ABSTRACT: This paper examines "the computer/ICT as an essential component of the school and its relevant to the management of higher education in Nigeria". The paper discusses how computer has become one of the basic building blocks of modern society. Noting how developed nations of the world have considered computer understanding as the basic skill and also part of the core of education. The paper discusses concepts of computer, ICT, school plant and management. The paper contains that computer is a very essential component of the plant by Quoting Duffy & Cunningham’s (1996) contemporary learning theory and also discusses the relevance of ICT on the management of higher education. The paper also discusses the benefits of ICT to education as noted in UNESCO. Then the challenges of using ICT in Education were also discussed. The paper recommended that, for the integration of ICT - driven Education in Nigeria, government should increase funding for the Education sector, so that the development of ICT can be achieved and the management of higher education should source for assistance from donor agencies and NGOs for the development of sound and functional ICTs in the institutions.

KEYWORDS: management, school plant, relevance, essential, ICT, higher education

1 INTRODUCTION

The computer as an essential component of the school plant and its relevance to the management of higher education is a welcome development. In developed nations of the world computer understanding and mastering the basic skills and concepts is now regarded as part of the core of education, alongside other cores, (Daniels, 2002). Computer has become within a very short time, one of the basic building blocks of modern society, and their application play a significant role in modern information management. The term computer was replaced by IT (Information Technology) near the end of the 1980s, signifying a shift from computing technology to the capacity to store and retrieve information. In 1992, there was an introduction of the term ICT (Information and
Communication Technology), when e-mail started to become available to the general public (Pelgrum and Law, 2003).

Information and communication technology is regarded as the combination of informatics technology with other related technology, specifically communication technology (UNESCO, 2002). There are various kinds of ICT products available such as internet services, teleconferencing, email, information and communication are of relevance to the school plant and education generally. A great deal of research has proven the benefits of ICT to the quality of education (Al-Ansari, 2006). Hence the management of education needs to be more focused on the use of technology to improve teaching and learning as a rationale for investment, since the use of computer systems in schools is built upon an understanding of the link between schools, learning and computer technology built upon an understanding of the link between schools, learning and computer technology.

2 CONCEPTS OF COMPUTER, ICT, SCHOOL PLANT AND MANAGEMENT

These concepts have different meanings by different authors according to Aju and Usman (2014: p.136) "a computer system is basically an electronic machine that can carry out specified task by following sequence of instructions". Then UNESCO (2002) notes that information communication technology (ICT) may be regarded as the combination of informatics technology with other related technology, specifically communication technology. In support the computer can be defined as an electronic device that is programmed to receive messages known as data (input) and acts on this message following instructions and sends out feedback (output) as accurate information, while ICT as the name implies refers to the act of informing and communicating through modern technology.

Akpakwu (2012: P.177) defines the school plant "as the school site, buildings, equipment and playgrounds which are designed to facilitate effective teaching and learning, and also enhance the physical and emotional needs of staff-students and the general public". Usende (2007) also sees school plant as the structure in schools, the areas where the school is built, the physical facilities, the sports equipment that promote teaching and learning. Therefore, the school plant can be defined as consisting of all physical educational facilities which aid the teaching-learning process.

Management on the other hand is viewed by Durosaro (2012: p.55) as "what you do when you are planning, programming, directing, regulating, financing, staffing, equipping, controlling (personnel, output and time), conducting meetings and communicating with others in an organization to ensure achievement of set goals". (Hersey and Blanchard as cited in Barasa 2007, p.2) on the other hand defines management "as a process of working..."
with and through individuals and groups of people to accomplish organizational goals”. Therefore, management is seen as the planning and coordination of both human and material resources towards achieving organizational goals. The organization involved is higher education, thus higher education management involves defining and delegating responsibilities and authority, as well as, establishing relationships for enabling people to work effectively together for college goal achievement, (Obi as cited in Adeyemi and Asere, 2003).

3 COMPUTER AS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF THE SCHOOL PLANT

The computer is a vital component of the school plant since in the words of Syed (2014) computers have the potential to innovate, accelerate, enrich and deepen skills to motivate and engage students, to help relate school experience to work practices, create economic viability for tomorrow's workers, as well as strengthening teaching and helping schools change. This is also in line with Reeves and Jonassen (1996) as they argue that the use of ICT in educational settings, by itself acts as a catalyst for change in this domain. Computers by their nature are devices that promote independent learning, encouraging students to become engrossed in the learning process.

On the other hand the integration of information and communication technologies in schools can help revitalize teachers and students, (Oliver, 2000). To this regard the teaching-learning process has become an act of constructing knowledge through interaction. This is in line with contemporary learning theory of Duffy & Cunningham (1996) which states that "learning is an active process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring knowledge, and that instruction is the process by which this knowledge construction is supported rather than a process of knowledge transmission". Lebow (1993) also supports this theory by stating that in this domain learning is viewed as the construction of meaning rather than as the memorization of facts. Hence learning can be achieved through physical activity with the computer as an instructional facility.

On another note computers can be used to remove communication barriers such as that of space and time, (Lim and Chai, 2004), and again students have to access knowledge via ICT to keep pace with the latest developments (Plomp, Pelgrum and Law, 2007). The use of ICT can improve performance, teaching, administration, and develop relevant skills in the disadvantaged communities (Bottino and Sharma, 2003). Computers are therefore very relevant to the school plant since they don't only improve the quality of education but also are a tool for effective learning and efficient management.
4 RELEVANCE OF ICT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The relevance of ICT to the management of higher education is a welcome development. In order to increase the access to higher education for all and improve its reach to the remotest parts of the country contribution of open and distance learning facilities is on the increase, with the inclusion of developments in ICTs in higher education systems around the world (Ajit and Mete, 2012). The introduction of ICTs in higher education has so many implications for the entire education process especially in dealing with vital issues of management, quality, efficiency and effectiveness. People need to access knowledge via ICT to keep pace with the latest developments of information technology. According to (Adeyemi and Esere, 2013) it is clear that the possibilities and reach of information technologies can tear down territorial boundaries and make available equal information and knowledge of different categories as fast as possible. The field of educational research, students and other educational providers are able to exchange knowledge, research findings and opportunities through publications and other outlets available in countries around the world (Jegede, 2002). Again the introduction of ICT in higher education is a catalytic utility to technology, to improve performance and effectiveness in teaching, management and many other social activities (Cross St Adam, 2007). Therefore it is only through the integration of ICT in higher education that one teaches students to be participants in the growth process in this era of rapid change. ICT also allows for the creation of digital resources like digital libraries where students, teachers and professionals can access research material and source material from all over the world at anytime (Bhattacharya and Sharma, 2007). These facilities allows for sharing of scholarly material between academic and researchers and also aids management to effectively and efficiently manage information in institutions of higher learning. Lastly (UNESCO, 2002) enumerated the following as the benefits of ICT in education to the main stakeholders as shown in the Table 1:
Table 1: Benefits of ICT in Education

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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| Students    | Increased access  
             | Flexibility of content and delivery  
             | Combination of work and education  
             | Learner-centered approach  
             | Higher quality of education, and  
             | New ways of interaction |
| Employers   | High quality, cost effective professional development in the workplace  
             | Upgrading of employee skills, increased productivity;  
             | Developing of a new learning, culture;  
             | Sharing of costs and of training time with the employees  
             | Increased portability of training |
| Government  | Increased the capacity and cost effectiveness of education and training systems  
             | To reach target groups with limited access to conventional, education and training  
             | To support and enhance the quality and relevance of existing educational structures  
             | To ensure the connection of educational institutions and curricula to the emerging networks and information resources;  
             | To promote innovation and opportunities for lifelong learning |

*Source: UNESCO, 2002*

With these benefits it is important to note that ICT has enormous contributions to all levels of education and to the society at large.

5 **CHALLENGES TO USING ICT IN EDUCATION**

With the obvious and numerous benefits of using ICTs in education the introduction and use of ICTs also comes with challenges. Worthy of note is that the integration of ICTs into teaching-learning is still in its infancy stage, in Nigeria not to mention other challenges like
the high cost of acquiring, installing, operating, maintaining and replacing ICTs, (Ajit and Mete, 2012). Introducing ICT systems teaching in developing countries has a particularly high opportunity cost because installing them is usually more expensive in absolute terms than in industrialized countries, whereas, in contrast, alternative investments (e.g. building,) are relatively less costly, (UNESCO, 2009). Again UNESCO that:

The four most common mistakes in introducing ICTs into teaching and learning are: installing, learning technology without reviewing student needs and content availability; imposing technological systems from top down without involving faculty and students, using inappropriate content from other regions of the world without customizing it appropriately and producing low quality content that has poor instructional design and is not adapted to the technology in use.

Ajit & Mete also notes that there are several risks of using ICT in education, which need proper mitigation mechanisms, they include: increased transactional distance, the need for training all stakeholders in ICT and it encourages plagiarism against promoting individual skills. Also notable amongst the challenges of using ICT in education in Nigeria is the epileptic supply of power, and connectivity problems.

6 CONCLUSION

With the increasing growth of ICTs taking place all over the world, for the diffusion of knowledge and information, effective and efficient management and other social activities, ICT introduction and use in higher education is a long awaited for innovation, so government and the management of higher education should "play the ball" by acting towards integration of functional ICT in Nigeria's institutions of learning.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following points should be considered as recommendations for the integration of ICT-driven education in Nigeria:

Government should increase funding for the education sector, so that the development of ICT can be achieved. Management of higher education should
source for assistance from donor agencies and NGOs for the development of sound and functional ICTs in the institutions. Government and managers of higher institutions should set up ICT research institutes in Nigeria. Regular and continuous training in the use of ICTs for management, teachers and students should be done. Steady power supply should be ensured to facilitate the school plant.

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