ENHANCING THE USE OF SCHOOLNET FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
IN
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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July 2010

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Enhancing the Use of SchoolNet for Learning and Teaching

By

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The Dissertation was submitted to the Department of Computer Science & Engineering of the University of Moratuwa in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Business Administration.

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Declaration

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university to the best of my knowledge and belief and it does not contain any material previously published, written or orally communicated by another person or myself except where due reference is made in the text. I also hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be made available for photocopying and for interlibrary loans, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organizations"

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Date

The above particulars are correct to the best of my knowledge

.....
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Supervisor

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Abstract

SchoolNet is a network connecting secondary schools in Sri Lanka, which has been setup to support effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT), particularly the Internet, for enhancing primary and secondary school education, and for encouraging greater communication and co-operation among school communities. In school learning environment, teachers play a central role and the objective of this research is to assess whether SchoolNet has made a positive impact to enhance this role. The evaluation of impact of SchoolNet on teachers and the strategies they employ to facilitate the environment is critical.

The research made use of a questionnaire to identify areas where SchoolNet could have made a difference and includes an in-depth analysis of the level of significance of such impact. The analysis shows few relationships that need to be highlighted as improvements in the areas could lead to a more efficient and effective use of SchoolNet for teaching/learning activities.

Number of hypotheses which lead to the development of the questionnaire was evaluated based on the collected data. These evaluations, detailed analysis of the results as well as a set of recommendations are presented in this thesis. Three of the relationships that came into light are highlighted due to their significance: The medium of information used in SchoolNet, SchoolNet utilization in provinces, the use of SchoolNet based on gender of teacher.

There is an identifiable relationship between the use of the SchoolNet and medium/media used in it. All three languages (i.e. Sinhala, Tamil and English) should be used for the contents of the SchoolNet while localizing the operating environment of the SchoolNet. This indicates the importance of local language use in ICT. The teachers who have undergone ICT training use the SchoolNet more than the others, indicating the need for well structured training programs.

Even though the study provided greater insights into the ways SchoolNet is currently being used in Teaching/Learning activities in Schools, it should be noted that the sample size does not permit to generalize conclusions. A detailed survey, which takes into account provincial aspects, needs to be undertaken as a continuation of this work.

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Abbreviations

ADB	- Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	- Association of SouthEast Asian Nations
BECTA	- British Educational Communications and Technology Agency
CLC	- Computer Learning Center
CMS	- Course Management System
CRC	- Computer Resource Center
ICT	- Information and Communication Technology
ISA	- In-Service Advisors
LAN	- Local Area Network
MAN	- Metropolitan Area Network
MOE	- Ministry of Education
NCOE	- National College of Education
NGO	- Non-Government Organisation
NOC	- Network Operation Centre
OERI	- Office of Educational Research and Improvement
SEMP	- Secondary Education Modernization Project
TETD	- Teacher Education and Teacher Development
VPN	- Virtual Private Network
WAN	- Wide Area Network

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