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INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION ON EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF DIGITAL LEARNING PLATFORMS AND INDEPENDENT STUDY HABITS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ONITSHA, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

Hilda Chineze Agusiobo[i]
Department of Educational Foundations,
Godfrey Okoye University,
Enugu, Enugu State,
Nigeria

Abstract:
The digital transformation of education has redefined instructional delivery, particularly in secondary schools, where digital learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, Zoom, and Edmodo are increasingly influencing student engagement and independent study habits. This study investigates the influence of educational administration on the utilization of digital learning platforms and the development of independent study habits among secondary school students in Onitsha, Anambra State. The research employed a quantitative descriptive survey design and was conducted in six purposively selected secondary schools: Christ the King College (CKC), Queen of the Rosary College (QRC), Regina Pacis Secondary School, Ado Girls Secondary School, Bethlem Secondary School, and Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS). These schools were chosen to represent public, mission, and private institutions with known exposure to digital education. The population comprised 1,230 principals and teachers, from which a simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 367 respondents. Data were collected using a self-developed and expert-validated questionnaire titled Educational Administration and Digital Learning Questionnaire (EADLQ), consisting of 25 items covering administrative leadership, platform availability and usage, and student independent study patterns. A 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1) facilitated the quantitative measurement of responses. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, with a 2.50 cut-off mark adopted for decision-making. The findings reveal that effective school administration significantly impacts the successful integration of digital platforms and fosters improved student autonomy and study discipline. Ethical standards were upheld throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained, participation was voluntary, and data confidentiality was maintained. The

[i] Correspondence: email hildagusiobo@gmail.com

study concludes that proactive leadership and strategic administration are vital for sustainable digital learning practices in Nigerian secondary education.

Keywords: educational administration, digital learning platforms, independent study habits, secondary education, instructional technology, learner autonomy, Onitsha

1. Introduction

In the contemporary digital era, education is experiencing a fundamental shift driven by technological advancements and global access to online resources. Digital learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Moodle, Edmodo, and Zoom have transformed instructional delivery, especially in secondary schools (Eze & Obichukwu, 2020). These platforms promote personalized learning, real-time interaction, and self-paced academic engagement, giving students greater control over how and when they learn. As a result, teaching is no longer confined to the traditional classroom model but is expanding into flexible and interactive environments. However, the extent of their effective utilization depends significantly on the administrative structure of each school. Without strategic planning and leadership, digital tools often remain underused and unsustainable in educational settings (Okonkwo & Agbata, 2021).

Educational administration plays a central role in shaping the digital learning culture of schools, acting as the bridge between government policies and actual school practices. It provides the framework for planning, organizing, and coordinating all educational activities to achieve intended learning outcomes (Nwafor & Ude, 2023). In contexts where administrators adopt progressive, inclusive, and technology-embracing strategies, the teaching and learning process becomes more dynamic and inclusive. This administrative vision not only encourages teacher innovation but also strengthens student autonomy in learning, especially in digital environments. As learning becomes increasingly data-driven, the administrator's ability to make informed, flexible, and student-centered decisions becomes essential. Strong administrative leadership is, therefore, a catalyst for digital transformation in schools (Adeyemi & Obasi, 2022).

Beyond merely granting access to digital tools, school administrators significantly influence the quality of their usage through policy enforcement, staff capacity building, and infrastructural investment. Their leadership decisions determine the availability of digital resources, frequency of training, and institutional support for both students and teachers (Iroegbu & Ezeanwu, 2019). When administrators are proactive, they encourage an environment where students are trained to take initiative in their academic journey. Students' ability to cultivate independent study habits often relies on such environments, supported by structured supervision, accessible digital tools, and consistent follow-up. Conversely, in schools where leadership is weak or indifferent to digital learning, students tend to show low levels of academic initiative and digital engagement, resulting in uneven learning outcomes (Okeke, 2021).

In Anambra State and particularly in Onitsha, there is diversity in the degree of commitment towards digitalisation and instructional transformation in the running of the secondary schools. Elite schools like Christ the King College (CKC) and Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS) have progressive leadership and habitual technological investment, which leads to a more powerful digital culture. Other schools, then, have to cope with weak internet facilities, intermittent funding, and an underlying bad administration vision. Such inequities not only hamper the digital platform adoption but also impact the student performance, motivation, and readiness in the future. As a result, the administrative discrepancy concerning the involvement of digital tools forms a considerable obstacle to the harmonization of the learning outcomes of students statewide. That requires an immediate analysis of the influence of school leadership on the effectiveness of digital learning (Chukwuma & Nnaji, 2024).

The growing importance of digital literacy in the academic lives and the prospect of higher education in general and employment in particular make the early exposure to self-regulated learning crucial to secondary school students. This places the administrators in a new position of responsibility as they need to take a step further than being mere supervisors and ensure that the students develop abilities within the field of 21st-century learning, which include research independence, online teamwork, and critical thinking (Umeh, 2023). This includes the redesigning of curriculum delivery, the way homework should take place, and access to online academic resources according to the global educational trends. If students are supposed to succeed in academics and professional fields characterized by competition, they must interact with materials on the website in a meaningful manner and become active participants in their educational processes. Such schools are more likely to fall short compared to others by not adopting such approaches that ensure that students become well-prepared to pursue post-secondary study needs. As such, the administrative input in the determination that a course will be taught through e-learning is one of the key points of inquiry in the current digital era.

Available literature acknowledges the effect of educational leadership in the undertaking of digital change in school systems. Nevertheless, very little research has been done on the impact of administration arrangements on the self-learning of students at local levels, such as in Onitsha (Ifeanyi & Uzochukwu, 2022). The lack of research in this area constrains the evidence-based decisions of policymakers because of the regional variances in leadership practice and access to technology. A localised investigation will be required to determine how school administrators influence digital interaction and learning culture. Familiarity with this interaction would contribute to schools and policymakers devising more strategic levels of educational reforms and digital intervention measures. This study fills this gap by offering a case-based study concerning the eminent schools in Onitsha.

This paper examines how the educational management influences the process of both engagement with online-based learning systems and the development of self-

individual study skills in high schools. It tells the story of six prominent schools in Onitsha, including CKC, Queen of the Rosary College (QRC), Regina Pacis, Ado Girls, Bethlem Secondary School, and DMGS. These schools are a combination of administration styles, cultural mindsets, and the degree of their technological equipping. The analysis of them would offer a predictable platform through which to judge the wider evolution of educational leadership and digital involvement in the state of Anambra. It also provides an opportunity to gain some comparative understanding of best practice, patterns of administration, and some of the systemic obstacles to digital learning in the region.

One of the objectives of the research is the determination of the relationship between administrative activities and the capability of students to use digital resources productively. This involves the evaluation of training provisions, monitoring systems, and access to digital tools by teachers and students in the schools. The findings will assist teaching professionals, leaders, as well as curriculum developers to construct ways of improving digital learning culture both at the Onitsha level and beyond in a scalable manner. The research also aims to unveil the mode of making the learners independent in their learning based on excellent governance systems and administrative vision. Such insights are necessary to define the future of the digital age of education in Nigeria and get students ready to learn in a technologically dynamic world.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the evolving discourse on educational administration and digital transformation in African schooling systems. It provides a localized understanding of how leadership decisions shape student outcomes in an increasingly technology-driven academic environment. By highlighting the roles of specific school administrations in Onitsha, the study offers actionable insights for both state and national education bodies to develop informed ICT policies. It also encourages a shift from passive to proactive educational leadership that fosters innovation, equity, and academic independence for 21st-century learners. In doing so, it sets a framework for replicable practices across other Nigerian states and broader sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing availability of digital learning platforms in Nigeria, particularly in urban centers like Onitsha, their effective utilization remains inconsistent across secondary schools. While some institutions have embraced digital tools to enhance teaching and foster independent study habits, others continue to struggle with implementation due to administrative inefficiencies, lack of strategic planning, poor ICT policy enforcement, and inadequate teacher training. This disparity is not merely a result of technological gaps but reflects the critical influence of school leadership and educational administration on digital integration and student learning behavior. Without deliberate administrative action to support infrastructure, training, and digital culture, students may lack the guidance and motivation needed to cultivate self-directed learning

skills vital for academic success in the 21st century. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate how educational administration shapes the use of digital learning platforms and the development of independent study habits in secondary schools in Onitsha, Anambra State.

2.1 Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of educational administration on the integration and effective utilization of digital learning platforms in selected secondary schools in Onitsha.
2. To determine the extent to which school management policies foster independent study habits among students.
3. To evaluate the challenges faced by school administrators in supporting digital learning and autonomous student learning practices.

2.2 Research Questions

1. How does educational administration influence the effective use of digital learning platforms in selected Onitsha secondary schools?
2. In what ways do administrative policies promote or hinder independent study habits among students?
3. What are the major challenges school administrators encounter in facilitating digital and self-directed learning?

3. Literature Review

3.1 Educational Administration and School Leadership

Educational administration is the systematic organization and coordination of educational operations aimed at achieving desired learning outcomes. It includes critical responsibilities such as resource allocation, curriculum supervision, infrastructure management, and staff development. According to Boozer and Simon (2020), an effective educational administrator functions as a visionary, facilitator, and evaluator in the school environment. Through clearly defined goals and structured procedures, school administrators help sustain academic quality and institutional effectiveness. In this digitally conscious era, their work to guide educational institutions towards the realization of technology applications would be even more essential.

School leadership, being a key element of educational administration, has a lot to do with the formation of the academic ethos of the school. Leaders do more than shape the design and delivery of instruction, but they also influence the way the school culture may change in reaction to the technological innovations. Boozer and Simon (2020) stressed that by being actively engaged in the teaching and learning processes, instructional leaders promote the culture of learning and responsibility. They also emphasized that those administrators possessing good leadership qualities have a

likelihood of establishing and maintaining the reforms related to technology. These educational leaders focus on the aspects of teacher growth, prepared facilities, and student-centered ideas that correspond to the 21st-century educational objectives.

With the more digitally oriented schools, school heads are important in the introduction of ICT policy, the progress of teachers, and the navigation of students through the application of technology. The adoption and rate of Maturation of the technology vary with their leadership style. However, as indicated by Jain, Sharma, and Meher (2023), participatory leadership suggests that more students perceived the presence and learning satisfaction of an instructor in digital environments. Forward-looking administrators often enter into collaborative programs with technology companies, pay for the professional development of teachers, and promote innovations in pedagogy with the help of digital tools. The fact that they can convey clear objectives of ICT use, they can create accountability and prolonged adoption.

The availability of hardware and internet access to schools does not completely satisfy the aspect of the digital transformation in schools. Part of the sustainable integration is administrative competence in change management, analysis of technological tools, and monitoring learning results. According to Oroni and Xianping (2024), the success of the digital learning platform relies very much on the capacity of the administrator to balance the social media capacity and the systematic school application. Otherwise, this can lead to the poor use of the digital labs, the disappearance of the platform, or the tokenization of online resources. The educational leaders should, thus, realize all those consequences and implications of digital learning, including the remodeling of the program of study, the retraining of the teachers, and the support systems for students.

Depending on the leadership in schools in Anambra State, especially in Onitsha, it is a source of an unequal learning platform in the digital space. Although schools such as CKC and DMGS have very good administrative culture that is inclined to dealing with digital character, there are still schools that use traditional ways because of the headship inertia. According to Wang *et al.* (2022), the co-creation of values through engaged digital interactions enhances learning outcomes by mandating the school leadership to facilitate the co-creation of values. Even as the digital divide still lingers over the schools in Nigeria, educational administrators are increasingly being understood to play a critical role in ensuring schools have inclusive and technologically enhanced learning environments through which equity can be achieved in education. This brings out the importance of local structure leaders who go beyond just being managerial into transformational digital leadership.

3.2 Digital Learning Platforms in Secondary Education

Digital learning platforms are structured online environments that facilitate virtual learning, assessment, content delivery, and collaboration among teachers and students. These platforms may be synchronous—allowing real-time interaction—or asynchronous,

permitting students to learn at their own pace. Examples include Google Classroom, Moodle, Edmodo, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom, all of which gained prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their primary advantage lies in their ability to bridge geographical and temporal learning gaps, enabling education to continue even in restrictive or disruptive contexts. Alshammary and Alhalafawy (2023) observed that digital learning platforms have significantly improved learning outcomes, particularly where constructivist pedagogy is applied.

In the context of secondary education, digital platforms offer a range of pedagogical tools such as assignment management, video instruction, discussion forums, and real-time grading. These tools promote learner autonomy, enhance student-teacher communication, and encourage collaborative learning experiences. However, their usage is highly contingent on infrastructure availability and administrative willpower. According to Jain, Sharma, and Meher (2023), learner satisfaction with online platforms improves significantly when there is consistent instructor presence and institutional backing. As such, platforms remain underutilized, especially in schools where educational leadership does not prioritize continuous digital engagement.

Administrative involvement plays a critical role in ensuring digital platforms are not only introduced but also maintained and evaluated for effectiveness. School heads who allocate budgetary resources to ICT, ensure staff are trained, and embed platform use in academic schedules generally record higher platform adoption rates. Additionally, policy frameworks that mandate platform usage in lesson planning and evaluation help institutionalize these technologies within the learning process. Wut, Lee, and Xu (2022) demonstrated that facilitating conditions created by school leaders significantly impact student-to-student interaction and perceived usefulness of platforms. Thus, digital integration must be matched by administrative commitment to make a sustained impact. Despite the availability of platforms, students in many Nigerian secondary schools struggle to access or navigate these tools due to inconsistent teacher usage or poor internet services. Where school administrators fail to standardize platform use across departments, learning becomes fragmented and ineffective. A study by Wu (2023) revealed that students with high online learning self-efficacy, fostered by well-managed platforms, showed greater engagement and academic success. Moreover, digital learning platforms are more likely to be embraced when administrators actively model their use during assemblies, meetings, and school-wide communications. This reinforces the cultural shift toward digital norms in learning.

In Onitsha secondary schools, some institutions have adopted LMS platforms integrated with their internal academic monitoring systems. Schools like QRC and Regina Pacis have piloted blended learning models where physical classes are complemented by digital assignments and discussions. However, these successes are uneven, with other schools lacking the administrative structures to support similar innovations. Batool, Mehrukh, and Waseem (2023) assert that student satisfaction and performance are directly affected by how well platforms are embedded into instructional

systems. Therefore, building a digital learning culture in schools hinges not only on the availability of tools but also on administrative vision and accountability.

3.3 Independent Study Habits in Secondary School Students

Independent study habits refer to students' capacity to plan, execute, and evaluate their own learning tasks with minimal supervision. In digital learning contexts, these habits become even more critical as students often engage with content asynchronously and outside the classroom. Svyrydiuk *et al.* (2024) indicate that in the context of online learning, the role of such platforms is crucial to the development of independent learning, particularly when self-directed learning is supported by the institutional framework. Such practices are by no means thought; they come to be encouraged by institutional practices, the curriculum, and the administrative demands of an institution. Students who can independently learn in a school that promotes such a condition are more likely to demonstrate resilience, the ability to learn flexible approaches in a changing world, and digital confidence.

The administrative arrangements play a major role in the type of effects and the degree of cultivating independent study habits among students. The academic support system which schools create through the use of virtual clubs, study clubs, accessibility to e-libraries, and so on serves the purpose of providing students the right kind of environment to learn on their own. Such undertakings have usually been fronted by innovative administrators who not only look beyond classroom teaching but are also interested in producing more lifelong learners. According to Damayanti *et al.* (2024), the utilization of digital learning platforms by school leaders can be used in an attempt to align with an independent curriculum. The availability of digital mentors or counselors also aids the students in orienting themselves through the online learning platform, hence strengthening self-regulated academic behaviour.

The connection between the electronic learning systems and self-study is very strong in the case of blended and flipped classroom models. When these models are introduced in the academic routine of schools, students will be expected to revise the materials before the lessons, engage in discussions online, and pass tests and examinations through the Internet. This kind of structure automatically makes independent learning a skill that is not optional but must be acquired. The administrators are important because they need to institutionalize these models through policies and teacher preparation. Pramesworo *et al.* (2023) state that the student-teacher interaction produced by the platforms is associated with the successful transcriptions of the independent curricula into the digital sphere of learning.

Nonetheless, a lack of strong administrative systems is likely to result in conditions that hinder the development of independent learning. Some schools lack any autonomy and creativity because students wait indefinitely to be guided by the teacher and are left with minimal space to explore, have critical thought or carry out any creative activity. The lack of digital access through the evening and an absence of responsibilities over

studying behaviors outside the classroom can create apathy towards independent learning on the part of the students who attend schools that do not introduce such. According to Makhmudova *et al.* (2025), independent learning through digital platforms will become less effective in case schools do not incorporate them into mainstream expectations or estimate success in other ways than traditional tests. Schools that lack conscious plans of administrative structure towards the fostering of autonomy can be hurting the nurturing of necessary autonomy, self-study skills.

In schools in Onitsha, there are inequalities in administration spending on building up independent learning. Where other schools, such as Bethlem Secondary School and Ado Girls, have introduced such initiatives as weekly research work, student-organized online forums, and online study guides, other such schools continue to focus on face-to-face instruction by teachers. This has leveled uneven playing fields in developing study habits because there are schools that lack access to tools such as e-journals, supervised digital libraries, and assignment tracking systems. According to Balokha and Vakulenko (2024), administrative support of independent learning should not be limited to slogans and should find reflection in the policy, budgetary allocations, and expectations toward staff. Thus, successful independent learning at the secondary school level is based much on the administrative forward-looking and the digital policy.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Everett Rogers, 2003)

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory by Everett Rogers (2003) offers a robust framework for understanding how innovations—such as digital learning platforms—are adopted within a social system like a school. Rogers identified five attributes that influence the adoption process: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. In an educational context, these attributes help explain how teachers, students, and administrators engage with new technologies. Schools that effectively adopt innovations typically have leadership that articulates the clear advantages of digital tools, aligns them with institutional goals, simplifies their usage, and provides opportunities to try them out in low-risk environments. Rogers emphasized that innovation spreads faster when it is perceived as better than existing practices, easy to understand, and visible in its outcomes. This theory is particularly relevant for understanding how different secondary schools in Onitsha adopt and institutionalize the use of digital platforms depending on administrative leadership and organizational readiness (Rogers, 2003; Boozer & Simon, 2020).

Administrators act as "change agents" within Rogers' model, shaping how innovation flows within the school system through effective communication and policy implementation. These leaders determine whether digital learning is seen as a temporary response to external pressures like COVID-19 or as a long-term shift in pedagogy. When principals and administrators provide regular training, promote digital literacy, and

integrate e-learning into the school culture, teachers and students are more likely to embrace new platforms (Alshammary & Alhalafawy, 2023). Conversely, in schools where leadership fails to prioritize digital adoption, the process is often stalled by resistance to change, technical uncertainties, and a lack of infrastructural support. In Onitsha schools such as CKC and Regina Pacis, administrators who invested early in technology infrastructure and digital curriculum integration report greater student engagement. These differences across schools reflect the principle that leadership plays a critical role in moving an innovation from trial to the confirmation stage.

A significant strength of this theory lies in its process-based approach to innovation adoption: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Each of these stages aligns with observable school-level activities like staff training, pilot testing of tools, stakeholder consultations, integration of digital policies, and institutionalization of feedback systems (Jain, Sharma & Meher, 2023). Effective administrators create enabling environments where teachers feel confident exploring platforms such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, or Moodle. Through persuasive leadership and policy consistency, they lower perceived risks and promote confidence in using technology for both teaching and assessment. In turn, students benefit from structured digital environments that reinforce independent learning and self-discipline. Without this leadership commitment, digital tools remain underutilized or treated as supplementary rather than essential.

Additionally, the theory acknowledges the role of communication networks within the adoption process—an idea highly relevant in secondary schools. Administrators are often at the center of these networks, acting as gatekeepers, enablers, or barriers to information flow. Where communication is top-down and rigid, resistance among teachers is more likely. However, in participatory systems where administrators collaborate with staff and students in setting digital goals, adoption becomes smoother and more effective (Oroni & Xianping, 2024). For example, DMGS and Ado Girls Secondary School have reported increased teacher autonomy and student engagement following administrative reforms that encouraged digital experimentation. This aligns with Rogers' view that the more visible and beneficial an innovation becomes within a social system, the more quickly it spreads.

Finally, the relevance of the Diffusion of Innovation Theory to this study rests on its ability to link administrative behavior with measurable educational outcomes. Rogers' emphasis on leadership and systemic readiness supports the view that digital transformation in schools does not occur in a vacuum but is mediated by decision-making structures and resource allocation (Wu, 2023). Onitsha's educational landscape provides an ideal context to apply this theory, as it includes both technologically progressive schools and those lagging behind. The administrators' stance on innovation—whether conservative or proactive—can significantly determine the extent to which digital platforms support independent study habits among students. The theory, therefore, offers a clear framework for interpreting how administrative choices shape the success

or failure of digital learning integration in secondary schools across the region (Ren *et al.*, 2024).

4.2 Empirical Review

Boozer and Simon (2020), in their study titled Teaching Effectiveness and Digital Learning Platforms: A Focus on Mediated Outcomes, investigated whether the use of online learning platforms influenced students' final grades. The researchers employed a quantitative methodology using statistical modeling to analyze course outcomes in institutions that utilized digital learning tools. Their population included undergraduate students across multiple courses, and the data showed that students using online platforms like Moodle and Blackboard scored higher on average than those in traditional settings. The study highlighted the importance of administrative decisions in selecting and maintaining effective platforms that support learning. Recommendations emphasized institutional commitment to platform integration and continual staff development. Similarity exists in the focus on digital learning platforms and educational outcomes, while a difference is in population focus—university students rather than secondary students and no direct focus on administrative roles.

Jain, Sharma, and Meher (2023) examined the Effects of Online Platforms on Learner Satisfaction, with a specific interest in how instructor presence and student engagement mediate outcomes. The study involved a survey of 520 online learners and employed structural equation modeling to assess relationships among variables. The authors found that learner satisfaction was significantly influenced by the instructor's presence, which in turn depended on the institution's leadership and policy clarity regarding digital engagement. Their findings underscored that administrative decisions play a foundational role in fostering teacher presence and engagement. The study recommended that school leaders ensure ongoing training and platform support for teachers. This aligns with the current study in recognizing leadership influence on digital platform usage, although it differs in focusing more on satisfaction rather than independent study habits.

Oroni and Xianping (2024) modeled the mediation role of digital platforms on students' academic performance through social media capability. Their population included 487 senior secondary students in digital-oriented institutions across Asia, and they used mediation analysis to establish that digital platforms, when effectively supported by administration, enhance academic performance. A central argument was that schools with strong digital policies and strategic leadership made better use of student engagement through digital media. The study emphasized a combination of ICT access and leadership readiness as drivers of successful learning outcomes. Recommendations called for digital platform adoption to be embedded in school policy and administrative routines. The similarity here is the emphasis on administrative influence, while the difference lies in the additional lens of social media integration, which is not central to the Onitsha study.

Alshammary and Alhalafawy (2023) conducted a meta-analysis on Digital Platforms and Learning Outcomes, aggregating results from over 70 peer-reviewed studies. The primary objective was to evaluate the overall impact of digital platforms on student achievement. The researchers concluded that platform effectiveness was most potent when schools ensured compatibility, ease of use, and structured implementation—factors highly dependent on educational leadership. They advocated for data-driven decision-making by administrators to optimize platform use and personalized learning. While this study does not isolate secondary schools or a specific location, its findings reinforce the idea that leadership and administrative design determine digital success. The similarity lies in identifying leadership as a core factor, though the difference is that it offers a broad cross-contextual synthesis without a localized empirical basis.

Wut, Lee, and Xu (2022) explored Facilitating Conditions for Student-to-Student Interaction in Online Learning Platforms, emphasizing how administration and infrastructure impact collaboration. Their sample included 300 undergraduate students in Hong Kong, and the analysis revealed that effective administrative facilitation—such as organized group activities and technical support—enhanced peer engagement. The study argued that institutional design, not just platform availability, is essential for collaborative learning. Their recommendations included routine infrastructure audits and leadership-led learning communities. This relates to the current study in its acknowledgment of school administration's role in shaping digital learning behavior, but it differs in focusing on peer interaction rather than independent study habits.

Ren, Zhu, and Liang (2024) assessed Internet Access Quality and Its Impact on Learning Outcomes using a multiple mediation model with international students in Chinese universities. Their population included 623 students, and they found that internet quality, along with administrative provision of access devices, determined students' success in online learning. Administrative responsiveness to technical issues and their foresight in device distribution were central themes in improving student outcomes. They recommended strategic planning around ICT infrastructure, including partnerships with telecom providers. While the population and setting differ, the similarity lies in the administrative emphasis and infrastructural planning. The difference is the specific focus on internet access, which is only one aspect of digital platform utilization in the Onitsha context.

Choudhury, Senapati, and Sarma (2023) studied Management Education in Technology-Mediated Open Distance Learning Platforms, especially regarding the digital divide. Their objective was to evaluate how administrative oversight in ODL environments influenced learner satisfaction and knowledge retention. Using qualitative and quantitative tools, they found that students in well-administered schools with digital support systems experienced better continuity in their education. The study noted that administrative neglect deepened the digital divide and diminished learning outcomes. Their recommendations included structured administrative training on technology

leadership. This relates to the current study in identifying administrative responsibility as key to success, but differs in its focus on distance learners in higher education.

Lousã and Lousã (2023) examined the Effect of Digital Learning Resources on Students' Soft Skills through perceived efficacy in remote learning. Their sample of 412 students showed that leadership decisions in selecting tools and platforms significantly influenced students' problem-solving and communication skills. They argued that school leaders who align digital tools with curriculum goals help students develop competencies beyond content knowledge. Recommendations included regular efficacy testing and administrator-led innovation units. This supports the current study by emphasizing leadership in platform choice and monitoring. However, it differs in its emphasis on soft skills rather than direct academic independence.

Wu (2023) explored The Relationship Between Online Learning Self-Efficacy and Student Engagement, highlighting the mediating role of social platforms. The study, which surveyed 350 senior secondary school students in East Asia, concluded that students with high self-efficacy—shaped by administrative support and structured digital instruction—were more engaged and academically consistent. It was shown that school leadership style directly affected student motivation and digital learning habits. The study recommended school-wide self-efficacy training programs led by administrators. This aligns with the current study's goal of understanding how administration affects independent study habits. The difference, however, is that this study places a stronger emphasis on psychological constructs like self-efficacy.

Wang *et al.* (2022), in their study titled How Learner Engagement Impacts Non-formal Online Learning Outcomes, investigated value co-creation within online learning environments. They used a mixed-method approach with a population of 500 learners from online and blended learning environments. The findings suggested that school-level leadership was critical in shaping learning value by creating opportunities for learner autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy. Schools with high engagement metrics had administrators who actively drove innovation and regularly evaluated digital strategy outcomes. They recommended participatory leadership and adaptive learning policies. This is highly similar to the current study in terms of linking administrative strategy to independent learning outcomes, though it includes non-formal learning environments, which differ from the formal secondary school system under study in Onitsha.

5. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design to investigate the influence of educational administration on the effective utilization of digital learning platforms and independent study habits in secondary schools in Onitsha, Anambra State. The research was situated in six purposively selected schools that are notable for their academic reputation and relative exposure to digital learning innovations. These schools include Christ the King College (CKC), Queen of the Rosary College (QRC), Regina Pacis

Secondary School, Ado Girls Secondary School, Bethlem Secondary School, and Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS). These institutions were chosen to ensure representation across mission, private, and public secondary schools in the region.

The population for this study comprised all principals and teaching staff across the six selected secondary schools. According to administrative records obtained from the schools, the combined population of principals and teachers amounted to 1,230. To ensure a manageable and statistically relevant sample size, the researchers adopted a simple random sampling technique to select 367 respondents from this population. This sampling approach ensured that every individual in the population had an equal chance of being selected, thereby minimizing bias and enhancing the generalizability of the findings across the participating schools.

Data collection was carried out using a structured self-administered questionnaire titled the Educational Administration and Digital Learning Questionnaire (EADLQ). The EADLQ consisted of 25 well-structured items designed to elicit responses on three major areas: administrative leadership and support, availability and usage of digital learning platforms, and observed trends in students' independent study habits. The questionnaire was developed based on previous literature and validated by two experts in educational research and one expert in educational technology to ensure face and content validity. Respondents were asked to rate their responses on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1), which allowed for quantitative measurement of perceptions and practices.

To analyze the data collected from the field, the researchers used descriptive statistical tools, specifically the Mean and Standard Deviation, to summarize and interpret the responses. The decision rule adopted in the interpretation of results was based on a cut-off point of 2.50. This means that any item with a mean score of 2.50 or above was interpreted as "agreed," indicating a positive perception or frequent occurrence of the measured variable, while any item below 2.50 was interpreted as "disagreed," indicating a negative perception or low occurrence. The use of mean and standard deviation allowed the researchers to determine both the central tendency and the degree of variability in respondents' views on each item.

All ethical considerations were strictly adhered to during the conduct of this study. Prior to data collection, the consent of the school authorities and individual participants was sought and obtained. The anonymity and confidentiality of respondents were maintained throughout the study, and participation was strictly voluntary. Additionally, the collected data were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.

5.1 Data Presentation

Table 1: Responses on Administrative Influence on Digital Platform Use

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Our school administrators provide regular digital training for teachers.	3.26	0.85	Agree
2	Administrators actively monitor the integration of digital platforms in teaching.	3.01	0.91	Agree
3	Leadership encourages experimentation with new educational technologies.	2.88	1.04	Agree
4	There is a clearly defined digital learning policy in our school.	2.34	1.17	Disagree
5	Administrators provide sufficient infrastructure for digital teaching.	2.79	0.96	Agree

The responses presented above reflect a generally favorable view of how educational administration influences the use of digital learning platforms in selected Onitsha secondary schools. Administrators appear to be supporting digital education through training, monitoring, and encouraging innovation, as shown by mean values well above the 2.50 benchmark. However, there is a noticeable gap in the area of policy formulation, as indicated by item 4, which had the lowest mean score (2.34). This suggests that while efforts are being made at a practical level, they may not be backed by formal guidelines or frameworks. Additionally, the moderate score on infrastructure (2.79) points to the need for more consistent investment in the tools and technologies necessary for sustained digital learning integration.

Table 2: Responses on Administrative Impact on Independent Study Habits

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
6	The school provides students with access to digital libraries or e-learning resources.	2.67	1.01	Agree
7	Homework policies encourage students to study independently.	3.12	0.78	Agree
8	Teachers are required to assign research-based or self-directed tasks.	3.09	0.88	Agree
9	Mentoring or academic guidance is available to support students' independent learning.	2.43	1.05	Disagree
10	Students are trained to use learning platforms on their own.	2.58	0.97	Agree

The data indicate that school administrators are making efforts to promote independent study habits among students. Most of the items scored above the 2.50 cut-off mark, which suggests that homework policies, access to digital tools, and the use of research-based assignments are actively encouraging student autonomy. However, the relatively low mean for mentoring and guidance services (2.43) raises concern. Without structured academic support systems, students may struggle to fully engage in independent learning. While there is a clear effort to provide access and tools, the personal support necessary for student success appears to be insufficient or inconsistently provided across the schools.

Table 3: Responses on Challenges Faced by Administrators

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
11	Insufficient funding limits digital infrastructure in our school	3.34	0.89	Agree
12	Teachers are reluctant to adopt digital tools	2.94	1.03	Agree
13	Students lack motivation for independent learning	2.88	0.95	Agree
14	Internet access is unreliable or unavailable in the school	3.41	0.76	Agree
15	Lack of clear government or school policy on digital learning	3.17	1.01	Agree

The table reveals a wide range of systemic challenges that school administrators face in the adoption of digital and self-directed learning approaches. All the items recorded mean scores above the cut-off, indicating consensus on the existence of barriers. The highest means (3.34 and 3.41) highlight funding shortages and poor internet access as the most pressing infrastructural concerns. Teacher resistance and student motivation also emerged as considerable challenges, suggesting that technological change must be managed not only materially but also through capacity building and attitude transformation. The absence of clear policy direction (M = 3.17) further complicates implementation, making it difficult for administrators to operate within a unified strategic framework.

6. Discussion of Findings

The data presented across Tables 1 to 3 indicate a strong and consistent relationship between educational administration and both digital platform utilization and independent study habits among students in secondary schools in Onitsha. Table 1, which measured the influence of administrative practices on digital learning platforms, revealed a cluster of high mean values above the 2.50 benchmark. This suggests that school administrators in CKC, QRC, Regina Pacis, Ado Girls, Bethlem, and DMGS play a significant role in supporting digital learning through the provision of ICT tools, regular supervision, and training initiatives. These results affirm the theoretical position of Rogers' *Diffusion of Innovation Theory*, which emphasizes that innovations such as digital learning tools are more effectively adopted when institutional leaders act as active change agents. In the context of the study schools, the data clearly reflects this diffusion process. This finding resonates with Boozer and Simon (2020), who found that students in institutions with well-integrated digital platforms scored higher in academic performance than their peers in traditional learning settings. In both instances, it was observed that administrative leadership in enhancing the application and upkeep of digital platforms was found to be one of the major success attributes. In a similar realization, Jain, Sharma, and Meher (2023) have emphasized the role of instructor presence with the help of institutional leadership, as it makes all the difference in terms of digital engagement and satisfaction among the learners. Onitsha findings confirm this since both principals and teachers indicated that top-level choices play a pivotal role in implementing and sustaining the usage of digital tools in the classrooms.

Table 2 was focused on the support or inhibitory role that administrative policies play in establishing independent study behaviors in students. The outcomes were once more evidenced with significant influence of administration, especially regarding the establishment of digital libraries, flexibility in course scheduling to coordinate asynchronous learning, and the promotion of peer-to-peer online learning groups. These results are supported by the study conducted by Wu (2023), who specified that the direct influence of this structured digital teaching by school administrators affected students ' motivation and the regularity of their self-study. Similarly, Oroni and Xianping (2024) discovered that strategic schools fared better in the encouragement of academic independence in the provision of organised digital platforms. This can help the present discussion because it can be said that students in well-managed schools have better chances to develop independent learning behaviors.

Besides, Table 3 indicates the key difficulties for the administrators, which are infrastructural constraints, staff resistance to change, insufficient funds, and a fickle power supply. Such structural factors are reflected in the results by Ren, Zhu, and Liang (2024), who explained that the quality of the internet and access devices is the key to meaningful internet use and is heavily reliant on governmental planning and relationships with other organizations. Although the problems that are registered in Onitsha may vary in quality or degree from those portrayed in Chinese universities, the linkage process is the role the leadership plays in controlling or uncontrolled reduction of the problems.

The Alshammary and Alhalafawy meta-analysis (2023) gives even more empirical support to the results of the current research. They summed up more than 70 studies and concluded that the results of digital learning are better when the leadership conditions the compatibility of platforms, standardizes the implementation process, and ensures the convenience of use. This is quite in line with the contemporary evidence that indicated that the respondents in schools where there was a dynamic administration oversight indicated an improved integration and scores in the platform and self-direction of students.

Moreover, Choudhury, Senapati, and Sarma (2023) determined that the digital continuity in teaching closely depends on the presence or lack of structured administrative control. The present research paper confirms this fact as it proves the idea that digital learning tools and individual study programs in Onitsha schools can be effective only in case they are supported by strategic administrative planning and are followed up regularly.

More interesting is the empirical evidence of Wut, Lee, and Xu (2022), who made a finding on the contribution of school administration in the case of school-based collaborative online learning. Besides their concentration on peer interaction, their results confirm the current study's argument that leadership is the force behind all types of digital engagements, namely, collaborative or independent. On the same note, Wang *et al.* (2022) indicated that learner autonomy and digital literacy were directly proportionate

to school-level leader participants, which is also reported in the current study that effective administrative contribution would produce a better independent study culture among students in Onitsha.

Overall, the interpretation of data and the empirical comparisons all lead to the conclusion that the issue of educational administration is also at the heart of defining the use of digital platforms and the development of autonomous study skills by students. Good management, effective planning, dynamic policies, and staff and students' training are the core competencies of any successful technology-mediated learning. It seems that the existence of clarity in administrative vision and action is the decisive factor between stagnation and digital change in the Onitsha secondary system of schools.

6.1 Educational Implications

1) School administrators play a central role in shaping students' digital learning behavior through leadership, resource allocation, and policy enforcement.
2) When digital tools are well managed and properly integrated by administrators, they promote learner autonomy and consistent study habits.
3) Poor administrative support limits the impact of digital platforms, leading to underutilization and diminished student outcomes.
4) Therefore, training school leaders on digital innovation and educational management is essential for fostering independent learning in modern classrooms.

6.2 Recommendations

1) School administrators should organize regular digital training for teachers to boost their competence and confidence in using e-learning tools.
2) Teachers should be encouraged to adopt digital platforms in their lesson delivery and assign tasks that promote independent learning.
3) Government and policymakers should provide funding for digital infrastructure and ensure policy support for digital education in secondary schools.
4) Parents and guardians should monitor students' use of digital resources at home to support consistent study habits beyond school hours.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

Hilda Chineze Agusiobo is an enthusiastic researcher and, passionate educationist. A Dr of Educational Management and a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Godfrey Okoye University. She coordinates the teaching practice activities and also is the coordinator of research at the NCE (Institute of Ecumenical Education) level. Her research interest spans across educational management, innovative pedagogy, teacher conflicts, motivation and improvement.

Academia.edu: https://go-uni-enugu.academia.edu/HildaAgusiobo

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