
Information and Communication Technology and Record Keeping in Secondary Schools in Nigeria

By

DR. (MRS.) KEZIAH A. ACHUONYE
*Dept. of Curriculum Studies/Instructional Tech.
Rivers State University of Education. Port Harcourt.*

And

DR. GIFT UCHENNA NWIYI
*Dept. of Educational Foundations and Management,
Rivers State University of Education, Port Harcourt*

Abstract

The law requires every educational institution to keep and maintain statutory school record which is database of the school needed by students, parents, administrators and policy-makers. To make this information-base accurate, complete and accessible, this paper is of the opinion that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) be incorporated into the school-record keeping. However, Ignorance of ICT, poor facilities, and poor attitude towards record keeping are some of the setbacks identified. It is therefore recommended that workshops and seminars be organized for teachers and school administrators, while ICT equipments and other facilities be provided by the government to appropriate areas.

Introduction

The importance of information in every aspect of human endeavour cannot be over-emphasized. Everyone expects information to be reliable, accurate, complete, precise and sufficiently up-to-date. To achieve this fit has posed major problems until the current revolution in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

In every educational setting, information is very crucial for day to day operations. School records are very important in the administration of schools and as such require serious attention for effective and efficient administration of schools at every level of the educational sector. The keeping of record in school as entrenched in the Public Education Edict 1974 carries penalties for those who fail to keep them.

Schools records are information banks of what has been done or known, of what is to be done and of how things are to be done (Koko & Nwiyi, 2004). It provides useful source of information not only for the schools but also for the large society, and without record keeping knowledge and learning would be hampered (Aminize, 1995).

Information provides a base for our knowledge and understanding about them and the environment surrounding them. For this purpose, the administrator must be able to learn the art of getting information, storing and retrieval of same as and when desired. Such type of activities are said to be the part and parcel of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

ICT is an extension and inter-mingling of Information Technology (IT) and Communication Technology (ICT). It is the application of computers, telecommunication equipment to process, store, retrieve, and send information of all kinds (Achuonye, 2004). It is an all embracing, a comprehensive application of modern communication gadgets for processing, storing, retrieving and sending information of all kinds in whatever form or distance. It is a very fast and accurate means of accessing or receiving, storing, transferring, processing, and sending ideas, perception or information. It is very much technology-driven in the shape of tools. Equipment and application-support which helps in the collection, storage, retrieval, use, transmission, manipulation and dissemination of information as accurately and efficiently as possible for the purpose of enriching the acknowledged developing communication, decision-making and problem solving ability of the user (Mangel & Mangel, 2009). Information and Communication Technologies, according to Tuayerinia, Festus, Oghoroli and Duke (2007) are the application of computers and other technologies to the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in the form of data, text, images, etc. This information, according to them, is stored in the form of database, which is a collection of files of information organized in such a way that the said information can be accessed from different computers in different locations.

The law requires each educational institution to keep and maintain statutory schools records especially in the secondary schools. Such records includes among others, the scheme of work, the staff record register, log book, the cash book, inventory book, admission register, continuous assessment record, and dossier of the staff. It is therefore necessary that the administration adopts ICT facilities such as computers, e-mail, internet and World-Wide Web (WWW); including digital libraries, computer database, data processing mechanism, CD-Rom, DVD and so on.

Importance of Record Keeping in our Schools

The need for accurate record keeping in our secondary schools is very enormous touching on various stake-holders in education as follows:

- School-record keeping helps parents who would want to know the academic performance and general behavior of their children
- It informs the students on their current academic status motivating them to work harder.
- Inspectors or supervisors of education may require seeing the records as to enable them assess the students' performances objectively and give advice for improvement where necessary.
- School record helps to provide useful information to the higher institution of learning who may want to have or get information about the student's academic achievement

- It provides useful information to employers of labour who may want to recruit students for job at graduation.
- Keeping school records gives assistance for successive school heads in school management.
- School records act as sources of school history.

Potentials of ICT in School-Record Keeping

The usefulness of keeping school records with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is for the following reasons:

- ✓ **Administrative Efficiency:** One major setback in achieving the educational objective of the secondary education is inefficiency of the principal in keeping some records. Principals are not good in keeping records, but with the introduction of information and communication technologies such as computers, digital libraries, e-mail, internet and so on where information are stored and disseminated, they can do better in keeping records, and become effective and efficient in performing their prescribed roles as administrators. This is why Otaria (2003) opined that National Development in the current world cannot be achieved without the use of computers and information technology for efficient government administration and management.
- ✓ **Availability of Information:** Information and Communication Technologies will help in maintain adequate and accurate records in our schools.
- ✓ **Easy Retrieval:** It also leads to easy accessibility and dissemination of information on school records will become available for national planning, financial budgeting, effective implementation of the educational programmes and policies.

Problems Facing ICT in the Secondary Schools

- **Lack of trained personnel** – Personal experience show that most public secondary schools in Nigeria do no have trained technologies as store keepers who could effectively manipulate and operate computers and other information storage devices in the secondary schools
- **Poor state of the school facilities** – Most schools buildings are dilapidated and serves as death trap to both the staff and students alike. The state of the few buildings are not good for human habitation as such the equipment, machines, and other information and communication technologies cannot be kept anywhere within the school environment, and so, it is a set back in realization of the good intention of the government to globalize knowledge.
- **Lack of electricity** – Some schools in the rural areas are not connected to National grade. Information and communication technologies equipments and machines need electricity to function, but these schools are not yet electrified and the application of these equipments and machines in keeping schools

records becomes difficult. This is a challenge in implementation in these localities of such ideas in record keeping in the schools.

- **Unavailability of ICT materials and facilities in secondary schools** – The public secondary schools in Nigeria especially in Rivers State do not have information and communication technology equipment and facilities. Some school administrators do not have even the ideas of ICT as a device in facilitating the smooth running of their school as regards to record keeping.
- **Poor attitude to record keeping** – Researches on the roles of school administrators and teachers on record keeping have shown that some school-heads lack the knowledge of the usefulness of properly kept school records. Therefore, they do not pay more attention to records keeping (Koko & Nwiyi, 2006). Since some of them are not aware of the usefulness of keeping records, how could they be interested in the use of information and communication technology equipments and facilities in keeping records, hence they are ignorant of its effectiveness in record keeping. The ignorance in the part of the school-heads reduces administrative effectiveness.

Conclusion

School record keeping is all about information collection, storage, retrieval, use, transmission, manipulation and dissemination for the purpose of enriching communication, decision-making and problem solving ability in the school system. It is therefore necessary that this process be as accurate and accessible as possible, hence the need for ICT in schools. Using ICT in keeping school records will help to facilitate and enhance the administration of the school towards achieving the goals of the secondary education in Nigeria.

Recommendation

1. The school curriculum should be redesigned to include information and communication technology in the school curriculum especially at the secondary school level.
2. Because of the epileptic state of electricity supply, generators with security should be installed in all the secondary schools by the government.
3. The federal and state government in Nigeria should provide needed ICTs equipment and facilities so that school records will be adequately and accurately kept.
4. Both academic and non-academic staff in charge of keeping records should be sent for in-service training on how to use ICT equipment in keeping records. Such in-service training could be in form of seminars, workshops and conferences.

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