ICT UTILIZATION FOR SOCIAL STUDIES DELIVERY

IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper articulated Information and Communication Technology utilization for social studies delivery in secondary schools in Nigeria. The 'why' of ICT utilization in c delivery were highlighted and the possible challenges in the use of ICT in social studies delivery in secondary schools were also articulated. Finally, the paper proffered remediation package that would encourage the use of ICT in social studies delivery in secondary schools in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: ICT utilization, Social Studies

INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) utilization is becoming the trend in Nigeria's educational system for service delivery especially in secondary schools (Upper Basic Education level schools (JSS 1-3) and Senior Secondary Schools (SS 1-3). With ICT becoming an innovative teaching method in social studies, social studies service delivery with the utilization of ICT is gradually becoming very effective. Even though Adesote and Fatoki (2013:2155) noted that "Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a force that has changed many aspects of human endeavours: The impact of ICT on various fields of human endeavour such as medicine, tourism, business, law, banking, engineering and architecture one/two or three decades has been enormous. But when one looks at the field of education, there seems to have been an uncanny lack of influence of ICT and far less change than other fields have experienced". This is because of the ignoring strategy the Nigerian government has melted on the Nigerian education. The issues on how to develop, improve and advance Nigerian education and make it acceptable all over the world have become uppermost in the mind of Nigerians and the Nigerian government. This is why Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2015:108) succinctly averred that "one good thing that is continuously occurring in the developed world, and which it has taken the lead in its instrumentality in scientific and technological breakthrough otherwise referred to as automation. This innovation or technological development is varied and has had a spillover effect on the schools with special emphasis on the teaching-learning process that is continuously yawning for improved performance". They further noted that "one of these innovations – novel, change, new practices geared at the efficacious instructional delivery system in social studies is…" Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

It is true that social studies delivery system in secondary schools is only specific to Upper Basic Education level schools (JSS 1-3), but its impact would give a carry over effect on delivery of other subjects in the senior secondary schools. This writing is capped with the responsibility of unraveling how ICT utilization for social studies delivery in secondary schools has positively or negatively affected the teaching and learning of social studies in Nigerian schools.

Conceptual Clarification

Every writing is unique in one way or the other. This is because of the way the writer or writers try to make their opinions or views public, it may also be the way the readers understand what has already been written or the common level of understanding between the writer(s) and the reader(s).

According to Mezieobi, Jerry-Alagbaoso and Nnoruem (2016:64) "the purpose of every write-up is to make an impact in the lives of the readers. This impact can only be achieved if the readers understand the concepts that make up the write up". For Mezieobi and Nwosu (2016:88) "no writing is complete unless the readers understand its concepts to a large extent". For readers to understand the intentions of the writer, the writer needs to clarify the items that make up the write-up. For this purpose, several concepts need clarification. They are: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), utilization, social studies, delivery and secondary school.

The Term: Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

This is a concept that cannot be left out in all human endeavours in contemporary times. ICT is a classification term. According to Lallana and Margaret (2003:4), ICT is defined as "a broad field encompassing computers, communication equipment and the services associated with them". For Bhati, Bhati and Kulvia (2011) ICT means "the use of all conceivable digital media in managing and processing information". Heathcote (2000:330) averred that ICT means "a term which is currently used to denote a wide range of services, application, and technologies, using various type of equipment and software often running over telecom networks". Ogunsola (2005:3) referred to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as "an electronic-based system of information transmission, reception, processing and retrieval" Ihebereme (2008:172) noted that ICT is "the whole range of facilities or technologies involved in information processing and electronic communication…"

Define Utilization

Utilization simply means the act of using a thing, a concept, and an idea and so on for a purpose or reason.

The Concept: Social Studies

According to Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2015:2), social studies is an "integrative field of study which probes man's symbiotic relationships with his environments, endows man with the reflective or contemplative capacities, intellectual, affective, social and work skills, to enable him understand his world and its problems, and to rationally solve or cope with them for effective living in the society". For Nwoji (2006:1) social studies are referred to as "a discipline or field of study that deals principally with human beings interacting with one another and with their environment". Akude (2007:4) sees social studies as a filed of study "concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, the development of social and inquiry skills, and the improvement of social attitudes and behaviour". For the purpose of this paper, social studies can be seen as a discipline or course of study that exposes individuals to the extent interaction between them (the individuals) and their environment can go a long way in influencing their standard of living and whether or not they become comfortable in their environment through their strategies of solving their numerous societal problems.

Define Delivery

Delivery is the act of handing over something from one individual to another. For the purpose of this paper, delivery would mean the act of conveyance of social studies to social studies students in secondary schools.

Secondary School: Meaning

Secondary school means that school in-between the primary school and university/tertiary institution of learning. In Nigeria, the secondary school is made up of Upper Basic Education level schools (JSS 1-3) and Senior Secondary Schools (SS 1-3). The secondary education is acquired in preparation for attending the tertiary institution of learning be it a university, polytechnic or college of education.

Why ICT Utilization for Social Studies Delivery in Secondary Schools?

Social studies are becoming a complex subject in secondary schools. This is because of its balkanization into civic education, national values and religious studies. Social studies complex nature can also be attributed to the fact that social studies is only offered as a subject in the Upper Basic Education level schools (JSS 1-3) and not in the Senior Secondary Schools (SS 1-3). The reason for this is yet to be unfolded. Even with the above, innovations are still being accepted in the teaching and learning of social studies in secondary schools and beyond. The use of ICT in the teaching and learning of social studies has become one important innovation that everyone in social studies both teachers and students of social studies have wholeheartedly accepted. Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2015:108) explained that "one good thing that is continuously occurring in the developed world, and which it has taken the lead in, is its instrumentality in scientific and technological breakthrough otherwise referred to as automation. This innovation or technological development is varied and has had a spillover effect on the schools with special emphasis on the teaching-learning process that is continuously yawning for improved performance. One of these innovations – novel, change, new practices geared at the efficacious instructional delivery system in social studies is" Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

It is important to look at the usefulness of ICT in the delivery of social studies in secondary schools in Nigeria. The followings are the 'why' of ICT utilization in social studies delivery.

First, the use of ICT in teaching social studies can boast the interest of students and catch their attention. This means that teaching and learning social studies can spur-up the interest and attention of the learners to the lesson in question.

Second, the utilization of ICT in social studies delivery would make abstract issues or topics in teaching and learning process concrete. This is especially when ICT is used as an instructional aid. Torruam and Abur (2013:513) noted that "the use of ICT-driven instructional aids in teaching and learning process makes learning real, practical and more permanent to the learners". This is important because concretizing abstract lessons draws the lesson closer to the students (contextualization).

Third, every teaching and learning can be made effective and efficient only when communication between the teacher and the student is effective. Utilizing ICT in teaching and learning of social studies in secondary schools make communication extremely effective, efficient and appropriate.

Four, appropriate feedback can be given to secondary school social studies students through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning of social studies. Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2015:112) averred that "there is appropriate feedback which may not only point to a student's deficiencies; or low achievement but also makes the student look out for performance remedy".

Five, according to Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2015:112), "computer has learner diagnostic capacities". So one can boldly note that the use of ICT in teaching and learning social studies in secondary schools is germane.

Six, the utilization of ICT in social studies delivery helps the social studies teacher to carry so many students along at the same time. Torruam and Abur (2013:514) detailed it as "use for mass instruction and taking care of a wide audience".

Seven, social studies effective teaching and learning have to do with sourcing of sufficient and authentic information. ICT usage in social studies delivery provides the social studies teachers and students with meaningful and useful information which keep them (the social studies teachers and students) abreast with happenings and innovations in the society.

Eight, Torruam and Abur (2013) mentioned that ICT usage in social studies delivery can help in continuity of reasoning and coherence of thought. This is important to avoid distraction and causing confusing in the social studies learners.

Nine, with the use of ICT in social studies delivery, the teacher can attend to several teaching activities at the same time. This implies that saving time is one of the reasons why use of ICT is important in social studies delivery. Thus Emma and Ajayi (2006:3) noted that "figurative speaking…enable the teacher to be in more than one place at a time and to address several issues at a time".

Ten, ICT as a trend in teaching and learning of social studies can be used to make every teaching method effective. It can be adopted in every social studies method, technique or strategy. Torruam and Abur (2013:514) succinctly pinpointed that "the teachers of social studies perfect not only their methods of teaching but also perfect contents and situations (activities) to be taught".

Eleven, promotion of a cordial relationship between the secondary school's host community and the secondary school itself is an important reason why ICT is used in teaching social studies. This is because the secondary school can give authentic information to or about the community through ICT. Members of the community can also be allowed to use the school's ICT facilities in their training, presentations, town hall meetings and so on.

Possible Challenges in the Use of ICT in Social Studies Delivery in Secondary Schools

There are several challenges faced by the social studies teachers, social studies students and the secondary schools in the quest to use ICT in social studies delivery. Some of these challenges are:

First, Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2015:112) noted that "computers rob the teaching learning process of the affective, emotional characteristics associated with that interaction". Face to face interaction between the teacher and students create an affectionate and emotional bonding between the teacher and the students when ICT becomes the middle man, that bonding is nullified.

Second, majority of teaching staff do not know how to use ICT and ICT facilities. This is because in most cases, the schools and the schools' authorities do not give the teachers the opportunities to train in the use of ICT in teaching.

Third, expensive nature of computers, laptops, ICT accessories and facilities in Nigeria is a challenge. This is because most schools and teachers cannot afford ICT and ICT facilities. Nigeria does not manufacture ICT facilities. These facilities are imported to Nigeria and with the huge excess duties, the prices of ICT and ICT facilities including installation become very expensive.

Four, insufficient power supply is also a major challenge. This is because in case where the schools and teachers have access to ICT facilities, arrangement of a generating set needs to be made on regular bases. In some cases, even the level of current of electricity available cannot power available ICT and ICT facilities.

Five, security of the available ICT and ICT facilities in Nigeria's secondary schools is not guaranteed. Secondary schools can be bulged by hoodlums and the available ICT or and ICT facilities can be carted away in a twinkle of an eye.

Six, immorality has become the cause of fear in the use of ICT in teaching of social studies. Nigeria has experienced increased level of moral degradation in ICT usage. Students instead of using ICT for reading, information search and other positive ventures, indulge in immoral activities online like visiting, dating sites, watching pornographic movies, getting involved in terrorists' activities and so on

Seven, in schools where parents or the government provide ICT facilities to encourage the school, school management, teachers and students, the school finds it difficult to manage or maintain those available ICT facilities. This might be due to lack of sufficient funds, lack of revenue and so on.

Eight, interest connectivity is expensive in Nigeria. Also, schools can experience poor network supply depending on the area where the school is located or their internet provider (MTN, Airtel, Glo, Etisalat and so on).

Nine, using ICT and ICT facilities in social studies teaching and learning consumes time. Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2015:113) aptly noted that "the use of…in the social studies classroom takes a lot of time". On the same note, White (1987:46) also mentions that teachers and students who use ICT and ICT facilities in classrooms "spend a lot of time at it, in both preparation and class time".

Ten, some environmental issues can also pose as challenges to the use of ICT and ICT facilities in teaching and learning of social studies. Some of these environmental issues may include flood, earthquake, thunder, reptile invested areas, lead noise and so on.

The Way Forward

In as much as challenges must be experienced, the following should be done to encourage the use of ICT in social studies delivery in secondary schools in Nigeria:

- Sufficient ICT and ICT facilities should be provided in secondary schools.

- Teachers in social studies should be trained on how best ICT can be used in social studies delivery.

- Maintenance culture should be imbibed and adopted.

- Enough security should be provided for available ICT and ICT facilities in secondary schools.

- Adequate electricity supply should be made available at all times.

- Non-governmental organizations, parents, religions institutions and private individuals should be encouraged in the quest to assist secondary schools with provision of ICT and ICT materials like desktops, laptops, internet services and so on.

- Secondary schools should be located in places where internet connectivity would not be a problem.

- Students should be given orientation on how best to use ICT, what to do and what not to do with ICT facilities.

- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) usage should be introduced as a subject in Nigerian secondary schools.

CONCLUSIONS

ICT utilization for subject delivery including social studies delivery in Nigerian secondary schools should be encouraged. Teachers, students, the schools, the government and so on should be committed to making sure that ICT usage in teaching and learning becomes a necessity. This would give the teachers and students the opportunity for enriching their knowledge of ICT and compete favourably in the committee of secondary schools in the world. It is also worthy of note that the world as a globalized village has accepted ICT utilization in teaching and learning. This has also been accepted by various countries of the world with no objections. All hands need to be on deck for the institutionalization of ICT usage in subject (social studies) delivery in Nigerian secondary schools.

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