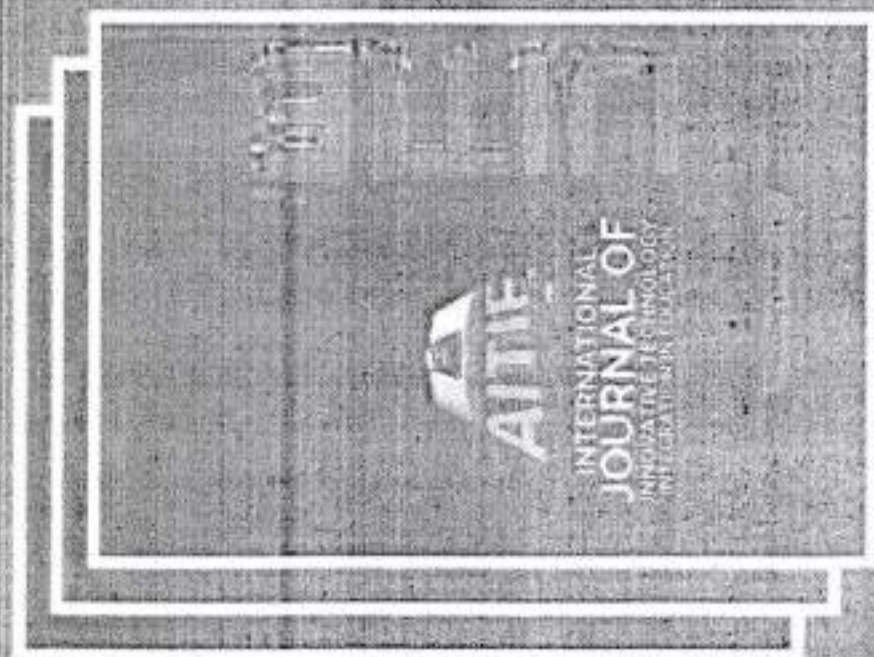




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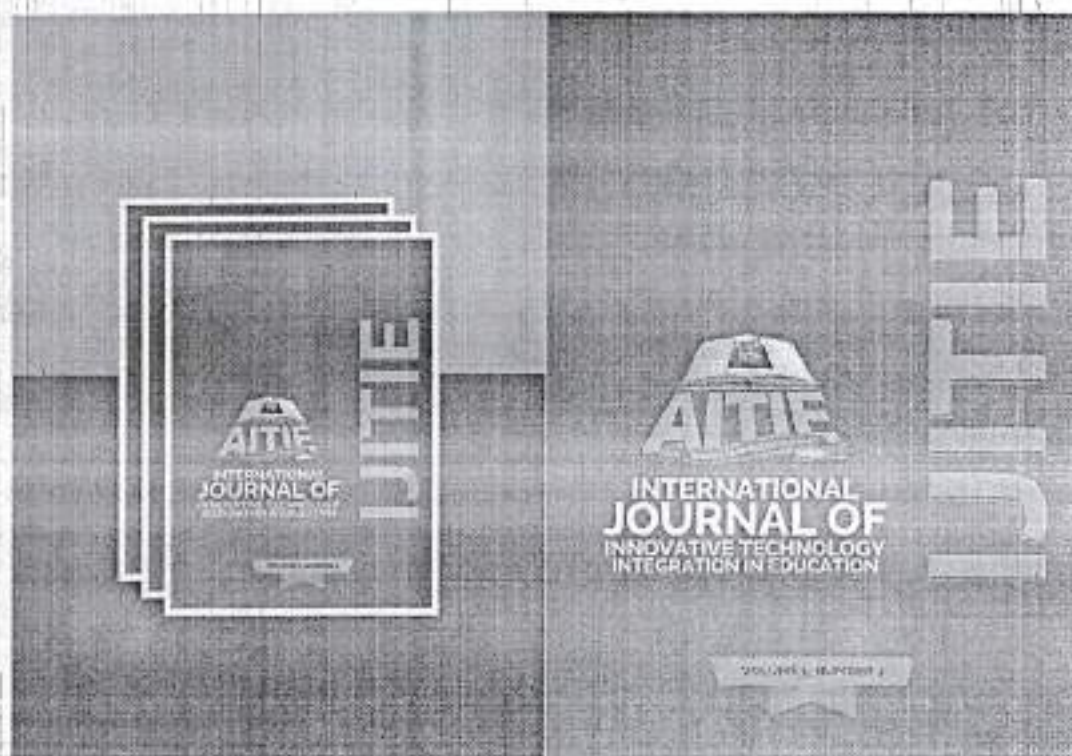
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PERCEIVED RELEVANCE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT AMONG TEACHERS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The perennial problems of increased poverty, unemployment and overdependence on foreign goods and technology have become worrisome to the government. ICT as a highly potent developmental strategy can therefore be used to equip the youths with the necessary skills to be self-reliant. This paper examines the teachers' perceived relevance of ICTs for the development of entrepreneurial skills among Nigeria teachers. A survey method was used, with questionnaire as the dominant instrument. Data were collected from a simple sample of 145 primary and secondary teachers drawn from three local governments in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state. The data collected were analysed using percentage. Findings of the study revealed that ICT is not only an effective tool of instruction and learning but empowers Nigeria teachers. This reduces poverty and makes the country's economy more efficient and globally competitive. It was recommended that the government should provide jobs for Nigerian youths through the use of ICT tools and initiate effort to make all educational programmes relevant to provide the youth the needed entrepreneurial skills.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Skill Development, ICT Relevance,

Introduction

The economy has classically been divided into agricultural, manufacturing and service sectors. Today, these sectors have been joined by a fourth category: the booming knowledge sector consisting of knowledge workers. In an increasingly 'smart' automated environment, mental work is moving from crunching and tossing data to creating information and knowledge, and then communicating, exchanging and sharing it with fellow-workers (Perelman 1992). The world's most serious problems, the growing demand for food, shelter, health, employment, and quality of life, cannot be solved without the introduction of highly efficient emerging technologies. With the advantages of being nature-protecting, non-polluting, less energy consumption, and above all, more human-friendly, ICT applications are becoming indispensable parts of contemporary culture, spreading across the globe through general and vocational education (Ogunlade, Olafare & Udom 2013).

There is a call for innovation and transformation among educators everywhere, especially in the elementary upper basic schools, the most crucial stage in the development of a human being. Furthermore, the internal problems of schooling are inseparable from external changes on a global scale and must be seen in the context of contemporary world problems. These, in turn, will not be solved unless approached and treated educationally, as well as economically, politically, and socio-culturally. Adegboye (2016) observed that in recent years, the promotion of entrepreneurship as a revolution to solving numerous economic and social challenges facing developing countries has attracted significant attention by policy makers and the academia. This is because the impact of globalization on the education system is overwhelming as it has greatly affected not only the curriculum but also the instructional process of the entire system. Entrepreneurship education has been embraced by almost all the developed countries and its capabilities and efficacy in springing up economies is not in doubt. It is believed that refocusing education system will immensely contribute in building entrepreneurial mind set.

In Nigeria today, the increasing rate of poverty, unemployment, corruption and other allied social problems have become worrisome to the government and to every well-meaning citizen. Therefore, the need for change is desirable and necessary for the country to forge ahead and meet up with global challenges. The incidence of poverty in Nigeria is on the high side, where 70% of the total population has been classified as poor (Ewurdjapor, 2008). This rate of poverty is, however, accentuated by the increasing rate of unemployment, high level of illiteracy, corruption and bad governance. Therefore, as part of the

panacea to ease the effects of these challenges, entrepreneurship has been identified as a means of providing employment and income generation in the country.

Training programmes in Nigeria, both at the secondary and tertiary levels, have concentrated more on teaching knowledge and skills in principle devoid of practical experience in related fields. There have been extensive calls for entrepreneurial education in Nigeria (Chaimuwa & Obanya 1989; Ozoro, 1973; Parkin, 1994). In 1983, the Federal Government of Nigeria urged training institutions in the country to refocus existing programmes towards vocational relevance for the graduating class to possess relevant skills for self-employment and self-relevance.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the perceived relevance of ICT for the development of entrepreneurial skills among teachers in Ilorin, Kwara State. Specifically, the study found out the perceived relevance of ICT, influence of ICT in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and ICT use for the development of entrepreneurial skill to alleviate poverty among school teachers in Kwara State.

Research Question

1. How do teachers in Kwara State perceived relevance of ICT, influence of ICT in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and ICT use for the development of entrepreneurial skill to alleviate poverty?

Literature Review

Information and communication technologies are of paramount importance to the future of education. ICT in education initiatives which focus on the following areas are most likely to successfully contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goals by increasing access through distance learning. ICTs can provide new and innovative means to bring educational opportunities to greater numbers of people of all ages, especially those who have historically been excluded, such as populations in rural areas, women facing social barriers, and students with disabilities, enabling a knowledge network for students. With knowledge as the crucial input for productive processes within today's economy, the efficiency by which knowledge is acquired and applied determines economic success. Effective use of ICT can contribute to the timely transmission of information and knowledge, thereby helping education systems meet this challenge, training teachers - Large numbers of school teachers will be needed to meet the EFA and Millennium Development Goals for education. The use of ICTs can help in meeting teacher training targets. Moreover, ICTs provide opportunities to complement on the job training and continuing education for teachers.

Broadening the availability of quality education materials- Network technologies have the potential to increase the availability of quality educational materials. Their interactivity and global reach allow for customized sharing of knowledge, materials, and databases, quickly and cheaply overlong geographic distances. Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of educational administration and policy- New technologies can help improve the quality of administrative activities and processes, including human resource management, student registration, and monitoring of student enrollment and achievement (Ogunlade, Olafare & Udom, 2013).

The establishment of Computer Science Department in almost all Nigerian University, Colleges of Technology, Colleges of Education and Faculties of Education, the teaching of various subjects which includes Computer Science; Software engineering; programming and programming language; numerical computation and systems analysis at various institutions of learning computer science studies had led to the award of degrees or diploma and certificates in computer science.

Also, the advent of cheaper access to the internet makes it easier to access training opportunities on the internet, chapter telecommunication costs have also facilitated access to the internet and today internet services is now common in every nooks and crannies in Nigeria. There are proliferations of cyber café to provide access to internet, while a few telecommunications companies offer internet connectivity with telephone services.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are technology that supports activities involving the creation, storage, manipulation and Communication of Information, together with the related

methods, management and application (National Open University of Nigeria, 2009). In other words, ICTs enables us to record, store, process, retrieve and transmit information. It encourages use of modern technologies such as Computers, Telecommunications facsimile and microelectronics. Older technologies such as document filing systems, mechanical accounting machines, printing and cave drawings and communication technologies (ICTs).

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has potential for reducing poverty and fostering growth in developing countries has increased rapidly.

Some of the relevance of ICTS as it has potential to raise growth in businesses of any size and countries, play a vital role in advancing economic growth and reducing poverty, make management and operation more efficient, differs based on business size, ownership, and export orientation, makes a country's economy more efficient and globally competitive, improves health and education, enhances social inclusion and promotes more effective accountable, democratic government, especially when combined with effective freedom of information and expression (Ayelaagbe & Loto, 2013).

In Nigeria there are numerous problems facing the youths and the most notable ones are poverty and unemployment. These have led to youth unrest in the country. Ayelaagbe & Loto (2013) observed that the three tiers of government have realized that without tackling this problem of high rate of unemployment and poverty the millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will not be achieved. Therefore, different programmes that have been put in place by the Federal, State and Local Governments in Nigeria are National Economic Employment Development Strategies (NEEDS), State Economic Employment and Development Strategies (SEEDS), Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (LEEDS). Part of the objective of these programmes includes developing strategies that will give the youths residing in both rural and urban centers the chance of decent and productive work, stemming down the population of youths whose income is less than 1 dollar a day and those who suffer from hunger, creating employment opportunities through small scale entrepreneurship and thereby inculcate value orientation in them (Software, 2009). In addition to NEEDS, SEEDS and LEEDS the government has other programmes and initiatives which includes are Millennium Development Goal (MDGs), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Plan of Action of the world Summit on Information Society (WSIS). (National Planning Commission, 2004), O YES (Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme), and N - Power.

There are other efforts made by various tiers of government to empower the Nigerian youths, some of them are low income ICT opportunities for youth entrepreneurship, selling telephone + based services, opportunities for e-commerce-based entrepreneurship on remote communities, telephone as income generators for young people, micro-credit and young people and ICT generated employment for young people through call centers and marketing pro-poor tourism (Ayelaagbe & Loto, 2013).

Also, Omotade (2010) as mentioned in (Abidoye, Ayelaagbe, & Fakokunle, 2011) using ICTs in generating employments for Nigerian Youths are as follow are simple food processing e.g. Ice cream, Soya Milk, computer training, Global System for Mobile Communication in GSM Phone Services, retailing GSM recharge Cards, photocopying, photography e.g. digital camera, wait and get pictures, engraving and sale of mobile phones

For most people, the popularity of entrepreneurship is largely due to the positive effects it has on many countries as a catalyst that creates wealth through the generation of job opportunities (Ayelaagbe & Loto, 2013). In this respect, entrepreneurship is a major engine driving many nations' economic growth, innovation and competitiveness (Kuratko, 2009). At the same time, many studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth in terms of job creation, firm survival and technological change (Lena & Wong, 2003). This, in turn, has increasingly made entrepreneurship emerge as one of the most popular research domains in academic circles.

Olaitan (1996) observed that Nigerian graduates can only be self-employed and marketable if they acquire relevant skills and knowledge for successful establishment in occupation and gainful employment. It was also observed by Williams (2002) that, the training programmes in the country both at the secondary and tertiary levels have concentrated more on teaching knowledge and skills in principles devoid of practical experiences in related fields. Parking (1994) suggested that teaching and learning should

emphasize the development of favourable skills and competencies in specific disciplines that can be utilized in real life situations. Chimuwaza and Obanya (1989) stressed that, for favourable skills and competencies to be developed in the learners, the strategies adopted should expose the learners to the acquisition of specific skills, knowledge and values.

Courses in entrepreneurship are also becoming popular at college and university levels (Brown, 1999). An exponential interest in entrepreneurship studies has increased amongst both undergraduate and graduate students over the last decade (Solomon & Weaver, 2005). One of the key factors explaining this unparalleled phenomenon is the fact that, wages employment or 'secure' employment is no longer a guarantee especially in the public sector for university graduates (Kamau-Maina, 2006). In addition, the luxury thoughts of university graduates as the elite and intelligent group in the society, who can easily acquire a job upon graduation, has no longer reflected the realities of today's employment world (Adegboye, 2016). In today's competitive job environment, job opportunities are inevitably limited and thus one must compete to secure a job. The whole impetus for ICT-based entrepreneurship education is the increasing interest in the development of education programmes to encourage and enhance graduates' self-employability.

The explosion in entrepreneurship education came towards the end of the 1970's (Kent, 2006) due to students' demand and donations to educational institutions from the biggest donors who were entrepreneurs. Many people seem to worry about the nature of entrepreneurship education given to the undergraduates in Nigerian universities. One expects the inclusion of guest lectures, students' consultation with the practising entrepreneurs, and development of business plans, field trips, use of videos and films and special readings. These will create entrepreneurial consciousness. According to Nwoye (2011), there is the need for entrepreneurship students to know the structures that government has put in place which will enhance entrepreneurial ventures in terms of facilities that will enable them to venture into creating wealth and accumulating capital in the market place. She also suggested the importance of information, communication and technology to enterprises.

Methodology

Descriptive survey method was adopted in this study. The population of the study comprised all primary and secondary school teachers in Ilorin Metropolis. The sample consists of 150 primary and secondary teachers across the three local governments in the metropolis. Specifically, 25 primary and 25 secondary school teachers were randomly selected from each local government. Only 145 questionnaires were returned. Combinations of purposive and proportional random sampling techniques were employed. A researcher-designed questionnaire known as ICT as an Entrepreneurial Tool for Poverty Reduction (ICTETPR) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts from Social Science Education Department, University of Ilorin. Internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha to have a coefficient of 0.82.

The questionnaire consists of two section 'A' and 'B'. Section A solicited personal information from the respondents while section 'B' which consisted of seven items was based on the influence of ICTs on teachers' entrepreneurship education and ability.

The three research questions have been X-rayed under seven items as shown in table 1 below. For scoring purpose there were two alternative responses showing whether the respondents agree with each statement made or not. Simple percentage was used to analyse the personal variables of the respondents and the three research questions.

Results

Research Question

How do teachers in Kwara State perceived relevance of ICT, influence of ICT in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and ICT use for the development of entrepreneurial skill to alleviate poverty?

Perceived Relevance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) For Entrepreneurial Skill Development Among Teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria

Table 1:

Teachers' Perceived ICT Relevance to Alleviating Poverty through Entrepreneurial Skills

S/N	Relevance of ICT for the development of Entrepreneurial skill	Agreed (F (%))		Disagreed (F (%))	
1.	ICTs promote technology in education and empower Nigeria teachers	114	78.6	31	21.4
2.	ICTs is not a cost-effective system of instruction and learning of entrepreneurship education	57	93.3	88	60.7
	Influence of ICT in the acquisition of Entrepreneurial skills	Agreed (F (%))		Disagreed (F (%))	
3.	ICTs help in sharing and transmission of latest information on business opportunities and ventures	139	95.9	6	4.1
4.	The use of ICT Provides an opportunity to overcome the perennial problem of non-availability of staff, books and even lack of equipment in the laboratories.	95	65.5	50	34.5
5.	Through ICT, I'm now a business owner	100	68.9	45	31.1
	Influence of ICT-based Entrepreneurship education on Poverty Alleviation	Agreed (F (%))		Disagreed (F (%))	
6.	ICTs play a vital role in accelerating growth and reducing poverty	120	82.8	25	17.2
7.	ICT makes a country's economy more effective and globally competitive	87	60.6	58	40.8

On the relevance of ICT for the development of entrepreneurial skill among school teacher, table 1 indicates that 114 (78.6%) of the 145 respondents agreed that ICTs promote technology in education and empower Nigeria teachers while 31 (21.4%) disagreed. Also, 88 (60.7%) agreed that ICT constitutes a cost-effective system of instruction and learning of entrepreneurship education while only 57 (39.3%) disagreed. However, on the influence of ICT in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills among school teachers, 139 (95.9%) agreed that ICTs help in sharing and transmission of latest information on business opportunities and ventures while 6 (4.1%) disagreed with the statement. Also, 95 (65.5%) agreed that the use of ICT provides an opportunity to overcome the perennial problem of non-availability of staff, books and even lack of equipment in the laboratories while 50 (34.5%) disagreed. However, through the use of ICT, 100 (68.9%) of the respondents agreed to be proud owners of businesses while 45 (31.1%) disagreed. On the influence of ICT-based entrepreneurship education on poverty alleviation, 120 (82.8%) of the respondents agreed that ICTs play a vital role in accelerating growth and reducing poverty while 25 (17.2%) disagreed. However, on whether ICT makes a country's economy more efficient and globally competitive 87 (60.0%) agreed while 58 (40.0%) disagreed.

Discussion

As revealed in the table, majority of the respondents acknowledged and appreciated ICT as a tool for promoting technology in education and empowering Nigeria teachers. This finding agrees with that of Ogunlade, Olafare & Udom (2013) who posited that the world's most serious problems- the growing demand for food, shelter, health, employment, and quality of life, cannot be solved without the introduction of highly efficient ICTs with the advantages of being nature-protecting, non-polluting, less energy consuming, and above all, more human-friendly. ICT applications are becoming indispensable parts of contemporary culture, spreading across the globe through general and vocational education.

It was also agreed that ICT helps in sharing and transmission of latest information. This outcome corroborates that of National Open University of Nigeria (2009) which submitted that ICT is a technology that supports activities involving the creation, storage, manipulation and Communication of Information, together with the related methods, management and application. In other words, ICTs enable us to record, store, process, retrieve and transmit information. It is therefore believed that effective use of ICT can contribute to the timely transmission of information and knowledge, thereby helping education system meets this challenge.

Again, the general opinion was that ICT is a cost-effective tool of instruction and learning. This conforms to the position of Ogunlade, Olafare & Udom (2013) who opined that ICTs enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of educational administration and policy. Such new technologies can help improve the quality of administrative activities and processes, including human resource management, student registration, and monitoring of student enrollment and achievement.

It was also established in the study that many of the teachers are proud owners of various businesses through the ICTs. Ayelaagbe and Loto (2013) observed that ICTs-based entrepreneurship programme would create wealth through the generation of job opportunities for the teeming population.

Majority of the teachers equally opined that the use of ICT provides opportunity to overcome the perennial problems of non-availability of staff, books and even lack of equipment in the schools' laboratories. Olafare (2015) agreed with this position by maintaining that Network technologies have the potential to increase the availability of quality educational resources through their interactivity and global reach which allows for customized sharing of knowledge, materials, and databases, quickly and cheaply overlong geographic distances.

Nigeria teacher finally perceived ICT as a major player in reducing poverty and making the country's economy more efficient and globally competitive. This again agreed with the position of Adegboye (2016) who opined that the whole impetus for ICT- based entrepreneurship education is the increasing interest in the development of education programmes to encourage and enhance graduates' self-employability. Olaitan (1996) equally observed that Nigerian graduates can only be self-employed and marketable if they acquire relevant skills and knowledge for successful establishment in occupation and gainful employment.

Conclusion

The dwindling nature of the so-called white-collar jobs when compared to the rate of turnout of graduates at all levels of education made it necessary for an alternative and globally embraced innovation known as ICTs in empowering our teeming youths. With networked computers, new software applications and many other innovative tools, ICTs can generate employment for the youths in Nigeria.

Recommendations

For the effective use of ICT as a tool to enhance entrepreneurship education and alleviate unemployment among the teeming population, the study recommends that;

- i. More efforts and initiatives should be organized to make ICTs more relevant at all levels of education. This provides the desired entrepreneurial skills for Nigeria teachers.
- ii. ICTs infrastructures should be made available and be improved upon to enable the youth gainful employed using ICTs facilities.
- iii. The government should provide jobs for Nigerian youths through the use of ICTs tools and this will reduce insecurity and youth unrest because of gainful employment.

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