BUSINESS EDUCATION TEACHERS' CHALLENGES IN UTILIZATION OF ICT IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

By

NDOM-UCHENDU, MARITHA NWAKAEGO (Ph.D)
Department of Vocational Education (Business Studies),
Faculty of Education,
Abia State University, Uturu.
08063995243
E-mail: Maritha.uchendu@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

A few decades ago has ushered the world into a technological changes with emphasis on the use of information and communication technology (ICT). The Business Education Teachers being the personnel responsible for the utilization of the ICT in teaching and learning process in the classroom for Business Studies are faced with some challenges. This paper therefore x-rays some of the challenges posed to the Business Studies Teacher in the utilization of ICT in Business Studies in the 21st Century and the possible solution to these challenges.

Keyword: ICT, Utilization, Business Education

Introduction

A great transformation is emerging in the formal education system and other sectors of the economy. Anikweze (1995) noted that knowledge, ideas and techniques grow and change so rapidly that they quickly become obsolete. Recently these transformations have been linked to information and communication technology (ICT). The introduction of ICT in the education system is to bring a positive change in the educational system in order to prepare students for the information age and accelerate national development efforts. Business education being a fundamental programme of economic education that has to do with the acquisition, conservation and expenditure of wealth is meant to be
responsible for the development of full potential of individuals to contribute meaningfully to the development of the nation (Ndom-Uchendu, 2015). Therefore, there is need for adequate trained personnel. Isy Aku (2004) opined that we are in the era of reforms and things are changing, the teacher trainers should be kept abreast with the changing situations and on-going reforms being advocated by the government. Business education teachers need to be exposed to available innovative learning facilities and methodological approaches and the use of information and communication technology in the learning process, impart, and encourage entrepreneurial skills on students. In this 21st century, it has become imperative as Nigeria desires to meet up with developing nations of the world in technology advancement and to become globally competitive.

The paper therefore will look at the challenges faced by the Business Education teachers in the utilization of ICT in the 21st century under the following sub-heading:-
- Concept and Nature of ICT in Business Education
- The Business Education Teacher
- The Challenges in the Utilization of ICT among Business Education Teachers
- Conclusion
- Reference

**Concept and Nature of ICT in Business Education**

ICT is an acronym that stands for information Communication Technology. Some still yet call it information and communication technologies. According to World Bank Group (2005), Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) consist of the hardware, software, network and media for the collection, storage, processing, transmission and presentation of information (voice data text, images) as well as related services. Wikipedia (2006) view it as communication facilities and features that variously support teaching and a range of activities in education. They are those electronic gadgets used for accessing, gathering and manipulating of information. Etejere (2007) defines it as a new communication and computer technology available for creating, storing, selecting, changing, developing, receiving and displaying different kinds of information. Basically ICT is any electronic system of information. Basically ICT is any electronic system of information that transmits processes and retrieves information (Fagbemi, 2009). Okejie (2008) sees it as an application of microcomputers and telecommunication technology used to improve on the learning process.

In education, ICT can be understood as the application of digital equipment to all aspects of teaching and learning. Hence Ogunsola (2007) described information communication technology as an enabler for many different types of educational opportunities. There are facilities needed in the utilization of ICT in Business Education. These facilities include:

- **Radio Set**: Radio is the most common electronic gadget that every average
Nigeria can afford. Its system of communication is by transmission and reception of signal through antenna. Ogili (2007) stated that radio is for all purpose mass communication medium. Ame (2007) confirmed that the invention of radio since 1920 led to the wide dissemination and accessibility of information globally. Radio technology has been used and is still being used to train people massively in the educational set up especially in taking dictation in business studies class.

- **Television**: This is also an ICT facility that is also used to pass or update information to the public. Television is a small media that serves as a catalyst in the process of development (Ogili 2007). Eze (2007) noted that television is used to supplement training programmes to reinforce learning. In teaching advertisement in Business Studies, television is a vital instrument. Students in general relate more reading to visual stimuli than to spoken or written word. And also showing them component or piece of equipment brings the subjects to life for them. Mkpa (2004) perceived television as all-purpose pervasive means of communication. Television is a powerful educative ICT equipment that can be used to organize and disseminate educative programmes to students (Ame 2007), especially students of Business Education in this 21st century.

- **Telephone**: Telephone facilities have been highly utilized in industrial countries to facilitate discussions among the masses especially among students and their lecturers (Mkpa 2004 and Bassey, Umoren, Akuagwu, Udida & Ntukdem 2007). Telephone is an important computerized facility that enables one to send and receive information from one person to another. It can be used in educational set up. Mkpa (2004) noted that students can be linked up to telephone conversation to share and discuss their lessons and discussions as teleconferencing. Ame (2007) observed that in recent times, telephone is being used for discussions and for educating students especially where there is large number of students. In teaching communication in Business education, telephone is very important instructional material that deives the lesson home for the students.

- **Computer**: A computer is a data/information processing machine. Ngene (2007) defines computer as an electronic device which can accept input data, process the data according to specified instructions, store the data, retrieve and store data and output the result (information) in a desired format. Obianwu and Obioma (2004) defined it as a device for storing large amount of information called data, and for processing these data in specified ways in a very short period of time. It is a machine specifically designed for the manipulation of cooled information, an automatic electronic machine for performing simple and complex operations far beyond the capacity of man.

However, today when the word computer is mentioned, we most certainly
mean the electronic machine that is capable of processing a variety of data in a variety of ways. Computer as an electronic device has specific characteristics such as the ability to solve problems from the beginning to the end without human intervention. Computer operates at a very high speed. It is this self-directing capability that differentiates the true computer from the other machines that perform computation. The tremendous versatility of the computer is as a result of the fact that the information stored in it can be processed in many different forms using a set software.

Computer has become the fastest and most reliable means of information dissemination through internet. With the computer (internet), the targeted audience is reached faster and instantly. The internet is a massive public spider web of computer connections.

It connects personal computers, mainframes, cell phones, GPs units, music players, soda pop machines, car alarms etc. All of these computer connections exist for the sake of free information sharing. It is also an interconnected system of networks that connects computers around the world. Ngene (2007) defined internet as a system of international or worldwide interconnection of computer networks for exchange of information. The internet is the cheapest and faster means of sourcing, providing information and compiling information. The amount of information available through the internet is enormous and is increasing steadily.

Ngene (2007) noted that one can publish on the internet full text articles, reports, illustrated articles, abstracts computer program and demonstrations. Operations that can be carried out in the internet include browse web site for information, create an e-mail account, send and receive mails, join news groups, read and contribute to articles, download files to computer, chat and play games with other users on-line, access multimedia and radio/video broadcast, subscribe to electronic newsletter, join contest, do on-line shopping, submit your curriculum vitae (CV) on the internet for job etc. This is made possible through the internet service provider (ISP). Once you are connected to the internet, your computer can communicate with computers anywhere in the world. Also the internet can be used to disseminate information through internet services like electronic mail (e-mail), file transfer protocol, telnet, the news, Gopher, NASI and the worldwide web (www) (Awake, 1997). In fact computer is a powerful tool in the utilization of ICT in Business Education in this 21st Century.

The Business Education Teacher and Utilization of ICT in Business Education

Business education is a fundamental programme of economic education that has to do with the acquisition, conservation and expenditure of wealth. It is meant to be responsible for the development of full potential of individuals to contribute meaningful to the development of the nation (Ndom-Uchendu, 2015).

Since business education emphasizes skill acquisition and knowledge that will assist the students to take up jobs in different spheres of works after graduation, the business education teacher therefore should be one who is endowed with the
skill potentials and capabilities to train the individual students in the acquisition of skills and knowledge to face the world of work. The business education teacher has the responsibility for the development of the full potential of individuals to contribute meaningfully to the development of the nations. The business education teacher occupies a unique position in the society and there is no other profession that has more opportunity to influence the youth and future of this country than the teaching professional. The business teachers have the responsibility to help the students develop to their maximum capacity, and also have the responsibility of helping those students who desire work in business to develop the basic skills, knowledge and attitude which are required for initial employment. The business education teachers should be trained to be competent professionals in this field (Igboke, 2005). In order to be qualified and fit into the new scheme of things, business education teachers must not only be aware but also equip themselves with the knowledge and skills appropriate for imparting the new skills and knowledge. Effective and appropriate training therefore should be given to them so as to inspire confidence and competence in them for the utilization of ICT in teaching. Teaching and learning has been made easier through the utilization of electronic devices. A number of skills can be taught using the computer when the appropriate software is in place. For example, learning of the key boarding can be done by using a computer application known as the typing tutor in the computer. The use of ICT in lesson presentation will enhance better understanding since learner has the opportunity to visualize the concept taught. In the time past, so much theoretical learning goes on with a lot of memorization without the chance of conceptualizing what is taught. Learners do not visualize in concrete terms the concept learnt. Most of what is learnt becomes mere rote learning. Ayodele (2001) noted that the situation inevitably results in inability to apply oneself to challenging situations at the require time.

Over the years, business educators/teachers have lamented that skills of typewriting and word processing they are teaching the student-secretaries are no longer meeting the requirements of their corporate employers. The reason being that the speed at which technology is evolving and the changing methodology of office work is so alarming that it moves ahead of the school. The business educators are using 1989 curriculum in teaching student – secretaries and it has word processing as the only course that teaches emerging technology skill. Since then a lot of changes have taken place from conventional to electronic or digital technology. E-commerce, e-business, e-office, e-banking, all have altered the method, process and procedure for doing business. To this effect, Ahuannah and Nwaokolo (2001) noted that economy and technology change, now occupational opportunities emerge which make fresh demands on the secretaries for new skills required to operate. They concluded that the consumers of the graduate secretaries have different views as to which internet skills these secretaries should posses.

The advancements in ICT have made distance learning opportunities more accessible and viable for a growing number of people and it is increasingly gaining
popularity for students who wish to read for higher levels. Due to these technologically assisted options, time and location are no longer defining criteria for participation in further education. However, ICT has had a huge impact on the ease and accessibility of information irrespective of the location which has greatly enhanced individualized learning.

The Challenges in the Utilization of ICT among Business Education Teachers: Business education teachers face a number of challenges in the utilization of ICT in business education. These challenges range from lack of competent and qualified teaching staff, non-availability of instructional material, infrastructural amenities, finances, support personnel, instructional method etc.

Lack of Competent and Qualified Teaching Staff: There is no denying the fact that many teachers lack the basic knowledge and skills necessary to make use of ICT materials for teaching and learning of business studies. The number of prospective ICT users are very limited and this has affected teaching and learning adversely. Aliu (2001) expressed that teachers need to support the diffusion of computer assisted learning in school. The implication is that, teachers should be trained in operating these computers effectively especially business education teachers in order to impart this knowledge to the students. It may be that many of the dysfunctional aspects of our school today like low quality of learning, poor students performance in functional areas, indiscipline etc are as a result of failure to reconceptualize the technology of teaching. Today, the teachers' role is being redefined in order to utilize the changing technology. But the major problem now is the inadequate competent and qualified personnel in most of the schools. This problem is so glaring that some schools have stopped offering business education at all level of education.

In offices today, secretaries who can operate computer, browse the internet, operate teleconferencing and video conferencing equipment are in great demand while those with only shorthand and typewriting skills are being threatened by the insurgence of technology. Business education teachers need to be versatile. They need to be well-formed on any technological breakthrough in their field of study to enable them keep abreast current happenings and hence command the respect and confidence of their students (Aliyu, 2001). Obi and Obiorah (2001) observed that the business education teachers should be well prepared in information technology since it has to do with acquisition of skills. Their preparation should be rich in practical experience so that they would effectively demonstrate information technology to the students they teach.

In fact teacher of business education should always ensure that he/she is capable of making use or operating the instructional resources being selected especially in this 21st Century.
Non-Availability of Instructional Material/Access to ICT Resources: One of the major problems in the utilization of ICT is non-availability of instructional material/access to ICT resources. To ensure utilization, material should be made available at the right time one needs it and in the quality and quantity if one is to be assured of effective utilization. Unfortunately, most schools offering business education are doing it theoretically because of non-availability of instructional materials. These materials which include computers, photocopier, typewriter, stop watch, projectors, motion picture/films, television etc are not available in schools. Because they are not available, utilization is impossible.

The business teachers should be empowered to own their personal computers and where this is not feasible, they should be granted full access to software and hardware at times. Mumtaz (2002) noted that the level of access to ICT is significant in determining its level of use by teachers and lack of computers and software can seriously limit what teachers can do with regard to the implementation of ICT. Therefore where high quality resources are always available and sufficient, teachers are encouraged to utilize ICT in teaching.

Infrastructural Amenities: Some instructional resources require some additional amenities for utilization. Like the computer, motion picture/film, television etc. They require electricity for them to be in use. For areas where there is no energy source, generators are expected to be stand by so that they can be used whenever the need arises. This is a great challenge to the teachers of business education because some schools that have the computer may not have source of power and alternative source of power to ensure effective utilization. Owing to the epileptic power supply in the country, where ICT is utilized in teaching, there is need for standard-by power generator which automatically switches on as soon as there is power outrage so as not to disrupt class work.

Finance: Finance is one of the major problems facing schools in the utilization of ICT. Even when these instructional materials and the infrastructural amenities are available, the school still needs finances to see to the running cost of these materials and amenities. The generator need to be fueled, the materials like the computer need maintenance and all these involve money which the school may not be able to provide. Unfortunately, funds are not usually available as most of the subjects are taught under general education which makes funds to be continually insufficient for other school activities.

Support Personnel: Another challenge to effective utilization of ICT in schools is the lack of support personnel. The schools need qualified and competent technicians to repair broken resources like the computer, photocopier, typewriter, the television etc for school services. In schools, since there are no support personnel, once these equipment are spoiled, they are packed away in the store and with time, they become dysfunctional but if there are repair personnel, they will
work on them immediately to make the functional. This is a very big hindrance to effective utilization of ICT in schools.

Also once the internet is disconnected, it also needs the attention of the internet provider services to attend to it otherwise the students cannot access the net. Similarly, machines are generally unpredictable, therefore, machines are generally unpredictable, therefore it is necessary that a reliable technical support staff is always available to give prompt assistance to both teachers and students. Bradley and Russell (1997) opined that technical faults with ICT equipment are likely to lead to lower level of ICT use by teachers. In their view, recurring faults and the expectation of faults occurring during teaching sessions, are likely to reduce teachers confidence and cause them to avoid using the technology in future lesson. In supporting this fact further, Cox and Cox (2000) expressed that lack of technical support staff is also likely to lead to teachers avoiding ICT for fear of fault occurring that cannot be rectified and lessons being unsuccessful as a result. Aside these, a technical support staff can help carryout regular and periodic maintenance as at when due, and in so doing, the life span of the machines are prolonged.

**Instructional Method:** This is another challenge faced by the teachers of Business Studies. The teacher is satisfied when the students behaviour is changed as a result of instruction. It is always important to select the medium of instruction that will match the chosen method of instruction. For instance, when a group discussion is chosen, a video tape recording that gives the required background information on the topic of discussion could be used to start the discussion. And if a lesson is on discussion of type of offices in a Business Studies class, a motion picture could be used to flag off in the demonstration class. These are mere wishes because these equipment are not always available which in turn hinders the teachers turnover of instructional methods.

**Conclusion**

The technological advancement and development of any nation depends to a large extent the wealth, strength, social and economic well being of that nation. That being the case, the system and quality of that nation education is of paramount importance. To improve learning outcomes, enhance access to rich digital content, manage knowledge and students in real learning processes in order to achieve quality in the educational system, the utilization of ICT in the 21st Century should be enhanced.

Based on the challenges face by the Business Education Teacher on the utilization of ICT in Business Education, the following recommendations are made:

1. Qualified and competent staff should be employed to fit into the new scheme of things. Business teachers must not only be aware but also equip themselves with the knowledge and skills appropriate for imparting the new skills and knowledge. The serving Business Studies teachers should be sent
on effective and appropriate training so as to inspire confidence and competence in the utilization of ICT in teaching.

2. Instructional materials for ICT should be made available to the schools and be accessible to the teachers especially business education teachers. The Business Education teachers should be encouraged to own their own personal computers as this will enhance effective teaching and learning of ICT in the schools.

3. Infrastructural amenities should be provided in all the schools especially stand-by power generators to supplement the epileptic power supply in the country. The government should work towards ensuring stand-by power supply by increasing the amount of electricity generated in the country.

4. Adequate funding should be made available to schools in order to implement ICT in schools. Maintenance and fueling of the generator sets all need funding and also paying the supportive technicians.

5. The supportive personnel's should also be engaged in the school system so that any fault in the ICT system could easily be handled. Since machines are generally unpredictable, it is necessary that a reliable technical support staff is always available to give prompt assistance to both teachers and students.

6. The business education teachers should endeavor to choose the medium of instruction that will match the chosen method of instruction in order to enhance effective utilization of ICT in this 21st century.

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