

ACQUISITION OF OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS: CURRENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

BY

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Abstract

T-his study was carried out to examine the acquisition of office technology and management skills: current issues and challenges. Also, to ascertain the extent basic skills in secondary education affect acquisition of OTM skills, determine the critical issues in the learning of OTM and identify the measure that can ameliorate these challenges. Descriptive Research design was adopted in this study. Eighty (80) respondents were involved in the research which consists of those who are in the field of office technology and management. Self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. All data collected from the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts with mean and standard deviation. The finding revealed that there are lots of issues and challenges hindered the acquisition of OTM skill acquisition. It was also revealed that there were measures that can be put in place to Improve OTM skill acquisition. It was concluded that if issues and challenges that confronting OTM acquisition it resolved, there would be improvement in the acquisition of OTM. It was recommended that practical keyboarding must be made available for students in secondary schools. Professional career counselors must be made available for students in secondary schools. Classroom and laboratories for OTM must be adequate and adequate supervision of students practical must be done.

Keywords: Acquisition, Office technology, Management skills, Current issues and Challenges

Introduction

Just of recent, The National Board for Technical Education enhanced the objectives of the secretarial training. By changing the nomenclature to Office Technology Management. This affected both the curriculum of Colleges of Education and Polytechnics. The polytechnic curriculum comprises of four main components of booth National Diploma and Higher National Diploma hence, General Studies/ Education Foundation Courses, Professional Courses and SIWES. The professional courses are giving the students the theory and practical skills they need to practice as a secretary. According to Agboola (2014) much emphasis is given to ICT courses than shorthand and Typewriting/Keyboarding by reducing their credit hours drastically. The purpose is to actualize the demand for supply of manpower who have appropriate office skills and competences to manage office technologies to favour the organization given the current wave of information communication technology profitably. The Office Technology and Management study encourages employment creation given multifaceted skills embedded in it which include reprographics, word processing, micrographics, telecommunication, data processing and many others.

Merriam Webster Dictionary (2013) divined skill as ability coming from one's knowledge practice or aptitude to do something well. Etonyeaku (2008) added that it involves practical knowledge in combination with cleverness, expertise, dexterity and ability to perform function which could be acquired or learnt in school. There are areas which require immediate attention as standing on concerned with development of individuals, person skills and attitudes, communication and occupational skills, technology literacy, employability skills, broad specific occupational skills and knowledge. Oladunjoye (2015) asserts that the products of a deficient curriculum cannot function effectively and efficiently in today's consistent change in the world of work.

When computer studies were first examined in (2014) at SSCE level – WAEC in 2014 it has become optional in SSCE. The Basic Education at JSS is exclusive of shorthand but optional in Senior Secondary School. The revised edition of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) outlined that the acquisition of appropriate skills, anilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. The objective of each level of education is to give the individual a climbing stone to higher level. Where the secondary school curriculum is inadequate, it cannot prepare students for useful living and solid higher education.

Statement of the Problem

Office Technology and Management is comprised of courses that have to do with development of skills and competencies. It has been observed that there are certain criteria which must be met by teachers, students, and stakeholders in order to achieve the overall objective of the programme in the college. With the unprecedented rate

of change in technology as requiring knowledgeable workers and creating entrepreneur opportunities, students need to be adequately prepared to make choices and acquire basic skills to enhance learning. Despite the importance of OTM in the society still there are critical issues confronting OTM which require immediate attention include adequate number of trained teachers, poor social perceptions, retaining of teachers on e-teaching platform, poor industry/institutional collaboration, incessant strike action and good utilization of modern ICT gadget.

Purpose of the Study

The main Purpose of the study was acquisition of office technology and management skills: current issues and challenges. Specifically to:

1. ascertain the extent basic skills in secondary education effect acquisition of OTM skills
2. determine the critical issues in learning of OTM.
3. identify the measures that can ameliorate these challenges.

Research Questions

1. The following research questions were raised for study.
2. What are the basic in secondary education that effect the acquisition of OTM skills in the institutions offering OTM
3. What are the measure which to be adopted to improve OTM skills acquisition?

Methodology

The survey designed was adopted for the study. The population of the study was made up of 80 students from OTM in Oyo the state and Federal colleges of Education in Oyo state and Federal validated by experts in Business education. The questionnaire was major instrument used for study and was point rating scale of strongly agreed (4points) agreed (3points) disagreed (2points) strongly disagreed (1points). A mean score of 3.00 and above was considered as agreed while a mean score below it was considered y disagreed. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected.

Results

Research Question 1: What are basic issues in secondary education that effect skills acquisition

Table 1: Basic Education Factors that affect the Acquisition of OTM Skills

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT | SA | A | D | SD | U | X | SD | DECISION |
|-----|---|----|----|----|----|---|------|------|----------|
| 1. | Students do not have practical keyboarding in secondary school | 36 | 35 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 4.29 | 0.81 | Accepted |
| 2. | Keyboarding is theoretical in secondary schools. | 34 | 36 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 4.23 | 0.88 | Accepted |
| 3. | Students do not do shorthand at SSS level. | 32 | 32 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 4.04 | 1.08 | Accepted |
| 4. | Practical computer education is done in secondary school. | 32 | 33 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 4.11 | 0.96 | Accepted |
| 5. | Most OTM students do not offer computer studies at SSCE. | 30 | 31 | 12 | 6 | 1 | 4.04 | 0.97 | Accepted |
| 6. | Most students are not introduced to e-learning in secondary school. Scored 60% and above in practical courses in NCE. | 38 | 34 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4.29 | 0.90 | Accepted |
| 7. | Many students do not have retain power in shorthand speed for advanced | 35 | 31 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4.08 | 1.14 | Accepted |

transcription course.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|----|----|---|---|------|------|----------|
| 8. | Many students did not have OTM at first choice course. | 28 | 36 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 4.03 | 1.01 | Accepted |
| 9. | Many secondary school students do not receive professional career counseling. | 37 | 32 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 4.26 | 0.88 | Accepted |
| 10. | Many students do not score 60% and above in practical courses in NCE. | 38 | 34 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4.29 | 0.90 | Accepted |

From the analysis of data and the responses by the respondents most of the respondents accepted that there are basic issues in secondary school education affecting OTM skills. All the respondents have a mean of not less than 3.00 in all items.

Research Question2: What are challenges faced on OTM skills acquisition?

Table 2: Challenges faced in the acquisition of OTM Skills in Tertiary Environment

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT | SA | A | D | SD | U | X | SD | DECISION |
|-----|--|----|----|----|----|----|------|------|----------|
| 1. | Incessant strike action. | 20 | 27 | 21 | 11 | 1 | 3.68 | 1.03 | Accepted |
| 2. | Cult practices. | 13 | 21 | 29 | 14 | 3 | 3.34 | 1.05 | Accepted |
| 3. | Poor supervision. | 27 | 26 | 19 | 7 | 1 | 3.89 | 1.01 | Accepted |
| 4. | Poverty. | 14 | 25 | 27 | 12 | 2 | 3.46 | 1.02 | Accepted |
| 5. | Corrupt practices. | 24 | 29 | 10 | 7 | 10 | 3.63 | 1.33 | Accepted |
| 6. | Inadequate supply of ICT equipment/facilities. | 22 | 34 | 14 | 9 | 1 | 3.84 | 0.99 | Accepted |
| 7. | Low institution and industry partnership. | 19 | 28 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 3.49 | 1.27 | Accepted |
| 8. | Poor utilization of e-learning. | 21 | 26 | 22 | 6 | 5 | 3.65 | 1.13 | Accepted |
| 9. | Poor career counseling. | 13 | 21 | 29 | 14 | 3 | 3.34 | 1.05 | Accepted |
| 10. | Poor societal perception. | 27 | 26 | 19 | 7 | 1 | 3.89 | 1.01 | Accepted |
| 11. | Inadequate classroom and laboratories. | 19 | 28 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 3.49 | 1.27 | Accepted |
| 12. | Poor access to school uniform. | 13 | 21 | 29 | 14 | 3 | 3.84 | 1.05 | Accepted |
| 13. | Poor dress codes. | 22 | 34 | 14 | 9 | 1 | 3.84 | 0.99 | Accepted |

The data presented in table 2 indicates that all items raised pose threat to the acquisition of OTM skills because all the respondents gave a response with a mean of not less than 3.00 all the items.

Research Question 3: What are those measures that can improve OTM skills acquisition?

Table 3: Challenges faced in the acquisition of OTM Skills in Tertiary Environment

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT | SA | A | D | SD | U | X | SD | DECISION |
|-----|--|----|----|---|----|---|------|------|----------|
| 1. | Put all aspects of OTM skill to secondary school curriculum. | 27 | 41 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4.04 | 1.01 | Accepted |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|----|----|---|---|------|------|----------|
| 2. | Professional career counseling. | 32 | 27 | 11 | 8 | 2 | 3.99 | 1.08 | Accepted |
| 3. | Constant and systematic teacher training and retraining program. | 32 | 32 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 3.96 | 1.22 | Accepted |
| 4. | Adequate supervision of students practical. | 32 | 28 | 12 | 2 | 6 | 3.89 | 1.15 | Accepted |
| 5. | Mass enlightenment by professionals on entrepreneurial skills of OTM. | 26 | 31 | 13 | 5 | 5 | 3.85 | 1.13 | Accepted |
| 6. | Provision of real work life learning environment | 37 | 25 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 4.09 | 1.07 | Accepted |
| 7. | Provision of constant power supply for an ideal environment. | 31 | 33 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 4.10 | 0.93 | Accepted |

The data displayed in table 3 indicates that all the items revised would serve as means of managing the challenges in OTM skills acquisition. This can be seen from the response of the respondents with a means not less than 3.00 in all the items.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the current issues and challenges faced in the acquisition of OTM skills. Some challenges have unprecedented effect on skills development. This view is backed up by Ediabonya and Oyadongba (2012) who agreed that business educators have low cares skills. Eze (2008) also submitted that many institutions lack necessary facilities specifically designed to enhance teaching and learning of skills in OTM. Business education at secondary school level is bedrock to acquire OTM skills at higher level or be prepared for the world of work. The implication is that the curriculum should be beefed up to incorporate those aspects of study which are currently lacking in the curriculum such as practical computer, e-learning, shorthand in junior secondary school. The gap in leaving studying shorthand after first semester HND I and introducing advanced transcription in first semester in HND II and students in NCE II for a whole semester for teaching practice makes students loose skill. In addition, Oluwole (2011) posits that the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) should enrich the OTM curriculum with teaching of graphic application and website designing to enhance their job or business concern.

Students do not have experience of real work life environment during training. In the light of this, Azih (2011) maintained that innovation of Office Technology brought about the use of computers, internet, e-mail, video conferencing, etc. it is observed that there is inadequate functional laboratories, model office and equipment. Ojeaga and Igbinedion (2012) explained that the use of e-learning in Nigeria educational system is still slow. This problem should have been ameliorated had it been there is good collaboration of industries and institutions through adequate funding. Also, Oludele (2013) opined that nearly all the training facilities for acquiring the professional skills specified in the curriculum are powered by electricity hence the erratic power supply in the nation pose a threat. Field trip is not commonly observed. Eze (2008) maintained that government should devote special funding for OTM because of the capital intensive nature of facilities required. This is necessary to realize the OTM objectives of NBTE which is designed to produce graduate well equipped with secretarial/office skills for employment in various field of endeavour and effective work competences.

Furthermore, the study discovered that students with the practically oriented course were poorly supervised. This may be due to result of poor policies on retraining of teachers in the era of constantly changing office technologies. Adeola (2010) maintained that teachers employed to teach OTM should be competent and qualified in terms of professional qualification practical skills and knowledge and should know both content methodology of the subject to actualize effective learning. In addition, social vices ranging from cult practices to lack of ethics in modeling office dress affect the training of OTM graduates. This poor dressing shows inadequacy in office skills. Njoku (2014) confirmed that social vices have negatively impacted on the training of OTM graduates. It was observed that there are incessant strike actions that obstruct supervision which is an integral aspect of skill acquisition. There were also accepted strategies which can alleviate these issues which by adding OTM skills to basic secondary education,

mass enlightenment programs by OTM professionals, provision of real work life laboratories institution-industry collaboration.

Conclusion

It was concluded that if issues and challenges that confronting OTM acquisition is solved there would be generally improvement in the acquisition of OTM, as organizations will have qualified personnel, society will also receive better sources. The recipients of the programme will also be more qualified and their services would be more required.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Practical keyboarding must be made available for students in secondary schools and professional career counselors must be made available for students in secondary schools.
2. Classroom and laboratories for OTM must be adequate and adequate supervision of students practical must be done.
3. Teachers should found methodologies of assessing components of each of the skills including dress codes, operating skills.
4. Institution/industry collaboration should spread across students SIWES and industrial attachment to periodic interactions amongst their managers and encouragement of field trips donations of facilities.

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