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RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

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CHALLENGES OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) AS A TEACHING AND LEARNING TOOL IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN ZAMBIA: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF MONGU DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to assess the challenges of using information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching and learning tool in the education sector in Zambia. Following the quantitative research design, the major findings of this study are that the ICT infrastructure support by government in secondary schools in Mongu District of Zambia is a serious challenge. Teachers perceive strong benefits should the government decide to embrace information and communication technology as a teaching and learning tool in the education sector in Mongu District of Zambia. However, the sector is currently lacking government infrastructural development and technical support. The basic conclusion of the study is that the ICT can only be used as a teaching and learning tool in the education sector in Mongu District through the provision of well ICT infrastructure facilities, strong financial capacity, strong-coordinated government support, and highly expertise of human resources to curb the challenges.

KEYWORDS

information, communication technology, learning tool, ICT infrastructure, networks, software, internet.

INTRODUCTION

In this information age, everyone requires information and communication technology (ICT) competences to survive. To borrow the words of Adomi and Kpangban (2010), "the ability to access and use information is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for development". Mulauzi (2007) also asserts that "information and access to ICTs are no longer a luxury, but a human need and basic right". ICT refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. This includes televisions, radios, satellite, internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums. These ICTs have significant impact on all areas of human activity (Brakel and Chisenga, 2003) and the education sector is no exception. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is shorthand for the computers, software, networks, satellite links, and related systems that allow people to access, analyse, create, exchange and use data, information, and knowledge until recently, were almost unimaginable. The term 'ICT' is used almost interchangeably with the Internet. The Internet together with its applications (the most well-known being the world wide web) (www) is the infrastructure that brings together people in different places and time zones with multimedia tools for information, communication, data, and knowledge management in order to enlarge the range of human capabilities (Fitz Partrick *et al.*, 2011). Information and communication technology (ICT) and their utilization are increasingly becoming a part of everyday operational activity in learning institutions such as Universities and Colleges and their importance cannot be over emphasized. It is, however, unfortunate that the advancement of ICTs has failed to produce the radical changes in learning and teaching that many anticipated especially in Zambia (Adedokun-Shittu, 2012).

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The Zambian Ministry of Education has attempted, and planned for introduction and use of ICT in teacher training education. Indeed, efforts in the past have been made to define and articulate plans to improve the management and application of information system in the Ministry of Education in all this, the Ministry has recognized the importance, use of ICT in the improvement, application of ICTs quality, and accessibility of Education. So many discussions and planning around the use of ICT have taken place. The number of schools, colleges, and skills training institutes planning for acquiring computers in their computer laboratories is slowly increasing; there is need therefore, for a corresponding strategy for taking advantage of this situation (Global Campaign for education sector 3rd June, 2005). However, Zambia faces many challenges in realizing the potential of secondary education in the penetration levels of ICTs in Zambia's education institutions however, remains low, with those secondary schools that are equipped mostly utilizing second-hand and refurbished computers. This is despite the adoption of a national ICT policy as well as the development of a draft ICT policy for education and an associated implementation framework, which provides an enabling policy environment that promotes far greater access and use of ICTs across all sectors of Zambia's education system, including a system for enhancing education management, administration, and teaching and learning. Recent research has also shown that the impact of ICT has fallen short of the rhetoric that it would produce radical change in learning and teaching in secondary schools (Nepad-Thematic paper for ICT Education African Countries, 2010). Information and communication technology ICT in teaching and learning in secondary education, is defined as an instructional program that prepares individuals to effectively use technology in learning, communication and life skills (Parker and Jones, 2008). ICT also refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. This includes the internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Zambia lacks a clear national policy articulated guide on the information and communication technology (ICT) that can necessitate effective implementation of ICT as a teaching and learning tool in the secondary schools. There is a weak stakeholder base to champion the cause, and advocate for enhancing ICT capabilities in the education sector. Worse still, most training Education Colleges in Zambia, do not offer ICT programmes in their curricular which entails that most teachers who have graduated from these colleges have little or no knowledge about ICT. This has therefore, compelled the researchers to carry out the study to investigate challenges of using ICT as a teaching and learning tool in the Education sector in Mongu District of Zambia.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the challenges of information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching and learning tool in the Education sector in Mongu District of Zambia.
2. To examine to what degree does government support affect human resource capacity in the education sector for ICT teaching in Mongu District of Zambia.

3. To examine to what degree does government support affect ICT infrastructure development in the Mongu District secondary schools in Zambia.
4. To access if teachers receive enough government support to attain ICT training in colleges and universities in the Mongu District of Zambia.

METHODOLOGY

The sampling technique used in the study was a non - probability purposive sampling .This enabled the researchers` judgment to select cases to achieve the research objectives .This form of sample is often used when working with small sample sizes. Out of 21 secondary schools 11 has been selected and 205 teachers were taken as sample size and a questionnaire was administered.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study was basically confined to the education sector and limited to secondary schools found in the Mongu District of Western Province in Zambia. The Secondary schools in Mongu were found to be more convenient to the researchers because one of the researchers is a teacher in one of the schools in the district. In addition this study was conducted for academic purpose and was not sponsored or commissioned by any organization hence, faced financial limitations to cover a wider spectrum of the population. Hence a case studies.

BACK DROP

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has attempted, and planned for introduction and use of ICT for example in teacher education. Indeed, efforts in the past have been made to define and articulate plans to improve the management and application of information system in the Ministry of Education in all this, the Ministry has recognized the importance, use of ICT in the improvement, application of ICTs quality, and accessibility of Education. So many discussions and planning around the use of ICT have taken place. The number of schools, colleges, and skills training institutes planning for acquiring computers in their computer laboratories is slowly increasing; there is need therefore, for a corresponding strategy for taking advantage of this situation (Global Campaign for education sector 3rd June 2005). However, Zambia faces many challenges in realizing the potential of Secondary Education in the penetration levels of ICTs in Zambia's Education institutions however, remains low, with those Secondary Schools that are equipped mostly utilizing second-hand and refurbished computers. This is despite the adoption of a national ICT policy as well as the development of a draft ICT policy for education and an associated implementation framework, which provides an enabling policy environment that promotes far greater access and use of ICTs across all sectors of Zambia's education system, including a system for enhancing education management, administration, and teaching and learning. Recent research has also shown that the impact of ICT has fallen short of the rhetoric that it would produce radical change in learning and teaching in Secondary schools (Nepad-Thematic paper for ICT Education African Countries, 2010).Information and communication technology ICT in teaching and learning in secondary education, is defined as an instructional program that prepares individuals to effectively use technology in learning, communication and life skills (Parker & Jones, 2008). ICT also refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications. This includes the internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums (Techterms, 2010).

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS MEAN AND STD. DEVIATION ON GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Government Support	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Provision of ICT infrastructure by government	98	1.6939	.87824
Government Supports ICT in the curriculum design	98	3.6735	1.29850
Government has a provision for ICT at my School	98	2.7755	1.39610
School has a policy in place to foster ICT	98	3.0612	1.46306
Government allocates funding for ICT at my school	98	3.1633	1.41926
School has staff development policy for teachers to teach ICT	98	2.5714	1.52640
Strategic framework is in place to facilitate training for teachers	98	3.3265	1.36809
Periodic Assessment in place by government at my school for ICT	98	2.1633	1.29785
Periodic Evaluations are made for implementation of ICT	98	3.3469	1.45093
Valid N (Listwise)	98		
Government support Average		2.8639	.61244

Table 1 above presents data gathered in response to the provision of ICT infrastructure support by government. A mean of 1.6939 (SD= .87824) measuring ICT infrastructure support by government, perceived that government does not support and provide ICT infrastructure in secondary schools in Mongu District. Furthermore, a mean of 3.6735 (SD = 1.29850) supports that government even at school level does not seem to know the ICT infrastructure status. The school staff development programme has a mean of 2.7755 (SD =1.39610) which indicates that government does not support staff development programmes for teachers to teach ICT in secondary schools. The table has also shown a mean of 3.0612(SD = 1.46306) reveals that teachers seem not to know whether government has or does not have a provision for ICT in secondary schools. Failure by government to support such postulates serious challenges by secondary schools to teach pupils using ICT. A mean of 3.1633 (SD = 1, 41926), a mean of 2.5714 (SD = 1, 52640) and a mean of 3.3265(SD = 1.36809) show that there might be challenges in terms of the ICT infrastructure.

TABLE 2: REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR GOVERNMENT SUPPORT ON ICT HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
Government support	.497 ^a	.247	.239	.40015	.247	31.528	1	96	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant),									

Table 2 shows the adjusted R square .239 or (23.9%) indicating the forecasting outcome or predictive outcome between government support and human resource in the education sector for ICT teaching. The level of government support would affect the level of human resource capacity in secondary schools in Mongu District, if the government would do something here. The positive Beta value of .497 indicates that the higher there would be government support, the higher there would be ICT human resource capacity in secondary schools in Mongu District. This affirms that there is a direct relationship between government support and ICT human resources capacity.

TABLE 3: REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR GOVERNMENT SUPPORT ON ICT HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY (COEFFICIENTS)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error				Zero-order	Partial	Part
Government support	1.811	.194		9.322	.000			
	.372	.066	.497	5.615	.000	.497	.497	.497
Dependent Variable: human resources have								

The table 3 shows the regression analysis for perceived effect of government support on ICT human resource development. The positive Beta of .497 indicates that the higher the perceived government support, the better will be the ICT human resource capacity in secondary schools. This could be true considering that naturally human resource capacity gets better and better when government support is adequately available. The higher the positive Beta value, the higher the degree of .497 of correlation which is significant with 0.000 less than the standard 0.005. The adjusted R square accounts for 23.9% indicating a predictive out come between government support and ICT human resource capacity. This means that there is perceived higher correlation between government support and human resource capacity to enhance ICT as a teaching and learning tool in the education sector in Zambia.

TABLE 4: REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON CHALLENGES FACED BY GOVERNMENT AND THEIR EFFECT ON SUPPORT FOR ICT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN MONGU DISTRICT

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
Government support	.389 ^a	.151	.142	.52745	.151	17.070	1	96	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), govsupave

The table 4 shows the adjusted R squared of .142 or (14.2%) indicating the perceived predictive out come between government support and ICT infrastructure in Mongu District, would the government decide to support ICT infrastructural development in future. The positive beta value of .389 indicates that the higher the government support, the better the ICT infrastructure will be in the secondary schools in Mongu District of Zambia.

TABLE 5: REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND ITS EFFECT ON ICT INFRASTRUCTURE IN MONGU DISTRICT (COEFFICIENTS)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error				Zero-order	Partial	Part
Government support	1.624	.256		6.345	.000			
	.361	.087	.389	4.132	.000	.389	.389	.389

The table 5 shows the regression analysis for perceived government support in secondary schools and how it will affect or enhance ICT infrastructure development and capacity should the government decide to lend its needed support. The positive beta value of .389 indicates that the higher the government support, the higher there will be ICT infrastructure development in secondary schools in the Mongu District of Zambia. This postulates that the availability of government support will have an ultimate effect on ICT infrastructure development in secondary schools in the Mongu District of Zambia.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Suggestion 1: The major challenge of using information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching and learning tool in the education sector in Zambia is lack of provision of well ICT infrastructure facilities, strong financial capacity, strong-coordinated government support, and highly expertise of ICT human resources.

Suggestion 2: There is very strong perception that the government does not support and provide ICT infrastructural development in secondary schools in the Mongu District in Zambia. The general fear is that by its nature this study's findings can be generalisable to other Districts of Zambia as whole. The results of the study impact negatively on the responsibilities of the government of Zambia when it comes to education.

Suggestion 3: The results of the regression analysis performed strongly indicate that the availability of government support has an ultimate effect on ICT infrastructural development in secondary schools in the Mongu District of Zambia. There is a need for the government of Zambia to embrace the need for ICT as a teaching and learning tool in the education sector, especially in the secondary schools.

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