

APPLICATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN ACCOUNTING EDUCATION

Matthew Thomas Umanah and Enenwan Akwaowo Evanson

Abstract

Information and Communication Technology through Accounting Education is the answer to economic development and globalization in modern societies. The reverse could attract social vices such as fraud, poverty, unemployment and the like. Some achievement recorded in computerizing payroll, marketing, stock and cost management, accounting lectures and research materials needs encouragement. However, problems in this direction are irregular power supply, frequent fluctuation in network, non Professional employees, paucity of research materials, alarming rate of students absence from accounting education lectures, poor funding, facilities and equipment and some lecturers poor attitude to conferences, Seminars and workshops. It was recommended that 70% students compulsory minimum attendance at lectures be strictly adhered to, while Accounting is made compulsory for all fresher in the higher institutions. Constant power supply and steady network be ensured. Only professionals versed in Information Communication should be employed to lecture Accounting Education Courses. All companies Annual Report be stored in the internet. A separate department should be created for Accounting Education. Government should provide adequate funds for Information and Communication Technology based Accounting Education.

Introduction

The development of large-scale businesses, complexity in government administration and the global economic meltdown calls for a faster and more reliable means of communication of more detailed and adequate information. Whatever this would cost is less expensive than communication gap, which often create non-accountability, poverty, unemployment, under-development, high cost of living and its associated low standard of living which consequently attract militancy, armed robbery or war. According to Isaac and Ibe-Bassey (2008), this trend of events requires not only a comprehensive package accounting approaches, philosophies, but also a close monitoring of information and analysis of such information to set aside the inherent repressive tendencies in order to create an avenue for meaningful results. In addition, Ebirim (1996), looks at Accounting as a language of business while a greater percentage of Nigerian employees are in the business sector of Nigeria economy. This point at necessity for making and supporting innovations in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Accounting Education

As education that needs modern techniques and strategies in information and communication, Accounting Education, according to Isaac, Ibe-Bassey and Evanson (2007), is a programme designed and aimed at developing skills, knowledge and understanding that are necessary to facilitate financial information control and processing. It provides individuals opportunity for the acquisition of relevant skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the nation. Accounting Education is a programme of studies in the Higher institutions of learning.

Nevertheless, some achievements have been recorded in the area of Accounting Education. These include:

- (a) Introduction of computer Education in the Higher Institutions of learning such as college of Education, polytechnic and the university.
- (b) At least, certain accounting data could be down loaded from the web site.

Information Technology

Oranu (2004), described information technology as the one which supports activities involving the creation, storage, manipulation and communication of information, together with their related methods, management and application. Thus, information technology is the broad based technology needed to support information systems. Computers, telecommunications equipment and other technologies associated with. automation come under the general heading-information technology. Computers in this regard are seen as office assistance that helps in the office work or as electronic device used by humans to do whatever it is asked to do. In the modern world computer comes in to complement man's effort in handling large volume of complicated transactions and the increasing expectation of the general public for quality service in terms of generating, storing, supporting and processing information while saving time.

Application of Computer in Nigerian Accounting Education

It is essential that Accounting Education should inculcate in the students at least the knowledge of the basic structural elements of the computer system to enable them appreciate its benefits to the user. According to Atiomo (2000), the basic structure of a computer consists of the heart, the central processing unit (C.P.U) which consists of the arithmetic and control circuiting, and the main data and programme storage area. In addition, it is expected that Accounting Education student be able to enter data and programme as well as to obtain results, hence at least one input and one output device is required. It is customary to augment the main storage of the CPU with some ancillary storage.

The importance of computer application cannot be over emphasized in payroll accounting involving basic salary, fringe benefits, tax, increment, and surcharge.

Also, it is very essential in determining the corporate financial position through statement of profit and loss account, statement of source and application of Funds as well as Balance Sheet at a given time.

In addition the provision for information through the internet ensures up to date data for researchers in Accounting Education.

The on-line and off-line payment from banks bringing satisfaction to both the customer and the bank attracts excursion from Accounting Education student and helps to ensure proficiency in Accounting, the pivot of business.

However, in order to ensure the above benefits accruing from computer through Accounting Education the lecturers, instructors, punch operators, the programmers, and system Analysts should have a fair knowledge of computer application in order to deliver qualitative instructions both in theory and practical.

Communication Process in Accounting Education

Ibe-Basseyy views communication as the transfer, transaction or exchange of ideas, knowledge, beliefs or attitudes from one person to another within a given social organization. This

Application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Accounting Education

involves written and oral speech. Essentially communication involves the transfer of information from a source to a receiver. To communicate one needs to become aware of our environment or surrounding through our senses of sight, hearing, taste or touch. This is facilitated through the elements of perception, which include the eyes, the ears, the nose and the skin. Therefore, the communication process involves a source (sender), and message transmitted through certain channels to a receiver. The sender becomes aware of the receiver's response through a response loop (feed back) and some times some interference or disturbance can distort the message through the noise factor.

- (i) In communication process the message at the mental level is converted into transmittable form (encoded). The message then passes through a transmission unit (print, television, film) via a suitable channel (air, wire, paper, light) to the receiver's motor skills (a person's senses - eyes, ears nerve endings) where the message is converted within the central nervous destination - the brain of the receiver. In the process, the receiver responds to the stimuli. Reaction may be either verbal or non-verbal gestures. This may include answering questions, questioning or performing some physical or mental activities. This is referred to as feedback, a process whereby a sender or a message utilizes information obtained as a result of impact or lack of impact of his intended message for effectiveness. Thus, for Accounting Education to exert positive impact on the learners and the Nigerian society, the principles of communication can be needed to analyze the instructional process. Teachers in this profession should help select and encode curricular content into meaningful symbols to achieve learning objectives. The success of such an instructional situation depends on your teacher's field of experience and that of the students. For instance, if a teacher wants to show a film to students on a particular topic such as bank reconciliation, he will need to have a preliminary discussion of the topic, an over view of the content at or even cueing the students and to prepare follow-up activities to reinforce and extend the range of what has been learned through the film e.g. after teaching Bank Reconciliation statement, a follow-up could be assignment on adjusted cash book. Moreover, materials that are to be presented to the students should be sufficiently within their field of experience. There is need to consider the ability of the students to be able to select appropriate materials within their field of experience.

Computer and Nigerian Economic Development

Ever since computer becomes part and parcel of business operation in Nigeria, employment opportunities are open to people nationally and internationally not only in the area of computer engineering (computer manufacturing and repairs), computer marketing (computer sales and distribution) as well as computer application (system designing, computer programming and operation). This innovation has earned employees a lot of income and hence contributed immensely to the national economy as well as global economy. The high demand in public and private schools as well as various computer training centers across the country brings about reduction in unemployment, increase in standard of living and higher human development index. Being trained in digital electronics and computer application and operation in institution of learning and private computer centers bring about regular in-service programme and seminars to get the staff abreast of the latest knowledge in computing in order to enhance their efficiencies and software effectiveness. According to Iwe and Udo (2004), countries producing software locally such as Nigeria is saved the trouble of foreign exchange to import services in this direction.

Equally, the advent of information technology has encouraged entrepreneurial skills in support of globalization as many can now boast of owning and managing complex businesses. The

information and computer technology applied in Accounting Education encourages people transacting business electronically either locally or international through T-Commerce, E-Commerce and M-Commerce. Television Commerce is the transacting of business by loading the smart cards from home via their television sets, once the internet is connected to the television the user is given access to shop on the network while electronic Commerce is the transacting of business on-line through the computer by the internet users. And business dealing with the use of mobile phones the M-commerce. The on-line marketers can leverage competitive advantage by using the internet in functional areas like sales, purchases, internet administration, Stock management and goods order management. Accounting education students and researchers as well as others also can source information without having to travel to other institution or to the public library, all without risk.

The current development in the banking industry coupled with the advent of e-banking has made banking service delivery to customers very efficient, faster and reliable. Today banking services are available in the form of private computer banking, telephone banking, internet banking, mobile banking with the aims of meeting the needs of modern Society.

Computer has revolutionized the economy in the area of information dissemination through e-mail and e-learning. E-mail has become part of corporate work as it is widely used to deliver information that could not be relayed over the phone. Apart from fast delivery and collection of mails, it costs less to send mails via e-mail.

The application of information and communication technology has played a vital role in the development of any nation's economy. In addition to enabling business executive work from anywhere and remaining connected to the office, Banks accounts being connected from the Head Office with branches, it ensures quality of service, better enlightened and informed people and persistent improvement in the ways of organizing business and hence a sustained economic viability.

Communicating Accounting Information to the Users

It is more convenient for managers and other decision makers to obtain information by Communication. Here, the information source is an accounting system consisting of economic events which are normally reflected in the signal received in form of invoices, receipts and other documents. The accountant acts as a transmitting device by observing the economic (financial) event and encoding them by means of the preparing accounting reports or statements. Both accounting reports and statements represent the communication channel by providing information for decision making, explaining plans and evaluating performance. From the channels the manager, shareholder or any user of accounting information will decode and interpret the message. Therefore an accounting information should mean that the message which are conveyed in the accounting reports have a significant influence on the action of the manager or receiver. According to Dickson (2006), communication is subject to inference or noise which can cause the signal received to differ from the signal transmitted, thus frustrating the intention of the originator of the message. Noise may be caused by processing error such as the transposition of symbols in transit, the accidental loss of digits, the distraction of parts of the report or window-dressing.

In terms of the end-product of the accounting effort and the requirement of the expected user, accounting information system can be broadly classified into two types: Financial and management accounting system.

The financial accounting system concerned with the financial records keeping provides information about the profit and loss associated with the organizations economic activities during a given period and the financial position attained at the end of that period. The information is of interest to all users of accounting information system.

Application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Accounting Education

On the other hand, information generated by management accounting system is available only to management and is usually designed and tailored to what management needs to ensure that the organization functions effectively. Most users of accounting information may also be interested in this information. Inanga (1985).

Problems Facing the Application of Information and Communication Technology

- Frequent fluctuation in network operation.
- Absence or irregular supply of electricity to enable constant information and communication among various business organizations and different sectors of the economy.
- Some operators of computers are not professionals. Equally, some cannot extract or download information successfully from cyber due to lack of relevant experience.
- Some firms have not stored their annual Reports or statement of accounts in the internet. This poses a problem of paucity of materials for researchers.
- Government has not ensured funding of training programmes in this regard.
- Some students of accounting education do absent themselves from lectures and thus limit their knowledge in the area of study.
- Some lecturers of accounting education choose not to participate in seminars, conferences and workshops to update their knowledge.

Recommendations

- i. To prevent further cases of non-accountability and other financial crimes in Nigeria and beyond, accounting as a course should be made compulsory for all year-one students in the tertiary institutions.
- ii. Still in this direction, absence from accounting education lectures should be checked by implementation of the 70% lecture attendance minimum before a student is allowed in for Examination.
- iii. The government (all tiers) should do all within its limits to ensure a steady electricity supply throughout the country to facilitate constant network operation.
- iv. Business organizations and tertiary institutions should employ professionals in information and communication technology to handle accounting work and lecturing respectively.
- v. The corporate affairs commission should ensure that all business organizations store their Annual Reports and other accounts statements in the internet for users.
- vi. A separate department should be created for Accounting Education in Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities.
- vii. Accounting as a subject should be considered compulsory for admission to read Accounting Education.
- viii. Government should provide adequate funding to encourage Accounting Education, the bed rock of development and productivity.

Conclusion

The role of information and communication technology in the Accounting Education is very significant and sine qua non. Despite few problems, the numerous merits associated with information and communication technology in accounting education make it convincing that if institutions of Higher Learning, Business organizations and Government and even the students could appreciate this

innovation by supporting the technology, Nigeria would surely excel in economic development and could compete favourably in the on-going globalization.

References

- Atiomo, A. C. (2004) *Practical human resources management*, Ikeja, Lagos, Malthouse press Ltd.
- Ebirim, C, O. J. (1996) *Business accounting*, vol.1 Port Harcourt: Michael Willy Agencies Nig. ltd.
- Inanga, E. L. (1985) *Principles of accounting*, 2nd edition, Onistha Heinemann educational book (Nig) Plc.
- Isaac, I. J. Ibe-Bassey, B. S., & Evanson E. A. (2007) Making accounting relevant through business education curriculum innovation. A paper presented at the 4th Annual Conference of the ASSEQEN at Federal Government College of Education (1) Asaba, Delta State, 14th – 15th May.
- Iwe, J. P & Udo, I. I. (2004). The role of information and communication technology in education; *Nigeria Journal of vocational teacher education* Vol. 5 (1) March.
- Oranu, R. N. (2004) Information technology *Nigeria Journal of vocational teacher education* (NJOVTE), Vol. 5 (1) March.