

**OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT SKILL ACQUISITION FOR
NATIONAL AND MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT**

Being a Paper jointly presented

By

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Abstract

The development of any nation depends to a large extent on her manpower. In actual fact, manpower is the driving force of a nation's social and economic development. This study therefore investigated the impact of skill acquisition in Office Technology and Management (OTM) on the national and manpower development. The study was carried out in Ogun State of Nigeria. In carrying out the study, three research questions were generated from which the questionnaire used to gather data was developed. Two hundred (200) Office Managers (Secretaries) were selected from five tertiary institutions in Ogun State using simple random sampling technique. Also, two hundred copies of the questionnaire were produced and administered on the selected respondents. However, out of the number administered, one hundred and eighty (180) copies were filled and returned. The data collected was analysed using mean method. The study concluded that skill acquisition in Office Technology and Management is a cornerstone for national and manpower development. It was recommended that management of every organization should employ Office Managers who had been trained to man offices so as to achieve set goals and objectives.

Keywords: Office Technology and Management (OTM), Skill Acquisition, Office Manager.

Introduction

Office Technology and Management (OTM) formerly known as Secretarial Studies is an integral part of vocational and technical education where emphasis is placed on acquisition of skills for national development. 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 and manpower development.

Komolafe and Ajayi (2010) described Office Technology and Management (OTM) as work-oriented educational programme which aims at skills acquisition for paid employment, self-reliance or employer of labour. They went further to say that training in Office Technology and Management involves the acquisition and development of skills, competencies, attitudes and

attributes to be able to function effectively in the millennium office. Orija (2012) described Office Technology and Management (OTM) as a specialized course of study designed to produce manpower of different cadres (with ND and HND qualifications) that will maintain and sustain offices in both private and public organisations.

Iro-Idoro, Jolaade, Aladenusi and Ajibare (2012) asserted that it is important to equip undergraduates (OTM) in tertiary with the necessary skills that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant after the completion of their programmes. Self-reliance is to rely on one's ability to make a living; that is, to utilize an acquired tacit knowledge that has metamorphosed into resourcefulness and innovativeness.

Atakpa (2008) opined that the strength of any nation in all ramifications is dependent upon her strength in the use of technology. This assertion made Prachi (2018) to describe manpower (Human Capital) as the collective stock of skills, attributes, knowledge and expertise which further play an integral role in increasing the productivity of an organization. According to him, no organization survives if there are no employees who contribute their quota to its success and productivity since employees spend the maximum part of their day in offices and strive hard to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization which in effect contribute positively to the national and manpower development of a Nation.

Atueyi (2010) believed that the rapid advancement in technology and the new innovations are moving the world from industrial society to information society. Technology has evolved the functions of the office to rely on different types of improved and standardized equipment. It has also devised varied stages and concepts for effective communication within and outside the organization. These could be seen from the various societal needs and wants created by new technologies. As a result, the jingles have added more alphabets like "I" and "C"

to “T”. Today, the jingles now ring IT and ICT. According to her, the rapid pace of technological change opens new opportunities like e-business, which is the use of electronic means and platforms to conduct a company’s business. Others are e-commerce, e-purchasing, e-marketing, e-finance and e-service all use electronic means to do these practices on-line. These new opportunities pose challenges not only to OTM graduates but to humanity too. Also, Kotler (2004) in his view remarked that with faster communication, transportation and financial flows, the world is rapidly shrinking. He further noted that marketers have made a strategic decision to become part of the cyber bazaar. That is, they are using the web to reach new customers outside their home countries so support existing customers to live abroad. Electronic researchers are building smarter chips to make our cars, homes and offices more responsive to changing conditions. The blending of personal computers scanners, fax and copy machines, wireless phones, the internet and e-mail, has made it possible for people to ‘telecommute’, that is, work at home or on the road instead of travelling to the office.

Peter (2010) cited Osagie (1992) revealed that office education is a type of education that is concerned with the acquisition of the skills or office occupation, aptitudes, attitudes and knowledge for carrying out successfully, the functions in the office. Ngenegbo (2002) posited that employees must possess relevant employable skills to fit into labour market. Furthermore, Peter (2010) cited Okwuanaso (1992) that many changes are taking place in the way tasks are performed in the modern office. These changes show a continued office revolution in future. According to him, the up-to-date office educations programme must also prepare students for the modern processes of storing and retrieving data, for the way mail is processed and for the way word processing is accelerating production and transmission of letters and other documents. Employers and customers seek graduates who are not afraid of change and who can adapt to changes and will continue to be part of office scene. Change is the order of the day and the new

office education graduate must be prepared to cope with it. He went further to say that the office education graduate is expected to be competent in performing basic skills. Employers and customers have not reduced their demand for graduates who are competent in the use of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and proper word choice and who can express themselves well both orally and in writing. Listening skills are also essential. The ability to follow directions and accurately collect fact and information to be stored and later retrieved are important skills.

Today the greater need is for editing skills that go far beyond what we normally thought of as proofreading. Office education graduates are no longer expected only to detect errors and to know how to correct them, they should have the ability to edit the letter or document as well. Emphasis on those basic skills is a must. There is no acceptable substitute for proficiency in office management since Office Managers are experts in utilizing Basic Skills, Administrative Skills, Communication Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Manipulative skills, Innovative Skills, Creative Skills and Computational Skills for performance. All these would enhance both national and manpower development.

Statement of the Problem

The development of any nation depends to a large extent on her human resources. In actual fact, no nation could develop without competent and skilled manpower. Office Technology and Management programme is a course designed to produce highly skilled manpower that could be self-reliant and contribute meaningfully to national development. Unfortunately this area of knowledge has not been given proper attention by government at all levels. This has been affecting the social and economic development of Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of skill acquisition in Office Technology and Management on National and Manpower development. The specific objectives were:

1. To identify various skills required by OTM graduates for effective job performance for National and Manpower Development.
2. To determine how OTM skills could enhance job performance of Office Managers towards National and Manpower Development.
3. To determine the extent acquisition of OTM skills could lead to National and Manpower Development.

Research Questions

1. What are the skills required by OTM graduates for National and Manpower Development?
2. In what ways could acquisition of OTM skills enhance job performance of Office Managers (Secretaries)?
3. To what extent does acquisition of OTM Skills enhance National and Manpower Development?

Methodology

The study was a survey and carried out in Ogun State, Nigeria. The population used for the study comprised of OTM graduates (Office Managers) working in five tertiary institutions in Ogun State. A total number of two hundred (200) respondents (forty from each institution) were selected using simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire was the main instrument used

to gather data for the study. The instrument consists of sixteen-question items seeking information on the impact of skill acquisition in OTM on National and Manpower Development. The instrument was validated by experts in Office Technology and Management as well as Human Resources Management. Respondents were asked to choose one out of the four options (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) provided for each item of the questionnaire.

Two hundred (200) questionnaires were administered on the respondents out of which one hundred and eighty (180) copies were duly filled and returned. Forty (40) questionnaires were collected from The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro; thirty seven (37) from the Federal College of Education, Osiele, thirty six (36) from the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, thirty four (34) from Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu Ode and thirty three (33) from Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo.

For the purpose of analysis, values were assigned to the four options provided in the Instrument as follows: Strongly Agree = 4 marks; Agree = 3 marks; Disagree = 2 marks and Strongly Disagree = 1 mark. Mean method was used to analyse the data collected. A minimum of 2.5 mean score was set as standard for acceptability or otherwise of the research question raised on the study. Any research question scored below the set standard was rejected.

Results

Table 1: Mean rating of the respondents' responses on the skills required by OTM graduates for national and manpower development.

Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remarks
Skills required by OTM graduates for National and Manpower Development							
1. Communication skills.	140	23	10	7	180	3.64	Accepted
2. Human relations skills	150	11	9	10	180	3.67	Accepted
3. Computational skills.	140	40	-	-	180	3.77	Accepted
4. Leadership skills.	100	50	10	-	180	3.16	Accepted
5. Problem solving skills	140	20	20	10	180	3.16	Accepted
6. Emotional skills	170	10	-	-	180	3.94	Accepted
7. Team work skills	155	25	-	-	180	3.86	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Data collected and analysed in table one showed that all the items raised on the skills required by OTM graduates were relevant to national and manpower development. This was attested to from the responses of the respondents with the mean score of not less than 2.5 in all the items raised on the research question one.

Table 2: Mean rating of the respondents' responses on ways through which acquisition of OTM skills could enhance job performance of Office Managers (secretaries) for national and manpower development.

Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remarks
Ways through which OTM skills could enhance job performance of Office Managers							
8. Emotional skills help to control one's temperament when relating with others.	144	36	-	-	180	3.8	Accepted
9. Application of leadership skills leads to team work and achievement of set goals.	86	94	-	-	180	3.5	Accepted
10. Better understanding is achieved through effective communication skills.	90	90	-	-	180	3.5	Accepted
11. Team work is enhanced through human relations skills.	176	4	-	-	180	3.9	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The data presented and analysed in table two also showed that all the items raised on the ways through which acquisition of OTM skills could enhance job performance of Office Managers for national and manpower development were upheld. This was attested to from the responses of the respondents with the mean score of not less than 2.5 in all the items raised on the research question two.

Table 3: Mean rating of the respondents' responses on the extent to which acquisition of OTM skills could lead to National and Manpower Development

Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Remarks
Extent to which skill acquisition in OTM could lead to national and manpower development							
12. It enables graduates to be self-reliant.	117	63		-	180	3.65	Accepted
13. It contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a nation.	156	24	-	-	180	3.87	Accepted
14. It leads to global competitiveness	118	62	-	-	180	3.66	Accepted
15. It reduces social vices.	119	61	-	-	180	3.66	Accepted
16. It increases government revenue through tax payment.	90	90	-	-	180	3.5	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The data collected and analysed in table three also showed that all the items raised on the extent to which acquisition of OTM skills could lead to national and manpower development were upheld. This was attested to from the responses of the respondents with the mean score of not less than 2.5 in all the items raised on the research question three.

Discussion

The first research question sought to determine the skills required by OTM graduates for national and manpower development. From the data collected and analysed using mean method, all the respondents agreed that acquisition of OTM skills is a veritable tool for national and manpower development. The outcome of this study was in line with Peter (2010) that office education graduate is expected to be competent in performing basic skills. He remarked further

that employers and customers have not reduced their demand for graduates who are competent in the use of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and proper word choice and who can express themselves well both orally and in writing. He highlighted that listening skills are also essential; the ability to follow directions and accurately collect fact and information to be stored and later retrieved are important skills. Emphasis were also placed that greater is the need for editing skills that go far beyond what we normally thought of as proofreading. Office education graduates are no longer expected only to detect errors and to know how to correct them, they should have the ability to edit the letter or document as well.

The second research question sought to know the ways acquisition of OTM skills could enhance the job performance of Office Managers (Secretaries). Based on the data collected and analysed using mean method, all the respondents believed that all the items raised on the ways through which acquisition of OTM skills could enhance job performance of Office Managers for national and manpower development were upheld. The outcome of this study was in line with Ngenegbo (2002) assertion that employees must possess relevant employable skills to fit into labour market. Peter (2010) corroborates this that office education (OTM) graduate is expected to be competent in performing basic skills. Also, Komolafe and Ajayi (2010) believed vividly that Office Technology and Management (OTM) as work-oriented educational programme which aims at skills acquisition for paid employment, self-reliance or employer of labour, involves the acquisition and development of skills, competencies, attitudes and attributes to be able to function effectively in the millennium office.

The third research question sought to investigate the extent acquisition of OTM Skills have enhanced National and Manpower Development. The data collected and analysed for the study, using mean method revealed that all the items raised on the extent to which acquisition of

OTM skills could lead to national and manpower development were upheld. The outcome of this study was in line with Atakpa's (2008) view that the strength of any nation in all ramifications is dependent upon her strength in the use of technology. Also, O' Keefe (2008) submitted that there is the need to ensure that those coming through education and those currently in the workforce have the right skills for this evolving sector thereby they contribute to the national and manpower development of a nation positively. Prachi (2018) corroborates that manpower (Human Capital) as the collective stock of skills, attributes, knowledge and expertise plays an integral role in increasing the productivity of an organization. According to him, no organization survives if there are no employees who contribute their quota to its success and productivity since employees spend the maximum part of their day in offices and strive hard to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization which in effect contribute positively to the national and manpower development of a Nation.

Conclusion

Office Technology and Management is a specialized course of study that was designed to produce manpower that will maintain and sustain offices in both private and public organisations. It can be described as a work-oriented educational programme which aims at skill acquisition for paid employment, self-reliance and employer of labour. It also involves acquisition and development of skills, competencies, attitudes and attributes to function effectively towards national and manpower development.

Consequently, acquisition of Office Technology and Management skills such as communication, human relations, assertiveness, emotional to mention but just a few is the right step in the right direction towards national and manpower development.

There is no doubt that the quality of manpower in a country determines to a large extent on her social, economic and political development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made on this study.

- ❖ The Federal and State governments should focus more attention on Office Technology and Management Programme through provision of funds for procurement of facilities for institutions running the course.
- ❖ Office Managers (Secretaries) should try as much as possible to update their knowledge through training and other developmental programmes
- ❖ Government at all levels should provide enabling environment for OTM graduates who are desirous of being job creators rather than job seekers.
- ❖ The management of organisations (Employers of Labour) should employ Office Managers who are experts and skilled in office management to man offices so as to achieve set goals and objectives.

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