and learning process that utilizes computers and internet connections. Unfortunately, accruing to Wheeler (2003) whilst some have passionately integrated technology (such as computers), others have carefully welcomed it whilst others have out rightly rejected it. The resistance in the acceptance of ICT in the classroom is often said to be primarily based on the risk of teachers losing influence over the values and directions of classroom activity. However, it is worthy to note that resistance to change is not necessarily a barrier in itself but could also be an indication of the presence of much deeper problems,

This deep problem as espoused by Cox (1999) appears to be the lack of the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude (SKAS) to adapt to change which are necessarily brought by technology. Thus, the motivation and confidence to integrate ICT in teaching and learning could only come from having access to ICT equipment and possessing the required ICT skills (Mikre, 2011).

- **Lack of Power Supply:** There is no constant supply of electricity and as such most universities do not have electricity all the time. For proper and effective use of Information and Communication Technology, it is therefore important that standby electricity supply like generators and renewable power supply like solar must be in place to enable document transmission from one place to the other.



- **Unqualified/Untrained Personnel:** Information and Communication Technology is not very old in Nigeria. Most Universities Administrators, academic and non-academic staff are not ICT compliant and there is shortage of well-trained ICT handlers (Ibadin, 2001). This makes it difficult for lecturers and students to use computer gadgets in teaching and learning.

## Conclusion

Information and Communication Technology plays a vital role in the administration and academic activities in the Universities, they enhance the quality of programmes in the universities, which are based on student learning centre. The internet can be used to gain knowledge of what currently determines programme structures and outcomes in more developed nations. These would enable higher education in Nigeria particularly universities and the National Universities Commissions to adopt best practices that are relevant to the local, social, economic and educational environment thereby enhancing quality assurance in the Administration of Universities.

## Suggestions

The paper suggest that:

1. There should be a comprehensive thought on policy and strategy for the integration of ICT in the entire University system.
2. There should be orientation for new and old staff on the use of Information and Communication Technology to enhance efficiency in the University system.
3. There is need for Information Communication Technology to be included in the programmes at every level in the University.
4. There is need for the university to employ trained personnel/experts in the area of ICT to enable them manage the operation of computer equipment and accessories.
5. The universities should allocate a large sum of money/funds during budgeting for ICT development based on courses offered, research understanding and expected academic support.
6. There should be constant supply of electricity in our universities through the use of other electricity source like generators and solar system.

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