

The Impact of ICT on Youths Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The world today is very competitive as a result of globalization. The rapid changes in technology have brought into focus the issue of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in all spheres of life. Technologies now feature in collecting, storing, editing and passing on information in various forms. Nations have recognized the importance of ICT and have made frantic efforts to develop and incorporate ICT in education programmes. Hence, education is the process of shaping individual's behaviour for adequate adjustment in the society. This adjustment is vital for national development. Nigeria has a laudable ICT vision and has incorporated computer education as one of the subjects to be offered at all levels of education. One of Nigeria's specific aims of ICT vision statement is to empower the youth with ICT skills and prepare them for global competition. Youths are the driving forces that determine the future and hope of many societies. This paper, examines the impact of ICT on youth development in Nigeria, looks at the following concepts: youth, education, development and youth development. A questionnaire was designed on a four-point scale to elicit information on ICT, youth development etc. Data analysis is based on mean. Among the major findings is that ICT has empowered many Nigerian youths, equipped them with relevant skills that have helped them establish their own computer business outfits or get jobs as computer engineers and operators. The paper recommends government financial assistance to maintain ICT education in the country.

Key words: ICT, Youth, Education, Development.

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Introduction

Rapid change in the technology has brought into focus the issue of ICT which is an acronym that stands for Information and Communication Technology. ICT has affected virtually every aspect of human life in the society. It has penetrated the educational, political, economic, social and cultural lives of people in many nations of the world. ICT has become the most useful instrument of development in the whole world. Development according to Macmillan (2009), is a change, growth or improvement over a period of time. Ajayi in Chibueze (2007:22-23) gave a detailed account of how IT has successfully been used in both developed and developing nations of the world to enhance education and offset the problems associated with traditional method such as a large class sizes and unproportional teacher - student relation and acute shortage of learning resources. According to him, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Zambia and several Latin America countries have long embraced IT-based education as a means of increasing access to basic education among their people. In the United States of America for instance, A mobile technology van is used to offer internet service to areas which are connected. The mobile van is also available to other groups with education mission.

Nigeria, a developing country in West Africa adopted the policy for information technology in the year 2001. This was the right step in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) application in every sector of Nation's life especially in the Educational sector. Education is the totality of all the means through which one acquires knowledge, skill, attitudes, and values and develops positive behaviours to make one become useful to oneself and society in which one lives.(Enaibe 2010:23) The adoption of ICT policy by the Nigerian government led to the incorporation of computer education as one of the subjects to be offered at all levels of the nation's educational system. The knowledge and skill acquired as noted by Nbina (2010:282) will enable the individual process information by organizing and reorganizing, sorting and analyzing, processing and communicating information. Nigeria has an Information Vision Statement which is to make the country, an Information and Technology capable country in Africa and a key player in information society by the year 2005. Among the specific aims of this Information Vision Statement is to empower the youths with ICT skills and prepare them for global competitions.

Youths in this context are people between the ages of 18 & 35. They are very active, valiance and very vulnerable segment of the population. They develop into the leaders of tomorrow, parents for the future generation. Youth is a vibrant segment of the society and indeed of any nation. It is quite a useful and hopeful group that must be given every care and attention. Youth education is very important for development of manpower. Education leads to development. This is right to say that when the youth is educated the nation is equally educated. Hence ICT educations for youth development are vital issues that must be taken very seriously in every nation's educational sector and even in homes. It is vital because of the immense benefits for the youth. There is every need to support the guide and provide all the ICT facilities for the youth development.

It is evident that when youths are well developed and they use the knowledge and skills acquired as expected in the community or society, that community or society must surely be developed for better. The youths will also be self developed.

In as much as educating the youths especially in ICT is quite important and can contribute to the development of both youth and the nation. What they are to become

in the society depends on the level of competence in ICT on what they are able to read and channel themselves toward. Information technology is one of the major forces influencing opportunities for youths. Access of information technology allows youths to learn marketable skills, find required information and be heard by others.

Globally, ICT education is one of the most important elements defining the basic competencies of the youths. It is essential for students at all levels of education. ICT is needed in the educational sector because it has the potential for increasing access and improving the relevance and quality of education in general and youth development in particular.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is a nation with the largest economy in the West African sub-region and is also blessed with human and natural resources. This shows that the country has a great potential for growth. Contrary to expectations, the history of economic stagnation, declining welfare, huge unemployment among the youths and social instability has been a common experience since her independence.

A close review of the past indicted that Nigeria started having a growth turn around in recent years when ICT was valued, appreciated and brought to the country. The door of opportunities to rapid growth opened to Nigeria. The youths which constitute a very high percentage of the country's population grabbed these opportunities with zeal and vigour. Today the knowledge and skills acquired through ICT education have affected the life of many Nigerian youths to a great extent that enhances the youth development. There are also some negative effects of ICT on youths that need proper orientation and moderation by the government and parents to the youths.

Purpose of Study

Purpose of the study is to examine the impact of ICT on youth development in Nigeria and to determine its effect on science and language students respectively.

Research Questions

- What are the language and science students' perception on the meaning and functions of ICT?
- What are the language and science students' knowledge on the impact of ICT on youth development?

Research Design

The research design was survey and analytical. 240 youths (120) males and (120) females in Enugu education zone through a purposive sampling technique constituted the sample of study.

The questionnaire which elicited responses based on the research questions were used on the four-point modified Likert scales of Strongly Agree=4, Agree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1.

Frequency and mean was used to answer the research questions, A mean of 2.5 was taken to be positive response (Agree) while any score below 2.5 was regarded as a negative response (Disagree). The mean of the nominal value of four categories were worked as follows: $\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = 2.5$

Analysis and Results

Table I: Responses on Language and Science Students Knowledge Of ICT in Education

	\bar{X}	\bar{X}
Information Communication Technology (ICT) refers to technologies used in processing data.	3.13	3.05
Most Nigerian youths are computer literate.	2.42	3.75
Students learn their lessons in less time with computer based instruction.	3.00	2.91
Internet provides access to virtual libraries the world over.	2.92	3.05h
ICT aids the completion of assignments.	3.13	3.05
Sufficient ICT facilities are found in all schools.	3.29	3.05
Computers are used in the teaching of all subjects in schools.	1.77	1.99
Internet gives access to E-mail for different users.	2.45	2.45
ICT services are more important for science students.	3.37	3.04
ICT is more relevant for language students.	2.46	3.49

Table I shows data on Language and Science Students Responses on Knowledge of ICT in Education. From the table, information and communication technology ICT refers to technologies used in processing data has means 3.13 and 3.05 which shows agreement decisions for both language and science students. Most Nigerian youths are computer literate has means 2.42 and 3.75 which shows disagreement and agreement decisions for language and science students respectively. Students learn their lessons in less time with computer based instruction has means 3.00 and 2.91 showing agreement decisions for language and science students. Internet provides access to virtual libraries the world over has means 2.92 and 3.05 showing agreement decisions for both language and science students. ICT aids the completion of assignments has mean 3.13 and 3.05 which shows agreement decisions for both language and science students. Sufficient ICT facilities are found in all the schools has means 3.29 and 3.05 showing agreement decisions for both language and science students. Computers are used in teaching all subjects in schools has means 1.77 and 1.99 which shows disagreement decisions for both language and science students. Internet gives access to E-mail for different users has means 2.45 and 2.45 showing disagreement decisions for both language and science students. ICT services are more important for science students has means 3.37 and 3.04 which shows agreement decisions for both language and science students. ICT is more relevant for language students has means 2.46 and 3.49 which shows disagreement and agreement decisions for language and science students respectively.

Table II: Response on Language and Science Students' perceptions on the Impact of ICT on Youths Development

	\bar{X}	\bar{X}
Through constant use of computers, youths can develop skills in their subject areas.	3.29	3.05
ICT offers opportunities for self reliance for the youths.	2.99	3.03
Competencies in ICT have helped to reduce unemployment for the youths.	3.23	3.25
Students through the use of internets imbibe the culture of other people world over.	2.88	2.46
Global use of ICT has improved positively on the views expressed by the youths.	3.15	2.83
Students through the use of the internet repair electronic materials.	3.2	2.83
Exposure to ICT has made youths nowadays, experience sexual activities earlier than in those days.	3.5	2.03
Most Nigerian youths browse without making effective use of the information collected.	3.2	3.23
Many youths use their handsets to send pornographic materials to their friends.	3.25	3.02
Most often youths use cyber café for fraudulent activities.	3.42	3.02

Table 11 shows data on responses of language and science students' perceptions of the impact of information and communication technology on youth development. From the table through constant use of computers, youths can develop skills in their subject areas has means 3.29 and 3.05 which shows agreement decisions for language and science students. ICT offers opportunities for self reliance for the youths has means 2.99 and 3.03 showing agreement decisions for both language and science students. Competencies in ICT has helped to reduce unemployment for the youths has means 3.23 and 3.25 showing agreement decisions for language and science students. Through the use of internets the youths imbibe the culture of the other people world over has means 2.88 and 2.46 which shows agreement decisions for language students and disagreement decisions for science students. Global use of ICT has improved positively on the views expressed by the youths has means 3.15 and 2.83 showing agreement decisions for both language and science students. Students through the use of Internet repair electronic materials has mean 3.20 and 2.83 showing agreement decisions for both language and science students. Exposure to ICT has made youths nowadays, experience sexual activities earlier than in olden days has means 3.5 and 3.03 showing agreement decisions for both language and science students. Most Nigerian youths brows without making effective use of information collected has mean 3.2 and 3.23 showing agreement decisions for language and science students. Many youths use their handsets to send pornographic materials to their friends has means 3.25 and 3.02 showing agreement decisions for both language and science students. Most

often youths use cybercafé for fraudulent activities has means 3.42 and 3.02 showing agreement decisions for language and science students respectively.

Discussion of Findings

Language and Science students' perceptions on the meaning of ICT in Education (table I)

The students mean rating revealed that both language and science students are conversant with the meaning of ICT. They are aware that information in the world today can be transferred in different forms. The most popular these days are telephones and computers. Many Nigeria youths have cell phones, personal computers, computers in their homes and schools. They are used to transfer information using internet. According to Hantor (1994), Internet is a loose collection of millions of computers at thousands of sites around the world whose users can pass along information and can share files no matter which type of computer they are using. The internet services/browsing in Nigeria are mostly provided by cybercafés. These cybercafés have their internet services enabled by internet service providers (ISPs). It is in cybercafé that individuals go for internet browsing. The youths have the highest number of patronage of cybercafés. They often times browse with their phones and computers in their homes. The implication of this attitude is that most Nigerian youths are computer literate. With the introduction of computer education at all levels of Education in Nigeria some youths are computer literate while some are not. With computer based instruction students learn their lessons in less time. ICT is used in effective teaching and learning of most concepts and principles of school subjects'. For instance the science or language teacher could record the highlights of his lesson, illustration, diagrams etc on given topics on diskettes, CD-ROMS; and have them projected on a large elevated monitor as he teaches. This strategy greatly facilitates teaching and learning and hence increases understanding, evokes and sustains interest in them because of the use of audio-visual aids which show diagrammatic representations, processes, etc. It also helps to alleviate the problem of large class.

Internet provides access to virtual libraries the world over. ICT serves as a reference point for information, news sports, dictionary, encyclopedia, etc for youths. Internet has extensive news coverage, research opportunities, scholarships and even the chance to study in developed countries. These are the advantages the youths can utilize in their frequent visit to cybercafés. Materials for school assignment can be downloaded from the internet. Many well researched works and journal articles and textbooks are in software which the youths can download or read through online which aids them in their studies. The knowledge of ICT has offered both the language and science students the ability to access, retrieve, transmit and document programmes and information which enables them to write their assignments, projects, thesis etc. Sufficient ICT equipment are found in all schools in Nigeria most especially federal institutions. Though sufficient ICT are found in Nigerian schools, not all the subjects are taught with computer because many Nigerian teachers are yet to be computer literate. Computers are available but there are not enough capable hands to handle or operate them. For this reasons not all subjects are taught with computer. From personal observation, computers are mainly used in teaching computer science even in some schools where there are language laboratories, these laboratories are not well utilized or managed in language teaching.

Internet gives access to E-mail for different users. Some of internet websites are mail oriented. Mails are transferred electronically. Students and their families and friends exchange e-mails to facilitate letter writing and keep down the cost of phone calls.

ICT is relevant in teaching all subjects in school but more relevant to science courses like computer science, biology, medicine and so on. Science students use computer more often than the language students. Even the language students gave their agreement decision on that. For example, In Federal College of Education Eha-Amufu, the language laboratory is not serving the students learning therefore they do not know it's value and they feel that ICT is more important in science teaching than language while science students like computer students who use computer often have discovered that ICT is useful in teaching science and every other subjects like languages.

Language and Science students' perceptions of the Impact of ICT on youth development (Table II).

The students mean rating reveals that youths can through the ICT develop skills in their subject areas. They can also develop knowledge, creativity and be innovative through constant use and manipulation of the computer.

ICT offers opportunities for self reliance to the youths. ICT has offers many vocational jobs to youths, for instance with the introduction of GSM and CDMA, many youths have learned on internet the repairs of the handsets and other related sets. They engage themselves in the installation of hard and soft ware. They are able to detect and affect any change on part or component of computer hardware. They also conduct repairs on the software and networking of computers, V-sat installations for different applications like satellite receivers, V-sat for banks and internet cafe, the installation and repairs of PABX for companies, departments and ministries, Installation and repairs of cars, houses and CCTV security networks for organizations etc. These have helped many youths to be financially independent and relieving poor families financial burden.

Competencies in ICT have helped to reduce unemployment for the youths. Studies have shown that ICT have created various kinds of jobs such as computer engineers, the chief information officer in big enterprises or government agencies, computer operators etc. According to Ebitani (2001), ICT has created opportunities for individuals, firms and countries all over the world. No wonder there are commercial GSM, cyber café and other computer centers all over the country. ICT has really improved the economic life of many people especially the youths.

Oladunjoye and Audu, Olanmi and Kareem in Oladunjoye and Audu (2014) admit that since early 90's vendors of hand held phones and their accessories are common sight in every community. There are various types of ICT based businesses such as document processing centers, cyber café, computer training, computer services and repairs, internet programming, cable and satellite TV installations etc. Also in the area of job searches, the internet is an incredible tool for finding a job. It's good for youths because it provides a powerful, economical way to conduct a real job search. Resume are published online for prospective employers. Young people invest through the internet. People do financial research, buy stock, and invest money.

Some companies trade their own shares. Young people are finding new ventures, and new ventures are finding capital.

Students through the use of internet imbibe the culture of other people world over. Some students like language students spend most of their leisure time viewing television,

watching films, and surfing the internet and through these means learn other peoples culture, this in one way or the other influences their behaviours either positively or negatively. The language students have agreement decision on this because culture is part of their language study and they are less busy than the science students who are always busy example the medical students, They have nothing to do with culture in their area of study that is why they disagreed on this point.

Global use of ICT has improved positively on the views expressed by the youths. On a chat line, young adults can talk to another person or group of people. This helps improve teenage grammar ability, increase their intelligent quotient and make them smarter. The new technologies have helped create a culture of learning in which the learners enjoy enhanced interactivity and connections with others, rather than listen to a professor regurgitate facts and theories. Nbina (2010) adds that the internet avails the child the right to explore on any subject or field of his choice. Exchange of ideas is possible and opportunity for further development is available even to the child on the computer. Students could participate in class group discussion via video conferencing.

Students through the use of internet repair electronic materials like television. Computer, radio, handsets etc and through this means earn their living as has explained earlier above,

Despite the immeasurable positive impact of ICT on youth development, it also has a number of negative effects on them. Some of these negative effects include:

For example, youths nowadays, experience sexual activities earlier than in early days. Many youths have been destroyed through the watching of pornography on the internet and cable satellite television, for example DSTV. The problem arises when the youth start looking for a way to practice those things he/she has learnt. If he/she cannot get it, he finds solace in imaginations which should have been used for bringing out good ideas for a constructive future. Worse still they look for people with like minds with whom they can share their dirty views thereby worsening their situation until they become totally enmeshed in this degrading act. Science students have disagreement decision on this probably because sex education is among the things they study in their course therefore, have no negative ideas about sex or pornography. A research conducted by Leatu on teenage pregnancy and school drop outs in Adamawa State of Nigeria 2002 cited in Onaolapo (2007:115), it was discovered that most secondary school students in Adamawa State have at least experienced sexually transmitted disease.

Most Nigerian youths browse without making effective use of the information collected. The internet has become a vogue among the youths. Browsing through the internet has become a favourite part-time of the youths. The internet services/browsing in this part of the world are mostly provided by the cybercafés. These cybercafés have their internet services enabled by Internal Services Providers (ISPs). It is in the cybercafé that individuals go for internet browsing.

From experience and personal observations, the youths have the highest number of patronage of cybercafé. They spend most their time in the chat room of the internet. They send mails, chat with online friends who in many cases have never really met their chat partners face to face. On close observation, one can see that the youths hardly visit religious websites. They visit pornographic sites (here, dirty words are allowed), cultism and some websites that catch their curiosity. The quest to satisfy their curiosity is what leads some of these youngsters with unsavory website.

There have been reported cases of teenagers leaving home in western world through online dating. A lot of these teenagers have walked with death traps set by sadistic killers. Some were traced to where they were not so lucky. What this paper is saying is not that internet is not good, it is good, and can affect the youth both positively and negatively. As the case may be, what matters most is that youths should be guided and proper orientation should be given to them right from secondary school so that they do not get carried away by the excitement of the new concepts and the freedom that internet offers.

Most often youths use cyber café for fraudulent activities. The most common aspect of the internet that caught up negatively with the youth is con practice. Fraudulent practices known as 419 have become the other of the day. Mails are sent out on daily basis with fake addresses, false information and false promises. A lot of these mails filter with different mailboxes, sometimes, some otherwise innocent looking mails are sent to users of some mail accounts e.g. Yahoo telling individuals to forward a mail to at least twenty users or more, otherwise, their address may be erased from the yahoo account. Users innocently send out these mails which on investigation, may be discovered not to have actually come from yahoo. One may then ask what the writer stands to gain. They simply want to collect mail addresses to know who to defraud. It is very common. They sleep over at cybercafé all night browsing which is mostly to defraud people. They mostly defraud innocent foreigners. The practice has become common that some of these youngsters hold by address each other as yahoo guys which simply mean internet fraudsters. Some of them drive flashy cars in schools and live big.

Way Forward

Information and Communication Technology is necessary for the development of a country and youths in particular. There is an urgent need to tackle the negative impact of ICT on Nigerian youths:

- Like Britain did in 80's Nigeria government should source for fund to make computer available in every school. This should be jealously guarded and maintained so as not to render them useless within a short time. This will help to provide opportunities to some youths who are yet to be computer literate to also enjoy the benefits it offers. Africa especially Nigeria should improve its electrification supply without effective electricity the quest for ICT in learning will be a mirage.
- The various rules and regulations put in place by the services providers in Nigerian Communications Commission to govern ICT services providers in Nigeria society should be monitored and be sure that service providers comply.
- Effort of the individual or Nigerian citizen, law enforcement agents are needed to reduce fraud and scam among Nigerian youths.
- Through ICT a global village, parents and the society in general should monitor the kind of programmes youths watch on the internet.
- Religious leaders should inculcate moral behaviour to avoid immorality among people.
- Parents should moderate their children's frequent visits to cybercafé and get them to show the same zeal and interest in their academic works, they can become addictive if not well monitored.
- Cyber cafe should be made to block some of the so-called adult sites which actually have nothing to offer outside display of nudity, pornography and address of prostitutes and lure for would be prostitutes. This is already

practicable in some Islamic countries where cybercafé are made to block pornographic sites.

- Proper orientation should be given to youths right from secondary schools so that they do not get carried away by the excitement of new concepts and the freedom that internet offers.
- More emphasis should be laid in the area of research and information in the internet rather than making these youths see the internet as something that is made only for leisure and entertainment.

Conclusion

The survey reveals that ICT plays a very important role in the development of nations and youths in particular. ICT has a very big impact on the development of Nigerian youths, as the youths develop the nation also develops because youths are the life wire of every nation. In as much as ICT has great positive impact on the youth, it also has some negative impact too. As the people enjoy its positive impact, everything should be done the stakeholders to reduce to minimal, the negative effect of ICT in Nigeria in general and youths in particular. There should be an organized body that regulates the type of information that should be on the internet and to which group of people, adults or youths because some of the information obtain from this type of media are not good for the youth. However, the use of internet should be encouraged among the young ones but with a view of tapping the advantage the cybercafé has offered especially to the Young stars who still have long years ahead of them. This will encourage the advent of technological development in the minds of these youths who will bring these developments to the nation. It is necessary that government, corporation, parents, individual, institutions etc. should put hands together to allow ICT operate.

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