

The Challenges of Office Technology and Management Skills in Nigeria

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Article Info

Volume 82

Page Number: 13697 – 13702

Publication Issue:

January-February 2020

Article History

Article Received: 18 May 2019

Revised: 14 July 2019

Accepted: 22 December 2019

Publication: 24 February 2020

Abstract

This paper talked about a portion of the difficulties looked by the Office Technology and Management Skills in Nigeria because of present mechanical changes today, the innovative changes has transformed numerous callings so as to meet the current worldwide changes in numerous territories for example higher profitability, speed, precision, paperless office and superb routine office work, bundling and so forth. At the presentation, the paper characterized expertise, office innovation and the board just as its difficulties, joblessness, part of office mechanization, it further featured a portion of the elements that upset office innovation and the executives aptitudes (graduates). Suggestions was likewise made on how such difficulties can be address. At last, end was offered for the foundation offering the OTM courses to receive the current worldwide changes in order to rebuild their educational plan to satisfy the worldwide guideline and for palatable employment exhibitions and individual satisfaction in the worldwide work advertise.

Keywords: *Challenges, Office, Technology, Management Skills*

I. INTRODUCTION

The modern office has gone through series of technological changes in recent years, as a result of growth and importance of information and communication technology. Today, virtually all office and business functions are being facilitated via advanced automated equipment and system. It is evident in recent times that the great impact of information and communication technology can be said to be on business education programmes, of which OTM is an off-shoot. However, it is not understatement that despite the potentials of ICT to OTM profession, very little has been achieved in whichever level of institutions offering OTM programme in Nigeria. Some of the problems include: inadequate ICT infrastructure, over dependence of educational institutions on government for funding, inadequate teaching skills and methods.

As the name implies Office Technology and Management Skill, are those type skills acquired after passing through the rigorous training in the former Secretarial studies course which comprises of Typewriting now (Keyboarding) office practice, records management, web page design, desktop publishing to mention but a few. The nomenclature of the course was change by the Polytechnics regulatory body National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) in Nigeria, due to the global technological changes and the review of the curriculum at both Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The OTM course was introduced in order to boost the secretarial courses and to enable the Secretarial studies (OTM) graduate to be self-reliant. The course was offered at both National Diploma and Higher National Diploma level in the Polytechnics. The course gives the student theory and practical knowledge of becoming some qualified office secretaries. The course is a

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complete activity-based educational programme which is more of acquisition of office technology and management skills, understandings, attitudes, work habits and competencies that are necessary for the secretarial and office management occupations.

After the review of the OTM curriculum, much emphasis was given to ICT rather than Keyboarding or Typewriting and others with the sole aim of proving effective manpower that can manage various offices at both technology and managerial aspect in the organizations.

The knowledge and skills acquired enable the OTM graduate to operate computer and other ICT related effectively ranging from web page design, desk top publishing, records management, word processing etc.

The OTM programme was re-design for the following major reasons, the desire of secretarial studies student, the practitioners need to change the name of the programme and being in a digital era where documents are stored in electronic form Adelakingy (2009). He added that also as a result of change in curriculum in which ICT and management was given much emphasis so as to equip the students with the necessary needed in today's modern office.

II. THE SKILLS AND THE OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

Skill is said to be a knowledgeable response, after acquiring a particular training which will enable that person the capability to accomplish a particular task so as to achieve a specific objective Daniel (2006). Ekpenyong (1988) it is the ability of using one's knowledge effectively and readily in effecting of performance; technical expertness, a power or habit of doing any particular thing competently. Therefore, OTM can said to be a skill that encompasses practical knowledge with intelligence, expertise, dexterity and the capability to execute a function which could be acquired or learnt in school. The acquisition of practical skills can be classified in two forms learners' behaviour and their

willingness towards learning that skill to its highest level of expectation for beneficial employment in the global labour market. Furthermore, the OTM course offers skills, knowledge and attitudes that are necessary for effective employment in secretarial and management occupations. Merriam Webster Dictionary (2013) defines skill as the ability of coming from one's knowledge practice or aptitude to do something well.

The skills needed necessary by the OTM students as outline by the NBTE in its curriculum are office skills, managerial skills, entrepreneurial skills, ICT skills, communication skills and socio psychological skills. (Ojukwu, 2009) added that all the above mentioned skills could be acquired from the courses offered by the OTM students. OTM skill is technical skill which is purely of basic secretarial duties in the office. The technical skills of OTM include keyboarding skills, and shorthand skills. According to FGN (2004) it is expected that on graduation OTM students should possess the office skills such as shorthand, typing and bookkeeping. They are also required to be able to write in shorthand for some minutes perfectly and transcribed it on the typewriter accurately. They are also expected to type good office job with a high degree of accuracy.

III. CONCEPT OF OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

The OTM route offers making equipped in keyboarding knowledge and file arranging utilising a word – dealing with software utility effectively as workplace tasks to create capabilities in language aptitudes and archive era. As indicated via utilising Oyinkoye and Oluwalola (2010), administrative center technology and administration is an additional category that developed to supplant the previous Secretarial experiences program and become presented with the help of the national Board for Technical schooling (NBTE) in 2004 that is a frame that controls the polytechnics movements in the course of the nation. The exchange was meant

to make this system and its beneficiaries more ICT instructors and to ample fit into the universe of labor surely, primarily on this decreasing discipline time of globalization, where apparatus and new machines are developing every day. The Committee on study and Publications of the American Vocational organization in Esene (2013) characterised OTM (Secretarial reports) as instruction purported to create aptitudes, capacities, understandings, frames of mind, work propensities and thank you enveloping statistics and facts required via workers to enter and benefit ground in paintings on a helpful and beneficial premise.

OTM application includes the style towards controlling and commencing the scholars to relaxed the relevant aptitudes, actualities, data, propensities and frames of thoughts to be competent to make them co – exist with others as valuable and valuable individuals from the bulk. It's a software of steering meant to outfit its beneficiaries with understanding and aptitudes for mighty paintings. Nwabuona (2010) portrayed the OTM application as focusing on blend of place of job statistics specialized aptitudes with enough and predominant enterprise data in taking care of authoritative troubles. He observed that the objective is to supply 1/2 and half of authoritative specialists to react to the requests of a dynamic and enormously mechanized artwork neighborhood. At the same time Komolafe and Ajani (2010), OTM is a piece geared up instructive program that focuses on abilities obtaining which can be priceless and employable within the work show off. They similarly incorporated that this approach is meant to development member's aptitudes, capacities, getting, demeanors, artwork propensities and force about enveloping data and understanding required through people with a view to input and enhance in art work on a invaluable and gainful base. Place of work technological know-how and administration software in this manner, is an instructive software implied for the securing of data, competencies workplace morals and skills predicted to installation the persons to enter priceless work in

specific enterprise and workplace career. It is an right application of appear at which constructs its members and graduates to have the option to contribute definitively to country wide progress. It is a section of industry education and clearly proficient and specialised practise. Alumni of the application on the polytechnics in Nigeria are granted country wide Diploma following two years of stories and a bigger national Diploma testament at the development level blended with an Industrial training involvement with between the two initiatives of study.

Place of business technology and administration application throughout the past

within the previous times, the natural approaches for preparing for getting capable secretaries at some factor of Nigeria used to be sincere and crude. Its educational plan changed into inadequately all set on this means proscribing its diploma for essentially the most phase to administrative administrations like; typing, sound composing and interpretation, managing sends, accepting calls to make reference to but a couple.

Administrative center technology and management program today

The presentation of ICT and the international mechanical changes, have disappointed manufacturer and office advantages such plenty of that OTM calling has gotten vaster and soliciting for. This is in view that paintings of the expert secretary has changed from the usual office common of caring for sends physically, to the usage of contemporary place of business tactics, and the usage of sophisticated place of business hardware. Oueyiola (2005) likewise included that OTM program that fulfills the modern-day wishes of the company worldwide and the problems of the places of labor is on the length of records preparing/corporation and correspondence, keyboarding, word managing and human loved ones individuals skills. Thus, the prior insufficiencies in

extension and constitution have virtually furnished procedure to properly-gear up and composed software of research furnished in Polytechnics, faculties of education and Universities at some point of Nigeria. Among the publications it offers are; phrase managing, understanding getting ready, secretarial responsibilities, workplace the executives and severa others.

IV. CHALLENGES OF OTM PROGRAMME

It is interesting to note that while computer and other modern office equipment have been instrumental in changing the way business and office routine operate in Nigeria, they seem to have had little effect on the OTM programme in many institutions in Nigeria. The following are some of the related issues and challenges:

✓ **Quality and Quantity of OTM Lecturers:**

Lecturers are regarded as the soul of any school. The quality of education in any nation is reflected by the quality of people who serve as teachers (lecturers) in its educational system.

One disturbing phenomenon is that most institution that mount OTM programme across the country (Nigeria) employ the services of unqualified personnel's. The implication is that learners' skills are not adequately made-to-order to suit the demand of the present world of work. In another view, people are of the said, "poorly trained teachers will no doubt produce poorly trained doctors, engineers, lawyers, architects, lecturers and the like".

Therefore, appropriate mechanism which will accord OTM lecturers the opportunity for training and upgrading their skills and methods from time to time be put in place. While on the quantity of OTM lecturers in Nigeria, there is clear severe shortage of lecturers in the institutions. One major reason is that, the demand for qualified OTM graduate is higher than the supply.

✓ **Quality of OTM Graduates:**

To this effect, there is no much changes in the curriculum of OTM in Nigeria except the recent review made by the National Board for Technical Education Board (NBTE). The minimum standard given for OTM programme is not adequately responsive to the present technological changes, as such; the OTM graduate are not adequately skilled to cope with the quality needed in the global labour market of today.

✓ **Quality of Quantity of OTM Facilities**

It is important to note that the teaching of OTM courses at both secondary and tertiary levels is lacking of adequate and functional facilities as well as instructional materials such as model office, lecture classes, text books, typewriters, shorthand laboratories, ICT facilities, most especially computers, and where they exist the problem of power supply is another major problem which makes its existence of little or no significance to both lecturers and the students. As such this what leads lectures to be theory and skipping the practical, this save as a major challenge to the OTM profession. It is only with the help of NCCE and TET Fund little changes was introducing. Since the time the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in Nigeria introduces this OTM programme, most of the graduates appeared not to be competent in the use of ICT facilities in the office. Looking at the curriculum which is more of ICT and that of modern office. This has negatively affect the idea of introducing the new programme. In the same line Okoro (2013) asserted that both HND and ND graduates do not have adequate competency in ICT application in their place of work. This can equally be seeing as to the quality of OTM graduates. This could lead to the issue of the provision of teaching and learning equipment and resources in the Nigerian Polytechnics that offers OTM.

Today, computer and other modern office equipment had brought tremendous changes to the performance and development of OTM, because computer can be seen as a device of transmitting man's knowledge of a specific law with the help of his or her skills into real object so as to bring global changes. It is the machine which is capable of taking input data, sorting, processing, storing as well as given out the processed data as information for human use.

The OTM faces drastic technological changes this is because computer has make many work admirable and enjoyable by civilizing the input and output of many office work. The introduction of computer and other modern office machines has replaced many concepts in OTM, and develop the system of the routine work and increase production of work in today's organizations.

✓ Student Enrolment

The most common problem of Nigerian tertiary institutions today is that of students' enrolment that favours other disciplines to the detriment of OTM programme. Despite the laudable objectives of this programme, the society is yet to accord this aspect of education its rightful place. To this effect, no particular programme at the Nigerian institution has the required number of students admitted. This resulted to a situation that practical is not being given adequately in the institutions where the practical equipment was provided.

✓ Opportunity for Advancement

Another challenge face by the OTM programme to day in Nigeria is that of opportunity for advancement of OTM education unlike its peers in other sector of education, the opportunity is limited. Only few Universities in Nigeria offer Secretarial Studies/Administration at bachelor degree. The opportunity for advancement of OTM programme need to be given like other peers of educational sector.

V. CONCLUSION

The overall educational system should be adequately funded. However, much success in this regards will depend on the institutions ability to collaborate with private sector, or seek alternative funding sources through community adequate participation, since it is obvious that government alone cannot cater for the need of education sector.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

As per the above presentation, the following recommendations are made:

1. NBTE as the body that regulates the polytechnic programmes in Nigeria (NBTE), should re-evaluate the programme for current teaching and learning of office technology and management courses so as to cope with the present technological changes.
2. Provision of modern teaching and learning facilities should be made by the Federal/State Government.
3. Staff of OTM department be sponsored from time to time in attending seminars, workshops, conferences and training.
4. The facilities provided need to be improved as well as the lecture room.

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