Research Paper

Evolving Technology and Effective Communication in Public Institutions in Ekiti State

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ABSTRACT
This study used descriptive and representational approaches. The descriptive approach according to Vyhmeister (2001) is used in making reality known through collecting factual information that describes existing phenomena at a given moment in time. This study sought information about the perceptions, skills, knowledge of people on ICT; and this enables the researcher to observe the attitudes of the people towards ICT. For Nigeria technology to thrive successfully, the Federal Government has to attach much importance to communication, this is because communication is a key to human existence. The universal nature of communication has accorded it a great importance in the society, hence the need for this study.
KEYWORDS*: Technology, Evolving Technology, Communication and e-learning*

I. INTRODUCTION

We live in a world of technology where almost all the artificial things we use are products of technology. Man has used science and technology for the benefits of man to improve the quality of life. Technology, as Ndu et al in Ademola, Adepoju, Adekunle, Eyisi, Eto and Adams (2016) succinctly put it that technology has helped man to understand the structure of his body and how it works, as well as what he needs to do to keep himself healthy. They acknowledge that technology

makes it possible for us to communicate by telephone or to send messages quickly by radiophones, satellite phones, mobile phones, video phones and facsimile (fax) or electronic mail (email) via the Internet. One can even watch a soccer match on television in Nigeria as it is being played in America (p.50).

All these are made possible through the new satellite communication. In fact everything we do now is digital.

Communication Technology, also known as Information Technology, refers to all equipment and programmes that are used to process and communicate information. The impact of technology and communication in everyday activities has shown a remarkable development in politics, education, religion, heath and all other socio-economic factors in Nigeria.

From the foregoing, it is clear that modern living cannot exist without technology and communication because all aspects of human life have been taken over and improved by technology especially in terms of communication. Communication, as it is being said, "is the hallmark of good morale." According to the words of Bergin (1981) in Seweje (2005) "with words we govern men" (p. 2). Nevertheless, it will be practically impossible to imagine any civilization without technology and communication nowadays.

Objectives
This study's aim is to establish the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in solving problems in the public institutions in Ekiti State. The objectives of this study among others are:
i.   to investigate availability of ICT tools for use in promoting development;
ii.   to establish the extent to which workers were endowed with the technology and communication skills for human development; and
iii.   to investigate the people's attitude towards the use of computers in the public institutions.

Statement of Problems

The whole world has become a global village with the use of (ICT). However, the effective evolvement of technology and communication in the public institutions in Ekiti State, particularly, during the lock-down owing to COVID – 19 pandemic, is appalling and far beyond the desired expectation. It sad to understand that most the public secondary schools in Ekiti State have some computer equipment but only a few was equipped with basic ICT infrastructure to facilitate modern communication. More importantly, Information Communication Technology in public institution is designed to advance information literacy and the ability to access use, evaluate information from different sources so as to promote development, solve problems as well as to generate new knowledge. That is the reason Liem, Martin, Anderson, Gibson, & Sudmalis (2014) lend their voice to advocate the use of ICT in schools, "a growing body of research has now centered on understanding how the integration of ICT in arts activities may bring about improvements in students' cognitive functioning and academic attainments" (p. 2).

What is Technology?

Technology is the scientific knowledge used in practical ways to meet and satisfy human needs and comforts. To follow Obioma's (2010) assertion, "things made with technology are products of technology" (p. 1). The following are some of the products of technology that can be found in homes, schools and industries: Television, Radio, CD/DVD player, Electric Stove, Cell Phone, Calculator, Piano, Computer, Air Conditioner, Heat Extractor, Oven, Photocopy Machine, etc.

According to Obioma (2009), almost all artificial or man-made things around us are products of technology. Some specific scientific ways of doing things as in accountancy, management, building construction, medical practice, engineering, information and communication are regarded as technology. Technology makes things possible, makes things happen and produces things for the comfort and ease of human life.

Generally, technology is about work: how work is imagined and how work is done to produce goods and services for better ways of living. We can say that technology makes the modern world.

Historical Development of Technology

From Obioma (2010) point of view, "every type of technology available today started as a low idea, and kept on advancing" (p. 3). To this end, examples of advancing technology manifests in the technology of automobiles, telephone, X-ray, surgery, medicine, computer/telecommunication, to mention a few.

Evolving is a gerund or a verbal noun. From the definition of Longman (2008), it means "to develop or change gradually over a period of time." From this definition, one can say that evolving means the gradual changes in the area of technology and communication. That is, the development or innovation that has taken place in technology and communication. This means that technology and communication did not stand still, but they grow and change. For instance, oral messages and letter writing were used before to disseminate information. Nevertheless, with technology today, telephone, telex, radio messages, fax, internet, email and other modern sophisticated information, technologies have developed and are now in use.

From the foregoing, we can say that the evolution of modern technologies and communication across the globe, there must be drastic changes in the society since the development of any nation depends on its technological know-how. It is important to stress that technology has improved communication tremendously and they include internet surveillance cameras, social media platform, telecommunication system and other ICT technology for data collection and analyzing as well as other sound based means of communication. In the rise of digital communication, technology can actually help communication skills because it allows people to learn written communication to varying audience. Using technology to communicate effectively among people is a newer skill that not all workers in the public institutions in Ekiti have.

What is communication?

The origin of communication is from the Latin word, "communicare", meaning "to share" and from French word, "communis" which means, "common." This indicates that when people communicate with others, it shows that they have something in common to share. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines the word, "communicate" as "to impart, transmit or share." Seweje (2005) asserts that through "communication, thoughts and idea are transferred from one mind to another either by speech or the recorded written word" (p. 1). Obioma (2009) asserts that "most communication is done by the use of words" (p. 1). He stresses that during conversation and other person-to-person communication, we use our natural voice. These means of communication include the megaphone, letters, telephone, radio, television, the internet and satellite. Each of these means of communication has solved the problems of communication at one time or the other.

Odhiambo (2013) categorically traces the history of (ICT) Communication Technology, also known as information communication. Technology refers to all equipment and programme that are used to process and communicate information. Information and communication technology is about the discovery of new ways of

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communicating faster and more easily at any time in human life. In the past, information could only be passed from one person to another by word of mouth; then letters, telegrams, telex and telephone came into use. Now fax, Global System of Mobile communication (GSM) and Internet are used.

Therefore, evolving technology and communication will help to achieve a lot if more emphasis can be laid on the study of ICT in schools and make it compulsory as one of the criteria for employment and admission. Raja and Nagasubramani (2018) add that "top institutions offer amazing online programs with the use of various applications and the internet. This is a concept that will continue to rise as it gets more support and awareness" (p. 33).

Technology and communication have gradually developed to the extent that everything, if not all things in the society depends solely on technology. For instance, let us see how technology and communication developed from basic telecommunication to the use of satellite solar cells.

Various ICT System and where they can be Identified

A basic telecommunication system consists of the information source, encoding device and received information. The Internet is a collection of computers linked together. Mathevula (2015) breaks it thus

These technologies range in turn from conventional gadgets, for example videos, audio tapes, radios and television, to modern state of the art technologies, such as computers and Smartphones (a mobile phone that is able to perform many of the functions of a computer, typically having a relatively large screen and an operating system capable of running general-purpose applications), from low end to high end (relatively inexpensive to relatively expensive of its kind respectively), from analog to digital (p. 9).

There is the use the Internet of protocol (rules) to share information (files) among them. Internet services include: e-mail, the World Wide Web (www), web search engines, mailing lists and Telnet.

Apart from telephoning, other service from GSM include the Short Message Service (SMS) and Enhanced Message (EMS). Satellite is another technology and communication services. The satellite is an electronic device stationed twenty four hours in the space above the earth, to observe happenings in and around its country of origin.

Nigeria, according to Obioma (2009, p. 10) has a satellite called "NIGCOMSATI which is used for communication." Satellite have three parts namely radar, receiver and transmitter and small altitude control nozzles. Solar cells or batteries are used to power satellites. Other information communication devices include Close Circuit Television (CCTV) camera, Automated Personal data Bank (APDB), Social Networking platform and Detecting Device (DD).

The following among others, are some of the contexts in which the impact of evolving technology and communication can be identified:

The Global Media: Today, the media industry has become international, competing to reach large audiences in every world region. English language is being used principally to reach these massive global audiences. Many national media conglomerate, including BBC and the CNN, are now active on a global scale through the medium of language.

Internet Communication and the GSM: Computer technology has transformed the way people interact both locally and internationally. Now, we are at the edge of a new era of personal and group communication for example: political groups, economic groups, religious groups, social platforms, health groups and education groups, where people interact and communicate online.

Education and Training: Remote learning or what some people describe as distance learning (electronically) is helping the growth of education in many parts of the world for example. School programmes during this global pandemic and zoom method of workshop/conference, and online lectures in the developed countries like China, Japan and the USA are germane and relevant to education and training. According to Liem et al (2014) who made a reference to a study of nationally "representative 15-year old Canadian youth, for example, Thiessen and Looker (2007) reported that the frequency of computer use improved reading achievement up to a certain point and more intensive use was associated with detrimental effects on achievement" (pp. 4-5). This shows that ICT can improve learning and training. Also, Ghavifekr and Rosdy (2015) add that "using ICT tools and equipment will prepare an active learning environment that is more interesting and effective for both teachers and students" (p. 188). Besides, Olaleye and Adegoke (2009) add that "children demonstrate increased levels of spoken communication and cooperation during computer use" (p.149).

Factors to be considered in Evolving Technology and Communication

Needs for technology advancement: The need for this kind of advancement is because the technology landscape changes fast with technology evolution, an example is the yahoo messenger in the year 2000 which was in vogue then, and all of a sudden, nobody is talking about yahoo messenger again today. According to Okonji (2018) "this shows the length and pace at which technology solutions are evolving." Okonji (2018) adds that, the Google map has helped and still helping the people in the society to solve mapping and navigation problems which implies evolving of technology from Nokia map to Google map.

Power of Media in Improvement of Economy: The best way by which the media can advance technologically is through putting up the right content that is useful and relevant to the readers. In Okonji's (2018) view, majority of people are not interested about the technical jargons in today's technological world. What they are interested in, is how technology works and how it can improve on their business or job. So, for media practitioners, there is a need to make technology as simple as possible when writing about it.

The Government impact in Technology Advancement

The government has its own role to play in improving the technology and communication system of the country. The government needs to come up with policies that will empower Nigerians especially, the youths and speed-up technology and communication development in Nigeria. Olokoba, Abdullahi and Omosidi (2014) have this to say

The ultimate aim of information Communication Technology is therefore to develop a viable system to maximize the effective use of modern data approach to institutions management practices. It also aimed at assisting management, and indeed operating personnel to produce timely and accurate information. It also answers the increasing needs of tertiary institution as it allows the academic staff to have access to all relevant organizational information which enables them to make quick decisions within a reasonable length of time (p. 62).

It is also advised that people must not wait for the government to provide all the infrastructures needed to grow technology.

Benefits of Evolving Technology and Communication

The advantages of using information technology include cheap and quick access to any point or place in the world; easy and profitable trading and electronic learning (e-learning). According to Kumar (2017) the "IT revolution has facilitated the processes of searching for and recovering information; ICT improves the efficiency of organizational management processes and provides new ways of improving the capacity of response to its users" (p.446). Today, for a better communication to take place, we can avail the facilities of e-mail; we can chat for hours with our loved ones. Information is another benefits of evolving communication and technology. (Fischer, 2012) in Kumar (2017) explains that the goal of ICT is "to provide information to the 'right users' at 'any time', from 'anywhere' in the 'right way' is possible using web based technological settings" (p.445). There is a large amount of information available on the Internet for just about every subject known to man, ranging from government law and services, trade-fairs and conferences, market information, new idea and technical support, politically, religiously, socially, economically, to mention a few.

Many services are now provided on the internet such as online banking, job search and application, as well as hotel reservation. Often, these services are not available off-line. The E-commerce is a very effective way to buy and sell products all over the world using on-line techniques. Communication of all types have spring up on the Internet. Besides, Olawale (2008, p.73) highlights other benefits of technology on the entertainment angle since internet has done a lot. According to him, downloading games, visiting chat rooms or just surfing web are some of the uses people have discovered.

II.   CONCLUSION

This study has shown that evolving technology and communication is very important for human development. This is because "technology", according to Ajayi (2010) is concerned with the application of science to obtain practical solutions to myriads of human problems. Much of these problems can be solved by using products of technology such as computers/ICT for passing information to a large audience. The development above can only be achieved through communicating to the public to be aware of the new technological methods of doing things. Therefore, evolving communication and technology are the master tools that can make the process of doing things easier, faster, neater, more accurate, more reliable, thereby uplifting the standard of the living of the people.

In effect, this paper has been able to buttress the fact that evolving technology and communication have helped the world economically, socially, religiously, educationally and health wise, especially in this era of Corona Virus called COVID – 19 pandemic. It has been able to warn everybody to stay at home and stay safe, and people should maintain social distancing, wash hands regularly with soap and running water or sanitize hands, and cough in the bent elbow. People were equally made to understand through the media that COVID – 19 is real, and it has no respect for any person, and it is not a death sentence, however, it can kill. Through the power of technology and communication, everybody is aware that the whole universe was locked-down and everything was virtually done online.

III.   RECOMMENDATION

The impact of evolving technology and communication in the society cannot be underestimated. Therefore, this paper recommends the following points to support the importance of technology and communication in the economic development of Nigeria and the world at large: the federal government should ensure proper implementation of technology and communication tools in all areas of human endeavors including agencies and departments. The Nigerian governments should train its personnel on technology and communication knowledge in all sectors, to ensure proper utilization of the ICT facilities. Also, the inclusion of technology and communication courses in all Nigerian institutions of learning should be monitored to ensure practical teaching of the course at all levels, so that graduate can operate the device:

"The government and the school management should make provision for the availability of the Information Technology facilities for the use of students and teachers for effective teaching and learning and the teachers should be allowed to go for further training to update their knowledge and be equipped readily to face present challenges in the area of Information Communication Technology in Nigeria" (Olokoba, et al p. 66)

Finally, following Okonji's (2018) suggestion, if Nigerians are empowered with technology and communication skills, and there are adequate infrastructures for technology on ground across the country, the people will develop fast and the country will grow faster

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