

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS IN VOCATIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATION THROUGH OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION AS PANACEA FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

BY

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examined the entrepreneurship skills expected of graduate of Office Technology and Management Education programme in Nigeria. It discussed the concept of entrepreneurship, its characteristics and the concept of Office Technology and Management Education. The paper highlighted the Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Office Technology and Management Education for Self-reliance that when graduate venture into will reduce the rate of insecurity in Nigeria. The paper recommends that Office Technology and Management Education programme be encouraged by both government and public as its a programme of study, designed to equipped its participants with entrepreneurship skills for employment or self-reliance. The paper also recommended that institution offering the course should be well equipped with infrastructural and the right instructional materials for teaching and learning and also recommended that government should make the provision of soft loan facilities for potential OTME graduates and other entrepreneurs to enable them set up their own small business enterprises.*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship Skills, Office Technology Management Education, Self-Reliance and Insecurity*

### **Introduction**

Nigeria is currently faced with serious insecurity challenges such as increased crime rate, unfulfilled dreams, suicide and impaired financial position. The insecurity challenges have assumed formidable dimensions forcing political and economic managers and indeed the entire nation, to rue the loss of their loved ones, investments and absence of safety in most parts of the country. The number of violent crimes such as kidnapping, ritual killings, hijacking, suicide bombings, religious killings, political-motivated killings and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry and others has increasingly become the regular signature that characterizes life in Nigeria since 2006 (Imhonopl & Urim, 2012). The term insecurity is used to describe a situation where there is feeling of inadequacy in the protection of lives and properties of individuals. Aliyu (2020) observed that insecurity is as a result of structural entrenched crisis of development that creates environment for the emergence of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country. Azazi, (2020) explained that most of the perpetrators of crime in our society belong to the productive age who are not meaningfully engaged in productive ventures. The author further explained that unemployment is a single largest cause of insecurity as it has led millions of Nigerian youths into expressing their anger and frustration through violence and crimes. It is no more news that most of the criminals under investigation are graduates of tertiary institutions with few secondary school graduates and drop outs. These able bodied men whose energy could have been rightly used in ensuring economic development of the country now resort to criminality as a source of livelihood.

However, addressing the root causes of insecurity in the country calls for participation of all Nigerians in tackling hunger, poverty and promote inclusive economic development in the country. Oluwa, (2014) agreed with the above when he lamented that the increasing rate of insecurity is as a result of hunger, poverty, illiteracy, income inequality among others and these are root cause of insecurity. One of the national education goals is principally the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to leave in, and contribute to the development of the society (Esene & Magbonyebi, 2015). It is obvious that empowering Nigerians through skills acquisition oriented courses and training will be a proactive measure of solving the problems emanating from the above root causes of insecurity. With the teeming population of Nigerian students, receiving training on skills for inclusive economic development with the adequate office technology and management programme is a panacea for achieving sustainability of the economic needs of these youths. Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) which form part of vocational education is needed to fill the gap since it is well positioned to equip today's students with the right skills that would enable them face the challenges of the present and future labour market.

Vocational Business Education holds the ace to bridge the gap between educational experiences and the requirements of industrialization. Entrepreneurship in vocational business education through the programme of OTME is a utilitarian programme that prepares students for immediate employment in an existing enterprise or becoming business owners. Education laced with entrepreneurship training produces students with leadership, innovation, and creativity and people management skills. These competencies distinguish prospective entrepreneurs from job seekers. As an occupational programme, OTME offers experiences and technology which are essential prerequisites for starting a business. It therefore, assists students' transit from their educational experiences to employment. A recent unemployment survey carried out by the National Bureau of Statistic (2015) also revealed that 20% of the current trend in the world is moving towards encouraging entrepreneurship as opposed to search for white collar jobs.

The youths must have high level of creativity and innovation and the ability to think about the future and relate these ideas to their businesses. They are also expected to have strong skills in business planning, finance and accounting as well as ability to create new and innovate marketing plans that utilize modern communication technology. Entrepreneurship therefore, is a type of education that is geared towards developing in students and the youth's skills, ideas, and managerial abilities necessary for personal reliance. Obviously the effective performance of the above activities is critical to the birth, survival and growth of the business enterprises. Thus, entrepreneurship is a vital factor. Esene (2019) defined entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment, establish and run an enterprise successfully. The author further stated that the concept of entrepreneurship has been associated with several activities concerned with the establishment and operation of business enterprises. These activities as opined by the author include identification of investment opportunities, decision making as to the opportunity to exploit, promotion and establishment of business enterprises, aggregation of scarce resources required for production and distribution, organizing and management of the human and material resources for the attainment of the objectives of the enterprises, risk bearing and innovation.

The concept of self-reliance emphasizes looking inwards not only for foreign high-tech designed things, but the ability to establish self independently. Self-reliance will make the individual to see ways of advancement from tasks and had-to-do through initiatives and innovations. This will help the individual and the country attain the satisfactory harmonious and economic security needed for transformation. From the foregoing, it is obvious that OTME can help to achieve self-reliance, self-resourcefulness and development oriented that will better the living condition of the majority of the citizenry. Similarly, Igbinedion (2019) opined that OTME should be a tool for empowering Nigerians, especially the youths, for sustainable livelihood and the socio-economic development of the country, thereby eradicating extreme poverty, hunger and insecurity in the society. The author further stated that there is no doubt that quality OTME promotes skill acquisition through competency-based training for employment, sustainable livelihood and responsible citizenship. From the foregoing it is obvious that OTME is concerned with the preparation of learners for employment, through the provision of knowledge, skills and attitudes desirable in the world of work. It is on this premise that this paper sought to assess the needs for entrepreneurship skills in OTME as a tool for achieving as a panacea for self-reliance and insecurity in Nigeria.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is a word that has been given attention to in the recent years in Nigeria. In any developing nation like Nigeria whose economic strength is weak, entrepreneurship is a strong force that could strengthen the economy and improve the standard of living of the people and also create employment opportunity for the youth and will go a long way in reducing the rate of criminal activities. Darma (2014) stated that the primary goal of entrepreneurship is to strengthen the individual's ability to see and exploit opportunities in an economic, social and cultural context. Ama (2014) defined entrepreneurship as the venture that involves taking up a business enterprise quite distinct from obtaining a paid job. Owelukwu (2018) described entrepreneurship as the ability to organize business opportunity and mobilize both human and material resources to exploit the identified opportunity. Badi and Badi (2021) sees entrepreneurship as the function of seeking investment, production opportunity, organizing an enterprise to undertake new production process, raising capital, hiring labour, arranging resources and introducing new organization. Agweda and Usman (2018) described entrepreneurship as a relentless pursuit of business opportunities regardless of resources currently controlled. Ndikanwu and Aninye (2014) described entrepreneurship as "the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and coupling these with management and organizational skills in order to combine people, and other resources

to meet an identified need and create wealth. In the same vein, Ndikanwu and Aninye (2014) described entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of a person or persons to acquire educational skills to explore and exploit investment opportunities, establish and management as successful business enterprise and in the process creating employment opportunities to would-be employees. Egboh (2019) sees entrepreneurship as the process of creating wealth by bringing together resources in new ways to start a venture that benefits customers and rewards its founders for their initiative and innovation. Also Oduma (2012) noted that entrepreneurship involves the capacity to find out and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources and implement actions to take advantage of the opportunities while guided by high achievement motivation.

From the above perspectives, it is evident that entrepreneurship is the apparent willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. Therefore, the concept of entrepreneurship is associated with the establishment and operation of business enterprises. These activities include identification of investment opportunities, decision-making as to the opportunities to exploit, promotion and establishment of the business enterprise, aggregation of the distribution, organization and management of the human and material resources for the attainment of the objectives of the enterprises, risk bearing, and innovation.

### **Characteristics of an Entrepreneur**

The definition of an entrepreneur is somebody who can see an opportunity and exploit it. Even during times of economic depression, real entrepreneurs will always find a use for their skills. Entrepreneurs can be found in every conceivable business sector and industry, so trying to predict some sort of general trend and therefore future of these business people is almost impossible. One thing is for sure; entrepreneurs always bounce back no matter what. The characteristics of entrepreneur are essential for the success of an enterprise. Oduma (2012) stated the characteristics of a successful entrepreneur as an individual with technical competence, risk taking, high initiative, good judgment, intelligence to analyze and solve problem areas, leadership qualities, confidence, positive attitude, high level of energy, creativeness, honesty, integrity, emotional stability and fairness. Nwabufo (2013) however, posited that some of the positive characteristics of an entrepreneur include: Self-confidence, Risk taking, Task (result) orientation, Drive and energy, Leadership, Creativity, Taking initiative, Aggressive, Trusting, fair and honest, Delegation of authority, Loyal and supportive and Good planner and organizer

### **The Concept of Office Technology and Management Education**

Office Technology and Management Education is one of the programmes of vocational business educational introduced by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) since the inception of the programme. More emphasis was placed on the programme to make its recipients more ICT compliant and to adequately fit into the world of work appropriately, especially in this modern age of globalization, where equipment and new machines are emerging daily. The Committee on Research and Publications of the American Vocational Association in Esene (2013) defined OTME as education designed to develop skills, abilities, understandings, attitudes, work habits and appreciations encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis.

Nwabuona (2010) described the OTME programme as focusing on combination of office information technical skills with adequate and relevant business knowledge in solving organizational problems. The author noted that the target is to produce hybrid administrative professionals to respond to the demands of a dynamic and intensely computerized work place. To Komolafe and Ajani (2010), Office Technology and Management Education is a work oriented educational programme that aims at skill acquisition which are useful and employable in the labour market. Komolafe and Ajani opined that the programme is designed for the development of participant's skills, abilities, understanding, attitudes, work habits and appreciation of encompassing knowledge and information needed by individuals in order to enter and progress in employment on a useful and productive base. OTME is an efficient, effective, productive and functional education which leads to self-employment, self-reliance, paid employment and consequently, self-actualization (Okoro and Amagoh, 2018). Office Technology and Management Education programme therefore, is an educational programme meant for the acquisition of knowledge, skills office ethics and competencies needed to prepare the individuals to enter gainful employment in specific business and office

occupation. It is a veritable programme of study which builds its participants and graduates to be able to contribute meaningfully to National Development which leads to curbing insecurity.

It is very obvious that the importance of OTME in developing the individual and national capacity for growth in the economy and reducing poverty and securing national security cannot be overemphasized. This is why Amao-Kehinde (2011) identified the following as some of the roles of OTME in the reduction of poverty and helping to curb insecurity in Nigeria:

- Impartation of knowledge and skills which improve and upgrade an individual's position in employment.
- Impartation of skills which equip individuals with capacity necessary for change of occupation or profession.
- Impartation of knowledge and skills for self-reliance. It makes an individual function as a responsible and productive member of the society.
- Impartation of skills and knowledge to enable individuals create employment for others who have acquired marketable skill. Such employment when created generates wealth for individuals and grows the economy. Such employment opportunities also enable the training of others.
- Attracting economic boom and social recognition to the society through saleable skills which are assets.
- Supporting the well-being of the society through promoting the establishment of industries and business. For example, collage industries for the manufacture of tools/implements/furniture etc, for community use.

#### **Entrepreneurship skills expected of Graduates of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME)**

According to Esene and Mgbonyebi (2015) Entrepreneurship education has been gradually accepted as unique courses now offered and taught among higher education institutions in Nigeria aimed at equipping students with skills and competencies to make the self-reliant and employer of labour on graduation. In Office Technology and Management Education Programmes, one of the grand objectives at the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) and at the Universities levels as spelt out in the Minimum Standard (FGN, 2014) and National University Commission (NUC) office Technology and Management Education Curriculum/Course Specifications are to create general entrepreneurship awareness in the student with a view to inculcating in him the spirit of self-reliance. Office Technology and Management Education is a work-oriented educational programme which aims at acquisition of skills, development of skills, competencies, attitudes and attributes to be able to function effectively in millennium offices. A cursory look at the curriculum content therefore revealed that at the end of the NCE or degree programme, some entrepreneurship skills and office competencies must have been acquired or developed for effective and efficient job performances in the office. In the view of Ihimekpen, Crossdale and Amaehule (2015) the following entrepreneurship skills expected of graduates of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) Programme are personal skills, technical skills and Professional skills.

#### **Personal Skills**

The personal skills of the graduates of OTME programme includes:

**Self-confidence:** Graduates of OTME programmes that is prepared for the world of work should have self-confidence skill. This skill is needed to energize the graduates to do what he thinks is right and continue doing it without minding distractions from outsiders, until he succeeds. Self-confidence is the ability to trust one's efforts and that one succeed in a chosen adventure. It is the skill of self-confidence that spurs the entrepreneur into taking risks in starting and operating a business. It energizes him to forge ahead in the midst of odds. This skill is built during the period of formal school system training or through apprenticeship.

**Motivational Skill:** Motivation is what prompts people to do what they are doing with success zeal in them. It is the inner mind that energizes. Motivation makes businessmen work day and night without feeling tired, hoping that "one day, it will be better". The entrepreneur can build on motivated skills for himself or acquire skills through the encouragement of other people such as parents, teachers, supports, professional partners, age group amongst others.

**Communicative Skill:** This involves meeting people and making them buy business ideas, products or services, or meeting people and encouraging them to sell their business ideas, products or services. Communication skills involve visiting people, talking to people, writing business letters, telephoning, arranging for meetings and others. The graduate of OTME should have good command of English language, possess listening ability, possess intelligent perception and competent to make intelligent interpretations, be competent in use of body language, possession of friendly voice and ability to make intelligent selection of communication channels. These skills are learnt during period of apprenticeship, vocational or technical training, seminars, workshops and on-the-job-training. An entrepreneur who lacks communication skills would be using un-refined and uncomplimentary language on customers, workers, suppliers, and friends.

**Planning Skill:** Planning involves patience and belt-tightening. This skill is about eating half instead of exhausting all so that one can move in the future. The skill of planning starts by setting aside amount from small income. Anyone who cannot save from the little he/she has would not be able to save anything from thousands and millions of naira. This skill is learnt by initiating successful entrepreneurs, businessmen and women.

**Saving and Investment Skills:** Saving is a skill, which can be acquired through practice or learnt under a successful businessman. It is the act of keeping aside an amount of one's income or profit at the end of a business cycle. The cycle may be on daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. Savings gives rise to investment and without savings there will not be any investment. The practice and prospective entrepreneur must learn, acquire and practice the skill of saving which leads to investment.

**Adaptive Skill:** To adapt is to change according to changing conditions. "no condition", they say "is permanent". The entrepreneur operates in all kinds of changing environment, and must adapt to changes if he is to survive. Business environment is sometimes favourable and sometimes unfavourable. But he would not need to jettison his business even in an unfavourable condition. He must learn to adapt and continue the business using other skills of the entrepreneur. When he adapts to the changing economic, social and technological environment, he becomes a part of it and would eventually suppress or manage the environment and extract the much needed profit.

**Managerial Skills:** the graduates of otme programme needs to develop managerial skills in order to know how to take care of men and materials under his care. these men and materials are scarce or insufficient and need to be managed optimally some entrepreneurs regard human beings as machines but those who have managerial skills apply the principles of human relations in treating their workers.

**Human Relations Skills:** Human beings live and work together and they need some skills to encourage them to be highly productive. Human relations try to find out what behaviour and attitudes that encourage people to work and be productive. Nwosu (2022) affirmed that human relation is the interaction and integration of people into a work situation that motivates them to work together productively, co-operatively and with economic, psychological and social satisfaction. Human relations could be said to be the ability to get along with others. This skill is expected from office managers, directors, entrepreneurs, supervisors and foremen.

#### **Technical Skills of the Entrepreneur (OTME Graduates)**

The technical skills of OTME graduate entrepreneurs are as follows:

**Vocational Skill:** A vocation is an economic activity requiring the use of skills in an occupation or profession. The graduates of OTME entrepreneur must therefore be skilled and knowledge in the following areas of his vocation or profession.

**Computer Skills or Professional Software Skills:** Most employers demand "computer literacy" as a prerequisite for employment on certain jobs. OTME products must therefore, be versatile with the use of the computer and information and communication technology. With the invention of computer and internet technology, the world has been reduced to a global village where people buy from the same market, the same computer language and travel on the same information "super-highway" (Ehirheme, 2014). The scopes of computer and information processing have widened technology with the introduction of

electronic-business, e-payment, e-commerce, cashless society and paperless office among others. OTME graduates work typically centers around the office. It therefore behooves on them to be well skilled in the use of computer and information and communication technology. Arising from the above, it becomes pertinent for OTME graduates to be competent in the use of computer packages such as Microsoft word, Microsoft excel package, PowerPoint package, competent in desktop publishing, webpage design, data base management package, CorelDraw usage, internet browsing packages and competence in the use of other office technologies.

**Basic Professional Competencies:** According to Oduma (2010), the business education graduates of which OTME option is its components should have the following basic professional competencies: Skill of taking shorthand notes and transcribing same using the typewriter or computer; and possess competencies in preparing accounting information effectively, as accounting information and their uses are inevitable exercises in every establishment and organizations for monitoring financial transactions and analysis.

**Record Management Skill:** Oduma pointed that effective record management skill is another entrepreneurial skill needed by OTME graduates for optimal records keeping. He buttressed that records management is an inevitable activity in modern establishment that guarantees the safety of documents and their retrieval in times of need and that for now, there is no establishment or organization that outlaws the use of written documents. This OTME graduates must possess the competence in the management of essential official documents. Oduma concluded that it is equally important for OTME graduate to be competent in preparing official reports, coverage of official meetings by taking down minutes, be knowledgeable in law and practice of meetings, knowledgeable in office staff training and orientation methods, coupled with proficiency in form design.

**Psychomotor Skills:** This is the ability to operate machines tools, machinery and also manipulative technical objects. This is one of the most important skill expected of OTME entrepreneurs for effective office operations. It involves the use of various office machines, including keyboarding machines and making use of various copiers and processors for reproduction of documents.

**Analytical Skills:** Business needs critical analysis to separate successful businessmen from unsuccessful ones, to separate 419 businessmen from genuine businessmen. An OTME entrepreneur must possess the skill to analyze the business environment which is friendly in some regions, volatile in other ones and full of uncertainty in other areas. The analytical skill is developed during training and is applied to environment scanning, business appraisal and offer to bid.

**Creative Skills:** This is one of the skills which OTME graduates must possess. The skill enables him to create ideas, services and products which he sells to people and as such, he is said to be creative. The skill helps him to generate business ideas, imagine new products, packages, services among others. Creative skills assist him to engage in imaginative thinking which can bring innovations in any sector of entrepreneurial activities.

**Professional Skills of the Entrepreneur:** According to Ihimekpen, Crossdale-Ovwido, and Amaefula (2015), professional skills are competencies which assist the entrepreneur to enrol, be acceptable and also practice in a profession. To be recognized by a professional body, OTM graduate must be technically and educationally qualified and must possess the right ethics of the profession. When he is admitted into the profession, he can practice as a professional, having an obligation to protect the professional ethics and enjoy the privilege of this profession.

**Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Office Technology and Management Education for Self-reliance**  
Qualified graduate of OTME stand the advantage of being employed in such diverse areas as education, government, banking, publishing, insurance, medicine, law, art, public relations, accounting, fashion, entertainment, advertising etc.having received relevant skills on the effective use of modern office technology that will meet the standard of modern business, and assist in building pride on the part of the graduates in their achievement and their preparation for a good life in their career (Dekom, 2013).Through entrepreneurship, OTME graduate can be self-employed, create job, and effectively manage the following businesses which will reduce the rate of insecurity in the society.

- **Service Enterprise:** Distributorship, wholesaling, retailing, ICT consultancy, agency

- **Information and communication:** There are many business outfits that OTME graduate can establish to create job especially in the area of information and technology such as: computer accessories, sale of laptop, sale of personal computers (PCs) and software engineering, sales of handset, telephone services and selling of GSM recharge cards.
- **Internet business:** Establishment of automobile net marketing, aware site, banner designer, business software site, cyber copywriting, discussion board, download site, fee for air linkages, game site, internet press releases etc.
- **Printing and publishing:** Establishment of business centers where services such as book will be typesetting and published, book binding, publishing diary/calendars production, exercise books, envelop production, jotters production, sticker, greeting cards, laminating, photocopying, scanning desktop publishing etc.
- **Telecommunication services:** Operating services such as GSM unlocking, handset production, handset repairs, handset sales, telephone booth operation, recharge card printing.
- **E-services:** Operating web designing, App development, digital marketing services, online registration of exams such as JAMB, WAEC and professional courses. OTME graduate can serve as a data upload manager.
- **Book sale service:** Operating a bookshop that deals with office stationeries and office equipment, sells of different books of learning.
- **Educational services:** Operating a studio for learning how to type, computer appreciation and to provide service on acquiring word processing skills.

One of the problems that may come with the above small-scale businesses is the source of start-up capital. Source of finance could come from any of the followings: personal savings, sales of personal assets, assistance from relations, financial assistance from friends and acquaintances, loan from relations and friends, loan from the bank as overdraft.

### **Conclusion**

Office Technology and Management Programme is an educational studies designed to develop skills, abilities, understandings, attitudes, work habits and appreciation encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to centre and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis. One of the grand objectives of the programme is to create general entrepreneurship awareness in the student with a view to inculcating in him, the spirit of self-reliance. This study revealed that some of the entrepreneurship skills expected of graduates of OTME programmes includes; managerial skills, professional skills and personal skills. These entrepreneurial skills if put together would make OTME graduates better prepared to take up jobs in organizations and contribute meaningfully to its success or be self-employed by establishing small and medium businesses.

### **Suggestions**

Arising from this study, it is therefore suggested that:

1. Office Technology and Management Education programmes be encouraged by both the government and the public, as it is geared towards skill acquisition, knowledge development and entrepreneurship.
2. Institutions where OTME courses are offered should be well equipped with adequate infrastructures and adequate lecturers and instructors, while the right instructional methods and materials should be used in the teaching and learning processes.
3. Adequate infrastructural facilities should be made available in the society, to encourage potential entrepreneurs to invest their resources.
4. Loan facilities should be provided for potential OTME graduates who is willing to invest without stringent measures (collaterals) being attached to such loans and
5. There should be stability in the policy, sustenance of reliable and applicable government policies, while efforts should be made to curtail the high rate of corruption within the government circles in government business. Finally, tax relief should be extended to potential new entrepreneurs in the field as a source of motivation.

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