

# CHALLENGES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TO SKILL ACQUISITION IN TERTIARY POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

*Uzebu Efosa*

## **Abstract**

This paper examines political science education as a tertiary education discipline and its relationship with information technology. It adds that the application of information technology to the acquisition of skills in political science education in Nigeria's tertiary institutions will go a long way to making beneficiaries to achieve gainful employment after graduation. It highlights the implications of information technology for effective teaching of political science education in Nigerian's tertiary institutions. Therefore, the paper recognizes the following problems like: erratic electricity power supply, wide-scale corruption, poor attitude to work, poor governance, among others. The following recommendations, among others, were made that all stakeholders must wake up to their responsibilities through purposeful funding,, provision of instructional facilities, enthronement of good electricity power supply, shunning of all forms of corruption; effective provision of good computer laboratory (including all varieties of equipment/tools), and so on, so as to make sure that better training environments are sustained.

## **Introduction**

The present position of information and communications technology in the teaching and learning of political science in Nigeria's tertiary institutions cannot be over-emphasized because the nature of the subject requires students' familiarity with their physical, social, political and technological advancement. Hence, the present wide-scale unemployment of youths and adults is a test-case to the reason why students of political science education should be computer-compliant while in their respective training environments so as to justify the caring posture of the present Nigeria's political dispensation popularly called the seven-point agenda.

In this regard, the use of information will certainly enhance students' ability and familiarity to get access to information in all parts of the world to fulfill their needs and aspirations in relation to job market and educational advancement. Therefore, the application of information technology through the use of computer devices, according to Ogbeneakoke (2008), will certainly help to bring the world closer together and enhance social and political interactions among nations of the world. This is the reason why political science education would provide the necessary knowledge and skills for rapid development in all areas that are relevant to nation building as far as education is concerned. This is indeed one of the major objectives of the subject matter as entrenched in the National Policy on Education (2004) as it concerns the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around including the world of work.

In this regard, computer development has given birth to three directions of communications technology in the form of connectivity, interactivity and multimedia. Therefore, the combination of computer development and that of communications technology mentioned above, has empowered any computer literate beneficiary to keep on busy in the working environment simultaneously by doing multiple tasks creatively in the production of usable documents either for an employer or for a fee in case of a self-employed political science beneficiary. This is the reason why computer technology has brought changes into the training programmes of Nigerian tertiary institutions. It then means that such institutions must brace up to put in place a proper training environment for students by providing computer laboratories that are suitably enriched with computer systems. It would certainly stimulate the necessary anxiety and interest needed by students of political science to learn. Invariably, when there is a blend of political and social training skills with that of the computer technology, such a beneficiary would excel in any working environment through navigating the desktop to produce viable documents, including storing and retrieval of information from a database and the use of the multimedia to source for more usable information.

In this regard, political science education, as a major player of any democratic system of governance, has become a dynamic field of study requiring the learner or beneficiary to acquire computer application skills. It has gone beyond the emphasis on studying parliamentary processes, and has added the requirements of proficiencies in the operation and application of the computer system, among others. This is the reason why this paper is focusing on challenges posed by information technology in the acquisition of political science education in Nigeria as a viable option for youths and adults to earn a living and become self-reliant economically.

### **Relationship between Political Science Education and Technology**

Ogbeneakoke (2008) citing Idowu (2001) explained that is a keen relationship between political science education and technology because of the following reasons:

1. Dissemination of necessary information to understand the scientific basis of modern life. This will enable him or her to explain the phenomena in daily life in an intelligent manner.
2. Developing an appreciation for scientific and technological discoveries and inventions.
3. Development of an open enquiring mind, along with such values as honesty, diligence, patience, determination, self-discipline, and self-criticism. These behavioural traits are among the most important ones that sustain scientific enquiry and technological inventiveness.
4. Development of objective mindedness which is perhaps the most crucial trait necessary for scientific investigations. If a person develops objective in his approach to issue, he will avoid laziness, sentiments and prejudice and he will always seek the truth. He will also be positive his outlook and will often seek to establish cause and effect relationships when discussing and events.
5. Scientific investigation and technological inventions require a high degree of intellectual study ability. Political science facilitates the development of intellectual ability and other necessary scientific and technology skills such as critical analysis comparison, synthesis, applications and evaluation.
6. Development of psychomotor skills through the process of observation, comparison, sound judgment and decision-making. Political science education also helps the leaner to develop perceptual abilities to distinguish between objects and to develop hand manipulative skills and physical abilities of strength and endurance through practice and practical work.

Taking a look at the above factors, there is a keen relationship between political science education and that of technology, and this is the reason why it should be taught in Nigerian tertiary institutions so as to empower graduates to gain employment in their respective environments.

### **Computer Laboratories as Serving the Functions for Training Political Science Education Students in Actualizing Gainful Employment after Graduation**

In this regard, Naughton, Raymond, Shulman and Struzzi (2008) explained that computer laboratories could serve the following functions for training political science education students in tertiary institution which would aggravate gainful employment after graduation:

**Basic Programming:** Makes students to learn about tools and processes that are used to instruct computers to perform their training routine work. The training laboratory should include topics on basic computer tasks like: input, processing, and output, variables, constants, assignments, mathematical calculations and re-using of codes.

**Binary Numbers:** Enable students to explore binary numbers including such topics as binary numbers as switches, how to make a binary number, binary addition, and binary logic.

**Computer Anatomy and Computer Troubleshooting:** Make students to learn the parts that make up a personal computer, including input, output, storage and processing devices. On troubleshooting, it enables students to learn how to avoid, repair, and troubleshoot computer problems.

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**Disk Fragmentation:** Enables students to understand how data and programs are stored and assessed. They include concepts such as disk storage, blocks, fragmentation, defragmentation, media types and data storage.

**E-mail Essentials:** Ability to learn the tools, techniques and etiquette needed to communicate by e-mail.

**Workplace Issues:** Enable students to learn the basics of ethics, privacy, security and time wasting activities, either as an engineer or as an employee.

**Multimedia tools:** Learning the basics of creating a simple multimedia presentation by understanding the types of media, virtual reality, interactivity, multimedia applications, and the uses of multimedia.

**Introducing Databases to Students:** A laboratory will certainly introduce to students the many concepts involved in making, maintaining, and using a database to store large amounts of related data. Students will have the opportunity to design a database, create the data base, and use the information they entered to generate useful reports.

**File Organization:** Enables students to learn about the way files are stored on their hard drive and how they can configure the storage to help them work efficiently.

**Word Processing and Spreadsheets:** Students would learn the common features of word processing and spreadsheet programs, the basic features of word processing programs, and the basic features of spreadsheet programs.

**Internet Overview:** Makes student to explore features of the internet including communication browsing, sharing, and how to get connected.

Davies (2006) explained that capacity building entails using available human and material resources to actualize economic efficiency in an environment. In this regard, there has to be a systematic blending of political science skills and computer laboratories to train students to acquire competencies in their various programmes so as to guarantee gainful employment after graduation. On the other hand, many graduated students, as a result of lack of gainful employment in government offices or private organizations, have been able to set up their own business centres or documentary offices to earn a living. This has been made possible as a result of modern technological advancement especially the use of the computer system. Such students have availed themselves by becoming computer literate in its applications in order to empower them to serve their customers better. Eyitayo, Eyitayo and Akeju (2002:73) including Becham and Rathswohl (2006:291) explained that computer studies and business data processing skills provide self-employment skills to graduates as summarized below:

- a) **Word Processing and Desktop Publishing:** This concerns the skills for writing. It is the first application used by all students. Desktop publishing concerns using the personal computer to transform written texts or words into polished and exciting publications.
- b) **Spreadsheets:** This concerns the computer application that calculates and works with numbers and formulas.
- c) **Databases for Information Storage and Retrieval:** They are used in libraries, banks, schools, colleges of education, polytechnics, universities and other institutions for information storage.
- d) **Computer Graphics:** They are used to produce all kinds of graphics, charts and graphs.
- e) **Multimedia and Hypermedia:** Multimedia tools make it possible to combine audio and video with traditional text and graphics. They add new dimensions to computer communication. On

~~Uzebu E. Osa~~  
the other hand, hypermedia tools focuses on the interactive capabilities of computers. They allow users to explore a variety of paths through information sources. Both multimedia and hypermedia have wonderful potentials in transforming information.

- f) **Telecommunication and Networking:** This is very interesting in the multi-purpose global communication web known as the Internet. It has become as important in our lives as the telephone system, the postal service and broadcast television are today.
- g) **Artificial Intelligence:** This explores the use of computer in tasks that require intelligence, imagination and insight which have been traditionally performed by people rather than machines.
- h) **General Problem-solving:** Computers are used to solve problems. This is where programming languages are used as tools that allow one to build and customize applications.
- i) **Integrate Software:** This concern transferring data from one program to another, that is, data could be electronically moved from one program to the other. Ugiagbe (2010) opined that this was not possible for earlier microcomputers. For example, a computer user can analyze and make a report of the results of a class which have been entered by using a database management system. It can be transferred into a spreadsheet package to draw graphs, and later, the computer user could transfer the graphs into a word processing package to write a report that would be submitted for decision-making. Consequently, integrated software allows several programs to share the same data. This means that a spreadsheet package can use database package to draw graphs. In this regard, the general benefits of integrated software are that the user can work faster, be more efficient and be more productive than if non-integrated programs were used. A common integrated software package integrates software for spreadsheet, database, graphics and word processing packages. It enables a computer literate to navigate the desktop to produce a document which he or she wants. Therefore, here are some examples of integrated programs:
  - a) **Microsoft Office:** This comprises the following: Microsoft word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, Microsoft Power Point, Microsoft Outlook and Bookshelf Basics.
  - b) **Corel Word Perfect Suit:** This comprises: Corel Word Perfect, Corel Quattro Pro, Corel Presentations, Corel CENTRAL, and Corel Photo House.
  - c) **Claris works:** It comprises a Word Processor, a Spreadsheet and a database.

### **Some Major Problems Facing the Teaching of Information Technology in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions**

Some of the major causes of unemployment problems are enumerated below:

- a) **Erratic Electricity Power Supply:** This is an outstanding problem in Nigeria today. It has become a cankerworm that is working against economic development in the country. Many industries, farm settlements, small-scale businesses, artisans, technicians, et cetera, require electricity power to operate. Some industries are out of business, some others are not operating to full capacity while some farm settlements have been deserted as a result of incessant power failures. The artisans, technicians, owners of business centres, bukateria, hotels, art galleries, and poultries and so on, are thrown out of jobs, thereby, making unemployment situation to soar.

On the other hand, the simple comfort at home is not there because of the epileptic or permanent failure of power supply in most parts of Nigeria. A part from the untold hardship which lack of power supply has brought to Nigerian citizens, it has contributed immensely to the economic and unemployment woes that have befallen the country today. And the Federal Government's bid to solve the problem through privatization and commercialization of National Electrical Power Authority

(NEPA) now Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), has continued to defy the enthronement of permanent power supply to move the economy forward.

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**b) *Corruption in Low and High Positions:*** In this regard, Egbochuku (2003:16) explained that Nigeria has become very notorious in corruption, and it is massively taking place in low and high positions. There have been some complaints and reports of reckless looting of Nigeria's treasury by accounting officers of all tiers of government, parastatals, and agencies, banks, oil sector, construction and fertilizer companies, among others, that so much hard-earned money is being siphoned out of the country and stocked in foreign bank accounts. It has been found that many court registers have pocketed fines paid by convicts, pervasive over-invoicing, unreceipted purchases, multiple payments for one job, paying for work not done, illegal contracts, etc, in the above-mentioned offices, while some Nigeria State governors have been severely indicted for gruesome involvement in money laundering. Such monies are supposed to be used for developmental projects which stimulate investments, production, savings and employment, and invariably enhance good standard of living of the citizens. Instead, many people have continued to wallow in abject poverty, unemployment and shortages of infrastructures in schools and poor maintenance culture of public utilities.

**c) *Lack of Hard work:*** As many Nigerians have thrown overboard the virtues of hard work and put in its place the culture of corruption and trading in contraband and expired drugs, etc., many of the want to become rich over-night. Honesty, accountability, reliability, trust, etc., have eluded many Nigerians because they have the wrong belief that they cannot succeed in life without being corrupt. This has culminated into unemployment situation because many youths and adults are waiting for opportunities to become rich over-night through fraudulent and unlawful practices (Ayeduso, 2002:72).

**d) *Absence of Creative Thinking and Good Governance:*** Nicholas (2007:23) explained that creative thinking gives birth to good governance in any nation. The author further explained that good governance is a multi-faced subject, but the main theme is that it is to ensure the accountability of certain individuals like the politicians through mechanisms that try to reduce or eliminate resource wastages including corruption. Hence, this has become a very big problem in our environment because many individuals, leaders, manufactures, small-scale business, large-scale industries, entrepreneurs, among others, do not think from cause to effect and from effect to cause. They do not think in their minds the effect of producing sub-standard goods on them, their families, the nation, and humanity at large. In most cases, the thinking of people is short-lived, and cannot serve the common good for a long time to come as is the case in advanced nations. Many Nigerian politicians are too self-centred that serving the common good of the people has become an uphill tasks, hence, nothing is working for the promotion of warfare and service-oriented activities and programmes that have direct impact on the standard of living of citizens.

**Conclusion**

In this segment, it is very obvious that there is a great need of political science education students to be trained in information technology while in their training environments. It is the view of this paper that political science education programme will certainly go a long way in rescuing the unemployment syndrome, especially when students are trained in computer applications.

**Recommendations**

In order to facilitate the teaching of information technology in political science education in Nigerian tertiary institutions, the following recommendations are hereby proffered:

1. All tiers of Nigerian government should gather their loins and put in place an enduring electricity power supply. This is the single commodity that aggravates self-employment opportunities in all options of vocational and technical education programmes.
2. Adequate funds should be made available by government and other stakeholders to purchase good quality computers and other gadgets for training students so as to achieve desirable competencies so that practical training would match theoretical knowledge gained.

3. Computer training should be exclusively included into political science education curriculum in tertiary institutions for adequate training. It should be made compulsory for all the students of Uzebopolifosa science education programme.
4. Government and other stakeholders in tertiary education should endeavour to build good classroom spaces and viable laboratories for practical training in computer systems, usage of scientific calculators, and photocopying, among others, in such a way that only one or two students are assigned to use one instrument or computer.
5. Nigerians should endeavour to shun all forms of corruption which are heavily affecting the procurement of facilities for teaching and learning and other infrastructures. Otherwise, the worst of unemployment is yet to arrive.
6. Federal Government of Nigeria should take the lead in fighting unemployment by providing loans to graduates or beneficiaries of political science education so as to enable them set up their own business centres because of its equipment that are capital-based in nature.
7. Entrepreneurship and small-scale business management skills should be added to the curriculum of political science education in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It would enhance their creative intelligence for business centre and small-scale enterprise management.

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