

**The Place Of Information And Communication Technology In The Effective Teaching And Learning Of History In The Nigerian Educational Institutions In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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**Abstract:** The main thrust of this paper is to critically examine the place of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the effective Teaching and Learning of History in the Nigerian institutions in the 21st century. It argues that the new Information and communication technologies of internet and multimedia which have led to positive impact in the field of education in most developed countries are still at infancy or not used at all in the classroom instruction in most developing countries (Nigeria inclusive). ICTs are potential powerful enabling tools for effective teaching and learning in educational institutions. Thus, the paper argues that the central role of ICT is to provide additional strategies that can be used to address major educational challenges being faced by teachers and students of History Nigerian educational institutions in the 21st century. The paper, therefore, concludes that the appropriate use of ICTs can positively influence and change traditional methods of teaching and learning of History in Nigerian educational institutions, thereby making the teaching and learning of History more concrete. The methodology adopted in this paper is qualitative and analytical utilizing materials from the primary and secondary sources.

**Keyword:** Information And Communication Technology, Effective Teaching And Learning, Educational Institutions

## **1. Introduction**

Information and communication technology (ICT) remains a major 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 among others over two or three decades has been enormous. A critical look at ICT and education reveals that there seems to have been an uncanny lack of influence of ICT and far less change than other fields have experienced. However, a number of scholars such as Soloway and Prior, 1996; Collis, 2002; Wagner, 2001; McCormick and Scrimshaw, 2001; Flecknoe, 2002 among others have attempted to explore this lack of activity and influence of ICT on education. For instance, according to Collis, though ICT has begun to have presence in education, its impact has not been well pronounced as in other fields (Collis, 2002). As the world is gradually moving speedily into digital media and information in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the place of ICT in education is becoming more and more significant. It has equally been argued that information and communication technologies (ICTs) can play a number of roles in education among which are developing the kind of graduates required in an information society; improving educational outcomes and enhancing and improving the quality of teaching and learning (Wagner, 2001; McCormick and Scrimshaw, 2001; Flecknoe, 2002). Garrison and Anderson (2003) argue that the application of ICTs in the teaching-learning process can enhance the quality of education in several ways such as increasing learner motivation and engagement, facilitating the acquisition of basic skills, and enhancing teacher training.

Therefore, since History is one of the major subjects being offered at both secondary schools and tertiary institutions such as Universities and Colleges of Education in Nigeria, its relevance and sustenance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century requires adequate application of ICTs like video tapes, television and multimedia computer software that combine text, sound and colorful moving images which can be used to provide challenging and authentic content that will not only engage the students/learners in the teaching-learning process but also make learning concrete. It is against this backdrop that this paper is divided into five sections. The first section deals with introduction and the methodology adopted in the paper; second section focuses on the concept and importance of teaching and learning of History in the Nigerian educational institutions; third section discusses the concept and challenges of ICT in Nigeria; the fourth section examines ICT and the effective teaching and learning of History in the Nigerian Educational Institutions in the

21st century while the last section is the conclusion. The methodology adopted in this paper is qualitative and analytical, utilizing materials from the primary and secondary sources.

## **2. Results And Discussion**

### **a. The Concept and Importance of Teaching and Learning History in the Nigerian Educational Institutions**

Several historians have put forward some definitions of History. It will be practically impossible to identify all these definitions. However, attempt would be made to limit ourselves to few definitions. As argued by E.H Carr (1954) history is the continuous interaction between the historian and his facts and an unending dialogue between the present and the past. Coolingwood (1973) defines history as the interpretation of traces or relics of the past in the light of the imaginary idea of the historian which is self-dependending, self-determining and self-justifying form of thought. This means that historians have access to the traces of the past in terms of relics, monuments and documents, but each historian interprets such materials according to his understanding and imagination (Osokoya, 1997). G Barraclough defines history as the attempt to discover, on the basis of fragmentary evidence, the significant things about the past. Arthur Marwick explains the definition of History from three distinct levels. First, History refers to the entire human past as it actually happened. Secondly history is man's attempt to describe and interpret the past. Thirdly, history is a systematic study of the past. J.B Bury explains that "History is science, no less, no more". Barnes defines History as the sum total of human activities in the past. According to J.F. Ade-Ajayi, History must be understood in its two-fold. First, as the reality of past events; and secondly, as the efforts of historians to capture or retrieve and interpret something of the reality. From these above definitions of History one can easily conclude that history though deals with human past, it requires analysis and interpretation of the past based on historical evidences, which are at the disposal of a historian.

Aside the meaning of History, another important aspect of the concept of History is that it is academic field of study being studied in most public and private Nigerian tertiary institutions, particularly, Colleges of Education and conventional Universities. Although it is a teaching subject in both Primary and Secondary Schools, it is an academic of study in

tertiary institutions. While History is now a compulsory subject in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools, it is an optional subject in the Senior Secondary Schools. At the Senior Secondary School level, History is being offered as a subject in International and National Examinations being organised by the West Africa Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) respectively. Also, History is one of subjects being offered at Advanced Level as well as at United Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), an examination being conducted by Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) for prospects candidates seeking tertiary education in the country.

At the tertiary level, History is being offered as an academic discipline. For instance, in most public and private Colleges of Education in Nigeria, History is combined with other disciplines. In other words, History is not offered as a single discipline. What we have most Colleges of Education in Nigeria are History and Social Studies, History and Geography, History and French, History and Economics, History and English, History and Yoruba, History and Islamic Studies, History and Christian Religious Studies, Primary Education and History so on. All these subject combinations with History are studied in places like Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, Tai Solarin College of Education, Federal College of Education, Kano, College of Education, Ilesa, College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti among others. In the University, at the undergraduate level, while History is being offered as a single honour degree (that is Bachelor of Arts Degree in History) in some universities such as University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Bayero University, Kano and Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, it is being combined with other disciplines (like Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Diplomatic Studies, History and Strategic Studies, History and International Studies, History and International Relations, History and War Studies) in some universities such as University of Lagos, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Osun State University, Osogbo, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Benin, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna and so on. At the postgraduate level, there are different specialisations in History such as Economic History, Social History, Constitutional History, Political History, Medical History, Islamic History, Diplomatic History, Military History, Administrative History, Cultural History and Gender Studies

Prior to the reintroduction of History into the Primary and Junior Secondary school curricula in 2018 by the Federal Ministry of Education through the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), the subject was initially being offered in both primary and secondary schools. However, due to the deliberate government educational policies of encouraging science subjects at the expense of arts subjects (History inclusive), History was replaced with Social Studies at the primary and Junior Secondary School levels and as well made an optional subject at the Senior Secondary School level. Its further marginalization by the Federal Government of Nigeria through the Federal Ministry of Education was equally made positive by the introduction Government as a teaching subject at the Senior Secondary School level.

The deliberate marginalization of History as a subject in the Nigerian secondary school curriculum was severally challenged by the Historical Society of Nigeria (the foremost Nigerian Professional Body set up in 1955). After several unsuccessful attempts made by the leadership of the body on the need for the government to understand why History as a subject should be given its pride of place in Nigeria's educational curriculum (Ogbogbo, 2011), a major breakthrough was recorded in 2018. In that year, the Federal Ministry of Education, did not just restore History as a teaching subject in both Primary and Junior Secondary School, but also was made a compulsory subject.

The reconstruction of past events depends on the availability of historical sources or sources of history. The sources of history are simply the working tools a historian uses in the reconstruction of past events. These sources of history are basic in historical studies. In fact, the quality of a historical work depends on the way the sources of history are collected and used. Since a historian does not direct access to the past because events happen and disappear and that what is left of the past are traces of or statements about the past, he has to rely on its sources as evidence in the reconstruction of the past (Adesote and Falade, 2020). Basically, the sources of history can be categorised as follows:

- 1) **Primary sources:** Primary sources of history are original or direct information. The primary sources are of two types. First, they consist of documents (written or printed) which are generated by the events such as annual reports, letters and memoranda, speeches, official reports,

court decisions, charters, constitutions, research reports and statements. Secondly, they comprise oral sources, which made up of both oral tradition and oral evidence. Oral tradition refers to historical information being transmitted from generation to generation through the word of mouth. Examples of oral traditions are folklores, songs, story, proverbs, legends, tales, wise sayings, eulogies and ballads of all sorts. Oral evidence deals with eye-witness accounts of the past, which is also, being transmitted by word of mouth. Oral evidence can also be referred to as oral testimony. It deals with events that are recent or contemporary (Adesote and Falade, 2020).

- 2) **Secondary sources:** Secondary sources are documentary evidences or written materials. They are textbooks, journals, monographs, periodicals (such as magazines, newspapers and newsletters), biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, encyclopedia and government publications.
- 3) **Tertiary sources:** Tertiary sources of history are aggregates of primary and secondary sources of history. They draw information from both primary and secondary sources. They include students' research works (such as long essays, projects, dissertations and theses), bulletins, memoranda, manuals, directories, guide books and fact books.
- 4) **Archaeological Evidence:** Archaeology deals with the study of material remains (such as fossils relics, artifacts and monuments) of past human life and activities. These materials are very important to historians in the reconstruction of historical events. For example, the study and interpretation of material remains generated by the archaeologist can tell historians about the past in terms of early human settlement, the beginning of economic activities such as agriculture and trade; relationship between different communities and so on. Archaeological discoveries and excavations have taken place all over Nigeria. Some of the excavation sites include Igbo-Ukwu in Anambra State; Iwo Eleru in Ondo State; Kaura Namoda in Sokoto State; and the Nok culture area in Plateau and Kaduna States. Archaeology through its dating system like radio carbon dating helps to throw more light on dates (Adesote and Falade, 2020).
- 5) **Linguistic evidence:** Linguistics deal with the study of languages and their relationship. Linguistics can tell us about culture change and

contact in the past. Linguistic evidence can help to throw light on routes of cultural diffusion or ancient political and economic relationships between communities. Examples on this are Hausa loan-word in Yoruba (such as Onion- *Alubosa*); and Igala words in Idoma litanies. One important historical information that can be obtained from linguistic evidence is information about common origins (Adesote and Falade, 2020) .

- 6) **Geographical evidence:** Geographical evidence refers to information obtained from the environment. For example, topographical and climatological data could provide useful historical information.

Undoubtedly, the importance of History in nation building process cannot be overestimated. History does not only serve as a bedrock for other disciplines, but also provides man with the understanding of the process of change and continuity in human society. Notable among the importance of teaching and learning History in the Nigerian educational institutions includes the following:

- 1) The teaching of History enables the next generation to know about themselves and their environment. Through the teaching of history, people know their places of origin, cultures, and the nature of internal and external relationships that had existed in the past.
- 2) We teach history for the purpose of promoting national consciousness. The teaching of history makes us to know the origin and historical development of our country. It accounts for the contributions of heroes and heroines in the socio-economic and political development of the nation. This creates in us the spirit of national consciousness, identity and patriotism.
- 3) The teaching of history plays important role in fostering national unity and integration. Through systematic study of history, people would know the nature of interaction and interrelationship among the various tribes and ethnic groups in the nation. This fosters the spirit of unity and togetherness among the citizens.
- 4) The teaching of history helps to understand the process of change and continuity in human society. Human affairs in Nigeria have passed several historical periods, namely pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods.

- 5) We teach history in order to inculcate in the people the habit of not accepting explanations on their face value. There is the need to find out the roots of happenings in order to have better understanding before passing judgment.
- 6) We teach history for the purpose of learning about ancient cultures and civilizations, great warriors and ancestors, heroes and heroines, kingdoms and empires. The contributions of great state and empire builders like Oduduwa in Ile- Ife; Jaja of Opobo; Queen Amina of Zaria; Bayajjida in Hausaland and so on were learnt through the teaching of history.
- 7) History teaches specific lessons, which could be moral. There are a lot of moral lessons that can be learnt from studying history. It enables one to learn from the pitfalls of the people of the past and around them. Hence, history serves as a teacher for the future.
- 8) History promotes the habit of critical examination of situations and invariably offers opportunity for a special intellectual experience which sharpens the imagination and deepens one's knowledge about the developments of the society.
- 9) It inculcates in the people the habit of not accepting explanations on their face value but to identify the roots of happenings thereby promoting better understanding (Adesote and Falade, 2020).

#### **b. The Concept and Challenges of ICT in Education in Nigeria: An Overview**

The concept of ICT has been viewed by scholars and researchers from different perspectives. The term information and communications technology (ICT) was introduced in the early 1990s, which replaced information technology (IT) as a result of recognition of the communicating abilities and facilities offered by the computer. Meanwhile, while some people adopted the term ICT, those in the higher education used the term communication and information technology (C and IT) (Salau, 2005). According to Clark, ICT covers a whole range of applications, techniques and systems (Clarke, 2006). Lallana and Margaret (2003) postulate that ICT “refers to a broad field encompassing computer, communications equipment and the services associated with them.” In other words, ICT is not just considered as applications and systems, but



also as skill for life. Thus, it is viewed in line with literacy and numeracy as a fundamental skill that every individual needs so as to live “confidently, effectively and independently in a modern or contemporary society (Clarke, 2006). ICT is also seen as a key skill for learning different subject areas (Tanner: 2003 and Kennewell 2004). This perspective of ICT as a skill for life informed its introduction into the school curriculum initially in the developed countries (Akudolu, 2007).

Significantly, ICT has three positions in the curriculum namely, learning about ICT, learning with ICT and learning through ICT. While learning about ICT means to ICT as a subject of learning in the school curriculum, learning with ICT focuses on the use of ICT as a major means to facilitate effective instruction or communication (Akudolu, 2007). Pelgrum and Law (2003) equally shared this perspective and maintained that “learning through ICT means to integrate ICT as an essential tool into a course/Curriculum, such that the teaching and learning of that course/curriculum is no longer possible without it”. Based on this argument, one can argue that ICT can be an instructional medium or a source for learning. It can also be integrated in the learning process so that learning takes place through the learner’s interaction with the facilities or technologies. Consequently, ICT in education can be considered as discipline, resource and key skill. Within these three broad areas, ICT offers enormous benefits to effective teaching and learning in educational institutions. This is because ICT education helps to equip learners with concrete knowledge and skills (Akudolu, 2007).

Generally, recent report showed that the readiness of ICT in the Sub-Saharan Africa is still very low with most countries experiencing strong lags in connectivity due to inadequate development of ICT infrastructures. While the developed world continues to witness development of ICT, sub-Saharan Africa is still lagging behind due to poor quality services (Global ICT Chart Report: Guardian, Friday April, 2012 p.6). As indicated in the report, African countries were ranked on the global ICT Chart. For instance, while Nigeria was ranked 112th on the global ICT Chart, other countries in the African continent such as Mauritius, South Africa, Rwanda, Botswana, Kenya and Senegal were ranked 53rd, 71st, 82nd, 89th, 93rd and 100th respectively (Guardian, Friday April, 2012 p.6). The report also showed that African countries suffer from severe weaknesses in

all components of the index of ICT, which included poor connectivity caused by expensive and poor quality ICT infrastructure, very low levels of basic skills and a weak framework for technology (Guardian, Friday April, 2012 p.6). Undoubtedly, several of factors have contributed to reasons why the use of ICT in most educational institutions in Nigeria is still very low. Notable among these factors are lack of funding to support the purchase of the technology, lack of training of teachers, lack of motivation on the part of teachers to adopt ICTs as teaching tools in the classroom instruction and so on.

### **c. ICT and the Effective Teaching and Learning of History in the Nigerian Educational Institutions in the 21st century**

There is a positive relationship between ICT and the effective teaching and learning of History in the Nigerian educational institutions. There is no doubt the fact that teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have developed within the framework of theory and practice. In this technological age, the application of information and communication technologies helps to make classroom instruction more effective and efficient. As argued by Alvin Toffler, “the illiterate of the 21st century, will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn” (Alvin Toffler, cited in Shikshak, 2009). According to Haddad and Jurich, (2002), there are four basic issues in the use of ICTs in education in the 21st century, namely effectiveness, cost, equality and sustainability. They pointed out that, in recent years, there has been an upsurge of interest in how ICTs most importantly computers and the internet can best be harnessed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education at all levels and in both formal and non-formal settings (Haddad and Jurich, 2002).

The place of ICT in the teaching and learning of History in the 21st century can be seen in its impact on teacher, learner and the image of history as a discipline. Conventional teaching method, which is still common today in most Nigerian educational institutions emphasises content. For many, teachers of history in particular have taught through lectures and presentations interspersed with tutorials and learning activities designed to consolidate and rehearse the content (Kamal and Banu, 2010). Meanwhile, contemporary settings are now favouring curricula that

promote competency and performance. In the developed countries, curricula emphasize capabilities and concerned more with how the information will be used than with what the information is. As argued by Stephenson, the moves to competency and performance-based curricula are well supported and encouraged by emerging instructional technologies (Stephenson, 2001). Such curricula tend to require: access to a variety of information sources; access to a variety of information forms and types; student-centered learning settings based on information access and inquiry; learning environments centered on problem-centered and inquiry-based activities; authentic settings and examples; and teachers as coaches and mentors rather than content experts. Otakhor emphasizes that for many years, teachers wishing to adopt competency and performance-based curricula have been limited by their resources and tools. However, following the proliferation and widespread availability of contemporary ICTs, many restrictions and impediments of the past have not only been overcome, but also removed (Otakhor, 2007).

Another place of ICT in the teaching and learning of History in the 21st century is the need for information literacy. In the 21st century, it has become imperative for educational institutions in Nigeria to ensure that graduates are able to display appropriate levels of information literacy, “the capacity to identify an issue and then to identify, locate and evaluate relevant information in order to engage with it or to solve a problem arising from it” (McCausland et al., 1999, p.2). The drive to promote such developments stems from general moves among institutions to ensure their graduates demonstrate not only skills and knowledge in their subject domains alone but also to acquire general attributes and generic skills. Traditional generic skills have involved such capabilities as ability to reason formally, to solve problems, to communicate effectively, to be able to negotiate outcomes, to manage time, project management, and collaboration and teamwork skills. The growing use of ICTs as tools of everyday life have seen the pool of generic skills expanded in recent years to include information literacy (Kamal and Banu, 2010). The impact of ICT on how students learn history is very important. Just as technology is influencing and supporting what is being learned in schools and tertiary institutions today, so also is it aiding the way students/learners are learning.

Also, as a result of the emergence of ICT in Education, there is a gradual move from content-centered curricula to competency-based curricula as well from teacher-centered form of delivery to student-centered form. Through technology-facilitated approaches, contemporary learning settings now encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. In the past, students have become very comfortable to learning through transmissive modes. Students have been trained to let others present to them the information that forms the curriculum. The growing use of ICT as an instructional medium is changing and will likely continue to change many of the strategies employed by both teachers and students in the learning process. Technology has the capacity to promote and encourage the transformation of education from a very teacher directed enterprise to one which supports more student-centered models which is manifested in the moves towards problem-based learning and increased the use of the Web as an information source (Kamal and Banu, 2010). The use of ICT in educational settings, by itself acts as a catalyst for change in this area. ICTs by their very nature are tools that encourage and support independent learning. Students using ICTs for learning purposes become immersed in the process of learning and as more and more students use computers as information sources and cognitive tools (Reeves and Jonassen, 1996).

It is significant to point out that the influence of the technology on aiding how students learn will continue to grow. For instance, the emergence of ICTs as learning technologies has coincided with a growing awareness and recognition of alternative theories for learning. The various theories of learning during the classical period pre-date the introduction of ICT into the school curriculum. The current theories of learning that hold the greatest sway today are those based on constructivist principles (Duffy and Cunningham, 1996). These principles posit that learning is achieved by the active construction of knowledge supported by various perspectives within meaningful contexts. In constructivist theories, social interactions are seen to play a critical role in the processes of learning and cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). In the past, the conventional process of teaching has revolved around teachers planning and leading students through a series of instructional sequences to achieve a desired learning outcome. Typically, these forms of teaching have revolved around the planned transmission of

a body of knowledge followed by some forms of interaction with the content as a means to consolidate the knowledge acquisition. Contemporary learning theory is based on the notion that learning is an active process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring knowledge (Duffy and Cunningham, 1996). The strengths of constructivism lie in its emphasis on learning as a process of personal understanding and the development of meaning in ways which are active and interpretative. From this perspective, learning is viewed as the construction of meaning rather than as the memorization of facts (Lebow, 1993; Jonassen and Reeves, 1996).

Finally, the application of modern technologies such as video tape, television, internet, CD tape and other multimedia would equally help to sustain and make History more relevant in the 21st century in our educational institutions. The study of History has gone beyond story telling of the classical period. History as a discipline is both broad in its coverage and content. It embraces the whole spectrum of human endeavors as could be seen in its various branches such as political history, constitutional history, business history, medical history, legal history, church history, cultural history, administrative history, Islamic history, military history, economic history, social history, diplomatic history, development studies among others (Adesote and Omojeje, 2011). This development has necessitated some scholars to argue that history is an Art, a Science or a Social Science. In all, the use of ICTs in the teaching and learning of History would help to make learning more concrete and practical. This would also change the perspectives of people about the discipline (who see the study of as History a dead issue rather than a living subject/discipline). The application of information and communication technologies of internet and multimedia would enable both history teachers and students of history to have access to images of historical figures in their real form, thus making teaching-learning process more concrete than abstract.

### **3. Conclusion**

The place of information and communication technology in education and training cannot be overemphasized. Its full integration in education helps to ensure quality education in various levels of education such as primary, secondary

and tertiary. Despite the fact that some educators do not support the introduction and adoption of ICT into the school curriculum, majority of educators strongly feel that ICT is the most valuable tool to overcome the problem being faced in the teaching-learning process. ICT has become a major key tool in acquiring, processing and disseminating adequate knowledge especially in the 21st century. In fact, its effective use has become an imperative tool for measuring development of a nation in the 21st century (Adedoyin et al., 2010). Today, the academics are now being challenged by the rapidly growing new information technologies of multimedia, internet, WWW and other virtual computer technologies, which demand changes in the styles, attitudes and skill towards information handling and dissemination. Therefore, as we move on in the 21st century, many factors are bringing strong forces to bear on the adoption of ICTs in the classroom instruction. As argued above, conventional teaching of History has emphasized content. Thus, contemporary settings are now favouring curricula that promote competency and performance which require appropriate use of ICTs. This is because ICT acts as a powerful agent that can change many of the educational practices.

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