



## ABSTRACT

This study examined quality of Office Technology and Management programme and funding in Polytechnics in South West States, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to find out if there is any relationship between funding and quality of Office Technology and Management programme (OTM) as it is currently offered in Polytechnics in South West, Nigeria. Two research questions and one hypothesis were raised to guide the study.

## IMPROVING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME THROUGH SUSTAINABLE FUNDING IN POLYTECHNICS

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### Introduction

The acquisition of comprehensive office vocational skills, understanding, attitudes, works habits and competencies that are requisite to success in office management occupations shows the quality of office technology and management (Ikelegbe, 2020). According to him, it is an efficient, effective, productive and functional education which leads itself to self employment, self reliance, paid-employment and consequently self actualization. Amesi (2016) admitted that sustaining the quality of office technology and management programme is important for it to be accountable to society, employers, students, and each other. As more universities, polytechnics, colleges of education are established to meet these demands, there arose the need to upgrade the quality of education and ensure that standards remain above the minimum benchmarks. Quality Office Technology and Management programme has the objectives of continuous striving for excellence and quality in all ramifications. Certain precautions coupled with other factors such as facilities are taken to achieve quality in the programme (Omoniyi and Elemure, 2020).

Quality assurance has to do with the management of teachers, students, resources, school environment as well as teaching-learning activities so as to ensure that quality is maintained at



Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. A sample of 80 academic staff and 205 graduating students were used for the study from the total population of 80 OTM academic staff and 427 HND graduating students in the department of OTM in six polytechnics in South Western States, Nigeria. The research instrument was a 4-point scale likert-type questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that there was significant relationship between funding and quality of OTM programme ( $r$ -value = 0.315,  $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that funding plays an important role in the quality of OTM programme in polytechnics in South West, Nigeria. The study recommended that government and institutions should revisit the equipment and facilities position of the respective training institutions by providing adequate fund needed for the programme.

**Keywords:** Quality, office technology and management, funding, polytechnics

every stage and that the students who emerge from the entire process conform to national norms both in terms of academic achievement, moral development and social skill. Quality assurance involves consistently meeting product specification or getting things right first, every time. Adamu (2015) viewed that it has to do with the ability of the institution to meet the expectations of the users of manpower in relation to quality of skills acquired by their outputs. According to him, it goes with the ability of institutions to meet certain criteria relating to academic matters, staff-student ratio, staff mix by rank, staff development, physical facilities, funding and adequate library facilities.

Quality assurance involves the process of ensuring that these institutions also conform to the national and international practices. With an effective and acceptable mechanism of quality assurance at all levels in place, the challenges of globalization may not come as a shock as higher education graduates would be ready for challenges in real life and the quality of research would be of international standards. This target cannot be achieved in Office Technology and Management if all the necessary inputs are not provided by the authorities in charge of polytechnics education in Nigeria. This in the view of Oluwadare (2019) could be why it was opined that educational system in Nigeria is bedeviled with myriad in adequacies ranging from under funding, enrolment, explosion, inadequate physical facilities, poor management, inadequate staffing, fraudulent qualification and practices.

However, the success or otherwise for achieving the objectives of Office Technology and Management programme as prescribed in the National Board for Technical Education



curriculum to a large extent depends on how well and appropriate the programme is funded. Funding is a vital mechanism in maintaining, ensuring and enhancing effective implementation of any education programme in tertiary institutions. For an institution, organization, government or individual to carry out their laudable programme objectives, adequate funds must be made available because it is an indispensable component to success in every establishment. The state of education in the view of Ezeonwurie (2019) is one of the crucial indicators of the seriousness of a society in its quest for national development because the quality of education in a society determines the quality of the society manpower.

Unfortunately, with the economic down turn in Nigeria, the educational sector is experiencing gross under funding. This inadequate funding is made pronounced in OTM which unfortunately is highly capital-intensive. The apparent neglect is highly visible in the level of available facilities, equipment, structure and personnel. Given the poor state of higher institutions in Nigeria, Ezene (2019) asserted that it is doubtful if it can ever meet its unequivocal role of technological growth.

Agboola (2015) opined that for effective implementation of office technology and management curriculum to be achieved, it is imperative for the government and the management of institutions offering the programme to make adequate fund available at the right time for the running and sustenance of the programme. The programme according to him is challenged by paucity of funds for acquisition and maintenance of physical facilities and equipments. It is very difficult to implement curriculum successfully if education system has limited funding capacity. Since manpower in the education sector has increased, the bulk of money allocated to education is absorbed by salaries leaving very little for the provision of training facilities, teaching resources and for recurring expenses like servicing and fueling of power generating set (Ejeka and Mgbonyebi, 2016). Adekunle (2019) asserted that adequate funding is crucial for quality Office Technology and Management provision.

### **Quality of Office Technology and Management programme in Polytechnics**

Quality of Office Technology and Management programme has as its controlling purpose the preparation of individuals for gainful employment and life-long education (Omoniyi, Elemure and Abiodun, 2019). Office Technology and Management is a quality programme designed to train students essentially on the utilization or application of technologies to office management processes with the general objective leading students to the understanding of the use and impact of computer-based communication technologies in a working environment. It is a recent nomenclature for secretarial education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Quality Office Technology and Management emphasizes job competence, career preparation and work adjustment and with various tertiary institutions such as universities, polytechnics and colleges of education having the



mandate to train interested individuals and the product of such training are called office managers.

Quality assurance in Office Technology and Management according to Oluwalola, Oyedeji and Oyedele (2018) is an indispensable component for quality control strategy and determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control in office technology and management programme. Quality in Office Technology and Management programme is the relevance and appropriateness of the programme to the needs of modern office for which it is provided.

Courses offered in Office Technology and Management programme in the Nigerian Polytechnics were reviewed sequel to the change of the nomenclature of the programme from Secretarial Studies to Office Technology and Management. Following the change, course specification and guideline for Office Technology and Management in Polytechnics were put in place by the National Board for Technical Education in order to ensure minimum standard and to guide implementation of the curriculum with a view to inculcating quality. Okoro (2018) however averred that **adequate comprehensive curriculum is required to enhance quality assurance for sustainable development**. The current programme of Office Technology and Management in tertiary institutions is embellished with new and additional courses to prepare students with competencies in information and communication technology.

#### **Funding of Office Technology and Management Programme in Polytechnics**

Akanbi (2017) observed that education is an expensive social service that requires good policy backed up with sufficient funding and effective monitoring of the sector. It was reported that inadequate funding forms part of the causes of poorly resourced vocational institutions leading to inadequate tools, equipment, shortage of teaching materials and low motivation among the teaching staff (Mubanga, Hock, Karim and Mulenga, 2019). It was therefore admitted that these have to be resolved if remarkable improvement in the performance of students is to be made for the attainment of the carrying capacity needed in the tertiary institutions. The nation must therefore look ahead to evolving strategies which include funding for meaningful implementation of the present day vocational and technical education curricula objectives, if the challenges posed by the contemporary needs are to be met.

Okolocha and Baba (2016) reported that the teaching and examination of office technology and management has been bedeviled by numerous problems. The report stated that inadequate funding of vocational education has been a problem in the implementation of Office Technology and Management programme. The strict implementation of this type of education according to the submission of Koffi and Etukudo (2016) will remain elusive without adequate provision of fund, equipment and facilities. Office Technology and Management programme is practical oriented; the absence of required fund, equipment and facilities will affect the competency of the



graduates and subsequently the implementation of the objective of the programme. To further corroborate the above assertion, Chinakwe (2019) maintained that no meaningful progress can be achieved, no matter how well it is planned, structured, organized and handled when the enabling funds are lacking. Funds are essential for government institutions to achieve desired programme objectives.

Abubakar (2019) admitted that the insufficient funding has been the recurrent and seeming challenges of office technology and management programme in Nigeria. According to him, these successive governments have not found it necessary to adequately finance both the planning and implementation of standard and sustainable vocational education programme.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Close observation and the literature have revealed that quality of office technology and management programme seems to have declined over the years in Polytechnics. As a result, graduates lack the office skills and competencies which are highly demanded in organizations. If solution is not proffered, graduates may only end up with paper qualifications instead of the knowledge and skills required to face an innovative and competitive world. They become ineffective, inefficient and unproductive to themselves, and the nation at large. The nation at large suffers as the unskilled graduates are potential problem to the nation and cannot contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the nation.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. Establish whether the available facilities are adequate to ensure quality Office Technology and Management programme in polytechnics in South West, Nigeria.
2. Investigate how the quality of Office Technology and Management programme could be improved for self empowerment of graduates in polytechnics in South West, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide this study.

1. To what level are the available facilities adequate to ensure quality Office Technology and Management programme in polytechnics in South West, Nigeria?
2. In what ways could the quality of Office Technology and Management programme be improved for self empowerment of graduates of polytechnics in South West, Nigeria?



### Hypothesis

H<sub>01</sub>: There will be no significant relationship between funding of quality Office Technology and Management programme and self empowerment of OTM graduates in polytechnics in South West, Nigeria.

### Analysis

Research question 1

To what level are the available facilities adequate to ensure quality Office Technology and Management programme in government owned polytechnics in South West, Nigeria?

Table 1: Adequacy of facilities for quality office technology and management Programme in polytechnics

	Item statement	Very adequate	Adequate	Not adequate	Grossly inadequate	X Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Recommended equipment	13 (19.1%)	28 (41.2%)	14 (20.6%)	13 (19.1%)	2.603	0.272
2	Well equipped staff offices	12 (17.6%)	24 (35.3%)	25 (36.8%)	7 (10.3%)	2.603	0.272
3	Sufficient computer for learning and connectivity to internet	18 (26.5%)	14 (20.6%)	22 (32.4%)	14 (20.6%)	2.397	0.272
4	Adequate classrooms	12 (17.6%)	24 (35.3%)	22 (32.4%)	10 (14.7%)	2.559	0.273
5	Functional shorthand laboratory	10 (14.7%)	18 (26.5%)	22 (32.4%)	18 (26.5%)	2.294	0.276
6	Well equipped computer laboratory	13 (19.1%)	23 (33.8%)	19 (27.9%)	13 (19.1%)	2.544	0.272
7	Availability of recommended model office	12 (17.6%)	25 (36.8%)	17 (25.0%)	14 (20.6%)	2.515	0.272



8	Availability of projector and digital camera	14 (20.6%)	23 (33.8%)	26 (38.2%)	5 (7.4%)	2.676	0.276
9	Adequacy of office and classroom furniture	15 (22.1%)	21 (30.9%)	19 (27.9%)	13 (19.1%)	2.559	0.272
10	Availability of conference facilities	11 (16.2%)	25 (36.8%)	17 (25.0%)	15 (22.1%)	2.471	0.272

**Weighted  $\bar{X}(SD) = 2.522(0.273)$ ; Overall decision = Adequate**

Source: Field survey, 2021

The above table reveals the adequacy of facilities for quality office technology and management programme in Polytechnics in South West, Nigeria using their frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. All the items on the table were decided as 'agree' with a grand mean of 2.522 except sufficient computer for learning and connectivity to internet with a mean of 2.397 and functional shorthand laboratory with a mean of 2.294. This implies that the quality of Office Technology and Management programme is moderately high in Polytechnics in South West, Nigeria.

### Research question 2

In what ways could the quality of office technology and management programme be improved for self empowerment in Polytechnics in South West, Nigeria?

Table 2: Improving the quality of Office Technology and Management programme for self empowerment in polytechnics

	Item statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	X Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	Strict implementation of the curriculum	29 (42.6%)	33 (48.5%)	4 (5.9%)	2 (2.9%)	3.309	0.335
2.	Improving skills, knowledge and competence of teachers and other professionals	27 (39.7%)	37 (54.4%)	3 (4.4%)	1 (1.5%)	3.338	0.333



	through seminars/workshops						
3.	Integration of key competencies into OTM curricula and developing appropriate means of assessment	19 (27.9%)	42 (61.8%)	5 (7.4%)	2 (3.0%)	3.147	0.308
4.	Adequate funding by government and other stakeholders	17 (25.1%)	27 (39.7%)	12 (17.6%)	12 (17.6%)	2.721	0.276
5.	Ensuring quality assurance and control	14 (20.6%)	39 (57.4%)	6 (8.8%)	9 (13.2%)	2.853	0.288
6.	Effective monitoring to access the level of performance	13 (19.1%)	42 (61.8%)	5 (7.4%)	8 (11.8%)	2.882	0.288
7.	Proper classroom management	18 (26.5%)	39 (57.4%)	4 (5.9%)	7 (10.3%)	3.000	0.297
8.	Adequate and functional infrastructural facilities	19 (27.9%)	25 (36.8%)	14 (20.6%)	10 (14.7%)	2.779	0.281
9.	Strict adherence to students' entry qualifications	40 (58.8%)	24 (35.3%)	3 (4.4%)	1 (1.5%)	3.515	0.363
10.	Employing teachers with high qualifications into OTM programme	38 (55.9%)	26 (38.2%)	4 (5.9%)	- (0.0%)	3.500	0.363
11.	Effective supervision in the quality of content and input	23 (33.8%)	35 (51.5%)	7 (10.3%)	3 (4.4%)	3.147	0.308

**Weighted  $\bar{X}(SD) = 3.108(0.287)$ ; Overall decision = Adequate**

Source: Field survey, 2021

The above table reveals the ways that the quality of office technology and management programme could be improved for self empowerment in Polytechnics in South West,



Nigeria using their frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. All the items on the table were decided as 'agree' with a grand mean of 3.108. This implies that the quality of Office Technology and Management programme could be improved in various ways for self empowerment of graduates in Polytechnics in South West, Nigeria,

### **Hypothesis**

There will be no significant relationship between funding of quality Office Technology and Management programme and self empowerment of OTM graduates in polytechnics in South West, Nigeria.

Table 3: Relationship between funding of quality Office Technology and Management programme and self empowerment of OTM graduates in polytechnics

		Quality of OTM Programme	Self Empowerment
Quality of OTM Programme	Pearson Correlation	1	.387**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	68	68
Self Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.387**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	68	68

Source: Field survey, 2021

The table above shows that there is a significant relationship between quality of office technology and management programme and self empowerment of OTM graduates. The result shows that quality of office technology and management programme has a positive relationship with self empowerment of graduates in government owned polytechnics in South Western, Nigeria. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is therefore rejected since  $r = 0.387$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This implies that an improvement in the quality of office technology and management programme will increase self empowerment of office technology and management graduates in government owned polytechnics in South Western, Nigeria.

### **Discussion**

This study revealed that available facilities to ensure quality office technology and management programme are not very adequate. The finding is supported by Ubogu and Money (2018) which affirmed that the revenue from government allocations have to increase to meet the rising costs in office technology and management or else it will suffer setbacks in capital and equipment. They further submitted that office technology and management in Nigeria has been experiencing loss of facilities, deterioration' of equipment and plants and uncompleted projects as a result of financial crises facing the



system. This finding was supported by the result of a study conducted by Eravwoke and Ukavwe (2019) which revealed that funding of office technology and management is imperative because of the costs involved in maintaining the programme. The study observed that investment in office technology and management revolved around capital and recurrent expenditure that are cogent to the survival of the programme in the current period of global competition for attracting funding and best hands. Lending further support to this finding, Orobor and Orobor (2018) affirmed that trend in the funding of office technology and management in Nigeria revealed that there is no progressive increase in the funding injected to the programme with the growing cost of maintenance, increased students intake, inflation trends and overhead cost. It is imperative to note that non-commensurate of funding with other growing indices in office technology and management have a negative impact on the quality of the programme. This result was also strengthened by the finding of Nwachukwu and Okpo (2018) who found that there are no adequate funds for the purchase of equipment and maintenance of facilities in office technology and management which has negatively affected the implementation of office technology and management curricula. There is also evidence that the problem of insufficient building, under-equipped laboratories and facilities in office technology and management can be traced to inadequate funding (Akpomi, 2013).

The study also revealed that the quality of Office Technology and Management programme could be improved for self empowerment of graduates. This result is in agreement with the findings of Seidahmetov et al (2014) which discovered that the development of business potential of office technology and management graduates will lead to increase of their competitiveness in the market. According to them, complication of the world and growth of uncertainty compels individuals to consider office technology and management as a career choice, and also to look for ways of training in enterprise competences. Suleiman (2016) in his finding affirmed that office technology and management programme provides graduates with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values that would enable them to be fit in the field of work and contribute to economic development of the nation. The study revealed that it takes cognizance of the dynamics of the labour market, equips its graduates with occupational skills and competences to enable them be self reliant.

The result of this study is consistent with the finding of Babalola and Tihamiyu (2013) who posited that training in office technology and management is central to self reliance. According to them, office technology and management programme aimed at reducing unemployment, poverty and to serve as vehicle for promoting entrepreneurship and self-reliance. The findings of Umoru (2013) justified the need for value-based teaching in office technology and management so that graduates of the programme would be empowered to be self-reliant, help in poverty reduction and sustainable development in Nigeria.



The result of the study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between funding and quality Office Technology and Management programme. This finding was in agreement with the finding of Eze (2013) who submitted that the level of funding in office technology and management has resulted in a lack of well-equipped libraries, laboratories and workshops as well as obsolete and outdated equipment that have not been replaced. The result of the study was consistent with the finding of Akpotohwo and Ogeibiri (2018) who viewed that government has a role to provide modern ICT laboratories for the programme, sponsor lecturers on conference, provide adequate textbooks, provide places for student industrial attachment, increase remuneration of office technology and management teachers, provide on-the-job training for teachers, and establish entrepreneurship centers in the department.

This finding also gained support from the findings of Ekoh (2016) which asserted that availability of fund in office technology and management programme is a critical factor in achieving functionality of such programme. The finding affirmed that well founded office technology and management will no doubt equip the programme with adequate facilities needed for efficiency of the programme and achieving the stipulated objectives of equipping the graduates. However, in another development, it was revealed by Ibrahim (2016) that inadequate funding are major problems militating against effective teaching and learning of office technology and management. The findings posited that funds are required to acquire numerous necessary infrastructures, workshops, workshop materials, stationeries, hand tools, books and other reading materials and ensure regular maintenance of equipment and to retain highly qualified teachers.

From the finding of Ayonmike & Okeke (2017), it was affirmed that government, school administrators, industries, and other professionals have greater role to play in improving vocational programmes which can be achieved through adequate provision of funds, human and material resources, and resource sharing between industries and institutions. It was affirmed from the finding of Danjuma (2015) another study that stakeholders, particularly industries and community must be involved in funding office technology and management programme. Similarly, results from Odike and Menkiti (2019) revealed that most times budgetary allocation tends to be discouraging and there is hardly enough fund to run office technology and management programme effectively.

### **Conclusion**

This work emphasized and equally established the relationship between quality of office technology and management programme and funding in polytechnics. A nation's overall advancement is a direct function of the quality of the educational attainment of its citizens and quality of office technology and management programme is dependent on sustainable funding. The quality of office technology and management programme would be maintained and the goal of self empowerment of its graduates would equally be



achieved when all stakeholders including the government are involved in funding the programme. The importance of OTM programme in skill acquisition makes it imperative for the nation to embrace the programme to achieve the goal of self empowerment of graduates and also to reduce the level of unemployability of graduates. Prioritising office technology and management in polytechnics is one of the ways to reduce unemployed graduates in the nation.

### **Recommendations**

1. Curriculum planners and other stakeholders should consider the review and expansion of office technology and management curriculum for inclusion of various office and entrepreneurial skills required for students to be self-reliant after graduation.
2. Institutions and department offering the programme need to embark on rigorous orientation for students of the programme. There is need for skill edict to have a significant promotional content that would stimulate and sustain the interest of the students in the programme. The issue of wage earner culture should be discouraged by encouraging a self reliant/employment culture.
3. Government and institutions should revisit the equipment and facilities position of the respective training institutions. Effective office technology and management training requires that, machines and equipment is suitable to learners on a one on one basis to ensure sufficient practice and development of facility and speed.
4. The government should co-opt the private sector and other educational stakeholders in supporting the education system through financial and material assistance. This should serve as part of their corporate social responsibility since the education sector also contributes to the provision of quality manpower for other sector of the economy.
5. Management of institutions should set up quality councils that will evaluate the teaching learning process to ensure and sustain quality, based on the specifications of the curriculum of office technology and management programme.

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