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**DON'T KILL INNOVATION**  
**CHANGING EDUCATION PARADIGM**  
**SHORTFALL OF CURRENT EDUCATION**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The permeation of information communication technology (ICT) in the educational sector cannot be underestimated. Currently, ICT integration in education is moving away from the traditional use of computers for administrative work and typing assignments to mobile learning, collaborative learning, fast sharing of information and gamification. In ideal educational set-ups at either elementary or tertiary levels, the benefits that come with ICT integration are enormous. On the other hand, the traditional challenges to quality education have never been dealt with in many educational institutions all over the world. The persistent challenge of teacher shortages, capacity and infrastructural inadequacies have ensured some educational institutions the world over churn out students who are illiterate or unable to favorably compete in the global job markets with those whose institutions are better endowed.



The argument is that the above challenges can easily be solved by respective countries through public-private-people partnerships so long as there is political good will for the concerned governments. The single most current shortfall to education and the innovation in education is the lack of information ethics. This paper strives to highlight the issues surrounding this challenge as well as some suggestions on how it can be solved.

## **2 INFORMATION ETHICS**



Countries are investing so much in their educational sectors to meet the demand which is fueled by the ever-increasing populations of school-going children, youth and adults who are seeking education at all levels. The high demand has led to commercialization of education as the world witnesses the inability of governments to provide quality public education and the spiraling of private educational institutions, some which are

charging millions of dollars for elementary education. Against this backdrop, ICT integration in education is continuing to take root even in some of the most remote schools in rural areas. Sharples (2009) expounds on issues in mobile learning in his precisely titled article: Mobile learning: small devices, big issues. The more teachers and learners are getting exposed to more information in varied formats from all over the world, the more they are exposed to technological innovations and modern pedagogies, is the more the world is experiencing unethical academic practices to unprecedented levels. The traditional ICT-related challenge of copy and paste has slowly but gradually been replaced with complicated plagiarism that cannot be easily detected by expensive anti-plagiarism checkers installed by educational institutions. Educational institutions are installing CCTV cameras in examination centers as much as technological innovations like wrist watches and other gadgets are being churned out with ability to help students cheat in examinations. Students are using social media to openly share the many tricks and gadgets that one can easily employ to engage in academic malpractices to get fake high grades. The commercial production of educational outputs like term papers, projects, dissertations and theses is a real threat to critical thinking, creativity, innovation, literacy and life-long learning among learners, some who include faculty

members. These challenges, coupled with the traditional challenges in education silently but negatively impacts on the ability of individual countries and the world at large to achieve socio-economic, political and technological developments that can be in tandem with the global development agenda. These, among other information ethics issues, inform the work and efforts of regional and international bodies like the African Network on Information Ethics and UNESCO respectively, to collaboratively advocate for the integration of information ethics across the curriculum.

### **3 THE CONTEMPORARY MISSING LINK IN EDUCATION**

The question then is: How did we get here and how do we move forward? The above issues can be partially be blamed on teacher-challenges: shortage, inadequate training and consequently capacity to mold learners into wholesome beings; poor teaching methods; and poor morale among teachers due to poor pay are issues that touch on country policies and political good will. Reporting for UNESCO (2006), Cooper and Alvarado demonstrate the interrelation between teacher preparation, recruitments and retention; and lament the general lack of country policy frameworks to guide these issues. The major issue with information ethics is

the current social dynamics that range from how children are being raised to corruption at all levels of the society and especially in governments.



The public, including children, are daily exposed to news on so many corruption scandals that many of the learners find it very normal to equally engage in scandalous academic behavior so long as it assures them of good grades. The solution to this is three fold: educational (government) and institutional policies that severely punish those who engage in academic malpractices; integration of information ethics across the curriculum for learners' behavior change; and family upbringing that emphasizes ethical practices in life. Effective ICT integration that is based on fundamentals of pedagogy, social interaction and technology (Qiyun, 2008) should be equally applied for quality teaching and learning experiences but also as an effort to bridge the digital divides within and among

educational institutions. These approaches, if well blended into solutions to teacher-centered challenges, will, over time, ensure quality education that fosters creativity and innovativeness among learners.

## 4 CONCLUSION

Solutions to the current short falls in education across countries can only come from collective effort from the key educational stakeholders namely the learners and their families, their communities, governments, educational institutions and strong public-private-people partnerships that aim to educate wholesome learners.

