

CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT CURRICULUM IN NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines those challenges that affect curriculum development and implementation of Office Technology and Management Programmes in achieving its main objectives. Achieving programmes objectives becomes a mirage if the implementation is faulty due to shortcomings and other inadequacies which have been the bane of most of the educational programmes in Nigeria. Office Technology and Management is a new academic programme that replaces the erstwhile secretarial studies in Nigeria which seeks to equip its recipients with the relevant knowledge and skills that are needed in this dynamic world of ours. The survey design was used and Data collected were analyzed. The random sampling technique was used for getting the respondents for the study. It was found out that the curriculum of Office Technology and Management, if well implemented, will, to a large extent address most of the issues and fears raised by stakeholders. Based on this, it was recommended among others that all stakeholders and management of institutions running Office Technology and Management programme in Nigeria should fund the programme adequately so as to ensure the availability of functional equipment and other resources that are needed in order to overcome the seemingly challenges that arise in the course of implementing the programme as stipulated in the curriculum.

Key words: Challenges, Curriculum Development and Implementation, Technology, Management, institutions.

Introduction

Office Technology is the application of scientific devices and systems to facilitate and enhance the information processes and delivery of same. It is also used as a concept that is associated with office automation, electronic technology and office

globalization. Office Technology and Management is a new academic programme in Nigeria Polytechnics designed to replace the Secretarial Studies programme. The need to prepare and make students of Secretarial Studies competent, skillful and employable in the world of work, which is being driven by technological programme in Nigerian Polytechnics gave birth to Office Technology and Management (OTM).

The Office Technology and Management programme is designed to equip students with Secretarial skills for employment in various fields of endeavour. Akwa & Pavol (2009) citing NBTE (2004) asserted that in addition to the acquisition of Vocational Skills in Office Technology and Management the students are equipped with effective work competencies and socio-psychological work skills which are very essential in everyday interaction with people. The aim and objective of the curriculum is to make effective use of Microsoft, desktop publishing and other publication softwares, design webpage for modern office, organize data using spreadsheet and data base management software and acquire the ability to interact with clients, co-workers, vendors and general public using online facilities among others.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to:

1. Identify the current challenges on the implementation of Office Technology and Management curriculum in Nigeria Polytechnics.
2. Review the strategies for implementing the curriculum of OTM in Nigeria Polytechnics.
3. Identify other areas where OTM curriculum can be further enriched.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study:

1. Are there challenges on the implementation of the OTM curriculum in Nigeria Polytechnics?
2. Are there strategies that can be adopted for the implementation of OTM curriculum in Nigeria Polytechnics?
3. Are there areas where OTM curriculum could further be enriched?

Curriculum Development in Office Technology and Management

The current Office Technology and Management (OTM) curriculum came into existence and became operational in 2005. The curriculum was developed to replace the former Secretarial Studies when the programmes courses became obsolete due to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in performing office duties. In the words of Oludele and Dosunmu (2015), the curriculum was designed to replace the former Secretarial Studies curriculum when the latter was found to be grossly inadequate for the demands of information age. The curriculum consists of four main components:

1. General Studies Courses;
2. Professional Courses;
3. Foundation Courses; and
4. Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES)

Okolocha and Ihionkhan (2015) noted that in a bid to meet the curriculum change, some courses in the Secretarial Studies curriculum were removed and new ones like Introduction to Business, Keyboarding (former Typewriting) ICT related courses, Records Management, Research Methodology, Career Development amongst others were added. Though Shorthand and Typewriting were retained in the new curriculum, they were watered down greatly in terms of credit units and contact hours (NBTE, 2005). To meet up with the information age, the

curriculum was loaded with ICT and Management related courses.

Oludele and Dosumu (2015) described curriculum implementation as a network of varying activities involved in translating curriculum design into classroom activities and changing people's attitude to accept and participate in these activities. The course specification as given by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) is highlighted below:

Table 1: Course Outline for ND I, First Semester

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
GNS 101	Use of English I	1	1	2
GNS 111	Citizenship Education	1	1	2
BAM 111	Introduction to Business	2	1	3
OTM 111	Shorthand I	2	2	4
OTM 113	Information and Communication Technology I	1	3	4**
COM 101	Introduction to Computer	1	3	4**
OTM 114	Office Practice I	1	3	4
OTM 112	Touch Keyboarding I	2	2	4

Note:

T	-	Theory
P	-	Practical
CH	-	Credit Hour

Table 2: Course Outline for ND I, Second Semester

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
GNS 102	Communication in English I	2	2	4
GNS 121	Citizenship Education II	1	1	2
OTM 123	Information and Communication Technology II	1	2	4**
BAM 126	Practice of Entrepreneurship	1	2	3**
BAM 113	Principles of Law	1	1	2
OTM 126	Career Development	2	2	4
OTM 114	Office Practice I	1	3	4
OTM 121	Shorthand II	2	2	4
OTM 124	Modern Office Technology	1	3	4
OTM 121	Keyboarding II	2	2	4

Table 3: Course Outline for ND II, First Semester

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
GNS 201	Use of English II	2	2	4
OTM 228	Research Technique	2	2	4
OTM 211	Shorthand III	1	3	4
OTM 215	Office Practice II	1	3	4
OTM 212	Desktop Publishing	1	3	4**
ACC 111	Principles of Accounting	1	3	4**
OTM 215	Keyboarding III	2	2	4
OTM 213	Records Management	2	2	4
OTM 217	Report Writing	1	1	2**
SWS101	Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme		4	4

Table 4: Course Outline for ND II, Second Semester

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
GNS 202	Communication in English II	2	2	4
OTM 222	Peoples Communication Skills	1	1	2**
BAM 114	Principles of Economics	2	1	3
OTM 223	Web Page Design	1	3	4**
OTM 226	Practice of Meeting	1	1	2**
OTM 227	Keyboarding IV	1	3	4**
OTM 298	Project		4	4

Table 5: Course Outline for HND I, First Semester

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 311	Shorthand IV	2	6	8
OTM 313	ICT Office Application I	2	2	4**
OTM 314	Office Administration and Management I	2	2	4
OTM 312	Business Communication I	2	2	4
GNS 411	Social Psychology	2	2	4
BAM 214	Business Law	1	3	4

Table 6: Course Outline for HND I, Second Semester

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 321	Business Communication II	2	2	4
OTM 322	ICT Office Application II	2	6	8**
OTM 323	Office Administration and Management II	2	2	4**
OTM 324	Research Methods	1	3	4

OTM 325	Professional Career Development	2	2	4
BAM 324	Human Capital Management	2	2	4
BAM 427	Nigeria Labour Law	2	2	4

Table 7: Course Outline for HND II, First Semester

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 411	Advanced Transcription	1	3	4**
OTM 402	Literary Appreciation and Oral Composition	1	1	2
OTM 413	Database Management Systems	1	3	4**
OTM 414	Oral Composition Skills	1	3	4
OTM 415	Advanced Desktop Publishing	2	6	8**
BAM 224	Elements of Human Capital Management	2	1	3

Table 8: Course Outline for HND II, Second Semester

Course Code	Course Title	T	P	CH
OTM 423	Management Information Systems II	1	3	4**
OTM 424	Professional Ethics and Social Responsibility	2	2	4
BAM 426	Entrepreneurship Development	2	2	4**
OTM 425	Advanced Webpage Design	2	6	8**
OTM 422	Project		4	4

**** Newly introduced courses**

The features of the curriculum at this level were the inculcation of more subjects that make the recipient to be more useful.

Challenges of Curriculum Development and Implementation

The Polytechnics in Nigeria have used this OTM programme for some years, yet some graduates of the programme seem not to be competent in the usage of ICT facilities in the office (Osakwe & Akhilele 2023). Considering that the curriculum for OTM is ICT based tailored towards the needs of the modern office (Ugwuanyi, 2012). This negates the idea of

introducing the programme which is aimed at improving the quality of the graduates of the programme. This is in line with the observations of Okoro (2013) who noted that indications emerging from the world of work indicate that the ND and HND graduates do not seem to show adequate competency in ICT application in their place of work.

Resource provision is imperative in every institution offering OTM. Provision of resources includes both human and material resources. Lack of fund is a major challenge experienced in Nigerian Polytechnics. OTM department in any polytechnic in Nigeria is capital intensive especially with the introduction of the new curriculum. In some Polytechnics, there is dearth of human and material resources for teaching the OTM courses. In a study carried out by Amiaya, (2018), found out that OTM programme faces the problem of inadequacy of ICT resources and had hampered the acquisition of knowledge and skills expected to prepare the learners for the world of work. Ojukwu (2009) equally opines that some Polytechnics do not have enough ICT resources to competently deliver ICT related courses in OTM programme being implemented nationwide. There are insufficient computers in some Polytechnics, where they exist, they are fewer in number. When the required resources are not provided, teaching and learning and by implication, Implementation of the curriculum will be seriously hampered since the students will not receive sufficient training as a result of inadequate attention paid to practical of the ICT skills. In another study carried out by Amiaya (2018) on integrating new technologies into the OTM curriculum, challenges and strategies, Amiaya (2018) found out that among others are lack of new technologies, non-possession of skills in the utilization of the facilities by the lecturers, poor electricity supply are the challenges militating against curriculum implementation. Effective teaching and learning demand that the

teacher must have a mastery of the skills. It is however worrisome when the lecturer expected to impact the requisite skills lacks the ability to perform those skills. This invariable will lead to poor master of the skills by the students.

Aims and Objectives of the Curriculum Development and Implementation

The aim and objective of the curriculum are as follows:

1. Effective use of the Microsoft, desktop publishing and other publication software.
2. Design webpage for modern office.
3. Organizing data using spreadsheet and database management software.
4. Acquiring abilities to interact with clients, co-workers, vendors and general public using online facilities among others (Umukoro, 2014).

Challenges of Curriculum Development and Implementation

Implementing the new, long awaited ICT driven OTM curriculum was aimed at producing graduates who would be able to effectively manage the electronic driven office and graduates who would be equipped with Secretarial and office skills for employment in various fields of endeavour. The new curriculum of Office Technology and Management has no doubt come with some challenges that must be met by both the teachers and the students in order to achieve the general objectives of the programme. The resources namely, human, material and financial which are the basic requirements for the attainment of the objective of the new programme are not adequate.

Methodology

The survey design was used for the study. The population of the study was made up of all academic staff, secretaries, office staff and final year students of Office Technology and

Management in Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe-Oghara, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Federal Polytechnic, Oko, and Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi Uku. Using the random sampling technique, a sample of 80 respondents was used for the study. Questionnaires were the main instrument used for the study and was validated by experts.

The items for the questionnaire were structured in such a way that respondents expressed their candid opinion in a five point Likert rating scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and undecided. The data collected were analyzed using mean ratings and standard deviation to answer each of the three research questions. The mean of the responses to each item was computed and interpreted based on the statistical real limits of the numbers as follows:

Strongly Agreed	5 points
Agree	4 points
Disagree	3 points
Strongly Disagree	2 points
Undecided	1 point

In taking decision for the research questions, a mean score of 3.00 and above was considered as ‘agree’ while a mean score below it was considered as ‘disagree’.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: Are there challenges on the implementation of Office Technology and Management curriculum in Nigeria?

Table 9: Rating and Standard Deviation of respondents on the challenges of OTM curriculum implementation

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	U	X	SD	DECISION
1.	Arbitrary implementation of OTM	24	29	10	7	10	3.63	1.33	Agreed
2.	Teacher overwork	13	21	29	14	3	3.34	1.05	Agreed
3.	Inadequate supply of ICT	28	25	20	6	1	3.91	1.00	Agreed

	equipment and facilities								
4.	Poorly equipped libraries, laboratories and lecture rooms	27	26	19	7	1	3.89	1.01	Agreed
5.	Inadequate classroom accommodation	34	26	12	7	1	4.06	1.02	Agreed
6.	Poor societal attitude	21	26	22	6	5	3.65	1.13	Agreed
7.	Dearth of qualified teachers/ personnel to integrate computer into learning areas	19	28	15	9	9	3.49	1.27	Agreed
8.	Unstable teaching staff	15	20	31	14	0	3.45	0.99	Agreed
9.	The poor state of the economy	22	34	14	9	1	3.84	0.99	Agreed
10.	Corruption	20	27	21	11	1	3.68	1.03	Agreed
11.	Scarcity and prohibitive cost of books	14	25	27	12	2	3.46	1.02	Agreed
12.	Unfavourable government policy	31	31	11	6	1	4.06	0.97	Agreed
13.	Incessant strike actions	52	14	11	2	1	4.43	0.91	Agreed
14.	Epileptic power supply	35	23	15	5	2	4.05	1.05	Agreed

Table 9 shows that, a large number of the respondents agreed that there are challenges in the implementation of OTM curriculum. This is so because all items have mean rating of not less than 3.00.

Research Question 2: Are there strategies that can be adopted for the implementation of OTM curriculum in Nigerian Polytechnics?

Table 10: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of respondents strategies for the implementation of OTM curriculum.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	U	X	SD	Decision
1.	Employment of qualified and competent teachers	31	33	10	5	1	4.10	0.93	Agreed
2.	Training and retraining of teachers/ personnel through regular workshops/conferences	37	30	7	4	2	4.20	0.97	Agreed
3.	Consistency in government policy	32	27	11	8	2	3.99	1.08	Agreed

4.	Improved funding	24	26	16	6	8	3.65	1.26	Agreed
5.	Properly equipped automated instructional equipment	35	26	8	7	4	4.01	1.16	Agreed
6.	Development of new methods of instructions by lecturers	35	30	9	2	4	4.12	1.04	Agreed
7.	Dedication on the part of lecturers	27	41	4	4	4	4.04	1.01	Agreed
8.	Organised teacher development programme	32	32	4	5	7	3.96	1.22	Agreed
9.	Ownership of personal computer by every OTM Lecturer	26	31	13	5	5	3.85	1.13	Agreed
10.	Effective evaluation system	32	28	12	2	6	3.98	1.15	Agreed
11.	Institution-Industry collaboration	20	36	11	6	7	3.70	1.16	Agreed
12.	Provision of adequate training facilities and equipment	37	25	9	6	3	4.09	1.07	Agreed

Table 10 shows that all the respondents agree with all statements as reflected in their mean scores of not less than 3.00 in all items. This implies that data presented in the above table shows that all the items raised could serve as good strategies for the implementation of OTM curriculum in Nigeria Polytechnics. Research question 3: Are there areas where Office Technology and Management curriculum could further be enriched?

Table 11: Mean rating and Standard Deviation of respondents on further improvement on OTM curriculum

S/ N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	U	X	SD	Decision
1.	Application package	34	36	6	2	2	4.23	0.88	Agreed

	for graphics								
2.	Word Processing	38	34	3	3	2	4.29	0.90	Agreed
3.	Corporate Administration	37	32	8	1	2	4.26	0.88	Agreed
4.	Corporate Governance	28	36	10	2	4	4.03	1.01	Agreed
5.	More courses on Entrepreneurial Education	30	31	12	6	1	4.04	0.97	Agreed
6.	Computer Programming	36	35	6	2	1	4.29	0.81	Agreed
7.	Basic Networking	32	22	9	4	2	4.11	0.96	Agreed
8.	ICT Maintenance and repairs	35	31	4	5	5	4.08	1.14	Agreed
9.	Software/Application Package Installation	41	26	6	4	3	4.23	1.04	Agreed
10.	Computer Safety Package	32	32	6	7	3	4.04	1.08	Agreed

The data presented above shows that a large number of the respondents agreed that all the above listed courses should be included in OTM curriculum in order to further enrich the programme. This could be adjudged from the fact that all the items show a mean of not less than 3.00.

Discussion of Findings

In the process of carrying out this study, the following findings were made:

1. There are challenges in the in the implementation of the Office Technology and Management curriculum in Nigerian Polytechnics.
2. That the strategy currently being used for implementing the OTM curriculum is not ideal enough to get the desired results.
3. That there are areas where OTM curriculum can further be enriched.

The result of the findings also pointed out to the fact that the content of the OTM curriculum still needs to be enriched with

other beneficiary courses. Olawole (2018) remarked that vocational education philosophy was built on the production of graduates who will be equipped with all necessary skills and knowledge that will not only enable them fit into already existing job opportunity in the society but will also empower them with skills that will enable them establish their own business and if possible create job opportunities for others.

Conclusion

No doubt, the new curriculum in OTM is timely when the flux in technology and environment is challenging the present curriculum. The OTM graduates of today are not only required to have theoretical and practical knowledge and skills in ICT, computer operations, internet connectivity, but are also expected to possess competencies in converging in the telecommunication and cyberspace technology. However, these challenges could be overcome if the various strategies which include the provision of adequate training facilities/ equipment and consistency in government policy are adopted. The curriculum of OTM could be further enriched with the inclusion of other relevant courses that will not only make the graduate to be marketable but also self-reliant.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusion drawn, the researchers hereby recommend the following:

1. The need for regular training and retraining, workshops, seminars and conferences should be mounted for staff to sensitize and update their knowledge of the lecturers in ICT based curriculum. In the recruitment of staff, there is need to recruit staff with relevant background in the new curriculum. The possession of ICT skills and knowledge should be an

advantage for prospective personnel seeking teaching appointment in OTM department.

2. The material resources listed in the new curriculum to facilitate effective teaching and learning should be provided. Classrooms and physical facilities should be improved and new ones built to enable the teaming student population take part in the pedagogy of the new curriculum. There is also the need to provide solar energy as alternative means of power supply because of the high cost of petrol and diesel since public power supply has been very epileptic.
3. Government at the national, state and local government levels together with all other relevant stakeholders in the educational sector should prioritize adequate funding for education in the country.
4. A review of the curriculum of OTM should be made by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) by including more courses that have entrepreneurial opportunities.

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