

**Navigating the Digital Age: Empowering Kwara State University Administrators in Bridging the ICT Literacy Gap**<sup>1</sup>Wasilat Olaide Amura-Yusuf., <sup>2</sup>Hameed Olalekan Bolaji<sup>1</sup>[Department of Educational Management & Counselling, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria](#)<sup>2</sup>[Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria](#)**Research Article****Citation Information:**

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**ABSTRACT**

This position paper explores the role of literacy skills, efficacy, and readiness among university administrators in Kwara State regarding the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for management functions. With the rapid advancement of technology, educational institutions are compelled to adapt to modern tools and practices for efficient management and administration. The study aims to assess the current status of literacy skills, efficacy levels, and preparedness of university administrators in Kwara State regarding the integration of ICT into various administrative tasks and functions. The research methodology involves a comprehensive survey among university administrators across various institutions in Kwara State. The findings will help educational policymakers and stakeholders develop targeted interventions and strategies to enhance capacity building, training programs, and infrastructure development initiatives. The paper also contributes to the existing body of knowledge on ICT integration in educational administration, particularly in the context of Nigerian universities. It highlights the importance of continuous professional development and training to ensure university administrators remain adept at utilizing ICT tools for effective management and decision-making. The paper advocates for targeted interventions, capacity-building initiatives, and infrastructure development efforts to enhance the ICT readiness of university administrators in Kwara State, contributing to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of higher education administration in the region.

**Keywords:** Management Functions, ICT, Literacy Skills, University Administrators

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Email: [wasilatyusufamura@gmail.com](mailto:wasilatyusufamura@gmail.com)**INTRODUCTION**

The application of ICT could expose administrators to various skills linked to their future needs, such as using Microsoft Word, email, and the Internet for a lifelong learning process. The application of ICT is intended to refine and elevate university administrators (Onoshakpokaiye, 2023). In addition, it is a process of fitting technology to various conditions whether inside the classroom or outside. Moreover, the addiction to ICT could increase competence based on global needs through skill shaping and increased knowledge as well as the ability to enhance cooperative learning through community practice (Nayazi et al., 2023). ICT has become an important means for university administrators to acquire resources in the form of simulations, notes, exercises, brainstorming information sharing. Different applications areas of ICT include the internet, telephones, mobile phones, TV, radio, and office automation systems such as word-processing, fax, audio-conference, video-conferencing, computer conferencing, and multi-media through the use of networks satellite and backbone optics. It can also be used in most fields such as E-Commerce, E-governance, Banking, Education, Medicine, Defense, and Transport (Raman et al., 2014). Literacy has shifted over the years. While there was a time when job candidates were encouraged to list "Proficient at Microsoft Word" on their resume, now such skills are considered standard.

This shift toward a technologically savvy workforce has permeated the administrative department as well at the university level. It makes sense to assume that the more digitally literate university administrators are, the more they will employ these skills in their workplace, which will in turn foster a strong sense of digital citizenship in staff i.e. academic and non-academic (Jones & Kennedy, 2022). However, the importance and scope of ICT literacy extend beyond this simple theory. Literacy skills are the ability that enables a university administrator or anyone to successfully surf the internet in search of information to improve

learning. The internet is a platform that consists of different resources where an individual can search for and retrieve information. There are three reasons why ICT literacy skills are important for today's administrators: Schools and administrators must emphasize digital literacy to avoid policies that simply mandate placing technology into the hands of administrative staff without thought for how that technology will be used. Digitally literate staff see technology for all of its creative potential, rather than something they are mandated to do in a step-by-step fashion.

Efficacy on the other hand is the effectiveness and the belief that one can succeed in performing particular behaviors; this is more strongly related to university administrator managerial outcomes than many other individual characteristics like university administrator gender, self-concept, or the perceived usefulness of the knowledge later in life (Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2020). Stemming the loss of efficacy as university administrators progress through school is a crucial first step in improving administrators' performance. To stem this tide of decreasing confidence in job performance, there is a need to have a better understanding of how differences in efficacy lead administrators to participate differentially in work done, which then ultimately results in divergent outcomes. Management is getting things done through others, the literacy skill of university administrators will ease most administrative work i.e students' records instead of the manual way of record keeping, when the university administrators are computer literate work will be done very fast, retrieving information, storing of information, sorting of students' academic files, school fees payments, checking students records and record keeping, admission process, checking of students result, teaching methods, other information can be done through the internet if the university administrator is computer literate.

University administrators should be equipped with knowledge related to ICT and their supporting roles in using ICT for management functions. However, most studies pointed out that university administrators are unaware of their roles as technology leaders since most of them are unprepared to accept the role of technology leadership. Moreover, Okayo (2013) revealed that only a few university administrators used computers for meaningful purposes, therefore, it is a difficult task for university administrators to provide guidance and support for ICT usage in school since computers are considered as new knowledge for them to be learned.

Ping et al. (2023) study revealed that university administrators' management role in ICT usage and facilities is at a medium level, with their support and provision being minimal. Based on the findings, it is assumed that university administrators provide the least support and inspiration towards the usage of computers in school. Therefore, more exposure to ICT should be provided to university administrators. In another study conducted in Nigeria by Unachukwu and Nwankwo (2012), findings revealed that the majority of university administrators are not ready for the use of ICT for management functions.

It is revealed that only a few university administrators attained much knowledge and skills related to ICT usage and purposes, while quite a several university administrators have many difficulties and problems in implementing ICT for school administrative purposes. Conversely, Amara (2006) argued that university administrators' competencies of ICT usage were the central determinants of ICT utilization in the school context. However, a previous study by Markauskaite (2005) revealed that university administrators still have low levels of competencies in ICT implementation within the school leadership paradigm. They believed that university administrators required support and formal training to integrate ICT not just for teaching and learning purposes but also in their administrative and decision-making tasks. In addition, Witten and Richardson (2019) revealed that only 21 percent of university administrators have undergone computer training. As a result, they will face difficulties in facilitating ICT integration. Although previous studies proved that university administrators have the least competencies in the integration of ICT, Han (2019) disclosed that preschool leaders have positive attitudes towards the use of ICT and they found ICT was helpful and gave continuous support to the ICT integration at school.

Previous researchers Muthomi et al (2023) also pointed out that as university administrators, they should play a significant role in influencing the school community in ICT implementation which has a strong impact on management functions and the performance of administrators. Surprisingly, there exists an abundance of studies that measured the ICT engagement among university administrators from various perspectives and educational systems, but little attention was shown to explore the ICT engagement among university administrators in managerial functions. The implication of the readiness of University administrators in the use of ICT for management functions in Kwara State is to improve record keeping, admission process, checking of students' results, school fees payment with specific reference to its interdisciplinary nature and the requirement of all faculties to engage purposefully and deliberately in delivering its objectives. In terms of University, administrators prioritize developing digitally literate staff by focusing on technical skills in using appropriate ICT tools and systems in educational settings and identifying their use within specific learning units. This approach assumes that doing this equips pre-service academics and non-academics with a set of basic competencies they can transfer to their future classroom practice (Vogel & Hunecke, 2023). However, Critics argue that these approaches are narrow, lack authenticity, fail to consider sociocultural contexts, and have ineffective, reductive design. Others have identified limitations in their overly technical approach that ignore wider considerations, including ethical, digital citizenship, health, well-being, safety, and social/collaborative elements (Gatiat & Netaliyeva, 2022). More recent studies have called for a re-conceptualization of the outcomes of university administrators, suggesting the present skills-focused digital literacy emphasis be abandoned, in favor of broader digital competency models that recognize the more diverse knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions needed by future teachers.

The inability to access the internet and surf information online could be traced to the literate level of university administrators in Kwara State. Many university administrators are not connected to the internet, and those that are connected have a growing issue of power failure, the government on other hand is insensitivity to education needs and a lack of the spirit of hard work among a growing number of university administrators, poor policy implementation, poor school supervision, corruption among government officials, low awareness about what is stated in the National Policy of Education, etc. This study, therefore, looks into literacy skills, efficacy, and readiness of University administrators in the use of ICT for management functions in Kwara State.

Societies all over the world strive to achieve quantitative education for their citizenry. To achieve this noble course, so many factors must be put into consideration. University administrators in Kwara State need easy access to the Internet and ICT to manage their administrative functions in a digitalized environment. Many administrators lack internet access or are computer literate, leading to power failures and poor policy implementation. The government's insensitivity to education needs and lack of hard work among administrators contribute to this issue. Poor policy implementation, school supervision, corruption, and inadequate training programs further hinder the performance of university administrators. Low awareness of the Internet and knowledge about the National Policy of Education further exacerbate the gap in managerial performance. This issue is a significant concern for the government, policymakers, and government agencies responsible for higher institutions in Kwara State.

Research indicates that university administrators' literacy skills and efficacy in using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for managerial functions are significantly influenced by their ability to use ICT. This lack of ICT usage negatively impacts non-academic staff, hindering their future careers and resulting in a drop in managerial performance. This study aims to investigate the literacy skills, efficacy, and readiness of university administrators in Kwara State to improve their ICT usage for management functions.

## **METHOD**

The research aimed to examine the literacy skills, efficacy, and readiness of university administrators in Kwara State for using ICT for management functions. A comprehensive methodology was employed, including document analysis, direct observations, and ethical considerations. Various documents were analyzed to assess the existing framework for ICT integration in university management, identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement. Observations provided firsthand insights into how administrators interacted with ICT tools and systems, identifying areas for improvement. Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the research process, ensuring participant confidentiality and anonymity, obtaining informed consent, and respecting privacy and rights. The study was conducted in compliance with ethical guidelines and standards to uphold the integrity and validity of the findings.

## **RESULTS and DISCUSSION**

### **Reasons Why Digital Literacy Is Important for University Administrators**

Digital literacy is a critical skill for university administrators, as it allows them to effectively navigate the complexities of modern management functions. It enhances communication and collaboration, enables efficient data management and analysis, and streamlines administrative processes like student registration, course scheduling, financial transactions, and human resource management. This allows administrators to make informed decisions, identify trends, track key performance indicators, and drive strategic initiatives. Digital literacy also allows administrators to adapt to technological advances by staying abreast of new tools, applications, and systems. By continuously upgrading their skills and knowledge in digital technologies, administrators can leverage innovative solutions to address emerging challenges, enhance institutional competitiveness, and meet the evolving needs of students and stakeholders.

Lastly, digital literacy helps university administrators foster student engagement, success, and support services. By utilizing online platforms, social media, virtual learning environments, and other digital resources, administrators can engage with students, provide academic support, and enhance the overall student experience. By leveraging digital tools for student communication, feedback, and service delivery, administrators can create a more inclusive, interactive, and personalized learning environment that caters to the diverse needs of today's digital-native students. Investing in digital literacy training and development for university administrators is essential for the continued success and relevance of academic institutions in the digital age. By embracing digital technologies, administrators can unlock new opportunities, overcome challenges, and lead their institutions toward a more innovative and sustainable future.

### **Enhancing Management Functions Using ICT in University Administration**

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in higher education has become crucial for efficient management functions. In Kwara State, the literacy skills, efficacy, and readiness of university administrators in utilizing ICT for managerial purposes are essential for success. By harnessing ICT tools, administrators can streamline operations, enhance decision-making processes, and optimize overall institutional effectiveness.

One of the primary advantages of ICT in university administration is its ability to assist administrators in accessing digital information efficiently and effectively. Digital databases, cloud-based storage systems, and online information repositories enable administrators to easily retrieve and analyze critical data, empowering decision-makers to make informed choices and develop strategic initiatives. ICT tools also foster self-directed learning among university administrators. With the proliferation of online resources, webinars, and virtual training platforms, administrators have access to a wealth of educational materials to enhance their skills and knowledge base. Engaging in continuous learning opportunities facilitated by ICT helps administrators stay abreast of emerging trends, best practices, and innovative strategies in higher education management.

The integration of ICT in university administration offers more opportunities to develop critical thinking skills among administrators. Data analytics software, simulation tools, and collaborative platforms allow administrators to engage in complex problem-solving exercises, scenario planning, and strategic foresight activities, fostering creativity, innovation, and adaptability in decision-making processes. By embracing ICT tools to facilitate access to digital information, support self-directed learning, and cultivate critical thinking skills, administrators can navigate the complexities of modern higher education administration with confidence and proficiency.

### **Readiness of University Administrators in the Use of ICT for Management Functions**

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become crucial in various sectors, including educational institutions. University administrators' readiness to use ICT tools plays a significant role in ensuring efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness in the higher education sector. In Kwara State, Nigeria, it is essential to assess the literacy skills, efficacy, and readiness of university administrators in using ICT for management functions. Literacy skills include the ability to navigate digital platforms, use specialized software and tools, analyze data effectively, and communicate through various digital channels. Assessing current literacy skills involves evaluating proficiency in basic computer operations, software applications relevant to academic management, information security protocols, and digital communication tools. Training programs and workshops should be organized to bridge knowledge gaps and empower administrators to utilize technology efficiently in their daily responsibilities.

Efficacy in ICT implementation is crucial for optimizing operational processes and achieving institutional goals. It involves integrating technological solutions seamlessly, adapting to changing digital trends, troubleshooting technical issues, and maximizing the benefits of ICT tools for administrative tasks. University administrators in Kwara State should demonstrate proficiency in utilizing management information systems, student information systems, digital communication platforms, and online learning management systems. They should also possess the skills to analyze data insights, generate reports, monitor key performance indicators, and make data-driven decisions to enhance institutional effectiveness.

Readiness for digital transformation is a key determinant of organizational success and competitiveness in the higher education sector. To enhance readiness for digital transformation, universities in Kwara State should invest in infrastructure development, cybersecurity measures, ICT training programs, and capacity-building initiatives for administrators. Collaborative partnerships with industry experts, technology providers, and government agencies can facilitate knowledge exchange and best practices in ICT utilization for management functions.

### **Identified Challenges and Barriers Faced by University Administrators**

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Kwara State is hindered by several challenges. The lack of infrastructure and resources, coupled with a lack of training and capacity-building opportunities, results in inefficiencies, delays, and errors in management processes. This leads to suboptimal decision-making and organizational performance. The primary issue is the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources, with outdated technology, limited internet connectivity, and insufficient funding for cutting-edge ICT tools. This inadequacy hinders administrators' ability to access and utilize advanced ICT systems, affecting their efficiency in managing essential tasks.

Another significant barrier is the insufficient training and capacity-building opportunities, with many lacking the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively leverage ICT for management functions. The absence of comprehensive training programs further exacerbates this issue, leading to a gap in digital literacy and proficiency. The lack of digital literacy among administrators also hinders their productivity and the effectiveness of ICT integration in university management. The bureaucratic red tape and resistance to change within university structures further impede the integration of ICT for management functions. Institutional barriers, cultural resistance, and organizational inertia further impede the implementation of ICT solutions. This resistance to change not only impedes progress but also perpetuates a culture of complacency and stagnation, hindering the ability to adapt to the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

To overcome challenges faced by university administrators in Kwara State regarding the integration of ICT for management functions, several recommendations can be implemented. These include investing in infrastructure, developing comprehensive training programs to enhance digital literacy and proficiency in using ICT tools for management functions, implementing change management strategies to address bureaucratic red tape and resistance to change, and fostering a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing among administrators. Investing in infrastructure, providing administrators with access to state-of-the-art technology and resources, and implementing comprehensive training programs can enhance efficiency and effectiveness in managing institutional operations. Change management strategies should involve administrators in decision-making processes

and provide necessary support and incentives to embrace ICT solutions and drive organizational transformation. Fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation can help bridge the digital skills gap and promote continuous learning and innovation.

### **Future Directions and Opportunities in ICT Integration in University Management**

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in university management is rapidly evolving, offering opportunities for administrators to enhance their skills and readiness for effective decision-making and operational efficiency. In Kwara State, Nigeria, where ICT integration is gaining momentum, administrators must anticipate future trends, explore professional development opportunities, and consider recommendations for future action and research.

Anticipated trends include data analytics and business intelligence, which can be used for strategic planning, resource allocation, and performance evaluation. Cloud computing and virtual collaboration can streamline communication and project management across departments and campuses, fostering a more connected working environment. Artificial intelligence and automation can revolutionize administrative processes, such as student enrollment and financial management, by reducing manual tasks and enhancing decision-making accuracy. Cybersecurity and data privacy are also crucial as universities digitize more sensitive information, necessitating robust cybersecurity measures and data privacy protocols to safeguard institutional data, student records, and intellectual property from cyber threats and breaches.

Universities in Kwara State can enhance their ICT literacy and capacity by organizing specialized training programs and workshops on ICT tools and technologies. Collaborating with industry experts, IT firms, and research institutions can provide administrators with hands-on experience and innovative solutions for leveraging ICT in university management. Continuous learning opportunities, such as online courses, certifications, and conferences, can enhance ICT literacy and adaptability. Establishing mentorship programs and peer learning networks can create a supportive environment for administrators to exchange ideas and share successful ICT integration strategies.

Institutional ICT policy development is recommended, with comprehensive guidelines and standards for the effective use of technology in academic and administrative operations. Investment in infrastructure and resources is recommended for the seamless integration of ICT tools across departments. Regular evaluations and impact assessments of ICT initiatives can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness, efficiency, and benefits of technology integration. Research collaboration and knowledge sharing are encouraged to foster innovation, creativity, and thought leadership in the academic community. By anticipating trends, exploring professional development opportunities, and implementing recommendations for future action and research, university administrators can position themselves as digital leaders in the evolving landscape of higher education.

### **CONCLUSION**

This position paper examines the literacy skills, efficacy, and readiness of university administrators in Kwara State regarding the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for management functions. It reveals that ICT is crucial for modernizing and enhancing management efficiency, but there are significant gaps in the literacy skills and readiness of administrators. Many lack the necessary training and proficiency to fully utilize ICT tools, hindering resource utilization and progress toward digital transformation goals. To address these gaps, tailored training programs, ongoing support, and a culture that values digital proficiency are needed. The efficacy of ICT implementation depends on factors like infrastructure, support systems, and organizational policies. It is recommended that university administrators adopt a proactive approach to enhance their ICT literacy and readiness, investing in professional development opportunities, fostering collaboration, and embracing emerging technologies. Policymakers and educational institutions should collaborate to develop a comprehensive strategy for promoting ICT literacy and readiness.

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