
Perceptions of Professional OTM Educators and General Educators towards Quality Assurance in Office Technology and Management Programmes of Nigerian Polytechnics in Delta and Edo States

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Abstract

This study took an investigative look of the perceptions of professional Office Technology and Management educators and the general towards quality assurance in Office Technology and Management Programmes of Nigerian Polytechnics in Delta and Edo States. The design of the study was survey. In going about the investigation, two hypotheses were formulated for the study. An instrument which consisted of ten questionnaire items was distributed to 120 respondents drawn from the Polytechnics located in Delta and Edo States. In analyzing the data obtained from the field, the researcher made use of Analysis of Variance. The findings of the study revealed, among others, that the professional OTM educators, general educators and the uneducated group accepted that quality assurance in OTM meant the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies needed to prepare the graduates to enter gainful employment in specific business and office occupations; and that graduates of Nigerian polytechnics are adequately and sufficiently prepared for the world of work, to be productive and be able

to create wealth for themselves as part of their entrepreneurial initiatives. On the strength of the results of the study, the researcher recommended that NBTE should reduce its visitation exercises to polytechnics under its aegis from five to three years in order to ensure that the minimum academic standards prescribed are not out rightly compromised by governments and institutional administrators, and also to guarantee that the ND and HND OTM graduates of polytechnics in Nigeria continue to be proficient and productive in their work places.

Throughout the history of mankind so far, education has assumed various roles and significance, and has been used as an alchemy for achieving various aims, goals and objectives for the benefit of human societies. In Nigeria education has contributed so much to national development and the achievement of political independence that the average Nigeria parent strongly believes in it as a potent instrument for preparing children to become active participants in the realization of important social and economic objectives.

Education in Nigeria is an instrument “par excellence” for effecting national development. It has witnessed active participation by non-government agencies, communities, and individuals as well as government interventions. It is therefore desirable for the nation to spell out in clear and unequivocal terms the philosophy and objectives that underline its investment in education. This, perhaps, informed and led to the various editions of the National Policy on Education which seek to fulfil that noble role (Abiodun, 1986).

In Nigeria’s philosophy of education, it is believed that (a) education is an instrument for national development; (b) education fosters the worth and development of the individual, for each individual’s sake, and for the general development of the society; (c) every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability; (d) there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria and to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should determine the individual’s direction in education (FRN, 2009).

Tertiary education in Nigeria is the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics, including those institutions offering correspondence courses. The goal of tertiary education is, thus summarized as to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training as well as to enable its recipients acquire both physical and

intellectual skills, competencies and knowledge which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.

To achieve the goals enumerated above, the Federal Republic of Nigeria set up a federal education parastatal — the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) for the polytechnics, monotronics and technical institutions. The board was established by Decree No. 9 in 1977 as a parastatal to supervise technical institutions up to higher level but below the universities. The programmes division of the board is charged with the duties and responsibilities such as curriculum development, research and publications, curriculum implementation and accreditation programmes. Esene (2009) listed the major functions of NBTE as

- i. laying minimum academic standards for all programmes;
- ii. setting out criteria for accreditation visitation;
- iii. prescribing minimum space for the lecture halls, laboratories, workshops, studios, etc.,
- iv. ensuring lecturer-student ratio for effective teaching and learning enterprise;
- v. ensuring adequate staffing of personnel;
- vi. ensuring adequate instructional materials and equipment;
- vii. ensuring provision infrastructural facilities;
- viii. ensuring recreational facilities (Osuala, 1998).

The issue of quality assurance in education, and in particular office technology and management has attracted the attention of the professional OTM educators, general educators and the uneducated group in recent time. There are allegations and counter-allegations that the products (graduates) of OTM should be the basis of assessment. Other groups believed that the performance of OTM graduates in the world of work should be the factor/basis for assessing the quality of OTM graduates. The factors assumed to be militating against the OTM programmes of Nigerian Polytechnics are the misinterpretation of the programmes, in terms of quality assurance in OTM; the reasons for setting minimum academic standards; poor assessment of the contents, inputs, processes and products of the programmes and poor attention of the proprietors of these institutions. These are the reasons for which this study was undertaken.

The major purpose of this study was to find out the perceptions of professional OTM educators, general educators and the uneducated group towards quality assurance in OTM and the reasons for setting minimum academic standards for these polytechnics.

The Usefulness of the Study

The knowledge and the focus of OTM as a discipline of study is germane and fundamentally crucial to its quality. Any programme of study that is not understood or ill-conceived may not succeed in its implementation because such programme will

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certainly require proper clarification. Therefore, a proper understanding of OTM, its objectives, the process and its products are good indices for assessing quality assurance. The results of the study will provide avenues for governments and institutional administrators to re-direct their efforts towards ensuring and realizing quality assurance which is the ultimate goal of good and quality instruction in institutions of higher learning.

Hypotheses for the Study

The following hypotheses formulated for this study are tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of professional OTM educators, general educators and the uneducated on the meaning of quality assurance in OTM.
2. There is no significant difference between professional OTM educators general educators and the uneducated group in their perceptions of the reasons that necessitated NBTE setting minimum academic standards for OTM programmes of Nigerian Polytechnics.

Related Literature

The issue of standard in our educational system has always attracted the attention of the public. It is being widely debated by the enlightened and the unenlightened due to the quality of graduates that are churned out from the school system, coupled with the follow-up reports by employers of labour.

Quality assurance is a current issue irrevocably tied with educational supervision and visitation exercises in tertiary institutions of learning. For instance, the importance of educational supervision in today's educational system demands far greater attention than ever before. People are becoming more conscious now than in the past about the importance of education in general and thus have generated interest in the daily operations of the school system in particular. Enlightened parents are now more curious to know the functions of the federal education parastatals put in place by the federal government and thus they ask questions from educators, the general educators and the uneducated group in order to satisfy their curiosity. They have been asking intriguing questions such as; what is the cause of the falling standard in our education? Who should be held accountable for the falling standard? Why does moral laxity prevail in most of our schools? What are the functions of the institutions? Who are the bodies that are charged with supervision? What do they do? Why do we have NBTE visitation exercises? Whose instructions should the lecturers follow? What hope is there in future for the school system?

According to Ogunsaju (2003), even the so-called non-enlightened who are generally labeled the illiterates in our society seem to be raising similar questions as those of the enlightened in the issue of quality assurance.

Section 12, sub-section 114 of the FRN (2009 edition) of the National Policy on Education copiously documented on the title “monitoring and maintenance of minimum standards”. It stated that reason why the federal government set up the various commissions/boards/council is to ensure that the minimum academic standards prescribed by these federal education parastatals are not compromised in any way.

Specifically, sub-section 118 clearly specified the goals of the educational system by these bodies to include.

- (a) maintaining and improving standards in all academic programmes of institutions;
- (b) ensuring uniform standard and quality control of instructional activities in institutions of similar status;
- (c) obtaining information on problems and difficulties of lecturers and institutions and offer in a practical solutions to them, and
- (d) encouraging dissemination of information on innovation and progressive educational principles and principles in these institutions through publications, workshops, meetings, seminars, conferences, etc.

The NBTE, acting on behalf of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) came up with a new Office Technology and Management Curriculum which replaced Secretarial Studies. Under the new structure, there exists two years for both the National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND), excluding the one year compulsory programme for out of school industrial training. The subjects are divided into

- (a) special areas which include secretarial practice and techniques in office management control;
- (b) information and communication Technology Application which includes ICT, Word Processing, Computer Appreciation, Desktop Publishing, and Web Page Design; and
- (c) general studies education relating to contemporary problem usually called general studies (Jamiu, 2008).

The emphasis in the new OTM curriculum, according to Esene (2011) is to radically shift from where the profession has been in order to join the rest of the developed countries. Some discoveries in the OTM profession have shown that gone are the days when secretaries were traditionally regarded as office assistants to their bosses who sit behind the typewriters. The story is changing very fast as today’s secretaries trained with modern office automation, materials and equipment are expected to cope with all the changes occasioned by ICT driven arrangements.

Abang (2009) reported that secretaries have vital roles to play in enhancing the attainment of organizational goals. Though secretaries of nowadays would not necessarily be expected to understand as much about the business in hand as their executives, they are increasingly being expected to have some understanding of the significance and effective management of the correspondence, reports and instructions which normally pass through their desks. The trained secretaries with the state of the art materials and equipment are expected to be gainfully employed in the labour markets or even create jobs and become self-reliant despite the present hardship in the Nigerian economy.

The modern offices of today, lay due emphasis on paperless office as a way of facilitating the process of correspondence handling and operation. For instance, Ekula (2008) stated that in offices, computer, database management and other accessories are increasingly being used to organize and control records. Secretaries are now being required to be able to operate computers using Dbase, Excel, Corel Draw and Word Processing packages such as Word perfect, Ms Word, Ms power point, Adobe Page maker and in particular the dexterity to use most of the application packages contained in Windows 2000 to 2007 respectively.

Computer internet is now being used to send, search and retrieve information from any part of the world with relative ease. Office automation has taken over the entire activities of very many organizations. Various electronic equipment such as: computer, electronic typewriters, photocopiers, tele-printers, fax-recorders, telephones with cellular, GSM/mobile attachments, electronic switch boards, laminating machines, scanners, dictaphones, magnetic and non-magnetic tapes, etc. All these equipment, as a matter of fact are used to speed up the processing of correspondence, but not to replace office technology and management function of the secretaries (Ekula, 2010). Perhaps, it must be stated very clearly that the equipment listed in the preceding paragraphs demand special skills on the part of the secretarial personnel to operate them proficiently. Really, automation carries with it good mission for secretaries, for apart from bringing about increased mechanization of office activities and services, it has gone a step further to make the impact of secretaries felt in the world of business.

Office technology and management is a component of the umbrella business education. Business education, in the view of Popham, Schrag and Blochus (2005) is education that prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within business, handling their own business affairs and to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. In educating for business, business education is vocational education for business majors. Education about business is general education for all students. Anao (1986) described business education as the types of education that deals with the acquisition of practical skills, knowledge and value to enable one function

effectively in the society. He further noted that business education simply means educational process or content that has its primary aim as the preparation of people for roles in business enterprises. Such roles, according to Anao could be as employee, employer/entrepreneur (self-employed)

The Committee on Research and Publications of the American Vocational Association (2000) defined OTM (Secretarial Studies) as education designed to develop skills, abilities, understandings, attitudes, work habits, and appreciations encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis. This Committee therefore sees OTM as a work-oriented education, a means whereby the individuals require occupational education to enable them function creatively and productively in their job. Okoro and Amagoh (2008) described OTM as an efficient, effective, productive and functional education which leads to self-employment, self-reliance, paid-employment and consequently self-actualization. Arising from these definitions, it seems obvious that an OTM graduate is not left out in the drive towards self-reliance as a utilitarian programme of studies. In all therefore, OTM could best be described as a type of education deliberately designed for the development of skills and knowledge which can be useful for both the individual concerned, the immediate family and the entire nation. It is also conceived to mean and to fulfil two purposes — to provide training for specific jobs; and to develop ability to use these skills in the environment where business is regularly and usefully conducted.

Quality is usually seen as the degree of excellence in terms of passing judgment to the level of value in a product (graduate). Middle-hurst (1992) perceived quality as a grade of achievement, standard against which to compare certain things by means of judgment. Assurance refers to promises by one or agency that the degree or level of value of service will produce good results — usually all the time. Using these two terms, quality assurance is defined as a plan and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled. It is the systematic assessment, measurement and evaluation by making objective comparison with a standard, monitoring of processes and an associated look that confers error prevention. (Ehiamentor (1990) described quality assurance as the practice of managing the way goods are produced or services are provided to make sure they are kept at a high standard. In the authors words, office technology and management needs to be managed in such a way that very high standard will be maintained. The need to constantly maintain and improve the quality in education arises because without quality, education becomes a waste, useless and valueless in a competitive, complex and challenging society. Ijaiya (2001) posited that without quality education not only will be entire system, processes and products be termed failures, but that the system will also pose danger to the individual beneficiaries and the society where the individuals reside. Ijaiya

maintained that the worth of any educational system, and in particular any programme of studies as an investment lies in its capacity to continuously serve its customers (students, parents, employers of labour and the society) better by providing for quality and quantity. Continuing, the author maintained that quality assurance is a guarantee that the quality of education provision is a fundamental aspect of gaining and maintaining credibility for programmes in institutions of higher learning, not only nationally, but worldwide. On the whole, quality assurance is principally designed to improve the quality of an institution's methods and educational products and outcomes.

Oderinde (2004) outlined two aspects of quality in education, which are both internal and external. The internal aspect is the implementation of the school objectives, while the external aspect deals with the implementation of the national objectives, which are pre-requisites for the achievement of quality in any educational institution. According to Middlehurt (2001), the scope covered by quality assurance in education involves the following dimensions:-

- i. regulation (legal frameworks, governance, responsibilities and accountabilities);
- ii. educational process (admissions, registration or enrolment, curriculum design and delivery, support for learning, assessment);
- iii. curriculum design and content (validation and approval frameworks, levels and standard);
- iv. learning experience (consumer protection, students' experience, complaints and appeals); and
- v. outcomes (qualifications, certificates, transcripts, security, transferability, recognition/currency and value);

Maduwesi and Onyechu (2010) posited that for quality assurance to be achieved, some strategies should be used to achieve it. These strategies include constant monitoring, evaluation, supervision, inspection, quality control and reporting. The guideline specified by the National Board for Technical Education for Office technology and Management Course Curriculum and Specification in order to achieve the minimum academic standards set for Nigerian polytechnics include: (a) enhancing the new OTM Curriculum; (b) provision of adequate infrastructural facilities; (c) provision of adequate textbooks and text-materials; (d) time management (e) adequate number of professionally and academically qualified lecturers; (f) proper screening of candidates in order to ensure that only qualified students after ability and aptitude tests are administered on them; (g) adequate funding; (i) provision of instructional materials and equipment; (j) adequate provision of recreational centres (k) visitation exercises to institutions to ensure that graduates of OTM compete favourably with their counterparts nationally and internationally through accreditation and re-accreditation of programmes; and (l) ensuring that institutional administrators through

deans, heads of department and lecturers concerned with the conduct of examinations, tests, tutorials quizzes, assignments, term and seminar papers presentations follow the laid down rules and regulations (FRN, 2004). Esene (2001) reported that for the minimum academic standards set for OTM programmes to be achieved, school operators must review and constantly re-assess the application of institutions' context, inputs, processes and products (CIPP) as a way of evaluating the products of OTM graduates who find themselves in the world of work. Esene (2008) stated that students in tertiary institutions are prepared for the world of work to be productive, and be able to create wealth for themselves as part of their entrepreneurial initiatives. He noted that whatever is learnt in tertiary institutions is to serve as a weapon for dealing with events in the world of work. Esene (2009) posited that the ultimate in life, after all the learning in institutions of higher education is to reside in the world of work and make vital critical and viable contributions to its growth and development.

Design of the Study

The design for the study was survey. Survey studies, according to Yomere and Agbonifoh (1999) is that in which questionnaire is administered face to face to the subject by either the researcher or his assistant with a view to assessing public opinions, beliefs, attitudes, motivations and behaviour.

The population of this study consisted of 120 respondents. The sample used for this study comprised three major categories of people, namely;

- (i) Professional OTM Educators. Forty lecturers in OTM departments were selected through the use of purposive sampling.
- (ii) General educators – randomly selected 40 lecturers from polytechnics.
- (iii) The uneducated group – those who have not received formal education. The group consisted of 40 respondents.

A preliminary survey of the meaning of quality assurance in OTM was carried out to enable the researcher obtain information that will help in the development of the final instrument for the study. The preliminary study involved collecting information from a sample of 25 participants selected among the three groups involved in the study. The respondents were asked to give free responses to the following questions: (a) What is quality assurance in OTM? (b) What are the reasons for setting minimum academic standards in OTM?

Oral information were taken from those who could not write. The free responses were collected and clustered to similarity or sameness in ideas to arrive at the questionnaire after much rewriting to enable the respondents understand the content or ideas expressed without much difficulty.

Validity

The instrument was faced validated by three senior lecturers in OTM and measurement and evaluation.

Reliability

The test-retest reliability method was used. Twenty-five identified respondents were requested to respond to the items of the instrument again two weeks after the first administration. The Pearson Product Moment Co-efficient was employed for correlating responses. A coefficient of 0.78 was obtained which compared favourably with Cronbach alpha of 0.71.

Description of Data Gathering Methods

The collection of data was through the use of questionnaire. A total of 120 copies of the questionnaire were distributed as follow — 40 copies to each of the three groups. The questionnaire was designed in such a way as to find out the level of agreement or disagreement with suggested definitions of quality assurance in OTM as contained in section 'A'. Section 'B' of the questionnaire was designed to find out the level of agreement or disagreement with possible reasons for NBTE setting minimum academic standards in OTM programmes. The questionnaire copies administered to the respondents by hand and after going through, they were filled and were later collected by the researcher.

Methods of Data Analysis

In analyzing the data generated from the field, the researcher made use of mean, standard derivation, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). A system of analysis was sought which would determine the degree of an acceptance to each statement in the questionnaire. Values were assigned to each response category as follows: Strongly Agree (4); Agree (3); Disagree (2); Strongly disagree (1). Since the four point rating scale was used, all items receiving 2.50 and above were accepted why those with below 2.50 were rejected.

Results

Table 1
Mean Responses of Professional OTM Educators (A), General Educators (B), and Uneducated Group (C) on their Perceptions of the Meaning of Quality Assurance in Office Technology and Management

Q/I	Items	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	Decision
		A	B	C	
1.	Quality assurance in OTM is to improve instructions in higher education	1.30	1.70	2.72	Con
2.	Quality Assurance is meant to improve institutional effectiveness of OTM	3.44	2.30	1.71	Var
3.	Quality Assurance in OTM means the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies needed to prepare the graduates for gainful employment in specific business	3.75	3.50	2.82	Con
4.	Quality Assurance is designed to achieve appropriate instructional expectations in OTM programmes	1.02	1.68	2.44	Con
5.	Quality Assurance in OTM is primarily designed to ensure that high standards are maintained	2.00	2.20	2.62	Con
Total		11.51	11.38	12.30	Con

Con = consensus = Var = Variation

Source: Field trip, 2013.

From the data collected and analysed as shown in Table 1, it is seen that professional OTM educators, general educators and the uneducated group regard items 3,4 and 5 as the meaning of quality assurance of OTM; professional OTM educators accepted items 3, 2 and 5 as the meaning of quality assurance of OTM. The general

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educators accepted items 1, 3 and 5 as meaning of quality assurance of OTM, while the uneducated group accepted questionnaire items 2, 3 and 5 as definitions of OTM.

Table 2
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Table on the Mean Responses of Professional OTM Educators, General Educators, and the Uneducated on the Meaning of Quality Assurance of OTM

	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}
	A	B	C
Total	11.51	11.38	12.31
Mean (\bar{x})	3.84	3.79	4.10

Grand mean (\bar{x}) = 3.91

Source of variation	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F. Cal Value	Level significance
Between columns	0.389	2	0.284	0.03	P 0.03
Between Rows	12.14	15	0.78		P < 0.03

E 2 = 0.7

Since F0.05 Cal at df2, 12 which is 0.03 is less that F0.05 DF2, 15 which is 6.39, we then do not reject the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the perception of OTM educators, general educators and the uneducated group on the definition of quality assurance of Office technology and Management.

The correlation ratio (E2 of 7) is an indication that the relation between the perceptions of professional OTM educator, general educators and the uneducated group is strong

Table 3
Mean Responses of Professional OTM Educators (A), General Educators (B), Uneducated Group (C) of the Reasons for NBTE Setting Minimum Academic standards in OTM Programmes

Q/I	Items	\bar{X} A	\bar{X} B	\bar{X} C	Decision
6.	Reason for setting minimum academic standard in OTM programme is to ensure that no institution operates below the minimum prescribed	1.12	1.65	2.67	Con
7.	They are set to guarantee quality of instruction in OTM.	2.70	3.06	2.66	Con
8	Minimum academic standards are set so that graduates of OTM are adequately and sufficiently prepared for the world of work and be productive.	3.75	3.31	3.01	Var
9	Minimum academic standards enable operators to show total commitment to their duties and responsibilities.	1.34	2.12	2.69	Var
10.	Minimum academic standards are set to guide institutional administrators and their agents in the implementation of OTM Curriculum, and Course specifications	3.84	3.10	2.43	Var
Total		12.75	13.24	13.46	Con

Source: Field survey, 2013

From table 3 above, it is revealed that Professional Office Technology and Management educators, general educators and the uneducated group considered items 6, 8, and 10 as the reasons why NBTE minimum academic standards in OTM programmes were set.

Table 4
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Professional OTM Educators, General Educators and the Uneducated Group of the Reasons for Setting Minimum Academic Standards in OTM Programmes

	\bar{X} A	\bar{X} B	\bar{X} C
Total	12.75	13.24	13.46
Mean (\bar{X})	2.55	2.65	2.69

Grand mean (\bar{X}) = 2.63

Source of variation	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F. Cal Value	Level significance
Between columns	0.054	2	0.0253	0.02	P 0.02
Between Rows	2.69	12	0.87	0.87	P < 0.05
Total	9.65	14			

$E^2 = 0.8$

Since F cal at df2, 12 and (P0.05) which is 0.02 is less than F df2, 12 at P0.05 which is 6.96, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the opinions of the professional OTM educators, general educators, and the uneducated group on the reasons for NBTE setting minimum academic standards of OTM is not rejected. The correlation ratio (E^2) of 0.8 is an indication that the relationship between the three groups is strong.

Below are the specific findings derived from the study.

- (a) Professional OTM educators, general educators and the uneducated group accepted the following as the meaning of quality assurance in OTM.
 - (i) that quality assurance in OTM is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies needed to prepare the graduates to enter gainful employment in specific business and office occupations.
 - (ii) that quality assurance in OTM is designed to achieve appropriate instructional expectations.

- (b) In addition to the above meanings, professional OTM educators and the general educators agreed that quality assurance in OTM is primarily designed to ensure and that high standards are maintained.
- (c) That professional OTM educators and general educators rejected the following as the meaning of quality assurance of OTM.
 - (i) that quality assurance in OTM is to improve instructions in higher institutions
 - (ii) that quality assurance in OTM is meant to improve institutional effectiveness.
- (d) The Professional OTM educators, general educators and the uneducated group accepted the following as the reasons for NBTE setting minimum academic standards for OTM programmes:
 - (i) that graduates of OTM programmes will be adequately and sufficiently prepared for the world and will be productive
 - (ii) that the standards set will guide institutional administrators and their agents in the implementation of the OTM programmes.
 - (iii) that the setting of minimum academic standards is to ensure that no institutions operate below the minimum standard prescribed.
- (e) However, the general educators and the uneducated group rejected the reasons
 - (i) that setting minimum academic standards could guarantee quality of instruction in OTM
 - (ii) that the operators of the OTM programmes will show total commitment to their duties and responsibilities.

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to find out the perceptions of the professional OTM educators, general educators and uneducated group towards quality assurance in Office Technology and Management programmes of Nigerian Polytechnics in Delta and Edo states. It was found that OTM is designed to develop appropriate skills, abilities, values, understandings, attitudes, work habits and appreciation encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis. This finding was supported by the studies by Esene (2008) and Popham et al (2005) which noted that the OTM programmes prepare graduates to enter into and advance in jobs within business and office occupations, and that students in tertiary institutions are prepared for the world of work, and to be productive and be able to create wealth for themselves as part of their entrepreneurial initiatives.

The study also revealed that the reasons why NBTE set minimum academic standards is to ensure that graduates of OTM are adequately and sufficiently prepared for the world of work and be productive in their work places, and also to ensure that no institutional administrator and their agents operate the OTM curriculum and course specification below the minimum academic standards prescribed. This finding supports by earlier findings or Esene (2011), Abang (2009), (FRN 2009) and Ekula (2008) when they noted that the reasons for the establishment of NBTE in 1977 as a federal education parastatal is to ensure constant maintenance and improvement of academic standards in all institutions, and also to ensure uniform standards and quality control of instructional activities in the institutions under the aegis of NBTE so that the OTM graduates who are trained with the state of the art materials and equipment can be gainfully employed in the labour markets or even create jobs and become self-reliant in the Nigerian economy.

Conclusion

The new Office Technology and Management Curriculum and Course Specification which came into operation in 2004 is a radical shift from the old name — Secretarial Studies. The emphasis in the new OTM programmes is designed to enable Nigeria join the rest of the developed countries in terms of the use of ICT in conducting business transaction. One way to achieve this is to ensure that the minimum academic standards put in place by NBTE is not in any way compromised by governments, institutional administrators, their agents and the operators of the system. The OTM Curriculum has significantly improved in content and in pedagogy by the inclusion of courses in computer, database management, ICT applications, management and secretarial office practice, vocational skills and contemporary courses. All these are designed to enable secretaries to operate computer using Dbase, Excel, Corel Draw and Word Processing packages such as word perfect, MS Word, MS power point. Adobe Page Maker, etc, in order that they could be self-employed and/or enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis, especially now that modern offices lay the emphasis on paperless office of as a way to facilitating the processing of correspondence handling and operation. One way to achieve quality assurance in OTM programmes is to constantly monitor the system put in place, carry out evaluation using the CIPP model, engage in supervision and inspection so that quality can be controlled and guaranteed all times, and also to ensure the ND and HND OTM graduates stand the test of time in a free and competitive labour market.

Recommendations

On the strength of the results derived from the study, and the conclusion reached, the investigator recommends the following as a practical way of achieving quality assurance in Office Technology Management Programmes in Nigerian Polytechnics:

1. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) should be strengthened. The strengthening of the Board in terms of adequate funding, provision of

- human and material resources would help it discharge its onerous duties and responsibilities creditably to the nation.
2. The period of accreditation and re-accreditation of academic programmes of Nigerian Polytechnics should be reduced from five to three years. The reduction will put more responsibilities on governments, proprietors and institutional administrators by ensuring that observed lapses in the course of visitations are corrected.
 3. Adequate and relevant infrastructural facilities, materials, equipment, and laboratories should be on ground for the training OTM graduates so that they can be efficient, effective and productive in work situations, particularly now that secretaries are to work in modern offices equipped with the state of the art equipment.
 4. NBTE should encourage Polytechnic lecturers to obtain professional certificates in education so that they will be competent in both content and pedagogy. The possession of professional qualifications will improve and facilitate the classroom teaching and learning enterprise.
 5. OTM curriculum should be constantly revised, reviewed and adjusted in line with national and international standards. This exercise, if carried out with every sense of seriousness and at the appropriate time will meet the needs and aspirations of the learners in terms of adequate preparation for the acquisition of employability skills needed by the employers of labour and also for self-employment for the ND and HND OTM graduates.
 6. Each institution should, in addition to high scores obtained in UTME be allowed to conduct ability and aptitude tests for the selection of the right candidates.
 7. Institutional administrators should ensure that all those concerned with teaching and the conduct of test examinations and evaluation obey, observe and implement rules and regulations governing their conduct.
 8. Institutional libraries should be stocked with relevant and current books, journals, magazines, etc, for use by students, lecturers and researchers. Additionally, indigenous authors should be assisted financially in the production of local text-materials.

9. NBTE should collate research findings from institutions under its aegis, publish and disseminate same regularly in order to aid research documentation and also to facilitate teaching, learning, and encourage research work.
10. Lecturers should be trained and re-trained in order to prepare them to meet and grapple with the challenges and changes occasioned by curriculum innovations.
11. NBTE should pay unscheduled visits to polytechnics. Such visits will enable the Board to ascertain not only the actual physical infrastructural, instructional materials and equipment on ground, but will also reveal the quality and quantity of staff strength.

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