Impact of ICT on Universities Administrative Services and Management of Students’ Records: ICT in University Administration

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the issue of governance in higher education, of which administration is key, is saddled with numerous challenges, as such, new approaches are being sought out to enhance the process. It is obvious that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a tool that enhances administrative activities of higher education institution. This article is based on descriptive survey design which investigates the impact of ICT on the administrative services/management of students’ records in Nigerian universities. A questionnaire was the research instrument employed, and questionnaire items were developed through a review of related literature. A total of 200 respondents participated, comprising students, lecturers and administrators were randomly selected from ten universities in Nigeria. Data collected was analyzed using ANOVA. The major impacts of ICT in administrative services/management of students’ records in Nigerian universities were identified and discussed. Suggestions are made on the need for Nigerian universities to widen the scope of ICT application in administrative services to fully reap the benefits of ICT.

KEYWORDS

Administrative Services, Challenges, Developing Countries, E-Governance, Higher Education, ICT, Nigerian Universities, Students’ Records

1. INTRODUCTION

Information technology is described as the gathering, processing, storing or retrieval of information. A more general term, ICT emphasizes the role of communication in modern information technology, in the transmission or transfer of the information from place to place and over a distance. According to UNESCO (2006), ICT is a term used to describe a range of hardware equipment (personal computer, scanners, digital camera), computer software (database programs, multi-media programs) and the telecommunication infrastructure (phones, faxes, videoconferencing equipment and web cameras) that allow us to access, retrieve, store, organize, manipulate, present, send material and communicate locally and globally through digital media. In the opinion of Newhouse (2002), ICT typically refers to computer technologies, but strictly speaking should also include other technologies used for the collection, storage, manipulation and communication of information. Eadie (1999) stated that ICT
is a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, and create, disseminate, store and manage information.

Generally, ICT is used to encompass all forms of telecommunication networks, including telephone, radio, and television. However, the driving power of ICT is obviously the internet, a world-wide computer network built on telecommunication media, and which is usually the focus of discussions on ICT. According to Achimugu et al (2010), the internet has emerged as a major driving force of this dynamic development of information and communication technologies, which has impacted positively in virtually every sector. ICT has been fundamental for improving productivity and the development of knowledge-intensive products and services (Soto-Acosta et al 2010), which is one of the main aspirations of all countries in the world, since it brings overall prosperity for countries and regions (Hanafizadeh et al, 2009). It has been adopted by different sectors including business, manufacturing and agriculture and health (Dzombeta, Stantchev, Colomo-Palacios, Brandis & Haufe, 2014).

The field of education has been affected by these positive impacts of ICT. According to Lemke and Coughlin (1998), Davis and Tearle (1999), cited in Yusuf (2005), ICT has the potential to accelerate, enrich, and deepen skills, motivate and engage students in teaching, helps to relate school experiences to work practices, helps to create economic viability for tomorrow’s workers, contributes to radical changes in school, strengthens teaching, and provides opportunities for connection between the school and the world. According to Angeli & Valanides (2009) technology has extensive pedagogical affordances and great potential for transforming the teaching and learning environment when it is used appropriately.

The adoption of ICT in education spans through from preschool (Lui, 2015) to higher education institutions (Pavel, Fruth & Neascu, 2014; Toro & Joshi (2012). Higher education institutions across the world have been adopting ICT teaching and learning technologies in an effort to create environment for both students and their instructors to engage in collaborative learning and gain access to information (Abirin, 2006). ICT has presented an easy means for students and teachers to access the world quickly, to obtain or disseminate information. The higher education institutions around the globe have increasingly adopted ICT as tools for teaching, curriculum development, staff development, and learning (Usuel et al., 2008). Specifically, application of ICT to higher education institutions has redefined activities in teaching and learning process, research and information sourcing, administrative services/management of students’ records, as well as communication among teachers, students and others in these institutions. According to Ahmed (2009), the use of ICT makes administrative and teaching process more flexible, less time consuming, and less expensive, and so most of the universities are trying to assume the benefits of ICT. Also, in the statement of Awoleye (2006), ICT enhances easy communication, is used as a research tool, and provides solutions to assignments. As a result of this, ICTs are fast becoming an integrative part of national higher education policies and plans all over the world (Louw et al., 2009).

The governance and management of higher education institutions is primarily saddled with administrative services, as such the success of its governance is dependent on the effectiveness of its administration (ADB, 2012; Hénard & Mitterle, 2010). Administration Administrative services in higher education institutions take care of various activities in areas such as accounts, management of students’ data and general administration. Administration of students involves various activities starting from the admission process through learning activities to processing and release of results. These administrative works are found to have enhanced greatly under the application of ICT. According to Obeng (2004) the integration of ICT into this process enhances the overall admission activities of higher education institutions by making it more accessible to many.

ICT might have brought changes in the administrative services/management of students records in Nigerian universities, with some success recorded, especially in its role in students’ enrolments. But, the benefits are obviously not yet adequately captured.
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