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# Interviewing Marijuana Users: Issues and Strategies for a Reflexive Grounded Theory Approach

*Pogovori z uporabniki marihuane: problemi in strategije za pristop refleksivne utemeljitvene teorije*

**Curtis Fogel  
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## **Abstract**

This paper examines several limitations of Positivist and Constructivist Grounded Theory approaches to interviewing based on reflections from a study of marijuana use by white-collar professionals and graduate students. The limitations discussed include the following: a) finding and categorizing participants based on the researcher's own conception of who the participants are, b) treating the interview respondents as vessels of facts and knowledge that can be elicited through various interview strategies, c) ignoring the mediating role of the researcher and his/her inscription devices in the construction of interview data, and d) treating the data collected in the interview as reports that mirror lived experiences and realities. This paper concludes with a discussion of some possible strategies to overcome these issues.

**Keywords:** Grounded Theory; Constructivism; Interviewing; Qualitative Research.

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## **Povzetek**

*Besedilo obravnava številne omejitve pozitivistične in konstruktivistične pristope utemeljitvene teorije na podlagi opravljenih intervjujev, ki temeljijo na refleksiji študij uporabe marihuane med t.i. 'belimi ovratniki' in diplomiranimi študenti. Obravnavane omejitve vključujejo a) iskanje in kategoriziranje participantov, ki izhajata iz raziskovalčeve lastne koncepcije, b) obravnava respondentov kot gola dejstva in znanja, ki jih izzove pogovor, c) zanemarjanje uravnavajoče vloge raziskovalca ter njegove/njene vloge zapisovanja podatkov v konstrukciji pogovora, d) obravnava zbranih podatkov kot poročila, ki odsevajo življenjske izkušnje in realnosti. Besedilo se zaključi s diskusijo o možnih strategijah, ki bi presegle te omejitve.*

**Ključne besede:** utemeljitvena teorija, konstruktivizem, intervjuji: kvalitativno raziskovanje

## **Introduction**

With much of the emphasis of Grounded Theory approaches placed on coding procedures, theoretical saturation, and theorization, little reflexive attention appears to have been placed on the construction of interview data. The aim of this paper is to explore this construction further by outlining some potential issues with traditional Positivist and Constructivist Grounded Theory approaches to interviewing, as well as to provide some possible strategies for a more reflexive approach to Grounded Theory interviewing. Examples used in this paper are drawn from a study on the use of marijuana by graduate students and white-collar professionals, which used a Grounded Theory approach (Osborne & Fogel, 2007, 2008).

The Grounded Theory approach has been the subject of various

criticisms since its formal inception with Glaser and Strauss's (1967) *Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Much of this criticism has, however, related to the definition and use of various terms from Glaser and Strauss's (1967) original work, which has now become known as *Positivist Grounded Theory* because of its attempts to mirror the empirical research methods of the natural sciences. In later works, Glaser and Strauss have made attempts to clarify and further develop their original *Grounded Theory* text, to reconcile such criticisms (See Glaser, 1978, 1992; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). For more on the general criticisms of traditional grounded theory see the work of Bryman (1988), Silverman (1993), and Bryant (2003).

These criticisms have related primarily to ways of using data collected via traditional *Grounded Theory* methods. Minimal critical attention appears to have been placed on how data is collected in the first place; instead emphasis has been placed on how the data should be used. This paper makes a significant contribution to this literature by critically examining the ways in which data is initially constructed and developed using a *Grounded Theory* approach.

In recent years, *Constructivist Grounded Theorists*, particularly Kathy Charmaz (2000a, 2000b) have provided more detail on conducting *Grounded Theory* interviews that move away from *Positivistic Grounded Theory* approaches that ignore the central part of the researcher in the construction of data. However, the mediating role of the researcher, and his or her "inscription devices" (p. 18), still appear understated (Law, 2004). *Inscription devices* refer to systems or devices that researchers use to produce or trace out materials that take on other forms. Examples of *inscription devices* could include a pencil to jot down notes, an audio recorder to record, or a computer to transcribe audio to text.

Constructivist Grounded Theorists have made an important turn from a traditional or Positivist Grounded Theory approach by acknowledging that categories, concepts, and theorizations do not merely emerge from data but rather, are defined by the researcher. However, the role of the researcher in the construction of interview data still appears minimal. Furthermore, interview data is still perceived and used as a report that mirrors the experiences and realities of the respondent. This paper encourages a move towards a more reflexive interviewing approach.

### **Limitations of Grounded Theory Interviewing**

The basis of this article stems from methodological issues encountered during the interview process of a study of white-collar professionals and graduate students who use marijuana for non-medical purposes. As the collection of interview data progressed and concluded, a number of possible limitations to Grounded Theory interviewing were apparent. These limitations include the following: a) finding and categorizing participants based on the researcher's own conception of who the participants are, b) treating the interview respondent as a vessel of facts and knowledge that can be elicited through various interview strategies, c) ignoring the mediating role of inscription devices in the construction of interview data, and d) treating the data collected in the interview as reports that mirror lived experiences and realities.

#### ***Categorizing Participants***

Bruno Latour (2005) a leading figure in Actor-Network Theory, criticizes traditional sociological approaches for privileging the researcher. He argues that this privilege grants researchers the ability to tell actors who they are, what groups they belong to, and how they organize themselves within their groups. This critique is particularly relevant to how interview

respondents are located and categorized within a Grounded Theory approach.

In both Positivist and Constructivist Grounded Theory approaches, interview respondents are typically sought out based on “theoretical sampling” (p.16) procedures (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). A theoretical sample is one that emerges during a study as categories, concepts and theorizations develop; it directs the researcher to interview particular people based on how the study is developing. It is essentially a form of “purposive” (p. 36) sampling, which involves the deliberate selection of subjects who are representative of a given population (Berg, 2004).

Theoretical sampling is considered to be a useful strategy in remaining flexible and open to new possibilities of exploration within a study. Taking Latour’s objection into consideration, theoretical sampling does, however, risk privileging the researcher with the capacity to determine who is involved in a particular group. It operates on the presumption that the particular respondent will provide the report that the Grounded Theorist is seeking. The researcher might, however, misidentify the participant, which appears to be a definite challenge with theoretical sampling.

In a study on the subcultural identity of punks, Sue Widdicombe (1998) reveals why it is difficult to label and categorize research participants into given groups. In her study, most of the participants rejected the categorical label of “punk.” While Widdicombe (1998) began her work with an idea of who was and was not a member of the subculture of punk, after conducting her research, she found that the respondents did not necessarily confirm these notions. This study reveals the difficulty researchers face in labelling respondents on their behalf.



Group categorization was not a primary issue throughout the study of marijuana use, but certain challenges did exist. The first task was to find people that were marijuana users. This was, however, a difficult category to construct as a large portion of Canadians have used marijuana, although they might not identify as marijuana users. Similarly, we wanted to find students and professionals, which again are not as simplistic of categories to construct as they might appear. Difficulties surrounded the discernment of what work would be considered professional, as well as the categorization of students who were on leave from their professional working position to upgrade their degree. Labelling and categorizing these individuals on their behalf could have negative outcomes on the construction of interview data, as the sample might not reflect how individuals would categorize themselves. By misidentifying participants, it seems problematic that the Grounded Theorist might not be researching the participants that they think they are researching.

### ***Respondents as Vessels of Knowledge***

A second limitation of Grounded Theory interviewing encountered in our study was the treatment of the interview respondent as vessels of facts with knowledge that can be elicited through various strategies. While it is certainly important to use a variety of strategies to elicit information from a respondent that might not be discussed otherwise, it appears problematic to ignore the mediating role of the researcher in how these facts, knowledge and experiences are expressed and analyzed.

Grounded Theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) at a time when American Sociology as a whole was attempting to gain the legitimacy of the natural sciences. The attempt was to create a method that could be considered an objective science, by grounding its method of theorizing within the empirical world. The social world, from this

traditional, positivist perspective, is considered to be what John Law (2004) terms an “out-there reality” (p. 14). An out-there reality exists in isolation to the researcher, waiting to be probed from an objective distance. It is singular and definite.

This description of out-there-ness is characteristic of the natural sciences. The biologist, chemist or geologist is said to study a world that exists beyond the researcher. The process of constructing scientific fact rests crucially on the invisibility of the researcher. The goal of a Positivist Grounded Theory approach has been the same; to treat the researcher as invisible in the construction of the social groups and realities to which they are studying.

Bruno Latour (1987, 1988, 1996, 1999), has written extensively on how scientists construct scientific fact. For Latour, scientific fact cannot be constructed independent of scientists and the inscription devices that they employ. From this perspective, it appears that Grounded Theorists have been chasing a false ideal. As Latour would claim, researchers, whether they are chemists, biologists or sociologists, play a mediating role in how data and facts are constructed. For Latour (2005), to ignore this role is to slip further away from objectivity.

Constructivist Grounded Theorists are beginning to acknowledge this mediating role of the researcher in how categories and concepts are constructed. However, minimal attempts have been made to acknowledge the mediating role of the researcher in the initial construction and development of the interview data; instead, the reflexive attention appears limited to how the interview data are used.

This challenge of doing Grounded Theory interviewing was considered at the outset of the marijuana study before any interviews with users were

conducted. To avoid this problem, the interview process was treated as what Mason (2002) describes as a “site of knowledge construction” (p.231). The marijuana users were not perceived as vessels of facts and experiences to be probed, but rather as co-producers of knowledge surrounding the use of marijuana. This allowed for some flexibility to explore issues and concerns prompted by a basic set of open-ended interview questions that were, as should be noted, constructed by the researchers. Just as labelling and categorizing marijuana users on their behalf could have been problematic for the construction of interview data, so too did it appear problematic to feign invisibility in the construction of this data.

### ***Ignoring the Mediating Role of Actants***

Acknowledging the part of the researcher in the construction of interview data has become more commonplace after the reflexive turn in sociology (Woolgar, 1988). What has been largely ignored, however, is the mediating role that various technologies or inscription devices play in the construction of interview data. Bruno Latour (2007) suggests that the central aim of Actor-Network Theory is to explore the mediating role that non-humans play within social organizations or networks. He (2005) refers to these non-human actors as “actants” (p. 54). For Latour, non-human entities do not become actants simply because they exist, they do so because they “do things” and “make a difference” (p. 154).

Many non-human actors, or actants, appear to be involved in the construction of interview data. For example, Raymond Lee (2004) has explored how recording technologies have shifted the manner to which we conduct interviews. In doing so, the interview data we collect has also changed. Similarly, the process of transcribing audio into text, results in the development of a new actant as the transcribed text may act differently than the audio recording as it may be void of sighs,

pauses, laughter, or tones of exaggeration.

On a more specific level, there are numerous actants that might play a mediating role in the construction of interview data. As illustration, Marjorie Devault (1991, 1999) suggests that women draw on various discourses available to them in how they describe their work of provisioning food for their families. In this sense, the available discourses of both the respondent and the researcher could be conceived of as actants that play an important role in how the interview data is constructed.

Another example, more specific to the Grounded Theory approach, is the actants at play in the process of coding. This process requires verbal speech to be transformed into written text, regardless of what transcribing and coding processes are used. A good example of how transcribed text can be seen as an actant is a close look at how Kathy Charmaz (2000a) describes her technique of coding. Charmaz (2000a), a Constructivist Grounded Theorist, uses what she terms “line-by-line” (p.684) coding of her interview transcripts, whereby she literally divides transcripts line-by-line. It seems apparent that by separating the text by line, different meanings will emerge than if the text were separated by sentence, paragraph, or idea. Essentially, the text comes to act differently based on how it is organized through the coding process.

Like the examples described, the marijuana study had a number of actants that likely shaped how the interview data was constructed. The most obvious actant was the computer and email technology that was used to conduct eleven of the interviews through email. This technology influenced the data that was gathered from these interviews. In some cases it was much more difficult to illicit detailed interaction with respondents through email as compared to face-to-face interviews,

while in others the respondents seemed more comfortable interacting through such a medium. Since actants such as this appear to play an important mediating role in the construction of interview data, it seems to be a disservice to ignore this role.

### ***Capturing Lived Experiences***

A fourth limitation of Grounded Theory interviewing encountered in our study was the treatment of the data collected as reports that serve to mirror lived experiences and realities. Part of this presumption is based on the previous three limitations, as the researcher might begin with the assumption that a given participant belongs to a particular group. The researcher might then ignore their own mediating role, and the role of the actants they employ in the interview process, constructing the illusion that the data is formed in isolation of external forces, much like an experiment in a scientific lab. As already shown, such presumptions can be damaging to the use of Grounded Theory interviews.

A further assumption that appears to be held in many Positivist and Constructivist Grounded Theory approaches is that the interview data or transcribed text is able to reflect the lived experiences of the participants. Relatively recent theorizations in Institutional Ethnography have can be used to expose this limitation. A central aspect of many studies using Institutional Ethnography approaches is the exploration of the disjuncture between institutional texts with the lived experiences of people (Smith, 2005). For example, Ellen Pence (1996) explores the disjuncture between women's lived experiences of domestic assault with their institutional representations, whereby much of the women's experiences are left out of the initial police reports and are further tapered as each case travels through the legal system.

The interviewing process of Grounded Theory could be construed as

having a similar tapering effect on the lived experiences of participants. From the outset, the lived experience of the participant is assumed to be accurate and has been mediated by the researcher as well as the various technologies or inscription devices that he or she employs. This lived experience is then textualized in a manner where the researcher determines what is, and is not important, to a given study through processes of transcription, categorizing, coding and theorizing. As the interview data, as a text, travels through these stages, less of the respondents' experiences are captured. The complexity and messiness of the world is reduced into what grounded theorists often refer to as "themes" (Karp 1994, p. 10), or what Latour (2005) cleverly terms "neat little pots" (p. 141).

This limitation provided the most difficult methodological struggle in the study of marijuana use. As outlined, a variety of steps were taken to acknowledge various mediators in the interview process. Through this, we moved the construction of interview data from being "out-there" to "in-here" in John Law's (2004) terms. The interview data was not already in existence, it had to be constructed and developed through a process that involves more than and interviewer probing a passive vessel of knowledge. However, through this process a disjuncture appears to form between the lived experiences of the respondents, and the textual representations of these experiences in the interview data and later theorizings of the Grounded Theorist. A disjuncture still remains between words and worlds, or what Dorothy Smith (2005) refers to as "actualities" and "virtual realities" (p. 2).

### **Strategies for Reflexive Grounded Theory Interviewing**

Despite the various possible challenges of doing Grounded Theory interviewing, various strategies could be used to address and possibly

reconcile these limitations. It is important to note that the term strategies is used here to denote open and flexible means towards more reflexive interviewing, rather than rigid rules that, if followed, will lead to reflexive research. These strategies correspond with the limitations just described. Each discussion will include brief explanations of how they were reconciled in the marijuana use study.

The first challenge of Grounded theory interviewing, to label and categorize interview respondents on their behalf, could be addressed by providing participants with more voice in categorizing themselves. With each step of the research, the Grounded Theorist will inevitably play a mediating role in how the data and analysis come to be constructed, but it might be useful to place more responsibility on the part of the participant throughout these stages. As revealed in the section on limitations, categories can never be taken as a given; even a category as simple as 'student' might not be clear if that participant is a working professional on a leave of absence to take a few courses. Given this, it seems appropriate to have participants categorize themselves as much as possible within a given study.

In the marijuana study, we stumbled upon the use of self-categorization as we were not permitted, via our ethics agreement, to actively seek out research participants given the criminal nature of the topic of study. Instead, we could only have participants contact us if they were interested in participating. Through their expression of interest in the study, they would identify themselves as either student or professional marijuana users. Theoretical sampling was still used until saturation developed, but it was done in a way where participants identified themselves. However, this passive method of theoretical sampling might not be the ideal, as the response rate is often lower when researchers are not able to actively seek out participants (Berg, 2004).

In studies where there are no ethical limitations to contacting participants, it still might be useful to have them label and categorize themselves. For Latour (2004), a central task of sociology is to discern how individuals organize themselves into groups, and not to privilege our selves to do it for them. By having participants categorize themselves, delineating the boundaries of their groupings, a more accurate picture of the subject of inquiry can be developed. By doing so, problems of misidentification on the part of the researcher can be lessened, and a more thorough understanding of how a given group of inquiry is organized and coordinated can be elicited.

The second limitation, treating respondents as vessels of facts, knowledge and experience to be probed at from a distance by an objective grounded theorist, might involve the turning away from scientific ideals. Bruno Latour (2005) has asserted that scientists merely cloak themselves with invisibility despite their clear mediating role in the construction of scientific fact. A strategy towards increased objectivity in Grounded Theory interviewing might then involve increased reflexive acknowledgement of the mediating role of the researcher in the construction of interview data.

The task then becomes to perceive grounded interviewing as what Mason (2002) terms a “site of knowledge construction” (p. 231), rather than as an attempt on the part of the researcher to employ a number of strategies to probe the passive vessel of knowledge that is the research participant. This interviewing approach was adopted in the interviews with marijuana users to limit the false sense of objectivity that characterizes Positivist, and to some extent, Constructivist Grounded Theory approaches.



An additional strategy to allow for the co-production of knowledge within an interview might be to discuss the formulation of possible interview questions pertinent to the given study with the interview participants, which we experimented with in our study. The tendency of Grounded Theorists, and social science researchers in general, is to formulate interview questions on one's own, then posing these questions to interview respondents. This process can be rigid or flexible in its approach, but the researcher invariably formulates and asks the questions. As a collaborative site of knowledge production, it might be useful to discuss the formulation of other possible interview questions with participants. Such a strategy might elicit interesting interview questions, and would also contribute to the earlier strategy of giving participants more voice in the research process beyond just being sources of facts, knowledge and experiences.

Beyond the reflexive acknowledgement of the mediating role of the researcher in the construction of interview data, is the strategy to acknowledge the various actants or inscription devices that shape this construction. Latour (2005) suggests that non-humans can be more than placeholders in the social world but rather, can play active roles in the assemblage of social realities. Various actants appear present in typical Grounded Theory interviewing such as: audio-recording devices, transcription text, dominant discourses, coding techniques, local settings, and internet mediated interaction.

It is difficult to discern what mediating role these, and other, actants play within given Grounded Theory studies. To attempt to follow the traces left by each might be a never-ending task. However, it still appears important to allow for some transparency of the actants that might be involved; at the very least, to acknowledge their existence and the mediating role they might have in the construction and development of

interview data.

The result of such a strategy would be a further move away from the original positivistic orientations of the Grounded Theory approach. The concern would no longer be with hiding the mediating role of the researcher, and the tools and technologies of his or her trade, but rather to acknowledge the important role these play in the construction of interview data. Essentially, this strategy holds that forthrightness will replace the illusion of objectivity. As such, in the interest of transparency over illusionary objectivity, efforts were made in our study of marijuana users to highlight the various actants which might have played a mediating role in the construction and development of interview data such as: the audio recorder, the computer, textual transcriptions, and the location of the interview.

The final limitation outlined, that interview data is often treated as a mirror of the lived experiences of respondents, is the most challenging to reconcile. The real challenge appears to be in preserving some of the lived experiences of the respondents within their representations. This is a difficult task with all of the mediating factors that go into interview data construction, from the questions that the interviewer asks to the medium through which the interview is conducted. One possible strategy is to try to avoid what Institutional Ethnographers refer to as “institutional capture” (Smith 2005, p. 119). Institutional capture occurs when both the interviewer and the respondent are familiar with a given institutional discourse. The interview is then conducted in a manner whereby the interactions are informed by this discourse, which can lead to the overlooking or pushing aside of lived experiences.

Thus, one strategy to maintain a measure of the lived experience of the respondents would be to avoid assuming that certain forms of

knowledge are shared in common. Instead, a task of the researcher and respondent might be to develop new meanings of taken-for-granted terms, as DeVault (1999) suggests. Using a basic example from the marijuana study, many of the marijuana users suggest that one of their main reasons to use marijuana is to get 'high'. This seems like a pretty self-evident and straightforward claim. But, we might assume a shared understanding of the term 'high', instead of discussing what the lived experience of being 'high' entails. Regardless of the researchers own understandings and experiences of being 'high', the object of inquiry should be how the participant experiences being 'high'.

Another strategy to maintain some of the complexity of the lived experiences of respondents, rather than tapering them through a series of grounded theory processes, might be to give respondents more responsibility in the processes of theorization. Latour (2005) writes: "You have to grant them back the ability to make up their own theories of what the social is made of. Your task is no longer to impose some order, to limit the range of acceptable entities, to teach actors what they are" (p. 11/12). Just as it might be a useful strategy to have participants label and classify themselves, as well as to discuss the formulation of research questions, it might be useful to have increased participant involvement in the development of concepts and theories.

A method of doing this might be to discuss emerging ideas and theories with respondents in interviews of collaborative knowledge construction as previously described. Many of the theoretical ideas that have been published out of our marijuana study have been shaped by discussions with our participants. Another method could involve having respondents who appear particularly knowledgeable about a particular field of inquiry look over the developing concepts and theorizations as they emerge. This approach was used by Bob Stebbins (1987), who had

professional football players look over the findings that he generated to confirm that his concepts and theorizations fit with the experiences of professional football players in Canada. A more in-depth approach could be done through collaborative research, whereby one of the primary researchers acts as a participant or member of a group under study. An example of this is the collaboration of Dragu and Harrison (1989) in a study of the female strip trade; Margaret Dragu worked as a stripper before the study.

## **Conclusion**

A number of limitations of traditional Grounded Theory interviewing approaches have been identified. These include: the labelling and categorizing of participants on their behalf, the treatment of participants as vessels of fact and knowledge, the lack of reflexivity on the mediating role of the researcher and the technologies he or she employs, as well as the use of data as reports that are believed to mirror the lived experiences of the respondent. Each of these limitations appears to arise from outdated Grounded Theory interviewing methods that still seem to be developed in attempts to gain the legitimacy of the natural sciences. The problem is that these approaches have been based on false ideals. Scientific fact is not created external to scientists, and the various technologies and inscription devices they use. To hide these mediators might actually move the researcher further from an objective position, rather than closer to one.

Taking these criticisms seriously, Grounded Theory interview strategies could involve moving away from this illusion of objectivity to acknowledge the role of the researcher, and various other mediators, in the construction of interview data. It might also involve allowing interview respondents more responsibility in the construction of

interview data and its subsequent analysis. The ultimate strategy could be to have respondents themselves tell the researcher who they are and how they organize their realities, rather than have the Grounded Theorist do this for them. By revoking its aspirations to mirror the natural sciences, instead opting for increased reflexivity, Grounded Theory could become better suited to study the contemporary social world.

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## Women and Sungura music in Zimbabwe: Sungura Music as a Culturally-Gendered Genre

*Ženske in Sungura glasba v Zimbabveju: Sungura glasba kot  
žanr pogojen s kulturo in spolom*

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### Abstract

Women in Zimbabwe, continue to be looked down upon in most disciplines particularly theatre. Yet theatre has grown to become a big industry in the world in general and Zimbabwe in particular. It is not surprising that, people import and export cultures through theatre. Intercultural, intra-cultural and cross-cultural dynamics have been found to be easily communicable through theatre. Theatre is everywhere in both private and public spheres of life. Politicians have found the power of theatre not easy to resist in performing the magic power of courting the attention of potential voters. Zimbabwe music as part of theatre has culturally other genres where women cannot enter. Interestingly Zimbabwean women are musicians in Mbira, gospel, Rhythm and Blues and other genres but no or possibly few women are into Sungura music.

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Interestingly the role that women have been made to play in Sungura music is culturally gendered as in the case of Zimbabwe. Men have crowned themselves as kings of Sungura where queens seem not welcome and the media have created that gendered space where women are yet to break into. This paper seeks to argue that women musicians have not entered into Sungura music because of cultural gendered factors which are not economical as some might think.

**Key words:** Sungura, gender, culture, loose, decent, genre, prostitute

### **Povzetek**

*Ženske so v Zimbabweju pogosto deležne slabše obravnave na različnih področjih, še posebej v gledališču. Slednje je postalo še posebej očitno, odkar je gledališče postalo velika industrija tako v svetu kot v Zimbabweju. Glasba je v gledališču odraz kulturnih in ostalih žanrov, ki odsevajo medkulturne ter čez-kulturne značilnosti. Besedilo prikaže, da je Sungura glasba kulturno pogojena in je omogočila vstop v gledališče le moškim. Ženske so lahko glasbenice v ostalih žanrih, v Sungura glasbi pa niso zaželjene.*

**Ključne besede:** Sungura, spol, kultura, prostitucija, dostojnost

## Introduction

Theatre is part of communication in African society and can be in various forms that include: dance, music, drama and art. This paper will focus on *Sungura* music in relation to the low status that women have been made to occupy in that genre of music. Music is regarded as the heartbeat of every society as it portrays the joys and sorrows of the community. This was the case during time immemorial where music and dance among the Shona people were used to communicate what had happened in the hunting expedition, for example, men would act out how they managed to capture an antelope through the *Chidzimba* dance. Women on the other hand would enact the planting, sowing and harvest of the plants through *Mbakumba* dance (Zimbabwe Music Festival, 2010). It is important to note that, dance and music has always been part and parcel of people's lives. New styles of dance and songs were composed in line with the context of the Shona people. It is therefore not surprising that of late, *Sungura* music has been found to be popular amongst Zimbabweans. What is surprising is that, as of now there are no females who are into fulltime *Sungura* music provoking this study to look at the possible reasons that lead Zimbabwean women not to engage in it even though it is one of the biggest growing industries that is economically performing well. One is justified to ask the following questions: Does it imply that women musicians are not economically alert to the fact that, *Sungura* music is performing well and economically promising? What are the barriers that cause women not venture into *Sungura* music? It is our argument in this paper that, the cultural dimension is the major factor that feeds into the religious, economical and social dimensions as shall be shown in this study.

## What is *Sungura* music?

*Sungura* is a common name for a Zimbabwean style of popular music that draws heavily from Congolese rumba. It is arguably the most popular style of music in Zimbabwe, perhaps rivalled only by gospel music (Tony Perman, 2003). *Sungura* music uses instruments that include drums, guitars and keyboard. *Sungura* music in Zimbabwe is normally associated with popular night clubs, hotels, and beer gardens as *KwaMereki* in Warren Park of Harare. *Sungura* musicians usually perform in cities, growth points that are littered around the country. There are many theories that explain the origin of *Sungura* music in Zimbabwe. According to Fred Zindi (The Standard, 2007), *Sungura* music was influenced by *Rhumba* sounds from Congo. He added that, people used to imitate *Rhumba* sounds from Congo and translate them into Shona, and this is how it came into being. With the passing of time, musicians such as John Chibadura, Knowledge Kunenyati, James Chimombe and others started fusing it with such sounds as *jiti*, and all this has resulted in the birth of *Sungura*. *Sungura* music then became popular in the 1980s pioneered by Ephraim Joe and his *Sungura Boys*, which groomed future popular *Sungura* kings who include John Chibadura, Simon Chimbetu, Naison Chimbetu, Ronnie Chataika and Michael Jambo. It emerged as one of the popular genres of music in Zimbabwe. Now there are many male *Sungura* musicians like: Tongai Moyo, Alec Macheso and the Chimbetu brothers. Others would like to refer this type of music as Zimbabwean *Rhumba*. The *Sungura* music has been popularised in neighbouring countries like Mozambique and South Africa.

## ***Sungura* Music as a Culturally-Gendered Path**

The Shona group of people constitutes more than three quarters of

Zimbabwe's population and speak one or other of the dialects of what the linguists call the Shona cluster of languages (Gelfand 1973, 19). When it comes to the Shona culture, it puts men as heads and leaders of society with women and children as followers. The Shona culture plays a key role in defining space, designating and differentiating space and assigning it to specific gender categories (Pascar Mungwini and Kudzai Matereke, 2010). Generally, the Shona Traditional Religion and culture gendered the socialization of people even in music, something important in the analysis of *Sungura* music and women. There were certain instruments that were particularly for men and for women, for example, drums were played by men whereas rattles were played by women. Few women save those spiritually possessed were allowed to play the drums at traditional ceremonies like *kurova guva*. *Kurova guva* is a ceremony held amongst the Shona people after a year when one is deceased. The function of the ceremony is to bring back home the spirit of the deceased so as to guide the living (Ranger 1975, 261; Banana 1991, 76). Women were religiously and culturally not allowed to play drums as such an action was regarded as defiling the instruments particularly during the menstruation periods of women. Drums are highly regarded amongst the Shona people because of their religious role in evoking spiritual possession. In order to keep the ceremonies pure, women were therefore not allowed to play drums. The religious and cultural prohibitions put women at the bottom of society and this can still be related to the contemporary *Sungura* music. It is always men as leaders who culturally allocate roles to others particularly women and that cultural hierarching of social roles is seen in *Sungura* music. It is men who dominate as directors, composers and managers whereas women are only dancers and vocalists. In real life few women are fully employed in theatre as the industry is culturally considered to be of people with 'loose' morals. Unfortunately, theatre which should be at the forefront in offering space to women has not been culturally spared in the gendered

demarcation of what is regarded as “respectable” and “unrespectable” for women.

### **The Cultural Impact of costuming and make up on women dancers in Sungura**

Some critics have looked at the cultural influence of how the African culture prescribes what is to be worn and not worn by women in public, something that has topped the debate in relation to the reasons why the general public are against women who dare become part of *Sungura* music. Pascar Mungwini and Kudzai Matereke rightly noted something on the Shona culture that:

The consigning of people to specific spaces ensures that they occupy and co-opt space through action, so that they realize their agency. The separation of spaces into private and public, and the allocation of bodies to the specific space is also a way of investing power in the body. Ideas such as ‘decency’, ‘beauty’ and ‘culture’ are at the core of this investment of power in the body. Within this framework, bodies partake in routines to perform tasks and roles.

Since *Sungura* musicians are known to perform in public places like beerhalls, night clubs known to be associated with certain lifestyles that are shunned by society, such public places have been associated with people of loose morals. Culturally the Shona people stereotypically associate women members of music bands particularly *Sungura* ones as divorcees, unmarried and commercial sex workers. Critics have looked at the role of culture in the socialization of people especially on the allocation of roles and characterization of dressing. Culturally the Shona people have specific dress codes that define the characters of their members particularly women. Mini-skirts, tight trousers and revealing

clothes are associated with deviant people. The Shona females are taught to kneel before elders (especially men), to sit with legs crossed, and to dress appropriately to cover specific parts of the body. It is regarded a taboo amongst the Shona people for a woman to expose her tummy in public let alone expose her breasts. The Shona people consider matters relating to sexually inviting dances as in most of the *Sungura* dances as taboo or unspeakable (Mashiri 2002, 221). It is within this context of cultural expectations that rape and the narratives of the victims of rape are usually explained away, for example, that it is a woman who provokes a man; or that the woman was not supposed to have been in that place in the first place; or that any normal man could not have behaved any different considering how the lady was scantily dressed. Some of these cultural norms are written down but the Shona people just know them. Traditional, as well as modern Shona society encourages stylised communication that is orally passed but with impact on the contact and attitude of people. Charles Pfungwa (2001, 25) noted that, this orientation derives from the unwritten Shona moral or ethical code which venerates verbal and nonverbal behaviour that maintains respect, stability and group solidarity. Anything that culturally undermines these values is censored and has contributed to the attitude towards *Sungura* music. It is important to note that, *Sungura* Shona women dancers are censored for their dressing and taken as social outcasts. This has a negative effect on women who are interested in becoming *Sungura* musicians for economical empowerment, they find the heat of being censored and labelled by society unbearable to stand.

What is interesting is that, women who are incorporated into *Sungura* music as dancers or backing vocalists normally put tight jeans and tops, sometimes with topless costumes and bodices on the public stage exposing their feminine features something culturally censored. Yet the male *Sungura* counterparts put on casual clothes that do not expose

their masculine features leading people to question, why is it like that? Critics add that, when male *Sungura* directors and musicians force their female dancers to perform on stage with tummies out, the message about women is loud and clear. Shona cultural traditionalists argue that, the type of costume that women dancers are made to wear clearly show the general attitude of men towards women. For both cultural conservatives and liberals, women are masqueraded and marketed as uncultured, prostitutes and sex objects in the eyes of society whilst their *Sungura* male counterparts are portrayed with decency. The attitude of the male audience is clearly shown after the show, when some men would try their luck by proposing to the dancers. It would then imply that, *Sungura* musicians deliberately select costumes that leave women dancers half-dressed as a marketing strategy but at the same time putting women at the mercy of society. The strategy is there to lure big crowds with big cash inflows not for the benefit of women dancers but the male *Sungura* musicians. In Zimbabwean Shona culture, for women to be appreciated they should dress according to what the society sees and describes as decent (Sheehan, 2004, 109). These dancers find it difficult to complain since the managers are men. Interestingly, male dancers and the *Sungura* musicians are mostly not prepared to be half-dressed arguing that, it makes them lose their dignity in society. Teresa Barnes (1999, 129), quoted some African men who reported that, “girls and women were spoiling *Tsaba-tsaba* dance (just like *Sungura* dance) as they do degrading things by flinging up their dresses moving their behinds and fronts in a bad way as if to expose and advertise their bodies to possible clients, not befitting good girls and women”. The above citation clearly shows how African society defines, demarcate and relate bad and good women through arts. Women who dare join *Sungura* groups suffer discrimination from the members of the society and their immediate families. If the costumes are chosen as a marketing and business strategy as raised above it still leads society to culturally



stereotype women musicians as immoral. Therefore our argument is justified that, that women musicians have not entered into *Sungura* music because of cultural gendered factors which are not economical.

## **A Cultural Discourse about Sungura Music and Married Women**

Even though *Sungura* music has turned to become one of the leading music industries, it is the worst challenge for married women to venture into it. The Shona culture stipulates that, married women are expected to stay at home tending their families. As long as women move into public spaces considered male territories, they are branded as prostitutes (Gaidzanwa, 1995, 7-11). Ethel Dhlamini (2003) in her interview with Patience Musanhu, also said,

‘One of the main reason for women not to stay long in theatre is that family obligations, called for most of their attention making it difficult for them to come for rehearsals and let alone the show.’

Women’s participation in theatre is limited due to cultural barriers. Many *Sungura* plays and performances are staged during the night in public places like restaurants, night clubs or beer halls. Therefore occupying these places bring in bad comments or being violated against because they are regarded as outside the boundaries of male control. Kathy A Perkins (2009, 2) interviewed the late Tisa Chifunyise, who explained that, as women in theatre there is need to change the attitude of the community towards female theatre workers. Families sometimes always want to know when they are at work, like any other person. Some even go to the extent of making their own private interrogations to find out if they are not going out for prostitution. The major influence being that, *Sungura* music is deemed as unthinkable for a decent woman. By the same token, the Shona society particularly men control the behaviour of the Shona women as it modifies the ways they carry themselves, and

prohibits them from occupying some spaces. Paschal Mungwini (2010) observed that, patriarchal Shona men usually describe vocal women who stand up for the rights of women as morally loose. The usual question is: “*mukati ane murume iyeyu mukadzi or Ule ndoda hini umfazi*”? Or By the way, is this woman married? She cannot be really married”. Such questions are usually raised against women who are *Sungura* band members or *Sungura* lovers frequenting places where *Sungura* musicians perform. Thus marriage is conceived as a way of social control. If it is confirmed that she is married, there is usually a condescending response that the husband is weak and has failed to discipline his wife. The weakness of the men, in this case is that of men who allow their wives to think of entering *Sungura* music or even becoming fans was noted by Paschal Mungwini and Kudzai Matereke (2010) as in two levels:

*First*, the husband is perceived to have physical weakness, in that he has failed to use persuasion, violence or the threat of it, to control his wife. *Second*, the husband’s perceived weakness is in terms of his sexual potency, since it is believed that women who become active in the public sphere are those who do not get satisfaction in their sexual lives, so that the public sphere is a relief for their unfulfilled sexual appetites or is a place where they can get men to ‘quench their thirst’.

Culturally the Shona husband is regarded as having total control over the life of his wife and this includes time-tabling the places that his wife should visit or avoid at all cost. In the public places like beerhalls, there is alcohol consumption, prostitution and some men who frequent these places tend to believe that any woman who is there is a potential customer for sex. As Gaidzanwa (1999) pointed out, images in society are socially constructed, continually reconstructed, struggled against, reinforced and renegotiated. This is true of the images relating to sexual relations among the Shona. Married women are mostly barred from

such places by their men as a result of socially constructed images about the *Sungura* music. Women then dare not venture into *Sungura* music as a result of cultural stereotypes associated with such genre of music. Moffett (2006, 132) explains that societies use 'justificatory narratives' or 'narratives of normalisation' to legitimize the violence or suppression of the dominant males against the disenfranchised women. Thus the man as the head of the household wields power because he carries with him the 'seed' of the clan, an aspect that is highly regarded amongst the Shona people. In order to have order in society, men are culturally encouraged to take charge of women. A closer observation on most of the *Sungura* lyrics belittle women and portray them as objects that must be always under control of men. Tongai Moyo's wife, Barbara Muchengeti, committed suicide after her husband indicated that he wanted to marry another wife and composed a song justifying polygamy. Tongai Moyo's behaviour in fact revealed the popular attitude of a patriarchal Shona society towards women where women are ridiculed, stereotyped and made to accept what is good for men. Men sing and dance out their superiority beliefs through *Sungura* music and this can only be reversed and countered if there are *Sungura* women musicians.

Wellington Mutyozwa interviewed William Tsandukwa, band member of Orchestra Mberikwazvo who revealed that, women are not integrated in *Sungura* band basing on social and cultural beliefs. It depends on ones marital status as most husbands believe *Sungura* is a style of music which only women with loose moral can venture. As a result women venture into gospel music which is perceived to be decent. For Dutton (1995, 13), emphasis on decency, deportment, presence and absence from space and the offer of reward and punishment are evidence of the ways the body is a social construct and a means of self-expression or performance by which identity and value are created, tested, and validated. Women particularly those intending to get married or already

in marriage fear the consequences that come with either being a *Sungura* musician or just a mere *Sungura* band member. Fear is the self-expression of women and the majority avoid identifying themselves with *Sungura* due to above named consequences. Men are usually discouraged to marry women in theatre as they are viewed as everyone's wife. Such views were raised by the manager of Tongai Moyo's Utakataka Express Band (one of the popular *Sungura* bands), that, women lack confidence and need a lot of attention whenever they participate in groups as most end up being impregnated by male *Sungura* band members or fans (The Herald). Utakataka Express manager's statement shows the myth surrounding how married women and those who want to have families cannot venture in *Sungura* music. As Haber (1996, 138) rightly noted, a woman's body, its parts and her life are "judged from the standpoint of male desire". Women who enter into these spaces are negatively labelled. The following quotation from Moreblessing Chitauro, Caleb Dube and Liz Gunner (2003, 177-204) reveals the struggle that women musicians face:

Women *sungura* artists, be they singers or actresses are often perceived as 'women of the night' or 'women of the streets' perhaps this is because they exist in these roles in the unmarked territory outside domesticity and also in urban space which for historic reasons relating to both colonial and indigenous patriarchy has been officially defined as the territory of men.

It is as a result of these challenges that, women artists need encouragement to venture into those fields deemed men's territories. They must declare *Sungura* as their virgin land waiting for the touch of women to bring meaningful life to the Shona society where all members are given opportunities to show their talents in whatever discipline or area. In this regard, this reflects on the role that the Shona culture and socialization of gender roles play in nurturing an environment conducive

to the perpetuation of patriarchy.

Women can be fully employed or employ others into *Sungura* music if patriarchy is to be ignored or challenged. The fact that women are not into *Sungura* music does not mean that they cannot compose songs or run *Sungura* bands or lack commitment and financial power as some would like to say. It is because of cultural values and norms that put women on the receiving end where they are disadvantaged from grasping life-long opportunities. Women, if given equal opportunities with men can also become Queens of *Sungura* music. Women in gospel music have proved that they can do even better than men. There are examples like: Olivia Charamba, Shingisai Suluma, Ivy Kombo, Fungisai Zvakavapano, and Mercy Mutsvene who have done well in Zimbabwean's gospel music. They became successful as gospel musicians since gospel music is considered decent; something that can also reap results if society's attitude changes towards women who would like to venture as *Sungura* musicians. The society must be culturally educated that *Sungura* music just like another type of music is a form of employment that is meant to benefit all members of society, women included. Joyce Jenje Makwenda, who has been teaching music at the Zimbabwe college of music from 1991-2005, said

Most women, whom I taught at the Zimbabwe College of Music between 1991 and 2005, had problems of balancing between looking after their homes and the course. Because of the problems they faced they ended up dropping out of the course. In a class where there was around 25 percent women and 75 percent men, a ratio of 1:4, less than a quarter of women would continue with the programme.

Society must be culturally transformed and move with time in terms of affording all the people equal opportunities in all the forms of theatre,

be it *Sungura* or not. Many women would like to see a proliferation of music schools in Zimbabwe manned by women, where female musicians will be able to attend music lessons with no cultural strings attached.

### **Colonialism, Christianity and women musicians: *Sungura* Music as Evil**

Besides the Shona culture being regarded as contributing to the exclusion of women in *Sungura* music, the coming of colonialism and Christianity are also mentioned as the major factors. Some critics argue that, the stigma that is meted against women in theatre can be traced back to the colonial era that separated men from women; the ideal space for women became the rural areas where they lived through subsistence farming. However, women were not barred from participating at traditional ceremonies, though they were certain traditional instruments that were gendered. Critics note that, Colonialism, Christianity and the western culture contributed to the gendering of spaces and places in Zimbabwe. Critics dismiss any suggestions that put the Shona culture as the contributory factor to the lower number of Zimbabwean women in *Sungura* music. They point to the western culture and Christianity that were adopted and adapted in the colonial Zimbabwe. Lucy Green (1997, 21, 52) noted that, European men controlled all activities and deliberately excluded women from the public space like: theatre, literature, music and other performing arts. Young boys and girls were socialized in such a gendered society where they experienced music as a reflection and legitimation of their own gender identities (Carter, 2010, 69). The coming of Christianity and the eventual attitude on traditional theatre and music changed the whole scenario with a negative impact on women. Traditional music and dance were labelled unchristian and not good for development. Thus many women shunned any type of traditional African music, dressing and

dance deemed unchristian so as not to affect the newly found Christian religion. The *Ruwadzano* movement or women's church club or ladies union became popular in most traditional and protestant churches. Women were taught to dress modestly (wore uniforms with long skirts, sleeves that cover the shoulders, and hats or *dukus* (head scarves) and respect the authority and views of their husbands (Gurli 1991, 64). The form of decent dressing and the concept of modesty were regarded as lacking in *Sungura* music. Rudo Gaidzanwa claims that, Christianity further contributed to female subordination since missionaries were nurtured in the context of ideologies of female subordination, which made them less open to other possibilities of gender organization, education and women's participation in public life. Thus, their Christian evangelism confined women into domestic life whilst shaping men into public domains. Women began to shun public life other than Church-led ones and singing and listening to secular music became a sin.

Claude Mararike (1999, 36) adds that, women had to informally work to feed their families and if they chose to formally get employed, they were expected to be employed in "decent careers as domestic workers or clerks" where they wore decent clothes, work during the day, have plenty of time for the family and interact less with opposite sex. In years of colonial rule, critics argue that women were not included in the scheme of things by urban designers. As is evident in most towns and cities in Zimbabwe, bachelors' flats were designed for the married men. These flats acted as brothels for men who wanted short time activities with women of the night. So the colonial system encouraged male sexual immorality in the cities and women inferiorisation. The colonial legacy also made *Sungura* music to be associated with those people interested in enjoying life especially the 'unmarried immoral women' who were categorized as those thronging cities and were usually arrested for loitering and engaging in prostitution. *Sungura* music in Zimbabwe was

and is still associated with beerhalls, night clubs and prostitution. This then leads women singers, actors and dancers in secular music to be labelled as *loose* as a result of the: places where this type of music is mostly performed, the costume they wore, vigorous and energetic dance movements they perform. Isabel Mukonyora observed that those who are called ideal women were those who care for the family and husband and are fully committed to prayer meetings. These were the standards set by the missionaries, hence prohibiting women to enter into art. Christianity made women to become domesticated to the kitchen as their private important space and then the Church as their important public space (Mano, 2009, 192). The Zimbabwe society with the influence of Christianity has defined and set 'gender behaviours' considered appropriate for males and females. The cultural socialisation that women are nurtured into makes them believe that the exact place for women is the house and the Church. This unfair division of labour is nurtured into girls as they are growing up; they are always prepared to be good mothers who will give care to the husband first and then the extended family

## Conclusion

This paper has clearly shown that, the failure by Zimbabwean women to venture into *Sungura* music is as a result of cultural gendered factors which are not economical as originally thought by some people. Even if critics pointed out the influence of colonialism, western culture and Christianity as other factors; we still believe that other factors fed into the already existing Shona cultural dynamics that put women at the bottom of the heap of society. As a result of the cultural images that are set against women with interest in becoming *Sungura* musicians and performers, they avoid it so as not to be labelled as deviants. In conclusion, there are no *Sungura* musicians in Zimbabwe due to cultural



dynamics and not economical factors.

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## Across the digital divide with regional strategies and e-services

*Premoščanje digitalne ločnice z regionalnimi strategijami in e-storitvami*

**Blaž Rodič<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

This paper describes a proposal for development of regional strategies against digital divide. We believe that affected regions in the EU cannot rely on the proper market initiatives or wait for government intervention. They need to develop and implement their own strategies for bridging the “digital divide”. Also, the poor uptake of e-services as a replacement for physical services is not only a consequence of the digital divide, but also due to the intrinsic differences between currently available e-services for citizens and companies and physical services available in urban centres. We believe that to bring users and e-services closer, efforts to make users more ICT aware and improving access to e-services should be complemented by making the e-services more approachable to the users.

**Key words:** digital divide, information society, e-inclusion, regional strategies, public administration, e-services

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## **Povzetek**

*Prispevek opisuje predlog za razvoj regionalnih strategij za premoščanje digitalnega razkoraka. Prepričano smo, da EU regije, ki jih prizadeva digitalni razkorak, ne smejo pasivno čakati na razvoj trgov in državne intervencije, ampak morajo prevzeti iniciativo in razviti in implementirati lastne strategije ta premoščanje digitalnega razkoraka. Poleg tega menimo, da je slaba absorpcija e-storitev kot zamenjave za fizične storitve ne samo posledica digitalnega razkoraka pri dostopu do in poznavanja IKT, temveč tudi zaradi razlik med sodobnimi e-storitvami za osebe in podjetja in fizičnimi storitvami v administrativnih središčih. Verjamemo, da bi za zблиžanje uporabnikov in e-storitev bilo potrebno nadgraditi iniciative za osveščanje uporabnikov in izboljšanje dostopa do e-storitev z razvojem uporabnikom bolj prilagojenih e-storitev.*

**Ključne besede:** digitalni razkorak, informacijska družba, e-vključevanje, regionalne strategije, javna uprava, e-storitve

## **Introduction**

Development of new information and communication technologies (ICT) has produced a social division among those countries and regions producing the ICT and those who are not. This division is often referred to as the "Digital Divide" (Warschauer, 2004). Contrary to what one might think, the Digital Divide is not a social phenomenon present only in developing countries, it is a common phenomenon even in the most industrialized countries.

Digital divide in European regions is still a real problem affecting the economic perspective of regions and their inhabitants, and their quality of life. Anything from 30-50% of all Europeans still gain few or none of the ICT-related benefits (European Commission, 2010-1). The digital

divide keeps several groups of people from reaping the benefits of ICT development, ranging from well paid jobs online public services such as e-government. Deep divides exist between those who possess the resources, education, and skills to reap the benefits of the information society, and those who do not. The most excluded groups are the elderly, the unemployed and those with a low level of education. But the digital divide is a symptom of a much larger and more complex problem – the problem of persistent poverty and inequality. Digital divide is a global problem; differences in income, education, as well as gender are factors influencing the uptake and use of broadband in OECD countries („new use divides”). (OECD, 2008)

The role of ICTs in enhancing economic growth and socio-economic development is now well established. Measuring the impact of ICT uptake and the progress countries are making towards becoming information societies is therefore a critical input to ICT policy making. A useful tool to monitor such progress is the ICT Development Index (IDI), a composite index made up of 11 indicators covering ICT access, use and skills. (ITU, 2010)

Significant differences in the uptake of broadband in businesses, schools and households still exist among the OECD countries; some with far lower use levels than others. To improve the situation, the governments have fostered broadband content and applications, for example, by acting as model users, by promoting e-government services and broadband-related standards, by putting content online and by supporting the development and distribution of digital content by other players. (European Commission, 2010-1)

Recently, ICT services have become more affordable worldwide, with fixed broadband services showed the largest price fall, followed by

mobile cellular and fixed telephone services. Despite these improvements, the broadband price gap between developed and developing countries remains huge and broadband access remains the single most expensive and least affordable ICT service in the developing world. Moreover, countries with the highest broadband prices are all ranked relatively low in the IDI, reinforcing the argument that the affordability of services is crucial to building an inclusive information society. The IDI results show that although the digital divide is still significant, it is slightly shrinking, especially between those countries with very high ICT levels and those with lower levels. Moreover, high IDI growth in some developing countries illustrates that countries with low ICT levels can catch up relatively quickly provided their ICT sectors receive adequate policy attention. (ITU, 2010)

### **Dimensions of digital divide in regions**

In this paper we will focus on digital divides present within individual EU's regions. Regions are geographically and administratively distinct areas. In our opinion the digital divide between and within regions has three dimensions:

1. **physical access divide:** do the target users (e.g. individuals and SMEs) have the access to ICT (broadband connections, computers) that will allow to access to e-services, and in general reap social and economic benefit from the use of ICT?
2. **knowledge divide:** do the users have suitable ICT skills?
3. **e-content divide:** is there suitable region-specific content available (e.g. e-services relevant for remote communities) that has the potential to improve the quality of life of region's inhabitants, including SMEs?

For a region to reap social and economic benefit from ICT, all three



dimensions of digital divide have to be addressed. Simply providing access will not suffice for groups of people without adequate ICT skills, and only by providing and stimulating the development of relevant e-services will the most affected groups of people (i.e. the elderly and remote communities) be able to fully benefit from ICT.

Regarding the physical access, the digital divide is affecting efforts to improve the territorial cohesion and internal integration within the European Union. There were 115.1 million fixed broadband subscribers in the 29 European countries surveyed at the end of 2008, a 12% increase over the previous year. This translates into a 22.8% penetration rate (22.8 subscribers per 100 inhabitants) on average. DSL and cable modem are by far the most prominent technologies. With 91.0 million subscribers, DSL accounted for 79.1% of total fixed broadband connections at the end of 2008 while cable modem accounted for 15.1% of the subscriber base (17.4 million subscribers). (DG INFSO, 2009)

As to DSL penetration, national figures range from 3.1% in Romania and 3.2% in Bulgaria to 30.9% in Iceland, with a weighted average of 18.0% for the 29 countries (21.1% for Western countries). At the end of 2008, 9 countries were over the 20% mark (same number as at the end of 2007) with France and Germany at over 25%. There are disparities between penetration levels in rural areas and national levels which are generally larger in relative terms, which means that in rural areas, not only does deficient coverage limit penetration, but the late introduction of broadband in those areas has created further delays in take-up. The German and Danish markets stand out here, with national DSL penetration rates of 25.2% for the former and 22.8% for the latter, but only 14.4% and 11.3%, respectively, in rural areas. (DG INFSO, 2009)

Territorial coverage for 3G (UMTS) is lower than population coverage due

to the fact that the first rollouts were performed in densely populated areas (large towns, dense suburban areas) and, except in a few countries, rural areas are still largely underserved. In average, UMTS territory coverage was close to 40% at the end of 2008. 3G networks were largely upgraded to HSDPA: however, there are still significant gaps in some countries between UMTS and HSDPA coverage levels, notably in a few Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway). Average for HSDPA coverage is 27%. (DG INFSO, 2009)

According to OECD (2008), the private sector should take the lead in developing well-functioning broadband markets, but there are clearly some circumstances in which government intervention is justified. For example, connecting underserved areas and promoting efficient markets. Governments need to actively look for ways to encourage investment in infrastructure. Civil costs (e.g. building roads, obtaining rights of way) are among the largest entry and investment barriers facing telecommunication firms. Governments should take steps to improve access to passive infrastructure (conduit, poles, and ducts) and coordinate civil works as an effective way to encourage investment. Access to rights-of-way should be fair and non-discriminatory. Governments should also encourage and promote the installation of open-access, passive infrastructure any time they undertake public works. Also, in order not to hinder regional initiatives, governments should not prohibit municipalities or utilities from entering telecommunication markets.

Regarding the ICT knowledge divide, there is still a very high difference in weekly internet usage within the EU-27 states between different age and gender groups. While in the 16-24 years age group there's negligible difference between genders (88% female individuals vs. 87% male individuals), in the 55-74 years age group, males (38%) are nearly half more likely to use the internet at least once per weeks than females

(26%). Regarding the age influenced digital divide, the usage of internet in the 55-74 years age group is less than half of that in the 25-54 years age group and about a third of the usage in the 16-24 years age group. The digital divide (measured by weekly internet use) also exists between the groups of individual with different levels of education, especially in age groups 25-54 years (92% of individuals with higher education vs. 40% of individuals with no or low formal education) and 55-74 years (69% of individuals with higher education vs. 15% of individuals with no or low formal education). (EUROSTAT, 2009)

And finally, regarding the e-content aspect of the digital divide, it is discouraging to know that only 3% of public web sites fully comply with web accessibility standards, creating additional hurdles for the 15% of the EU population with disabilities. (European Commission, 2010-1)

Thus it is crucial that government and business support the evolution towards more advanced broadband applications in social sectors such as tele-work, education, energy, health, and transport, where real progress is needed. Governments have a lot of experience when it comes to ensuring efficient telecommunications markets. However, when it comes to broadband applications, services, software and content, this is mostly new territory. (OECD, 2008)

In order not to create more social divisions, but rather to use ICTs to bridge the existing divisions, the EU has decided to build an information society for all - an *e-inclusive* society (European Commission, 2010-1). The European Union has outlined several strategies to reduce the digital divide, including the "e-Europe 2002", stemming from the Lisbon strategy (European Commission, 2010-2), "e-Europe 2005" the i2010 strategy, and finally the current strategy, Digital Agenda 2010-2020 (European Commission, 2010-3).

The EU can encourage efficient competition among technologies and discourage inefficiently-high incompatibility, through creation or coordination of multi-stakeholder platforms and networks, and by applying multi-stakeholder governance principle. These would be enabling the adoption of common standards and market wide approaches to public policy concerns. The challenge is to intervene in a way that replaces inflexible 'black-letter' prescriptions with mechanisms that help identify the best approach and engage the efforts of those best-placed to help it. (Cave et al., 2009)

The launch of the European strategy for the development of e-government was the "e-Europe 2002" initiative, presented in March 2000 at the Lisbon European Council and approved at the Council of Feira (June 2000). The main objective for e-government was that Member States should ensure "generalized electronic access to main basic public services by 2003". Before the end of "e-Europe 2002" effective period, the Commission presented the continuation of this initiative as the "e-Europe 2005" programme at the Seville European Council in June 2002. Concerning interactive public services the objective was that "the Member States should have ensured that basic public services are interactive, where relevant, accessible for all, and exploit both the potential of broadband networks and of multi-platform access" (European Commission, 2010-2).

### **Why regional digital divide strategy development?**

The goal of this proposal is to tackle this issue through regional strategy development projects to tackle the digital divide in participating regions and addressing several technological issues related with the uptake of public e-services in Central Europe. The proposal represents an

opportunity to assemble all regional stakeholders able to influence the digital divide, form a partnership, and help them reach an agreement on a list of actions needed to reduce the digital divide in the region (the digital divide strategy). The partnership and strategy can be used to leverage the region's position in obtaining national and EU funds for broadband development, ICT education and e-services development and promotion.

The field survey in the start of the project would provide information on the knowledge of ICT and e-services, and preferences for e-services in communities, affected by the digital divide, while the pilot project is a chance to promote the e-services and improve the knowledge of ICT in selected communities, and monitor the e-service use. Through development of the new generation user experience for e-services we aim to develop guidelines on how the user interface of e-services should be developed to be more accessible to users with low ICT skills, eventually changing these users' preference for conventional, physical services by the public administration.

In order to tackle the digital divide, affected regions cannot rely on the market or wait for government intervention, but should develop a digital divide bridging strategy that will be supported and eventually implemented by the key stakeholders:

- e-service providers (regional and local authorities, private e-service providers - represented through regional chambers of commerce),
- e-service users (citizens, SMEs, represented by local communities, crafts chambers, interest groups, etc.),
- education providers (secondary and tertiary education institutions),

- other stakeholders with potential to influence the digital divide (regional development agencies, telecommunication service providers).

The process of stakeholder engagement and strategy development is very complex and sensitive, and a good strategy building model will be crucial for the success of the project. The implementation of the digital divide bridging strategy will need to include a good practice model for improving the accessibility and uptake of e-services.

Our thesis is that the poor uptake of e-services as a replacement for physical services is not only a consequence of the digital divide, e.g. lack of access to broadband internet and poor awareness of available e-services, but also due to the intrinsic differences between currently available e-services for citizens and companies and physical services available in urban centres. We believe the uptake of e-services would be higher if they were made more intuitive and attractive by using the analogies with physical services and provided live assistance through video or voice calls and instant messaging. To rephrase, to bring users and e-services closer, efforts to make users more ICT aware and improving access to e-services should be complemented by making the e-services more approachable to the users. Poor uptake of e-services is a consequence of the digital divide i.e. poor or no access to broadband internet, poor awareness and knowledge of available e-services, and insufficient quality of e-services, i.e. content and technological implementation including user interfaces, back-office integration and multi-platform implementation. The key difference from today's physical and e-services should be a shift from "form oriented services" to "process oriented services". From the user's view, services should transit from a seemingly haphazard, fragmented collection of documents and filling of forms to a clearly defined process, where the administration (e-

service) provides guidance (“walk-through”) to the user that is trying to accomplish a goal (changing residence, renewing a driver’s license, starting a company...). This will allow the development of digital era governance by fully exploiting the potential of digital storage and internet communications to transform governance. The new generation of e-services will include the best elements of physical services and current e-services and utilize proven e-commerce and direct communication technologies to provide a new level of user experience and service efficiency. New e-services should add value also for the administration/clerks, not only for the users (individuals, SMEs). Physical services and current e-services both have distinct advantages and disadvantages. To make the situation more complex, the sets of disadvantages and advantages that depend on the segment of users, especially user location, access to ICT and their digital awareness. The focus of the project, i.e. the target group are users that have yet to cross the digital divide, especially on users that reside in remote regions, away from urban centres. The exact set of disadvantages and advantages is to be determined through qualitative and quantitative research, i.e. use of focus groups to gather the set of service qualities, and use of structured user survey to determine the role and importance of each service quality. However our hypothesis is that the disadvantages and advantages perceived by our target user group are the following (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Disadvantages and advantages of physical services

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• user friendly: familiarity with paper documents,</li> <li>• human assistance is provided</li> <li>• conventional ID is required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical accessibility: distance and time to travel,</li> <li>• schedule is fixed</li> <li>• efficiency: services take a lot of time, especially if having to wait in a line</li> </ul>

Table 2: Disadvantages and advantages of current e-services

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical accessibility: can be used from home - if ICT is available,</li> <li>• no set schedule for use</li> <li>• efficiency: no waiting in lines, fast service execution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge of computer UI concepts is required</li> <li>• availability of ICT is required (HW, SW, and internet)</li> <li>• digital forms of ID are required (knowledge of ICT is required)</li> </ul>

According to our hypothesis, new e-services will be perceived as more attractive than physical services if they are at least as accessible as physical services in terms of physical access and ease of use. Therefore, the new e-services should be:

- easier to use than current e-services: i.e. as easy to use as physical services,



- more efficient (time to travel, distance, usage time) than physical services,
- easily physically accessible, preferably from user's homes or offices, or at least from nearby secure kiosks.

Of course the e-services should be also safe and reliable. One potential hindrance to be overcome is digital authentication. Even in regions where ID cards include a smart-card, users would need to purchase a smart-card reader. Another potential problem (for some services) is verification of documents: how to verify authenticity where user has to present paper documents? However this problem is being mitigated by the move of public services to the one-stop-shop model, where the gathering of documents from various administration offices is the task of the administration, not the user. Similarly, the need to present paper documents would require a scanner on the user side, and that need would be also made redundant by shifting the gathering of documents from various administration offices from a user responsibility to administration responsibility.

## **Conclusion**

Use of ICT can provide new opportunities for increasing accessibility in an intelligent way. As the roll-out of broadband as well as of internet use is currently still lagging behind in new Member States and in rural areas, Europe can meet challenge to encourage the catching-up-process of ICT-infrastructure and to promote the intelligent use of ICT for its purposes, such as the access to services in remote areas. The supply and quality of information and communication technologies also form prerequisites concerning the level of economic and social integration of economies and persons. Although broadband access is now available to a lot more

citizens, there are important exceptions, mainly in the new Member States and in sparsely populated regions, where the respective countries have to cope with a large backlog. Disparities between Member States have not been reduced yet.

Differences can not only be shown concerning the supply of ICT infrastructure, but also regarding the use of those technologies between and within countries, regions and social groups. Access to information (both in general and concerning specific supply of public services) is to an increasing extent offered exclusively by ICT. This form of information also allows high potential of development, but only if access is available and the knowledge is present. Access to ICT could also be restricted for people confronted with social or regional disadvantages for example for people living in peripheral regions with no ICT infrastructure, people with low income due to unemployment, illness. Nonetheless, some of the rural areas have the potential to accomplish the process of structural change successfully. Key factors are the possibility of access to infrastructure, knowledge and technology.

Therefore, the proposal's goals include promotion of ICT and e-services in areas affected by the digital divide, gauging end-users' knowledge and awareness of e-services, training of end-users, and gathering of user feedback during the development of solutions for technological issues of e-services. Through promotion of e-services, rising of awareness and skills of end-users and improvements in technical implementation of e-services the project will work towards changing the users' preference for conventional, physical public services to a preference for the e-services. Core outputs of the proposed project will facilitate the coordination of efforts to reduce the digital divide in participating regions and eventually in other regions in Central Europe, resulting in improved access to and uptake of e-services in Central Europe, and thus reducing the need to

travel, and improving the attractiveness of the regions as places to live and work, thus improving their competitiveness.

The implementation of regional digital divide strategies will contribute to reduction of disparities between Europe's regions and improve the CE's regions' competitiveness through increased usage of e-services by end users, also, the improved e-business readiness of SMEs is foreseen, making the distant areas a more attractive place to live and also to work from.

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# Use of ICT and Data Preservation by School

## Administrators

### *Uporaba informacijsko komunikacijskih tehnologij in ohranjanje podatkov*

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#### **Abstract**

This paper investigated the extent to which use of ICT predicts data preservation by secondary school administrators. The kinds of data preserved and challenges faced by the administrators were also investigated. An ex-post facto design was adopted for the study; three research questions and a null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. The sample size of 396 public secondary school administrators was randomly selected from the total population of 696. The instruments used for this study were Administrators' Use of ICT Questionnaire (AUIQ) and Data Preservation Questionnaire (DPQ). The instruments were validated by the researchers, and the corrected versions were subjected to the test of reliability using Cronbach alpha where the indices of .757 and .773 were obtained. The data obtained through these instruments were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and simple linear regression analysis. The null hypothesis was tested at .05 alpha level and the result showed that school administrators' use of ICT significantly

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predicted preservation of data; the types of data preserved and challenges faced by the administrators were also revealed. Therefore, it was concluded that the use of ICT is a predictor of the criterion variable, data preservation. Based on the finding, it was recommended that the government and well meaning individuals should ensure the provision of ICT tools in all secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State and that all administrators should be encouraged to use ICT in their school management.

**Key words:** Use of ICT, Data Preservation, School Administrators

### **Povzetek**

*Prispevek raziskuje uporabo komunikacijskih tehnologij v administrativnih postopkih sekundarnega izobraževanja. Avtorja ugotavljata, da uporaba tovrstnih tehnologij zahteva kriterijske spremenljivke. Priporočata, da mora tako vlada kot tudi posamezniki zagotavljati večjo uporabo komunikacijskih tehnologij v administrativnih postopkih in jo uporabljati v šolskem menedžmentu.*

**Ključne besede:** Uporaba IKT, ohranjenje podatkov, šolska administracija

### **Introduction**

The process of information gathering and communication has advanced greatly in recent times. Humanity is currently in an electronic age (i.e. the e-age) –an age characterized by bridging the gap between distance and time, giving way to information revolution built around information and communication (Ola, 2004; Ukwegbu, 2005). Never in human history has such a revolution been witnessed in which digital data has transformed the way we communicate in our homes, offices, market places, hospitals, churches, sports arena, legal environments and more

importantly schools or educational concerns.

UNESCO (2002) defined information and communication technology (ICT) as the range of technologies that are applied in the process of collecting, storing, editing, retrieving and transfer of information in various forms. ICT could therefore be understood as all those electronic devices that are used in broadcasting telecommunication and all other electronically mediated information gathering and dissemination processes.

The Association of Africa University (2001) observed that as a complex organization, the universities' high rate of utilization of ICTs has helped to handle large volume of data which they must process speedily in order to provide information for management decision-making as well as meeting the information requirements of the various clientele – students, parents, alumni, government, information community, the general public. Okoli (2007) in Bassey, Okodoko and Akpanumoh (2009) classifies university records into two broad categories, namely management and administrative records. Management records are generated at the top management level (vice chancellor, deputies, bursar, librarian, and registrar) in the form of meeting records, procedures, decisions and resolutions. On the other hand, administrative records take the form of admission records, personnel records (employment, leave and duty records), and physical resource records. It seems that the growing complexities of universities in Nigeria and the challenges they pose to management makes the application of Hi-Tech information and ICTs indispensable for quality assurance (Okorie, Agabi & Uche, 2005 in Bassey et al., 2009).

In Anamuah-Mensah's (2009) observation, record keeping was also enhanced through the use of ICT, hence enhancing productivity and cost-effectiveness. Hook (2004) found that the use of ICTs enhanced the transformation of learning outcomes for the gifted and talented. With ICTs, teachers were able to teach, communicate, maintain good records

and evaluate these groups of children with high level of potentialities in them. According to Obeng (2004), ICT is an important tool in facilitating filling/recording system in the university since it is the nerve centre of knowledge and innovation. Besides, ACT HEALTH (2007) recognized the importance of using ICT in organizations and asserted that business communications that are sent electronically (e.g. email messages) become official records, subject to statutory record keeping requirements; and such must not be inappropriately deleted.

From the account Borg (n.d.), apart from using ICT and computer equipment in primary schools to teach the rest of the curriculum in an efficient way; to present content in an entertaining way; to offer children better opportunities for self expression; to familiarize children with a tool which is constantly imposing itself as a major part of their everyday life, ICT equally enhances record keeping. Records such as certificates, prize lists, scores, minutes etc are kept via ICT to enable the teachers monitor and keep track of developments in children. It also facilitates the teachers' ability to have a clear snapshot of the individual child's continuous development of skills, character and personality. The ICT is equally made for effective measuring, monitoring and recording progress (Borg. n.d).

Keakope (2003) reported that the adoption of ICT in government has helped services performance and work done in proximity. Public officers can create, store, retrieve and disseminate information with ease; more records are now produced and kept in electronic form. With this development, management functions in the government such as in personnel, electrical process, land registration, payroll, auditing and accounting are now done without pressure. Also with record keeping through ICT, Keakope (2003) pointed out that decision-making and accountability are made possible as they continue to provide evidence of transactions in the organization. According to Rhodes (2009), China developed Chinese software to boost the governments' record keeping.



This according to Rhodes ensured a risk free record and archival system for the office of the prime minister and the country's public service.

The literature on use of ICT for data preservation reviewed so far revealed that many researchers found that use of ICT is significantly relevant in data preservation. However, many of the studies were done in the foreign countries of the world, while a few were found in Nigeria and Akwa Ibom State in particular. Besides, many of those literatures found were from the study of other parasatals like companies, hospitals among others, hence the study of the use of ICT for data preservation by school administrators in Akwa Ibom State. The findings in this study would increase the available literature on the subject matter, especially in the study area, which is Akwa Ibom State.

The study, therefore, investigated three research questions and one hypothesis thus:

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the typical student's and staff's data preserved by the school administrators in the study?
2. What are the other data preserved by the school administrators?
3. What are the issues faced by school administrators due to lack of ICT support?

### **Hypothesis**

The use of ICT does not significantly predict data preservation among secondary school administrators.

### **Method**

This study used an ex-post-facto research design. This design was considered appropriate because the researcher had no direct control of the variables of the study since they had already occurred. They were inherently not manipulable. Besides, the study was non-experimental

and required a large sample size. The population of the study consisted of all public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. There were 232 public schools with at least 3 administrators each (i.e. the principal and two vice principals) which gave a total of 696. This figure did not include those in private secondary schools and technical colleges. The sample of the study consisted of 396 school administrators representing 57% of the population. A cluster sampling technique was used in selecting the sample. Each of the three senatorial districts of the state was taken as a cluster, and then from each of the cluster, local governments were randomly sampled before selecting the schools from each sampled Local Government Area. Fifty-seven (57) percent of the administrators were selected from each senatorial district. This ensured that districts with more administrators also provided a greater number in the sample. The available administrators in each senatorial district were asked to pick from a bag of papers marked "Yes and No" The ones who picked "Yes" automatically become a subject for a study. From each sample school, two teachers who had worked under each administrator for at least three years were also purposely selected to assess each administrator.

A researcher-designed instruments known as "Administrators" Use of ICT Questionnaire (AUIQ) and Data Preservation Questionnaire (DPQ) were used for data collection for the study. The instruments were placed on a 4 – point rating scale of:

- Strongly agree (SA) - 4 points
- Agree (A) - 3 points
- Strongly disagree (SA) - 2 points
- Disagree (D) - 1 point

for positively worded items.

Reverse scoring order was used for the negative items as follows:

- Strongly disagree (SD) - 4 points
- Disagree (D) - 3 points

- Agree (A) - 2 points
- Strongly agree (SA) - 1 point

In order to ascertain the validity of the instruments, the items were critically examined by the researchers to ensure the face validity.

To determine the reliability of the instruments, the AUIQ and DPQ were tested on 20 administrators and 20 teachers who were not involved in the main study respectively. Cronbach alpha coefficient was used in determining the reliability of the instrument. Cronbach alpha enabled the assessment of the internal consistency of the instrument which options were strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. The data analysis yielded the alpha coefficient of .757 and .773 for AUIQ and DPQ respectively. These were considered adequate, that the instruments were reliable to achieve their objective.

## Result and Discussion

**Table 1:** Result of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for use of ICT and data preservation among Secondary School Administrators

Variable	Mean	SD	N			
Use of ICT	15.8056	3.27168	396			
Data preservation	14.8763	4.42116	396			

  

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1714.428	1	171.428	16.650*	.000
Residual	4056.600	394	10.296		
Total	4228.028	395			

R = .201; R2 = .041

Significant at .05 alpha level; df= F<sub>1,394</sub>; critical F= 3.89; N=396

Table 1 shows an F-value of 16.650 which is greater than the critical F-value of 3.89 at .05 level of significance with 1 and 394 degrees of freedom. The result is significant hence the null hypothesis that the use of ICT does not significantly predict data preservation by administrators is rejected. However, the simple linear regression correlation (R) of .201 and .041 indicates that only 04% of total variance in data preservation scores is predicted by the use of ICT. In other words, the test of the hypothesis reveals that each unit change in the use of ICT causes changes in data preservation. This result, therefore, implies that preservation of any form of data could be enhanced by the use of ICT.

This is possible because it is given that Information Systems (IS) and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are the basic enabling tools for organisations to innovate with new or improved services. The finding of this study is in consonance with those of Keakope (2003), Hook (2004), Obeng (2004), ACT HEALTH (2007), Anamuah-Mensah (2009) , Aldmour and Shannak (2009), Bassey, Okodoko and Akpanumoh (2009) and Rhodes (2009). The finding of Borg (n.d.) also agreed with the finding of this study and encouraged the use of ICT in schools as this eases and replaces in some cases and other cases the manual way of data preservation. Many types of data are preserved by secondary school administrators and the typical ones for student and staff were obtained during the study and presented thus:

**Table 2:** Typical Student's and Staff's Data Preserved by the School Administrators in the Study

A Typical Student's Data Preserved by School Administrators	A Typical Staff's Data Preserved by School Administrators
Name	Name
Sex	Sex
Age	Age
Place of birth	Place of birth
Date of birth	Date of birth
Father's name	Qualifications
Mother's name	Date of first appointment/reabsorption
Guardian's name	Residential address
Qualification	ID card number
Admission number	Computer number
Class	Staff number in the staff disposition
Address	Date of promotion
Phone number of parents or guardian	Date of retirement
Last school attended	Date posted to present school
State of origin	Annual salary
Local government of origin	Salary per month
Birth order	Rank
Fathers occupation	Salary grade level
Mothers occupation	Employer
Guardians occupation	Class taught
Sponsor	Number of periods
Nationality	Nationality

**Other types of School Records Preserved by Administrators in the Study include the following:**

1. Register
2. Continuous assessment

3. Minutes book
4. Scheme of work
5. Syllabus
6. Note of lessons
7. Movement register
8. Time book
9. Admission register
10. Log book
11. Duty roster
12. Time table
13. Examination time table
14. Counseling records
15. Visitors record books

The study also revealed that school administrators sometimes encounter some challenges in data preservation due to lack of ICT support. Those issues are enumerated here:

### **Issues faced by school administrators due to lack of ICT support**

The primary purpose of collecting data is to fulfill an administrative regulation, the concepts, definitions, and classifications used in administrative laws and regulations. These noble purposes are sometimes jeopardized by lack of ICT support as reported by the school administrators. These challenges post themselves in many ways including:

1. Changes in the definitions to suit administrative needs which may affect data comparability.
2. Records of administrative units are often incomplete or inaccurate, and may not represent the population of interest.
3. Data records could be subject to deliberate misreporting (overreporting or underreporting) due to financial incentives or disincentives.

4. Staff responsible for data collection and reporting may not be adequately trained leading to poor data quality.
5. Data sometimes limited to the population on whom the administrative records are generated and may not represent the population of interest.
6. Often the data from administrative systems will not match with statistical concepts.
7. Data management or Data warehousing systems to store, manage and analyze the data would not be effective.
8. Difficulty in working with and processing large data bases.
9. Disconnecting, incomparable and inconsistent data may occur during a change of management.
10. Data are mostly not collected through solid sampling design.
11. Time coverage and completeness may be questionable (i.e. informal/illegal activities data are not covered or underestimated).
12. Establishing an authorized environment for the use of administrative data is sometimes difficult.
13. Data that is available from administrative sources could be limited.
14. Applying statistical standards and classifications (e.g. geography) could be difficult.
15. Vulnerability to changes in administrative practice.
16. Administrative data may not be timely.
17. Data recording forms and registers are difficult to change given the large-scale changes to be implemented for the entire data reporting and recording system.
18. Record-keeping formats may not be conducive to extract data and link records with ease particularly when the related information is kept in multiple registers.
19. Many variables used in administrative data are not updated regularly.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the administrators' use of ICT has a linear relationship with data preservation. This implies that the variations in the use of ICT, whether to the positive or negative, can cause a variation in the effective data preservation by administrator. More so, secondary school administrators also encounter some challenges in the absence of ICT support. It was, therefore, recommended that:

1. Government should make ICT tools available for all secondary schools administrators.
2. Workshops on the use of ICT should be organized from time to time by the governments and NGOs for school administrators who are not still exposed. During such workshops, skilled man-power should be employed to teach the administrators in this regard.
3. A constant power supply should be made available to schools so that administrators would be able to make use of same for their administrative operations.
4. Packages, like the Microsoft word, Microsoft excel, Adobe reader, Corel draw to mention a few, that accompany the computer should be provided by the government to secondary schools.

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