

ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SKILLS ACQUISITION REQUIRED BY OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT (OTM) STUDENTS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The study examined the quality assurance and skills acquisition required by office technology and management students for national development. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Two research questions were raised and answered, and one hypothesis was generated to guide the study. The study population consisted of 38 business education lecturers from public tertiary institutions in Kwara State. A researcher-designed structured questionnaire was used to collect the data for the study. The instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded an index of 0.82. Data collected from the respondents were analysed with a mean score and standard deviation to analyse the research questions, and Pearson's Moment Correlation was used to analyse the main hypothesis. The results of the data collected and analysed indicated, among others, that the need for quality assurance in office technology and management is an indispensable component of the quality control strategy and determines the adequacy of the facilities available for quality control in the office technology and management programme. Based on the findings, it was concluded that there is a need for quality assurance in the office technology and management programme. This will serve as an indispensable component of the quality control strategy and will determine the adequacy of the available facilities. It was recommended, among others, that there is a need for constant and efficient supervision of the educational activities of the office technology and management departments by both internal and external supervisory bodies to ensure efficient academic delivery.

Keywords: Teacher Perception, Quality Assurance, Skill Acquisition, Office Technology and Management, National Development

Introduction

Quality assurance is widely recognised as the foundation of practical education, while quality education itself is a principal driver of national development. National development encompasses the comprehensive progress of a country in economic, social, political, and technological domains, aimed at improving citizens' well-being, enhancing productivity, reducing poverty, and fostering equitable growth. Education is a critical instrument in this process, as it equips individuals with the knowledge,

skills, and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to societal advancement and to address complex developmental challenges (Boateng, Eghan, & Adu, 2015).

Within this framework, Office Technology and Management (OTM) programmes play a strategic role in national development by preparing a skilled, competent workforce capable of meeting the demands of modern office environments. OTM, offered at National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) levels in Nigerian polytechnics, colleges of technology, and universities under the supervision of the NBTE and NUC, focuses on equipping students with theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and professional competencies required for effective performance in administrative and managerial roles. According to Komolafe and Ajani in Ovbiagele and Mbonyebi (2018), the programme is designed to develop students' abilities, work habits, and understanding, enabling them to secure meaningful employment and contribute productively to organisational and national objectives.

Quality assurance in OTM ensures that students acquire essential skills, including communication, managerial, digital, and technical competencies, while promoting the efficient use of institutional resources and maintaining high instructional standards. Sokyes et al. (2018) noted that competencies in office technology are crucial to national economic growth, while Adams (2022) emphasised that quality assurance mitigates inefficiencies in human activities, ensuring that educational outcomes align with intended objectives. The role of teachers is central in this regard, as their professional and interpersonal skills significantly influence students' attitudes, behaviour, and learning outcomes (Hayon in Okon & Archibong, 2015). Effective teaching in OTM fosters the development of graduates who can adapt to workplace challenges and contribute meaningfully to national productivity.

Moreover, OTM programmes are vital tools for reducing poverty and enhancing national productivity. According to Okorie and Ezeji in Udo (2014), the acquisition of practical and professional skills increases individuals' productive capacity, enabling them to contribute effectively to societal welfare and economic growth. By equipping students with core competencies, OTM programmes ensure that graduates are capable of driving innovation, improving organisational efficiency, and supporting technological advancement, key elements of sustainable national development.

National development depends on a skilled, competent, and adaptable workforce, and OTM, through adequate quality assurance, ensures that students acquire the requisite professional, technical, and entrepreneurial skills to meet labour-market demands. Therefore, quality-assured OTM education is indispensable not only for students' employability but also for advancing Nigeria's socio-economic and technological progress.

Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Quality Assurance

Quality connotes a degree of excellence and a higher standard. That is, the quality of a product is meaningful only when it is related to the function that makes it work or sell. To Abraham (2019), quality is appropriateness, effectiveness, and adequacy. Ekwuru (2019) said quality is a desirable attribute of a product or service that distinguishes it from other products or services to the person seeking it. Nwagbara in Ikuelogbon et al. (2020) described quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. According to Okoro and Aguguam (2017), quality embodies a standard phenomenon. That is, not just to create a complete product or service, but to emphasise internal procedures and outputs, and to reduce waste and improve productivity. Thus, it's implied standards of something as compared to

other things, the degree of goodness or excellence. Quality can simply be defined as the skill, ability, competence, and knowledge one needs to perform a specific task over a given period of time. Quality assurance refers to the planned and systematic activities implemented within a quality system to ensure that quality requirements for a product or service are met. According to Onyesom and Ashibogwu in Okoli et al. (2018), quality assurance is the entire process of ensuring maximum effectiveness and efficiency of educational programmes and services in relation to their context, mission, and stated objectives. Quality assurance generally refers to a systematic review of academic programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are maintained (Amesi, 2018).

Quality assurance, on the other hand, is about consistently meeting product specifications. It is the ability of educational institutions to meet the needs of the users of the workforce in relation to the quality of skills acquired by their products, that is, students. Okebukola (2010) viewed quality assurance in Nigerian universities as a process of continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning activities, achieved primarily through pathways that employ mechanisms, both internal and external to the universities. It ensures that the minimum academic standard is attained, maintained, and enhanced. Darling-Hammond et al. (2021) affirmed that quality assurance in education should aim for systemic reform with an emphasis on equity rather than simply compliance. This implies that educational institutions should meet the expectations of manpower users regarding the quality of skills in their outputs. Nnorom (2013) saw quality assurance as the university's ability to meet criteria relating to academic matters, staff-student ratio, staff mix by rank, staff development, physical facilities, funding, and adequate library facilities. According to Utoware and Kren-Ikidi (2013), quality assurance is a systematic measurement approach that an entity follows to ensure that the quality requirements of a product or service are met.

Quality assurance is a planned and systematic review process carried out by an organisation, institution, or programme to determine whether acceptable standards are met, maintained, and enhanced. It guarantees confidence in a programme of study given by an institution that standards and quality are being maintained and enhanced (UNESCO, 2024). For a clearer understanding, quality assurance in education is an all-inclusive set of activities that aim to generate, maintain, and improve quality performance from all participants, such as students, teachers, institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders, direct and indirect infrastructural facilities, and a conducive school environment, just to mention a few. Therefore, quality assurance is a multi-dimensional concept that includes all its functions and activities, which include teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community, and the academic environment. The above-mentioned are essential determinants of the overall quality assurance in office technology and management programmes in tertiary institutions.

Concept of Office Technology and Management

Office technology and management (OTM) is an integral part of a business education programme that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas, and management abilities necessary for office job performance and for gainful employment. Office technology and management education are primarily concerned with the acquisition and mastery of office-related skills needed to perform in business and technological organizations (Osuala, in Oluwalola, 2017). To Ojohwoh (2014), OTM is an effective, efficient, productive, and functional educational programme that prepares its graduates for self-employment, paid employment, self-reliance, and self-realization. The office technology and management programme continuously builds on the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes learned in the lower phases of education. This emphasizes the knowledge, skills, attitudes,

and technicalities that learners will be expected to display on completion of their training; hence, office technology and management education is an educational program for the competent and efficient performance of students in the world of work. To cap it all, the broad objectives of the OTM programme, according to NBTE (2004), are: (a) acquisition of secretarial skills; (b) acquisition by ability to write shorthand for three minutes in varied materials at 1.3 syllabic intensity dictated at 80 Words Per Minute (WPM) and 1.4 syllabic intensity of 100 wpm and transcribe on the computer with a minimum of 95% accuracy for both ND and HND, respectively; (c) typing effectively various office jobs and acquiring a copying rate of 40 wpm and 50 wpm for ND and HND, respectively, on passages not below 1.3 syllabic intensity with 98% accuracy; (d) acquisition of general education; and (e) laying the foundation for advanced studies.

National Board for Technical Education further stated that the programme is structured to achieve the following objectives: (a) Equipping individuals with office secretarial skills; (b) Creating general entrepreneurship awareness in the students with a view to inculcating in them the right knowledge for productive purposes, and (c) Laying foundations for advanced studies. To realize these objectives teacher's perception of the subject is very important. That is, the teacher's perception of the subject influences students' academic performance. This is because our perceptions affect our emotions and behaviour; likewise, our emotional and behavioural reactions also help to shape our environments and skew our beliefs about those environments. Perception is a hypothetical construct for the process of attaining awareness or understanding of the environment by organizing and interpreting sensory information (Ou, 2017).

Office technology and management (OTM) is a comprehensive activity-based educational programme that is concerned with the acquisition of skills, understandings, attitudes, work habits and competencies that are requisite to success in secretarial and office management occupations Udo, 2014). In support of this, one of the National Educational Objectives states that the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical are important for all Nigerians to live and contribute to the development of their society (NPE, 2014). However, the National Educational Policy document (2014) stated that the Nation's educational activity should be centered on the students for them to acquire maximum skills for self-development and fulfillment in the labour market. Therefore, because of certain impediments, the level of practical skills acquired by these students, compared with the demands of the labour market and technological advancement, is nothing to boast about. This explains why most employers of labour in this nation and abroad consider the products of office technology and management as half-baked and unusable without further training. As a result of this, many graduates of OTM are found all over the nation without gainful public employment. These graduates, too, cannot be self-employed because they are unable to put into practice what they studied in their tertiary institutions. Employability skills are key ingredients for a successful OTM programme in any tertiary institution.

Skill acquisition is crucial for national development as it leads to improved productivity, innovation, and competitiveness. Students need to acquire skills relevant to the current job market and that contribute to economic growth. Skill acquisition is a practical way of developing knowledge, ability, and skills in learners in such a way that they can use them to improve their society. Suarta et al. (2017) lamented that occupation-specific skills are no longer sufficient for graduates to meet labour market needs. It indicates that there is evidence of a lack of employability skills among tertiary institution graduates. This is an indication of the significance of the standard of the programmes offered in the schools for the employment needs of individual learners. Now the question is, can the Nigerian students be able to cope with the workforce of the twenty-first century, which requires manipulative skills and a greater ability to solve problems on their own than it has in the past?

Through the acquisition of skills in office technology and management, students will be equipped to be creative citizens and will also help to improve the living conditions of society and solve their existential problems.

Teachers emphasize the need for students to acquire practical skills in areas such as computer literacy, communication, and problem-solving to be successful in the workplace and contribute to national development. Therefore, to ensure quality assurance in OTM programme, Adegbesan in Ovbiagele and Mgbonyebe (2018) highlighted the following major relevance to: (a) serve as indispensable component of quality control strategy in office education; (b) ensure and maintain high standards of education at all levels; (c) assist in monitoring and supervision of office education at all levels; (d) determine the quality of teachers input; (e) determine the number of classroom needed based on the average control of office education; (f) determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control of office education and (g) determine how the final resources available for quality education could be prudently and judiciously utilized. It is against this background that this paper is written to explore teachers' perceptions of the quality assurance and skill acquisition required from office technology and management students for national development.

Statement of the Problem

The Office Technology and Management (OTM) programme is expected to produce graduates with digital, administrative, and employability skills needed for national development. However, recent studies show that many OTM graduates still lack sufficient ICT competence, office technology proficiency, and workplace-ready skills demanded by employers. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of curriculum delivery and the quality-assurance processes guiding OTM programmes in Nigeria.

Research evidence supports these concerns. Oluwalola (2020) found that although OTM students possess moderate ICT skills, these skills remain inadequate for today's digital office environment. Likewise, Oluwalola (2023) found that internal quality assurance mechanisms significantly influence the employability skills students acquire. Other scholars, such as Soyebi (2021), Arikwandu (2024), and Dasaolu (2025), also report gaps in digital readiness, curriculum implementation, and industry relevance within OTM programmes.

Despite quality-assurance frameworks provided by regulatory bodies, challenges such as inadequate facilities, inconsistent policy implementation, and weak teacher development persist. Teachers, who directly implement the curriculum, are in a unique position to assess how these quality-assurance practices support or hinder skills acquisition. Yet, limited studies have captured OTM teachers' perceptions on this issue.

The lack of teacher-based evidence makes it difficult for institutions and policymakers to strengthen programme quality and ensure that OTM graduates acquire the skills needed for national development. Therefore, this study examines teachers' perceptions of quality assurance and the skills acquired by OTM students to inform improvements in curriculum delivery and institutional practices.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perceptions of the quality assurance and skill acquisition required from office technology and management students for national development. The study intends explicitly to:

- (1) examine the need for quality assurance in office technology and management programme for national development.

(2) ascertain the necessary skills required of office technology and management students for national development.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered to guide the study

1. What are the needs for quality assurance in office technology and management for national development?
2. What are the necessary skills required of office technology and management students for national development?

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between teachers' perception of the quality assurance and skill acquisition required from office technology and management students for national development.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The survey carried out covered the entire public-owned institutions in Kwara State, which included the University of Ilorin, Kwara State University, Kwara State Polytechnic, and the College of Education, Ilorin. The population for the study consisted of all business education lecturers in tertiary institutions in Kwara State. The entire population was involved in the study because the researchers considered the size manageable. The instrument used for data collection was the researcher's self-constructed questionnaire titled Teachers' Perception of the Quality Assurance and Skill Acquisition Required from Office Technology and Management Students for National Development, consisting of 32 items. The instrument was divided into sections A, B, and C. A was designed to obtain information from the business education lecturers on quality assurance and skill acquisition required by office technology and management students for national development. Three experts were subjected to the questionnaire to face validation from the Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha reliability, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82. The collected data were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation. The decision rule was that any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was taken as agreed, while items with a mean score of 2.49 and below were regarded as disagreed with for research questions. Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to test the hypothesis raised at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the needs for quality assurance in office technology and management programme for national development as perceived by the teachers?

Table 1: Tables of teacher perception of the need for quality assurance in the office technology and management programme for national development

S/N	Item Statements	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	To evaluate the effectiveness of structures and processes required to achieve outcomes in OTM	3.04	0.66	Agreed
2.	To serve as an indispensable component of the quality control strategy in OTM	3.90	0.75	Agreed
3.	To prepare students for self-reliance	2.90	0.77	Agreed
4.	To ensure and maintain a higher standard in OTM	2.75	0.85	Agreed

5.	To assist in the monitoring and supervision of OTM	2.85	0.82	Agreed
6.	To determine the quality of the teachers' input	2.53	0.58	Agreed
7.	To determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control	3.69	0.75	Agreed
8.	To ensure that the financial resources available could be prudently and judiciously utilized	3.15	0.58	Agreed
9.	Adequate funding	2.98	0.62	Agreed
10.	Monitoring of OTM programme	2.86	0.89	Agreed
11.	Effective evaluation system	3.61	0.66	Agreed
12.	Training and retraining of staff	3.22	0.79	Agreed
Weighted average		3.12	0.73	Agreed

Table 1 reveals that the respondents unanimously agreed to all the constructs, as the mean is far above the fixed mean of 2.50. This means the respondents indicated that all the elements stated in the table are needed for quality assurance in office technology and management for national development. All 12 constructs have a standard deviation ranging from 0.62 to 0.89, which is below the fixed value of 1.96. This means that the responses of the respondents are not widely spread, as they are close to the mean. Overall, all the constructs in the table above are significant needs for quality assurance in office technology and management for national development. This implies that quality assurance can lead to or bring about the effectiveness of structures and processes, quality control, maintaining higher standards, and determining the quality of teachers' input, among others, in an office technology and management programme (mean = 3.12, SD = 0.73)

RQ2 What are the necessary skills required of office technology and management students for national development as perceived by the teachers?

Table 2: Tables of teachers' perception of the necessary skills required of office technology and management students for national development

S/N	Item Statement	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1.	Personal Skills	3.35	0.67	Agreed
2.	Motivational skill	3.23	0.89	Agreed
3.	Communicative skill	3.87	0.45	Agreed
4.	Planning skill	3.11	1.02	Agreed
5.	Saving and investment skills	2.96	1.01	Agreed
6.	Adaptive skill	2.91	0.56	Agreed
7.	Managerial skills	3.77	0.62	Agreed
8.	Human relations skill:	3.12	0.61	Agreed
9.	Vocational skill	3.32	0.77	Agreed
10.	Computer skills or professional software skills	3.35	0.89	Agreed
11.	Basic professional competencies	3.82	0.95	Agreed
12.	Record management skills	3.65	0.78	Agreed
13	Psychomotor skill	3.67	0.57	Agreed
14	Analytical skill	3.44	0.58	Agreed
15	Creative skills	3.32	0.71	Agreed

16	Web development skills (webpage)	3.82	0.66	Agreed
17	Microsoft office software skill	3.70	0.67	Agreed
18	Desktop publisher software skills	3.71	0.60	Agreed
19	Graphical design skill	3.13	0.83	Agreed
20	Database management software skills	3.15	0.95	Agreed
Weighted average		3.42	0.74	Agreed

Table 2 shows that the respondents unanimously agreed with all the constructs, as the mean was far above the fixed mean of 2.50. The table further clarified that the respondents agreed with all the items as skills required of office technology and management students for national development. All 20 constructs have a standard deviation ranging from 0.45 to 1.02, which is below the fixed value of 1.96. This means that the responses of the respondents are not widely spread as they are close to the mean. Overall, all the constructs in Table 2 are necessary skills required of office technology and management students for national development. This implied that web development skills (webpage), communicative skills, and basic professional competencies, among others, are necessary for office technology and management students (mean = 3.42, SD = 0.74).

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between teachers' perception of the quality assurance and skill acquisition required from office technology and management students for national development.

Table 3: Summary on the relationship between teachers' perception of the quality assurance and skill acquisition required from office technology and management students for national development

Mean	SD	Pearson	Sig. correlation (r)	REMARK 2-tailed
Teachers' Perception of Quality Assurance	43.03	3.57		
Skill Acquisition	71.58	0.720 6.64	0.0005	Significant

p<0.05

Table 3 shows that the Pearson Product-Moment correlation was $r = 0.720$, and the p-value was 0.0005, which is less than 0.05. This means there is a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of the quality assurance and the skills required of office technology and management students for national development. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of the quality assurance and the skills required of office technology and management students for national development, is hereby rejected. This implies that students need to acquire the required skills for quality and professionalism.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that the need for quality assurance in OTM is to serve as an indispensable component of the quality control strategy and to determine the adequacy of the facilities available for quality control in the office technology and management programme for national development. The findings support earlier findings by Adegbesan (2011), who stated that one of the needs of quality

assurance is to serve as an indispensable component of quality control strategies in education, as it will go a long way toward determining the outcome of any educational programme.

The study also revealed that web development skills (webpage), communicative skills, and basic professional competencies, with mean scores of 3.82, 3.87, and 3.82, respectively, are necessary for office technology and management students to support national development. This means that, to meet the challenges of the 21st century, OTM graduates are expected to possess these necessary skills upon completion of the programme. The findings corroborate those of Ottah (2015), who stated that the essential skills required of students are human and conceptual. This is because a person with strong human skills will have a high degree of self-awareness and the capacity to understand or empathise with others' feelings. Okorie and Ezeji in Udo (2014) reported that the acquisition of the requisite skills is a means of increasing a nation's productive power. This implies that, for teachers to perform effectively, there is a need for additional training to augment traditional skills and knowledge with competency in ICT use. An effective teacher is required to have a higher level of professionalism because of rapidly changing circumstances. Hayon, in Okon and Archibong (2015), emphasised that teachers who possess professional and interpersonal skills are more effective in their classrooms in terms of students' behaviour, attitudes, and achievement. The teaching profession requires certain dominant behaviours that demonstrate a teacher's intellect, desire to excel, professionalism, and commitment to teaching as a life concern.

Finally, the study revealed a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of the quality assurance and the skills required of office technology and management students for national development. This is consistent with the findings of Sokyes et al. (2018), who stated that office technology facilities play an essential role in the development of the national economy. Oluwalola (2023) found that internal quality assurance mechanisms significantly influence the employability skills students acquire. Furthermore, citizen self-employment raises the nation's standard of living. Oladunjoye (2016) revealed that office technology management enhances job creation and increases employment opportunities in the nation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, quality assurance and skill acquisition are essential for national development, and Office Technology and Management students are critical to this process. Also, web development skills (webpage), communication skills, and basic professional competencies are necessary for OTM students in the office technology and management programme. Teachers' perceptions provide valuable insights into how to improve the quality of education and prepare students for the challenges of the future. By focusing on these key areas, we can ensure that our students are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed in the workforce and contribute to the growth and development of our nation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Institutions should implement comprehensive quality-assurance practices, including monitoring, evaluation, resource management, and staff development, to enhance OTM programme standards and equip students with skills for national development.
2. OTM students should be equipped with a comprehensive set of skills, including communication, professional, technical, managerial, and digital competencies, to ensure their effectiveness and contribution to national development.
3. Institutions should strengthen quality-assurance practices in OTM programmes, as improving QA directly supports students' acquisition of essential skills needed for professionalism and national development.

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