



STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF 2009 NBTE/UNESCO NATIONAL DIPLOMA CURRICULUM IN OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

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Abstract

The need to ensure success in the implementation of 2009 NBTE/UNESCO curriculum for National Diploma programme of Office Technology and Management necessitated this study. The study which was carried out in Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Afikpo, Ebonyi State, was guided by three research questions and one null hypothesis was tested. The design was descriptive survey. The population of the study was 76. Purposive sampling technique was used and the entire population was studied. A five point rated structured questionnaire which was validated by three experts in Office Technology and Management was used for the data collection for the study. Mean statistics and standard deviations were used to analyse the data collected so as to answer the research questions and to determine the cohesion or otherwise of the respondents' ratings. Z-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that the 2009 NBTE/UNESCO curriculum is embedded with ICT and communication skills oriented courses and as such is quite relevant in today's world of business. The study also found that the provision of relevant infrastructure as well as teacher's ability to demonstrate the step by step application and means of acquisition of the skills contained in the courses will greatly enhance the implementation success rate of the curriculum. Based on the findings, the study recommended that specialisation among teachers should be encouraged. It also recommended that teachers should be frequently updated by way of training so as to keep abreast with the ever evolving technological world of business.

Keywords: *Office Technology and Management, Curriculum and implementation*

Introduction

Since the inception of literacy, wherever there was a man or woman of action, there too was a man of pen (secretary) to record his/her deeds. Secretarial Studies is one of the oldest and very useful professions in the world. The Course was designed to prepare people with vocational skills, effective work competencies, knowledge and attitudes for employability and self-dependence (Chukwumezie, 2006). It produced secretaries who performed office traditional roles such as taking dictations in shorthand and transcribing same, recording minutes of meetings, preparing and dispatching mails, receiving and making phone calls on behalf of their organisations, and so on.

Secretarial Studies as a course has witnessed a very significant and remarkable improvement in recent years and has grown beyond only preparing secretaries to run errands, prepare tea for the boss, receive visitors, answer phone calls, to more significant and dignifying responsibilities. The dynamism of and advancement in technology have changed the needs of offices and the business world of today and so the job expectations from secretaries and the methods of meeting those



expectations got changed responsively. In view of these changing trends in the job market, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in collaboration with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2004, reviewed the then Secretarial Studies curriculum. Consequently, an overhaul and total transformation took place giving birth to an almost new course of study Office Technology and Management (OTM). OTM curriculum, therefore, came as a result of an extensive review of the curriculum of Secretarial Studies due to societal demand for improvement. The emerged OTM programme aims at producing competent Office Managers.

OTM involves the use of new inventions or devices in an office to transform or change the process of office work. Okoro and Amagoh (2008) viewed OTM as an efficient, effective, productive and functional education, which leads to self employment, self reliance, paid employment and consequently, self actualisation. OTM is the bedrock for graduates' self reliance; it leads to national survival due to its skills and sub-skills that arrest the travails and traumatic embarrassments suffered by job seekers (Ohaegbulem, 2018).

In line with this new nomenclature, course contents and skills expectations, OTM now has more ICT related practical courses than ever while their graduates are now referred to as Office Managers. Subjects in the curriculum are divided into special areas, which include secretarial practice and techniques in office management and control, information and communication technology applications (such as word processing, spreadsheets, desktop publishing, web page design and the internet), and general studies in education relating to contemporary problem (Jamiu, 2008). The expanded curriculum has further broadened the course and provides more job opportunities for its adherents.

As reliance on technology continues to expand in office, the roles and chances of office managers keep evolving to the point that professional office managers now assume responsibilities that were once reserved for managerial staff. This then meant that constant curriculum review, as much as the need arises, is inevitable. For instance, since its inception in 2004, the curriculum for OTM National Diploma had been reviewed twice in 2006 and 2009 (NBTE, 2009). Ohakwe and Ojukwu (2008) observed that a curriculum, like a constitution, is not static rather it is fluid and elastic in application, administration and change, and it is principally modulated by the environment and technology. Curriculum reform is a modification or a review of what has existed for a purpose, adding or subtracting some elements or modules as a result of observable need or societal demand for improvement (Aharu & Unwuchola, 2015).

It has been noted that curriculum is the heart and blood of all academic endeavours and yet it has been variously defined and wrongly implemented. Justifiably, OTM curriculum for National Diploma has been reviewed but the success thereof at any point in time, lies to a greater extent, on the implementation strategies adopted. It is against this background that this study on ascertaining strategies for effective implementation of the 2009 NBTE/UNESCO OTM National Diploma curriculum is being conducted.

Statement of the Problem

The nomenclature Office Technology and Management (OTM) came in response to the need and challenges of technological advancement in the business world making most secretarial skills redundant and outrightly eroding others. It therefore became essential and of paramount importance to either review the curriculum of Secretarial Studies or scrap the course. The former was chosen,



thus OTM was birthed. In 2009, NBTE in collaboration with UNESCO came up with a new curriculum for ND programme of OTM. As expected, the curriculum contained more ICT courses aimed at imparting students with such skills as are relevant in the age. However, not much was done on the strategies of achieving the objective of the new curriculum. More attention was paid on the curriculum content itself and little or no attention paid to the modalities for attaining its success. The same set of teachers who studied Secretarial Studies and taught it over the years kick-started the new programme - OTM, with only a handful of them enrolling for practical training and further studies bothering on the new programme. Thus the success of the curriculum risks being jeopardised. It therefore becomes imperative to review the strategies of implementing this curriculum with a view to ensuring its success.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to ascertain the strategies for effective implementation of the 2009 NBTE/UNESCO curriculum for National Diploma programme in OTM. Specifically, the study sought to identify the:

Relevant skills embedded in OTM ND curriculum of 2009.

Most effective means of imparting word processing skills to OTM students.

Effective methods of imparting internet skills to OTM students.

Research Questions

The following research questions, in line with the specific objectives were formulated to guide the study:

What are the relevant skills embedded in OTM ND curriculum of 2009?

What are the most effective means of imparting OTM students with word processing skills?

What are the effective methods of imparting OTM students with internet skills?

Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design and the study was carried out in Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnics Unwana, Afikpo, Ebonyi State. The population was 76, comprising of 8 lecturers of OTM Department and 68 students of the same Department. No sample was taken as the population was manageable.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire rated on a 5-point rating scale. The instrument had two sections A and B. Section A had 3 items on demographic data of respondents while B had 18 items designed by the researcher guided by the research questions. The questionnaire was subjected to face validation by two lecturers in OTM Department, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Afikpo.

The data collected were analysed using the mean statistics and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the hypothesis was tested using the z-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance thus:

Teachers and students do not differ significantly in their mean ratings of effective methods of imparting OTM students with internet skills.

Result

Research Question 1:

What are the relevant skills embedded in OTM ND curriculum of 2009?

Table 1: Mean ratings of lecturers on relevant skills embedded in OTM ND curriculum of 2009.

N = 8

S/N.	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1.	Word processing skills	4.63	0.85	Very highly required
2.	Spreadsheet operational skills	4.38	1.06	Highly required
3.	Presentation skills	4.63	0.52	Very highly required
4.	Internet operational skills	4.75	0.46	Very highly required
5.	Desktop publishing skills	4.75	0.46	Very highly required
6.	Enhanced communication skills	4.88	0.35	Very highly required
Grand Mean/SD		4.67	0.62	Very highly required

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2018

From the table, it can be seen that lecturers accepted that all the items (1 - 6) as very highly required as relevant skills that are contained in the courses in the reviewed 2009 NBTE/UNESCO curriculum for National Diploma programme in Office Technology and Management.

Table 2: Mean ratings of students on relevant skills embedded in OTM ND curriculum of 2009.

N=68

S/N.	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1.	Word processing skills	4.90	0.38	Very highly required
2.	Spreadsheet operational skills	4.52	0.76	Very highly required
3.	Presentation skills	4.38	0.92	Highly required
4.	Internet operational skills	3.96	1.07	Highly required
5.	Desktop publishing skills	4.57	0.76	Very highly required
6.	Enhanced communication skills	4.40	0.96	Highly required
Grand Mean/SD		4.46	0.81	Very highly required

Source: Researcher's Field Survey 2018

From the table, students accepted the items (1 6) as highly required as relevant skills that are contained in the courses in the reviewed 2009 NBTE/UNESCO curriculum for National Diploma programme in Office Technology and Management.

Table 3: Lecturers' ratings on the most effective ways of imparting word processing skills to students.

S/N	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
7.	Provision of relevant textbooks and manuals for students	4.63	0.52	Very highly required
8.	Furnishing computer labs with functional and sufficient computers	5.00	0.0	Very highly required
9.	Ensuring the availability of electricity for the class at least eight hours per week	4.88	0.35	Very highly required
10.	Guiding them through keyboarding with speed	4.55	1.07	Very highly required
11.	Teacher demonstrating to students the different uses of MS Word, step by step	4.88	0.35	Very highly required
Grand mean/SD		4.78	0.46	Very highly required

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2018

The table showed that lecturers accepted that all the items (7-11) are very highly required as the most effective ways of imparting OTM students with word processing skills, which is one of the skills contained in the reviewed 2009 NBTE/UNESCO curriculum for National Diploma programme in Office Technology and Management.

Table 4: Mean ratings of HND II students on the most effective ways of imparting word processing skills to students.

	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
7.	Provision of relevant textbooks and manuals for students	4.22	0.86	Highly required
8.	Furnishing computer labs with functional and sufficient computers	4.74	0.66	Very highly required
9.	Ensuring the availability of electricity for the class at least eight hours per week	4.63	0.81	Very highly required
10.	Guiding them through keyboarding with speed	4.25	0.85	Highly required
11.	Teacher demonstrating to students the different uses of MS Word, step by step	4.07	0.94	Highly required
Grand Mean/SD		4.38	0.82	Highly required

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2018

All the variables in the table were accepted by students as the most effective ways of imparting word processing skills to students. Two of the variables were very highly required while the rest were highly required.

Table 5: Mean ratings of lecturers on the effective method of imparting OTM students with internet skills
N = 8

S/N.	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
12.	Providing free and accessible internet services and facilities in school	4.00	1.13	Highly required
13.	Sending teachers on refresher courses from time to time	4.63	0.74	Very highly required
14.	Showing students how to download and upload data to the net via a projected screen	4.50	0.76	Very highly required
15.	Helping students create/use departmental email account	4.00	0.93	Highly required
16.	Having lecturers with students in a virtual classroom with the aid of teleconferencing device	4.50	1.03	Very highly required
17.	Demonstrate how to use research and collaboration tools such as search engines and email	4.50	0.54	Very highly required
Grand Mean/SD		4.36	0.86	Highly required

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2018

The table shows that all the items (12-17) were accepted by lecturers as very effective means of helping OTM (ND) students to acquire skills for proficiency in the use of internet. Items 12 and 15 were highly required while the rest were very highly required.

Table 6: The mean ratings of students on the effective methods of imparting students with internet skills
N=68

S/N.	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
12.	Providing free and accessible internet services and facilities in school	4.49	0.80	Highly required
13.	Sending teachers on refresher courses from time to time	3.69	0.83	Highly required
14.	Showing students how to download and upload data to the net via a projected screen	3.69	1.15	Highly required
15.	Helping students create/use departmental email account	3.72	0.98	Highly required
16.	Having lecturers with students in a virtual classroom with the aid of teleconferencing device	3.72	1.06	Highly required
17.	Demonstrate how to use research and collaboration tools such as search engines and email	4.04	1.06	Highly required
Grand mean/SD		3.83	0.98	Highly required

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2018

All the items (12 -17), as can be seen from the table, were highly required therefore showing their acceptance by students as effective means of helping ND OTM students acquire internet skills.

Test of Hypothesis

Table 7: There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students on the effective methods of imparting OTM students with internet skills as contained in the 2009 NBTE/UNESCO curriculum for National Diploma Programme in Office Technology and Management.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	\hat{A}	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Remark
Lecturers	8	4.36	0.86	0.05	74	1.123	1.980	Accepted
Students	68	3.83	0.98					

Data in Table 7 show that the calculated z value of 1.123 at 74 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.980. this shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and students respondents on the effective methods of imparting internet skills to OTM students, therefore the hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion

The result of the analysis of research question one showed that ICT and effective communication skills are considered relevant and necessary for graduates of National Diploma programme in Office Technology and Management, as engrained in the 2009 NBTE/UNESCO curriculum. This is in line with the findings of Jamiu (2008) who revealed that the 2009 ND curriculum contained courses in special areas which include secretarial practice and office



management, information and communication technology application skills and general studies relating to contemporary issues. With respect to research questions two and three, the analysis revealed that both lecturers and students rated the items on the tables as highly required. That is to say that they are highly needed for effective implementation of the 2009 curriculum as well as for imparting the requisite skills therein to students. The finding is in consonant with the observation of Adelakin (2009) that the implication of the 2009 curriculum is the greater emphasis on practical facet of teaching. Ileh and Akarahu (2014) also observed that one of the curriculum implementation skills needed is the ability of a teacher to take students to the laboratory for practical demonstration. A teacher can only do this if the needed facilities and infrastructure are provided. The test of the null hypothesis showed that teachers and students respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings of the strategies for imparting students with internet skills. The acquisition of these skills are important as they will enrich Office Technology and Management students with contemporary and relevant skills and so keep them highly competitive in the world of business.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the 2009 NBTE/UNESCO curriculum for National Diploma programme in Office Technology and Management contained relevant skills acquisition courses, the acquisition of which will keep its graduates viable in the world of business. It further concluded that teachers need to be actively involved in the order to ensure the success of this rich curriculum.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

OTM teachers should be regularly sent on refresher courses/training so as to keep them abreast of technological trends and thereby suitable to teach the courses in the 2009 NBTE/UNESCO ND curriculum for OTM. It may also be necessary to have teachers specialise on key specific aspects of the courses taught in OTM. This area of specialization should be critically considered in course allocations.

Deliberate efforts should be made to provide the requisite infrastructure and facilities, particularly ICT facilities, for the effective teaching of the curriculum. Enrichment courses should also be added to the curriculum, from time to time, so as to ensure that OTM students are not left behind in an ever changing business world.

The use of Computer Technologists in the teaching of core ICT courses in OTM should be discouraged by all because it is an indication that OTM graduates are ill prepared and not fit to carry the future of the programme. OTM is not an appendage of Computer Science and so must not be treated as such else we jeopardise the future of OTM as a programme.

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