

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

This study reports on the negative effects of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) within Early Childhood Education (ECE). Traditionally the bulk of the literature pertaining to ICT was predominantly focused on the compulsory sector, with any reference to early childhood education reporting on debates surrounding the pros and cons of young children's use of computers.

The purpose of this paper is to question the impact of computer technology on children and to offer solutions to deal with the situation. This is a systematic study to understand how computer use affects children's development, and discover the help to parents, teachers, and policymakers refine and adopt guidelines that maximize the positive effects and minimize the negative effects of computers in the lives of the children. The introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in schools has no doubt been marked as a remarkable step that will contribute to knowledge production, communication and information sharing among students and teachers in the school system. In the right purpose, the introduction of ICT into the educational system has the following objectives:

To make all the students computer literate at all levels of educational system, To create a critical manpower well of highly skilled ICT professionals, engineers, scientists, technicians and software developers to support a vibrant ICT world, To provide career opportunities for most talented children and others to participate in ICT knowledge era, To improve the administration and management of academic institutions through the effective use of ICT tools in their day-to-day activities.

As the children develop great interest in computers we need to assess its impact both positively and negatively on their development at a point in time. Over the years now, a good number of homes have added electronic games, home computers and internet to other technologies like television and stereo systems that takes most of the time of children.

For many years ICT have been judged for their potentially negative influence on the child. Often, worries about the usage of ICT are concerned with the question 'how early exposing of

the child to the ICT influences its general development'. Experts like Kirkorian, Wartella and Anderson (2009) points that the children learn more from real-life experiences than from the ones given by ICT, especially if the content is not so suitable for the children. The debate about the technology's influence on the child's development has long ago exceeded the borders of academic circle and became public. Plowman, McPake and Stephen (2008) have found out that even the general public thinks that the usage of ICT is dangerous for the child, and that its creative potential is being more and more overlooked. But where hide the reasons for such thinking? The major argument of all studies, which stress the negative sides of ICT is that the children in early stages of development are the most susceptible and because of that also very vulnerable. In one of their studies Plowman, McPake and Stephen (2010) divided the dangers and disadvantages of ICT usage into three major categories. The first category includes dangers and disadvantages of ICT usage for the child's socio-cultural development. The writers found out that ICT supposedly endangers the child's social development, because children spend less time playing with their peers and are mostly isolated; ICT is supposedly to offer virtual experiences from "the second hand" and not realistic experiences from "the first hand"; besides that the marketing of ICT is in our society very intense and prays on vulnerable children, which represent the biggest part of its target group. The second category includes the dangers and disadvantages of ICT usage for the child's cognitive development. ICT is supposedly to endanger the child's intellectual development, the development of imagination (it stimulates passivity and not activity), and the development of language (lack of communication with peers). The last category includes dangers and disadvantages of ICT usage for the child's wellbeing.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Children are supposedly to spend more time in enclosed spaces and not outdoors, the child's health is also endangered (sitting usage, which increases the risk of obesity), the usage of ICT supposedly leads to addiction with technology and exposure to inappropriate content., besides all that the chances of child interacting with family members are also decreased, what is supposedly to lead towards decreasing of child's emotional development. All these dangers and disadvantages of ICT usage are mostly connected with the amount of ICT usage, its content and the degree of parent control. Today, children can through ICT more

easily access various contents than ever before. Adults do not have control over this access, because the media environment has changed so drastically that a complete control over the child's usage of ICT is today practically impossible. (Roberts, Foehr, Rideout, and Brodie, 1999). We found out the number of sedentary hours children spend on the activities they engage in using the computer. Some research points to some health related hazards, such as back strains, neck strains and eyestrains. One of the bad aspects of computer use is that even the children who cannot read and write yet, are already used to this machine. They develop at a very early age the habit of playing on the computers for hours on end. Only 8% spend more than six hours a week either chatting online or on current affairs. Over sixty percent of the children spend one to three hours a week using the computer either playing computer game, homework, chatting online, sending e-mails and current affairs, Most of the boys spend a lot of their time playing computer games, while the girls spend the time either chatting or doing their homework. The boys spend more time on the computer as compared to the girls.

The influence of information technology on a child's educational performance varies from one situation to another. The negative effect on a particular child may be advantageous to the development of another child.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main aim of this study is to examine the negative effects of information technology on child-education. It was undertaken due to the increased expectation of ICT in the early childhood context and to explore how a corrective measure can be strategized for a higher percentage of positive impact on the contrary. Specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the type (s) of information technology devices and gadgets children are easily addicted to.
2. To identify information technology devices and gadgets that can negatively influence a child at his or her early stages of education.
3. To proffer various strategies and methods parents can use in eliminating the negative influence of information technology on child education.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In-order to achieve the above stated research objectives, the researcher formulated the

following research questions:

1. What information and technology gadgets are your children easily addicted to?
2. What negative effects have these gadgets had on the academic achievement of your child/Children?
3. What strategies can be adopted to help minimize the negative effects of information technology on children education?

### **1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

The following research hypotheses were formulated to help validate findings in line

Ho: There is no significant relationship between information technology usage and academic performance of children.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between information technology usage and academic performance of children.

### **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study will be highly useful after its completion for parents, teachers and the growing children. The research studies on child education and the negative influence of information technology and will be of great help in that it would;

· Help parents become sensitive to the inevitable influence on their growing children and how they can effectively manage the menace from crumbling their efforts to giving the child good grooming.

· **To the teacher:** The knowledge obtained from this study will enable them to understand how computer use affects children's development, and seek to help them refine and adopt guidelines that maximize the positive effects and minimize the negative effects of computers in children's lives.

### **1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study covers the child education and the negative impact of information and communication technology on the child's education. The study basically focused on the comparison between the positive and negative influence on male and female children in this era towards achieving the targeted future.

### **1.8 PRESENTATION OF THE THESIS**

This thesis is presented in six chapters. Chapter one presents an overview and rationale for

the study with the research questions forming the framework. This study was undertaken due to the increased negative influence of ICT in the early childhood context and to explore how a small group of early childhood teachers responded to this argument.

The second chapter outlines research and literature that exists in relation to ICT both within the compulsory and early childhood sectors. The bulk of literature pertaining to ICT in ECE previously focused on the presence of computers, which potentially reflected a negative view and interpretation of ICT effects. More recently, this has shifted to show how the potential of ICT can be enhanced when integrated within the holistic way of child grooming and teaching, reflected within the early childhood environment.

Chapter three outlines the research design. The theoretical framework, alongside the methods employed to gather and analyse the data, are also described. This study took a qualitative approach to the research, with the principles of the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whariki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) embedded within the research design. Collecting the data involved two methods, questionnaires and focus groups.

Within chapter four the findings of the research are presented and disseminated in relation to the key themes which emerged from the data. These themes show that the teachers in this study mainly incorporated ICT within their teaching and learning environments to document children's learning. They considered that using ICT supported the visibility of children's learning experiences despite the negative effects.

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