

Full Length Research

Influence of information and communication technologies on the Nigerian society and culture

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This paper examines the influence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the Nigeria Society and Culture. The paper also considers the correlation between “Information Age” or “Information Society” and societal good as well as cultural decadence. The study is descriptive in design and employs survey method with the use of questionnaire to gather its data. Three research questions were drawn from where a structured questionnaire was developed and administered. The results reveal that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) such as radio, television and internet are tools that could influence the society and culture positively and negatively. The paper recommends, among others, that various governments and its agencies should introduce sensitization campaigns and reorientation programmes where none existed and directed towards the return of discipline, probity and virtues into the society. Also, ensure information running at full speed on the internet and over the cable networks, ensuring that those trickling down our teenagers and children are reduced to the barest minimum.

Keywords: Influence, Information, Communication, Technology, Society, Culture

INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) is an indispensable part of the contemporary world. In fact, culture and society have to be adjusted to meet the challenges of the information age. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a force that has changed many aspects of people's ways of life.

Considering such fields as medicine, tourism, travel, business, law, banking, engineering and architecture, the impact of ICT in the past two or three decades has been enormous. The way the fields operate today is vastly different from the way they operated in the past. But if one looks at education sector, there seems to have a little impact of ICT utilization and far less change, than other fields have experienced. However, a lot of people have attempted to explore this lack of activity and influence (Soloway and Pryor, 2007; Collis, 2002). The pervasive influence of ICT has brought about a rapid technological, social, political and economic transformation, which has paved way to net work society, organised around ICT. The society and culture has not been unaffected by the penetrating influence of information and communication technology.

The contemporary world is a one where every single

detail of our daily life is a reflection of what transpires across continent. In essence, a kind of “squeeze” feeling is currently being experienced by an increasing number of people over what they perceive as the dearth of privacy, of social values, of eroding norms, of tarnished mores and the gradual growth of decadence of the human society. Others argued on the contrary, that life has become more easier, the knowledge of the continents and political/economics upheavals/events and achievements at the fingertips of the larger global audience the minutes the event happened, and most importantly, they argue that this free flow of ideas, knowledge and information, unprecedented in the centuries before, had actually made man safer (Compaine, 2001). Whilst the former school of thought argue that these free flow of information heralds societal decadence and the spread of dangerous ideas, ideologies and decadent social and moral values, which is exported to the helpless global audience, thereby making living less safe, nasty brutish and short, the latter argue that the world today is a better place to be owing to those flow of information. As the arguments go back and forth, it was discern that all the issue raised was

necessitated by the rise, and rise of information and Communication Technology.

Barlow (2007), made the following proclamation in an online discussion group and on his web site: Governments of the industrial world, you weary giants of flesh and steel, I come from cyberspace, the new home of mind. On behalf of the future, I ask you of the past to leave us alone. You are not welcome among us. You have no sovereignty where we gather. You have not engaged in our great and gathering conversations, nor did you create the wealth of our marketplaces. You do not know our culture, our ethics, or the unwritten codes that already provide our society more order than could be obtained by any of your impositions.

Many years later, Barlow's claims do not have the same ring to them as they did in 2007, when the internet was the best "new, new thing" that was available in information and communication technology (ICT). Now governments worldwide are increasingly exploring the possibilities that these "new, new" technologies might have for their activities and operations. E-government and other ICT related terms are increasingly coming into vogue.

As a result of these developments, society has moved more fully into what has been termed 'the Information Age' or 'the information society', but the Internet is not the only ICT medium to be related to this change. Other communication tools such as mobile phones, the social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Badoo, Skype, instagram, yahoo messenger etc. and text messaging have also been used to create powerful and dynamic networks (Rheingold, 2002). To reiterate the point made earlier, while technology is a driving force in the way society operates it is the take-up and use that is made of technology that changes the way society operates and functions, rather than the technology itself. Computing pioneer Lyons (2006) used a piano analogy to capture this: pianists know that music is not in the piano. It begins inside human beings as special urges to communicate feeling the piano at its best can only be an amplifier of existing feeling", bringing forth multiple notes in harmony and polyphony that the unaided voice cannot produce. The computer is the greatest 'piano' ever invented, for it is the master carrier of representations of every kind.

Information and communication technology, otherwise known as ICT, play a crucial role in the rise and growth of job creation. It is argued that it adds values to goods and services, that it encourages many a government, economies and business to be more proactive, efficient, accountable and effective. Reid (2000) opined that all recent analyses point to the fact that economics, and business, that invest in research in a particular technology are those that benefit the most from this technology and its progress. Those that rely merely on knowledge such as experience, reason, authorities and empiricism or the knowledge developed by others

elsewhere, are ultimately left behind.

With the introduction of many-to-many communication, the Internet and the World Wide Web have become powerful, dynamic and unequalled information and communication tools that are being used more and more by millions of people around the world. As computers become a common feature in libraries, offices, the home, universities and so forth, more people become comfortable with using the Internet for all sorts of purposes. Governments have been no exception in this regard. This becomes the norm and ICT accepted as given without recourse to the ills and damaging consequences of its abuse. That abuse and its negative repercussion on the traditional African society in general and contemporary Nigerian society in particular, is the thrust of this study.

Statement of the problem

Information and Communication Technologies are inventions of the people by the people and for the people that describe human ability capability to better his world or to ease the standard of living. ICTs have put our world finally in our own hands. These technologies are the major propellants of the developing global culture. Though, they offer us a great opportunity to make our national appearance in the world scheme of things and have the potentials to repaint our image that was previously carved, drawn and painted badly by some biased sculptors/artists. Yet some see them as capable of or chest rating the extinction of our cultural values and as channels propelling the loss of our cultural values and the Nigerian society we use to have.

This study is specifically set out to critically enquire into some relevant issues revolving around the ICTs and their effects on the Nigerian society and culture. It also examines the advantages and disadvantages of Information Technology on the existence of the Nigerian nation and culture.

Research Questions

1. What are the Information Communication Technology that can influence the society and culture?
2. What are the impacts of Information and Communication Technology on the society and culture?
3. What are the influence of Information and Communication and Technology on the society and culture?

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the survey approach with the use of questionnaire which was developed from the research

Table 2. Item 1.

Question No.	Total Responses	Types of ICT	Favourable		Unfavourable	
			Fig	%	Fig	%
1.	270	Radio	270	100	-	-
	270	Television	270	100	-	-
	270	Internet	270	100	-	-
	270	All of the above	270	100	-	-
Total	1080		1080	400		
Average	270		270	100		

Table 2. Result of Questions 2 – 12

Question No.	Total Responses	Favourable		Unfavourable		Neutral	
		Fig	%	Fig	%	Fig	%
2	270	270	100	-	-	-	-
3	270	269	99.6	1	0.4	-	-
4	270	270	100	-	-	-	-
5	270	263	97.4	4	1.5	3	1.1
6	270	264	97.8	4	1.5	2	0.7
7	270	262	97.0	5	1.9	3	1.1
8	270	266	98.5	1	0.4	3	1.1
9	270	267	98.9	1	0.4	2	0.7
10	270	268	99.2	1	0.4	1	0.4
11	270	268	99.2	2	0.7	-	-
12	270	269	99.6	1	0.4	-	-
Total	2970	2936	1087.2	20	8	14	5
Average	70	267	98.8	1.9	0.73	1	0.5

questions earlier formulated. The target population for the study are the students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro. A total of Three hundred questionnaires were administrated on the respondents that were randomly selected from the population. Two hundred and seventy questionnaires were duly completed and returned. The sample size is therefore the Two hundred and seventy respondents that returned their questionnaires. The data collected through the questionnaires were calculated by simple frequencies and percentages.

Data analysis

This section is design to give and analyse responses to the research questions formulated for the respondents through the questionnaires administered. This section is important because the recommendations and conclusion would be drawn from it.

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Research Question 1

What are the Information and communication Technology (ICT) that can influence the society and culture of Nigeria? Question 1 was used to gather information

Table 1 shows that all the respondents agreed that radio, television and internet can influence the society and culture of the people of Nigeria. With all the respondents in favour, the research question is upheld.

Research Question 2

What are the positive effects of Information and communication Technology (ICT) on the society? Questions 2- 12 were used to gather information.

Table 2 shows that 98.8% of the total respondents were in favour, 0.73% were not in favour while 0.5% was

Table 3. Result of Question 13 -21

Question No.	Total Responses	Favourable		Unfavourable		Neutral	
		Fig	%	Fig	%	Fig	%
13	270	261	96.7	5	1.9	4	1.5
14	270	259	95.9	10	3.7	1	0.4
15	270	255	94.4	11	4.1	4	1.5
16	270	254	94.1	7	2.6	7	2.6
17	270	265	98.1	5	1.9	-	-
18	270	265	98.1	5	1.9	-	-
17	270	264	97.8	3	1.1	3	1.1
20	270	262	97	3	1.1	5	1.9
21	270	261	96.7	7	2.6	2	0.7
Total	2430	2346	96.5	56	2.3	26	1.1
Average	70	61	96.5	6	2.3	3	1.1

neutral. With an average of 98.8% in favour, the research question is upheld.

Research Question 3

What are the negative effects if Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the society? Question 13- 21 were used to gather information.

Table 3 shows that 96.5% of the total respondents were in favour, 2.3% were not in favour while 1.1% was neutral. With an average of 96.5% in favour, the research question is upheld.

DISCUSSION

Research Question 1 which says "What are the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that can influence the society and culture?" was upheld by all the respondents in Table 1. The result is not surprising because all the respondents agreed that radio, television and internet can influence the society and culture of the people of Nigeria.

Research Question 2 which says "What are the positive effects of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the study?" was upheld by 98.8% of the respondents in Table II. The result is not surprising because majority of the respondents agreed that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is playing a significant role in the development of Nigeria economy in the area of employment generation, foreign direct investment and private investment. ICT adds value to goods and services, makes business to be more productivity, innovation and entrepreneurship to flourish. It also helps to solve socio-economic problems and monitors crime in the society.

Information and Communication Technology (Internet) has reduced cost and improved communication between

government department and the public, increase efficiency and encourage greater citizen participation in government process. ICT has increased the ease and speed of social communication (instantaneous availability of data) and at the same time removes the problem of transportation; applies flexibility to almost any task that involves the creation, manipulation, and distribution in an organization.

In the academics, ICT helps lecturers reach out to colleagues in other parts of the world and keep them up to date with developments in their disciplines. It also promotes distant education at all levels through e-learning and allows students to surf for information/learning packages or download course materials through internet.

Research Question 3 which says "What are the negative effects of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the study?" was upheld by 96.5% of the respondents in Table III. The result is so because majority of the respondents agreed that global reliance to machines and robotics in work place is a serious contributor to unemployment. Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sometimes result to low output/productivity as users often swap office hours with addictive visits to social network website that have little or nothing to do with their work and this often promotes laziness. ICT is an instrument for defrauding, siphoning resources as well as hoodwinking unsuspecting victims.

Working with computer for a long period of time can be dangerous to health as it can lead to eye strain, irritated eyes and blurred vision. ICT has introduced crime into our society and does not respect national boundaries and borders as it breaks into the privacy of individual users and governments.

Conclusions

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) such

as radio, television and internet are tools that can be deployed to influence the society and culture. The positive effects of information and communication and technology on the society include: development of Nigeria economy in the area of employment generation, foreign direct investment and private investment. ICT is useful for job search by youths, helps productivity, innovation and entrepreneurship to flourish. It also helps to solve socio-economic problems and monitors crime in the society.

In the academics, ICT helps lecturers reach out to colleagues in other parts of the world and keep them up to date with developments in their disciplines. It also promotes distant education at all levels through e-learning and allows students to surf for information/learning packages or download course materials through internet. The negative effects of information and communication technology on the society include: is a global reliance to machines and robotics in work place is a serious contributor to unemployment while ICT is an instrument for defrauding, siphoning resources as well as hoodwinking unsuspecting victims. Working with computer for a long period of time can be dangerous to health as it can lead to eye strain, irritated eyes and blurred vision. ICT has introduced crime into our society and it has broken into the privacy of individual users.

The effects of information and communication technology on our culture include: disrespect for culture and tradition, unquantifiable damages to the norms and values of Nigeria, disrespect for traditional stools and relegation of indigeneous languages, rise of homosexuality, bisexuality, arose out of a long interrelationship with an alien foreign culture facilitated by ICT.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The Federal Government should ensure information running at full speed in the internet and over the cable networks, ensuring that those tricking down to our teenagers and children are reduced to the barest minimum.
- ii. The academic curricula of our institutions must be inundated with topics on Africa social values and ethics, and history.
- iii. The academic curricula of our institution should further be enriched to include more trades in entrepreneurship education so that graduated can be self reliant. This will keep them away from crimes.

iv. Our national television, radio and print media must be restructured in such a way that foreign influence be reduced to its barest minimum, via local content programmes.

v. The various governments must introduce sensitization campaigns and reorientation must be introduced where none existed and geared towards the return of discipline into society.

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