



## RELEVANCE AND PROSPECTS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) TO BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM

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### **Abstract**

*This paper focuses on the role of ICT in the development of business education. The use of technology has come to rule today's world, and business education is not exempted from the areas that need adequate and proper use of information and communications technology (ICT). Being a skill course business education requires the use of ICT for the graduates to have learned full skills that are needed before graduation thereby producing competent, skillful and self-reliant business educators. Some of the prospects of information and communications technology to business education have been examined by the paper. Some problems militating against the smooth flow of ICT in business education have been touched, like the high cost of procurement and maintenance of ICT facilities and accessories. The paper concluded on the need to encourage the use of ICT in concomitant problems of running business education programme and recommendations were suggested to remedy the foregoing problems.*

**Keywords:** *Business Education, Information and Communications Technology ICT, Computer Accessories*

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### **Introduction**

Business education is a specialized component of vocational and technical education. It is offered in the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. Business education programmes offered in the universities and colleges of education, however, has education components that give the graduates the options to teach in secondary schools or seek employment in other organizations. Graduates, especially from the universities can also function as administrative officers in the public and private sectors of the economy. Business education offered in the universities comprises accounting, marketing and office technology and management (OTM) options. While in colleges of education it has basically two options namely accounting and office technology and management options.



The philosophy behind business education is to provide its graduates with appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies to become proficient educators and administrators who utilize both human and material resources for optimal productivity and to be self-reliant with the skills acquired; it thus promotes self-employment through skill acquisition development, it is also a tool in the hands of governments to combat unemployment and reduce poverty in the society (Amoor, 2009). Business education is an area of instruction that has been in existence for several decades. It plays very significant roles in the life of individuals, promotion of economic growth and national development, the provision of appropriate skills to make available human resources for employment in all sectors of economy.

Effective Business Education Programme would ensure competencies in skills and 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. (Akpan, 2010), For Nigeria to keep pace 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.



### **Concepts and Definitions of Business Education and ICT**

Business education is an academic discipline that provides students with appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical, that equip the learner with knowledge and makes him effective in teaching, office occupation and being self-reliant. Iwu (2016), Opined that business education is a course of study that equips individual with the occupational skills and knowledge that will enable him/her fit into a job and find satisfaction in the labour market. Its also a program that prepares its students with skills and competencies needed for self reliance and employment. Iwu (2016) concluded that primary goal of business education is to produce competent, skilful, and dynamic business educators, office administrators, secretaries and business men and women that will effectively compete un the world of work.. Amoor (2009) asserted that business education is a vocational programme that is offered in colleges of education and universities to provide students with appropriate skills and knowledge to take up career in teaching, business and office occupation.

Ikuka (2013) defined ICT as the electronic means of capturing, processing, storing and disseminating information. Presently, classrooms are shifting away from rows and desks to an environment that promotes collaboration between students, teachers and learning devices. Ajulukuchu and Osakwe (2019) in Njoku (2006) stressed that ICT is the combination of technologies for collecting, storing, processing, communicating and delivering of information.

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, textual 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 communication

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's 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.

### **Business Education and Information Communication Technology**

The emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as recorded in recent times has brought advancement in different spheres of human endeavor. So many technological tools, gadgets and software programmes are being discovered on a daily basis, and the need to develop human capital towards the acquisition and utilization of these knowledge becomes inevitable. (Okoli, 2012 in Okoro,2013). Education is regarded as the bedrock of any national development and the issue of technological application in teaching and learning is considered a priority for other resource areas to tap into. Igberaharha (2009) noted that education in Nigeria, in this rapidly changing and competitive environment cannot be relevant without effective preparation of the new generation to make effective use of information and communication technology in their professional practices.

Information and communications technology when adequately implemented in Business Education programmes would lead to numerous benefits for both learners and teachers towards ensuring quality instructions in Business Education. According to Akpan, (2010), the benefits include:

- Through the application of Information and Communications 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 students. Brewton (2002) affirmed that the use of information and communication technology in teaching and learning engenders 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 Communications Technology would develop teachers' and students' business ability, concepts and attitudes. 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 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 of time.
- Information and Communications Technology holds out the opportunity to revolutionize pedagogical methods expand access to quality education and improve the management of educational systems (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. Students and teachers can also view documents in richly-formatted texts and pictures, connect to colleagues, scholars, friends and resource persons in almost all parts of the globe. This would provide the teachers and learners with opportunities to read modified comprehensive output and to produce or write modified comprehensible output through the internet. Thereby promoting communication among students, teachers, peers and provide expansive feedback.
- Information and Communications Technology enhance educational efficiency. Through ICT, business students would be able to seek explanations, compare experiences, reason and learn many concepts in the school curriculum and also enhance problem-solving skills among students.
- Information and Communications Technology would offer business educators and students the opportunity to improve on their techniques of research. It would act as pathfinder to all researchers on how to write, present and obtain information for their research work. The problems of searching through library cards, catalog or periodical will be made easier through ICT.



## **Problems of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Business Education**

The use of Information and Communication Technology in Business Education is faced with several problems, some of which are:

- **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 is acute shortage of qualified teachers in the field of system operation, software and network administration to effectively use 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. The Federal Republic of Nigeria: FRN (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 Communications 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 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. It further added that only two companies in Nigeria assemble computers this warrants unavailability of the accessories and peripherals leading to a high cost.



- **Under Utilization of ICT Facilities** - Government may provide the ICT centers in our institutions of learning, but, the negligible nature of those handling it would not make the students full utilization of the facility there by allowing the decay in the facilities without a corresponding benefits to students.
- **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 amounts of money for their services thereby reducing access to the use of the internet. Another obstacle to the use of Information and Communications Technology in the learning and teaching of business education is insufficient ICT facilitating structures in the country. Such facilitating structures include computers, instructional packages and equipment.

### **Conclusion**

The paper concluded that Information and Communications Technology is very relevant and an indispensable tool that could enhance effective teaching and learning of business education programme, if relevant authorities would have the political will and commitment to design learner-centered curriculum that would incorporate the use of ICT and make the necessary funding available as well as giving training and retraining to academic staff on the use of ICT facilities and related accessories. It is therefore important that all Business education students should have requisite knowledge of ICT so as to effectively function in the society after graduation.

### **Recommendations**

Thinking through the fore going, the paper makes the following recommendations.

1. Government should make available electricity supply in all the rural and urban centers across the country. So that institutions of learning can stand a chance to benefit from the gesture, by making optimal use of all ICT gadgets in our institutions of learning.
2. Government should provide funds for the acquisition of ICT resources in the schools.
3. The Nigerian Communication Commission and other regulatory bodies should double their efforts in regular training of personnel to man and maintain ICT resource centers in various educational institutions.



4. Teachers should be trained and retrained periodically to be abreast with technological innovations.
5. A computer-based social interaction platform should be introduced in schools to foster knowledge and information sharing among members of the school community as a way of arousing interest in ICT applications.
6. Concerned authorities should enact policies and make funding available to the institutions offering business education programme facilitate the use of ICT in their respective institutions.

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