



PARENTS' PERCEPTION ON INTERGRATION OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN EDUCATION AND ITS INFLUENCE IN SCHOOL CHOICE IN PRIVATE PRE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN TANZANIA

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Abstract:

After independence, Tanzanian government had made various efforts of changing the educational system in various periods to suit the world changes needs. Among the efforts is that of integration of information communication technology (ICT) in various levels of education. Currently, Tanzania has finalized its information Communication Technology (ICT) policy.... for basic education which incorporates the integration of ICT in pre-primary, primary, and secondary education. This paper intended to assess parent's perception on Integration of Information Communication Technology in education in preprimary level and to examine the influence of Integration of Information Communication Technology in education on parent's preprimary school choice in Tanzania. The data were collected from 5 parents with children in private pre-primary schools in urban Njombe. The study revealed that most parents who send their children in private pre-primary schools in Njombe perceive ICT as very important for their children's future life, and also the parents do choose private pre-primary school by considering the ICT facilities as the factor for their choice. The findings revealed that apart from parents having a positive perception on ICT most schools have insufficient infrastructure for teaching and learning ICT and also parents are worried on the proper control of ICT use from their children. This is an implication that the situation forces the integration of ICT in education but the stakeholders are not yet fully prepared. The study recommends the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Vocational Training (MoESTVT) to fast track the ICT infrastructure in both private and public schools for all levels of education starting with pre-primary schools as a foundation of all other levels and involve all educational stakeholders especially parents.

Keywords: ICT, ICT integration, private primary school, parents school choice

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1. Introduction

From the historical facts, Tanzania has undergone several educational reforms and restructurings since independence in 1961 in order to meet its development objectives generate desired outcomes, and to make it fit to Tanzanian citizens with focus on Africanization. The reforms are based on the process of transmitting knowledge and civilization of society to present and future generations with the views of facilitating the continuity of the society to suit with the globalization of the world (Biao and Dipholo, 2013). Most changes are based on the educational policy which is the major direction of education system of the country depending on the government determination (Okoroma, 2006). Before the current Educational Policy Tanzania had an educational policy of 1995, the policy was created by the inspiration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in achieving the Universal Primary Education for equity in education (Weaver, 2011). With these changes, Tanzania had a current education policy of 2014. In this policy, there are other small education policies according to the particular field, like National ICT policy and ICT for basic education policy in Tanzania. This study therefore investigated the part of ICT policy in basic education specifically for pre-primary education by investigating parents' perception on the integration of information communication technology in education as the influence of school choice for quality education in private pre- primary schools in Tanzania

1.1 Parents' school choice in Tanzania

School choice is a very famous terminology for many parents in the world, since it is perceived as a means for removing bureaucratic constraints on personal freedom and provides opportunities for parents to make real choices in relation to their children's education. Also, the school choice states that choice provides a wider range of options both for consumers and for learning institutions only if parents are free to choose a learning institution, and can provide a co-operative partnership between the community and learning (Mark & Anne, 2010). Parents in Tanzania has an experience in the process of school choice since the educational system is operating under private and public schools, therefore parents in this case are free to exercise the freedom of choosing schools for their children's education. This study therefore investigated the parents' perception on the integration of information communication technology in education as the influence of school choice in private pre- primary schools in Tanzania.

1.2 Educational structure and ICT Educational Policy in Tanzania

The current educational structure in Tanzania involve 1+6+4+2+3+ years where the first one year is for pre-primary class followed by six years for primary education, together with four years for ordinary secondary education followed by two years for advance secondary education while the last three years are for tertiary education (MoESTVT, 2014). According to the policy, basic education is from pre-primary education level to

ordinary secondary education. This study dealt with the first cycle of the structure pre-primary school education.

In order to implement its policy and educational structure the government merged the policy into affordable and implementable policies where it includes National ICT Policy which specifies that ICT enriches effective way of conveyance of education. Also, it acknowledged as a major reason to the implementation of ICT in education. The policy aims at improving the quality of delivering education and training in all levels (MoEVT, 2003). From these facts, this study dealt with the integration of ICT in basic level of education particularly pre-primary education level.

1.3 ICT Integration policy in Tanzania

The ICT Policy for basic education advocates that the integration of ICT in teaching and learning will empower teacher, students, educators, school managers and leaders to use ICT effectively in their daily activities which will lead to the improvement of quality of education (United Republic of Tanzania, 2007)

With integration of this policy Tanzanian government espoused National Vision 2025 in 1999, which foresees five key areas that the country will achieve by 2025; high-quality livelihoods; peace, stability and national unity; good governance; a well-educated and learning society permeated with an ambition to develop; and a competitive economy capable of producing sustainable growth and shared benefit (Shafika, 2015). The Vision recognizes the potential of ICT to address the country's development challenges specifically in education sector.

The education sector included basic education as a priority area. This vision arranged objectives to make sure: equitable access to quality early childhood education development programmes, primary and secondary education for both girls and boys, expansion of quality Tanzanian Vocational Education Training (TVET), higher education; and adult non-formal and continuing education. The latest National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (Government of Tanzania, 2011) again highlights goals and strategies for each education subsector and makes specific reference to providing classrooms with ICT facilities and promoting the use of ICT in teaching and learning in all levels (Shafika, 2015). This study therefore investigated with the integration of ICT in basic level of education particularly pre-primary education level.

2. Statement of the Problem

Information and communication technology (ICT) are being integrated in teaching and learning process for many learning institutions of the world (Shafika, 2015). Mwalongo, (2011) argues that, the integration of ICT in education encourages independent learning, curriculum diversity, student-centred learning, high order thinking, problem-solving and cooperation learning. Due to the few cited benefits, Tanzania has no option rather than struggling to encourage and emphasize the integration of ICT in education system for all educational levels. The successful integration of ICT in education system involves

various stakeholders including parents and trained teachers for all levels of education. In this case, therefore there was a need to investigate in the parents' perception on the integration of information communication technology in education as parents are among the key important stakeholders in educational system. Due to these reasons, this study investigated parents' perception on the integration of information communication technology in education as the influence of school choice in private pre-primary schools in Tanzania

3. General Objective

To examine Parents perception on the Integration of Information Communication Technology in Education and the influence of integration of ICT in private Pre -Primary Schools choice in Tanzania.

3.1 Specific Objectives

1. To assess parents perception on integration of ICT in education for in pre-primary level
2. To examine the influence of integration of ICT in education on parents pre-primary school choice in Tanzania.

4. Literature Review

A range of studies has been conducted on the ICT use in education systems in the world for a number of years. Some researched on exploring the widespread of integration of ICT into school in developed and underdeveloped countries context. This study moved on the parents' perception on the integration of ICT in pre-primary education as a criterion for the parents' choice of private pre-primary school in Tanzania. Since it is well known that parents are among the very important stakeholders in educational system

4.1 Integration of ICT in education system

The Tanzanian government accepted a General ICT Policy in 2003, which expresses that ICT can improve education prospects and advocates for the introduction of an e-education system (Shafika, 2015). In 2007, the government adopted an ICT Policy for Basic Education which covers the education system from pre-primary to university, including secondary, teacher, non-formal and adult education. The policy addresses a wide range of areas related to Technology enabled learning and teaching, including ICT infrastructure, curriculum integration, digital content, teacher training, management, support and monitoring, and evaluation. In this case technologies include the use of radios, mobile phones, computers and the Internet in education system (Shafika, 2015)

In Tanzania, the process of integration of ICT in education system involves various institutions and strategy. For instance, about 21 universities and other higher

education institutions in Tanzania adopted a structure for the formation of a new national ICT network known as TERNET. TERNET's aim is to connect all universities, and other higher education institutions in Tanzania. Amongst their intended outcomes are to:

Firstly to link training, research and other service delivery institutions to a well-structured national and international data communication gateway; Secondly to promote enhanced ICT application in teaching, research and service delivery and Thirdly is to enable the cost-effective utilization of resources through the sharing and exchange of skills between national and international institutions (Shafika, 2015). This will be well successful in education system if the all education stakeholder included in the whole process of implementation from the pre-primary school level.

A study made by Ngeze (2017) on the ICT integration in teaching and learning in secondary schools in Tanzania aimed at looking on the readiness of secondary schools to successful integration of ICT in teaching and learning activities. The study discovered that most schools do not have ICT infrastructures in place and in those schools where ICT infrastructures exist; student computer ratio is very low. However, teachers are ready to use ICT in their teaching and learning activities if they will be provided with skills and knowledge to implement the target. on these studies, it is evident that, Tanzania has made several efforts to complete ICT integration in education system nevertheless little has been done to determine the readiness of all education stakeholders, availability of ICT infrastructures and possession of other devices for both teachers and students to help in the integration of ICT in Tanzania. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct this study so that to investigate hoe parents perceive this ICT integration in private pre-primary school and how this influence their pre-primary school choice. This study therefore investigated the parents (stakeholder) perception on ICT integration in pre-primary school.

4.2 Educational stakeholders' perception on ICT integration

Since the adoption of ICT use in education system there has been many studies done on the assessment of ICT integration in education for various countries in the world, by associating several educational stakeholders involved in the whole process of ICT implementation in education system. For instance, Shafika (2015) did a study on ICT implementation assessment for 20 countries, 18 from commonwealth countries in Africa and 2 from Mediterranean countries. In Tanzania, specifically most studies that have been done reflected on teachers and students and left other education stakeholders like parents in vain. Moreover, other prevailing conditions for ICT integration in education system have been more prominently invested in higher levels of education and left out the initial and foundation of all stages of education; the pre-primary school.

A study by Mwalongo (2011) on the teachers' perception on ICT Integration in teaching, professional development, administration and personal use revealed that the frequency use of ICT is influenced by access, the components of ICT use are influenced

by training, teachers use of ICT in teaching, administration, professional and personal use.

Furthermore, Mwalongo (2011) discovered that, the successful integration of ICT in the teaching-learning process, regardless of other things, is dependent much on the preparation and readiness of the teachers. In Tanzania, teachers are prepared at two major levels, in teacher training colleges and university levels. In the teacher training college level, graduates from ordinary level are trained as certificate teachers for pre-primary and primary schools while the advanced level leavers are trained as teachers for secondary schools. Therefore, the successful integration of ICT in education system needs to involve all educational stakeholders from the beginning.

A study by Hennessy et al (2010) discusses on the perceptions and beliefs of teachers on ICT integration in education and their motivating effects, technological literacy and confidence levels, pedagogical expertise related to technology use, and the role of teacher in teaching and learning. The study fuses on the research literature on teachers' use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in primary and secondary schools in sub-Saharan Africa, with a particular emphasis on improving the quality of subject teaching and learning. However, the study laid more emphasis on the internal factors of influence on teachers use, or lack of use, of ICT in the classroom at the level of primary and secondary school.

The study explained further that, ICT can be an effective tool in supporting teaching and learning. The study also determinedly recognized that its integration into schools does not by itself improve the quality of education or raise attainment. Hopefully, there is growing and widespread awareness that the pedagogical and technical expertise of the teacher is absolutely critical in the whole process of ICT integration. Governments in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) where Tanzania is included, as elsewhere, are emphasizing teacher development as the key to effectively implement policy and curricula, to using ICT to enhance teaching and learning, and to raising educational standards. Beside the truth discovered by the study, the parents as important stakeholders in the whole process of ICT integration in education system remained in vein especially at the initial stage of education system.

The study by Khan et al (2012) on the barriers to the integration of ICT into Education system in developing countries revealed that ICT for education is more critical today than ever before since its growing power and capabilities are triggering a change in the learning environments available for education. The study emphasizes that the practice of ICT offers powerful learning environments and can transform the learning and teaching process so that students can deal with knowledge in an active, self-directed and constructive way. The study further advocates that, currently ICT is considered as an important means to promote new methods of instruction (teaching and learning). However, it is used to improve students' skills for cooperation, communication, problem solving and lifelong learning Khan et al (2012). According to Khans' study, apart from all the necessary importance of ICT in educational sphere still there are various barriers and different perceptions of education stakeholders in the

whole process of integration of it in education system in developing countries. This study therefore scrutinized the parents' perception on integration of ICT in educational system based on private pre-primary school in Tanzania.

5. Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Njombe district whereby five parents from five private pre-primary schools were randomly selected from 10 urban private pre-primary schools in the district. These schools were selected due to the fact that it would provide the relevant information needed in the study. These schools were included in the sample because they have ICT classes and facilities. The study used interview and documentary review to collect information. The interview questionnaire guide were used to collect information from 5 parents with children in private pre-primary school who were purposively randomly selected from five private pre-primary schools in urban Njombe.(one school one parent for interview). The guide questionnaire had two parts, the first part aimed at assessing the parents' perception on ICT integration in education while the second part was on examining the parents' influence of ICT integration in private pre-primary school choice. The information collected were analyzed through thematic analysis

6. Analysis of Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the findings involves the demographic characteristics of the respondents on the two objectives of the study these are; to assess parents' perception on Integration of Information Communication Technology in education for in pre-primary level and the second is to examine the influence of Integration of Information Communication Technology in education on parents' pre- primary school choice in Tanzania. The interview guide questionnaire were used to collect information from 5 parents with children in private pre-primary school who were purposive random selected from five private pre-primary schools in urban Njombe. (One school one parent for interview). The collected data were dissected and sorted out into various sub themes of the study and finally classified depending on the two objectives of the study.

6.1. Parents perception on Integration of ICT in education in pre-primary level

The finding of this study initially concurred with the result of Baytack et al(2012) study on the perception of parents over the use of ICT in education which revealed that most of parents were found to give strong value to the use of ICT in education.

6.1.1 Parents social perception on ICT integration in education

One of the sub-themes obtained from parents' interview was social perception on the ICT integration in education system especially for pre- primary school level. Under this sub theme based on the social aspect, parents have perceived ICT as a social important

tool which allows their children to have a wide social network in the society. Most parents revealed that socially they have positive perception on the integration of ICT in the education system as it makes their children to be active in ICT and other aspects in their lives.

Parent A, with the son aged 6 years old said;

"My home on weekend days is like a class my son does teach and play games with other children from nearby houses and sometimes they make a competition among themselves"

On the same vein, Parent B added;

"At home with my daughter most of the time she asks and sometimes steals my phone in order to play games and sometimes to make calls for some mobile number in my phone. I asked her where do you learn those games and how to operate she said at school."

Also, the findings revealed that high social status in the society is among the parents' perception on ICT integration in education system. The parents with children conversant in ICT seem to be very proud and feel to have high status in the society especially at early stage. In fact, most ICT devices are in English whereas under education system in Tanzania public pre-primary schools are instructed by using Swahili while most of the private pre-primary schools are instructed by English and have ICT classes. Therefore, children from private schools are more conversant in ICT than others and in the society; they are seen as high social status children. To emphasize this, Parent A, said;

"I feel very proud when I find my child can teach other nearby children how to play games in computer and other ICT devices"

The findings on other hand revealed that, parents have negative social perception on the integration of ICT to pre-primary school. Parents perceive that children are losing their natural life and learn elements of other cultural life. Under this Parent D, said;

"...children do not respect elders due to this ICT you find a child playing a game in computer or any device throughout no greetings to elders, they don't want to respond if they have been called sometimes you find that they forget even eating time because of ICT at home it became difficult for them to remember even working to their home works given at school because of games in ICT devices."

In this case, parents suggested that ICT integration in education system should start at secondary education level since at lower levels children cannot concentrate in

many things at the same time. Automatically they will pay more concentration on ICT and loose other important things for their educational purposes.

However, all five parents declared that they have inserted password into various ICT devices in their homes including their mobile phones to prevent their children from accesses to some channels and videos to avoid the negative impact of them in their social daily life. In this case, therefore, apart from parents having positive perception with ICT integration in education system yet socially they have negative perception on their children's daily social life.

Parent E, said that;

"I inserted password from television, computer and mobile phone because my child is very curious he can open everything, so to prevent it I inserted password and always he is watching curiously when I open those devices. I think they have learned a lot at school on how to search those games and other things.

6.1.2 Parents political perception on ICT integration in education

Good number parents perceived that ICT integration in education as a political business which is full of politics in it, because the politicians did not create a conducive environment for ICT integration in education for all levels especially lower levels. Parents' A, C, and D said that:

"If the politician are serious they could make vivid effort in ICT facilities for the integration in all schools at all levels but in really sense very few public schools have ICT facilities .How could this be possible".

These findings concur with the study done by Khan et al, (2012) who state that the most notable barriers to the use of ICT in education in developing countries seem to be the political will of the people in the corridors of power because the allocation of sufficient funds for the educational sector and ICT does not seem to be very attractive to the leaders and show the seriousness of the issue.

6.1.3 Parents economical perception on ICT integration in education

Parents highlighted that the integration of ICT in education system economically is expensive to them because they have to pay some amount at school for ICT class and different programmes for their children to learn and enjoy ICT at school and homes too. The study executed that parents do perceive that ICT integration has increased the cost in education sector since with the ICT class at private pre-primary school their children demand for various ICT devices from their parents. Devices that are demanded mostly by their children include; Ipad, computerized games, computers, phones game, CDs' and other related ICT devices, Parent D, said that,

"Immediately after started the ICT class at school my child started to pay attention on my phone and watching what I am doing with time my child started to show me how to do with my phone and nowadays my child requesting be to buy almost everything that concerned with ICT, It is normal now to hear my child requesting to buy for him different game that learned at school."

Again parent C, advocated that;

"Due to their age everything you buy make sure the next day is no longer existing it has been divided into pieces may be due to their curious my son want to know everything what is inside if you left him alone with lop top don't surprise to see he has started disseminating it."

6.1.4. Parents cultural perception on ICT integration in education

The study revealed that parents in Tanzania perceived the integration of ICT in education system as cultural diversity in the society especially with this era of globalization. The parents mentioned the cultural advancement in academic, social network and interaction, political issues and together with economic issues. The findings also perpetuated that, the society have been changed and is still changing due to ICT integration since the society now could know what is going on in the world on the spot. Parent E said that

"It is not surprising now to find out a child with 6 years old telling you the issues happened in America china and other places in the world"

Also, Parent D said that;

"Always my son showed me how the people fight, how the people suffer from war, however he tells me the name of Banten with its characteristics, Tom and Jerry together with Spiderman. All these are learned from ICT devices".

On the other hand, parents perceived ICT integration in education as a cultural distorter. They perceive that all cultures learned as a result of ICT are not theirs originally they are from those countries that made these ICT devices which are quite different from their inventive cultures. Parent B, said that

"These technologies distort our culture because now days our children do not behave and act as previous time they have westernized totally because of the technology. Technology is good but we need to be very careful with our own culture."

In addition, parent D said;

“Actually our children learn western culture from ICT and we have no way to encounter it because all ICT devices are made by them we don't have our ICT devices. Otherwise we do not integrate in education system; the language itself belongs to them.”

6.2. The influence of ICT integration in education on parents' pre- primary school choice in Tanzania.

In responding on the influence of ICT integration in education on parents ' pre-primary school choice, most parents revealed that apart from other factors of school choice, schools with ICT facilities have great influence on their choices of schools to send their children. Their responses were categorized into four spheres of life.

6.2.1 ICT parents' social influence on private pre-primary school choice

Under this aspect, parents revealed that they want their children to be socially connected with others from their family members and out of family members. Parents advocate that the world now is connected through ICT so their children should learn ICT from the very early stage. From the findings that children with ICT knowledge mark high status in the society, parents revealed that ICT was among the factors that influence them to make a school choice for their children. Parent C said;

“I was feeling so proud to see my friend's children are having ICT knowledge at very small age. Then I had a plan that I have to send my child in a school with ICT facilities at early stage so that my child will have this important knowledge for various purposes”

Again, parent D said that;

“My child proposed this school so it is my child choice; due to the influence of my neighbors' child who was studying at this school he was telling to my child many things about the school games and other ICT facilities at his school. From their social interaction (friendship) my child wanted to join this school as a parent I had no option”

6.2.1 ICT parents' political influence on private pre-primary school choice

Parents responded that the policy decision maker, educational stakeholders and other organizations emphasis on the introduction of ICT in education from pre-schools influenced them on making school choice of their children. From having positive perception on ICT in education parents revealed that, political issues in the society influenced them to make more adhesion on ICT issues and finally choose the schools with the ICT facilities for their children's education. Parent D, said that:

“It is normal to hear different organization makes emphasis on ICT use in education in various places in the world and also in our country; I have to plan for my child future education that's why I want my child to be familiar with ICT in a very early age.”

6.2.1 ICT parents' cultural influence on private pre-primary school choice

Cultural ICT influenced parents' to make private school choice since most of parents have the opinion that with this era of globalization there is no way they can avoid from cultural diversity.

The parents were on the opinion that, most of children now are watching what is going on in the world in all spheres of life, and making a comparison with how they are in terms of culture, social interaction, behavior, relationship, clothing etc, parents agreed that in order to make the children's' social and cultural awareness they must learn ICT so that they will be able to learn what others do and why. Parent E Said that,

"We need to make our children aware with this cultural diversity hence with ICT our children are watching many things like hug, kiss as a normal thing in other culture but with our culture you know kissing has one meaning of love affairs which is not the case in other culture. In our culture, it is a taboo hugging daughter and her biological father but to others is a very normal thing. In this case our children should know this cultural diversity at a very age stage"

6.2.1 ICT parents' economical influence on private pre-primary school choice

Parents acknowledged that ICT influenced them in making choice of schools with ICT facilities because they believe that with ICT their children will get a better job in future. The selection of school with ICT facilities is regarded as an economic investment for their children's future. Parent A. Said that;

"Actually this school is expensive to parents but there is no way as parents we need to invest for our children and prepare them for job competition in future. With ICT our children will be connected worldwide and be able to learn and know what is going on the world."

Parent B, added that;

"You know when I want to order and buy something on line I have to inquire someone to internet café and pay for the service. I don't want my child to suffer like me; I want my child to know ICT at very small age that is why I am very much interested to schools with ICT."

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

The Government of Tanzania has emphasized the integration of ICT in Education in order to improve the quality of the educational system and correspondingly to generate an enhanced teaching and learning environment to permit and advance the proficiency of teachers and students in Tanzania. Apart from those good efforts done by Government and educational institutions, the study found that, integration of ICT in

education is not simply a vision. Rather, it needs a proper plan, policies, and inclusion of all educational stakeholders from the very early educational stage.

The study recommended that for a successful ICT integration in education there should be full involvement of parents. However, the findings pointed out that there is no guarantee on the specific ICT knowledge acquisition in education so there is a need of appropriate prevention programs to inform children and teach those concrete ICT skills and their border line for education purposes rendering to the level of education.

The study confirmed that apart from other exertions done by Government, organizations and other educational stakeholders for ICT integration in Tanzania there is a need for reconsideration of English language being taught from pre-primary school level in public schools for full reimbursement of ICT integration in education

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