ASSESSMENT OF THE ADEQUACY OF THE NBTE (2004) NATIONAL DIPLOMA AND HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA CURRICULAR FOR OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The study focused on assessment of the adequacy of NBTE (2004) National Diploma and Higher National Diploma curricular for Office Technology and Management in soufr east and south south geo political zones of Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to determine the adequacy of NBTE (2004) curricular by the OTM implementers. Specifically, the study sought to determine the adequacy of the NBTE (2004) curricular relative to; goals and objectives and general entry requirements. Out of seven researcn questions and seven null hypotheses used for the dissertation study, two researcn questions and two null hypotheses were used to guide this study. The study adopted a survey aesign and the population was 145 OTM implementers in polytechnics in south east and south south geo political zones of Nigeria. A total of 145 copies or questionnaire were administered and 100% retrieval achieved. Data relative to tne research questions were analyzed using arithmetic mean while z-test at 0.05 level of significance were used for testing the null hypotheses. The results showed that the respondents considered goals and objectives of the programmes very adequate and general entry requirements adequate. Status significantly affected the respondents' mean ratings on the two aspects. In view of the findings, it was concluded that the NBTE (2004) curricular for ND and HND OTM were adequate in the two areas covered. Consequently, the researchers recommends among others, that the NBTE should review the curricular for the two programmes at least, every five years for currency and that management of polytechnics should insist on admitting only qualified candidates into orogrammes.

Introduction

Office Technology and Management (OTM) was designed and approved in 2004 by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) the supervisory.agency for polytechnic education in Nigeria to replace the Secretarial Studies Programme in Nigerian Polytechnics. The OTM curricular covered the National Diploma and Higher National Diploma. The objectives, theoretical and practical contents of the ND and HND curricular for Office Technology and Management are geared towards integrating graduates and staff of Office Technology and Management into the evolution of technology. This integration came as a result of developments in technology that have taken place in offices, industries and even in

our homes. In agreement with the above, Ntukidem (2000) observed that the wind of change heralded by technological advancement has enveloped business education especially the secretarial profession and its training programme.

The goals and objectives of the ND/HND OTM programmes are what the programme is focused on or designed to achieve. It is the foundation of the entire programme that directs or guides the programme implementers towards the mission of the programme. The goals and objectives of this programme therefore are to equip students with secretarial/office skills for employment in various fields of endeavour and, as well, expose them to courses in their special area and in general education. Hornby (2010) defined goal as a point, marking an end, the object of effort, or ambition, a destination. Goal simply means a specific measurable occurrence, object or accomplishment that one would like to achieve or obtain in the future. It is simply a place or point where one develops concrete action plans to take one to where and what he wants in the future. According to the NBTE (2004), the goal of the ND and HND OTM programme is to equip students with secretarial/office skills for employment in various fields of endeavour. Students of this programme are exposed to courses in their special areas as well as courses in general education. In addition to the acquisition of vocational skills in office technology and management, the students are equipped with effective work competencies and socio-psychological work skills, which are very essential in everyday interactions with others. Jen (2006) posited that goals

are general statements of intent of purpose, which reflect recognized needs. In this light, Adeboye (2001) stated that the goal of business education (OTM inclusive) is the production of manpower that possesses the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for harnessing other resources and bringing them into co-operative relationship yielding goods and services demanded by society for the satisfaction of their wants and needs. However, a programme objective is a specific and usually quantifiable statement of programme achievement. It is a statement of measurable outcome which can be used to determine programme progress towards the programme goal. Collectively, objectives represent a quantification of the programme goal (www.sil.orgningualinks/literacy)

In line with the above statement, Okebukola (1997) pointed out that the primary mission/objective of higher education is to conduct research, disseminate knowledge and produce skilled persons that are capable of playing effective roles in national, economic and technological growth and development of the nation. In support Osuala (1998) affirmed that the leading role on the development of African states falls to higher education and polytechnic education in particular.

Akpan (1997) identified three basic objectives for vocational education (OTM inclusive) as training to meet the needs of industries, training to meet the needs of individual and training to meet the needs of the nation. Uwametye (1995) also confirmed that vocational education serves as tripartite functions of satisfying the needs of individuals, nations and

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industries. Mbata (1990) noted that vocational education (including OTM programme) represents an aspect of education designed to develop abilities, understanding, skills, attitudes, and work habits in workers to enable them enter employment and also make progress on a productive basis.

NBTE(2004) listed the programme objectives of the ND and HND OTM as follows at the ND and HND levels to include among others; that graduates of the ND/HND should fit properly into the office of any computerized organization and perform professionally, the functions of a secretary which among others include - relating the functions of the office to the whole organizations, attending meetings and providing information as may be required; making accurate records of proceedings, filing and retrieving information, taking appropriate action independently when faced with challenging secretarial office problems, showing personal qualities and attributes that are conducive and co-exist with the work group.

The general entry requirements are the relevant or necessary requirements that are often needed or required of the candidates seeking admission to the polytechnic. For entry into ND OTM programme candidates must obtain four credit passes which should include English Language and any other three subjects. Entry into HND OTM programme includes four credit passes in English, other three subjects and National Diploma result with at least lower credit Office technology and management programme, according to NBTE (2004) is designed to equip students with secretarial/office skills for employment in various fields of endeavour. For the programme to actually attain this goat, it is very important to admit/select people who are qualified and who will apply these skills both at work and on personal basis. This implies that proper selection of students into the programme is of paramount importance to their success in the programme and during employment.

Ogwu (1991) pointed out that student characteristics, such as interest, aptitude, ability and attitude should match with the demands of chosen occupation or educational programme in order to produce capable workforce. These characteristics are essential in ascertaining the prospect of candidates' success in order to reduce the probability of producing graduates who cannot meet the demand of employers during employment. The NBTE (2004) OTM curriculum general entry requirements for admission into the National Diploma (ND) programme of OTM include among others; the West African School Certificate (WASC), General Certificate of Education (GCE), Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSSC), National Examination Council (NECO), National Business Certificate (NBC) or their equivalent with four credits passes (including English Language). The four credit passes must be in English Language and any three of the following: Business Methods, Commerce, Economics, Typewriting, Shorthand, Principles of Accounts, Mathematics, History, Literature in English, Geography, Government, Religious knowledge, Biology/Agricultural Science.

Statement of the Problem

Modern technologies are making impact in various professions, careers, industries and offices, and Office Technology and Management (OTM) implementers, students and graduates are also affected. Despite the fact that the programme is a recent one, people have started expressing some doubts about the adequacy of its curriculum contents. For instance, Oyagiri and Nweke (2011) pointed out that products of the new curriculum are not performing up to expectation in business and industry. They maintained that no clear cut difference in performance has been recorded between the office workers (OTM graduates) trained with the new curriculum and those trained with the old (secretarial graduates). Based on this problem, the study was conceived to assess the adequacy of the NBTE (2004) ND/HND OTM curricuiar.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the adequacy of the NBTE (2004) National Diploma and Higher National Diploma curricuiar for Office Technology and Management. Specifically the study sought to determine the adequacy of the NBTE (2004) ND/HND OTM curricuiar by OTM implementers in the following areas.

1. Goals and objectives.
2. General entry requirements.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How adequate do OTM programme implementers in the south-east and South-South Zones of Nigeria consider the NBTE goals and objectives of ND and HND programmes?
2. How adequate do OTM programme implementers in the south-east and South-South Zones of Nigeria consider the NBTE general entry requirements of ND and HND programmes?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on the adequacy of the goals and objectives of NBTE (2004) ND and HND programmes in OTM as a result of status (lecturer/instructor).
2. The respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the adequacy of the NBTE (2004) general entry requirements for ND and HND programmes in OTM as a result of status (lecturer/instructor).

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Significance of the Study

The results of this study would be useful to all graduates and students of OTM programme as the findings would help to improve the quality of instructions given to them and ensure their acquisition of appropriate skills that would enhance their performance in modern offices. The findings of this study would benefit the OTM lecturers and instructors since the knowledge gained from assessing the curriculum would enable them make constructive suggestions in areas of the programme that need modification. Also, the NBTE would benefit a lot from the result of this study as it concerns the OTM curricular. For instance, if some inadequacies are detected in the OTM programmes, this findings of this study would become a resource/reference material based on which curriculum reform could be carried out for better outcome. It is believed that a good curriculum reform would, to a great extent, tend to meet up with the societal needs and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of learners in their individual's communities.

Scope of the Study

This study covered polytechnics in the south-east and south-south geo-political zones of Nigeria with particular reference to those accredited for OTM programme. The study focused on assessment of the adequacy of the NBTE (2004) ND and HND curricular for OTM and covered goals and objectives and general entry requirements.

Method

The study adopted a survey design. The design was used because the research relies mainly on the use of questionnaire to elicit the opinions of the respondents. In this case data are usually collected, organized and analyzed and then described as they exist in their natural setting without interfering with them (Uzoagulu, 1998). Ezeji, (2004) explained that through survey, researchers identify present conditions, prevailing needs as well as provide information on which to base sound decisions. Thus, survey design was appropriate for this study. The population for this study consisted of all academic staff in the OTM departments in the ten (10) polytechnics in the south-east and south-south geo-political zones of Nigeria. According to information from the NBTE and OTM departments of these polytechnics, there were 77 OTM academic staff from polytechnics in south-east and 68 in south-south polytechnics making a total of!45 lecturers and instructors.

A questionnaire consisting of 25 items was used to collect data from the respondents (OTM implementers). The structured questionnaire was developed on the basis of the research questions and hypotheses into two sections A and B. Section A of the questionnaire was designed to obtain information on demographic data of the respondents. The demographic data include information on gender, status, ownership of institution and years of teaching experience. Information gathered from the demographic data formed the basis for

testing the hypotheses so formulated. Section B focused on two research questions goals and objectives and general entry requirements of ND and HND OTM and was designed to elicit information on the adequacy of NBTE (2004) ND and HND curricular for OTM. The instrument had five response categories of very adequate with rating scale 5, adequate 4, fairly adequate 3, inadequate 2 and very inadequatel. The respondents were expected to tick the appropriate responses as provided in the column. The instrument was validated by experts from vocational education department and cronbach alpha was the statistical tool used in testing the reliability. Out of 145 copies of questionnaire administered, 100% retrieval was made, since 145 copies of the instrument were retrieved. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed with the arithmetic mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, white the z-test statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1

How adequate do OTM programme implementers consider the NBTE goals and objectives of ND and HND programmes?

Analysis of data relating to Research Question 1 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the adequacy of NBTE goals and objectives of ND and HND programmes

S/N	Goals and Objectives	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	To equip students with secretarial/office skills for employment in various fields of endeavour.	4.90	0.30	VA
2.	To expose students to courses in their special areas as well as courses in general education.	4.83	0.39	VA
3.	To equip students with effective work competencies and socio-psychotogical work skills which are essential in everyday interactions with others.	4.83	0.37	VA
4.	Acquisition of secretarial skills which includes at the ND level the Ability to; write in shorthand for Three minutes varied material of 1.3 syllabic Intensity dictated at 80wpm and transcribed on the Typewriter with a minimum of 95% accuracy.	4.77	0.50	VA
5.	Type effectively various office jobs and acquire a copying rate of 40wpm on passages not below 1.30 syllabic intensity with 98% accuracy.	4.68	0.76	VA

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Table 1 (contd.)

S/N	General Entry Requirements	Mean	SD	Remarks
6.	At the HND level write in shorthand for three minutes varied material of 1.4 syllabic intensity dictated at lOOwpm and transcribed on the typewriter with a minimum of 95% accuracy.	4.55	0.84	VA
7.	Type effectively various office jobs and acquire a copying rate of SOwpm on passages below 1.30 syllabic intensity with 98% accuracy.	4.59	0.77	VA
8.	Graduates of ND/HND should fit properly into the office of any computerized organization and perform professionally, the functions of a secretary.	4.67	0.76	VA
9.	Relating the functions of the office to the whole Organization.	4.72	0.55	VA
10.	Attending meetings and providir information as may be required.	4.70	0.54	VA
11.	Making accurate records of proceedings.	4.73	0.53	VA
12.	Filing and retrieving information.	4.77	0.51	VA
13.	Taking appropriate action independently when faced with challenging secretarial office problem.	4.72	0.53	VA
14.	Showing personal qualities and attributes that are conducive and co-exist with the work group.	4.68	0.69	VA
15.	Acquisition of general education.	4.68	0.68	VA
16.	Laying foundation for advanced studies.	4.72	0.58	VA
	Grand Mean	**4.72**	**0.55**	**VA**

Data in Table 1 showed that the OTM implementers considered all the sixteen goals and objectives as very adequate with mean ratings ranging between 4.55-4.90 and grand mean of 4.72, while grand standard deviation when it is below 1.0 indicated that the respondents' mean ratings are not far apart.

Research Question 2

How adequate do OTM programme implementers consider thegeneral entry requirements of ND and HND programmes?

Analysis of data relating to Research Question 2 is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of OTM programme implementers on the adequacy of the NBTE general requirements of ND and HND programmes Entry

S/N	General Entry Requirements	Mean	SD	Remarks
17.	ND Programme: WASC, GCE, SSCE, NECO, NBC or their equivalents with four credit passes (including English Language). The credit passes must be in English and any three of the following:- Business Methods, Commerce, Economics, Typewriting, Shorthand, Accounts, Mathematics, History, Literature in English, Geography, Government, Religions Knowledge, Biology or Agric. Science.			
18.	The Grade II teachers' Certificate with four (4) credits including English at not more than two sittings.			
19.	A pass in an NBTE recognized pre- National Diploma Programme, (candidates should have had a minimum of pass grades in the four subjects specified in WASC or its equivalent during entry into the pre-ND programme.	4.74 4.51 4.49	0.54 0.69 0.90	VA VA VA
20.	A pass in mathematics is not compulsory but an advantage.	3.23	1.36	VA
21.	Candidates may in addition to the qualifications listed above, be expected to pass an interview for the final selection.	4.22	1.20	VA
22.	HND programme: All the requirements into the ND OTM programme.	4.78	0.42	VA
23.	A minimum of a lower credit pass (CGPA 2.50 and above) in the ND examination.	4.77	0.42	VA
24.	A minimum of one year work experience.	4.81	0.45	VA
25.	Candidates with pass at ND should have 2 years work experience. The number of such candidates should not exceed 10% of the students in the class.	4.77	0.53	VA
	Grand Mean	**4.49**	**0.72**	**A**

The data in Table 2 showed that the OTM implementers considered six general entry requirements very adequate with mean ratings of 4.61 - 4.81 two adequate with mean ratings of 4.22-4.81 and one with mean ratings of 3.23 fairly adequate. The grand mean of 4.49, the respondents consider the general entry requirements of the programmes adequate and grand standard deviation of 0.72 indicated that the respondents' mean ratings are not far apart.

Hypothesis 1

The mean ratings of lecturers and instructors implementing OTM programme on the adequacy of the goals and objectives of ND and HND programmes do not differ significantly.

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Table 3: ^{Z}-test on the mean ratings of lecturers and instructors on the adequacy of the NBTE goals and objectives of ND and HND programmes

Source of variation	N	X	Sd	df	Cal.z	Critz	p³0.05
Lecturer	114	77.78	4.45				
				143	9.06	1.96	S
Instructor	31	67.45	8.73				

Table 3 showed that at 0.05 level of significance and 143df, the calculated z of 9.06 is greater than the critical z of 1.96, which means that significant difference existed in the mean ratings between the lecturers and instructors. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Null Hypothesis 2

The mean ratings of lecturers and instructors implementing OTM programme on the adequacy of the general entry requirements of ND and HND programmes do not differ significantly.

Testing of null hypotheses relating to hypothesis 2 is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: ^{Z}-test on the mean ratings of lecturers and instructors on the adequacy of NBTE general entry requirements of ND and HND programmes

Source of variation	N	X	Sd	df	Cal.z	Critz	p>0.05
Lecturer	114	40.82	3.40				
				143	2.73	1.96	S
Instructor	31	38.87	3.99				

Table 4 indicated that at 0.05 level of significance and 143df, the calculated z of 2.73 is greater than the critical z of 1.96, which means that significant difference existed in the mean ratings between the lecturers and instructors. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

With respect to the first research question, the findings indicated that the respondents considered the goals and objectives of ND and HND OTM programme very adequate. This is inconsonance with the observation of Mbata (1990) that vocational education (including OTM programme) represents an aspect of education designed to develop abilities, understanding, skills, attitudes, and work habits in workers to enable graduates enter employment and also make progress on a productive basis. Akpan (1997) further identified three basic objectives for vocational education cum OTM as training to meet the needs of industries, individuals and nation which aligns with the stated goals and objectives of the

OTM programme. From the findings of the study, the lecturers and instructors implementing OTM programme differed significantly in their mean ratings on the adequacy of the goals and objectives of the NBTE (2004) ND and HND programme in OTM. The difference in the mean ratings of these two categories of implementers in OTM could be linked to their areas of specialization and training background. This goes a long way to support Okebukola (1997) which pointed out that the primary mission/objective of higher education is to conduct research, disseminate knowledge and produce skilled persons that are capable of playing effective roles in national, economic and technological growth and national development.

Findings relative to the second research question revealed that the respondents considered the general entry requirements of the programmes adequate. This is in line with Ogwu (1991) which pointed out that student characteristic such as interest, aptitude, ability and attitude should match with the demands of a chosen occupation or educational programme in order to produce capable workforce. Although, the findings generally indicate that the respondents considered the entry requirements as adequate, they considered the statement that a pass in Mathematics is not compulsory but an advantage as fairly adequate. This buttressed an issue on the entry requirements of secretarial studies in polytechnics and secretarial technology in business education of universities, where JAMB maintained that a credit pass in Mathematics is compulsory. As a matter of fact, the implementers' response to this item indicates that they consider a credit or pass in Mathematics compulsory for admission into the programmes.

Conclusion

In view of the findings of the study, it was concluded that the NBTE (2004) ND and HND OTM curricular are adequate relative to goals and objectives and general entry requirements.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. The NBTE should review the ND and HND OTM curricular at least every five years for currency to stand the test of times in this era of technological changes.
2. Management of polytechnics should insist on admitting qualified candidates into OTM programmes to enable them graduate competent candidates to fit into offices and industries.
3. OTM implementers should be adequately re-trained in line with the demands of the stated goals and objectives of OTM programme to enable them impart appropriately and effectively to the students.

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