

# Examining the Prospects in Office Technology and Management Programme for Economic Diversification in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Quality education plays a crucial role in ensuring that individuals and society acquire the desired level of knowledge and skills. The advancement of the Office Technology and Management (OTM) programme contributes to increased productivity and innovation, offering significant potential for empowering graduates toward self-reliance. This study aimed to investigate ways in which the opportunities within the OTM programme can be leveraged to promote economic diversification in Nigeria. Two research questions guided the investigation. A descriptive survey research design was employed, targeting a population of 50 lecturers across three tertiary institutions in Ekiti State that offer the programme. Given the small population, total enumeration was used as the sampling technique. Data were collected using a 4-point Likert-type questionnaire, and analysis was conducted using mean scores and standard deviations. Findings indicated that respondents generally agreed with the statements presented, as evidenced by the grand means and standard deviations for the research questions, which were 3.27 (0.86) and 3.22 (0.84), respectively—both exceeding the study's threshold of 2.50. The results highlighted that the OTM programme contains diverse opportunities that can be harnessed for economic diversification. The study concluded that incorporating information and communication technology, automation, and business management into the curriculum positions the programme as a catalyst for economic growth. It was recommended that government policies should support the modernization and adequate funding of OTM programmes in tertiary institutions to ensure their effective implementation, standardization, and sustainability.

**Keywords:** *Office Technology and Management, Economic Diversification, Curriculum, Empowerment, Tertiary Institutions.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is viewed as a key tool for economic growth and national development. It has a significant role to play in the development of any nation. The growth, development and advancement of nations depend on education. The role of education extends through every sector of a nation's development, serving as a vital instrument for reshaping mindsets and driving meaningful change. It equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to unlock both human and natural resources, enabling these assets to be utilized more effectively for national growth. Through its transformative influence, education supports the country in attaining sustainable and comprehensive development outcomes (Ogar&Atanda, 2019).

It is therefore considered the clear responsibility of every government to establish an educational structure that supports the well-being of its people by equipping them with the skills necessary for the social and economic advancement of the nation. Quality education, in this context, refers to learning that meets expected standards of knowledge and competence, addressing both individual aspirations and the broader developmental needs of society (Okolocha& Baba, 2016). Nigeria's economy is largely driven by agriculture and supported by oil production, yet several other productive sectors remain available for strategic exploration and development. With proper attention and investment, these sectors have the potential to significantly strengthen and diversify the nation's economic base.

Olusanya&Ideh (2017) viewed that The emergence and exploitation of crude oil shifted Nigeria into a predominantly single-product economy. Nonetheless, achieving meaningful and sustainable national growth requires broadening the economic base so that other sectors also engage in productive activities and contribute to overall development. The relevance of education and skills in diversification of the economy cannot be overemphasized. According to Ineye-Briggs (2023), economic diversification serves as a fundamental approach for securing stable and sustainable income to support national growth and development. He noted that Nigeria's current reliance on a single major sector places the economy at significant risk. This vulnerability became evident in 2016 when falling crude oil prices pushed the country into recession, underscoring the consequences of heavy dependence on one economic source. The author further emphasized the need for Nigeria to broaden its economic base by investing in technology-driven education. Through this approach, the nation can tap into global knowledge networks, enhance communication, and reshape its thinking, lifestyle, and business environment. This shift, he argued, is essential for supporting true economic diversification and long-term development.

The negative effects of relying too heavily on oil exports have intensified the call for Nigeria to shift its economic focus toward non-oil sectors. Advocates of expanding non-oil exports maintain that these sectors hold significant potential to drive the nation toward meaningful economic growth and sustainable development. Adopting a value chain approach in entrepreneurship and vocational education can stimulate wide-ranging economic activities, create employment opportunities, and promote industrial development. This makes the non-oil sector a strong contender for driving Nigeria's sustainable economic future. Lawal (2013) stressed that meaningful economic and technological progress depends on citizens who are productive and innovative, noting that a nation thrives when most of its people are job creators rather than job seekers. He explained office technology and management as an educational pathway designed to equip individuals with practical, applicable skills that empower them to contribute meaningfully to their communities and sustain an independent livelihood. This type of training has consistently been recognized as one that fosters self-employment, boosts productivity, and strengthens self-reliance.

According to Okolocha and Baba (2016), skill acquisition allows individuals to explore their surroundings, utilize available resources, and benefit both themselves and society, since a nation's development is closely tied to its wealth creation capacity. Office technology and management, therefore, provides a comprehensive training framework that includes knowledge, skills, competencies, structured activities, abilities, and related experiences necessary for securing employment across different sectors or establishing oneself as an entrepreneur. Citing Uwaifo, Okolocha and Baba (2016) further noted that office technology and management develops

vocationally oriented professionals who serve as innovators, facilitators, and promoters of technological literacy, ultimately advancing self-reliance and sustainable development.

Ogar and Atanda (2019) emphasized that education must be aligned with the different sectors of the economy, which underscores the need for economic diversification. They argued that government at all levels plays a pivotal role in this effort through strategic planning, effective policy development and implementation, adequate funding, and the creation of a stable and conducive environment for teaching and learning. They further noted that developing skills in office technology and management is essential to national economic progress, as such competencies enhance enterprise productivity, support profitability, and contribute to overall wealth creation. For diversification efforts to succeed, the country's educational policies must be restructured so that institutions can produce graduates equipped with the skills required by both local industries and the international workforce. The promotion of all-inclusive educational policies is needed to promote diversification of the economy.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### ➤ *Office Technology and Management*

The primary aim of the office technology and management program is to equip graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to establish their own income-generating ventures, even in cases where public sector employment is not attainable. Kareem, Ademoyewa, Jolaosho, Ojenike, and Sodi (2015) highlighted that incorporating vocational skills into the curriculum serves as a strategy to empower graduates, promote self-reliance, and alleviate poverty. They argued that when students are taught the right combination of skills, attitudes, knowledge, and practical experience, they are more likely to become self-employed and even create job opportunities for others upon graduation. This approach can significantly reduce unemployment and enable graduates to achieve economic independence.

The competencies acquired through office technology and management programme such as ability to communicate with others, solving problems or thinking creatively ensure the development of well-prepared, skilled and equipped graduates for self empowerment and in the view of Gidado (2019), the development of office technology and management programme will be crucial in boosting productivity, increasing innovation, creating employment and It possesses significant potential to promote graduate empowerment and foster self-reliance. The development of business acumen, personal skills, and professional competence is essential for realizing any vision. The office technology and management program, with its focus on job creation and self-empowerment initiatives, offers promising opportunities to support these outcomes. According to Ejeka and Mgbonyebi (2016), a gainfully employed person contributes to per capita GDP while helping to reduce poverty and unemployment which is a

key indicators of development that underpin national transformation efforts. They further argued that without a strong educational foundation for acquiring knowledge, skills, and office competencies, the workforce is likely to engage in activities that are counterproductive, regressive, and detrimental to societal progress.

The development of the business skills of an individual is closely intertwined with the progress of the nation. Ajisafe, Bolarinwa, and Edeh (2015) emphasized that the socio-economic future of Nigeria, like any other country, depends on the capacity of its citizens to thrive in a knowledge-driven global environment. Efforts to instill values in office technology and management graduates—shaping their norms, interests, and beliefs toward meaningful goals—represent a positive and strategic approach. Such goals, they argued, influence graduates' thoughts, behaviors, habits, character, and overall destiny, helping them realize their intellectual potential, enhance their abilities, and pursue their aspirations. Orija and Jolaade (2019) highlighted that the office technology and management program aims to produce a workforce that is self-empowered and contributes to national development. Similarly, Ihaukwumere, Uteh, and Nkoro (2019) noted that the program equips graduates with expertise in the production of specific goods and services. The curriculum is designed to develop the skills, competencies, and attributes necessary to enhance efficiency and drive economic productivity.

The office technology and management program is designed to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills, and motivation needed to foster entrepreneurial activities across diverse settings. Ezeaherukwe and Ameh (2017) observed that when effectively implemented, the program leads to economic empowerment and development, enabling graduates to acquire essential skills for entrepreneurial success. The program's primary goal, according to this perspective, is to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and culture among graduates. Consequently, a well-structured and properly executed office technology and management program has the potential to generate employment opportunities and provide direction for unemployed graduates.

Education aimed at self-empowerment is designed to prepare individuals to build a sustainable future. The office technology and management program equips graduates with an understanding of the connections and skills necessary for personal growth and development. Kareem, Ademoyewa, Jolaosho, Ojenike, and Sodi (2015) assert that such education enhances both life and professional skills, boosting individual potential, promoting self-reliance, and improving overall quality of life.

#### ➤ *Economic Diversification*

Olubodun and Adaradahun (2020) define economic diversification as the activation of multiple sectors of the economy to ensure they are functional and productive. They

describe it as expanding the range of economic outputs so that various sectors contribute meaningfully to the nation's GDP. Drawing on Nnaji for, Okoroafor, and Wogu, they emphasized that the most reliable way to achieve economic diversification, foster development, and ensure sustainability is through significant investment in human capital and infrastructure. Similarly, Ogar and Atanda (2019) view economic diversification as a shift away from a purely theoretical education system toward one that produces a skilled, sustainable, and self-reliant workforce. Such a workforce would be capable of engaging in business opportunities, remaining creative and innovative, and contributing productively to long-term national development. They further describe diversification as redirecting focus toward different sectors of economic activity that can drive socio-economic growth.

Olusanya and Ideh (2017), referencing Anyaehie and Areji, defined economic diversification as the expansion of economic activities across both the production and distribution of goods and services. They argued that diversification does not necessarily mean increasing overall output, but rather broadening the economy to generate opportunities for a variety of economic activities. Similarly, Ineye-Briggs (2023) described economic diversification as the shift from reliance on a single income source to multiple sources across various sectors and markets, moving away from dependence on a few commodities, such as crude oil, to a broader range of products. From a sustainable development perspective, Olusanya and Ideh (2017) noted that diversification helps create employment for a wide segment of the unemployed population and stabilizes the economy against price and demand fluctuations, thereby enhancing national economic growth and development.

Ogar and Atanda (2019) highlighted the pressing need for Nigerian governments at all levels to review national educational policies, placing greater emphasis on initiatives that promote self-employment and self-reliance among citizens. They stressed the importance of fostering partnerships in education as a means of shifting focus from producing graduates primarily for salaried employment toward equipping them with skills for entrepreneurship and independent economic activity, thereby contributing to national development. They further argued that diversifying education into areas such as entrepreneurship, science and technology, agriculture, and technical education would create broad opportunities for students to acquire essential skills, knowledge, and competencies. These opportunities, in turn, would facilitate entrepreneurship, self-employment, and self-reliance. In planning for economic diversification and sustainable growth, governments should support educational institutions by directing them to train graduates in high-demand fields, encouraging innovation, establishing clear visions, identifying priority sectors, and developing both short-term and long-term strategies with achievable targets and expectations. In the view of Anyaehie and Areji, as cited

in Olusanya and Ideh (2017), one of the major challenges facing the Nigerian economy is the need for diversification to address weak economic and social infrastructure. They identified factors such as poor road networks, unreliable electricity supply, limited investment capital, an unstable education system, and inadequate health facilities as obstacles that hinder economic diversification in the country. Consequently, any nation aiming for sustainable economic development and diversification must prioritize functional education and dependable infrastructure.

In response to Nigeria's evolving economic landscape, vocational education—including programs like office technology and management—plays a crucial role in meeting changing manpower demands. The country's education and training systems must equip graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to generate employment in a rapidly expanding economy. At present, Nigeria faces an urgent need to realign its educational policies to support economic diversification across various sectors by emphasizing functional education in fields such as entrepreneurship, commerce, and Information and Communication Technology.

#### ➤ *Statement of the Problem*

Nigeria is richly endowed with abundant natural resources spread across the country. However, since the commercial discovery of crude oil, it appears that the government has largely neglected other income generating sectors, including education, in favor of focusing on revenues from oil production. Vocational programs, including office technology and management, have long been recognized as essential for national development. Unfortunately, they have not received the attention and support they merit. As a result, these programs are currently in a poor state, suffering from chronic challenges such as inadequate funding, insufficient staffing, outdated curricula, and a lack of proper infrastructure and facilities. Successive governments have implemented poorly planned and fragmented educational policies, leading to significant negative impacts on the country's development. The neglect of practical and functional education has, in turn,

produced graduates who are ill-equipped to contribute effectively to Nigeria's economic growth and development.

#### ➤ *Objectives of the Study*

- Examine the opportunities inherent in office technology and management programme for economic diversification.
- Identify ways of enriching office technology and management programme for economic diversification.

#### ➤ *Research Questions*

- What are the opportunities inherent in office technology and management programme for economic diversification?
- In what ways can office technology and management programme be enriched for economic diversification?

### III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised fifty academic staff from three tertiary institutions in Ekiti State offering the office technology and management program: The Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti; Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti; and Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. Given the small population, total enumeration was employed. Academic staff were selected purposively, as they were considered capable of providing detailed and relevant information for the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a four-point Likert-type scale. The instrument underwent both face and content validity checks. The questionnaires were distributed personally by the researcher, with assistance from research aides, and retrieved after completion by the respondents. Data were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviations.

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

#### ➤ *Research Question I*

What are the opportunities inherent in office technology and management programme for economic diversification?

Table 1: Opportunities Inherent in Office Technology and Management Programme for Economic Diversification

S/No	Item Statement	X	SD
1.	Enhances the creativities of graduates in digital technology to create jobs that promote economic growth	3.30	0.87
2.	Enabling graduates to use their abilities in diverse sectors of technology for national development	3.10	0.80
3.	Exposure of graduates in webpage to extensive range of occupational opportunities	3.40	0.91
4.	Graduates extensive use of desktop publishing for job creation and self reliance	3.30	0.87
5.	Enhancement of graduates ICT usage for business and intellectual development	3.40	0.91
6.	Enhances the application of technologies of graduates for self development and alternative source of income	3.40	0.91
7.	Equipping graduates with diverse office application skills and competencies for employment and income generation	3.20	0.83
8.	Graduates are able to use their professional and technological skills for increased productivity	3.00	0.78
9.	Exploration of vocational and ICT related skills towards income generation	3.30	0.87
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>0.86</b>



➤ *Mean Threshold*

If the mean is 0.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 1.50-2.49 = Disagree (D), 2.50-3.49 = Agree (A) and 3.50-4.49 = Strongly Agree (SA).

The table above highlights the opportunities offered by the office technology and management program for economic diversification, based on the calculated means and standard deviations. All items were rated as 'agree,' with mean values

ranging from 2.50 to 3.49. Generally, the table indicates a weighted mean of 3.27 (SD = 0.86), leading to an inclusive assessment of 'agree.' This suggests that the office technology and management program presents a variety of opportunities that can contribute to economic diversification.

➤ *Research Question2*

In what ways can office technology and management programme be enriched for economic diversification?

Table 2: Ways by Which Office Technology and Management Programme Could be Enriched for Economic Diversification

S/No	Item Statement	X	SD
1.	Sufficient funding for the planning and execution of a well-structured and sustainable office technology and management (OTM) programme.	3.20	0.83
2.	Planning, negotiating and funding exchange programme with private sectors and industries	2.90	0.75
3.	Well equipped laboratories and workshops with modern equipment and machines to enhance functional skills acquisition	3.30	0.87
4.	Training and development programme for staff to maintain continual enhancement of teacher quality.	3.40	0.91
5.	Matching of vocational education policies with needs assessment and proper planning	3.20	0.83
6.	Involvement of OTM professionals in policy making decision, planning and implementation	3.20	0.83
7.	A positive mindset of embracing OTM skills acquisition for improved socio-economic development	3.10	0.80
8.	Inclusion of more entrepreneurial and vocational skills courses in the curriculum	3.40	0.91
9.	Regular review and monitoring of the implementation of the programme to ensure compliance with standard	3.30	0.87
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.22</b>	<b>0.84</b>

➤ *Mean Threshold*

If the mean is 0.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 1.50-2.49 = Disagree (D), 2.50-3.49 = Agree (A) and 3.50-4.49 = Strongly Agree (SA).

The table above highlights the various ways in which the Office Technology and Management programme can be enhanced to promote economic diversification, based on the reported means and standard deviations. All items were rated as 'agree,' with mean scores ranging between 2.50 and 3.49. Overall, the table presents a weighted mean of 3.22 (0.84), leading to a general conclusion of 'agree.' This indicates that there are multiple approaches through which the programme can be strengthened to support economic diversification.

## V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that the Office Technology and Management (OTM) programme offers a variety of opportunities that can be leveraged for economic diversification. Supporting this, Adebisi (2023) emphasized that vocational education motivates individuals to contribute to national development by fostering technological and industrial growth. It produces competent, ethical workers who can effectively utilize a country's human and natural resources for economic and industrial advancement. Vocational education also transforms unproductive individuals into employable and self-reliant graduates.

Similarly, Ejiro and Ladu (2017) reported that vocational education drives economic growth, as many small businesses created by entrepreneurially minded individuals evolve into larger enterprises. Exposure to vocational programmes enhances creativity, self-esteem, and personal control over one's life. Abubakar, Abdullahi, and Gupa (2017) further corroborated that business education promotes self-reliance and personal development, supporting a stronger economy aligned with governmental objectives. The OTM programme is particularly crucial in Nigeria given rising youth unemployment, emphasizing the need for initiatives that foster self-empowerment and sustainable development.

The study also identified ways in which the OTM programme could be enriched for economic diversification. Ebinga (2014) highlighted that the programme equips students with vocational and industrial skills essential for agricultural, commercial, and broader economic development, while also enabling them to navigate the complexities of modern technology and manage the nation's resources effectively. Umoru (2013) stressed that graduates must also acquire values alongside business education to ensure self-reliance and poverty reduction.

Despite longstanding implementation of business education, Babalola and Tiamiyu (2013) noted that Nigeria's goals for job creation, poverty reduction, and self-reliance remain largely unmet. They argued that the government must actively implement business education strategies to empower graduates economically and prevent societal disruption.

Suleiman (2016) similarly affirmed that the OTM programme equips students with essential skills for self-reliance and recommended a curriculum review to strengthen entrepreneurial training as a measure against unemployment.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The Office Technology and Management programme is a crucial tool for developing graduates with technical, managerial, and entrepreneurial competencies suited to today's competitive job market. By producing graduates capable of excelling in administrative, managerial and technical roles, the programme contributes directly to the growth of industries reliant on efficient office operations and organizational productivity. The integration of ICT, automation and business management into the curriculum positions it as a driver for economic diversification. By nurturing a skilled workforce that bridges the gap between traditional administrative functions and modern technological demands, the programme can significantly contribute to national development. Therefore, its value in tertiary education systems cannot be overstated, as it represents a critical investment in the future of both individuals and economies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government should implement policies that promote the modernization and adequate funding of Office Technology and Management programmes in tertiary institutions to ensure their proper execution, standardization, and long-term sustainability.
- Regular updating of the curriculum by the supervisory body to include emerging technologies and entrepreneurial education to encourage graduates to establish their businesses, thereby reducing unemployment and enhancing the economy.
- Tertiary institutions should foster partnership with industries to provide graduating students with internships, mentorship opportunities and exposure to workplace dynamics.

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