



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME AS A TOOL FOR QUALITY EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

In this dynamic and rapidly changing world of science and technology, it is apparently clear that the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance teaching, learning, commerce and all other spheres of human endeavours is inevitable. Education stimulates young people to think about entrepreneurship and the role of the business community in economic and social development. This paper attempts to assess the capability of the usage of information and communication technology and entrepreneurship programme as a tool for quality education and development in Nigeria. The paper enumerates reasons for using information and communication technology and subsequently the role of entrepreneurship programme to the educational sector and the society at large.

Introduction

The role being played by information and communication technology in the world of science and technology, commerce and all other spheres of human endeavour is assuming different positive dimensions every day. The main purpose of information and communication technology consists just in the development of human mental resources, which allow people to both successfully apply the existing knowledge and produce new knowledge Shavinina (2001). Today, computers perform a host of functions in teaching

and learning as many nations are adding computer literacy, reading and writing literacy as skills students will need for succeeding in a technologically developed world (Thomas, 1987).

Meanwhile, entrepreneurship development skills in Nigeria is important and necessary especially in the area of economic globalization, where both young men and women should have the training and ability to practice entrepreneurship. Education stimulates young people to think about entrepreneurship and the role of the business community in economic and social development. So also, people gets an opportunity to analyze the changes taking place in their business and are encouraged to consider self-employment and enterprise creation as career choice.

Information and communication technology and entrepreneurship programme is indispensable to economic development, hence no economic development is possible without proper dissemination of information and entrepreneurship skills. A balanced information and communication technology, and entrepreneurial process will promote not only economic development, but education and productivity as well as the generation of improved individual per capital income.

Information and Communication Technology

The word information and communication technology (ICT) according to Burnett (1994) is the technology used for handling information, including multimedia and the Internet, and devices such as video, cameras and mobile telephones. ICT is often regarded as referring to a personal computer (PC) or laptop, with many potential functions and uses, and attached to the internet which provides access to large quantity of

information and enables the PC to be used as a communication medium. It includes other devices such as digital cameras, which are used in education and mobile telephones, seemingly best known in education for their nuisance value; (Adewa- Ogiebgen and Iyamu, 2005).

-Multimedia refers basically to the use of more than one medium to convey information. - Medium can refer to human senses (principally sight and sound), traditional means of conveying information (text, graphics, animated graphics, speech and music), or to the storage or communication devices employed (discs and tapes of various kinds, cable, radio, television and the internet). Interactive multimedia gives the user control over the information. The essence of the internet is that it enables computers and information applications to be connected to, and pass data between each other. This means that for

their users, they become devices, which can be used for communication. This shows that -ICT can be used in all spheres of human endeavours including entrepreneurship for educational development.

Reasons for using Information and Communication Technology

The use of ICT is widely spread and pervasive, and an integral part of everyday life. If education fails to make use of it, it will be failing people and society by failing to prepare the former for the latter. More specifically, the reasons relate to the following as explained by (Salomon, 1989):

- a. Improvements to learning resources the ability to create, maintain and deliver learning resources which are current, consistently presented, readily available, capable of simultaneous use by number of learner, and can be adapted to meet the needs of individuals.
- b. Enabling individual learning so that the activities of learners are directed towards their individual needs, abilities and preferences.
- c. Properly organized use of ICT results in increased efficiency and more effective working by learners, who in any case need to acquire ICT skills.
- d. Improved communication, regardless of location and time between and among learners, teachers, entrepreneurs and others.
- e. Testing, assessment and evaluation can be made more appropriate, realistic and practical, and the burden of routine tools can be reduced allowing more time for interaction between learner, teacher and others.
- f. Potential lack of teachers and the need to make better use of those who are available.
- g. Improvements to administration and management.
- h. Motivation

Agreeing with the above reasons is Becker (1986), who summarized that there are basically three reasons for using ICT in education. These are:

- To increase effectiveness so that what is learnt is more valuable to the learner and the society.
- To increase efficiency so that there is more learning for less resources.
- Because it is there. The above reasons by Becker and Salomon, we believe will summarily improve teaching/learning situation, improve efficiency and will make testing, assessment, evaluation and budgeting easy. It is also believed that it will improve the daily administration of schools, organizations and business enterprises.

Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship Programme

The history of the word entrepreneur can be traced to the French language and it has been in existence before the entrepreneurial function. K.S. Bhattachargee and Atkins first used the word to describe people engaged in military expenditure as early as 16th century and by the year 1700, the word has been applied to French contractors involved in government projects and was later used for architects.

An entrepreneur today may be defined specifically in terms of the function, which the entrepreneur performs. The characteristics of an entrepreneur today are as numerous as the number of people involved in entrepreneurship and those seeking to define them.

According to Kilby in Hussayn U.I. and Abdullahi, M. (2008), defined entrepreneurship as - the ability to, and the willingness of an individual to seek out investment opportunity and run such enterprise successfully . While Inegbenebor in Hussaiyn, U.I. and Abdullahi, M. (2008), sees the entrepreneurship as being associated with various activities such as deciding to establish, operate and manage a business enterprise. These activities according to him include:

- Identification of investment opportunities.
- Decision making as to which of these investment opportunities to establish, operate and manage.
- An aggregation of the scarce resources required for production and distribution.

- Organization and management of human and material resources for the attainment of the objectives of the enterprise, risk bearing and innovation.

From the definition above it, can therefore be deduced that an entrepreneur is someone who has the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, to gather the necessary resources and take advantage of them, to initiate appropriate action, ensure success, and take risks to achieve goals. The role the entrepreneur performs to achieve these goals is referred to as ENTREPRENEURIAL FUNCTION. The process is also called ENTREPRENEURSHIP, while the individual involved in starting the enterprise is known as entrepreneur.

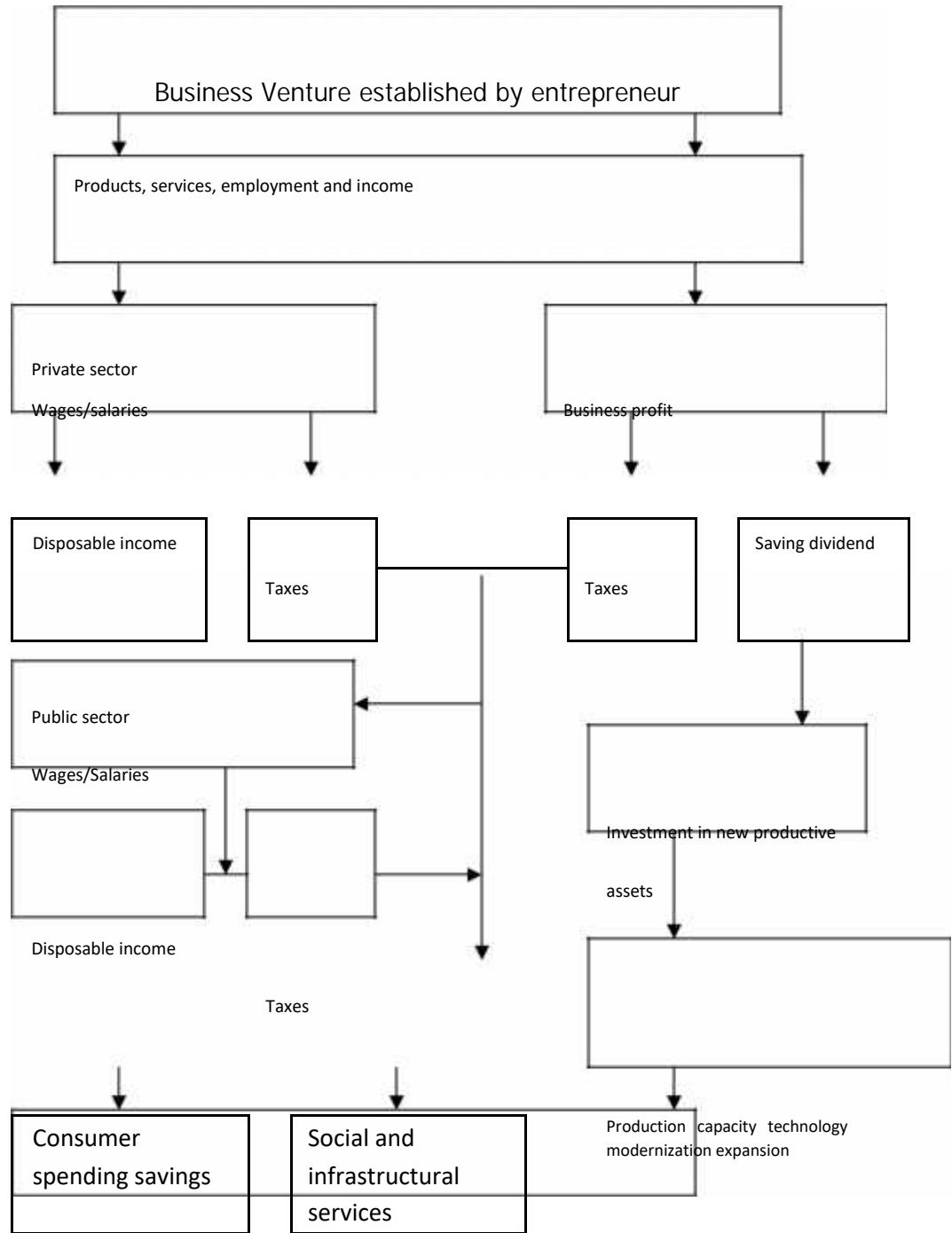
The entrepreneurship programme is seen as any comprehensively developed programme undertaken by an individual or a group of individuals or institutional agencies to develop competence in people leading to self-employment or employment generation.

Dividends of Entrepreneurship Programme

Stoner and Freeman (1992) opined that entrepreneurship programme has the following benefits to the society.

- i. It changes and rejuvenates market competition.
- ii. To serve as a guide and a useful device for influencing managerial behaviour and motivating managers to perform in line with organizational goals and objectives.
- iii. To evaluate performance and cost at the end of the budget period by making comparisons between the actual and the target set in the budget in order to determine any deviation and the corrective measures that may be taken without delay.
- iv. To provide a mechanism of ensuring control of activities by clearly defining targets of output, income and expenditure for each department or unit of an organization.
- v. It creates new technologies.

Similarly, Babakarewa (2009), summarized the role of entrepreneurship programme to the society in the table below:



The Role of ICT and Entrepreneurship Programme in Quality Education and Development

It is a universal believe that one of the most important roles of the school system in the society is that of serving as an agent of change and development. By implication therefore, it implies that whatever people desire in the society, has to be put into the school system Ukeje (1995). Subsequently, one of the main purpose of education is for mobilization of the entire citizens for social liberation or emancipation, economic empowerment and shaping of human behaviours. It is believed that if the individual is equipped enough to perform these tasks, definitely the development of the nation is assured. The question is; How will the individual get equipped to perform this tasks? The answer or solution to this question is not farfetched looking at the earlier discussions on the role ICT and entrepreneurship programme plays in the school and the society at large.

ICT and entrepreneurship programme in every sense is one of the fundamental factors of development without which no nation can achieve sustainable investment in human capital. Entrepreneurship and ICT enriches people's understanding of themselves, their immediate environment and indeed the world at large. When entrepreneur ideas are formulated and placed on the internet, individuals as well as the society can improve on their entrepreneurship programmes by retrieving the new ideas from the internet and applying it to the already existing ones. For instance, an entrepreneur in Nigeria can share new entrepreneur ideas with another entrepreneur in China, or USA or elsewhere in the world and vice-versa. There is no doubt that with proper and well integrated ICT and entrepreneurship programme, social benefits, productivity, creativity as well as self-reliance will be learnt and hence will play a great role in securing educational, economic and social up-lift of the individual, institutions and the society at large. ICT and entrepreneurship programme, social benefits, productivity, creativity as well as self-reliance will be learnt and hence will play a great role in securing educational, institutions and the society at large. ICT and entrepreneurship programme could be perceived as a driving force for improved transfer of knowledge, such as education and entrepreneurship, economic restructuring and a veritable tool for movement in the direction of achieving the Seven Point Agenda of the present administration.

Finally, it should be noted that ICT and entrepreneurship programme helps in the transformation of teaching and learning process and transformation of an economy from a low income traditional economy to a modern economy through the significant changes to production methods learnt or acquired through various means of disseminating information in which ICT plays a great role.

Conclusion

It is doubtless that teachers and students in educational institutions in Nigeria will have incredible resources available if they have access to the Internet. By integrating information and communication technology in our curriculum, fundamental shift in the way teachers teach and students learn will be evolved. However, to integrate ICT into teaching and learning in Nigeria, there must be proper and adequate funding and financing of education.

The education and training coupled with entrepreneurship programme will not be utilized if the fresh graduates cannot find a paid job and cannot raise the necessary capital with which to start an enterprise. In order to avoid this ugly situation, government need to set aside funds annually for financing graduates who intend to be self-reliant and employers of labour. An added positive implication is that our institutions will be turning out products that are not only competent and confident but products that are familiar with the rudiments of basic operations of the industry as well as entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

If the use of ICT and entrepreneurship programme for education and national development is to be as extensive and successful as envisaged in this paper. The following recommendations are put forward for consideration,

1. Provision of interest free loan facilities to the graduates to enable them establish enterprises of their choice. This will assist to reduce the level of poverty in the society.
2. Replacement of outdated equipment and facilities in our institution of learning.
3. Human and material resources should be made available to the institutions.
4. There should be easy and free access especially for students and teachers to the Internet and retrieval of information.

5. There should be increase in favourable policies in support of entrepreneurship and educational reforms.
6. The different access that men and women have in entrepreneurship and education system in some parts of the world should be discouraged i.e. gender disparity should be reduced to the bearest minimum level.

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