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**LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY, OJO, LAGOS, NIGERIA**

***THEME: DEMOCRATIZATION, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND  
EDUCATION***

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## VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION: ENSURING SELF-RELIANCE

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### Introduction

There can hardly be any Nigerian who would not cherish a country transformed dramatically from the present undignified level of mass poverty and underdevelopment to a haven of peace, progress and good living. Nigeria as the socio-economic hub of Africa and the ECOWAS sub-region has always biased the trail in the provision of an enabling environment for trade, commerce and industry to thrive. This is further supported by the envisioning of a Developmental Agenda-Vision 20:2020 that is expected to transform the nation into the league of the most developed economies of the world by the year 20:2020. For us in the Technical and Vocational Education sub-sector, we must accept the challenges of development in the context of capacity and equity building, its national impact and our status as a provider of high quality technical and entrepreneurial skills. Most critical to the attainment of the nation's vision is the supply of High Quality Technical and entrepreneurial skills to match the growing needs of the following sectors: Agriculture, Services, Industry, Manufacturing and Infrastructure of the nation by 2020.

Eliminating technical skill acquisitions by young boys and girls will address the skills gap in the economy as well as provide means for young people to be self-employed. Skills gap to drive the nation's vision has been identified by several studies as critical and must be urgently addressed for the realization of Vision 20:2020. One of the panaceas therefore to the provision of High Quality Technical and entrepreneurial skills acquisition is the modernization of our youths in technical and entrepreneurial skills acquisition. I will therefore attempt in this paper to articulate the relevance of Vocational and Technical Education in ensuring self-reliance.

### Vocational and Technical Education for Self-Reliance

Nigeria comprises 36 states and its Federal Capital Territory, Abuja with an estimated population of 182 million people. It has more than 250 ethnic groups with varying languages and customs, creating a country of rich ethnic diversity. The economy of Nigeria is one of the fastest growing in the world with 8.3% growth in 2009. Nigeria is classified as a mixed economy emerging market with its abundant supply of Natural Resources, well developed financial, communication and legal sectors.

About 50% of Nigerians work in the Agricultural Sector and Nigeria has vast areas of land underutilised. According to Economic Intelligence Unit and the World Bank, Nigeria GDP has nearly doubled from 177.7bn USD in 2005 to 292.6bn USD in 2007 and 37.8bn USD in 2010. The GDP per capita has jumped from about \$20 per person in 2006 to 1,754 per person in 2007 and 2,459 per person in 2010. It is the 22<sup>nd</sup> largest producer of petroleum in the world and has one of the fastest growing telecommunications markets in the world.

### A Self-Reliant Nation

One of the major challenges that confronts us in economic transformation that will guarantee that we are self-reliant is to ensure that Nigeria joins the league of the 20 most developed economies of the world by year 20:2020. This is a tall order and will require a major re-orientation in the West African sub-region. The vision to achieve this is to ensure that we have a strong attraction and adequate social services and infrastructure, thereby creating an enabling environment for private sector growth. An important thrust of Nigeria's National Education Policy is that of Education for Self-Reliance.

To attain this overarching goal of reaching the top 20 economies by year 2020, and be self-reliant, the country will need to enhance her economic development performance as illustrated below:

- Polity: By 2020 the country will be peaceful, harmonious and a stable democracy.
- Macro-Economy: A sound, stable and globally competitive economy with a GDP of not less than 900 Billion USD and a per capita income of not less than 4,000 USD/annum.

THE LIBRARY AS AN AGENT OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION:  
AN ESSENCE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE.

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Abstract

The paper examined communication of information as a salient feature of any organization that stands to reap the benefits of information and communication. The study examined the concept of organizational efficiency and the role of the library as an agent of information communication in governance. The paper thus highlights the relationship between the library and governance to see the immense benefits that can accrue to the political sector from the library.

Introduction

Communication is the process of transferring information, meaning and understanding from sender to receiver (Black and Porter, 2000). Communication can also be regarded as the process of sharing ideas, information, and so on with others at a particular time and place. Communication involves four actors and five components. The four actors are encoding, decoding, channeling and feedback. The five components are sender, message, channel, receiver and feedback. The sender originates the message by encoding it, that is, by constructing the message intended for conveyance. The message is the content of the communication. The sender then transmits the message through a medium. A medium is the mode or form of transmission, not the message itself. The receiver acquires the message, then begins decoding the message or interpreting the message. Sometimes distraction interferes with the message this is known as noise. Noise contributes to the misinterpretation of the original message and this can only be corrected through verification of the

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original message. Communication is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another; it involves a sender transmitting an idea, information, or feeling to a receiver.

Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. *Communication* is the activity of conveying information. Communication requires a sender, a message, and an intended recipient, although the receiver need not be present or aware of the sender's intent to communicate at the time of communication; thus communication can occur across vast distances in time and space. Communication requires that the communicating parties share an area of communicative commonality. The communication process is complete once the receiver has understood the sender. Ifidon and Ifidon (2007) viewed communication as a process of mutual interaction of people through the transmission of information and messages.

The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Simply put "governance" means the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. Since governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented, in many of its applications it involves formal and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the decision.

Information has been regarded as processed data, it has several dimensions and it means many things to different people. It must also be noted that information is both a product and a process. Information is regarded as a "thing" or a "stuff" because traditionally, it has been embodied in artefacts such as books, journals, newspapers, etc. While the telecommunications engineers associate information with bits and data, the librarians associate information with recorded knowledge. Nevertheless attempts will be made in defining information. Rubin (1998) described information as a processed data from which meaning arises and it is communicated. Information is used interchangeably with news, idea, and knowledge. Some of the definitions of information are

- Increasing the state of knowledge of a recipient.
- Reducing uncertainty
- State of being or existing
- Body of new wisdom and a practical aggregate of knowledge

The International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) proposes that all communication is an exchange of information.

- Source
- Encoder
- Message
- Channel

- Decoder
- Receiver

Communication of information as gleaned by Aina (2004) is the transmission of information (content) to individuals, groups of people, organisations, devices, etc. anywhere in the world. While the journalists are concerned with the main information, the telecommunications engineer is concerned with the accurate transmission of content. Communication of information can be between two individuals or it could be between one person and a group via printed materials, computer message or broadcast. Newspaper and magazines publishers, electronic news media and database producers are involved in the communication of information.

#### Communication System

The communications system in organisation is product of its degree of complexity and functions differentiated from one level to another. The direction of communication has been classified by Black and Porter (2000) according to the level they are intended: Downward Communication, which is sent from higher organisation level to lower organisational level; from the organisation top executives to employees or from supervisors to subordinate. Secondly, is upward communication, this includes communication sent from other organisational levels to higher levels. For example from management employees to their supervisors, or from a manager to her boss. Lastly, is lateral communication which is sent across essentially equivalent levels of an organization, for example, from one clerical assistant to another, or from the marketing department to the engineering design department.

However communication systems in libraries, archives and information centres are tailored towards user satisfaction and Aina (2004) explained it to include evaluating users needs, the existing software and hardware to ensure efficiency. Reference to the five classic laws of Library Science by S.R. Ranganathan is still very relevant in this regard. These five rules are as relevant today as when he wrote them years ago

- > Books are for use.
- > Every reader has his or her book.
- > Every book has its reader.
- > Save the time of the reader.
- > The library is a growing organism

The essence of Ranganathan's laws which help us think about library services is that they are very useful. First that the libraries are about what he called books which today we might broaden to include all kinds of information and works of creative imagination - information resources. Secondly and probably more importantly he perceived that libraries are people - readers, patrons or users and it is the use of the information resources that is the essence of the library.

Bearing this in mind, the role of the library may be analyzed from a number of perspectives. The traditional approach has been to emphasize collection building and collection management in essence the library key essence is to build broader and deeper collection and to arrange for users to access only on terms which ensure their longterm integrity. In this view the library is essentially a repository, and most of the activities in devoted to the maintenance of the repository.

#### The Library as an Agent of Communicating Information

Any library is a community within a community. Reduced to its essentials, a library consists of its collections, its staff, and the bibliographic structure that makes the collections accessible and enables the staff to provide the services and programs that the library provides (Gorman, 1997).

The library is an information management organisation, bestowed with the responsibility of acquiring information resources, processing information resources, storage of information resources and timely dissemination of information resources through direct dissemination or repackaged dissemination. In the process of transmission of knowledge and information, communication takes place. Libraries are concerned with all basic elements in the chain of communication. The library facilitates to acquire materials containing information or knowledge, systematically organizes the materials and finally bring them in contact with the users. All these point to arrive at the idea that all activities in libraries and information centres are user based and users are the essence of the information profession.

Libraries in the communication of information engages creation of information, by repackaging information to suit the intellectual capacity of their potential users based on the envisaged information needs, information in hard form like textbooks, journals, encyclopaedia, abstracts etc can be repackaged to filterate users in oral form. The library also encodes information resources acquired in the process of cataloguing and classification of information carriers, thereby describing resources to ensure uniformity and consistency and systematically organizing the materials by assigning class mark through a recognized list of subject headings or thesaurus like the Subject List of Subject Headings or the Library of Congress Subject Headings to facilitate placement on shelves and thereby ensuring easy retrieval by the users. A library also engages in providing guides to the intellectual content of books through the form of subject guides or subject lists. The library also provides access to the books, which manages, computer based information, online public access catalogue and the Computer Disc Read Only Memory (CD-ROMs) are channels in which the library displays its holdings to the benefit of its users.

The library as a mediator in the communication process create original information, document it in print or non print medium and bring the information in close proximity with the end users of the information created. It can be safely said that the library is concerned with information generation,

organisation for use and dissemination to users. Nwalo (2000) noted that some national and international agencies including the British Council, United States Information Service and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation are constantly assisting libraries with its task of generation, management and communication of information, recognising the fact that the library is important to every area of life that will witness meaningful development including the political sector.

#### Good Governance and the Library

The business of governance could be within the context of the legislative, executive and the judiciary, the crux of information in the performance of this governmental function needs to be underscored. Good governance is crucial to the development process. Governance is the exercise of power or authority - political, economic, administrative or otherwise, to manage a country's resources and affairs (Downer, 2000). It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and meet their obligations. Good governance also denotes the competent management of a country's resources and affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to people's needs. Good governance has the characteristics of being participatory, ensures effective and efficient decision making, responsibility to the present and future needs of society, consensus oriented, minimizes corruption and ensures the rule of law.

To achieve good governance the availability of relevant information is essential in the act of governance to serve as a guide in decision making on any subject and speeds up the decision making process. Bergdahl (1989) opines that, information has become such a precious resource that the fate of modern nations in all essentials is connected with their capacity to develop and exploit it. He further predicts that in future, countries that do not develop this capacity will be left behind in the cultural, scientific and economic development.

Information is an essential to national business, it is worthwhile to consider the sources of gathering the information. One of the remarkable sources of obtaining information is the library and of these also are information and documentation centres. The presence of information materials such as records, books, journals and other materials which bear the records of events from the beginning of human society. All this present thus including government documents, organizational documents are so on are sources that are used to conduct an investigation, leading to a final goal or objective.

Government needs information about the needs of the people in the area of education, social amenities, health, food and housing amongst some other ones. Government needs to borrow from experiences of other developed nations of the world in order to perform well and also consult documented knowledge of professionals in various fields of life so as to identify, understand and prefer solution to divers problems in various areas of public life.