

IMPORTANCE OF COMPUTER SYSTEM TO WORKERS IN PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

The paper focuses on how technological product like computer system can be of help to workers in promotion of economic development in the 21st century. For promotion of economic development, workers can use computer system to: achieve increase in productivity, enhance their intellect, be entertained for sound health. To ensure promotion of economic development in the 21st century, workers must inculcate ethics in the use of computer system. In the paper, certain recommendations regarding acquisition of computer literacy and its usage by workers are made.

Introduction

In this 21st century (3rd millennium) are visions and missions towards human and national development. An essential aspect of national development is economic development. However, technological advancement aids economic development. Uche (1984:86-87) notes that development is "the application of modern production techniques for increase in productivity, establishment of mass production". Uche also points out that development is also the improvement in both the community and individual ways of living. He views economic development as the most important aspect of development and it is "a process of transforming a society with low average real income into one in which income rise more or less continuously as technology is embodied in accumulating capital".

To achieve development, human and material resources are required. Simply analysed, the human resources are the workers; the material resources are the physical means required for production. An interesting example of material resources is technological device such as computer system. Workers are faced with the challenge of ensuring economic development. However, workers can use computer system in achieving economic development.

Computer has interesting features that can help workers in achieving productivity, which is an essential and prominent element of economic development. Also, acquisition of computer literacy offers employment opportunities in computer-based operations for socio-economic well being of people. In addition, the use of computer system can enhance the intellectual potentials of abilities of workers. Another relevance of computer system is in provision of entertainment needed by workers for healthy condition required for economic development. It should be pointed out that inculcating good morals, by workers, in the use of computer, helps in economic development.

Interesting Nature of Computer System

One of the prominent fruits of technology in the 21st century is computer system. Computer is an essential technological product that has helped man in his socio-economic development. According to Anigbogu (2000:1), computer "is an electronic device capable of accepting data and instructions, processing the data based on the instructions to generate results or outputs in such a manner that is yet to be equaled by any other known machine to mankind". Computer operations are input, storage, processing and output. Two main components of computer system are the hardware component and software component.

Computer system has interesting features that encourage its use in human society. For instance, computer gives an error-free or accurate result. It also has a high storage capacity. Another feature is that the operational speed of computer is reliable in its performance for it can handle complex tasks and performs several functions for a long time with consistent result and yet not liable to fatigue like the human being and other machine.

Computer system is a technological product that is utilized in the 21st century in various professions. Some of the areas of application of computer system are medicine, engineering and technology, government, industry, education, communication, business, etc. In fact, computer is versatile in its use for it is applied in almost every aspect of human endeavour; with the aid of software or programme, the computer can be made to perform any desired task. The application of computer system virtually in many spheres of life has brought us to a period in the 3rd millennium we call computer age.

Status and Importance of Workers in the Economy

For one to earn a living, he or she struggles to be a worker. Who is a worker? A worker is a person who engages in a skill or job for production of goods or services needed in society. A worker may be self-employed or be employed by government or other organizations. According to Mba (1990:31), "a worker may be working for himself in self-employment, generally assigning duties and responsibilities to himself and setting out to perform the task involved and ultimately performing the role he has mapped out for himself... . A worker may be in paid employment - government or privately owned organization not necessarily located in his area of origin".

Workers occupy high position, and play great role in economic development. Simply put, economic development is improvement in production. Production is the process of providing goods and services for satisfaction of people's needs. In fact, no meaningful economic development can occur in the 21st century without workers because they are providers of human resources required for such development. The human resource is the labour required in production. Its reward is wage or salary. For workers to be productive, they need to be educated. According to Nwaogu (1985:11), "man is a factor in production and therefore, in economic terms, real capital. To educate a man means adding to real capital, therefore increasing his productivity or real income".

There is no doubt that as the volume of production increases, there will be corresponding increase in the material well being of the people. However, workers are the people required in production in this 3^r millennium and the masses depend on workers for survival. According to Ezeokonkwo (1999:57), "the main purpose of production is to increase the material well being or economic welfare of the people. In a simpler way, the aim of production is to satisfy people's want... The development of civilization has helped to multiply peoples' wants and no individual, family or even country can afford to be self-sufficient. People therefore depend on other people for their satisfaction."

Effectiveness and efficiency of a worker (of labour) depends on physiological (physical/mental) and psychological (emotional) fitness. Physiological fitness is the power, ability, or strength to work while psychological fitness is the willingness, interest, and attitude to work. For workers to contribute positively in economic development, they ought to be both physiologically and psychologically sound. However, the computer system can assist in provision of physiological and psychological fitness of workers.

Computer Literacy Creates Employment Opportunity

People seek for employment in various jobs or works in society. However, there is division of labour, and one settles for a particular trade or profession. With the knowledge of computer (acquisition of computer literacy) one can get employed in a computer-based job.

In this 21st century, there are a lot of employment opportunities with computer system. A worker can be engaged as a computer operator, computer programmer, computer engineer, computer teacher/lecturer, computer consultant, and computer manager. Johnwakalo (1995:77-82) notes that "computer professionals are the most sought for professionals in the world right now. Demand for computer professionals far exceeds the supply". Johnwakalo explains that career opportunities in computer professions include information system director, programmer, telecommunication personnel, computer operation personnel and programme and media librarian.

The essence of employment is provision of income and prevention of idleness. Income is needed for economic satisfaction. Mba (1990:33) points out that workers work for money to enable them maintain themselves, train their children and build houses. When a worker is working, he or she becomes busy and avoids idleness, which leads to social vices. Social vices inhibit economic development.

Utilization of Computer System for Productivity

Computer system is a production of modern technology that is essential in achieving satisfactory production. A satisfactory production is one in which there is desired improvement in quantity and quality of production. That is, production that aims at productivity. Imaga (1996:20-21) and Nwachukwu (1988:207) point out that the nature of technology determines the level of productivity and improved technology increases productivity. Nwachukwu (1988:222) points out that technology "involves the use of new ideas, techniques, innovation, methods and materials to achieve an objective... How to select the appropriate technology for Nigeria is a major problem for management and is at the heart of low productivity in the industrial sector". Computer system, as a device from modern technology, plays a great role in provision of improved products needed for

economic development.

Computer system has characteristics that encourage productivity. According to Nwachukwu (1988:218-219), "productivity is the output resulting from a given resource input at a given time. Computer system enables a competent worker to produce an accurate result and produce products in a short time. With the use of computer, workers can achieve high yield of products within a stipulated time". Task very complex to humans can be achieved with ease using the computer. In fact, computer makes job easier and enjoyable for workers. According to Anigbogu (2000:1), "computer is a kind of machine which mankind can use to solve different types of problems much more easily". The purpose of computer is to speed up problem solving and increase productivity (Ekemezie, 2003:1.),

Computer helps in information management as well as integrating and controlling of various departments in an organization. Imaga (1996:193-195) emphasizes that though man's memory can store high volume of data, "today's complex managerial environment demands that an organization turns to the computer for sorting, processing and retrieving information in order to maximize its managerial output. Imaga points out that computer makes possible the integration of functions and departments through the Integrated Data Base. According to him, "it is no longer questionable by properly informed people whether or not the computer can increase production capacity and, indeed, revolutionize potential of an organization",

Computer System as a Source of Intellectual Enhancement

Intellectual enhancement is greatly needed in the 21st century. Education is a source of knowledge. Knowledge is power needed to remove ignorance; ignorance is a disease to economic development. It can be said that education is the means for intellectual enhancement. Ajayi (2002:20) noted that "knowledge is now the most valuable commodity in this global community... It is knowledge which is the key product and the key input of the global economy..". Computer system is a device capable of enhancing the intellectual abilities or potentials needed by workers for economic development in the 21st century.

In line with human resource development, if workers are developed on the use of computer system, they will be more fitted to work in computer-based operations and activities for economic development. Nwachukwu (1988:121-122) emphasizes that when an employee is not trained and developed, frustration sets in and hence, productivity falls because there is lack of adequate skills and knowledge. A trained employee derives intrinsic satisfaction from his work which promotes his morale.

With the existence of computer system, there exists Information Technology (IT) that in turn result in the use of Internet (Information Network). Internet makes it possible for people to communicate with one another irrespective of location and distance. Workers can get improved intellectually for economic development by using the Internet because Internet makes it possible for workers to exchange business message needed for economic development. Also with the Internet, workers can down load information of any sort from web sites, get news update and look up new technologies as they unfold. Internet is a great source of knowledge in this era of globalization. Thus, for workers to function effectively in this modern time, they should also seek knowledge from the Internet. Anyakoha (2004:3) observes that "today, knowledge is being generated at an alarmingly accelerated pace and distributed globally within seconds through IT. Knowledge is therefore becoming increasingly obsolete. Lack of it presently perceived as poverty".

The Use of Computer System in Promotion of Sound Health

It is an axiom that a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. Workers require good health to be productive for economic development. Physical (physiological) and emotional (psychological) health required for production can be achieved through entertainment or recreation.

Computer is a device that can provide entertainment or recreation for workers, it is possible to use computer for certain games; films can be watched on a computer and music can be played on a computer. Game brings about exercising of the body for physical health as well as relaxation of the mind for emotional health. Film can bring about emotional relaxation and it can be educative on issues pertaining to ensuring of health. Music is the food of the soul and so it is a vital source of emotional satisfaction. Ikekweazu (1992:9) points out that workers get tired after a strenuous work and entertainment such as music, films, romance and thrillers enable them feel relaxed and emotionally alright with the result that they feel happy and willing to work. Of course, economic development is ensured when workers work.

Employing Ethics in the Use of Computer System

The existence of computer system is for the good of man. A negative use of computer is computer crime: the use of the computer to commit unauthorized acts. If computer system is not positively used, it poses a threat to human and national development.

For workers involved in the use of computer to contribute in the economic development needed for progress in the 21st century, they should maintain sound ethical values in computer usage. The ethical values go a long way in avoiding computer crime. It is an axiom that no society can develop without observing ethical standards. According to Nwosu (2003:10), the essence of good moral is self-fulfillment and actualization as well as achievement of societal beauty,

Recommendations

Since computer system can enable workers achieve economic development in the 21st century, the followings are recommended.

- 1) Quality computer education should be encouraged in our academic institutions for acquisition of computer literacy needed for production.
- 2) Organizations should support acquisition of computer education and ensure that it is part of human resource development in the organizations.
- 3) The masses should help in educating the workers on the importance of computer system in human development and socio-economic development.
- 4) Moral education should be formally be encouraged in society in other to have disciplined mind for prevention of computer crime for computer crime inhibits economic development.

Conclusion

Computer system is a fruit of technology that is very beneficial to workers for economic development. Knowledge of computer system creates employment opportunities in computer-based activities and operations. Computer system, as instrument of economic development, can offer workers the opportunity to be more productive. Also computer system enhances the intellectual capacities of workers and as well provides them with entertainment for enhancement of health needed for economic development. In other that the use of computer system brings about economic development, workers must uphold ethical values.

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