RE-ENGINEERING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-PRODUCTIVITY

By

IMEH U. AKPAN
Department of Business Education,
Akwa Ibom State College of Education,
Afaha Nsit.

And

IME J. ISAAC
Department of Business Education,
Akwa Ibom State College of Education,
Afaha Nsit.

Abstract

Information and communication technology (ICT) in business education needs to be re-engineered, re-assessed and improved to meet the technological needs of the society. This paper therefore highlights the concept of ICT, re-engineering ICT in business education, prospect of ICT in business education, challenges of ICT and the way forward.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the most attractive tool for successful development of the education sector and industries that would facilitate craftsmanship in business world for the younger generation. Information and communication technology is not only regarded as a vital instrument of socialization and reform but as a means of laying solid foundation for strong and variable business world. It is the bed rock for business survival and development in a rapidly changing economy. Information and Communication Technology facilitate global connectivity resulting in new ways of creating and delivering products and services globally. Business education should be a true reflection of the technological world with the aim of preparing the youths for useful living in the society. Therefore, there is need to rethink towards gaining relevant information and communication technology skills, knowledge, and establishing networks for economic development.

Evans (2002) described information and communication technology as the acquisition, processing and dissemination of information by a micro-electronic based combination of computing and communication. Uwaje (2005) defined information and communication technology as information transmission technology built on the potentials of electronic communication equipment for connecting and accessing various

ends in the information path way. Obenobe and Atajeromavwo (2009) described information and communication technology as a sophisticated technology designed for monitoring, gathering and display of geospatial information.

These technologies include the satellite, personal computer, internet, geographic information system, global planning systems, remote sensing etc. Information and communication technology is simply set of activities which facilitate the processing, transmission and display of information using modern electronics devices, principally the computer, the internet and other devices such as the telephone, television etc. (Lee, 2004). Information and communication technology may therefore be defined as the process involved in gathering and processing information through computer and other related equipment to reach the desired places and people at a reasonable cost and time to the overall benefit of mankind.

Re-Engineering Information and Communication Technology in Business Education

Information and communication technology in business education needs to be re-assessed, re-engineered and made to be more compatible with the needs of the youths and society. With the changes in the global market, office automation and democratization, it is inevitable for the young generation to have the ability to assess and apply information; such ability should have a root in business education. Therefore, there is need to embrace the development and re-assessment of information and communication technology in business education for productivity and self-reliance. Availability of the right skills and attitudes is however important for realization of right educational progamme for economic development.

Business Education is the process of imparting business occupational skills and competencies to the learners. Such occupational skills include accountancy, secretaryship, Business management, marketing and Teacher Education. The major goal of business education is the development of occupational skills and competencies for obtaining jobs in business world.

Objectives of Business Education
- The objectives of Business Education include:
- To provide appropriate skills and competencies in business world.
- To inculcate the right business attitudes and values for the survival of the individual and the society.
- To provide career information that will help individuals relate their interest, needs and abilities to occupational opportunities.
- To produce Business Educators who will impart the needed skills and competencies to others.
- To prepare Nigeria citizens for employment.

Rapid development in office technologies have resulted in new terminologies in business world. ICT has revolutionized business and industrial world. As a result of this it is necessary that the youths that will form the labour force of the future be prepared for the ICT age.

Ekong and Williams (2004) confirmed that business education curricula should reflect the technologies that are available to the trainee. The curriculum for business education should be broadened to include: more packages in Information and Communication Technology such as internet, corel draw, power point, management information system (MIS). For a nation to keep apace with the global changes in the educational system, especially in content and mode of instruction, the younger generation should be geared to grip with the challenges of information and communication technology as well as meeting the national educational goals. Akpan (2010) asserted that by re-engineering information and communication technology in business education curriculum, the learners would be able to recognize what they need to accomplish, determine when and where to obtain the needed business information. To achieve the vision 2020 through business education programme, the curriculum of business education needs to be re-engineered to reflect on the current challenges in the information and communication technology world.

Prospect of Information and Communication Technology in Business Education

Proper integration of Information Communication Technology in business education programme will yield many benefits to the learners and the teachers towards ensuring quality instructions, self-productivity and self-reliance.
The benefits include:

- **Employment Opportunities**

  The acquisition of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills in business education would enable the youths to become self-employ, self sustaining and self-reliant in the areas of commerce and secretarial. The acquisition of these skills will make the youths to be job creators and employers of labour rather than job seekers thereby encouraging positive attitudes towards life long occupation in youths. Sadiq (2002) confirmed that the youths when helped to acquire skills, will be employable in the occupations that will benefits both themselves and the nation at large. Omotode (2010) emphasized areas of exploiting ICT in job creation/employment for the youths to include: computer training, GSM phone repairing, photocopying and sale of hand sets. Akpan (2004) concluded that to reduce the level of unemployment in any given society is to direct educational efforts towards developing skills and attitudes conducive for self-employment and self-productivity.

- **Improved Academic Training**

  Proper integration of information and communication technology in business education programme 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. Akpan (2010) asserted that information and columniation technology in business education would enhance the teaching of business concepts to the learners at every corner of the glob through internet. Teachers and students would haves access to current text books, reference books and large volume of current information using internet within a short period. Ezehora (2005) affirmed that with information and communication technology, teachers and students would be acquainted with current textbooks and information within a short period.

- **Poverty Alleviation**
  The acquisition of information and communication technology skills in business education will alleviate poverty among youths and increase productivity after graduation. The essential and versatile technological skills available in business education when acquired will alleviate poverty among youths through application of information and communication technology skills.
  Abidoye, Ayelaagbe and Fakokunde (2011) asserted that employment success, job attractiveness and salary level appear to be greater for individuals that possess good knowledge and skills in ICT. ICT enables youths to capture economic opportunities by promoting participation in expanded economic networks and creating opportunities for employment and productivity.

- **Global Connectivity for Goods and Services**
  The acquisition of Information and Communication Technology skills in business education will facilitates global connectivity for business educators thereby creating business opportunities and new ways of delivering products and services on a global scale. Abidoye, Ayelaagbe and Fakokunde (2011) confirmed that new business model and market configurations enabled by Information communication Technology, including business process out sourcing, value chain integration and distribution will provide access to new market and source of competitive advantage.

- **Enhance Research Technique**
  The acquisition of Information and Communication Technology skills will offer business educators and students the opportunity to improve on the technique of research methods. It will serve as a pathway for all researchers on how to write, present and obtain information for their research projects. The problems of searching through library cards, catalog or periodicals will be made easier through Information Communication Technology

- **Youth Participation in Economic Development**
  Empowering the youths with the multi-various Information and Communication Technology skills will ensure their full participation in economic development. The acquisition of the skills will integrate the youths into the society as useful citizens that will contribute effectively and efficiently to the wealth of the nation.

Challenges of Information and Communication Technology

Despite the numerous advantages of Information Communication Technology in business education, a lot of challenges are still militating again effective implementation of Information Communication Technology. Some of these challenges are:

- **Insufficient Qualified Man-Power and Technical Know-How**

  There is scarcity of teachers with requisite Information and Communication Technology qualifications in institutions of learning for effective use of Information communication technology. Akpan Iweh and Isaac (2010) confirmed that successful integration of Information Communication Technology in institutions of learning depends on availability of qualified teachers to enhance creativity and effectiveness.

  World Bank (2002) asserted that low education level, literacy level, lack of awareness about the capability of technology and absence of skills to develop and use ICT represent significant obstacles even when the physical infrastructure are available.

- **Insufficient Infrastructure**

  Insufficient supply of basic infrastructural facilities has become one of the major challenges for effective utilization of Information and Communication Technology in institutions of learning. Facilities like constant power supply, Information and Communication Technology equipment and accessories are inadequate and this is affecting the effective implementation of Information and Communication Technology negatively. Anujeonye (2008) affirmed that when electricity supply is not constant and stable, it is difficult to keep high technological equipment functioning there by denying the use of Information and Communication Technology and other devices.

- **Inconsistency in Government Policy**

There is no definite government policy for effective application of Information and Communication Technology in educational system. This singular act affects the use of Information and communication Technology and prevents business education students from benefiting from the information explosion that characterize the century.

- **Funding**

  Another challenge to effective use of information and communication technology in business education is inadequate funding to procure, install and maintain Information and Communication Technology equipment and accessories. The financial allocation to institutions in Nigeria is insufficient to procure and maintain Information and Communication Technology equipment and accessories for effective utilization. Aladejana (2007) confirmed that inadequacy of fund act as a major obstacle in the application of Information Communication technology for teaching and learning. To effectively implement Information Communication Technology in business education programme, the financial allocations for

education should be increased. This will lead to the provision of essential Information and Communication Technology equipment, instructional packages and maintenance of Information and Communication Technology equipment.

- **Curriculum Design**
  Information and communication technology in business education curriculum is not dynamic enough to accommodate emerging concepts such as power point, Corel draw, and internet. The curriculum is rarely modified to meet the challenges in the Information and Communication Technology world. It is still geared towards producing students with specific skills such as word processing and computer appreciation to the detriment of other instructional packages. Consequently, graduates of business education lack these skills and competencies and are therefore inadequately prepared to deal with the complexity of analysis and design of these packages.

Conclusion

Proper integration of information and communication technology in business education programme will guarantee reliable and dependable quality skills in information and communication technology world and integrate the youths into the society as useful citizens that will contribute effectively and efficiently to the wealth of the nation and to be self-reliant.

Way Forward

Information and communication technology in business education needs to be re-engineered, re-assessed and improved to meet the technological needs of the society through:

- **Adequate Funding**
  Adequate funding will lead to effective use of Information and Communication Technology that will empower the learners with the necessary skills and competencies to meet the technological needs of the society. Fund has to be made available for provision of essential ICT equipment, instructional packages and maintenance of ICT equipment for effective application.

- **Human Capacity Development**
  Business education in institutions should be empowered with ICT through in-service training, research, conferences, workshops and seminars to improve on the knowledge and skills to meet the technological changes in ICT world. Successful integration of ICT in institutions will depend on availability of qualified ICT teachers to enhance creativity and effectiveness. Awili, Nwanze, Adamu and Robbin (2008) affirmed that staff development will enable teachers to acquire new knowledge, skills and values for constant improvement of quality of their services that will enable them to impart the needed skills to the students. Akpan (2004)

observed that staff development would acquaint individuals with new techniques, knowledge and skills to meet the technological changes.

- **Provision of Information Communication Technology Facilities**
  Information and communication technology require functional equipment for proper utilization by students and teachers for successful acquisition of ICT skills. Efforts should be made by governments and private owners of institutions of learning to provide facilities that will promote the use of ICT in business education. Filani (2006) confirmed that equipment and material are necessary to make teaching and learning stimulating and goal directed but lack or absence of it makes teaching and learning difficult or even impossible.

- **Revised Curriculum Content**
  The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in business education should be critically examined and where necessary, restructured to meet the technological challenges of the century. It should be a true reflection of the industrial world with the philosophy of preparing the youths for useful living. Ekong and Williams (2004) observed that curriculum content should reflect the technologies available to the trainees. The curriculum content of Business Education should be broadened to include more packages in ICT. Such as power point, Corel draw, Internet, Tele-conference and management and information system (MIS).

References

Abidoye, J. A, Ayelaagbe, S.O. & Fokokunde, J.B. (2011) The use of Information and communication Technology for job creation and sustainable development in Nigeria. *Journal of Teachers Perspective* 5 (3), 423 – 430.

Akpan, I. U. (2004) The role of Vocational Education in National Development: Problems and solutions. *Multi disciplinary Journal of Research Development* 3 (4), 135 – 141

Akpan, I. U. (2010) skills acquisition in Business Education: Problems and Prospects. *Journal of Qualitative Education.* 6 (3), 34 – 37.

Akpan, I. U., Iweh , J. P. & Isaac, I. J. (2010) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Business education. Prospects and Problems. *Multi Disciplinary Journal of Research Development (MULJORED)* 15 (3), 18 – 2.

Aladejana, F. (2007) The Implications of ICT for Science Teaching; whither Nigeria. faladeja@yahoo.com 17 (2007) 113 – 124 (c) Complex systems.

Pristine

Anujeonye, N. C. (2008) Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in secondary schools: Prospects and challenges for 21 Century. *Multi Disciplinary Journal of Research Development* 10(1), 178 – 182.

Awili, C. P. N. Nwanze, P. I., Adamu, L., & Rubbin, A. A. (2008) State of Teacher Education in Nigeria. *Journal of Qualitative Education.* 4(3), 22- 26.

Ekong, A. O. & Williams, P. S. (2004) Proposing the Introduction of Vocational Education into Secondary School curriculum for sustainable Vocational Skills acquisition by Nigerian Youths. *Nigerian Journal of Curriculum studies* 1 (1), 66 – 71.

Evans, D. W. (2002) *People and Communication.* London Pitman Publishing.

Ezeliora, B. (2005) Problems affecting the Effective use on Information Technology in the Teaching and Learning of Chemistry. *Interdisciplinary Journal* 4 (1), 26 – 29.

Filani, E. O. (2006) Business Education: A Golden gatway to National survival; *Business Education Journal* 2 (1), 16 – 21.

Lee, (2004) *Experience in Supporting Community Centre.* A paper presented at international seminar on ICT Policy reform and rural communication infrastructure august 26.

Obenobe , I. & Atajeromavwo, E. J. (2009) in Uboh, P. O. & Oriabure, A. (2010) Issues and Challenges in the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development* 15 (3) 8 – 16.

Omotode, (2010) Integrating Information and Communication Technology in Business Education Curriculum. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development* 15 (3) 104 – 109.

Sadiq,M. A. (2002) the Impact of Vocational Education on a Development Economy. *The Nigerian Academy Forum* 2 (3) 15 – 19.

Uwaje, G. (2005) Preparing for the emerging Challenges and Opportunities of Information Society. *Vanguard News Paper,* 6th August, 21.

World Bank Report (2002) *Information and Communication Technologies.* A World Bank Group Strategy. Washington D. C. The World Bank Group.