

**TRAINING OF OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION
STUDENTS FOR JOB DEMANDS AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN EKITI STATE,
NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT: *Office technology and management (OTM) education is an integral part of business education programme in Nigeria. The course is expected to provide occupational skills for its recipients in business or office related occupations either as employees or self-employed. However, it has been observed that most graduates of this programme at both colleges of education and university levels are unemployed despite the presumed acquired skills and knowledge. In view of this, the study sought to examine the training of OTM education student vis-à-vis the job demands in business environment in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Thus, three research questions are raised and answered. The research design adopted descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of 4,030, made up of 15 OTM lecturers in College of Education, Ikere Ekiti and Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti and all the 4,015 registered operators/managers of private establishments with the Ministry of Commerce and Trade in Ekiti State in 2018. The sample of the study was 1,220 respondents made up of the entire 15 OTM lecturers in the two institutions and 1,205 randomly selected respondents across the 16 local government areas, representing 30% of the population of the operators of business establishments. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the three research questions. The results revealed that most of the needed ICT facilities for effective training of these students to meet job demands are not enough and that most OTM lecturers require additional ICT-related training to produce competent and qualified OTM education graduates for improved employability. Thus, the study concluded that most OTM education graduates are not adequately prepared to meet the expected job demands in a technologically-driven office environment. It is therefore recommended that government should provide needed modern-day instructional facilities for this programme and sponsor OTM lecturers on relevant ICT packages.*

KEYWORDS: training, office technology and management, education, job demands, self-employment

INTRODUCTION

There are three different options in the field of business education as practiced in Nigeria. They are accounting education, marketing/distributive education and office technology and management education (OTM) formerly known as secretarial studies. Generally, the ultimate aim of business education, as an integral part of technical and vocational education and training programme (TVET) is to provide graduates with the appropriate skills that will enable them to be

versatile in their business endeavor to meet the economic needs through engagement in the world of work as employees as well as self-employed.

Thus, the national policy on education in Famiwole and Akindula (2016) defined vocational education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technology and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Also, Osuala (2004) defined business education as a programme of instruction, which consists of two parts, office education which is a vocational programme for office workers and general education which is a programme that provided information and competencies needed for managing business. He explained that business education (of which OTM is part) prepares individuals for teaching business subjects as well as provide them with the knowledge skills and attitudes needed for successful business.

In the realization of this, business education programme was designed in a way that all business education students offered all the core courses in the first two years to have general knowledge of the content of business education before specialization on one of the options where they are trained in the related skills. This is to achieve of the objectives of National Commission on Colleges of Education (2008) which states that business education graduates are to be equipped with the right skills that will enable them to engage in the world of work as well as for self-employment.

In order to achieve this objective, there are some skill and core courses that must be offered by OTM students. These include keyboarding, shorthand, computer appreciation and application, office management small business, office practice and entrepreneurship education in business education among others. The technological development in information communication technology has increased the array of opportunities available for people who possess adequate mastery of the knowledge of keyboarding and other ICT skills. By this, keyboarding skills have become one of the important skills required in the world of work as the use of computer has tended to dominate today's business environments.

It has been observed that most of the OTM lecturers were trained in the traditional learning environment mostly with the use of manual typewriters, carbon papers, correcting fluid, typing erasers, stencils and all the likes, including the rigors of calculations and setting involved in tabulation works. The use of these obsolete technologies has paved ways to the new technologies which needed to be learnt by business educators for improved knowledge and skills that will match today's business environments. Thus, Nwosu and Ojo (2014) state the main goals of manpower training to include the need to increase the average skill level of the labour force and provide workers with the specialized skills necessary to meet future industrial needs. In line with this, Onwuachu (2014) Joshua and Nwabufo (2014), and Uwuanyi (2010) observe that some computer/ICT skills that business education programme to groom students as global workers include computer skills, skill in instant messaging, e-port folio, competency in the use of Microsoft words, Microsoft excel, power point, internet skills, word processing, among others.

In the same vein, perspective OTM education graduates are expected to teach all the components of business studies at the nation's junior and senior secondary school levels and as well teach some trades or entrepreneurship subjects like stenography and data processing. Thus, Aliyu (2000) observes that training of business education teachers need to be continuous and target oriented in view of the new development in the business world as a result of technological development. Also, the knowledge acquired in courses like keyboarding, office management, small scale business and entrepreneurship education are expected to prepare OTM graduates for self employment and as knowledge workers in public and private organisations. However, Nnaji and Bagudu in Ikegwani (2015) observe that most of the facilities required for the training of office manager are lacking and sometimes inadequate in most of the institutions in Nigeria. Office technology and management education is a subset of business education programme that is designed to prepare students who are interested in developing careers in keyboarding operation, stenography, office management, establishment of business training school, computer centres, data processing, small or medium business enterprises and teaching through the acquisition of appropriate skills, knowledge abilities and attitude that will make them enter and progress in their economic endeavor. To effectively make a success of these opportunities, OTM students must be taught under a conducive and well-equipped environment that is a replica of where they are expected to perform after graduation. Supporting this view, Prosser in Ibidapo, Fagbemi and Aina (2013) remarked that principles of vocational education include the followings among others:

- (1) Vocational education will be efficient in proportion as the environment in which the leaner is trained as a replica of the environment in which he must subsequently work.
- (2) Effective vocational training can only be given where the training jobs are carried out in the same way, with the same operations, the same tools and the same machines as in the occupation itself.
- (3) Vocational education must recognize conditions as they are and must train individuals to meet the demands of the market.
- (4) Effective vocational education can only be given to the selected group of individuals who need it, want it, and are able to profit by it.

These principles underscore the need to provide necessary equipment, exact teaching environment, consideration of employers' skills need and students interest or attitudes towards the programme. In view of the above, most business education scholars, such as, Owojori (2008), Akintonde (2008), Fadare (2015), Adebayo (2013) have expressly reported that business education programme as a vocational endeavor is cost effective if competent OTM graduates are to be produced for the private, industrial and educational sectors of the nation. In his contribution, Onojetal (2014) reported that the mandate of business education curriculum is the production of graduates for self-employment, and careers in other occupations. Such graduates are needed in the industry, but that they lack ICT skills and competencies when employed by local and multinational companies is a serious problem. Justifying this, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) recently embarked on strike on the need to improve the funding of university education in order to reduce the production of half-baked graduates.

There is the need to provide new technologies such as computers, scanners, printers, shredding machine, internet, intranet, teleconferencing device, ipad, multimedia projectors, e-library, etc which are e-learning tools that motivate student-centred and interactive learning environments.. The role of these new technologies in training OTM education students is rapidly becoming an important issue in the contemporary education. Supporting this, Yelland (2001) reported that traditional educational environments are not suitable for preparing learners to function or be productive in the workplace in today's society. This is buttressed by Onojetah (2012) when he asserts that the functions of ICT in business education curriculum are to increase skills, speed, accuracy, production and quality of study by students.

In view of the observed inadequacies on the part of OTM lecturers, available instructional facilities and expected performance of OTM education graduates in the labour market, there is therefore the need to examine whether recipients of the programme are well prepared to meet today's job demands in Ekiti State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the training of OTM education students in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State vis-à-vis meeting the job demands in public and private establishments. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

- (1) The skills/competencies required by managers/operators in the private/public sector from OTM graduates.
- (2) Available instructional facilities for effective teaching and learning of OTM programme.
- (3) OTM lecturers' preparedness to teach to teach the current ICT-driven curriculum contents.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- (1) What are the OTM skills required by managers/operators in the private/public sector?
- (2) Are there enough instructional facilities for effective OTM programme in these institutions?
- (3) Are the OTM lecturers well prepared to teach the current ICT driven curriculum contents?

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study consisted of 4,030; made up of 15 OTM lecturers in College of Education, Ikere Ekiti and Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and 4,015 operators/managers of private and public establishments registered in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Ekiti State in 2018. 30% of the population of the operators was randomly selected as sample in addition to all the course lecturers. Thus, the sample for the study was made up of 1,220 respondents. That is, 15 lecturers and 1,205 registered business operators.

The instrument used was a structured questionnaire made up two sections. Section A sought for the demographic information of respondents while section B sought for answers in respect of the research questions. Section B was sub classified into two (i and ii) Thus, section B(i) was designed for OTM Education lecturers while section B (ii) was designed for managers/operators of registered private/public establishments in the state.

The instrument was submitted to three experts in business education for face and content validity. The validated instrument was administered to 20 respondents to determine the reliability of the instrument. The data collected were subjected to split halves which yielded a coefficient of 0.79. The researcher personally distributed and collected lecturers' instrument while two officials in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry were used as research assistant to collect the instrument designed for the business managers/operators in the state. All questionnaires were retrieved. The research questions were analysed using mean and standard deviation

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: What are the OTM skills required by managers/operators in the private/public sector?

Table 1: OTM Skills Required by Managers/Operators in the private/public establishments in Ekiti State

N = 1,205 Respondents. (Managers/Operators)

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remarks
1	Possession of good keyboarding skills.	3.74	1.13	Required
2	Oral and written communication skills	3.08	1.85	Required
3	Resource management skills	2.73	1.09	Required
4	Use of office/secretarial equipment (ICT skills)	2.68	0.88	Required
5	Record keeping and information management skills	2.67	1.31	Required
6	Interpersonal relationship skills with visitors	2.84	0.94	Required
7	Application of professional knowledge and skills	3.06	1.09	Required
8	Coordination and supervision skills (subordinate)	2.65	1,10	Required
9	Goal attainment skills	2.85	0.90	Required
10	Possession of problem solving skills	2.89	1.03	Required
11	Ability to acquire more professional knowledge	2.57	1.12	Required
12	Ability to identify risk and avoid it	2.89	0.97	Required

Source: Field work, 2018

The data presented above revealed that items one to twelve (1-12) has mean range of 2.57 to 3.74 on the OTM skills required by the operators/managers of public and private business enterprises in Ekiti State. This indicates that all the identified skills are very important for a successful career in office technology and management education.

Research Question 2: Are there enough instructional facilities for effective OTM education programme in these institutions?

Table 2: Instructional Facilities Needed for Effective OTM Education Programme

N = 15 Respondents (OTM Lecturers)

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remarks
1	Well ventilated and air-conditioned OTM computer laboratory	1.02	0.89	Not enough
2	Computer sets	0.91	1.06	Not enough
3	Internet facilities for browsing	1.45	1.27	Not enough
4	Ipad	2.05	1.66	Not enough
5	Demonstration stand	2.68	0.96	Enough
6	Keyboarding software instructional packages	1.74	1.12	Not enough
7	e-library	2.81	0.84	Enough
8	Scanners	3.64	0.90	Enough
9	Shredding machine	2.98	0.76	Enough
10	Multimedia projector	1.13	1.01	Not enough
11	Tele-conferencing	1.80	0.73	Not enough
12	Printers	2.67	0.90	Enough
13	Uninterrupted power supply	1.82	1.00	Not enough
14	Power supply (Generator)	3.69	0.92	Enough
15	Office stationaries (A4 papers, tonner)	2.13	1.02	Not enough
16	Photocopying machine	1.89	0.83	Not enough
17	Computer chairs and tables	1.76	0.92	Not enough
18	Steel cabinet	3.03	0.87	Enough
19	Dictating machine	1.09	1.10	Not enough
20	Electric typewriters	2.03	0.67	Not enough

Source: Field work, 2018

The data presented in table 2 above revealed that only seven items (5,7,8,9,12 and 18) had mean scores ranging from 2.67 to 3.69 which were above the cutoff point of 2.50. This implies that 13 of the required instructional facilities for effective teaching of OTM education programme are lacking in these institutions.

Research Question 3: Are the OTM lecturers well prepared to teach the current ICT-driven curriculum contents?

Table 3: Preparedness of OTM lecturers for teaching ICT-Driven Curriculum Contents

N = 15 Respondents (OTM Lecturers)

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remarks
1	Possession of good keyboarding skills	4.73	0.60	Well prepared
2	Possession of good communication skills	4.61	0.73	Well prepared
3	Proficiency in the use of Microsoft words and excel	4.03	0.65	Well prepared
4	Have attended institution-sponsored training conference on OTM curriculum contents	1.10	1.13	Not well prepared
5	Have attended self-sponsored conference training programme on OTM curriculum contents	1.69	0.90	Not well prepared
6	I do not require more advanced professional programme in OTM.	1.30	0.86	Not well prepared
7	Proficiency in the operation of office equipment like scanners, media projector and photocopier	3.86	0.74	Well prepared
8	Competency in the use of self-developed instructional software packages	2.04	0.91	Not well prepared
9	Good knowledge of web and graphic designs	1.96	0.67	Not well prepared
10	I do not require regular training and retraining	1.64	0.63	Not well prepared

Source: Field work, 2018.

The data presented in table 3 above revealed that OTM lecturers are well prepared to teach the students to meet the demands of employers in four items (1, 2, 3, and 7) because their mean scores range between 3.86 and 4.73. Also, they are not well prepared in items 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 because the mean scores of these items were below the cutoff point of 2.50.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis in table 1 showed some of the vital skills that business managers/operators required from their office managers. All the identified skills are required as can be seen from the mean scores of all the listed items. The skills include manipulative skill (keyboarding), communication skills, information management skills, goal attainment skills, among others. This is in agreement with the findings of Onwuachu (2014) when the author reported that business education students need computer skills, internet skills and communication skills in order to be efficient as global workers. Also, the outcome of this study is in consonance with the findings of Ugwuanyi (2010) that business education graduates need to acquire employability skills in order to secure and retain employment in business organisations. Supporting this finding, Onojetah (2014), in his study found out that items that are fundamental to equipping business education graduates with skills and competencies that are needed in the 21st century and technology-driven era are not utilized and this has serious implication.

The results in table 2 showed that OTM instructional facilities are not enough to achieve the goal of meeting job demands and self employment of these graduates. This finding is supported by Joshua and Nwabufo (2014) where it was revealed that lack of technology infrastructure, computers and internet are barriers to the integration of web 2.0 tools in teaching/learning of business education courses in Nigerian universities. The result is also in line with the findings of Fadare (2015) when she opined that all the identified instructional facilities, except standby generating set, audio visual and stop watches, are not available for the training of OTM students in Nigerian Polytechnics. The finding of this study also corroborates the view of Ikegwuani (2015) when the researcher found out that teachers in both public and private schools agreed that most of the identified infrastructural facilities are not available for use in the teaching of business studies.

The findings on the research question three revealed that most OTM lecturers are well prepared in some identified skills such as keyboarding skills, communication skills, Microsoft word and excel and use of office equipment. The study also revealed that the lecturers are lacking required skills in some of their professional areas. These include inadequate skill in self-developed software instructional package, web or graphic design. It was found out that there has been no serious attempt to organize sponsored training by either the supervising agencies or the school authority for this category of lecturers on how to use the ICT gadgets that have engulfed today's office environments. This is in support of the findings of Onwuachu (2014) when she reported that many business educators lack competence required of them to teach ICT skills. The finding of this study also deviates from the FGN (2013) goal of teacher education which states that teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum and that teachers shall be regularly exposed to innovations in the profession.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that OTM education graduates are not adequately equipped with the skills required to perform well in paid or self employed business as most of the basic facilities for teaching/learning of OTM programme are not enough for effective use. There is the need for OTM lecturers to acquire competencies in some ICT skills such as use of instructional software development, web and graphic design and others. It is also concluded that OTM lecturers have not been enjoying sponsorship to conferences and seminars by their employers.

Recommendations

- (1) Basic ICT facilities that are mostly used in today's offices should be provided by the state government and the management of these institutions to ensure skill acquisition of OTM education graduates.
- (2) Organised private sector should regularly give feedback to the management of these institutions and government agencies like NUC and NCCE on the appropriate skills required for employment.
- (3) OTM lecturers should be sponsored to update their knowledge on ICT skills.

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