IT in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges

Africa has always been seen as a continent of disadvantage and "lack of" when it comes to anything technological, economical or social. This review of the four articles given will commentate on the opportunities and challenges that Africa as a continent can take advantage of or fall prey to.

The biggest obstacles to technological progress in Africa are infrastructure, digital transformation, sustainable job creation and entrepreneurship. Africa lacks infrastructure with the current focus mainly on network development, limited funds and the digital divide between developed and developing economies. Africa must educate the leaders of tomorrow with IT to increase the talent pools of possible workers to make sure we keep up with the revolution. Statistics show that employees and employers alike are scared by the need for modern technology in the workspace, this however goes hand in hand with the education of the people of Africa.

Africa faces a large number of challenges concerning both the use of ICT in education and the industry. One of the big challenges that Africa is faced within the education sector is the lack of proper education and the large number of children that are unable to attend any sort of school or institute. Businesses such as Tanzanian company Ubongo try to solve this problem by using ICT as a medium to encourage learning. They use this opportunity to create cartoons and online programmes focused on education to reach a larger audience. Unfortunately, this creates new challenges that need to be bridged, such as the lack of technological devices available to children to make use of these programmes or the lack of electricity in more rural areas. National governments are trying to help by providing schools with the means to use technology, but a lack of infrastructure, as well as a lack of funds, make this very difficult.

African countries are not well structured to transform into the Fourth Industrial Revolution economy. There has been light at the end of the tunnel, but the way ICT usage has become expensive in Africa has led to slow progress in economic activities being conducted online, hence today this sector of the country is very important. Reports suggest that many graduates are not yet reading because universities' curricula are not aligned with what is required in the private sector.

Another large issue in Africa is the large unemployment rate. While this is a serious problem, it also presents an opportunity to create sustainable jobs that help bring out the full potential of the diverse demographics in Africa. The development of new technologies creates many opportunities to both improve the ICT usage in Africa, as well as create job and educational opportunities. On the other hand, a growth in technology could also cause the replacement of the human element, which could lead to a growth in unemployment.

Technology in Africa plays a huge role because it is used as a solution to challenges faced by Africa's education sector. For technology to fulfil its true potential, lack of electricity outside of major cities, smartphone and internet penetration being low compared to elsewhere in the world, educators not being trained to use technology and lack of funding from investors are challenges that still need to be overcome. Africa has seen a technological era that has better influenced a lot of African people in the past decade. Technology has brought changes to the lives of African people. Although there are a lot of challenges that Africa needs to address first before seeing the African community on the same level or more than the rest of the world.

The internet and all it provides, has become a major entrepreneurial, social and political gate for Africa to finally connect with the world. The leading urban cities of Africa (Lagos, Nairobi,

Johannesburg, Dear-es-salaam etc.) are already involved in different technological breakthrough applications such as mobile money, low bandwidth prices, online retailers etc. These opportunities must be presented to our youth to drive our economies to new heights so African people can live better lives.

With all of this in mind, it becomes clear that Africa faces many an uphill battle with various ways to turn the tides to its advantage as long as national governments can take advantage of all the opportunities heading their way.

References

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