

Entrepreneurial Skills Needed for Self-Employment by Office Technology and Management Graduates of Polytechnics in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This study was designed to investigate the entrepreneurial skills needed by office technology and management graduates of polytechnics with special reference to Delta State. The study was guided by three research questions and one hypothesis which was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised all the office technology and management lecturers in polytechnics in Delta State, Nigeria. As a result of the limited size, the entire population was used for the study. The instrument that was used to elicit data for this study is a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher with insight gained from literature reviewed. The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of entrepreneurship and office technology and management. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha (α) reliability test and an overall reliability coefficient 0.76 was obtained. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data relative to the research questions as well as determine the homogeneity of the respondents' means. The t-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that entrepreneurial skills in terms of information and communication technology skills, managerial skills and communication skills are highly needed by graduates of office technology and management programme for self-employment. It was therefore recommended among others that OTM educators should ensure that graduates of office technology and management programme are well exposed to various entrepreneurial skills for self-employment and that polytechnic should also ensure the Departments of Office Technology and Management are well equipped with relevant facilities and equipment needed for quality entrepreneurial skill acquisition.*

KEYWORDS: *Entrepreneurial skill, office technology and management, self employment*

I. INTRODUCTION

The future of any nation lies greatly on the workforce prepared through a well designed and implemented capacity building programme. This reveals why education is considered the wheel for socio-economic growth. The quality of education provided by educational institution influences the level of performance of the workforce which eventually determines the future of the nation. The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria for both graduates and non graduates has become an issued for national debate. This resulted to a call for curriculum planners and management of tertiary education to look into the issue and seek effective methods that will train graduates for the world of work and self-reliance. Nedum-Ogbede (2017) stated that the type of education that is needed for self-employment and national development has changed to include reasoning, creative problem solving and behavioural skills as well as positive cognitive styles as against the narrow cognitive and occupational skills sought in more direct work environment.

Thus in effort to equip Nigerian graduates with relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities that would enable them become self-reliant upon graduation, the Federal Ministry of Education directed that entrepreneurship education should be included in the programme of the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education through the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) effective form 2007/2008 academic session (Onyesom, 2017). This is based on the belief that entrepreneurship education will help enlighten the youths on how to see business opportunities, ideas and act on them promptly in order to take advantage over others.

According to Ezeani (2012), entrepreneurship education is teaching students, learners and would be businessmen, the essential skills required to build viable enterprise, equipping the trainees with skills needed for taking responsibility and developing initiative of prospective trainees. It creates the willingness and ability in a person to seek out investment opportunities in the society and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities (Fashola 2006). Therefore, entrepreneurship education is the education that embraces skill building programme, creative thinking, product development and marketing negotiation, leadership training and wealth creation (Kurato, 2003). It is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and setting up the mind to create jobs by converting and starting up a new business (Anerua and Obiazi, 2009 in Shaibu and Mmeremikwu, 2017)

In polytechnics, NBTE has developed and produced curricular and training manuals for use in training students in polytechnics including office technology and management students. These are: Introduction to Entrepreneurship EED 126, Practice of Entrepreneurship (EED 216) and Entrepreneurship Development (EED 416). It is believed that exposing OTM students to these courses in addition to the office and business competencies contained in OTM curriculum will engender the production of a crop of OTM graduates entrepreneurs with the appropriate attitude and skills which will spur them on the path of creativity, innovation and enterprise thereby enable them to be job creators rather than job seekers. Office technology and management programme is an aspect of vocational education which equips individuals with the necessary skills and theoretical knowledge needed for performance in business world either for job occupations or for self-employment. It the opinion of Oduma (2012), it is a systematic and organized programme of instruction aimed at transmitting business knowledge, skills, ideas, aptitude and technical know-how to recipient which is required for usage in business offices or for self-employment. So OTM programme has already been designed with entrepreneurship in view. Osuala in Ezeabi (2017) defined entrepreneurship education as a specialized training given to vocational and technical education students to acquire skills, ideas and managerial abilities for self-employment. Several entrepreneurship skills abound students of office technology and management. However, Osuala posited that acquisition of ICT, managerial and communication skills are indispensable in producing competent OTM graduate entrepreneurs.

Information and communication technology according to the Commission for Information and Communication Technology (CICT) (2011) involves electronic devices or interconnected system or subsystem or equipment that is used in automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, control and reception of data or information. This includes all sorts of electronic devices such as computer, internet mobile equipment and software resources which have become powerful for educational change and reform. The Commission on Information and Communication Technology (2011) grouped ICT competencies needed for effective work performance in the office in clusters of word processing, spreadsheet processing application, PowerPoint presentation, database management and internet application. Each of these areas of competency consists of a body of knowledge, skills and abilities which OTM student must possess in order to be effective and efficient in office work and self-employment. Managerial skills are very important skills for successful entrepreneurship venture. Onoh (2013) pointed out that managerial skills combine planning and organizing abilities. OTM students without managerial skills cannot end up a success entrepreneur because with good plan no business will stand the test of time. In addition, Onoh added that with good plans and improper organization, a business will collapse because ability to organize the thoughtful plans is essential to the efficient running of any business. Organizational skills according to Ezeabi (2017) involves getting the right people to accomplish task; ability to delegate authority and responsibility ability to coordinate human and material resources etc.

Communication is a vital tool for business success because it is important in bringing about understanding among individuals and groups. According to Oliver and Kanu (2012) one major purpose of communicating in business is to give and receive information about the availability of products and services and encourage customers to buy more. The growth and development of a business enterprise depends on the ways it sources and utilizes information. Hence, communication skills are inevitable requirement for successful entrepreneurship of OTM graduates.

For graduates of office technology and management graduates to be successful in running a business venture, they must possess the requisite skills and competencies which are embedded in both office technology and management and entrepreneurship education curricular. Unfortunately, some graduates of OTM are found on the street roaming about looking for paid employment. This implies that these graduates lack the indispensable skills needed to kick start and manage entrepreneurship venture to become self-employed and contribute to economic development. This necessitated the enquiry to the entrepreneurial skills needed by office technology and management graduates for successful entrepreneurship

Purpose of the Study: The main purpose of the study was to examine the entrepreneurial skills needed by office technology and management students in polytechnic in Delta State. Specifically the study sought to determine the

- ✓ Information and communication technology skills needed by office technology and management students in polytechnics in Delta State.
- ✓ Managerial skills needed by office technology and management students in polytechnics in Delta State.
- ✓ Communication skills needed by office technology and management students in polytechnics in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the information and communication technology skills needed by office technology and management students in polytechnics in Delta State for self-employment?
- What are the managerial skills needed by office technology and management students in polytechnics in Delta State for self employment
- What are the communication skills needed by office technology and management students in polytechnics in Delta State for self-employment?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H₀ There is no significance difference in the mean rating of male and female office technology and management educators on the entrepreneurial skills needed by office technology and management graduates in polytechnics in Delta State for self-employment.

II. METHOD OF RESEARCH

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprised all the office technology and management educators (lecturers) in polytechnics in Delta State. The population size was not too large for the study. Therefore, there was no sampling of respondents. The instrument that was used to elicit data for this study is a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher with insight gained from literature reviewed. It consisted of two parts; Parts A and B. Part A focused on respondents' personal and demographic data while Part B is made up of three clusters, B1 to B3, covering the four areas of the research questions on a four-point rating scale of Highly Needed (HN) 4points; Needed (N) 3points; Rarely Needed (RN) 2points and Not Needed (NN) 1point.

The instrument was validated by three experts in the field of entrepreneurship and office technology and management. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha (α) reliability test and an overall reliability coefficient 0.76 was obtained which was considered high enough for the instrument to be reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data relative to the research questions as well as determine the homogeneity of the respondents' means. The t-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The result of the study was obtained from the research questions answered and hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question 1: What are the information and communication technology skills needed by office technology and management students in polytechnics in Delta State for self employment

Table 1

Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of OTM Educators on Information and communication technology skills
N= 43

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remark
1	Ability to use of a word processor to enter and edit text and images	3.56	0.25	Highly Needed
2	Ability to use word processor format text and control margin, format and paginate documents.	3.31	0.27	Highly Needed
3	Ability to use desktop publishing/graphic application for designing and publications	3.75	0.88	Highly Needed
4	Ability to use presentation application like Microsoft Powerpoint to display information in a presentation format	3.52	0.34	Highly Needed
5	Creating and organizing computer files and folders in window environment	2.84	0.33	Needed
7	Ability to use of spreadsheet to enter data, sort data and format cells into tables, make computations use formula & create graph	3.42	0.30	Highly Needed
8	Ability to use hardware facilities like printer, scanner, digital camera, projector etc	3.39	1.01	Highly Needed
9	Ability to create web page for e-commerce and e-business	3.47	0.38	Highly Needed
10	Ability to create an e-mail account, send and receive e-mails with attachments, and manage mails	3.84	0.30	Highly Needed
11	Ability to download from and upload files into the internet.	3.20	0.43	Highly Needed
12	Ability to access and use online stores for ordering, securing payments and delivery billing etc.	2.88	0.51	Needed
13	Ability to apply suitable format to types of documents and suitably using bullets and numbers for itemization in a document	3.39	1.11	Highly Needed
14	Ability to acquire text and images from different sources and placing them in a publication	3.65	0.87	Highly Needed
15	Applying alignment and justification to a publication using desktop publish technology	3.75	0.98	Highly Needed
Cluster Mean		3.95	0.50	Highly Needed

Table 1 presents the result on the rating of OTM educators on the information and communication

Technology skills needed by OTM students for successful entrepreneurship. Apart from Item 5 and 12, all the items in this cluster received mean rating between the range of 3.20 3.84 and are rated highly needed. The cluster mean of 3.65 is also regarded as highly needed. The range of standard deviation (0.25 – 1.21) revealed that the

respondents are not far apart in their ratings. This therefore means that information and communication technology skills are highly needed by graduates of OTM for successful entrepreneurship.

Research Question 2: What are the managerial skills needed by office technology and management students in polytechnics in Delta State for self employment

Table 2
Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of OTM Educators on Managerial Skills N= 43

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remark
1	Ability to set achievable goal for a business	3.46	0.53	Highly Needed
2	Ability to set up strategies for the attainment of set goals	3.21	0.29	Highly Needed
3	Ability to take decision in line with businesses objectives and follow them up to implementation	3.75	0.78	Highly Needed
4	Ability to assigned tasks to competent hands to handle	3.32	0.34	Highly Needed
5	Ability to delegate authority and responsibility to	3.52	0.23	Highly Needed
6	Ability to manage other people to get result and take initiative	3.48	0.41	Highly Needed
7	Ability to coordinate both human and material resources to achieve business goals	3.12	0.53	Highly Needed
8	Willingness to work with and give assistance to other people	3.41	0.61	Highly Needed
9	Ability to manage office files and records to meet the needs and demands of business organization	3.63	0.38	Highly Needed
10	Ability to motivate people towards the achievement of both individual and group goals	3.46	0.32	Highly Needed
	Cluster Mean	3.95	0.50	Highly Needed

Table 2 presents the result on the rating of OTM educators on the managerial skills needed by office technology and management graduates for successful entrepreneurship. From the result, all the items received mean rating above 3.0. Hence, they are considered highly needed. The cluster mean for this cluster 3.95 is also regarded as high extent. The range of standard deviation (0.23 – 0.78) revealed that the respondents are not far apart in their ratings.

Research Question 3: What are the communication skills needed by office technology and management students in polytechnics in Delta State for self employment

Table 2
Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of OTM Educators on Communication Skills N= 43

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remark
1	Ability to speak clearly and fluently to be understood	3.34	0.45	Highly Needed
2	Ability to speak politely to customers	3.21	0.50	Highly Needed
3	Ability to send and reply messages on cellular phone and other electronic data processing devices and systems	3.45	0.58	Highly Needed
4	Ability to correct sentence style, good sentence and use appropriate vocabulary and clarity in writing.	3.28	0.64	Highly Needed

5	Ability to read email messages and act on them promptly	3.56	0.38	Highly Needed
6	Ability to compose and write clear and concise memos, letters and related business documents on word processor	3.68	0.54	Highly Needed
7	Ability to express oneself courteously	3.32	0.60	Highly Needed
8	Ability to read business books, journals and periodicals regarding the line of business environment in general	3.36	0.51	Highly Needed
9	Ability to respond to points raised while engaging in oral communication	3.70	0.30	Highly Needed
10	Ability to listen to message clearly on telephone and other devices	3.24	0.37	Highly Needed
Cluster Mean		3.95	0.50	Highly Needed

Table 3 shows the result on the rating of OTM educators on the communication skills needed by office technology and management students for self-employment upon graduation from school. From the result, all the items received mean ratings above 3.0. Hence, they are considered highly needed. The cluster mean for this cluster 3.95 is also regarded as highly needed. The range of standard deviation (0.30 – 0.64) revealed that the respondents were not far apart in their ratings.

INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

Table 4

Summary of the t-test Analysis of OTM Educators' Mean Ratings on Entrepreneurial Skills Needed by OTM Students

Gender	N	X	S	t-cal	α	df	t-crit	Remark
Male	18	40.82	0.68					
Female	25	45.02	0.34	1.06	0.05	41	1.684	Not significant

Table 4 shows the t-test analysis of responses of the male and female OTM educators on the entrepreneurial skills needed by office technology and management students for self-employment upon graduation from school. The t-calculated value of 1.06 is less than the t-critical value of 1.684 at 41 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

IV. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Findings from Research Question One revealed that OTM educators considered information and communication technology skills highly needed by office technology and management students for self employment upon graduation from school. This finding is in agreement with Edeh (2017) who held that information and communication technology applications are needed by business education for successful entrepreneurship.

Again, the result of the study as shown in Table 2 revealed that managerial skills are highly needed for success entrepreneurship among graduates of office technology and management programme in polytechnics. This result corroborated Ezeabi (2017) who observed that managerial skills are very important as their acquisition will equip students with attitudes and competencies needed to be job creators instead of job hunters.

The findings of the study as shown in Table 3 revealed that communication skills are highly needed by office technology and management graduates for successful entrepreneurship. This finding is in line with Oliver and Kanu (2012) who held that communication skills are indispensable for successful entrepreneurship among graduates. The test of hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of OTM educators on entrepreneurial skills needed by office technology and management students for self employment. This is in agreement with Eze and Okoroafor (2013) who found out that sex, role and professional status do not affect possession of skills.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study, it is therefore concluded that entrepreneurial skills in terms of information and communication technology skills, managerial skills and communication skills are highly needed by graduates of office technology and management for successful entrepreneurship. Hence, the quality of office technology and management programme can be determined in terms of entrepreneurial skills possessed by graduates of the programme.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- ✓ OTM educators should ensure that graduates of office technology and management programme are well exposed to various entrepreneurial skills for self-employment
- ✓ Office technology and management students who desire set up entrepreneurship venture after graduations should ensure that they possessed the ICT, managerial and communication skills for successful entrepreneurial adventure.
- ✓ Polytechnic should also ensure the Departments of Office Technology and Management are well equipped with relevant facilities and equipment needed for quality entrepreneurial skill acquisition.

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