



A Study of Entrepreneurial Skills Needed By Office Technology & Management Prospective Graduates for Successful Operation of Business Enterprise

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the entrepreneurial skills required by office technology and management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise. Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi was the area of the study. The study examined the management skills, Human relation skills, Technical skills, and Communication skills needed by office technology and management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise. The research had four purposes and four research questions were formulated. The study employed a survey research design and the population consisted of 50 HND II students as the respondents. A questionnaire of 23 question items were asked to answer the research questions, using four point rating scale. The researchers administered the questionnaire to the respondents directly and collected the same back. Data collection were analyzed using mean. The finding revealed among others that, entrepreneurship skills will serves as basis for self-employment among the prospective graduates, which will reduce the problem of waiting for white collar jobs. It was recommended among others that prospective graduates of Office Technology and Management should strive toward entrepreneurial skills acquisition.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Skills, Office Technology and Management, Business Enterprises.*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas, combining them with management and organization skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth (Agomuo, 2012). It is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. Entrepreneurship is ‘an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives’, (Hartman, 2017). It is also seen as vital to promoting innovation, competitiveness and economic growth, fostering the creation of new firms and business growth. Entrepreneurship skills provide benefits regardless of whether a person sees their future as starting a business, they can be used across people’s personal and working lives as they encompass ‘creativity, initiative, tenacity, teamwork, understanding of risk, and a sense of responsibility’. Entrepreneurial skills include; technical, management and personal skills, as such, there is no established, simple definition of the entrepreneurial skills.

Entrepreneurship education is by nature economic-oriented, and its contribution is significant to the realization of the countries goals and objectives. One of the two aspects of entrepreneurship education, “basic business”, contributes to economic literacy and therefore to the general education of everyone. Basic business education is that broad area of knowledge that with a country’s enterprise system identifies and explains the roles of business a nation’s economic institution and provides content and experiences that prepare individuals for effective participation as citizens, workers and consumers in nation’s society (Osuala, 2009, Etonnyeaku, 2009).

Understanding the significance of entrepreneurial competencies among experts, educationist and managers around the world has prompted to judge potential employees not only by their conventional academic training and expertise rather, along with the degree of entrepreneurial skills acquired during their training (Cooper, Bottomley, & Gordon, 2014). This assertion has proved beyond reasonable doubt, for instance the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) through the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) has made it mandatory for all tertiary education

institutions to include the teaching of Entrepreneurship Education in their curriculum looking at the fact that, entrepreneurship skill are found to be very important in developing the socio-economy of the country and individual. This development has been at all the Higher Education levels irrespective of the study area and Institutions of learning (Colleges, Polytechnics, Monotechnic, Universities) for students taking Diploma courses at Higher National Diploma, Bachelor Degree courses, Nigeria Certificate of Education courses respectively (Odia & Odia, 2013).

Office Technology and Management is a form of education geared towards the development of skills, knowledge and abilities needed to enable the trainees perform effectively in an office environment (Chugbuson and Pwol, 2009). The course can be used to describe the various courses or subjects required for work by prospective Office Managers. Office Technology and Management mean different types of office machines and equipment which the managers, supervisors, secretaries and clerks use in discharging their duties. These facilities include classrooms, laboratories, model office, and electricity (power) among others. Akpa (2012) observed that with the provision of adequate facilities, students work harder and learn more, but in the absence of the facilities, both the students and the teachers are always eager, not feeling at ease to go ahead with the teaching-learning process. After carrying out a study Walberg and Thomas (2012) concluded that trainers perform best when they actively explore rich facilities and instructional materials.

The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) lays emphasis on computer and computer related courses. This is an indication that for any trainee to be more useful and effective in the course of studies. Must be prepared to learn computer-related courses. The design of the Office Technology and Management courses is responsible for global initiative with an object that portends new academic direction in favor of ICT (Okoro, 2010). The aim of OTM program was to meet the needs of secretarial studies students and practitioners on the need to change approach so that they can cope with the challenges of technology of the day. This can only be achieved by being equipped with necessary skills needed in current office environment and operations, (Adelakin, 2009).

Akpotowoh (2016) opined that the entrepreneurship skills acquired in Office Technology and Management programme promotes training in entrepreneurship as well as equip graduates with requisite skills to establish and

run businesses of their own. According to Benjamin (2016) entrepreneurship skills are simply business skills which individuals acquire to enable them effectively function in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur or self-employed, therefore they become necessary to the success of graduates. Nevertheless, the various entrepreneurship skills embedded in Office Technology and Management programmes need to be explored and learn by its prospective graduates for them to succeed as later entrepreneurs.

Graduates of Office Technology and Management programme without the relevant entrepreneurial skills will find the labour market most unrewarding and unfavourable in terms of creating job for them instead of seeking jobs where none-exist. When the lecturers acquires entrepreneurial skills and effectively orients these skills to the students, these lead to the students' effective acquisition of the skills and positively affects their wellbeing as individuals in their families in particular and the nation at large, thus addressing the incompetency among them. It is proved that when lecturers of Office Technology Management acquire the necessary business skills, they are able to easily impart to the students. It is conceived that effective teaching is capable of bringing about the desired socio-economic and political changes in the country, (Hartman, 2017).

Communication Skill

Developing communication skills and initiative should become major concerns of higher education, in order to facilitate employability of graduates who will increasingly be called upon to be not only job seekers but also and above all to become job creators. Higher education institutions should give the opportunity to students to fully develop their own abilities with a sense of social responsibility, educating them to become full participants in democratic society and promoters of changes that will foster equity and justice (UNESCO: 2017).” ‘Communication transforms an idea into a vision, defines how it’s different, explains why it will work, and engages people in helping to make it a reality (Heller, 2015.)’. Communication is what keeps the vision alive in entrepreneur’s communication with others and himself. Until and unless an idea is given a tangible body, it remains in its abstract form and there are chances that it may vanish. It is in communication that an idea gets envisioned; the moment the idea starts developing into a concrete shape in its communication, an entrepreneur starts visualizing the complete picture.

Technical Skills

Technical skill, according to Barron (2017) is the operational capabilities to perform job specifications. Word processing is a very widely used technical skill in many organizations. Furthermore, entrepreneurs must have the ability to use a basic spreadsheet and create spreadsheets that fulfil a specific purpose. By using a spreadsheet program, an entrepreneur can stay organized and work more effectively. Presentation programs allow an entrepreneur to manage meetings and product proposals more effectively.

Jenkins (2015) opined that entrepreneurs must have computer skills to succeed running their own business. Without computer skills, one is left to the mercy of assistants and expensive tech for hire companies. An entrepreneur often does not have the luxury of having huge budgets and the ability to hire lots of employees. Because of this, an entrepreneur needs to focus on building his or her own skills. Ambition, vision, execution and determination are important skills to have, but without the technical skills to succeed as an entrepreneur you are still lacking the secret ingredient. Edward (2012) identified important technical skills, which the entrepreneur should possess to include E-mail management, Analytics, Email and Keyboard Shortcuts. Esene (2010) agreed that the OTM graduates require technical skills and competencies on the following areas, Information Communication Technology (ICT), Keyboarding, Office Practice, Data Processing, Word Processing, Webpage designing and Office automation (sourcing and manipulating office machinery) for the success of business.

Managerial Skills

Management is the art of getting things done through people; a process of harnessing the diverse resources (materials finance, people and time) in a manner as to achieve what the organization set to achieve. It involves planning, organizing, directing and controlling of workers and materials to effectively and efficiently meet set objectives of an enterprise (Yemisi, 2010). Mamabolo *et al* (2017) see management as the process of directing, administering or running a business. It is essentially directing human efforts and energies and coordinating the whole as a team, and giving vital leadership.

Hartman (2017) defined management as the organizing planning and controlling the total business activities and the leading of people so that the use of material, men and equipment results in the efficient achievement of planned

objectives. It is therefore the process of achieving an organization's goal through the coordinated performance of five specific functions which is referred to as the classic management function, planning both short-term and long-term for the organization and setting goals to help achieve the plans, organizing how to use resources such as people and materials; directing employees to perform their work in a way that supports the organization's goals and controlling the organization's progress towards reaching its goal.

Human Relation skill

Relationships between business practitioners and their customers are of great value for any business. Human relations is the process of training employees, addressing their needs, fostering a workplace culture and resolving conflicts between different employees or between employees customers and management. Understanding some of the ways that human relations can impact the costs, competitiveness and long-term economic sustainability of a business helps to underscore their importance. Therefore, it is imperative for entrepreneurs to acquire human relation skill, (Benjamin, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the entrepreneurial skills needed by Office Technology and Management Graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise (self-employment) in Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the communication skills required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise.
2. Ascertain the technical skills needed by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise.
3. Ascertain the managerial skills required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise.
4. Ascertain the human relation skills required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study:

1. What are the communication skills required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise?
2. What are the technical skills needed by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise?
3. What are the managerial skills needed by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise?
4. What are the human relation skills required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise?

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for the study. The research was conducted using Department of Office Technology and Management in Federal Polytechnic Bauchi, Nigeria. Four research questions were formulated and 23 questions was drawn to answer the research questions, using 4-points rating scale. The population of the study was made up of 50 HND II students of the department. Because the population of the study was manageable, the entire purposive sampling was used, where the entire population was used. Data was be collected by administering the questionnaire to the respondent personally. Mean was used to analysing the data collected.

Data Analysis

Research Questions

This section presents the results in relation to research questions 1-5.

Research Question One

What are the communication skills required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise?

From items 1-5, the research, all the mean results indicate that communications skills are required for prospective OTM graduates to operate enterprises successfully. This can be seen from the mean results, ranging between 3.3 and 3.8.

Table 1: Mean Response of communication skills required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise.

SN	Variables	\bar{X}	Remark
1.	Written communication skill is required by office technology and management prospective graduate.	3.8	Accepted
2.	Non-verbal communication skill is highly needed for an office technology and management prospective graduates	3.7	Accepted
3.	Verbal communication enhance relationship and foster successful operation of business enterprise	3.5	Accepted
4.	Tone of voice is a means of communication skills required by office technology and management prospective graduate.	3.6	Accepted
5.	Receiving feedback is an effective of communication skills to office technology and management prospective graduate	3.3	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Research Question 2: What are the technical skills needed by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise?

From items 6-10, the research, all the mean results revealed that Technical skills are required for prospective OTM graduates to operate enterprises successfully. This can be seen from the mean results, ranging between 3.4 and 3.7.

Table 2: Mean Response on Technical Skills required by Office Technology and Management graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise.

SN	Variables	\bar{X}	Remark
6.	Designing websites accurately for e-commerce serves as a tool for successful operation of a business enterprise	3.7	Accepted
7.	Ability to input data into a computer accurately is an essential element for successful operation of a business enterprise	3.6	Accepted

8.	Using office equipment such as electric typewriter is essential for successful operation of a business enterprise	3.5	Accepted
9.	Using computer to advertise products and services to general public attracts customers and serve as a vital instrument for successful operation of a business enterprise	3.5	Accepted
10.	Skill for operating fax machine is essential for communications to office technology and management prospective graduate	3.4	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Research Question 3: What are the managerial skills needed by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise?

From items 11-15, the research, all the mean results shows that managerial kills are required for prospective OTM graduates to operate enterprises successfully. This can be seen from the mean results, ranging between 3.5 and 3.8.

Table 3: Managerial Skills needed by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise,

SN	Variables	\bar{X}	Remark
11	Planning is a foundation for successful operation of a business enterprise for office technology and management prospective graduates.	3.8	Accepted
12	Control over business activities is important in carrying out successful business enterprise	3.6	Accepted
13	Supervision skill is a key to successful operation of a business enterprise	3.5	Accepted
14	Coordinating business activities gives rise to success of a business enterprise	3.5	Accepted
15	Organizing skill is a vital ingredient for a successful operation of a business enterprise	3.7	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2019

Research Question 4: What are the human relation skills required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise?

From items 16-23, the research, all the mean results shows that Human Relations skills are required for prospective OTM graduates to operate enterprises successfully. This can be seen from the mean results, ranging between 3.5 and 3.8.

Table 4: Human Relation Skills required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise

SN	Variables	\bar{X}	Remark
16.	Entrepreneurs should interact with customers politely in their business.	3.8	Accepted
17.	Understanding one's personality are important in human relation skills required by entrepreneurs.	3.6	Accepted
18.	Good interaction with customers is very important to entrepreneurs.	3.6	Accepted
19.	Good relationship with customer's ethics is essential for every business.	3.5	Accepted
20.	Good customers' service is important for entrepreneurs.	3.7	Accepted
21.	Superiority in an organization enable sound decision making.	3.5	Accepted
22.	Teamwork increase productivity in an organization.	3.5	Accepted
23.	Effective communication enhances the efficiency and coordination in an organization	3.7	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Discussion of Results

The study was carried out to find out the Entrepreneurial Skills Needed by Office Technology & Management Prospective Graduates for Successful Operation of Business Enterprise. Findings from the results of the four research questions answered are the basis for the discussion as follows:

From research question 1, it is obvious from the result that written communication skill is required by office technology and management

prospective graduate for successful business operation. Non-verbal communication skill is highly needed for an office technology and management prospective graduates for successful business. The respondents agreed that Verbal communication enhance relationship and foster successful operation of business enterprise and Tone of voice is a means of communication skills required by office technology and management prospective graduates. The study indicates that receiving feedback is an effective of communication skills to office technology and management prospective graduate forward and not backward as agreed by the respondents. The findings of the study are similar to the study of Benjamin (2017) who asserted that, prospective graduates of office technology and management should acquire all the necessary communication skills to enable them perform their task effectively. He also asserted that the following communication skills are require, written communication skill, verbal and nonverbal skills. The study of Osuala, (2015) also asserted that, receiving feedbacks and acquiring necessary communication skills improve individual performance in business environment.

From the table 2 above, it is agreed that Office Technology and Management graduates have the capability to design Web Pages that will enhance the advertisement of their business worldwide as well as manipulating e-commerce for buying and selling online is needed. From the same table, it is agreed by respondents that Office Technology and Management prospective graduate that Ability to input data into a computer accurately is an essential element for successful operation of a business enterprise undertaking. Using office equipment such as electric typewriter is essential for successful operation of a business enterprise generally, using computer to advertize products and services to general public attracts customers and serve as a vital instrument for successful operation of a business enterprise. The same table also described that Skill for operating fax machine is essential for communications to office technology and management prospective graduate. The findings corresponds the study conducted by Mamabolo & Kerrim (2017) who asserted that, entrepreneurs need the following technical skills for successful operations; design Web Pages that will enhance the advertisement of their business worldwide as well as manipulating e-commerce for buying and selling online is needed and ability to input data into a computer accurately is an essential element for successful operation of a business enterprise undertaking.

From research question three, it is clear that Planning is a foundation for successful operation of a business enterprise for office technology and management prospective graduates. Also, that Control over business activities is important in carrying out successful business enterprise. More so, the respondents agreed that Supervision skill is a key to successful operation of a business enterprise and that Coordinating business activities gives rise to success of a business enterprise. Furthermore, it indicates that organizing skill is a vital ingredient for a successful operation of a business enterprise. The findings agrees with the study carried out by Cooney (2012) who asserted that, entrepreneurs and prospects need management skill to succeed and successful run a business. He also asserted that management skill is highly required by prospective graduates.

Results shown from research question 4 revealed that Entrepreneurs should interact with customers politely in their business. The findings also described that Good interaction with customers is very important to entrepreneurs. Furthermore, shows that described that Good relationship with customers' ethics is essential for every business. Also, the findings stated that good customer service is important for entrepreneurs. The respondent agrees that superiority in an organization enable sound decision making. The respondents also agreed that Effective communication enhances the efficiency and coordination in an organization is also needed. The findings of the study go in line with the study of Hartman (2017), who asserted that human relation skills are an important skill required by all prospective graduate more especially the office technology and management students as well as those studying secretarial studies as they become the face of their organizations.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn. Office Technology and Management prospective graduates require management skills to enable them successfully establish, manage and run a business enterprise of their own after graduation. It is established that communication skills are required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates. Technical skills such as, designing web pages, manipulating e-commerce and ability to input data into a computer accurately is an essential element for successful operation of a business enterprise undertaking. The study also affirmed that, managerial skills such as planning,

control, supervision and coordinating skills are highly required by Office Technology and Management prospective graduates for successful operation of a business enterprise. Human relation skills are also indicated as important skills required by prospective graduate office technology and management students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings made and the conclusions drawn, the researchers outlined the following recommendations:

1. Prospective graduate of Office Technology and Management should improve in the giving feedback to communication received, as this will keep communication flowing.
2. Students should work towards improving the skills of operating fax machine, as this will enhance their sending messages to the device.
3. Prospective graduates should develop the skills of supervision and coordinating business activities.
4. Prospective graduates should pay attention towards developing the skill of relating well with customers, supervision and team work.

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