

THE POTENCY OF ENTREPRENEURIAL AND FUNCTIONAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN LIBRARIES IN ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVE OF VISION 2020 IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Every nation needs adequate information to operate its programmes for effective developmental plans or visions. It is in this light, that this paper tends to examine the potency of entrepreneurial and functional Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in libraries in achieving the objective of vision 2020 in Nigeria. It started with an introduction, outlined the objective of the paper, examined the conceptual definition of entrepreneurial and functional education and ICT. It also gave a brief history of vision 20:2020. It suggested ways entrepreneurial and functional ICTs in libraries can help to achieve the objectives of the vision, some obstacles that were bound to be hindrances to the vision were outlined, after which the necessary steps to curb these obstacles were suggested and then conclusions were drawn.

Information has always played a vital role in human life. However, in the mid 20th century, the role of information increased immeasurably as a result of social progress and vigorous development in science and technology. Trostnikov (1970) in Ogunsola and Aboyade (2005) pointed out that rapid expansion of a mass of diversified information is occurring, which has received the name “information explosion”. As such, every nation needs adequate information to operate its programmes for effective developmental plans or visions. For instance, the first development plan in Nigeria was started by Late Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1960 – 1966), which was hindered by the Nigerian civil war. While the second development plan was initiated by General Yakubu Gowon in 1970, these plans were summarized in the National Policy on Education (2004). These plans continued with every head of state that came into power. It is in the same spirit that Late President Umaru Musa Yar’adua came up with the development plan of vision 20: 2020 in May 2009. The plan is hoped to make Nigeria one of the 20 most developed nations in the world, in the area of good governance, judiciary, health, agriculture, gender equity, economy, women empowerment, transport, media, finance, education etc.

Entrepreneurial and functional ICTs in libraries are very important factor for this vision to be achieved, because information from the libraries will expose the necessary steps taken by other nations to achieve their own vision. No wonder Abolade (2009) opined that most countries all over the world, are often assessed by the quality and quantity of their socio-economic, scientific and technological developments. Nevertheless, developing and under-developing countries in African continent, use the educational development as the yardstick for measuring their level of development. It is in this realm that one can see the need for scientific approach to information, for effective dissemination and retrieval.

The rate at which changes in the nations of the world take place through these new technologies has had a great effect on the way people live, work, and play worldwide, and this makes

the world a global village. In other words, information from other parts of the world can easily be assessed, retrieved and disseminated, which will in turn fast-track the achievement of the objectives of the vision 2020 in Nigeria.

Objective of the Paper

This paper intends to

- Identify ways entrepreneurial and functional ICTs in libraries can help to achieve the objective of the vision 2020 in Nigeria;
- Explain the importance of ICT in libraries;
- Mention some of the hindrances in achieving the objective of the vision 2020;
- Recommend ways of tackling these hindrances.

Entrepreneurial and Functional Education and ICT

An entrepreneurial education is a concept of “selling out knowledge to others (Wikipedia, 2010). It involves the establishment of new ventures, while adopting some risk. The essence is to create a product or a service in order to gain profit.

Functional education – the adjective “functional” refers to education that comes spontaneously from the influence of the environment; it is a kind of undirected, “natural” education, that is different from the deliberate goal oriented education, that is directed by man (Wikipedia, 2009). This education comes from the child’s needs and uses the child’s interest as a mechanism for activating him.

Entrepreneurial and functional education, is the education based on practical work plan that is intended to bring out the best in the child through the child mastering the subject matter. The subject matter to be taught is considered according to its importance in the life of the child, the society and nation at large.

ICTs – The Information and Communication Technologies has been viewed in different ways by different people. The World Bank defines ICTs as “the set of activities which facilitates by electronic means the processing, transmission and display of information” (Rodriguez and Willson, 2000). In an ordinary sense, it is referred to as the technologies people use to share, distribute, gather information and to communicate through computers and computer networks. It also represents a cluster of associated technologies defined by their functional usage in information access and communication, of which one embodiment is the internet.

Brief History of Vision 2020

The development plan of vision 2020 started in 2005, by former President Olusegun Obasanjo, when he saw the alarming rate at which Nigeria’s development was going, and he predicted that Nigeria might become one of the 20 leading economies in the world. To actualize this vision, many programmes were enacted and among them is the vision 20: 2020 in Nigeria.

The strategies and plans for this vision were set up by late President Umaru Musa Yar’adua. The committee was under the leadership of the Minister for National Planning Commission. He was mandated to draw up an articulated economic transformation programme for the nation (Daily Trust, 30 November, 2009: p.26). since then, many plans and strategies have been made. Among the objective of the vision 2020 in Nigeria, with reference to the blueprint of the federal government of Nigeria (2007), are:

- Macro economy

- Education
- Policy
- Infrastructure
- Health
- Agriculture
- Energy
- Good governance

Ways Entrepreneurial and Functional ICTs in School Libraries can Help Achieve the Objective of the Vision 2020 in Nigeria

New and emerging technologies challenge the traditional process of teaching and learning and the way education is managed. Information and Communication Technologies has its own impact in all curriculum areas easy communication, gives access to wide range of data, makes transfer and access of information in home, work, school, etc, easy, thereby making learning more functional and entrepreneurial. Since the objective of the nation is to place Nigeria amongst the 20 most developed nations in the world by 2020, in the areas of the rule of law, constitutionalism democracy, good governance, prosperous economy, manufacturing, health, agriculture, education.

In the judiciary, it is the rule of law, constitutionalism democracy, electoral reforms, constitutional renewal and amendment. And for a transparency and right administration in the rule of law, adequate information is needed and these can be obtained in libraries, through the use of ICTs facilities which will make information faster and easily assessable.

Good governance implies universal Basic Education; provision of social amenities, such as potable pipe borne water, stable electricity supply, good roads and hospitals, national poverty alleviation programmes through the creation of employment opportunities for all citizens of the country. And so for all these to be achieved by 2020, the ICTs in libraries will provide the information needed for its application through the internet. It is in this light that Ekwueme (2008) envisaged that information needs of library users are on the increase; this is because of the expansion of demands, in both volume and variety of information. These users she said, are information thirsty for their human and national development. The libraries therefore anticipate satisfying those wants for knowledge through the use of ICTs.

Moreso, the objective geared towards better agricultural programmes that will boost mass food programmes in Nigeria with encouragement to microfinance banks to provide loans to farmers of various cash and food crops. For these to be achieved, the society must be adequately informed through the use of entrepreneurial and functional ICT facilities like the internet so that one will get informed on how other nations was able to achieve self-sufficiency in food production. Besides, it is obvious that agriculture is also a criterion through which the level of development of any nation can be assessed.

Education as one of the objectives of vision 20:2020 should be based on a practical work plan. It is important to note that no nation can grow above its educational attainment. As such, libraries in schools should have the ICT facilities that will help to provide the necessary information needed to have an entrepreneurial and functional education. Therefore the first and basic area to be looked into is the educational sector because this is the nerve center of every other sector for national development. The importance of ICTs in schools cannot be overemphasized because it will give the nation a link to other nations through the various subjects studied in schools

Other sectors of importance in the development plan are the economy, health and energy (power supply). These areas need adequate information before proper implementation can be effected. It is quite clear that the plan aimed at giving effective and efficient health, so one need to be adequately informed before the objective can be achieved. No wonder the saying that a healthy nation is a wealthy nation and “health is wealth”.

We must understand that every skill for development comes through knowledge and information so the internet comes into pushback the frontier of ignorance by providing individuals with the necessary information and skills that will enable him to be entrepreneurial and functional and in the long run, help to achieve the objective of vision 20:2020.

Problems

Before any success there are bound to be obstacles, and some of the possible problems that might hinder this objective from being achieved are as follows:

- Lack of sufficient funding: Every project needs fund to succeed. This funding should be in all areas like public enlightenment campaign – through the in newspaper, television and radio. But there are insufficient fund to help carry out this programme.
- There is also poor funding of our libraries in schools and organizations where the necessary information on how best to achieve the 7-Point Agenda can be adequately provided.
- Poor government implementation of policy. Most programmes have not been able to achieve their objectives because most of the regimes only offer lip services just to win the interest of the citizens, without implementing the policy. In order words actions are not taken to implement it, but rather, they are only on blue prints.
- Lack of uninterrupted power supply that will help to operate the technologies, since they need electricity to work.
- Untrained librarians help to hinder the supply of current and updated information because of their poor knowledge in Information Technology.

Conclusion

Finally, to achieve the objective of the vision 2020, through ICTs in libraries, the librarians who will Mann these facilities in the libraries should be properly trained, and retrained on how to handle these facilities, as this will go a long way to help the information seekers or users to meet their information needs rapidly and easily.

However, the library is not only an information center but also a center of excellence upon which all academic activities are revolved. In order words, for a functional and entrepreneurial ICT in libraries, the ICT should provide information in all spheres of life – from the office to the manufacturing industries, from education to leisure activities, and in the home, giving current and updated information in these areas, than what it was in the past. The use of ICTs will provide current and updated information in the various areas of the nation, which will in turn, help us to achieve the objective of vision 2020 in Nigeria. It is therefore important that most industries, organizations and firms should develop special libraries where the services of professional librarians will be engaged to help get the necessary information needed for the achievement of the objectives of vision 20:2020.

Recommendations

For the success of the programme, the following have been recommended

- The government should sufficiently fund the programme especially in the area of creating awareness through jingles on radio, newspapers and television.
- Industries, organizations and firms should be encouraged to open special libraries attached to their organizations that will help to provide the necessary information that will help to achieve the objectives of the 7 (seven) point agenda.
- Librarians should be trained and retrained on how to use the information technology in libraries, as this will go a long way to help them get update and current information for the users.
- Every regime should make sure that policies and projects are implemented and carried out, instead of allowing it to be a political lip service in order words actions should be taken to carryout the objective of the 7-point agenda.
- Uninterrupted power supply should be made available to libraries and organizations, to enable the information technology to function.
- Adequate funding of the libraries are needed, so that the libraries will have the necessary information technology equipment to provide information to users.

The following are some of the areas information managers (librarians) needs to be trained.

Ejiofor (2000) listed some of the areas in include:

(1) Use of Telecommunication

This includes:

- ☞ Ability to send and receive E-mails manage mail services fax messages, operate teleconferencing facilities, send and receive messages through computer networks, send and receive correspondent by telex, telephone, mobile phone, etc.

(2) Reprographic

- ☞ Save, code, index and retrieve document or disk, microfilms, and other magnetic media.
- ☞ Accessing files, data capture, file creation, file update, report writing and file inquiry.
- ☞ Operating electronic filing, indexing and cataloguing.
- ☞ Applying the principle of electronic referencing.

(3) Communication Skills

- ☞ Use the telephones
- ☞ Be able to communicate orally
- ☞ Have good listening skills
- ☞ Able to write letters, memos, reports, etc
- ☞ Use grammar correctly, spelling etc

(4) Data Processing

- ☞ Interpret computer print out
- ☞ Apply basic processing method online, interacting, real time, batch etc.
- ☞ Data recording and updating stored databases.

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