EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS REQUIRED OF OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT GRADUATES BY MANAGERS OF SMALL-SCALE ENTERPRISES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract
The study was conducted to ascertain the employability skills required of office technology and management (OTM) graduates by small scale enterprises in Anambra State. The study adopted a descriptive Survey design. Two research questions guided the study, while two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Population of 980 mangers of small scale enterprise was used for the study. Proportionate stratified sampling techniques were used to sample 294 small scale enterprise managers in Anambra State. The questionnaire was validated by experts in business education. The reliability method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha formula to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded Correlation coefficient values of 0.93, 0.97, 0.98, and 0.96 for the four clusters of the questionnaire, with the overall coefficient value of 0.96. Mean was used to answer the research questions while the null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Z-test. Data collected were analyzed using arithmetic mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Findings from the study revealed that problem solving skill, and database administration skills, are highly required of OTM graduates by small scale enterprises in Anambra State.
Keywords: Employability Skill, Skills, Office Technology, Office Technology and Management Graduates and Small-Scale Enterprises.

Introduction

Nigeria is a country so much blessed with abundant human and natural resources which include petroleum, natural gas, uranium, tin, coal and so on. Inegbenebor, K. S. (2008) reported that at a time, Nigeria earned over US $ 300 billion from oil sales, this has not in any way improved the standard of living of her citizens. Today, Nigeria remains among the poorest countries of the world and still carries the tag of a" developing" or worse still "underdeveloped" nation.

The high rate of poverty and unemployment among the youths with its attendant manifestations such as kidnapping, armed robbery, terrorism and other social vices have been an epidemic and a clog to progress and national development. It is an obvious fact that graduates of our tertiary institutions often spend years roaming about the street in search of employment opportunities which are in most cases not even in existence. Okoye,E.M. (2014) reported that every year, about 150,000 students obtain their university degrees and other tertiary education

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certificates ready to be employed by the government and private business organizations but are unable to secure placements.

The present economic reality in the country shows that the situation has not improved in any way. Osinem,E.C and Nwoji, (2005) buttressed the above point by opining that the high rate of unemployment in the country could be attributed to lack of employment opportunities, as well as the unemployable nature of Nigerian graduates. It seems that Nigeria graduates are not exposed to qualitative education that would empower them through entrepreneurship towards becoming self-reliant.

To improve the employability status of Nigerian graduates and thereby reducing unemployment and poverty among the youths, Obi,C.A. (2005) asserted that the place of youth education and entrepreneurial programs that would genuinely address and encourage youths acquire relevant entrepreneurial and workplace skills are what the nation needs at this time. Thus, the only way to empower the youth is to provide them with adequate and qualitative education in order to make them self-employed, job creators and to eradicate poverty in their various communities. Many countries of the world including Nigeria have considered Office Technology and Management (OTM) as relevant in equipping young people with necessary skills and competencies that would enable them engage in skill acquisition and productive livelihoods (Ezeani,P. 2014).

Office technology and management according to Okoro and Amagoh (2008) is an efficient, effective, productive and functional educational programme which leads itself to self-employment, self-reliance and consequently self-actualization. It is expected that OTM students upon graduation have acquired relevant skills that could enable them employable in various small-scale enterprises that operates in the country. Mcquaid,C. (2015) defined employability skills as the transferable skills needed by an individual to make them 'employable'. Along with good technical understanding and subject knowledge, employers often outline a set of skills that they want from an employee, Mcquaid further identified four major employability skills required by graduates for effective job performance in the contemporary offices. These employability skills according to Mcquaid include problem-solving skills, database management skills, interpersonal skills and communication skills.

Small-scale enterprise can be defined as one having an investment and working capital not exceeding N750, 000. The World Bank (2013), on its own part, defined small-scale industry as an industry whose working capital including land does not exceed N2.5million and with a turnover of N12.5 million annually. The National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND) in Etebefia and Akinkumi (2013) defined small-scale enterprises as those industries whose fixed asset and cost of new investment does not exceed N10million. The Central Industrial Research and Development (IRD) of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife cited by the authors defined small-scale enterprises as those industries whose working capital is not exceeding N250, 000 and employing on full time basis 50 workers or less. Small scale enterprises in the context of this study, refer to those industries whose total fixed assets excluding working capital does not exceed N10million with total number of employees ranging from 5-25.

Problem solving is a broad term for a skill that is required of individuals in a wide variety of positions and fields. Any time one is presented with a difficult situation in a professional context, and it is one's responsibility to find a solution, one is engaged in problem solving. While problem solving is a skill required in jobs across all sectors and levels of experience, it can be difficult to quantify.

According to Mayer and Wittrock (2006) problem solving occurs internally and thus can only be inferred indirectly by the person's actions; Problem solving is a process – It involves representing and manipulating knowledge in the problem solver's cognitive system. Problem solving is directed – that is, the problem solver's processing is guided by set goals. Problem solving is personal – The solver's individual knowledge and skills help determine the difficulty or ease with which obstacles to solutions can be overcome. In order to succeed in the system, the OTM graduates needs to be able to evaluate information or situations, break them down into key components, consider various ways of approaching and resolving them, and decide which is the most appropriate. These problem-solving skills include recognizing long-term consequences of solutions to problems and probing, devising, implementing, and evaluating a plan of action for problem resolution (Brewer, 2013). Ability to solve problem is more relevant in automated environment. Thus there is need for problem-solving skills in business sector.

Database skills have brought a lot of improvement in the work of many organizations, which will equally be helpful to the retail business. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (2015) opined that Database Administrators (DBAs) use specialized software to store and organize data. Therefore, there is need for database administrators to have some skills in order to perform the special roles required. According to Osuala (2004), database skills have to do with the ability to handle information from simple manual processes to a sophisticated modern computer. Osuala further explained that, database skills involve the manipulation of raw and unorganized fact (data) in a computer to generate information. Thus, data processing is the conversion of data into meaningful information which involves series of activities and the use of technological equipment.

Gender could be a factor within the context of employability skills requirement of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises. Gender here simply refers to the sex of an individual either male or female. However, OTM graduates are male and female students of OTM programme that have successfully fulfilled the requirement of award of a Bachelor of Science degree as in the university or Higher National Diploma from the polytechnics. Aghenta, F. C. (2012) who reported that gender effect could be a factor in determining the skills of OTM graduates, as preferred by small-scale business managers. Therefore, considering gender in this study could yield useful practical information to the study.

Location is another important factor in the issue of employability requirement of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises. Location in this study could either be urban or rural areas. Obviously, the location in which entrepreneurs operate their businesses will have considerable influence on the management of the businesses and their expectations from employees.

Statement of the Problem

The high rate of unemployment among OTM graduates in Anambra State has been attributed to lack of skills required for the world of work. Thus, Onyebu,C.M. (2014) agrees that one of the main causes of unemployment among OTM graduates is lack of employable skills. Many unemployed youths seem not to possess the necessary skills which the modern economy demands. Secretarial studies was changed to OTM so as to bridge that gap by providing a functional training that would help the graduates of OTM make a career in office management. However, it's quite unfortunate that many students choose to study office technology and

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management as their career and yet they refuse to work hard enough to acquire adequate skills expected of them. Soludo,C.C. (2012) describing the Nigerian situation said, unemployment is not a problem in Nigeria rather Nigerian graduates lack the required skills and they are misfit for today's workplace. Many of the OTM graduates in Anambra State suffer unemployment today because they are presumed to have very poor attitudes towards the skills and competencies inherent in the OTM courses during school days.In fact, a gap exists between the expectations of skills required by organizations from OTM graduates.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the rating of employability skills required of OTM graduates by managers of small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent to which:

1. Problem-solving skills are required for employability of OTM graduates by managers of small-scale enterprises in Anambra State.
2. Database management skills are required for employability of OTM graduates by managers of small-scale enterprises in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent are problem-solving skills required for employability of OTM graduates by managers of small-scale enterprises in Anambra State?
2. To what extent are database management skills required for employability of OTM graduates by managers of small-scale enterprises in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:Male and female managers do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent problem-solving skills are required for employability of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State.

1. There will be no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent problem-solving skills are required for employability of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State based on location.
2. Male and female managers do not differ significantly in their mean rating on the extent database management skills are required for employability of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State.
3. There will be no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent database management skills are required for employability of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State based on location.

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for this research consists of 980 managers of small-scale enterprises registered with the Anambra State Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Industry. The instrument for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled "Employability Skills Required of Office Technology and Management Graduates by Managers of Small-Scale Enterprises in Anambra State". The instrument was structured on a 5-point rating scale of very highly required (VHR), highly required (HR), moderately required (MR), lowly required (LR) and very lowly required (VLR).

Face validity of the instrument was established using the opinion of three experts. Two of the experts are in business education from the Department of Technology and Vocational Education and the one expert in measurement and evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundations in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. To establish the internal consistency of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha formula was used to analyze the data using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 21 and obtain overall reliability coefficient values of 0.96 which indicates a high reliability coefficient for the instrument in accordance with George and Malltery (2013). A period of two weeks was used for the distribution and collection of the questionnaire. The copies of the questionnaire successfully retrieved were used for data analysis. However, out of the 294 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 283 copies were actually retrieved from the respondents which represented about 96 percent retrieval. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Where the calculated F-value was equal or greater than the F-table value at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected but where the F-calculated was less than F-table value, the null hypotheses would be accepted.

Results

The results of the data analyses are presented as follows

Table 1: Mean ratings of managers of small-scale enterprises on the extent problem-solving skills are required of OTM graduates

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Identify reasons for the discrepancies in products	4.52	.77	Very Highly Required
2	Develop critical thinking to turn problem into opportunities	4.22	.87	Highly Required
3	Understand the line of business involved	4.34	.82	Highly Required
4	Team up with experts in solving problems	4.35	.85	Highly Required
5	Provide solutions for every problems	4.30	.87	Highly Required
6	Implement a plan of action to resolve problem	4.29	.96	Highly Required
7	Carefully analyze data collected to enhance the business	4.23	.92	Highly Required
8	Take extreme measures to identified problem	4.22	.97	Highly Required
9	Evaluate and monitor progress	4.22	.92	Highly Required
10	Recognize and identify problems	4.25	.88	Highly Required
	Grand	4.29		Highly Required

Data presented in Table 1 revealed that the respondents rated item 1 very highly required with the mean value of 4.52. The other nine items had mean ratings ranging from 4.21 to 4.35 which mean that they are highly required by managers of small-scale enterprises in Anambra State for employability of OTM graduates. However, the cluster means of 4.29 shows that problem-solving skills are highly required of OTM graduates for employability in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range which implies that the respondents were cohesive in their ratings.

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Table 2: Mean ratings of managers of small-scale enterprises on the extent database management skills are required of OTM graduates in Anambra State

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
11	Maintain database security	4.20	.82	Very Highly Required
12	Restore data from back-up files	4.30	.76	Highly Required
13	Knowledge of data programming	4.30	.70	Highly Required
14	Retrieve information from database	4.45	.55	Highly Required
15	Control data access	4.40	.64	Highly Required
16	Create a database records	4.30	.60	Highly Required
17	Knowledge of systems of system implementation	4.30	,64	Highly Required
18	Recover database after failures	4.20	.87	Highly Required
S/N	**Item Statement**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Remark**
19	Present information from database	4.40	,75	Highly Required
20	Manipulate computer keyboard	4.35	,64	Highly Required
	Grand	4.32		Highly Required

The data in Table 2 shows that all the items have mean ratings ranging from 4.20 to 4.45 meaning that all the database management skills are highly required for employability of OTM graduates. The cluster mean score of 4.32 indicate that, in the opinion of the respondents, database management skills are highly required for employability of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. The standard deviation of 0.55 to 0.87 shows that the respondents were homogenous in their responses.

Table 3: Summary of t-test between male and female mean ratings on the extentproblem-solving kills are required for employability of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises

Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	p-value	Decision
Male	187	2.06	.13	281	.060	Not Significant
Female	96	2.14	.16			

Data in Table 3 show that male and female respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent problem-solving skills are required for employability of OTM graduate in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State with mean scores of.06 and 2.14 while the corresponding standard deviations are .13 and .16.The Table indicated p-value of .067, at degree of freedom of 281. Testing at alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is not significant, since the p-value is greater than the alpha value (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted hence, male and female managers do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent problem-solving skills are required for employability of OTM graduate in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 4: Summary of t-test betweene urban and rural means on the extent problem-solving skills are required for employability of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises

Location	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Urban	195	4.12	.15	281	.63	.067	Not Significant
Rural	88	4.10	.10				

Data in Table 6 show that respondents in urban and rural areas do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent problem-solving skills are required for employability of OTM graduate in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State with mean scores of 4.12 and 4.10 while the corresponding standard deviations are .15 and .10. The Table indicated a t-value of .067, at degree of freedom of 281 and a p-value of .067. Testing at alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is not significant, since the p-value is greater than the alpha value (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected; hence, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent problem-solving skills are required for employability of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State based on location. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 5: **Summary of t-test between male and female respondents on the extent database management skills are required for employability of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises**

Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male	187	3.50	.12	281	-1.43	.067	Not Significant
Female	96	3.52	.13				

Data in Table 5 show that male and female managers do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent database management skills are required for employability of OTM graduate in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State with mean scores of 3.50 and 3.52 while the corresponding standard deviations are .12 and .13. The Table indicated a t-value of -1.43, at degree of freedom of 281 and a p-value of .067. Testing at alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is not significant, since the p-value is greater than the alpha value (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected; hence, male and female managers do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent database management skills are required for employability of OTM graduate in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that problem-solving skills are highly required of OTM graduates for employability in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. Ajaero (2016) also supported the findings by stating that problem-solving skills for entrepreneurial development involve critical thinking, understanding of the business, team spirit, decisiveness and courage. The results revealed the major aspects of problem-solving skills which the respondents indicated that are highly required of OTM graduates for employability in small-scale enterprises. These include ability to recognize and identify problems ability to identify reasons for the discrepancies in products, ability to develop critical thinking to turn problem into opportunities, ability to understanding of the line of business involved, ability to team up with experts in solving problems and so on. This finding is in consonance with Okoli and Binuomote (2015) that carried out a study to determine the entrepreneurship competencies needed by business education students for successful entrepreneurship in colleges of education in South-

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East, Nigeria.The findings of the study revealed that problem-solving competencies were needed for successful entrepreneurship. The findings also revealed that male and female respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent problem-solving skills are required for employability of OTM graduate in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. The findings of the study further revealed that respondents in urban and rural areas do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent problem-solving skills are required for employability of OTM graduate in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. This means that location is not a factor influencing the level of problem-solving skills required of OTM graduates for employability in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. Supporting the above findings, Azubuike in Ezenwafor and Olaniyi (2018) asserted that entrepreneurs who develop and maintain good customer relationship will excel in business.

Furthermore, the study found that male and female managers do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent database management skills are required for employability of OTM graduate in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. This means that gender is not a factor affecting the extent of database management skills required for employability of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. Thus, OTM graduates irrespective of gender should endeavor to acquire requisite database management skills so as to be employable in small-scale enterprises and beyond. The findings also revealed that respondents in urban and rural areas differed significantly in their mean ratings on the extent database management skills are required for employability of OTM graduate in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. This means that location is a factor influencing the level of database management skills required of OTM graduates for employability in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. This could be attributed to the fact that small-scale enterprises located in the urban areas may have greater access to ICT facilities than their counterparts in the rural areas. This finding is in agreement with Agbamu (2015) whose study on database competencies needed for employability of NCE business education graduates revealed that database competencies were generally required for employment in both the public and private sectors of the economy.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, it was concluded that managers of small-scale enterprises in Anambra State are of the opinion that problem-solving skills, database management skills are highly required of OTM graduates for effective job performance. It was also concluded that gender do not significantly affect the opinion of respondents on the extent of employability skills required of OTM graduates in small-scale enterprises in Anambra State. This implies that OTM graduates irrespective of gender required adequate employability skills for effective job performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations were made:

1. OTM lecturers should use suitable methods and resources to ensure that their students adequately acquire problem-solving, database management, to be able to secure and succeed in their employment upon graduation.
2. OTM students should do their students' industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) in these small-scale enterprises so as to be familiar with these employability skills before they get employed.
3. Government should encourage retraining of OTM lecturers to acquire requisite employability skills since they cannot give what they do not have.

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