

APPRAISAL OF PARENTS' VIEWS AND SUPERVISION OF THEIR CHILDREN'S USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the parents' views and supervision of their children's use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for this study. 400 parents were randomly sampled from four (4) Local Government Areas of Kwara State, North Central Nigeria for the study. Two instruments were developed namely: Parents' Views of Children's Use of ICT Questionnaire (PVCUIQ) and Parent's Supervision of Children's Use of ICT Questionnaires (PSCUIQ) and used for data collection. PVCUIQ and PSCUIQ yield reliability coefficients of $r=0.86$ and $r=0.82$ respectively. were used to collect data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages and Chi-Square. The result shows that there is no significant difference between the gender of the parents in both their views of their children's use of ICT subsequently their involvement in supervision of their children's use of ICT. Recommendations were thus offered that schools and other stakeholders should educate parents on children's proper utilization of ICT and parents are also urged to maintain adequate supervision on their children's use of ICT.

KEYWORDS: Parents' views, Parents' supervision, Children's use of ICT, Information and Communication Technology

INTRODUCTION

There is no controversial dimension to the fact that Information Communication Technology (ICT) lies at the very heart of our today's society. It is closely associated with educational achievement and pivotal to virtually all aspects of human endeavour particularly if such society is to experience development. It seems now that everything is going digital when even examinations are now becoming computer based. The fact remains that ICT has social and educational benefits of interactivity, yet its potential harms should not be ignored. As technology became more pervasive, research established that in a greater way children's exposure to ICT affects their development.

Each new media technology brought with it great promise for social and educational benefits as documented by *Thornburgh & Lin (2002)*. ICT helps

children to socialize quickly, this they do on facebook, twitter, whatsapp, MySpace and 2go to mention a few. Engaging in these various forms of social

media is a routine activity that research has shown to benefit children and adolescents by enhancing communication, social connection, and even technical skills. Social media sites such as offer multiple daily opportunities to children. Social media sites allow teens to accomplish online many of the tasks that are important to them offline: staying connected with friends and family, making new friends, sharing pictures, and exchanging ideas. Social media participation also can offer adolescents deeper benefits that extend into their view of self, community, and the world (*Obeng, 2004; Fur, 2009; O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011*).

Children and adult put together, ICT fundamentally determines the frequency of our communication and the dynamics of socialization have been all together immensely affected by ICT. A child becomes better by the amount of information at his disposal. So, children have reached a high level of sophistication

in all ramification of learning, and acquired a liberalism orientation ICT afforded them due to globalization.

Invariably, it means ICT is indispensable to any modern society. ICT in its right use is not harmful to children; it is a relevant and functional way of providing education to learners. In fact, this ICT is fundamentally changing the way children live, learn, and work (Ajayi, 2003;

Aladejana, 2007). Studies has also highlighted the damages ICT is doing to the average Nigerian child and the entire Nigerian society today. Researches confirmed that children use ICT as a platform to flaunt immorality, abuse, bully, cheat and commit other vices that have virtually and inconspicuously eroded our value system. For example, ICT undermines children's morality and cause them to engage in illicit sexual and other criminal behaviours. Children's access to ICT exposes them to screen experiences far beyond their years. Volumes of researches conducted by the most prominent psychologists, sociologists, and educators confirms the effects of ICT on such diverse topics as sleep patterns, knowledge about foreign cultures, attitudes about violence, and delinquent behavior (O'Connell, Price & Barrow, 2004).

Amarachi, (2001) and Willard (2007) also expressed a great concern for children's exposure to inappropriate and harmful content. For example, some sites prescribe drugs for seeming ailments in children and adults, so, unknown to parents' children visit these sites to get drug prescriptions. Many children have become drug addicts as a result of their overexposure to these sites trying to google out drugs for ailments they feel they do not want to disclose to parents, and because of the high level of indulgence, no one is taking up the responsibility of nipping this in the bud. In many ways, children have exchanged reading habits for browsing and playing games on the internet which has led to failures recorded in the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations

(UTME) in recent years, misuse of drugs and the prosecution of fraud cases getting messier in our courts of law all call for investigation of probable causes which we cannot surprisingly separate from ICT. Not only have these, children and youths now besieged pornographic sites. It is estimated that over 10 million people (including primary school pupils) in a week visit pornographic websites in Nigeria alone. It is now a common sight to see nude pictures of little girls posted on face book and other social media making the situation more precarious. Also, pupils have found a good friend in ICT to deepen their game of cheat in schools (Oyinlola, 2013). The menace of cheating in schools has become elaborately sophisticated and is equally advancing among primary school pupils in Nigeria. Since the advent of GSM, cheating becomes easier in examination centers by copying supposed answers on memory card of phones. With the introduction of android software, i-pad, i-pod and other sophisticated phones, this cheat game is even getting messier and no one is taking up the initiative to stem the tide.

The underlying reality is that virtually all parents in Nigeria today want their children to have limitless access to the internet, phones and other communication gadgets without commensurately weighing its attendant negative impacts on their wards most especially the damaging impact on their children's moral and educational pursuit. Some parents are of the opinion that internet access, the use of phones and other ICT facilities are actually investments in their children's future while some see 24-hours internet access at home as mark of social status or as a thing that will depict them as elite class. Surveys indicate that a growing number of parents believe their daughters and sons should be permitted to participate in social networking at early ages. (Amarachi, 2001; Ajayi, 2003; Beebe et al, 2004) Crombie & Trinneer (2001) observed that parents lackadaisically indulge their children to overly expose themselves to the internet and allied gadgets without any supervisory

role coming from any quarter. Poor monitoring practices run counter to getting parents to become more constructively involved in online activities of children. There is growing obsession about the use of ICT by young ones in Nigeria today. The delusion of wealthy families and middle class families who have access to internet leaving their children online without monitoring makes these children to start their socialization online.

Some parents may find it difficult to relate to their digitally know-how youngsters online for several reasons. Such parents may lack a basic understanding of these new forms of socialization, which are integral to their children's lives while some may lack technical abilities or time needed to keep pace with their children in the ever-changing Internet landscape. The concern however is about its pervasive use, the negative attribute of ICT and the indifference of parents and guardians to the damages it's doing to posterity and our value system especially as Africans (Becta, 2005).

Sixty percent of Nigerian homes with children ages 8 to 17 have computers, and most of these computers are connected to the internet. Concerns about children's use of computers are being raised in the press, and increasingly, in public policy fora. The challenges posed by information and communication technology on children and teenagers in Nigeria especially and in Africa in general have necessitated rigorous research into measures that can be taken in order to avert the harm and damages this new age advancement in technology is causing in our society. ICT and social media should be revisited for the total development of an African child and particularly Nigerian children. The way parents view this powerful technology which can make or mar children's success and their supervisory role over these children in the use of ICT should then become a subject of concern to all stakeholders in the learning and development children. It becomes apparent

then that the responsibility and initiative for resolving this crisis and taking up supervisory role over what children do on net rests with the parents. Therefore, this paper appraised the parents' view and their level of

supervision of children and teenagers' use of ICT in Kwara State.

Research Questions

1. What is the parents' view of their children's use of ICT?
2. What is the level of parents' supervision of their children's use of ICT?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference Male and female parents' view of their children's use of ICT is not significantly different.
2. Male and female parents' supervision of their children's use of ICT is not significantly different.

Methodology

Descriptive design was adopted for this study. 400 parents were randomly sampled from four Local Government Areas in Kwara State, Nigeria. Two instruments titled 'Parents' Views of Children's Use of ICT Questionnaire (PVCUIQ) and Parents' Supervision of Children's Use of ICT Questionnaire (PSCUIQ) were used to collect data for the study. The PVCUI consisted of two sections; A and B. Section A collected demographic information of the respondents and Section B which consisted of ten items was used to ascertain information on the views of parents' on their children's use of ICT. PSCUIQ also consisted of ten items which elicited information about the parents' level of supervision of children's use of ICT. The face and content validity of the two instruments were established by lecturers in Early Childhood and Primary Education and

Information and Communication Technology. Using inter-rater scale, the instruments PVCUI and PSCUI yielded reliability coefficient ($r=0.86$) and ($r=0.82$) respectively. Data collected was analyzed

using the descriptive and chi-square analyzes.

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Result and Discussion

Research Question One: What is parents' view of their children's use of ICT?

Table 1

S/N	Parents' view	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean
1.	Every child should be provided with at least one ICT gadget (phone, tablet, computeretc) with internet access.	311(77.8)	43(10.8)	45(11.3)	1(.3)	1.34
2	There is nothing bad in buying phones with several functioning for children.	136(34.0)	255(63.8)	9(2.3)		1.68
3.	Children should be given unlimited access to the internet.	272(68.0)	109(27.3)	4(1.0)	15(3.8)	1.41
4.	All children should be encouraged to be on social medias facebook,youtube, 2go, and whatsapp) regardless of their age.	174(43.5)	210(52.5)	15(3.8)	1(.3)	1.61
5.	Allowing children to use phones with internet access helps them access information they need for school work.	206(51.5)	188(47.0)	5(1.3)	1(.3)	1.50
6.	Children should only be allowed to watch films once in a while	133(33.3)	229(57.3)	23(5.8)	15(3.8)	1.80
7.	Children should be allowed to watch films (downloaded or streamed) regularly because it increases their knowledge and experiences.	199(49.8)	161(40.3)	24(6.0)	16(4.0)	1.64
8.	Denying a child access to ICT is barbaric as it affects their level of exposure.	145(36.3)	217(54.3)	38(9.5)		1.73
9.	Children should not be allowed to use phones in school.	231(57.8)	166(41.5)	2(.5)	1(.3)	1.43
10.	Children will be feeling inferior among their mates if they are not allowed to use phones and have access to internet facilities	169(42.3)	216(54.0)		15(3.8)	1.65
	Weighted Average					1.58

Table 1 above showed that parents agreed with the following views: There is nothing bad in buying phones with several functioning for children (1.68); All children should be encouraged to be on social medias (facebook, youtube, 2go, and whatsapp) regardless of their age (1.61); Allowing children to use phones with internet access helps them access information they need for school work (1.50); Children should only be allowed to watch films once in a while (1.80); Children should be allowed to watch films (downloaded or streamed) regularly because it increases their knowledge and experiences (1.64); Denying a child access to ICT is barbaric as it affects their level of exposure (1.73); Children will be feeling inferior among their mates if they are not

allowed to use phones and have access to Internet facilities (1.65). The parents also strongly agreed with the following views: Every child should be provided with at least one ICT gadget (phone, tablet, computer etc.) with internet access (1.34); Children should be given unlimited access to the internet (1.41); Children should not be allowed to use phones in school (1.43). The weighted average of parents' view of their children use of ICT is 1.58 which is a numeric indicator that many parents had negative view of their children use of ICT. Research Question Two: What is the level of parents' supervision of their children use of ICT?

S/N	Parents' supervision	AA (%)	A (%)	S (%)	N (%)	Mean
1.	I monitor what my children do on phone, computer or the internet	29(7.3)	32(8.0)	259(64.8)	80(20.0)	2.03
2	I control the number of hours my children spend with phones, computer or the internet		26(6.5)	167(41.8)	207(51.8)	1.55
3.	I check my children's 2go, twitter and facebook pages to know their interaction with others and activities on these social media.	1(3)	9(2.3)	342(85.5)	48(12.0)	1.91
4.	I do not encourage my children to visit cybercafe.	10(2.5)	16(4.0)	149(37.3)	225(56.3)	1.53
5.	I search the laptop my children use to check what they download from internet..	16(4.0)	9(2.3)	270(67.5)	105(26.3)	1.84
6.	I select the films my children watch.	9(2.3)	15(3.8)	176(44.0)	200(50.0)	1.58

7.	I limit my children to channels they should tune to.	9(2.3)	1(.3)	271(67.9)	119(29.8)	1.75
8.	I don't bother what channel my children visit; all experiences educate them.	24(6.0)		148(37.0)	228(57.0)	1.55
9.	I correct my children if I see those watching films that will affect their morals.	9(2.3)		216(54.0)	175(43.8)	1.61
10.	I check my children to make sure they don't take phone to school.	9(2.3)	25(6.3)	186(46.5)	180(45.0)	1.66
Weighted Average						1.70

Table 2 above showed that parents sometimes carried out the following supervision of their children use of ICT: I monitor what my children do on phone, computer or the internet (2.03); I control the number of hours my children spend with phones, computer or the internet (1.55); I check my children's 2go, twitter and facebook pages to know their interaction with others and activities on these social media (1.91); I do not encourage my children to visit cybercafé (1.53); I search the laptop my children use to check what they download from internet (1.84); I select the films my children watch (1.58); I limit my children to channels they should tune to

(1.75); I don't bother what channel my children visit; all experiences educate them (1.55); I correct my children if I see them watching films that will affect their morals (1.61); I check my children to make sure they don't take phone to school (1.66). The weighted average is 1.70 which is a numeric indicator that the parents' level of supervision of their children's use of ICT is low.

Hypothesis One: Male and female parents' view of their children's use of ICT is not significantly different.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis showing Male and female parents' view of their children's use of ICT.

Gender of Parents		Disagree	Agree	Total	df	χ^2	Sig
Male	Count	179	4	183	1	.006	.937
	Expected	178.9	4.1	183.0			
Female	Count	212	5	217			
	Expected	212.1	4.9	217.0			
Total	Count	391	9	400			
	Expected	391.0	9.0	400.0			

Table 3 showed that there was no significant difference in male and female parents' view of their children's use of ICT ($\chi^2 = .937$; $df = 1$; $P > .05$). This implies that gender had no significant influence on parents' view of their children use of ICT.

The hypothesis is therefore accepted in the light of the result.

Hypothesis Two: Male and female parents' supervision of their children's use of ICT is not significantly different.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis showing Male and female parents' supervision of their children's use of ICT

Gender of Parents		Disagree	Agree	Total	df	χ^2	Sig
Male	Count	176	7	183	1	.638	.425
	Expected	174.3	8.7	183.0			
Female	Count	205	12	217			
	Expected	206.7	10.3	217.0			
Total	Count	381	19	400			
	Expected	381.0	19.0	400.0			

Table 4 showed that there was no significant difference in male and female parents' supervision of their children's use of ICT ($\chi^2 = .638$; $df = 1$; $P > .05$). This implies that gender had no significant influence on parents' supervision of their children use of ICT. The hypothesis is therefore accepted in the light of the result. The results showed that many parents had negative view of their children's use of ICT. This result corroborated Amarachi (2001), Ajayi (2003), Beebe et al, (2004) studies that indicated that a growing number of parents believe their daughters and sons should be permitted to participate in social networking at early ages. The result was not in agreement with the opinion of Bullen and Harre (2000) who advised parents against giving their children unlimited access to ICT and internet because of its negative impact on their behavior. The result was also against the findings of Crombie and Trinner who advocated restriction of children from some websites for internet safety purposes. The result also showed that the parents did not provide adequate supervision to their children use in their use of ICT. This result was in conformity with observation of Amarach (2001) and Crombie & Trinneer (2001) that parents lackadaisically indulge their children to overly expose themselves

to the internet and allied gadgets without any supervisory role coming from any quarter. The result also supported study of Byron (2009) who identified laxity of parents in supervision of their children's use of internet. The result also supported Consumer Reports Magazine (2011) that found that more than 7 million active users of Facebook were under the minimum required age. Children lying about their age with the support of their parents who appear unconcerned about involvement. The result revealed that gender had no significant influence on parents' view and supervision of their children's use of ICT. This implies that there is no difference in the views and supervision of both male and female parents. This result was supported by Gross (2004) who challenged that all parents should be involved in the supervision of children's activities on social media regardless of their schedule and gender.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The result revealed that some parents' views of their children's use of ICT are not right which subsequently affects their involvement in supervision of their children's use of ICT. The parents that have positive purposes provide adequate supervision on their children's use of ICT while reverse is the case with the parents

that have wrong intentions. Youtube, 2go, and whatsapp). Recommendations were thus offered that: All hands have to be on deck and we must go through a period of attitudinal change and proper reorientation in order to galvanize efforts to use ICT appropriately.

- Stakeholders in the education sector need to stop advocating for going digital alone, but also emphasize responsible use of digital life.
- Government and all stakeholders should also awake to their responsibilities to control pupils and teenagers in the use of ICT facilities and tailor pupils' interest and energy towards positive use of ICT in schools.
- Schools and other stakeholders should educate parents to correct their erroneous views of children's use of ICT and maintain children's proper utilization of ICT
- Parents are also urged to maintain adequate supervision of their children's use of ICT.

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