AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CHOICE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT GRADUATES IN BIDA NIGER STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract
The curriculum for tertiary education in Nigeria now comprise of components that will in addition, equip the students with entrepreneurial skills. The idea is to combat the prevailing high level of unemployment and dependence on government for employment. Information and Communication Technology has contributed immensely to the development of our society. This study examines the entrepreneurial opportunities available to Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates in Nigeria. Questionnaire-based survey of Liker-scale was administered to respondents that are graduates of OTM in Federal Polytechnic, Bida, Niger State, Nigeria (n = 30), and some entrepreneurs that operate ICT related businesses in Bida (n = 10) was interviewed. The study reviewed that the jobs OTM undergraduates intend to do after graduation are usually legal secretary closely followed by medical secretary and lastly secretarial consultant. It was also discovered that OTM graduates do not have much interest in entrepreneurship before graduation. This is because OTM graduates do not have adequate funds and business orientation. The work therefore, recommends the need for more awareness on how graduates can assess funds to venture into their own businesses. Nigerian government should provide enabling environment and infrastructure to enable the youth to venture into their own businesses.

Keywords: Unemployment, Office Technology and Management, Secretary, Capital

Introduction
The age-long formal education turned out graduates with job-seeking mind-sets as opposed to job-creation (Towobola and Raimi, 2011; Raimi et al., 2011; Simkovic, 2012). The uncontrolled rate of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria like in other developing economies has brought about the need for students not to be exposed to mental and conceptual knowledge alone but also to be skilled in creative thinking sufficient enough to establish and run a business at least at the small scale level (Salami, 2011). Though, entrepreneurship is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria,
the profile of the country with its diverse resources, attitude and culture encourages entrepreneurial education (Raimi et al., 2010).

**Statement of the Problem**
In our country Nigeria, the problem of unemployment has become a critical issue which the governments have done little or nothing to salvage. Year after year, a large number of graduates are out of our institutions and there is no ready job for them, and so they end up on the streets. However, the question to be asked is: How can a graduate of Office Technology and Management programme excel in our society today?

**Objectives of the Study**
The major objective of the study is to assess the choice of entrepreneurial opportunities available to office technology and management graduates in Nigeria. The specific objectives are:
- To find out the type of job Office Technology graduates have in mind before graduation
- To examine the proportion of OTM graduates that are entrepreneur after graduation
- To highlight the areas OTM graduates ventures into after graduation
- To determine the impact of OTM training on OTM graduates

**Research Questions**
- What are the likely jobs OTM graduates have in mind before graduation?
- What is the proportion of OTM graduates that are entrepreneurs after graduation?
- What are the areas of entrepreneurship that OTM graduates venture into after graduation?
- What is the impact of OTM training on entrepreneurship of OTM graduates?

**Research Hypotheses**
The following hypotheses of the study were formulated in line with the research objectives and research questions;
- H01: OTM graduates have no particular jobs in mind after graduation
- H02: OTM training do not impact on the entrepreneurship of OTM graduates
- H03: There are no area of entrepreneurship that OTM graduates venture into after graduation

**Significant of the Study**
Office Technology and Management programme enables graduates to acquire a lot of entrepreneurial skills that will enable them to compete favourably in the society. Therefore this study is aimed at identifying and analyzing the various entrepreneurial opportunities that an Office Technology and Management student and graduate can explore. This study will also assist in broadening the understanding of the generality of entrepreneurial Business Studies Students’ who have acquired entrepreneurial skills.

**Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**
When viewed as an academic endeavor, entrepreneurship education can be defined as a specialized knowledge that entails teaching learners the skills of risk taking, innovation, and coordination of factors of production in the creation of products and services for economic needs (Acs and Storey, 2004; Kanothi, 2009; Minniiti and Levesque, 2008; Naude, 2007).
Office Technology and Management (OTM) as a course of study enables students to acquire the necessary skills needed to face the challenges of labour market after graduation, since this course is based on the technology and management of the office, students have the notion that after their graduation, they will work in organizations as secretaries, office managers or personnel managers. However, this may not be as it is expected, due to the fact that our country today has a lot of unemployed graduates (UNESCO, 2004).

Theoretical Framework
This study took cognizance of some theories of entrepreneurship, like, Innovation theory Schumpeter, McClelland theory of high achievement, Everett Hagen theory of social change, Knight Theory of profit and Leibenstein X- efficiency theory. This study’s framework was based on the Social change theory of Everett Hagen.

Theory of social change by Everett Hagen
Technology has brought a lot of changes in the economic development of every nation. The creativity of individual in every society has equally changed. Therefore; the 21st century entrepreneur is different from the traditional ones of the former century. Everett Hagen in his social change theory sees an entrepreneur as a creative problem solver interested in things in the practical and technological realm and driven by a duty to achieve. Therefore Nigerian graduates should be provided with technological friendly environment to motivate the spirit of innovation and creativity in them.

Fig 2.1: Changes for Entrepreneurial Motivation


The technological era has brought about innovation, invention and entrepreneurship world over, therefore, the OTM graduates should make use of this golden opportunity. This could be done by showing personal commitment and managed implementation.
An entrepreneur is a person who organizes and manages business undertaking, assuming the risk for the sake of profit (Momah, 1999). An entrepreneur sees an opportunity, makes plans, starts the business, manages the business and receives profits (Nicks, 2008). Generally, an entrepreneur is a person who uses the skills at his/her disposal to initiate plan and achieve given business goals (Gibbs, 2002).

Entrepreneurship has a lot to do with office technology and Management programme. This is because, there are many entrepreneurial skills in this very course which gives graduates of this programme a better chance to face the challenges of labour market. These skills can be the profound knowledge of technology such as the different office machines, a vast knowledge of how to operate them; excellent usage of the computer, micro based applications, the basic understanding and use of the internet such as web page design, on line business, online conferencing and many others. Another is the profound knowledge and use of managerial skills which enables them to be able to manage their businesses well. Furthermore, we have the person nel management skills which will enable them to manage their staff and many other skills that will help them to be self-dependent in life (Aladekomo, 2004).

Dorf and Byers defined Technological Entrepreneurship as reported by Ndagi (2005) as a style of business leadership that involves identifying high-potential, technology-intensive business opportunities, gathering resources such as talent and capital, managing rapid growth and significant risk using principled, real-time decision making skills. Technology Entrepreneurship involves a process of industrial innovation and technology transfer, which is relevant for both independent start-ups and established corporations (Ndagi, 2005).

Despite the prevailing challenges in Nigerian environment, there is a viable niche for OTM graduates among other professions to occupy as entrepreneurs. This is buttressed by the Federal
Ministry of Education directive that entrepreneurship education be included as part of the curricula 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 from 2007/2008 academic session (ILO, 2010; Usman, (2006); Punch (2010).

Year after year, a large number of graduates are out of our institutions and end up on the streets. For this reason this study is aimed at analyzing the entrepreneurial possibilities embedded in the Office Technology and Management programme of Nigerian Polytechnics, so as unravel the untapped opportunities that await OTM graduates in the Nigerian economy. The emergence of new technologies, inventions and innovations has positioned OTM beyond the conventional secretary job. The diverse opportunities that now abound for OTM graduates to key into are anchored on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The study will also assess the propensity of OTM graduates for entrepreneurship.

**Technology and Entrepreneurship**

Office Technology and Management programme is enriched with invaluable skills that will make any one who acquires them independent and successful. An individual who has these skills can be a successful entrepreneur. Therefore some of the entrepreneurial skills in the office technology and management programme include but not limited to:

1. Office management skills
2. Webpage design
3. Desktop publishing
4. Computer packages and their uses
5. Internet facilities

**Office Management Skills:** Any true Office Technology and management student must be grounded in all it takes to be a good office manager. This has to do with coordinating the affairs of the office, the automations, correspondence, the staff as well as the client who visits the office on regular bases. So with this vast management knowledge, an OTM student can be sure of managing his business. Therefore managerial skill is one of the main pillars of Office Technology and Management programme.

**Desktop Publishing:** This has to do with the design of book, magazines, brochures and so on. Any student of OTM who is good at this will surely excel as an entrepreneur.

**Web Page Design:** This is a very important course offered in the office technology and management programme, and it has to do with how to design a webpage and have it functioning, since the world today have become internet oriented and people have begun to lunch websites for their businesses, then with the knowledge of webpage design OTM students can succeed.

**Internet Usage:** Office technology and management enables students to be vast in usage of the internet. Internet has made everything simple and has bring everything together just at our finger tips, business can be transacted online. For example online banking, online shopping, online conferencing and many more, and people have been enriched by it. One can attain financial prowess through the internet, therefore OTM programme is highly entrepreneurial.

**Computer Packages and their uses:** Any Office Technology and Management student must be grounded in the knowledge and use of computer applications such as word processing packages,
graphic packages, spread sheet packages and so on. Since our society have gone electronic to the extent that all the paper works that were once done manually in time past have now being carried out through the use of computer packages.

Therefore with this skill any OTM student will be highly indispensable where ever they find themselves. These and more are the entrepreneurial skills that can be gained in the Office Technology and Management programme. The programme is highly enriched with courses that are important for anyone who wants to be successful whether as an employee or as a self – employed person (Blenker and John, 2006; Minnesota State Council on Vocational and Technical Education, 1989; National Board for Technical Education 1987).

Methodology
This study adopt survey design, data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Interviews and questionnaire were adopted for data collection in the study. The survey of the required data under consideration was carried out by the use of structured questionnaire for graduates of OTM in Bida Polytechnic, Bida, Niger State and entrepreneurs that operate ICT related businesses in Bida. The questionnaire-based survey to the graduates of OTM in Bida Polytechnic, Bida, and that to the entrepreneurs that operate ICT related businesses in Bida consist of a fifteen (15) item researcher-designed questionnaire. This instrument assesses the entrepreneurial opportunities available to office technology management (OTM) graduates in Nigeria and advantage of OTM in operating ICT related entrepreneurship.

Interview: It is believed that more clarified responses (data) from the OTM graduates’ can be obtained by using a combination of different methods, following from studies carried out by Arksey and Knight (1999); Brookfield (1987). The work used semi-structured interviews with open ended questions (Arksey and Knight, 1999) for the sampled subjects: graduates of OTM in Bida Polytechnic, Bida and entrepreneurs that operate ICT related businesses in Bida; n = 30 for each research group.

Data Analysis and Findings
Data analysis was carried out by using Statistical Programme for Social Science (SPSS). Students’ t-test was employed to ascertain the level of significance ($P < 0.05$, i.e. $95\%$ confidence interval) in the disparity between opinions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The areas of business that entrepreneurs of OTM graduates venture into after graduation are stated in the Table 1. From the results, 53.34% of OTM graduates plan to engage in secretariat activities; 33.33% of the respondents plan to establish a computer training centre and engage operators; while 13.33% of the OTM graduates intend to engage in programming application business. The study indicated that OTM graduates are high interested in secretarial duties than being entrepreneurs. Programming application business that will be economically rewarding is opined by 13.33% of the respondents.

Table 1: Areas of business that OTM graduates wish to venture into

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>$f$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To create a computer training centre and engage computer operators</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To engage in programming application business | 4 | 13.33
To engage in secretarial activities | 16 | 53.34

Table 2: Qualities of OTM graduates that are entrepreneurs after graduation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abilities to create, edit, print, sort and retrieve document using word processing application</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abilities to operate teleconferencing and ability to fax messages</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to open e-mail address, typing your messages using the computer keyboard</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to determine the ICT potentials of the OTM graduates, which will indicate the tendency for them to be entrepreneurs in the ICT world; the study examined the ICT skills of OTM graduates as presented in Table 2. The result revealed that 40% of respondents are skilled in using word processing application; 33.33% in teleconferencing and can fax messages while only 26.67% are skilled in rendering e-mail services.

The result of Table 1 is triggered by the ICT skills of the respondents. The more the ICT packages the respondent is skilled in, the more the chance to venture into the ICT world as an entrepreneur.

Figure 1 presents the likely jobs OTM undergraduates (HND 2) of Bida Polytechnic, Bida have in mind before graduation. The results showed that 46.67% of the respondents opined to work as legal secretary after graduation; 40% want to work as medical secretary while 13.33% are willing to work as secretarial consultants. The job OTM undergraduates have in mind that recorded the highest frequency (18) is legal secretary. This corroborates with the assertion that OTM graduates are not keen about entrepreneurship.

f = frequency; % = percentage

Figure 1: Jobs OTM students have in mind before graduation

The result of interview conducted for entrepreneurs that operate ICT related businesses in Bida, Niger State, Nigeria showed the challenges confronting OTM related entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The frequency and percentage of challenges faced by OTM graduate who are entrepreneurs are presented in Table 3. It was indicated that 56.67% of the respondents complained that the challenge they confront is inadequate funding required to establish an enterprise. On the other
hand, 36.66% stated that the challenge confronting entrepreneurs related to OTM is lack of business orientation. A 6.67% portion of the respondents stated the major challenge as inadequate skill required to run an enterprise successfully.

**Table 4: Challenges faced by OTM graduates that are entrepreneurs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate funds to establish an enterprise</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inadequate skill to run an enterprise</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of business orientation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 4 above, it was revealed that some of the challenges faced by OTM graduates that are entrepreneurs are inadequate funds to establish an enterprise, lack of business orientation as well as some lacking adequate skills to run an enterprise.

**Conclusion**

From the research findings it can be concluded that Office Technology and Management houses a lot of entrepreneurial skills that can make OTM graduates successful entrepreneurs and OTM graduates have to assess the opportunity available to them. However, despite the entrepreneurial training factored into the curriculum of the OTM programme in Nigerian polytechnics, the study indicated that most students have not fully prepared to create jobs as entrepreneurs. This raises concern to government and stake holders to make small and medium enterprises viable to strive well in the current economy; also there should be incentives that will attract graduates to venture into self employment.

**Recommendations**

This study recommends the following:

- That Nigerian government should make fund available for the graduates who are willing to venture into entrepreneur
- There should be enabling environment for the graduates that want to venture into entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurship training programme should be encouraged in our tertiary institutions

**References**


