OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT (OTM) SKILLS AND THE ATTAINMENT OF ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

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Abstract
The study examined how office technology and management (OTM) skills could predict the attainment of economic productivity of university graduates. Three research questions guided the study. A descriptive research design of survey typed was used. The population comprised 132 postgraduate students of Business Education in Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Ijagun, Ogun State for the academic session 2024/2025. Enumeration technique was used for selecting sample size. Researcher developed questionnaire was used for data collection and it titled 'Office Technology and Management Skills and Economic Productivity of University Graduates Questionnaire (OTMEPUGQ) with reliability coefficient (r = .96). Descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and pie-chart were used for analyzing and presenting research questions 1 and 2. Research question 3 was analyses using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The findings indicated that there was medium level of economic productivity in terms of self-reliance of Business education (OTM) university graduates. It was also revealed that digital, problem-solving, effective time-management, cloud computing, organizational, artificial intelligence and emailing skills were among the required OTM skills for the attainment of university graduates' economic productivity. The study concluded that there was relationship between office technology and management (OTM) skills and the economic productivity of university graduates (r = 0.682, p <.05). It was recommended that government through university authority should increase and set aside revenue for the management and equipping OTM laboratory with modern technological tools students can play with towards increasing their level of economic productivity.

Keywords: Office technology and management skills, economic productivity, university graduates, self-reliance

Introduction

In developing countries, the top priority issue facing them is the graduates' unemployment. Nigeria is not an exception and whereby larger proportion of graduates produced yearly do not secure job placement in public or private sectors. The job vacant can only absorb marginal part of the graduates either from Universities, Polytechnic, Colleges of Education or any other higher institutions in the country. This circumstance is worrisome and a major concern to the stakeholders and government in the country. Evidence revealed that any country who found itself in this situation, may be experiences insecurity and other related issues (Orija & Akindele, 2018, Adamu, 2023). Umar (2020) reiterated that part of the factors fueling insecurity and high rate of crime in Nigeria is high rate of graduates' unemployment; while Eze and Ononye (2021) said many graduates in Nigeria lack employability and self-sustenance skills. That, even if there were no job vacant in public and private sectors to absorb them, being a higher institution graduates they should have acquired skills and capability to drove their economic development through venturing into small business that have tendency of making them self-reliance and contribute to economic productivity of the nation, rather to fell into the circle of jobless people.

The contribution towards economic productivity by graduates or how to improved graduates' economic productivity is the focus of this study and this simply refers to the extent how graduates can apply the skills acquired while in school to make a living and eventual become entrepreneur. That is, a process whereby graduates commercialized their skills by taken part in the economic activities and improvement in efficiency of daily work. It could also be referred to the process whereby graduates adopt to become economically self-sustenance in such a way that the bordering issues of unemployment could be reduced or eradicated, if they are all ready and prepared towards escaping the circle of unemployment. Nwosu and Amos-Olalemi (2023) defined graduates' economic productivity as the process whereby graduates engaged in one or two viable economic activities, that is, the process

whereby graduates failed to be idle and searching for unavailable white-collar job in government and private sector. Musa (2024) lamented that failure of graduates to be involved in economic productivity for long and continue in searching for white-collar job is the reason behind high unemployment in Nigeria economy. This author saw graduates' economic productivity as process whereby they participated in daily business activities which could rather be as material productivity and capital productivity. Through this, their economic value might increase as well as output, thus, expanding enterprises which could necessitated more hands to be employed and becoming entrepreneur.

In the opinions of Umoru and Yakubu (2018) graduates economic productivity is simply the capability and knowledge they have acquired and application/commercialization of these in having and developing owned business rather than remain jobless. These authors asserted that many graduates who found themselves unemployed could be as a result of not being able to commercialized skills acquired while in school or their course are not skill-building that can train and equip them for saleable and self-reliance. For this reason, Odesanya and Frank (2023), opined that Office Technology and Management (OTM) as one of the disciplines in the field of vocational education trained its recipients to qualify for white-collar job as well as for self-economic sustenance. That is, graduates of OTM have twin benefits of working in office either in private of public sector and should there are no job vacant in these mentioned sectors, they have been trained also to commercialize skills they have acquired rather to join unemployment figure in the economy. OTM as vocational education specifically designed to solve the contemporary issue facing every graduate which unemployment is and equipped them with required saleable skills to venture into small and medium scale business. This business could be secretarial business in nature such as cybercafe, computer training institutes and many more. For this reason, Odesanya and Frank (2023) comes to conclusions that, if all other things being equal, OTM discipline is the right vocational education that can engender graduates' economic productivity. OTM is also one of the segments of Business Education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Its beauty lied in the area where it acts as skills building for occupational skills as well as trained its students for economic self-sustenance (Aina, 2019). Furthermore, OTM as an integral segment of vocational and business education programmes has been training its recipients to be ready for career in teaching and other related activities. Umoru and Yakubu (2018) asserted that OTM equipped students with all what they need to know in subjects such as computer education and its operation which initially known as keyboarding, computer usage mostly for effectiveness in daily office work or self-business applications among others. The discipline also acts as eye-opener to students on various technological development software that can make graduates secure job or to used its applications for self-reliance and fully participated in economic productivity of the nation.

Statement of the Problem

University graduates should represent the bulk of ready-made assets for any country to fully participate in the process of rebuilding through their capability to engage in economic productivity. It has been said that many graduates in Nigeria are lacking employability skills, that they do not have required skills to take up the job and that many of them cannot even venture into business for economic self-reliance. Another problem identified was that they lack employability skills and they were not taught on how to legally commercialized skills for economic benefits. Although, the graduates of OTM who are vocational trained not an exception in this scenario, but their extent of inclusion is not the focus of this paper. Government and other stakeholders in the economy are of concerns on the rate at which graduates are continues to be jobless and could not venture into meaningful and legal business arrangement for economic productivity. On that note, government and educational experts introduced entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of university with the hope of training students before graduation to equip and train them for actualization of graduates' economic self-reliance for economic productivity. Despite that, with many years back, the issue of graduates' unemployment continues to increase yearly. This study is an attempt to examine how office technology and management (OTM) skills could help in the attainment of economic productivity of university graduates.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the level of economic productivity in terms of self-reliance of university graduates?
2. What are the required OTM skills for the attainment of university graduates economic productivity?
3. Is there any relationship between office technology and management (OTM) skills and the economic productivity of university graduates?

Methodology

A descriptive research design of survey typed was used in this study. The population of the study comprised 132 postgraduate students of Business Education in Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Ijagun, Ogun State for the academic session 2024/2025. Enumeration technique was used for selecting sample size. This implied that, since population was not too large, the whole was used as sample size of the study. Research developed questionnaire was used for data collection and it titled 'Office Technology and Management Skills and Economic Productivity of University Graduates Questionnaire (OTMEPUGQ). This instrument/questionnaire was designed towards eliciting required information needed for actualization of objectives and research questions of the study. It was apportioned into two major parts Y and Z specifically focused on demographic features of respondents and the level of economic productivity, and the required OTM skills for the attainment of university graduates' economic productivity. However, the validation of the instrument was done by 3 experts from Departments of Business Education and Test and Measurement, TASUED. All the errors identified and suggestions raised were amended. The reliability testing was carried out among 10 postgraduate students of Business Education in Lagos State University (LASU). The output data collected were subjected to Alpha Cronbach formula and this yielded (r = .96) reliability coefficient for the study instrument (OTMEPUGQ). The implications of this result were the such an instrument was optimally designed towards eliciting required information needed towards the attainment of study goals. The researcher with the help of two research assistants participated in distributing the questionnaire to the respondents in the day of postgraduate students of Business Education are doing seminar. At the end of seminar, the questionnaire was retrieved. Selection and sorting were carried out on the copies collected. It was found that 8 copies were not completed filled and these copies were removed from coding. That is to say that only 124 copies were useful representing 94%. Descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and pie-chart were used for analyzing and presenting research questions 1 and 2. Research question 3 was analyses using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of economic productivity in terms of self-reliance of university graduates?

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on the level of economic productivity in terms of self-reliance of university graduates

Items	Mean	SD
Economically self-reliance	2.67	.944
Always want to be self-engaged in terms of working for self.	2.94	.910
Creativity in developing new products for commercial purposes.	2.73	.941
Like to venture into SMEs rather than working as salary earner.	2.85	.888
Enjoy been creative in business activities.	2.57	.956
I have skills in venturing into secretarial business.	2.84	.895
I find it difficult to wait for white-collar job before venturing into personal businesses.	2.90	.912
Since I graduated, never involved in salary work, rather work for self.	2.76	.906
Cluster Mean	2.78	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

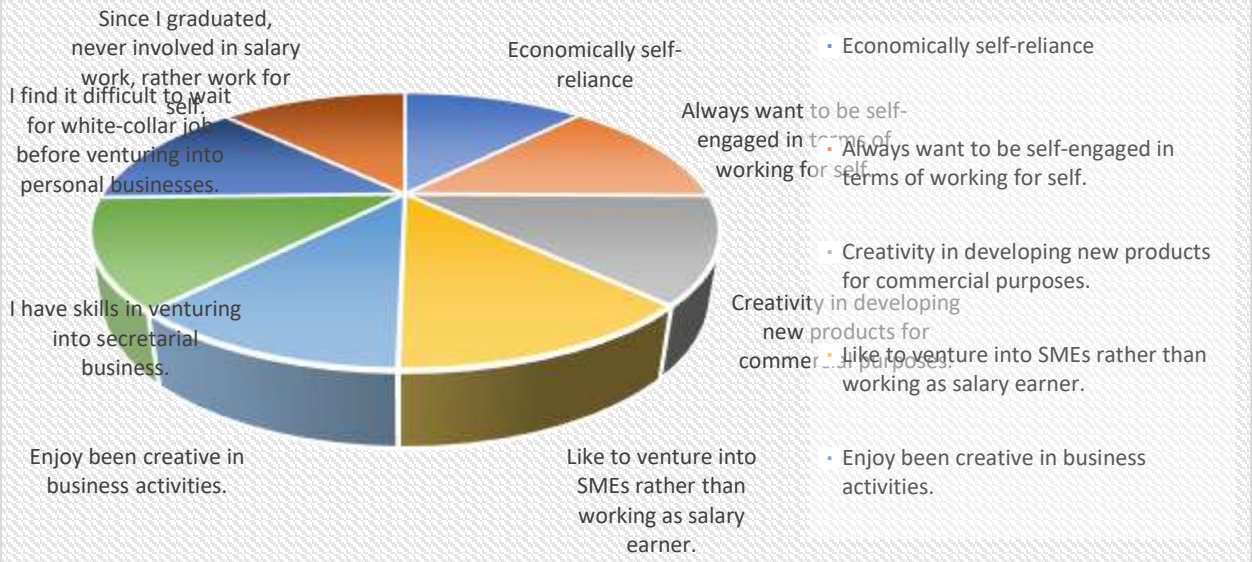

Figure 1: Pie-chart showing level of economic productivity in terms of self-reliance of university graduates

Table 1 and pie-chart 1 revealed that clusters mean was 2.78 and the bench mark mean value average was 2.50. This implication of this was that there is medium level of economic productivity in terms of self-reliance of Business education (OTM) university graduates.

Research Question 2: What are the required OTM skills for the attainment of university graduates economic productivity?

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on the required OTM skills for the attainment of university graduates' economic productivity

Items	Mean	SD
Digital skills	3.09	.805
Problem-solving skills	3.11	.822
Effective time management skills	2.99	.892
Cloud computing skills	2.97	.817
Organizational skills	3.16	.875
Artificial intelligence skills	2.89	.900
Emailing skills	3.22	.803
Cluster Mean	3.06	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

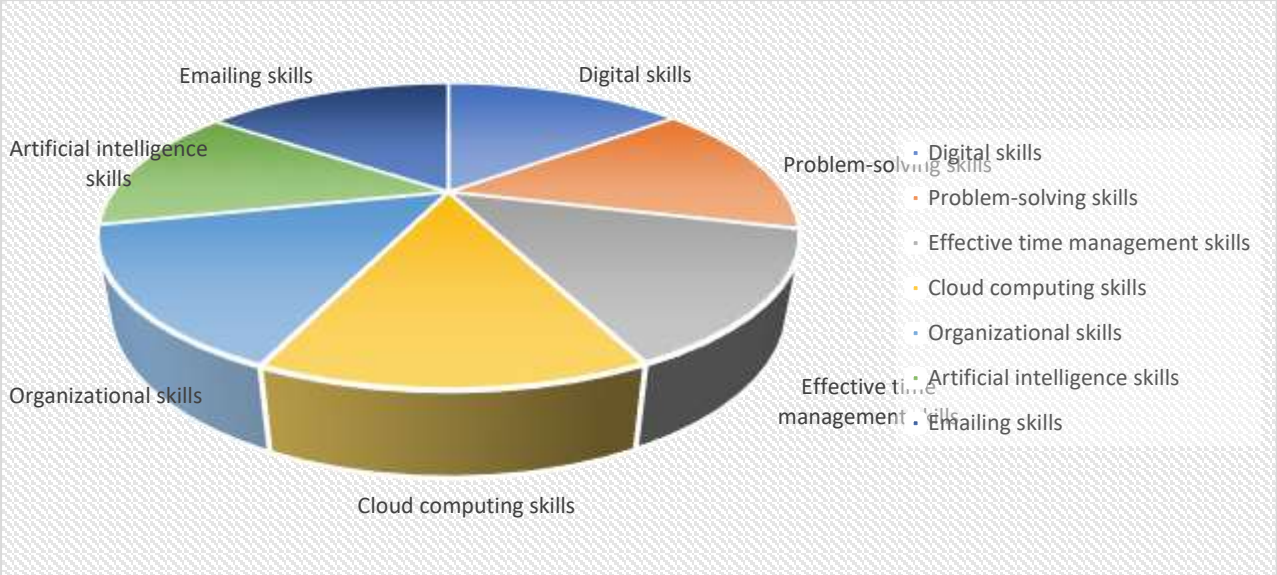

Figure 2: Pie-chart showing the required OTM skills for the attainment of university graduates economic productivity

Table 2 and pie-chart 2 indicated that cluster mean was 3.06 and the bench mark mean value average was 2.50. The implications of these results were that Digital, problem-solving, effective time-management, cloud computing, organizational, artificial intelligence and emailing skills were among the required OTM skills for the attainment of university graduates economic productivity.

Research Question 3: Is there any relationship between office technology and management (OTM) skills and the economic productivity of university graduates?

Table 3: Relationship between office technology and management (OTM) skills and the economic productivity of university graduates

Variables	Mean	SD	r-value	df	p-value	Remark
Economic productivity	31.9897	3.59836				
OTM skills	31.9003	3.41604	.682	122	.000	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2024

From table 3, it was observed that there was relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable in the order of ($r = 0.682$, $p < .05$). On this premise, the researcher concluded that there was relationship between office technology and management (OTM) skills and the economic productivity of university graduates.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicated that there was medium level of economic productivity in terms of self-reliance of Business education (OTM) university graduates. This could be possible as a result of the nature of OTM discipline, because it trained its recipients on the intrigues of economic self-reliance for economic productivity. These findings were in tandem with Umar (2020) who found that OTM graduates are quite different from other disciplines graduates in terms of economic productivity; that graduates of OTM have acquired needed vocational skills to enhance their economic productivity. Orija and Akindele (2018) agreed that OTM as vocational education trained its students towards self-reliance as well as qualify for white-collar job.

The findings also revealed that digital, problem-solving, effective time-management, cloud computing, organizational, artificial intelligence and emailing skills were among the required OTM skills for the attainment of university graduates' economic productivity. The implications of these findings were that the more acquisition of these aforementioned skills, the more capability increment to OTM graduates in terms of economic productivity. These findings were in agreement with Musa (2024) who found that skills such as ICT or digital, AI, time management as well as communication were among the needed skills for graduates of OTM to possessed for the attainment of sustainable economic development; while Nwosu and Amos-Olalemi (2023) lamented that failure of university graduates to have acquired employability skills were among the high level of unemployment in the

country and that OTM graduates with saleable skills such as cloud computing skills, organizational skills and problem solving skills could position their selves in the labour market or have opportunities for self-reliance towards the attainment of economic productivity. Eze and Ononye (2021) concurred that OTM skills such as problem-solving skills, entrepreneurship skills and cloud computing skills were among skills that can drive economic self-sustenance of today graduates.

Finally, the findings of the study showed that there was relationship between office technology and management (OTM) skills and the economic productivity of university graduates. These findings concurred with Aina (2019); Umoru and Yakubu (2018) that OTM skills served as potent factors for graduates' economic self-reliance and productivity improvement in Nigeria. Odesanya and Frank (2023) found that today firms are serious looking for graduates with sustainability skills possession that can enhance productivity while Umar (2020) found that OTM skills and graduates sustainable economic development dance in the same direction. This further implied that, the graduates of OTM with such skills as ICT skills, AI skills and organizational skills are in the best position towards the attainment of sustainable economic productivity.

Conclusion

The attainment of economic productivity by graduates was the issue this study examined through the applicability of OTM skills. The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study that there was medium level of economic productivity in terms of self-reliance of Business education (OTM) university graduates; digital, problem-solving, effective time-management, cloud computing, organizational, artificial intelligence and emailing skills were among the required OTM skills for the attainment of university graduates economic productivity and there was relationship between office technology and management (OTM) skills and the economic productivity of university graduates.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are raised for the study:

1. The teaching of OTM need to go down more on vocational aspect of the discipline and more attention should be place on how graduates can commercialize these skills for economic gain.
2. Digital skills such as AI and cloud computing should receive the attention of lecturer of OTM and lay emphasize on it as these skills are new in the process of economic productivity of OTM graduates.
3. Government through university authority should increase and set aside revenue for the management and equipping OTM laboratory with modern technological tools students can play with towards increasing their level of economic productivity.

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