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LIBRARY AND INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY FOR ENHANCING TEACHING, LEARNING AND RESEARCH IN HUMAN KINETICS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper explores the role of the library and modern Information Communications and Technologies (ICT) in promoting teaching, learning and research (TLR) in Human Kinetics Education in Nigeria. It shows the importance of this area of study not just to national but also to human development. The methodologies for TLR are shown to be dynamic depending on the constant changes taking place in the discipline. Curriculum change reflects the infusion of ICT into the discipline which subsequently affects its pedagogy and library collections. The paper also identifies the constraints to proper library and ICT integration to education, nay, Human Kinetics Education in a developing economy as in Nigeria.

Introduction

The educational terrain in Nigeria is taking on new dimensions in line with global best practices due to modernization. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is a term that includes any communication device or application, which encompasses radio, television, cellular phones, computers and networks, hardwares and softwares and satellite systems, as well as the various services associated with them such as videoconferencing. ICT revolution has impacted greatly on teaching, learning and research (TLR) in the Nigerian educational institutions, from the cradle to the tertiary, which is the highest level.

ICT engenders information generation, storage and retrieval which are cardinal tenets of librarianship. Knowledge management, the offshoot of information explosion, calls for special skills for optimizing information utilization. These are essential properties for the development of all disciplines and engagements within the educational sector. There seems to be no alternative to technology in engendering teaching, learning and research in the Nigerian educational system. Modern trends in TLR reflect societal acclimatization to the social, cultural and technological changes that must be embraced for things to progress smoothly (Rodriguez and Monroy Anton, 2011). The field of Human Kinetics Education is no exception in this development.

Human Kinetics Education in Nigeria deals with sports and physical education studies in Nigerian educational institutions. The TLR endeavours in this field cannot be extricated from other disciplines and treated in isolation. All fields and disciplines have taken up technological innovations to improve their curriculum and study. The use of computers and other information (ITs) technologies and multimedia equipment like radio, television and digital technologies have enhanced the general effectiveness of teaching, learning and research.

Significance of Human Kinetics Education to National Development

Human Kinetics can be described as the science of human movement, and studying the course has a lot of job opportunities in sports as fitness instructors, trainers and coaches. They can also be employed as physiotherapists, chiropractors and neuroscientists. Given the fact that a high percentage of youths in Nigeria participate in sporting activities just like in most other climes, Human Kinetics Education becomes a competitive field of study that should be given a pride of place within the educational structure of the country. This is aside from the fact that sporting activities are germane to human physical and mental development. Invariably, Human Kinetics Education leads to socio-economic development of a country.

In modern times, sports have very high economic value, not just for keeping the youths engaged and diverting their attention to productive activities, but also for empowering them through gainful employment, thereby making them contribute to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the nation and ensuring that they are kept away from acts that could be inimical or injurious to the national economy. Thus, sporting activities are instrumental to achieving national development goals. Indeed, Human Kinetics is committed to providing quality information and education products in the physical activities and the health fields that meet the needs of diverse patrons. Within the physical activity domain, recreational and organized sports are a major focus (www.humankinetics.com/aboutus). Quality physical education programmes are also needed to increase the physical competence, health related fitness, self-responsibility and enjoyment of physical activities for all students, and youths generally, so that they can be physically active.

Human Kinetics or physical activities and exercises can limit the incidence of risk of developing some infirmities, conditions or diseases including depression and anxiety while improving the quality of health and increasing life expectancy. It also provides a wide range of social related benefits to children and adults alike. For instance, it instils a stronger sense of self-worth and confidence in people.

Libraries and ICT as Resource Agents for Enhancing KHE in Nigeria

Libraries are information repositories. They aid knowledge acquisition through information harvesting and gathering, information organization and classification and, information dissemination and retrieval. According to Ola (2016), the proper use of library is the beginning of knowledge acquisition in any endeavour. He stated that libraries may have different objectives but one mission, which is to enhance learning, understanding and knowledge acquisition. The more libraries are appreciated and utilized, the more enlightened the users are likely to become in all fields of study.

ICT has revolutionized almost all spheres of human endeavour thereby making its use imperative for people to improve on their activities in order to achieve greater productivity. Information Technology has brought about radical departures to information processing and management over the years such that librarians and information managers must brace up for more surprises in the next few decades. Moreover, the challenge of modern day information seekers is spurring librarians to be even more ingenious and less apathetic in their approach to handling information (Ola and Adeyemi, 1998). ICT has made things easier these days. The Internet, for instance, has information on various topics depending on the use of appropriate search engines such as Google (Scholar; Plus), Bing, Ask Reeves, Yahoo, Wise Geek and several other databases.

New distribution technologies will make information more of a commodity belonging to everyone. As information becomes such a commodity, the value added by database vendors becomes more important; indeed the added value becomes the time sold. This value added can be timeliness of information, the speed of publication or more likely, it will become the intellectual effort in selecting and evaluating the information; the annotation or interpretation or even the aesthetic quality of information (Rosenberg, 1994). Interestingly, the job of the librarian, particularly those in the technical services division, and most especially, the cataloguer and indexer, is to provide the expected organization and needed access to information. They provide the gateway to required information. In doing this, ICT is the backbone and propeller.

The universal wind of change leading to the adoption of ICT in modern pedagogy generally and in research and learning is blowing across disciplines. Even though there are encumbrances in the effectiveness of ICT integration to TLR in developing countries, its potency for development is not controvertible. In fact, its adoption can only be the way to proceed. ICT utilization for TLR is becoming mandatory and its thrust cannot be taken for granted or with levity. According to Prajapati (2012) the illiterate of the 21st century cannot be people who do not know how to read and write but people who can learn, unlearn and relearn. Knowledge of ICT use must necessarily be a requirement for teachers in the 21st century. It definitely cannot be an option. For Rodriquez and Monroy-Anton (2011), the use of ICT is germane to the teaching profession as it is supposed to have a close relationship with any innovation that occurs in their areas of specialization. This unassailable and pervasive global consciousness and development has not left the KHE and sports discipline behind.

In the KHE, this trend becomes obvious in the improvement that is recorded in the methodology of the pedagogy. Media technologies like radio, television, social networks and other digital technologies like computers and Internet have been deployed to bring about the orchestrated improvement and change in TLR processes. According to Lockyer and Patterson (2007), technologies are widely acknowledged and used as educational tools for data collection as a basis for developing coaching methods and performance techniques within the broad spectrum of sport, physical activity and health. ICT has potential to offer an exciting and challenging environment through which learning is enhanced. It is imperative, though, that physical activity focus should be maintained. Human kinetics educators can utilize ICT through webpages that are for physical education departments, fitness assessment databases, content-based software programmes, multimedia systems and visual presentations. Digital videos, equipment and other fitness-related devices may be incorporated into daily assignments and unit planning (Mohnsen, 2008).

Different sports and physical education-related instructional technologies that can enhance the effectiveness of pedagogy in KHE have been identified in literature. According to Mohnsen (2008), computers, LCD projectors, digital video and cameras, audio equipment, heart rate monitors, pedometers, handheld devices like mobile phones, PDAs, GPS and video games consoles are ICT devices used commonly for KHE. It is apparent now that ICT is becoming inseparable from the TLR of Human Kinetics. In these processes, it is not only the content that is important but the materials in enhancing learning. Knowledge of technological content is a crucial construct that explains the technological skills that teachers should have for more effective teaching (Mishra and Koehlers, 2006). Literature is replete with facts that lend credence to the fact that the level of teachers' knowledge of the technological pedagogical content is a determining factor in their ability to successfully integrate technology into education. (So and Kim, 2009; Koh, Chai and Tsai, 2010).

The development of ICTs has led to significant changes in education; social, economic and political relations of modern society. Access to information and control over it contributes to the prevalence of soft power and education in the digital age (Lee and Tsai, 2008). The rapid metamorphosis in the learning, research and delivery of KHE due to ICT deployment in modern times is becoming quite overwhelming such that lecturers need to change their conception and style of teaching. This will be the impetus for motivating the students to learn. While asserting students confidence in learning the discipline, it will also assist them in gaining more through independent learning strategy. This paradigm shift in the teaching-learning structure will also catalyse the evolution of new teaching and learning resources which must, of necessity, be adequately provided for if the KHE process is to be holistic and complete. The shift from the traditional and conventional to the ICT-tailored teaching and learning techniques will affect curriculum and the change in curriculum through ICT adoption and utilization will influence the decision of library professionals on information provision in the discipline. The library collection has to reflect the innovations in this area of study.

Constraints to Library and ICT Utilization for Education in Nigeria

One of the main barriers to library and ICT utilization in Nigerian educational system is funding. Libraries in Nigeria are mostly bedeviled by paucity of funds. They are poorly funded and therefore unable to carry out most of their mandates. Libraries in Nigeria derive their funding from their parent institutions and as the financial situation of the institutions dwindle, so also does the allocation to the libraries. Libraries are usually the last unit to be favoured when budgets increase and the first to lose during depression (1980). Without funds, it is very difficult for libraries to be equipped with the necessary hardware and software infrastructure for smooth deployment of ICT to support TLR. The libraries will also not be able to subscribe to relevant electronic resources and databases in all the disciplines. Funding is also important for the acquisition of equipment and materials such as teaching aids and modern communication gadgets. Technology cost money for acquisition and maintenance. In the specific area of KHE, there is need for huge investment in electronic materials and databases in the areas of education, health related sciences, social sciences, physical sciences and others. Thus, subscription to databases such as HINARI, JSTOR, LAN-TEAL, MEDLINE, EBSCO-HOST, Research-4-Life, among others is imperative. Aside from this, funds are also required to acquire multimedia and communication technologies to support TLR in the discipline. Given that the discipline is tilted towards practical, a lot of funds are needed for the practicum materials.

In addition to funds, skilled manpower to handle professional chores is essential. Inadequate qualified personnel to handle ICT and multimedia technology affects the deployment of essential TLR to students in Nigeria. Computer scientists, analysts and engineers are needed to handle and maintain ICT equipment and/or gadgets and Internet resources. Qualified information professionals are also required to acquire and maintain relevant resources to support curriculum and pedagogy in the discipline. The professionals are to carry out the selection, acquisition, organization and dissemination of materials.

Infrastructural backbone for powering the library and ICT resources is important. Electricity, which is very epileptic in Nigeria, is needed to make technology function optimally. The porous performance of the power sector in Nigeria is of global knowledge. This has affected the Nigerian economy adversely and the education sector has gotten its fair share of this malaise. Library and ICT are very unlikely to function well in an environment where electricity is unstable. And, considering that the cost of alternative power generation through generating plants, cost of diesel and the maintenance of generators are astronomical, it cannot be cost-effective to use this for power generation. All these have combined to inhibit library and ICT utilization for education generally, and KHE in particular, in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The library and ICT have impacted greatly on the teaching, learning and research in Human Kinetics Education in Nigeria. The deployment of modern technologies into the discipline has brought about constant dynamism which has influenced the course. Being an area that is highly significant to the socio-economic, cultural and political wellbeing of a nation, its development is of paramount importance. Apart from providing gainful employment to the teeming youths, it provides physical recreation and healthy living to a wide spectrum of the Nigerian populace. It also serves as positive engagement for the youths who would otherwise have been involved in social vices that would have been inimical to the peace and health of the nation.

Proper funding should be made available to acquire relevant library and ICT resources for this area of study so as to make it more attractive for the youths. Necessary manpower should be sought for the modern technologies to be deployed for TLR in the discipline and professionals should be engaged to manage the collections and resources in the discipline. Finally, the issue of infrastructural menace, especially lack of electricity, plaguing the country should be rectified for positive changes to be harvested in the discipline.

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