INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) AND HOSPITALITY/TOURISM TRAINING IN NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

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Abstract
The use of ICT has turned out to be the motivating force in the transfer of education of today’s Technical, vocational education and training (TVET) in the world. Though ICT has become increasingly available means for instructors to use in their training activities, most instructors in the Hospitality are still incompetent to incorporate it in their instruction and learning processes. ICT is used to improve training excellence anywhere, though quality is very costly to produce, or to substitute for the lack of instructors or training opportunities that cannot be made accessible with conventional training practices. This paper examines the challenges of incorporating ICT into Polytechnics Hospitality instructional practices and the obstacles threatening implementation. Therefore the necessity for friendly ICT education policies, suggestions to integrate ICT into Polytechnics Hospitality and Tourism instruction and learning practices are provided to assist the instructors to the use of ICT in order to help the students acquire theoretical knowledge and grounded in real practice. It is the argument of this paper that though creating an ICT environment for teaching and learning of Hospitality and Tourism in Nigeria may seem difficult, it would improve students’ success in Hospitality, hence the push of this paper.

Keywords: Hospitality and Tourism, Information and communication technology (ICT), Technical, vocational education and training (TVET), Polytechnic, Nigeria.

The Role of ICT in Hospitality and Tourism
Effective and high-speed ICT infrastructure and software applications in the tourism and hospitality industry are crucial for tourism development. ICTs allow customer management relations and supply chain management to be combined into a single source that facilitates a variety of operations - product selection, ordering, fulfillment, tracking, payment and reporting to be performed with one easy-to-use tool. ICTs ultimately cut costs by enabling the provider to be in direct contact with the consumer and also impact employment through the need for required maintenance of ICT equipment. Management within tourism companies uses ICTs to undertake a range of tasks that enhance the efficiency of employees in the workplace, notably online reservations. The development of ICTs has also led to changes in demand and supply. A higher demand for flexible, individualized options and quality of information has personalized leisure
and tourism behavior, a consequence of increased ICT use. Through new technology and social and economic ratings (e.g., social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, blogs) customers have the ability to share information and research ratings on destination, quality of service in hotels and restaurants and environmental and social conditions. Number of hotels (e.g., Marriot Hotels and Resorts, Ritz Carlton Hotels, Hyatt Hotels and Resorts) have strengthened their brand image and communicate directly with their customers by posting links to a press release or promoting new package through Twitter. (Akhuemonkhan, Lukman, & Dada, 2014)

According to (Achimugu, Oluwatolani & Adeniran, 2010) contributed that ICTs are also transformational tools which, when used appropriately, can promote the shift to a learner-centered environment. The following are some of ways in which ICT have enhance quality education:

- Motivating to learn: ICTs such as videos, television and multimedia computer software that combine text, sound, and colorful, moving images can be used to provide challenging and authentic content that will engage the student in the learning process and telephone collaboration. (Akhuemonkhan, Lukman & Dada, 2014)

- Interactive radio likewise makes use of sound effects, songs, dramatizations, comic skits, and other performance conventions to compel the students to listen and become involved in the lessons being delivered. More so than any other type of ICT, networked computers with Internet connectivity can increase learner motivation as it combines the media richness and interactivity of other ICTs with the opportunity to connect with real people and to participate in real world events. (Bethapudi, 2013)

- Facilitating the acquisition of basic skills: The transmission of basic skills and concepts that are the foundation of higher order thinking skills and creativity can be facilitated by ICTs through drill and practice. Educational television programs such as “Who Want to be a Millionaire”; Nigeria’s biggest thought provoking program, enlightens people because of the questions that are required to be answered before the cash price is awarded. Questions are drawn from all works of life ranging from religious, cultural, educational to contemporary issues, thereby facilitating the acquisition of basic skills amongst populace. (Subramonian, Vikneswaran & Alice, 2004)

- Enhancing teacher training: ICTs have also been used to improve access to and the quality of teacher training. For example, institutions like the Cyber Teacher Training Center (CTTC) in South Korea are taking advantage of the Internet to provide better teacher professional development opportunities to in-service teachers. (Farkhondehzadeh, Mahmod, Mehdi, Jamshid i, & Farrokh, 2013)
ICT in Developing Economies

Technical, Vocational and Education Training (TVET) – locally, regionally and globally – is undisputedly both in transition and under pressure. (Latham & Idisemi, 2011) Indicate that there has been an increased interest in technology in many higher education institutions, particularly in Nigeria.

Training of the tourism and hospitality labor force is a key component of some of the Governments’ (for example, Nigeria) competitiveness policies to improve national productivity. Much of the Africa remains under-developed and poverty stricken where famine and civil war make universal basic education an unfulfilled dream. In such conditions e-learning needs to find a place, according to (Tassiopoulos, 2010) Arrangements of exclusion and inclusion, empowerment and disempowerment have distinguished the developing countries from their developed counterparts say (Achimugu, Oluwatolani, & Adeniran, 2010) and, in the patterns of educational provision and styles of teaching and learning. The prevailing view is that Nigeria, along with the rest of the developing world, needs wider access to the Internet if it is to compete in the global economy. In places where books and qualified instructors are scarce, the Internet may have the capacity to provide learning resources where there were none and provide access to high quality educational programs. The Polytechnic institutions throughout Nigeria share with each other through technology, seeking to attract distant new markets. This brought in the need to acclimatize innovative, cheaper approaches to provide education for growing numbers of learners.

(Apulu & Emmanuel, 2011) Provide a further insight as to why the Internet has, yet, not been fully exploited for its developmental value in a number of developing economies:

- **Cost factors:** the Internet is considered to be a very expensive resource, even in developed economies; maintenance costs, due to the rapid evolution of ICT requires constant upgrading of equipment and facilities; the cost of on-line charges for the use of the Internet is high unless it is subsidized by Governments or private institutions; and, the wide disparities between rural and urban areas in regard to basic telephone infrastructure and the quality thereof. (Shanker, 2008)

- **Professional Competence:** educating the educators is considered the most important factor in ensuring the successful use of the Internet in higher education as in many instances this factor is overlooked or underestimated in the development initiatives for introducing the Internet with the result that such projects fail or are never developed to their full potential. Training is costly but also requires being on-going and regularly updated to meet the ever new demands posed by evolving ICT technologies. (Usoro, 2007)

- **Educator attitudes:** Educators seem to resist the introduction of e-learning for a number of reasons, including their unfamiliarity with the technologies, the additional time and effort necessary for their effective use and the possible notion that e-learning pose a threat to their professional role and image

- **Language and cultural issues:** it is claimed that the “almost complete dominance of English over other languages in the computer field” is one of the principal obstacles to the widespread use of computer technologies in education in
developing economies, in particular. This linguistic and cultural dominance continues to be a serious barrier for non-English speaking countries wishing to integrate e-learning into their tourism curricula. Some governments may even oppose the use of e-leaning in the formal education system for fear of its potential for “cultural colonization”.

- Lack of technical expertise: developing economies, in general, lack technical expertise in this domain at all levels. The limited resources of such economies usually imply that they have neither the local capacity to develop the necessary human resources in this field nor the means to attract highly skilled and expensive experts from abroad. Many developing countries, such as South Africa, which succeed in training personnel, lose them to more highly paid employers abroad.

- Lack of information: In the case of developing countries there is a lack of two categories of information to educational decision-makers and practitioners – information about the role and value of e-learning in higher education, and, more specific information relating to available hardware and software and how to use it in curricula.

- Lack of centralized, coordinated administration: the success introduction of e-learning in higher education is dependent on the support of education authorities not merely at the national level but also in terms of local administration.

- It is however noted by (Morais, Carlos, & João, 2013) some universities have had e-learning strategies in place as long ago as the late 1990s. Such strategies were part of institution-wide initiatives at the universities of Stellenbosch and Pretoria. For most other South African institutions, policies and strategies have only been put in place in the last few years, but, with some institutions having no evidence of any e-learning polices being in place at all. (Umunadi, 2011) found that in the case of universities the key drivers for an increasing interest in e-learning was: individual academic staff (in the form of champions), senior leadership (either formally or informally), and students.

**ICT impact on vocational education and training**

The introduction of ICT on vocational education and training (VET) provides various opportunities in teaching and learning which helps not only to produce, access information but also to facilitate the transfer and acquisition of knowledge. The introduction of computers, which is the major and most influential technology of the last millennium, has however made the impact of technology greater felt in every sector and also in the educational sector. It is through the introduction of this major technology that the world actually started talking about information technology (Oguzor & Jacinta i, 2011)

Globalization and the use of ICT in vocational education training are leading to a new qualitative and quantitatively way of learning. The expressions of art and creativity and the respective institutions, through which it is produced, distributed and consumed. The contemporary use of computer and ICT in vocational education and training is one strand of local economic policy that could be used to cushion the negative effect of the painful
transition from an industrial to a post industrial economy. In this model, ICT in vocational education and training is perceived in the language of economic, with the attendant measurement applied to policy analysis; investment, leverage, employment, direct and indirect income effects, social and spatial targeting etc. ICT in vocational education and training are situated in historical context, and against a background of a rapidly globalizing world, the process of learning becomes significantly richer as students/teachers have access to new types of information and the new way this information can be manipulated by means of computational tools. (Latham & Idisemi, 2011)

In the classroom, computer can be used for drill and practice for tutorials, for games and simulations. Computer is useful in analyzing research data, for managing learning and other vocational education and training activities. They create rooms for interactive teaching and learning process with various microcomputer systems incorporating various software packages which are flexible and maximize learner’s control. The students are taught the skill needed to perform a specific job. Increase in the technology usage in the working life and rapid technological developments have made technology usage necessary in the vocational education and training schools preparing individuals for the work life as well as other educational fields. Indeed, computer self-efficacy is one of the factors affecting the student’s adaptation to the technology integration process. Hence each learner has different interpretation to a phenomenon depending on some variables such as sex, age, education, economic, social or cultural factors. According to Akhuemonkhan, Lukman, & Dada, (2014) ICT in vocational education and training therefore can be described as being useful to:

- a systematic arrangement of instruction in such a way that learning is facilitated;
- help the learners to interact individually or in groups for learning to take place;
- ease delivery of a lesson by the teacher;
- help learners to learn at their own pace and place; - helps learners to learn faster and better;
- broaden students’ knowledge and level of understanding. (Achimugu, Oluwatolani, & Adeniran, 2010)

The use of computer and ICT on vocational education and training allow countries to improve their educational systems. To enable societies to increase computer awareness and to learn about computers as instruments to meet social needs. To use computers to learn the various Computer related skilled as demanded by countries’ respective levels of economic and technological development. Computers can be used as a tool to help improve the quality of hospitality and tourism education, particularly in critical areas where developing countries lack sufficient teachers and school facilities. As research seems to indicate (Subramonian, Vikneswaran, & Alice, 2004) schools can be more effective in teaching knowledge that is more foreign to indigenous communities. And particularly, the use of computer simulations to replace expensive equipment in vocational education and training schools can also be a cost effective application. Indeed, globalization has generated new necessities, ideologies and ways to understand communications. ICT is crucial for all governments in the world towards promoting
equity. ICT has been considered a low cost opportunity towards equalizing educational systems. There are four pillars of education on vocational education and training through ICT: hardware and software, access to internet, competencies and skills, and content of the material (Magyar, 2004). Raising the level of low achievers is crucial for all countries if they aim at raising all students’ educational achievement since the potential gains are greater for those students in any educational system (Asgari & Mahdi, 2013). The widespread access to ICT in the past decade increased hopes for improving student learning. ICT connects information, products, people, ideas, individuals as well as communities globally at a low cost. All countries, including OECD members, stress the importance of preparation of young generations with ICT skills in their education policy documents. ICT brings new structures in learning. More so, ICT services are needed in today’s world.

**ICT and opportunities in hospitality/Tourism education**

Developments in ICT, particularly the popularity of the Internet, have forced organizations in the tourism and hospitality industry to appraise their use of technology in managing their business (Bethapudi, 2013). The digital revolution has emphasized innovation, new business models, new ways of organizing work as well as learning (Khasawneh & Ibrahim, 2012). Consequently, the use of the Internet in tourism and hospitality education can help tourism and hospitality educators meet the challenges of globalization by establishing international linkages, information and knowledge transfer and improving delivery and the quality of material received by learners. This is crucial for institutions in economically depressed regions that wish to contribute to the economic development of such areas by distributing up-to-date information and offering quality tourism and hospitality instructional programs. E-learning is the learning that occurs any time someone uses electronic means for learning with or without another live person being present in the same venue (Tassiopoulos, 2010). Consequently, it is believed to contribute towards improved productivity for commerce and industry, as industry then “gets” a technologized workforce. It is crucial for tourism and hospitality students, soon to enter the global marketplace, to be exposed to the online information resources and the managerial and technological uses of the Web in context of e-business Farkhondehzadeh, et al (2013). However despite the perceived benefits of e-learning, some industry experts and e-learning providers, according to (Tassiopoulos, 2010) do not see it as viable for all the necessary skills in industry or as replacement for traditional training. (Subramonian, Vikneswaran, & Alice, 2004), suggest that on-the-job and face-to-face training are important in teaching non-technical or soft” skills such as communication or leadership skills, where e-learning is not appropriate.

The mission of tourism and hospitality management programs is ultimately to prepare students for the work-place and to produce industry leaders who are motivated, service oriented and quick-thinking, with a multi-skills base that allows them to be creative, flexible and adaptable (Tassiopoulos, 2010). Social, multicultural and communication skills acquisition is crucial. In particular, (Tassiopoulos, 2010) stresses that e-learning
helps learners to acclimatize to the technological changes that are taking place in the tourism environment, and allows them to experience multicultural diversity and teamwork by interacting with people of different social and cultural backgrounds via the Internet. E-learning creates a learning environment that overcomes time and space barriers, offering learners greater opportunity to become familiar with the specific conditions of work in tourism and hospitality. As an increasing number of tourism and hospitality learners simultaneously seek part-time employment, e-learning thus offers flexibility in terms of time and place and delivery of instruction (Tassiopoulos, 2010).

Key factors for applying ICT in Hospitality and Tourism Training
According to Shanker, (2008) & Bethapudi,( 2013) ICT can be applied in the following ways;

1. ICT education and training for hospitality and Tourism policy makers, managers and other players in the industry.
2. Integration of various sectors like Restaurants, lodge, Inns etc.
3. Technical Infrastructure.
4. Human Infrastructure, which includes skilled people, vision and management.
5. Legal Infrastructure;
   - Regulation of telecommunication providers
   - Subsides for Internet service providers,
   - Legal framework for online advertisement or official endorsement for online marketing.
6. ICT culture;
   - Create and sustain ICT environment
   - Maintenance and updating of websites
   - ICT training for all level of workers
   - Establish electronic linkages between all related sectors (Shanker, 2008)

Challenges in the Hospitality and Tourism education
The Instructor’s competence, as numerous developments in technology are affecting hospitality and tourism education and training, the traditional ways of teaching and learning are changing. The traditional ways of teaching only appeals to a small minority of learners. The traditional classroom environment can often neglect factors that are essential for learning. Presently in the Nigeria hospitality and tourism, most learners are taught by the traditional approaches which often place the learners in a passive role. Teachers are therefore compelled by the learner heterogeneity to provide alternative units of instruction and alternative strategies to enable the students to attain educational objectives at their own rate. But the self –efficacy expectations mediate the actual involvement in a particular teaching process. Before a teacher can be expected to use computer and ICT to impact knowledge or learn the skills for producing software, it is necessary that such a teacher know and is competent in the usage. Training teachers as computer instructors is an urgent and essential matter. Since most software has to be developed by the teachers themselves, intensive training should be requested. Computers
are excellent tutorial tools, and they help teachers to become more efficient and effective for teaching, but they cannot replace teachers. (Oguzor & Jacinta i, 2011).

The Course structure, of any developed Country of the world regard ICT as a core component for learning especially hospitality and tourism, (Apulu & Emmanuel, 2011). The use and integration of computers and ICT in vocational education and training provide students with important skills applicable to computer related tasks. To be introduced in schools vocational education and training, software must be adapted to the curriculum. The more it deviates from the concrete needs of programs and teachers, the less likely it is to be implemented, regardless of its quality or certificate of innovativeness. Ignoring the needs of teachers and the dynamics of schooling introduces a risk similar to what happened to instructional television. By denying the importance of television as a teaching / learning tools, educators failed to produce interesting programs, (Oguzor & Jacinta i, 2011).

Tourism is a highly fragmented and multi-faceted industry. What exactly comprises tourism can therefore be difficult to grasp. A proper understanding of the various activities concerning tourism as a major global phenomenon is however necessary for systematic planning curricula and development of course contents that cover the scope and breadth of the industry.

There is lacks coordination between industry and educational training institutions. Industry demand, for instance, is limited both in size and capacity to absorb tourism graduates. In addition, quite often the industry is dominated and controlled by entrepreneurs who do not possess any formal training and/or have a complete lack of appreciation of hospitality and tourism education and underlying theories, framework and concepts that should guide tourism as a major social and economic global phenomenon. (Mayaka & John, 2007)

**Conclusion/Recommendation**

The worry for development can only be attained if skill improvement is encouraged through provision of adequate computer and ICT facilities in teaching and learning of Hospitality and Tourism education and training in schools. These facilities will in turn equip the students through interaction, the students will equip humanity through demonstration of the learned skills in encouraging local production and finally the society will equip the nation with the desired manpower.

It is important, however, that programs and incentives are put in place to ensure that rudimentary needs are met, that particular emphasis exist to maximize the return of investments, and that evaluation and experimentation is simultaneously undertaken to guarantee that lessons are academic and fed back to develop the policy and motivation tools. At the same time, an increase in the number of instructors and adequate installation of facilities and paraphernalia for the Hospitality and Tourism education and training classes are attained.

**Reference**


