Competencies Required for OTM Curriculum Implementation for Skills Development

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Abstract

This paper discusses the competencies required for OTM Curriculum Implementation for Skills Development. It was necessitated by the fact that despite government policies in the past to address the rising unemployment in the country, they have not come to fruition. Yet, tertiary institutions year in year out continue to graduate thousands of youths whose talents are wasted due to unemployment or underemployment. Government's directive for all tertiary institutions, irrespective of field of training to teach entrepreneurship with the aim of creating self-employment initiatives seems to have only scratched the surface of the problem. Now, another initiative is in the offing. That is, the National Skill Qualification Framework as an alternative. That is, all Polytechnics have been directed to initiate Institute of Skills Development and Vocational Training (ISDVT). The Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi has already complied with this directive and has set up close the Institute, which in turn has started offering training in close to thirty skill courses in the initial stage of these in the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF). Office Technology and Management (OTM) Program is part of this scheme since by its nature it is skill oriented. This work opines that possession of four skills, namely Entrepreneurship, Information and Communication Technology, Technical and Communication Competencies amongst others are must-haves for OTM Lecturers, and would resonate well for Curriculum Implementation. The paper partly recommended that OTM Lecturers should see the need to learn, unlearn and relearn in order to upgrade their competence in their profession.

Keywords: *Competencies, Office Technology & Management (OTM), Curriculum Implementation, National Skills Qualification (NSQ), Skill Development, Institute of Skills Development and Vocational Centre (ISDVT)*

INTRODUCTION

It is not news that the rate at which higher institutions churn out graduates into Nigeria's labour market has risen to a crescendo. For instance, according to the National Universities Commission (NUC) (2021), there were 1,955,983 students enrolled in Nigerian Universities in the 2018/2019 academic year, and 414,696 graduates were produced in the same year. This indicates that Nigerian universities produced about 21% of the total number of students enrolled as graduates in the 2018/2019 academic year.

Similarly, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) (2020) reported that in the 2018/2019 academic year, there were 1,064,597 students enrolled in Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in Nigeria, and 311,231 graduates were produced in the same year. This indicates that Polytechnics and Colleges of Education produced about 29% of the total number of students enrolled as graduates in the 2018/2019 academic year.

It is now equally a cliché that the Nigerian labour market is saturated and cannot absorb these graduates. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2021), the unemployment rate in Nigeria stood at 33.3% in the fourth quarter of 2020. This is an increase from the 27.1% unemployment rate recorded in the second quarter of the same year. This means that out of the labour force of about 69.7 million people, 23.2 million people were unemployed. However, the unemployment rate dropped slightly to 33.1% in the second quarter of 2021.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Nigerian economy and may have contributed to the rise in unemployment rates. The government has implemented several measures to address the issue, including the creation of the National Youth Investment Fund and the establishment of the Special Public Works Programme, which aims to create job opportunities for unemployed youths. However, the issue of unemployment in Nigeria remains a significant challenge that requires sustained effort and investment from both the public and private sectors. Meanwhile, the future seems bleak. The Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) has projected the unemployment rate in Africa's most populous nation to rise to 37 percent in 2023. This means that the projected unemployment rate is about four percentage points higher than the National Bureau of Statistics data of 33.3 percent as of 2020. In its latest report 2023 Macroeconomic Outlook report titled 'Nigeria in Transition: Recipes for Shared Prosperity', the private policy advocacy group said, the projected rate and the poverty headcount will amplify to 45 percent. This is due to weak performance in the job-elastic sectors, low labour absorption of sectors that will drive growth, and population growth estimated at 3.2 percent will lead to a decline in real per capita income. (Izuaka, 2023).

Thus, unfortunately, skilled and talented Nigerian youths roam our streets in search of means of livelihoods, a number being pushed into criminalities of various sorts and made to appear useless. Our educational system, especially University education, does not seem to help matters as graduates lack real life skills that would help them be self-sustaining. It is important to note that the quality of education and the employability of graduates from Nigerian tertiary institutions have been a subject of debate and concern, with many stakeholders calling for improvements to the curriculum, teaching methods, and infrastructure in these institutions.

In a bid to solve this problem, government has birthed many programs, including the policy that entrepreneurship education be incorporated into the Curriculum of all Nigerian Tertiary

Institutions. The most recent Policy is the National Skill Acquisition Framework, which requires that all Polytechnics should have Institutes of Skill Acquisition and Vocational Training, without which their programmes will not be accredited henceforth. The essence is to encourage skill acquisition for self-development.

The OTM programme by its nature tends towards skill acquisition and hence self-employment inclined. However, it appears there is a disconnect between the intent of the programme and ability of the deliverers to do the desired, or the loss of consciousness as to the abilities, skills and competencies needed by these resource persons to effectively deliver. Without doubt, Lecturers are at the core, or heart of academic programmes. Therefore, if the OTM Programme would achieve the desired aim in, and prove its mettle in the NSQ programme, then the Lecturers who are at the core in teaching and learning must be truly competent and at their peak of knowledge and efficiency. This paper therefore intends to highlight and very clearly too, the relevant competencies these resource persons would need to possess to effectively and efficiently help trainees cultivate needed skills for self-sufficiency.

Concepts Definition

a. Skill and Competence

To succeed in any field of endeavour, expertise is required and expertise is a function of ability to act due to knowledge, skill and competence in any area of specialization. Competency is the capability of applying or using knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours, and personal characteristics to successfully perform critical work tasks, specific functions, or operate in a given role or position. Kirschner and Thijssen (2005) describe the competency concept as a cluster of person-related qualities suitable to deal in a fitting manner with a clearly defined problem situation. It implies not only analytical and conceptual thinking, but also the development of meta-cognitive awareness, i.e. thinking and deciding in teaching; reflecting and adapting practices (Anderson, 2004).

Skill is the ability to do something well, usually gained through training or experience that is needed. The acquisition of skill involves the ability to perform a task proficiently, which can be obtained through education, training or experience. Fadere in Inalegwu (2016) defined skill as the appropriate expertise, aptitude and competence required for a specific job, involving expert knowledge and creative reasoning to a level of mastery. Developing and improving skills is an important part of personal and professional growth. Skills development refers to the process of improving or acquiring skills and knowledge that are necessary for personal and professional growth. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), skills development is a key component of economic and social development. The same Organisation in 2012 emphasizes the importance of skills development in improving the quality of life for individuals and communities, reducing poverty and unemployment, and promoting sustainable economic growth.

Competency according to Hornby (2015) is a skill you need in a particular job or for a particular task. Ojukwu and Ojukwu (2002) defined competency as the knowledge, skill and behaviour that enable an employee to meet established performance criteria. This means that it is the knowledge and ability to perform a task adequately. Competency can also refer to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviours that an individual possesses and demonstrates in performing a specific job or task. It is the combination of various attributes, including technical

expertise, problem-solving ability, communication skills, and interpersonal skills that enable a person to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. Competencies can be acquired through education, training, work experience, and personal development, and they are essential for job success and career advancement.

Competence describes what an academic staff should be able to know and do in professional practice. It refers to a state or quality of being able and fit (Jimoh, 2014). Business educators should enhance their competencies through professional development. This is highly required for improving educational effectiveness and performance and for sustaining business educators' commitment and job satisfaction. Competencies are dependent on sound frameworks of knowledge, supported by meta-cognitive skills and management strategies for swift retrieval and use (Feiman, 2008). Summarily, therefore, one can infer from above submission that competencies are skills, both innate or God-given gifts or talents, and those acquired through learning or passage of time known as experience, that can help individuals efficiently and effectively perform particular functions or tasks.

b. Curriculum Implementation

Okebukola (2005) defined curriculum implementation as the translation of the curriculum objectives from paper to practice. To Doggoh (2007), it is the process of putting into actual practice what has been planned in the curriculum document. Curriculum implementation is a process of bringing the paper plan of what should be taught to learners and how it should be taught using specified materials and learning experiences to achieve set goals. When this is done appropriately and according to the curriculum plan, the implementation can be termed effective and it is the effective implementation that guarantees the actualization of the curriculum objectives.

c. Office Technology and Management (OTM)

Office Technology and Management (OTM) is a comprehensive term referring to that aspect of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social live (Baba & Akarahu, 2012). It is a programme of study put together to enable the recipients to acquire knowledge, skills, competencies, abilities and attribute by engaging their brains and hands so as to equip them to live and contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. Therefore, it goes without saying that to successfully implement the OTM Curriculum for Skills Development certain competencies is a must.

The effective teaching of OTM in any learning environment requires teachers to demonstrate various skills, which will enable students to improve their knowledge, competencies, attitudes and values. Thus, the possession of required competencies by OTM teachers is vital in imparting the necessary skills to the students.

Office Technology and Management (OTM) was formerly known as secretarial studies in Nigeria. It was renamed by National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in 2004 out of the need to meet the technological and 21st century managerial demands of today's workplace. The new curriculum was enriched with several ICT courses amidst other injections. It is designed in modular approach and accommodates practical and theoretical ICT knowledge

which is intended to equip students with office and secretarial skills for employment in various fields or be self-employed (Ndinechi & Gude, 2014).

Virtually every field of education is focused on equipping students with the knowledge, abilities, and entrepreneurship skills that will make them self-reliant. The Office Technology and Management (OTM) Programme is not an exception, and it has a formidable content that can equip individuals with appropriate skills, knowledge, abilities, and competencies that will enable them to become self-employed and self-reliant. (Etonyeaku, 2013). It is designed to provide students with the practical and theoretical knowledge necessary to manage and organize an office effectively. The programme covers a wide range of topics, including communication, information technology, office management, accounting, and entrepreneurship. Through the OTM Programme, students learn about various office technologies, such as computer applications, internet research, record keeping, and filing systems. These skills are critical in modern workplaces where computer literacy and knowledge of digital tools are highly valued. (NBTE, 2004). Furthermore, the programme also focuses on office management, which involves developing organizational, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills. Students learn how to manage office resources, including personnel, materials, and time. They also learn how to communicate effectively with colleagues, clients, and suppliers. Importantly, the OTM Programme also emphasizes entrepreneurship, which is a critical skill for self-employment and self-reliance. Students learn how to identify business opportunities, develop business plans, and manage business finances. (NBTE, 2004). The Office Technology and Management Programme provides students with a comprehensive set of skills, knowledge, abilities, and competencies that will enable them to become self-reliant and self-employed. With the skills acquired from the programme, graduates can establish their businesses, manage offices effectively, and contribute to the growth and development of their communities.

Esene (2010) discussed the OTM program and stated that it is divided into three categories: secretarial studies for office management techniques, information and communication technology for word processing, computer application, and webpage design, and general education for contemporary problem-solving using general studies courses. The program consists of five courses: ICT courses, general studies/education, foundation courses, entrepreneurship education, and supervised industrial work experience scheme (SIWES). The general objectives of the program, as stated by NBTE (2006), serve as a guide for teaching. Agbongiasede (2014) agreed that these objectives would help educators focus their efforts on areas where effective teaching and learning can occur.

Ikelegbe and Odede (2012) explained that the curriculum focuses on teaching the skills necessary for ND/HND graduates to work effectively in automated offices and assume the role of office managers. Ndinechi and Gude (2014) noted that the introduction of ICT courses means that lecturers should understand that in addition to vocational competencies in office technology and management, students are expected to have standard knowledge of word processing and spreadsheets to type various office documents with 98% accuracy. Odumah in Adelakin (2009) added that the new curriculum emphasizes the practical aspects of teaching. Umukoro (2014) stated that the objectives and components of the OTM program aim to equip students with the necessary skills to use computers and their software applications. To achieve this, Akahara and Ile (2014) suggested that teachers need to take students to the laboratory for practical demonstrations.

d. OTM Curriculum Structure and Organization

The main features of the revised OTM curriculum include the incorporation of relevant ICT course modules; and Entrepreneurship Education Course and a significant change (i.e. reduction) in the contact hours of shorthand from 10 hours to 4 hours. More specifically, according to Ohakwe and Njoku (2009), the OTM courses are structured along four areas. These are:

1. General/liberal studies courses as seen in the teaching of Citizenship Education for all programmes.
2. Foundation/Basic courses as seen in introduction of:

- Use of English
- Principles of Accounts
- Business Mathematics
- Introduction to Business
- Principles of law
- Professional Ethics and Social Responsibility
- Entrepreneurship Education
- Business Communication
- Technical English
- Professional/Technical courses as in:
- Keyboarding
- Shorthand
- Office Practice
- Project
- ICT
- Modern Office Technology
- Records Management

3. The Supervised Industrial Works Experience Scheme (SIWES) for National Diploma Students

e. Challenges of OTM Curriculum Implementation

According to Ukata, Nmehielle, & Silas-Dikibo (2017), the following are the challenges confronting OTM curriculum implementation:

Inadequate funding

Insufficient funding is a significant challenge facing the implementation of OTM in Nigeria. Many OTM programs lack adequate funding, which has negatively impacted their performance and that of the institutions. Most schools lack modern facilities such as computer and office practice laboratories, shorthand studios, and keyboarding pools, while the available laboratories often lack modern equipment and are in poor condition. The lack of adequate funding has resulted in OTM programs not being given the priority they require, which is a significant challenge.

Dearth of trained teachers

Many teachers, including those in the OTM department, are not keeping up with technological advancements. This is because they are not trained with modern office equipment, making it difficult for them to teach their students. Inadequate manpower supply is also a major factor that has hindered the successful implementation of Business Education programs in Nigeria. The current economic challenges further exacerbate the situation as teachers are not adequately equipped to teach the new course content of the OTM curriculum, leading to the production of half-baked graduates who cannot handle modern office equipment or solve economic problems. To address this challenge, teachers in the OTM department need to be trained and retrained (Fadare, 2014).

Inadequate modern office equipment

According to Otobo and Makeri-Yahaya (2002) as cited in Fadare (2014), advanced and expensive equipment is necessary for technological acquisition and utilization in the automated office. The equipment used in the OTM curriculum of the 1980s is no longer sufficient to meet current economic challenges. Therefore, there is a need for the acquisition and proper use of modern facilities and equipment such as computers, overhead projectors, digital sharp reprographic machines, refrigerators, long span magnetic boards, and laminating machines by OTM teachers and learners to overcome these challenges.

Inappropriate/inadequate instructional strategies

An instructional strategy is a method employed by a teacher to activate students' curiosity, engage them in learning, foster critical thinking skills, promote sustained classroom interaction, and enhance the learning of course content. These techniques equip teachers to make learning enjoyable and motivate students to become strategic learners. OTM lecturers face a challenge as many lack knowledge of effective instructional strategies, leading to a loss of student interest and ineffective teaching. To overcome this challenge, it is necessary to provide training and retraining to ensure that teachers are familiar with a range of techniques such as lectures, discussions, case studies, excursions, independent and group study, projects, and discovery, along with skills such as questioning, focus, control, and conflict management. By doing so, the implementation of the OTM curriculum can be improved. (Robert, 2014).

Inadequate technical manpower

Currently, there are only a limited number of polytechnics that have skilled personnel to maintain, repair, and service both manual and electronic machines. As a result, malfunctioning equipment will likely disrupt the teaching and learning process, hindering the implementation of the curriculum.

Inadequate motivation

Komolafe's observation, cited in Fadare (2014), draws attention to the impact of societal values on the teaching profession, specifically in the Office Technology and Management (OTM) field. The author notes that in the past, knowledge and experience were highly respected, but nowadays, financial status is often the measure of a person's worth. The author emphasizes the need for recognition and respect for teachers in the OTM department and other educational institutions. Adequate compensation and recognition are necessary to motivate teachers to give

their best and ensure the effective implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, it is crucial for the government and other stakeholders to prioritize the welfare of teachers and improve the quality of education in Nigeria.

Irregular power supply

The use of modern tools such as computers, air conditioners, and overhead projectors is dependent on electricity. However, frequent power outages disrupt practical sessions, which is a major obstacle in carrying out the OTM curriculum.

High cost of facilities/equipment

The expenses associated with procuring ICT tools and equipment for polytechnics and educators are significant, which is adversely impacting their purchasing power and, consequently, hindering the implementation of the OTM curriculum.

In a study conducted by Omoniyi and Elemure (2014) on the *Challenges of Curriculum Development in Office Technology and Management in Tertiary Institutions*, the result revealed the following as the challenges of OTM curriculum implementation:

- Arbitrary implementation of Office Technology and Management programme.
- Teacher overwork
- Inadequate supply of ICT equipment and facilities
- Poorly equipped libraries, laboratories and lecture rooms
- Inadequate classroom accommodation
- Poor societal attitude
- Dearth of qualified teachers/personnel to integrate computer into learning areas
- Unstable teaching staff
- The poor state of the economy
- Corruption
- Scarcity and prohibitive cost of books
- Unfavourable government policy
- Incessant strike actions
- Epileptic power supply

f. Strategies Towards Successful Implementation OTM Curriculum

On the strategies towards implementation of OTM curriculum, the findings the study by Omoniyi and Elemure (2014), showed the following as the as the solutions to the challenges facing the implementation of OTM Curriculum:

- Employment of qualified and competent teachers
- Training and retraining of teachers/personnel through regular workshop/conferences
- Consistency in government policy
- Improved funding
- Properly equipped automated instructional equipment
- Development of new methods of instruction by teachers/lecturers
- Dedication on the part of teachers/lecturers

- Organized teacher development programme
- Ownership of personal computer by every business educator
- Effective evaluation system
- Institution-industry collaboration
- Provision of adequate training facilities and equipment

f.   Competencies Required for OTM Curriculum Implementation towards Skills Development

1.   Entrepreneurship Skills

Entrepreneurial skills according to Akunnaya (2012) are those skills that will enable individuals to maximise the resources around him within the limits of his capabilities. They are activity skills that will enable an entrepreneur to manage his own enterprise. Entrepreneurial skills are the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours an OTM lecturer should possess the ability to help their students identify business opportunities, stimulate creativity and transform ideas into practical and economic activities in his organisation. Entrepreneurial skills are simply vocational business skills, which an individual acquires to enable him function effectively in business environment (Ubulum, 2003). Entrepreneurial skills are important for OTM lecturers to possess in order to help students develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the business world. OTM lecturers should be resourceful, creative, passionate, risk-taking, possess strong communication skills, and be adaptable to changing market needs and student needs. These skills will enable them to identify business opportunities, stimulate creativity, and transform ideas into practical and economic activities in their teaching. Therefore, having entrepreneurial skills will assist Lecturers catalyse entrepreneurial desires in their students.

2.   Communication Skills

Communication is the spice of life. It is the vehicle by which feelings, ideas, thoughts could be articulated and exchanged between individuals to ensure comprehension, action and effective reaction. This skill is very essential as humans are social animals. Again, no human can read the others heart without communication.   Therefore, communication ensures understanding, and understanding ensures acceptance.   The communication result is indicated below:

| Communication | → | Understanding | → | Acceptance |
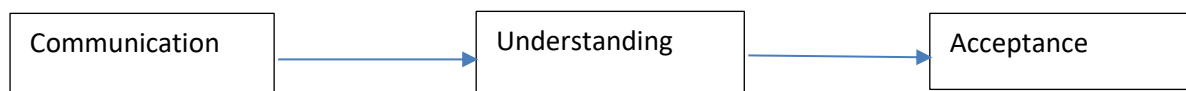
Source: Arikwandu, 2024

Of course, communication takes different channels, and Lecturers use the various means to achieve the goals of imparting skills to their students. Below are some of these skills doubling as various types related to Communications:

Writing: Collier (2002) defined writing as a method of representing language in visual or tactile form. Writing systems use sets of symbols to represent the sounds of speech, and may also have symbols for such things as punctuation and numerals. Writing skills according to Ifejika (2017) include, ability to use the right grammar, correct spelling and punctuation. It also

involves knowing how to write having the level and type of audience in mind. This knowledge will help to decide whether you need to write in a formal style or a more informal one and will also help you to decide on a suitable structure. Good writing skills enables one to communicate his/her message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. Good writing skills are essential for OTM lecturers, as they enable effective communication with students, colleagues, and other stakeholders. By developing these skills, OTM lecturers can enhance their professionalism, credibility, and effectiveness as educators.

Reading: Reading is making meaning from print. OTM educators require the ability to identify words in print, a process called word recognition, construct an understanding from them, a process called comprehension, coordinate identifying words and making meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate. An OTM educator should have the ability to recognize word, comprehend and fluently articulate the words in sound (Ifejika, 2017).

Reading skills are essential for OTM lecturers as they are required to read and understand various materials related to their field of expertise, including academic articles, research reports, industry publications, and textbooks. They must be able to comprehend and analyze complex written material and synthesize the information to develop new insights and ideas. OTM lecturers should possess strong word recognition skills, which involves the ability to accurately and quickly recognize and decode words in print. This skill is important for efficient reading and is necessary for reading fluency. In addition, they should have good comprehension skills, which involve the ability to understand and interpret the meaning of written text. They should be able to identify the main ideas, make connections between ideas, and draw conclusions based on the information presented (Powling, Gavin, Pullman, Fine, & Ashley, 2003)

Moreover, OTM lecturers should be able to read critically, which involves analyzing and evaluating the validity, reliability, and relevance of written information. Critical reading skills enable lecturers to assess the quality of information, identify biases and assumptions, and differentiate between fact and opinion. This skill is important for making informed decisions and developing evidence-based recommendations.

Speaking: A survey carried out in America on common fears, suggested that fear of speaking in front of a group was rated higher than fear of death (Rasberry & Lemoine, 1986). The reasons behind this are simple: people fear that public speaking may result in humiliation, embarrassment or loss of dignity (Ifejika, 2017).

An OTM lecturer should possess strong speaking competencies to effectively deliver lectures and engage with students. He/she should be able to speak clearly and enunciate words properly to ensure that students can hear and understand every word. OTM lecturers should be able to organize their thoughts and present information in a logical and structured manner. They should also use transitions to move smoothly from one topic to another. An OTM lecturer should be confident in their delivery and their knowledge of the subject matter. This will help to engage students and keep their attention. An OTM lecturer should be passionate about the subject matter and convey this enthusiasm to students. This will help to create a more engaging and interactive learning environment. They should be able to adapt their speaking style to suit different audiences and situations. For example, they should be able to adjust their tone and language depending on whether they are addressing a large lecture hall or a smaller seminar.

OTM educators should use body language to enhance their delivery and engage with students. For example, they should make eye contact, use hand gestures, and move around the room to maintain interest. They can use humour to make their lectures more engaging and memorable. However, they should use humour appropriately and in good taste. An OTM educator should be an active listener to ensure that they understand students' questions and concerns. They should also be able to respond to these queries in a clear and concise manner.

Listening: Listening is an active psychological process which enables us to attach meaning to all the information we receive (Ifejika, 2017). Hartley and Bruckman (2002) identified two specific steps in active listening, which are to develop the ability to recognize and deal with barriers that prevents an individual from listening with full attention, to develop and use behaviours which help in listening. Such behaviours can also help to let others know that you are giving them your full attention.

Effective listening is an essential skill for implementing OTM curriculum. An OTM instructor needs to listen actively to his students to understand their needs, concerns, and questions, and to help them learn effectively. He must learn to give full attention, encourage participation, use non-verbal communication (e.g. maintaining eye contact), avoid interrupting, be patient and provide feedback.

3.   Information and Communication Technology Skills

The revised OTM curriculum is characterized by the inclusion of relevant Information and Communication Technology (ICT) courses, in line with the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (2004), to keep up with technological trends. Mmeremikwu-fiac and Onwukwe (2011) argue that business education teachers must be adequately trained to acquire the necessary and vital competencies needed to teach the courses effectively.

Ehirheme (2014) emphasized that the current trend of ICT necessitates that graduates of Office Technology and Management possess the skills required for office information systems, which consist of major components such as word processing, micrographics, reprographics, telecommunications, and data processing. Akpomudjere (2014) believes that having the ability to effectively use technologies, such as software applications, computers, connectivity, teleconferencing or web-conferencing, among others, requires skill. She identified various skills necessary for using ICT, including the ability to produce numeric data using applications like Microsoft Word, Excel, and Spreadsheet, proficiency in producing various documents with Microsoft Word, conducting Web-based training (WBT), navigating on the computer, using hardware and software to organize telecommunication and teleconferencing, accessing the internet for various purposes, producing PowerPoint for information presentation, Data-Base Designs and proficiency in tele-collaboration, etc.

Thus, modern offices require the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as they are essential in carrying out various tasks. The computer is considered the basic device in the ICT revolution, as it contains software and devices that are relevant for office management in the current information age. Consequently, it is important for teachers to possess the necessary skills to use ICT devices, particularly the computer, to enhance the transfer of knowledge to their students. According to Onojafe (2013), such teachers must also be able to align their strategies with the intended learning outcomes of their instructions.

Ugwuanyi and Eze (2009) stressed the need for OTM educators in the polytechnics to be able to use teaching strategies that will enable students to learn and manipulate the applications in the computer system and other ICT devices. They pointed out that some of the courses which include ICT I & II, Modern Office Technology, Desktop Publishing, Management Information System, Multimedia, Webpage Design, Database Management cannot be appreciated without practical application of modern technologies. Adegbenjo (2014) identified that OTM students require skills in the following areas for efficient use of word processing, spread sheet, database management, presentation packages, internet, e-mail, digital camera, projector, scanner, among others. The teacher should therefore use teaching strategies that will enhance impartation of such ICT skills for efficient manipulation of the technologies for information communication.

4   Technical Skills

According to Coursera (2023), Technical skills are the specialized knowledge and expertise required to perform specific tasks, and use specific tools and programs in real world situations. It further stated that diverse technical skills are required in just about every field and industry, from IT and business administration to health care and education. Technical skills such as shorthand writing and keyboarding/typing are also important for instructors in the Office Technology and Management profession. Instructors in the Office Technology and Management profession may need to have proficiency in shorthand writing to effectively teach students this skill. Shorthand has been an essential technical skill for professionals in the Office Technology and Management profession, particularly for individuals who work as stenographers or court reporters. According to the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA), the demand for court reporters is projected to grow by 7 percent from 2019 to 2029 (NCRA, 2021). Instructors who have experience in shorthand writing can provide students with practical guidance on how to learn this skill and how to use it effectively in the workplace. Instructors in the Office Technology and Management profession must also have strong keyboarding/typing skills. Keyboarding skills include the ability to type quickly and accurately, as well as the ability to use specialized software, such as word processing software. Instructors who have proficiency in keyboarding/typing can model effective typing techniques for students and provide guidance on how to improve their keyboarding skills.

Shorthand writing and keyboarding/typing are important technical skills for instructors in the Office Technology and Management profession. Instructors who have proficiency in these skills can effectively teach students how to develop these skills and use them effectively in the workplace. Besides the above main core technical skills of the OTM profession, current trend requires that the OTM instructor should possess marketing skills as part of their technical skills. This involves creating advertising campaigns on facebook and other platforms, develop paid adverts, and design content.

Conclusion

From the discussions above, it can be established that Office technology and management curriculum is designed to provide students with the necessary skills to manage and operate office equipment, systems, and processes. The successful implementation of this curriculum requires educators to possess specific competencies. One of such competencies is the ability to be proficient in using technology themselves and able to incorporate it effectively into their teaching methods. Another competency is that educators must have strong communication

skills to effectively communicate with students, colleagues, and administrators. Other competencies include technical and entrepreneurship skills.

Recommendations

Lecturers need to honestly assess their skills and ensure continuous professional development. They should work hard to improve above identified skills, and even acquire more especially as technology has brought learning to the door-steps thorough self-paced, open distance learning programs. This way they will stay in-tune with current trends, and impart current knowledge to their students in line with required curriculum requirements and global best practices. This means they must be willing to learn, unlearn and relearn new skills. They must be willing to upgrade.

Government at all levels should provide up to date facilities, especially computers to enable OTM Lecturers and other resource persons to be fully equipped to do the good work of upskilling, reskilling, multiskilling and cross-skilling our students to meet curriculum objectives.

Also, training opportunities, both Nationally and Internationally, should be made available to OTM Lecturers to fully equip themselves with global trends.

Acknowledgement

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