academicresearchJournals

Vol. 8(6), pp. 204-208, July 2020
DOI: 10.14662/IJALIS2020.205

ISSN: 2360-7858
http://www.academicresearchjournals.org/IJALIS/Index.htm

International Journal of Academic Library and Information Science

Research

The effect of Internet Technology on Employment towards a Jobless Society

AKINDELE, Frederick Akinade[1], ADEPOJU, Kayode Olayiwola[2], OMOLE, Segun Michael[3], ADEBAYO, Tajudeen Temitayo[4] and ADEOJO, Michael Babatunde[5]

[1]PhD Student, Information Resources Management Department, School of Management Sciences, Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. E-mail: akinstaar@gmail.com

[2]Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex, Ile-Ife, Osun State. E-mail: kayode_adepoju@yahoo.com

[3]Assistant Director (Health Records Services), & HOD, Health Information Management, Osun State College of Health Technology, Ilesa, Osun State, Nigeria. E-mail: segunmicheal@gmail.com

[4]Assistant Director (Health Records Services), & HOD, Health Information Management, Federal Medical Center, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria. Corresponding author's E-mail: adebayott@gmail.com

[5]PhD Student, Information Resources Management Department, School of Management Sciences, Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. E-mail: mobadeojo@gmail.com

Accepted 9 July 2020

The alarming rate of unemployment with all its ugly consequences is fast becoming a global emergency requiring well-coordinated and resolute intervention strategy to mitigate. Joblessness has terrible consequences, on individuals, societies and the entire world, which everyone resists. Although fingered as a cause of temporary joblessness, IT is also an important cure for unemployment. Like other technologies, IT reorders the job landscape, increases productivity, improves quality of life, as well as promotes prosperity and investments thereby creating more new sets of jobs in the society. However, training and continuous capacity developments are needed by individuals to fit in into the dynamic world of employment.

Keywords: Effect, employment, Unemployment, Joblessness, IT, Technology, Society.

Cite This Article As: AKINDELE, F.A., ADEPOJU, K.O., OMOLE, S.M., ADEBAYO, T.T., and ADEOJO, M.B. (2020). The effect of Internet Technology on Employment towards a Jobless Society. Inter. J. Acad. Lib. Info. Sci. 8(6): 204-208

INTRODUCTION

Joblessness is a state of being unemployed. It is a state where someone actively looks for a job but not being currently employed. Joblessness and Unemployment are terms being used interchangeably although with a slight difference in meaning. While unemployment refers to a state of having no job despite being fit and willing to work, joblessness, on the other hand, refers to having no job regardless of either being fit

to work or not. So there are jobless people who are actually not fit, physically, mentally or socially to work, unlike unemployment. However, the common denominator is that both are a state of being without a job and redundant. The term unemployment is a household term which every society regardless of geography or social divide is familiar with. According to UK essays of 2018, unemployment is the shortage of job supplies in the face of high job demands in the labor market (UK essays, 2018). For emphasis and the purpose of this paper, unemployment is defined as the denial of someone who is able and willing to work the opportunity and work placement. Joblessness, on the other hand, is a state of having no job. However, the two terms will be interchangeably used in this paper.

The Plague of joblessness

Joblessness is a global menace. All human societies regardless of their geographical locations fight unemployment. Even the developed countries of the world are not spared. The United States of America (USA) which is considered the world's largest economy also battles joblessness. According to the US Bureau of labor statistics, by January 2019, the number of unemployed people in the USA rose from 3.9% in December 2018 to 4% with 6.54 million people being jobless (Trading Economics, 2019). If the world's largest economy can suffer this heavy blow from joblessness, one can imagine how the third world countries like Nigeria is rattled and groaning under the grip of unemployment. According to Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the unemployment rate in Nigeria rose to 23.1% in December 2018 from 22.7%. This shows that about 20.3 million Nigerians are unemployed.

It has become so significant to the extent of becoming a political campaign promise all over the world. Citizens vote in leaders who have a robust and strategic template of fighting unemployment and creating jobs. Unemployment has become such a big issue that bothers everyone both high and low. What made joblessness such a big issue?

If the unemployment rate of any country goes above 6%, then the country is heading for a serious socio-economic and political crisis of joblessness (Amadeo, 2019). This is because unemployment causes social crisis such as increased crime rate, poverty, hunger, emotional disturbances, poor citizens' purchasing power, low quality of life, low return on investments, reduced investments, health problems, economic recession, and depression, among other ills. According to Jackson and Crooks (1993), an unemployed person is merely existing and not living. The effect of unemployment on families can be far-reaching. For instance, loss of job by a parent can jeopardize the future and prospects of the next generation. Similarly, the consequences of joblessness on the government can be devastating. Hence, the importance attached to the issue. Therefore, everyone jostle to mitigate the menace of unemployment in society. However, the wisest first step towards resolving a problem is a proper diagnosing of the issue and its dynamics. The problem of joblessness cannot be effectively tackled without first identifying its causes.

Technology such as Information Technology (IT) has been fingered as a major culprit among other causes of unemployment. This is because it trades the tasks to be performed by humans with machines making humans irrelevant and ultimately being thrown out of a job (UK Essays, 2018).

The rationale for adopting IT

IT has been defined as any technology used in capturing, processing, storage, transmission, retrieval and use of information. We live in an information age as information rules the world now. Without IT and information, organizations cannot innovate and compete favorably in the business environment. The importance of IT in gaining competitive advantage and overall organization's success is immense (Venkatraman, 1994). IT guides innovations in the organization which is strategic to survival, success, and continuous existence. Innovation is vital to survival and competitiveness. Failure to innovate is a risk of extinction (Grobert, 2013). "The innovation game has changed…..companies that don't innovate die", Henry W. Chesbrough, (2006). The significance of IT also to work simplification and streamlining as well as the analysis of workplace data for future benefits is great (Hemmatfar, et al., 2010).

The right information is needed to adequately understand the dynamics of the business environment both internal and external with a view to being abreast of time, making good profit and succeeding. The dynamic business environment now moves in a geometric progression while many organizations are either static or responding in arithmetic progression, hence, they cannot keep pace (Utomi, 2019). The business environment is constantly changing and waits for no one. Inability to keep pace with this dynamism spells business doom. This explains why everyone jostles for any technology that will facilitate the speedy provision of quality information in order to keep pace with these important dynamics.

Managers found a cheaper and better alternative in machines for tasks that are repetitive and laborious. Machines are more cost-effective and efficient in this regards. Since every manager's goal is to minimize input and maximize output for optimal profit, they go for this economical alternative. Every profit-making venture seeks to minimize cost to maximize profit (Cloud-Moulds, 2014). For instance, in a U.S Hospital where clerical jobs were replaced by automation, IT brought about huge cost

reduction by eradication all paper and physical files purchases and printing works. Also, the cost of acquiring cabinets and storage spaces and offices for physical files has been removed. IT has also helped in cutting cost and maximizing profit by reducing the number of clerical staff and secretaries needed by over 30% in the last five years thereby saving a lot of money. IT through the Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system is widely believed to yield both financial and clinical benefits (HealthIT.Gov, 2012).

IT as a cause of unemployment

The adoption and use of IT by organizations redirect the type and quality of human resource requirement from mostly unskilled to skilled (Stewart, et al, 2015). This development contributes daily to the worrisome unemployment figures all over the world. For instance, where are the huge numbers of cleaners, typists, clerks, secretaries, launders, laborers on the firm's payroll before? Technology has replaced most of this class of employees for reasons adduced above. This development has contributed to the worrisome unemployment figures globally. According to U.K Essays (2018), IT has caused a lot of job crisis in African countries, unlike the developed world where IT has brought increased employment and economic growth (U.K Essays, 2018). According to a report released by the United Nations (UN), African countries were growing economically at about 6% and decreasing unemployment at about 1.5% before the introduction of IT. After IT, the economic growth rate dropped to 1.5%. This drop in the growth rate from 6% to 1.5% indicates an interface of how employment has been adversely affected by the introduction of IT. However, while many believe IT causes unemployment by replacing manual and clerical human activities with automated machines, some have a contrary opinion. They see IT as a solution to unemployment.

IT as the cure to The Plague of unemployment

Improvements in the human standard of living are a function of productivity while productivity is directly proportional to available technology. In other words, productivity is the key driver of an improved standard of living (NAP, 2017). But there cannot be increased productivity without technology. And IT has been identified as the most important technology of this time because it is a 'general-purpose machine' which can significantly transform any business endeavor thereby advancing workers' lives (Trading Economics, 2019). Therefore, IT is invariably the driver of human comfortable living and growth. IT reorders the job layout by replacing laborious and less rewarding ones with easier and more rewarding ones. Where are jobs such as IT consultants, cloud architects, computer forensic investigators, health IT specialists, mobile application developers, web developers, software engineers, IT vendor managers, geospatial specialists, data modelers, network engineers, ICT instructors, electronic media operators, IT Project managers, Database administrators, ICT teachers, etc. emerge from? The emergence of IT has given, is giving and will continue to give means of livelihood and prosperity to millions of people in the society. This will continue to increase people's purchasing power, create wealth and investments as well as lead to the provision of more jobs. However, the new jobs are most divergent from the old order to hospitality, care and knowledge-intensive sectors (Stewart, et al, 2015).

In the studies of Oye, et al. (2011), IT was found to be a critical solution to the rising unemployment rate in Nigeria. According to the study, IT can solve youth unemployment through the creation of telecom centers in shops, schools, hospitals, and all public places. This suggests a new order of training and repositioning to fit into this new job order. That means the changing world does not only force organizational change but everyone in the society also must keep changing in line with the changing world. Failure to change by learning new skills relevant to the new job trend is a gateway to joblessness. This explains why the introduction of IT in Africa slowed down its economic and employment growth.

Is IT really a cause or a cure to unemployment?

While many have argued that IT cause unemployment and others opined that IT cures unemployment, there is a common ground by all; IT reshapes the human skills need thereby reordering the labor market. It is however agreed that the main cause of unemployment is the failure of individuals to respond adequately to the changing world. The changing world has rendered the ancient skills irrelevant in the current business and employment scheme. Change they say is inevitable. It was observed that the world is moving faster than we do. The rate at which the world is changing is increasing and we are unable to keep up the changing pace, (Kotter, 2015). The main cause of unemployment is, therefore, our inability to keep pace with the changing world as asserted by Kotter (2015) and affirmed by Utomi (2019).

What is the right way to go?

The beneficence ethical principle asserts that what is right is that which benefit the greater number of people in the society (Beauchamp, 2013). The philosophical principle of what is right is guided by the analysis of alternate paths and choosing the one that will benefit a greater number of people in the society. The beneficence theory advised that it is more profitable to choose the

alternative that provides benefit to most people and contribute to their wellbeing. Therefore, there is a need to know whether the new jobs being created by IT outnumbers the ones that it destroyed. There is a need to know whether IT benefits the greater number of people in the society or not.

Does IT create more jobs than it smashed? Does it benefit more people than those it adversely affect in the society?

In the studies of Stewart, et al (2015), the number of jobs destroyed was compared with the number of new jobs created by technology between 1871 and 2011 within England and Wales. The outcome was comforting as it showed that technology actually created more jobs than it destroyed (Stewart, et al, 2015). This means that the adoption of technology benefits more people in society. According to this research, technology reduces the demand for the less rewarding laborious jobs such as cleaners, washers/laundry workers, domestic servants, clerical assistants, typists, secretaries, miners and laborers in agriculture, construction, factories, and general laborers. However, it creates an extra number of more rewarding jobs in several professional fields such as accounting, consultancy, teaching and education support, health, welfare, housing, youth development, community care, hospitality, etc. We now have Millions of job opportunities as nursing auxiliaries and assistants, management consultants, business analysts, information technology managers, entertainments workers such as actors, filmmakers, dancers, producers, and so on. Even some unskilled jobs are being created by technology such as luxuries brought by prosperity and increased purchasing power. These new jobs include bar staff, hairdressers, hotel staff, etc.

Several millions of direct IT jobs which never existed before are being created by IT daily. These include IT consultants, cloud architects, computer forensic investigators, health IT specialists, mobile application developers, web developers, software engineers, IT vendor managers, geospatial specialists, data modelers, network engineers, ICT instructors, electronic media operators, IT Project managers, Database administrators, ICT teachers, etc. From the foregoing, rather than destroying jobs and rendering people jobless, IT has been a major creator of employment opportunities in our current societies.

CONCLUSION

IT cannot eliminate the demand for human skills in any organization as no technology can completely replace humans. However, man will continue to devise better ways of doing work through technology to replace repetitive, laborious and less rewarding jobs. This will lead to increased productivity, prosperity, more investments, more new jobs, and a better world. However, individuals have their parts to play to benefit from this new order – training in the newly required skill – to fit in. By this, technology will not be a curse but a blessing indeed to humanity.

REFERENCES:

Beauchamp T, Childress J. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics, 7th Â Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Health IT.Gov, (2012) 'Benefits of Electronic Health Records,' Available at: (https://www.healthit.gov/providers-professionals/benefits-electronic-health-records-ehrs), (Accessed: 12/05/2016).

Kotter, J., (2015), '8 Steps To Accelerate Change in 2015', *Kotter international*, available at: (www.kotterinternational.com), (accessed: 16/11/2015)

Cloud-Moulds, P.J., (2014), 'Calculating the Right Number of Staff for Your Medical Practice', available at: (www.physicianspractice.com/blog/calculating-the-right-number-of-staff-for-your-medical-practice), (accessed: 05/10/2015)

Essays, UK. (November 2018). Is ICT creating unemployment. Retrieved from https://www.ukessays.com/essays/economics/is-ict-creating-unemployment-economics-essay.php?vref=1

Oye, N.D. & Inuwa, Ibrahim & Muhammd Shakil, Ahmad. (2011). Role of Information Communication Technology (ICT): Implications on Unemployment and Nigerian GDP. Journal of International Academic Research.

Trading Economics (2019). United States Unemployment Rate. Available at: https://tradingeconomics.com/united-states/unemployment-rate. Accessed: 28/02/2019.

Amadeo K. (2019). Unemployment, Its Causes and Its Consequences. The Balance.

NAP (2017). Information Technology and the U.S. Workforce: Where Are We and Where Do We Go from Here? *The National Academics Of Sciences Engineering Medicine.pg 54-79*

Stewart, I., De, D., & Cole, A. (2015). Technology and People: The great job-creating machine.

Utomi, P. (2019). International Conference on Knowledge and Innovation Management (ICKIM). Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo.

Chesbrough, H.W., (2006) 'Open Innovation, The New Imperative for Creating & Profiting from Technology,' Available at:https://books.google.com.ng/books?hl=en&lr=&id=OeLIH89YiMcC&oi=fnd&pg=PR17&dq=open+innovation&ots=RD7zmRJKhg&sig=8O92ZHJpD1WN70njIR8VZAMJtBQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=open%20innovatio

n&f=false), (Accessed: 21/08/16)
Cloud-Moulds, P.J., (2014) 'Calculating the Right Number of Staff for Your Medical Practice,' Available at: (www.physicianspractice.com/blog/calculating-the-right-number-of-staff-for-your-medical-practice), (Accessed: 05/10/2015).
Grobart, S. (2013) 'Apple Chiefs Discuss Strategy, Market Share – and the New iPhones,' *Bloomberg*, Available at: http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-09-19/cook-ive-and-federighi-on-the-new-iphone-and-apples-once-and-future-strategy, (Accessed: 07/08/16).
Health IT.Gov, (2012) 'Benefits of Electronic Health Records,' Available at: (https://www.healthit.gov/providers-professionals/benefits-electronic-health-records-ehrs), (Accessed: 12/05/2016).
Hemmatfar, M., M. Salehi, & M. Bayat, (2010) 'Competitive Advantages and Strategic Information Systems,' *International Journal of Business & Management*, 5 (7) pp.58-169
Venkatraman, N., (1994) 'IT-Enabled Business Transformation: From Automation to Business Scope Redefinition,' *Sloan Management Review*, 35 (2) pp.73-87.