

## **Role of Office Technology and Management Education in the National Development**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper discusses role of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in the production of skilled and competent workforce for employment and sustainable national development. The paper also examines the concepts of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME), National Development, Skills Acquisition and Competency. It went further to explain some global competencies acquired by graduates of OTME for them to be relevant in the labour market. The paper also discussed the numerous roles of OTME in the national development and hindrances to the effective implementation of the OTME Curriculum which includes window dressing for Accreditation Exercise, Inadequacy of funds, Corruption and mismanagement of funds, inadequacy of human resources, epileptic power supply, ineffective evaluation and assessment system and Inadequacy of physical Training facilities among others which impede the roles of OTME in national development. The paper concluded that OTME is an educational programme which aims at self-reliance and production of employer of labour which are vital in the contemporary Nigeria. Management of tertiary institutions and department of OTME should avoid window dressing for Accreditation Exercise and set up monitoring teams to monitor, among others, among others, were recommended.*

**Keywords:** *Office Technology and Management Education (OTME), National Development Skills Acquisition, Competencies*

### **1.0 Introduction**

Across the globe, education is the fulcrum upon which other indices of national development revolve, it is the level and quality of education collectively attained in a given society that determines the extent to which other factors of development are exploited for the advancement of such society. Essentially, office technology and management education is a form of vocational education that is directed towards developing the students to become productive in teaching, competent office administrators and employers of labour. The National Policy on Education (2004) defined Office Technology and Management as an aspect of education which prepares students towards the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge needed to perform adequately in the world of work. In other words, the programme is focused on production of manpower that would be self-reliant and contribute to

national development. Office technology and management education (OTME) programme therefore replaces the secretarial studies programme. The OTME curriculum was design to replace the former one which was found to be inadequate for the demand of the information age. The OTME programme according to National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) is primarily to produce competent, skilful and dynamic office technology and management teachers and dynamic office administrators that will effectively compete in the world of work, through multifarious office innovations emerging daily due to the technological advancement.

Change is the only constant factor in life, the emergence of new technologies such as the computer, word processor, the internet, automated teller machines, reprographic machines, micrographic machines, accounting machines, modern telephonic systems including handset and multimedia, among others, have not only revolutionized the office environment but have also brought changes in the ways people are doing things. The computer is one of the most visible of the new technologies. Much as new technologies are indispensable in business education programme delivery, the subject of quality assurance is of utmost importance. education.

New technologies in office education are designed to prepare students for variety of careers in high-tech corporate offices. No doubt, the emergence of new technologies such as the computer, word processor, the internet, automated teller machines, reprographic machines, micrographic machines, accounting machines, modern telephonic systems including handset and multimedia, among others, have not only revolutionized the office environment but have also brought changes in the ways people are doing things. The computer is one of the most visible of the new technologies base on this, Office Education graduates must be prepared to cope with it.

## **2.0 Concept of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME)**

Sani (2007) stated that OTM education involves the process of guiding and initiating the learners to acquire the necessary skills, facts, knowledge, habits and attitudes that will make them co-exist with others as useful and productive members of the society. He upheld that it is a programme of instruction designed to equip its recipients with knowledge and skills for gainful employment. OTME graduates acquire and develop needed skills, attitudes and knowledge to meet with the new technological challenges which have revolutionary changes in the offices. (Ojohwoh 2014) supporting these views said that OTME is an effective, efficient, productive and functional educational programme which prepares graduates for self-employment, paid jobs employment, self-reliance and self-realization. She upheld that it is a competence-based programme that allows its recipients to be independent and be employer of labour.

### **2.1 Concept of National Development**

National development comprises the general level of efficiency attained in a nation's production process as it affects output, real incomes and standard of living. According to Mbata (2009) national development means the all-round of individuals. It concerns not only personality development, but also nation building which goes beyond the construction of bridges, road, skyscrapers and provision of other social amenities.

### **2.2 Concept of Competency**

Competency refers to higher level characteristics, representing the ability of an individual to perform a job role successfully. These characteristics result in effective action and/or superior performance in a job. Onah (2018) viewed competencies as abilities of power and authority of skills, knowledge, attitudes and facts necessary for accomplishing tasks on the job. Competencies can also be viewed as the total ability of business studies teachers to carry out their roles successfully.

### **2.3 Concept of Skills Acquisition**

Skill does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental, innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experience an individual acquired. Skill according to Bolt-Lee and Foster (2003) is the art of possessing the ability to power, authority, or competency etc. to do the task required of an individual on the job. Skill acquisition is a specific form of learning and skill acquisition includes the acquisition of skills in areas that will be useful to OTME students and make them self-reliant, independent and productive citizens of the society. Skill is very important in the life of every citizen, including OTME students. Lack of skill is a major cause of corruption in the sense that a man without skills is not employed and can determine to do anything to earn a living. These skills are referred to as employability skills or "work readiness". In conclusion, skill acquisition is the ability and capability acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive), things (technical), and or people (interpersonal). Skills can be acquired through teaching and learning of office education.

## **Global Office Competencies Acquired by Graduates of OTME in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Global competencies in today's workforce, offices typically need administrative professionals to keep it organized, efficient and productive Shelly (2018), as such secretarial skills is a key way to ensure a company runs smoothly. Therefore, the need to acquire the basic competencies of the profession is required including the global competencies to fit in the professional area. Such skills and basic competencies include;

**1. Word Processing and Desktop publishing Competencies**

- Ability to produce document which includes both text and graphics
- Keyboarding with speed and accuracy
- Knowledge and skill in use of software programme
- Skill in formatting and proofreading documents
- A large vocabulary
- Proficiency with grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Ability to learn special vocabularies
- Ability to following instructions

**2. Data Processing Competences**

- Proficiency with using spreadsheet, database and related programs
- Knowledge of arithmetic processes and statistical methods
- Ability to be consistently accurate
- Ability to interpret data
- Knowledge of methods of organizing and analysing data
- Ability to prepare reports that communicate information in a meaningful way
- Ability to man an organized work station

**3. Information Management and Transmission Competencies**

- Identification of information needed in the situation
- Ability to maintain or develop an information system
- Ability to give attention to details
- Ability to use established procedures
- Good keyboarding skills
- Knowledge of records management principles and basic filing rules
- Proficiency in working with databases
- Ability to meet deadlines and solve problems
- Ability to work with others

**4. General Management and Communication Competencies**

- Establishing priorities
- Work in teams
- Motivate others to complete work
- Give attention to several tasks at the same time

- Communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- Interact with many types of people at all levels of an organization or outside the organization
- Complete tasks with little or no supervision
- Meet deadlines
- Using initiatives
- Evaluating your own performance objectively
- Flexible and adaptable
- Presentation and public speaking
- Ability

### **3.0 Relevance of OTME to National Development**

The relevance of OTME towards sustainable national development cannot be over-emphasized. Generally, OTME has improved economic growth and development through the development of small, medium and sometimes large-scale businesses based on creativity and innovation. Some of the areas in which OTME programme has contributed to national development include:

- a. **Job creation and provision of employment:** OTME helps tremendously in the creation of jobs and employment opportunities for the unemployed (Oladunjoye, 2016). This has assisted in reducing social ills and menaces such as youth restiveness, armed robbery, prostitution, rituals, violent, conflicts and so on, among the teeming Nigerian youths.
- b. **Technological Development through Office Technology:** Office Technology facilities are playing a vital role in developing and transforming the economy and also strengthening government and private sector collaboration for the attainment of sustainable national development through increase in the capability, flexibility and efficiency of channels of communication (Ikelegbe, 2016).
- c. **Developing entrepreneurial capacity and stimulating indigenous entrepreneurs:** OTME help develop in individuals the skills to be self-employed. Being engaged in self-employment over a period of time develops the individual's capacity and experience in the business. This in turn helps in stimulating and attracting other indigenous entrepreneurs into such business (Duruaku & Njoku, 2013).
- d. **Improves the standard of living:** Being self-employed serves as a major source of income to the individual, which leads to continuous increase in income and standard of

living. There are many intelligent, creative and motivated self-employed individuals who made it in business and are now more comfortable than many civil servants.

- e. **Reduces urban drift and enhances social status of the citizenry:** There is no doubts that increase business activities in the rural areas reduces rural-urban migration and enhances the social status and confidence of the citizenry (Bello, 2015).
- f. **Source of government revenue:** OTME practitioners involved in self-employment or paid employment, pay government revenue in the form of tax permit, licenses or personal income tax. These will be used by government to provide different social services and amenities to the society.
- g. **Industrial development:** OTME leads to gradual but smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy through its information and communication technology component.

### **5.0 Hindrances of OTME to National Development**

There are various problems militating against OTME towards contributing to national development and some of these are;

- i. **Window dressing for accreditation:** A situation where some institutions and in particular departments of OTME hire ad-hoc staff and equipment just for accreditation or re-accreditation exercises is unacceptable. What this means is that these hired staff and equipment are returned to their original owners immediately after the exercise, thereby compromising on the set standards by the regulating body and forcing the department back to its poor-quality level before the accreditation.
- ii. **Inadequate and unqualified personnel:** The staff strength in most of the departments of OTME in Nigerian tertiary institutions is undesirable and inadequate to maintain standard. An inexperienced teacher finds it difficult to carry the students along and this makes the products incapable of performing in the office and business environment of the current technological era.
- iii. **Lack of adequate supervision:** There is no structure on ground in most tertiary institutions to adequately monitor or supervise teachers in order to ensure standard teaching. It is observed that once a business teacher is employed, he/she is assigned courses to teach and nobody monitors or supervises what he/she does. If such a teacher is inexperienced and not supervised, the students are at risk of learning things that may not lead to the desired knowledge, skills and competencies (Amor, 2010).
- iv. **Inadequate physical facilities:** The state of physical facilities in many of the Nigerian tertiary institution is very deplorable. The shortage of equipment and facilities can

- affect quality teaching and learning. Quality is bound to diminish when the facilities are inadequate or at times not available for qualitative teaching and learning procedures.
- v. Ineffective evaluation and assessment system is also a problem, stance where students are not adequately and effectively evaluated affects the quality of outputs. Formative evaluation (continuous assessment) should provide feedback for both students and teachers. True evaluation of students for certification should not be compromised.
  - vi. Corruption and Mismanagement of funds, in this situation the funds meant for the development of infrastructure and other teaching and learning facilities are channelled in to private pockets is uncalled for. No country can forge ahead in a situation where bribery and corruption have been institutionalized. In some other situations, school administrators and others responsible for managing educational funds mismanage these funds at the detriment of the students. These affect the provision of quality education and consequently the products of the system.
  - vii. Inadequate funding: Inadequate funding of the OTM programme has been a problem in the implementation of quality teaching and learning in the programme and it continues to dominate discussion on the state of OTM in Nigeria. The situation has been further worsened by the current economic recession in the country and the state-owned institutions are the most hit by this development.
  - viii. Epileptic Power Supply: Power supply is one of the challenges affecting education across Nigeria. Unfortunately, tertiary institutions that are expected to use modern equipment in training their students are found handicapped because of epileptic power supply. In OTME, available resources are hardly used because of the power outage. In most tertiary institutions, students are not privileged to use available modern training facilities as there is no source of power.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Office Technology and Management is a specialized course of study that was designed to produce and sustain offices in both private and public organisations. It can be described as a work-oriented educational programme which aims at self-reliance and employer of labour. It also involves development of skills, competencies, attitudes and attributes to function effectively towards national development. Consequently, Office Technology and Management skills such as communication, human relations, emotional, entrepreneurship to mention but just a few is the right step in the right direction towards national development.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

In the light of the issues discussed above, the following recommendations are proffered.

1. Window dressing, a situation where some institutions hire ad-hoc staff and equipment for Accreditation Exercise should be discouraged.
2. Government should provide financial assistance to all OTME graduates who are interested in putting the acquired skills into practice i.e. those who want to be self-reliant rather than job seekers.
3. Entrepreneurship education should be inculcated into the school's curriculum to promote human empowerment and development through skill acquisition as a means of reducing unemployment.
4. OTME lecturers should always encourage the students to be innovative and contribute in the improvement of the economy after graduation instead of remaining idle waiting for paid jobs.
5. Workshops and Seminars should be organized to intimate lecturers in OTME of current trends in technology and competencies required to manage today's and tomorrow's office. The lecturers trained should in-turn transfer the knowledge to their students before graduating.
6. The Lecturers should be versatile in the use of new technologies and make use of them when teaching so that the students can develop their skills ready for self-employment.

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