

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN BUSINESS EDUCATION: PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS

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Abstract

The application of information and communication Technology (ICT) in Business Education programme would positively enrich the system. Through ICT, the commercial world would be influenced by the information age where the ability to excel would be determined by the availability, quality, source and value of information. This paper therefore examine the concept of ICT, prospects of ICT in Business Education, Problems and recommendations to the problems.

Introduction

The application of Information and Communication Technology in business Education would positively enrich the system. Through ICT, the commercial world would be influenced by the information age where the ability to excel would be determined by the source, availability, quality and value of information. ICT is the most attractive tool for successful development of the education sector and industries that would gear the awareness and facilitate craftsmanship in business world for the younger generation. Therefore, there is need to migrate towards gaining relevant knowledge, skills and establishing networks for economic partnership.

World Bank (2002) defined Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as the integration of computer technology mainly in the form of internet and information management system. Agbamu (2004) considered information and communication technology to be the use of electronic computers and computer software to convert, store, process and transmit vocal, pictorial, textural and numerical information. Evans (2002) also described information and communication Technology as the acquisition, processing and dissemination of information by a micro-electronics-based combination of computing and communications.

Information and Communication Technology may therefore be defined as all that is involved in gathering and processing information through computers and other related equipment to reach the desired places and people at a reasonable cost and time to the overall benefit of mankind. ICT have changed the lives of people, work and play. Business Education should not be left out of this change to exploit the potentials, shape and transform the educational landscape of the tertiary and secondary institutions in Nigeria.

Effective Business Education Programme would ensure competencies in skills, knowledge of Information and Communication Technology and proficiency in the world of work. With proper integration of ICT in Business Education programme, it will help to improve the academic training of business educators and holds out the opportunity to revolutionize office automation, pedagogical methods and expand access to quality education. There is the need to embrace the challenges through the development and use of Information and Communication Technology in Business Education. Abinbude (2000) confirmed that Information and Communication Technology requires acquisition of practical skills which must be properly communicated to the learners. With the changes in global market, office automation and democratization, it is inevitable for individual to have the ability to access and apply information; such ability should have a root from Business Education. For Nigeria to keep apace with the global Changes in her educational system, especially in content and mode of

instruction, the younger generation should be geared to grapple with the challenges of information and communication technology as well as meeting the national educational goals. With the application of information and communication technology in Business Education, the learners would be able to recognize what they need to accomplish, determine when and where to obtain the needed business information. In the world today, the primary means of reaching people in short and long distances with current information are mediated by information and communication technology (ICT). It is on these bases that Nigeria should embrace this powerful technology in Business Education to meet the competitive and challenging commercial world office automation.

Prospects of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) In Business Education

Information and communication technology when adequately implemented in Business Education programme will lead to numerous benefits to both the learners and the teachers towards ensuring quality instructions in Business Education. The benefits include:

- ❖ Through the application of Information and Communication Technology Students' interest would be sustained and ideas concretized using different resources that appeal to each student. Slow and fast learners would benefit from the Instructional approach as the process could be repeated several times to accommodate individual differences of the students. Brewton (2002) affirmed that the use of information and communication technology in Teaching and learning enriched in-depth understanding of Business concepts and ideas. ICT when applied as instructional devices would improve the individualization of teaching and learning which is lacking in most of our class rooms due to large students-teacher ratio.
- ❖ The application of Information and Communication Technology would develop teachers and students business ability, concept and attitude. Well written instructional packages to complement the efforts of business teachers and students, especially the poorly skilled/equipped students to develop effective business attitudes and concepts are achievable through ICT. Effective teaching and learning of business education depends on the availability and organization of materials, equipment, media and technology (Akpan, 2003)
- ❖ Information and communication Technology would enhance the teaching of business concepts to the learner at every corner of the globe. With ICT, students individually or collectively would receive lectures or instructions on different business concepts delivered by business Experts from different parts of the world using varied pedagogical approaches and resources. Teacher and students would have access to current textbooks, reference books and large volume of current information using internet within a short period. This would enhance knowledge sharing, quality of knowledge, authentic and unique knowledge among students and teachers. Ezeliora (2005) affirmed that with ICT, teachers and students would be acquainted with current textbooks and information within a short period.
- ❖ Information and Communication Technology holds out the opportunity to revolutionize pedagogical methods, expand access to quality education and improve the management of educational system (world Bank 2002). Through ICT, teachers, and learners of Business Education, libraries and schools in different parts of the globe would communicate with one another and share information to enhance business understandings. Also students and teachers

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can view documents in richly formatted texts and pictures, connect colleagues, scholars, friends and resource persons in almost all parts of the globe. This would provide the teachers and learners with the opportunities to read modified comprehensive output and to produce or write modified comprehensible output through internet. Thereby promoting communication among students, teachers, peers and provide expansive feedback.

- ❖ Information and communication technology enhance educational efficiency. Through ICT, business students would be able to seek explanations, compare experiences, reason and learn many concepts in school curriculum and also enhance problem-solving skills among students.
- ❖ Information and Communication Technology will offer business educators and students the opportunity to improve on the technique of research. It will act as pathfinder to all researchers on how to write, present and obtain information for their research projects. The problems of searching through library cards, catalog or periodical will be made easier through ICT.

Problems of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Business Education

The use of Information and Communication Technology in Business Education is fraught with several problems. Some these problems are as follows:

➤ **Poor and Insufficient Electricity Supply**

Unreliable and inadequate electricity supply is an obstacle to the use of ICT in our institutions of learning. Towns and Cities in Nigeria where institutions of learning are located do not have constant supply of electricity and some do not have access to electricity at all, especially the rural areas. This greatly affects the use of ICT in our institutions of learning. Anujeonye (2008) Affirmed that when electricity supply is not stable and constant, it is difficult to keep high technological equipment functioning thereby denying the use of ICT and other electricity devices.

➤ **Insufficient Qualified Teachers**

There are acute shortage of qualified teachers in the field of system operation, software and network administration for effective use of ICT in our institutions of learning, World Bank (2002) asserted that low education level, literacy levels, lack of awareness about the capability of technology and absence of skills to develop and use ICT application represent significant obstacles to adoption even when the physical infrastructure are available. Successful integration of ICT in our institutions depends on availability of qualified teachers to enhance creativity and effectiveness. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2005) Affirmed that there is scarcity of teachers with requisite ICT Qualifications and few University Professors engage in ICT due to poor facilities for teaching and learning.

➤ **Cost**

Another obstacle to the use of Information and Communication Technology in the teaching and learning of Business Education is the high cost of procurement and maintenance of ICT facilities and accessories. Nigerian institutions are not properly funded to enable them procure, install and maintain the ICT facilities and accessories for effective use in respective institutions. FRN (2005) observed that there is high cost of imported ICT hardware, peripherals and software. The conference further added that only two companies in Nigeria assemble computers and no

company presently in Nigeria engaged in the manufacture of computer parts and peripherals which is the major component part of ICT. To effectively implement information and communication technology (ICT) in Business Education programme, Policy makers at all levels of governance in the country need to develop political will and commitment to increase budgetary allocations for education. Increased in financial allocations and judicious and judicious use will lead to the provision of essential information and communication technology equipment, instructional packages, implementation and maintenance of the ICT equipment.

➤ **Lack of Government Policy**

There is no government policy on the use of Information and Communication Technology in the educational system. Government has not made it compulsory to include ICT in high institution curriculum. This singular act affects the use of ICT in Nigerian institutions and prevents business students from benefiting from the information explosion that characterize the century.

➤ **Limited Access to Internet**

There are few internet providers in the country today. Most of these companies provide poor service to customers while those that provide reliable services charge very high amount of money for their services thereby reducing access to the use of internet. Another obstacle to the use of information and communication technology in the learning and teaching of Business Education is insufficient ICT facilitating structures in country. Such facilitating structures include computers, instructional packages and equipment.

Recommendations

1. Government should make Information and Communication Technology part of National minimum standards for all graduates of business education in Nigeria.
2. Workshop, seminars should be organized to create awareness of ICT to students and teachers
3. Government should increase budget allocation to institutions to enable them embark on Information and Communication Technology
4. The use of Information and Communication Technology in the teaching and learning of business education should be highly encouraged by the government through the supply of computers and other ICT facilities.
5. Government should assist in training and retraining of teachers though in service courses to be ICT literate
6. Steady electricity supply and telecommunication facilities should be provided in urban and rural areas to facilitate the implementation of ICT.
7. Non Governmental organizations, multi-national companies and philanthropies should assist tertiary institutions in the provision of internet facilities and computers.

Conclusion

Nigeria most re-focus on her education system and integrate information and communication technology (ICT) into Business Education Curriculum to enhance the contents and pedagogical strategies in order to meet the changes in the global market, office automation and democratization and expand access to quality education.

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