

USE OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY IN PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTHS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

One of socio-economic problems existing in Nigeria is unemployment among the youths. So, there is urgent need to encourage entrepreneurship among the youths to enable them become "job creators" and not "job seekers". A vital technology that can enhance entrepreneurship for sustainable development is computer technology, which has brought about existence of computer and the Internet. The paper dealt on the use of computer and the Internet in promoting entrepreneurship among youths for sustainable development in Nigeria. Discussions in the paper are: concept of sustainable development, promotion of entrepreneurship among Nigeria youths, relevance of computer technology, and application of computer system in fostering entrepreneurship among the youths. Computer system can promote entrepreneurship among the youths because it can: provide computer-based jobs, foster productivity, ease communication and boost intellectual acquisition. Certain recommendations are made to support the use of computer technology in enhancing entrepreneurship. The paper ended with a conclusion.

Key Words: *Computer, Internet, technology, entrepreneurship, Nigeria youths, sustainable development.*

Background to the study

It is an unfortunate situation in Nigeria that most youths who have graduated from higher institution are finding it too difficult to be employed in jobs. This implies that one of the socio-economic problems in Nigeria is unemployment. This unemployment issue indicates poor utilization of human capital in that human resource is the most vital resource in nation building. Thus, unemployment situation in Nigeria seriously affects national development.

There is urgent need for Nigeria to aspire at producing graduates who are not "job seekers" but "job creators." Such can be achieved through effective support towards entrepreneurship. Promoting entrepreneurship is a means of promoting sustainable development in a nation. Thus, education in Nigeria should support adequate exposure in entrepreneurship among the youths (students).

In this modern time, a useful technology that can enhance entrepreneurship for sustainable development is computer technology, which has brought about existence of computer and the Internet. Nwosu (2006) noted that computer system can promote productivity in entrepreneurship because it is a device that can enhance higher yield of goods and services, promote intellectuality of entrepreneurs, promote business communication in entrepreneurship and create technological awareness in entrepreneurship.

This paper focuses on the use of computer technology for enhancing entrepreneurship among youths for sustainable development in Nigeria. Issues discuss in the paper are: concept of sustainable development, promotion of entrepreneurship among Nigeria youths, relevance of computer technology, and application of computer system in fostering entrepreneurship among the youths. Certain recommendations are made in the paper and the paper ended with a conclusion.

Concept of Sustainable Development

One of great expectations in nation building is achievement of sustainable development. A nation becomes powerful and respected in all ramifications when there is effective utilization of a nation's human and natural resources to achieve sustainable development.

Ballara (1991) in Okoro (2005) viewed sustainable development as humanity's ability to survive by means of the rational use of renewable resources, by refraining from disrupting the societies and instead allow them to reach their potentials. World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) defined sustainable development as the development that meets the need of the present generation

without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In the same vein, Nwosu (2010) pointed out that sustainable development is advancement for the well being of people in a manner that is favourable to both the present and future generation. As noted by Onwudinjo (2010), the four broad objectives of sustainable development are:

1. Maintenance of high and stable levels of growth and development.
2. Social progress which recognizes the needs of every one.
3. Effective protection of the environment.
4. Prudent use of natural resources.

It can be deduced that sustainable development abhors improvement or development that disappears after a certain period of time. Rather, sustainable development is aimed at effective and efficient use of human and environmental/material resources for a continuous good quality of life in human society. To achieve sustainable development, technology is needed. Kolde (1992) in Ikponmwosa (2006) defined technology as the development and implementation of formats and formula as set out in blue prints, process charts, material specification, and the operating instructions required for the manufacture of products and/or services plus the technical and managerial capabilities required to operate the facilities. Technology is the knowledge of scientific principles applied to practical tasks with the purpose of reducing human suffering or for improved productivity (Obianwu and Azubuike, 1994).

Nigeria cannot talk of national development without strong focus towards sound acquisition and utilization of technology. Adedeji (2004) opined that developing countries need employment of technological skills, technical training and technical education in order to catch up with the current trends of the global economy and development. Adequate exposure to technology can make the youths be creative and innovative, thereby being able to engage in entrepreneurship for socio-economic advancement and sustainable development. So, imparting technological consciousness to Nigerian youths is a means of promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship for achievement of sustainable development.

Promotion of Entrepreneurship Among Nigeria Youths

One of the factors for socio-economic problems (eg unemployment) in Nigeria is poor state of technological ingenuity and usage in the nation. Nwosu (2005) asserted that it is unfortunate that the value system in Nigeria is satisfaction of money instinct but a value system that gears towards technological development will be a fertile ground for economic progress. There is need to promote entrepreneurship among youths by exposing them to technology for self-reliance and sustainable development in Nigeria. In other words, in this era of economic

depression/unemployment, an essential area where technology should be applied by the youths for sustainable development in Nigeria is entrepreneurship.

The youths are leaders of tomorrow and majority of them are students. The youths are agents for culture preservation and national development. Based on the role of the youths in the family and society, they should be exposed to sound education. Maduewesi (2005) acknowledged that the youths occupy strategic position in political, social and economic processes and reforms. Nwosu (2005) noted that it is because of the position of youths in the family and society that urges investment on them by educating them. By educating the youths, they are “prepared to participate in the productive activities of that society as well as being equipped for the future of that society” (Nwuzor and Ocho, 1988). An essential education for the youth is exposing them to entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship pertains to being self-employed or “job creator”. Entrepreneurship can be said to be establishment of business in which one is self employed for the purpose of making a living and solving people's needs. Osuwa (2005) noted that entrepreneurship “involves the ability to set up a business enterprise as different from being employed. This ability should be acquired and should differ in some aspect from the abilities acquired to enable a person obtain paid employment.” Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully (Okenwa, 2005). A person who engages in entrepreneurship is called an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship signifies self reliance and so an entrepreneur is expected to acquire skills, ideas and managerial abilities needed for effective and efficient running of the business enterprise.

It is an axiom that entrepreneurship creates employment opportunities. It is unfortunate that a lot of youths in Nigeria are unemployed. With focus on technology for self-reliance, various organizations and business centres can be created and then the youths can be engaged in various works for socio-economic development. Nwosu (2005) pointed out that “employment helps to generate income for a happy and healthy living as well as prevention of idleness that is associated with social vices. Unemployment leads to emotional (psychological) disturbances and distress; and social vices inhibit socio-economic development”. In fact, entrepreneurship should be of great value in Nigeria, especially among the youths. To enhance entrepreneurial activities, entrepreneurs (the youths) should adequately explore the great values which computer technology offers.

Relevance of Computer Technology

Computer technology has made it possible the production and use of computer system. Computer system is an electronic device that makes works easier for man by accepting input data and, based on set of logical instruction called programme, processes the data with high speed and accuracy to generate an output result (Anigbogu, 2000; Chijioko, 2004). Nwosu (2004) pointed out that computer system has important features that make it serves as a useful technological device: computer operates at a fast speed and gives accurate result; computer is reliable for it does not experience fatigue and so can perform several functions for a long time; based on the flexibility of computer, data fed into it can be adjusted; and computer does a neat and nice work.

The use of computer system in entrepreneurship can draw an entrepreneur close to technology. Computer being a technological system can bring technological consciousness among an entrepreneur that uses it. Without a cling to technology, it is very hard for any society to develop. Technology is vital in achieving progress in a society for it plays a vital role in alleviating the environmental problems of man (Nwosu, 2004). It then implies that for Nigeria to develop there is urgent need to be technologically conscious.

Proper utilization of computer system by entrepreneur is a means to boost technological awareness in Nigeria. It is an axiom that computer technology is widely used in almost every aspect of human endeavours. As noted by Okwoche (2004), computer system is fast replacing manual tasks worldwide and so it is an essential technological device that has helped man in his activities towards personal welfare and national development. In fact, computer system can be seen as a vital technological device for enhancing productivity in entrepreneurship.

Application of Computer System in Fostering Entrepreneurship among the Youths

For entrepreneurship to be appreciable there should be adequate productivity. As opined by Nwachukwu (1988), productivity can be seen as a measure of the output that results from a given resource input at a given time; the nature of technology determines the level of productivity and improved technology increases productivity.

In this modern time, computer, as a prominent technological device that is so much helpful in human endeavours, can be used to make job easier for the entrepreneur be it entrepreneur with knowledge of arts, social-sciences, or pure and applied sciences. It can then be said that computer system can enable a competent entrepreneur to produce higher yield of satisfactory products (goods and services) in a short/stipulated time. As posited by Ekemezie (2003), the purpose of computer

system is to speed up problem solving and increase productivity. Anigbogu (2000) acknowledged that computer is a kind of machine which mankind can use to solve different types of problems much more easily.

There are some employment opportunities which the knowledge and utilization of computer can provide for the youths. The youths with computer literacy can work as a computer operator, computer programmer, computer engineer/technologist/technician, computer tutor (lecturer, teacher), computer consultant, computer vendor, or computer manager. It should be recalled that employment provides income for satisfactory living and prevention of idleness that can lead to social vices which jeopardize socio-economic and sustainable development.

Computer can be useful to youths in entrepreneurship by serving as a storage and communication device. It is obvious that the major purpose of communication is to transmit information. It should be noted that without information, no meaningful development could take place in any human activity and so information is needed to achieve effective and efficient entrepreneurship. It then implies that adequate communication is dearly needed for development of entrepreneurship among the youths. The use of computer system can promote entrepreneurship because computer system, by its nature, can store vital information which can be retrieved for future operation to continue or enhance the jobs engaged by the youths.

Computer system has made the existence of Information Technology possible; so, in this present era there exist the Internet that has made the world a global village. With the Internet serving as the greatest computer network and integration (linking) of various computer networks in the world, youths can communicate with one another from any part of the world, to enhance productivity, irrespective of the geographical distance. For instance, with the use of the Internet, entrepreneurs can communicate through electronic mail (E-Mail). E-mail provides a fast, economic convenient means of sending message to people and receiving messages from them. Also, Internet makes it possible to have business activities such as E-commerce, E-conferencing, etc. which the youths can use to promote entrepreneurship for sustainable development. In fact, Internet enhances business communication needed for socio-economic activities in society.

Entrepreneurs can get their productivity improved through intellectual enhancement. Education is a medium for intellectual enhancement. Nwosu (2006) view intellectual enhancement as acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills that assist one perform effectively and efficiently. The ability of citizens to have access to sound and qualitative education helps in manpower development of any nation (Okwoche, 2004). Fortunately, computer system is one of the technological devices

that can be used for educational purpose to enhance entrepreneurship among the youths. As pointed out by Nwosu (2008), computer system has proved to be a vital electronic resource for intellectual enhancement. Entrepreneurs need to have sound education because education is a means of adding more capital in human development and so increase in productivity. There exists educative software, bearing information that relates to entrepreneurship, which can be displayed using computer system. If entrepreneurs in business are educated on the use and educational importance of computer system, they will be more equipped for activities in entrepreneurship.

The use of Internet can boost entrepreneurship because it has educative value. The use of Internet to obtain and exchange information needed for socio-economic development has an educative value. Internet makes it possible to download information of any sort from websites, get news update and be aware of technological innovations.

Conclusion

As regards unemployment (lack of employed/paid job) among youths in Nigeria there should be orientation and thinking towards how to be "job creators" instead of being "job seeker". Focusing on self-reliance by being job-creators will enable the youths contribute in the development of Nigeria. Thus, it is essential to encourage entrepreneurship among youths in Nigeria.

Based on the importance of technology in human society, it can be employed to enhance entrepreneurship among the youths. Computer system can serve as a useful product of electronic technology which can be used to promote entrepreneurship. Computer system can enhance entrepreneurship among the youths because it can: provide computer-based jobs, encourage productivity, ease communication and enhance education (intellectual acquisition).

Recommendations

Based on the usefulness of computer technology in enhancing entrepreneurship among the youths, the followings are recommended:

1. Youths should be given effective education in school and in society on the use of computer in human endeavours.
2. There is need for youths to develop deep and great desire in acquisition of computer literacy.
3. Government should create education pertaining to computer system.
4. Government, organisations and individuals should create an enabling environment and computer centres for people, especially the youths, to acquire computer literacy.

5. All stakeholders in the training of the youths should support the acquisition and utilization of computer system by entrepreneurs (youths).
6. The youths should observe ethical conducts so as to avoid computer crime in the use of computer system for entrepreneurship.

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