



## OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION (OTME): FUNCTIONAL SKILLS NEEDED BY BUSINESS CENTRE ENTREPRENEURS FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

---

**Kire Charles Gilmour and Okunola Olawuyi Taiwo**

Business Education Department,  
Federal College of Education Yola

Email: [kire.charles@gmail.com](mailto:kire.charles@gmail.com), [olawuyiokunola@gmail.com](mailto:olawuyiokunola@gmail.com)

---

### ABSTRACT

The 'Business Centre' as is commonly known, is a Sole Proprietorship endeavor which provides direct basic secretarial and information reprography services to members of the public. This form of business venture has become a veritable avenue through which many school leavers, artisans and graduates of Office Technology and Management Education from tertiary institutions have gainful employment. Though easy to start, the business centre venture requires more than just an acquisition of machines and equipment. Office management, business etiquettes, and information technology, among others, are basic requirements for success. This study sought to determine the basic office technology skills needed by business centre entrepreneurs for efficient and satisfactory service delivery in national development. The population of this study consisted of 72 respondents made up of 48 computer operators and 24 managers of the 24 identified registered business centres in Yola and Jimeta metropolis of Adamawa State. The entire population was studied. Three research questions were asked to guide the study and mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected. It was found that basic office technology and management skills such as system operations, human relations business communication were highly needed by the business centre entrepreneurs for effective and satisfactory service delivery for national development.

---

**Keywords:** *Office, Technology, Management, Business, Skill, Service Entrepreneurship, National Development.*

### INTRODUCTION

Kire (2020), defined the Office as an administrative unit, division or department of an organization where the services of communication and record are provided. Given the consequential role of the Office as the

nerve centre of any organized activity or organization, the (NCCE, 2020) provides for its study through the Office Technology and Management Education course at the NCE 3 level. As a specialized academic discipline, the Office Technology and Management Education is an integrated component of the Business Education programme. The general philosophy of Business Education in national development is the provision of well qualified and competent graduates who will be able to teach business subjects in schools. It is also meant to equip graduates with the right skills that will enable them to engage in a life of work as well as for self-employment (NCCE, 2020). Osuala (1998), described business education in one aspect as a programme of instruction which provides the recipient with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and in using the services of the business world. Godspower (2017), sees Business Education as a process of building skills, knowledge, ethics, values and attitude that will help an individual to be able to face life challenges around them and function effectively as an entrepreneur. In the same vein, Asuquo (2010), described business education programme as capable of making an individual to be independent in employment. Thus business education graduates are expected to acquire skills that would enable them to establish businesses of their own. One of such is the business centre.

### **Impact of Technology in the Office**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) could be defined as a body of technologies and techniques used to obtain, process and disseminate information to individuals or groups through electronic mail (E-mail), World Wide Web (www), Computer software and hardware, Robotics, Computer Aided Learning and Instruction (CAL and CAI), Fibre Optics and Communication equipment. Moursund as cited by Khan, Hassan and Clement (2012), detailed more comprehensively the range of technologies that are commonly used in Offices and business centres as Computer hardware and software, computing devices such as handheld calculators and cellphones, full range of display and projection devices used to view computer output, the various networks by which people could communicate through the computer system, digital cameras, computer games, CDS, DVDs, Satellites, telecommunication and other optics, computerized machinery and robotics.

Ford (2015) as cited by Kire (2021), argues that if a business must stay competitive in these present days of technology, the business must use

artificial intelligence which makes jobs faster and cheaper to run. High level of skill competency and proficiency in information technology is required for successful business centre operation, such as, typing of document, photocopying, laminating, printing, spiral binding, and all forms of data processing in the computer system. Asuquo (2010), defined the computer system as a telecommunication device that processes data through typesetting, gathering, analyzing, storing, retrieving, and disseminating processed information.

Nnaka as cited by Zakari (2015), referred to ICT as the greatest change agent of the century. The convergence of ICTs has improved the Office and the business world to a level never imagined within a very short time. Many businesses are winding up due to lack of knowledge in technology while others who acknowledge the importance of technology spring up and flourish. Technology has become the corner stone of the modern office. It has impacted virtually in every aspect of office work.

Technology is no doubt, the bedrock toward the growth of any nation apart from education which is a key factor. Technology is a process that uses the application of knowledge to produce the required results in an office and help in achieving organizational goals and objectives, (Voliti, 2009 in La Shun, 2017). Technology is directly connected to knowledge which in turn educates the citizens (Dunning, 1994 in Sazali; Raduan, Suzana, and Idayu. 2012).

### **Office Technology and Management Education Curriculum and Provision of Functional Skills**

Etonyeaku (2010) states that Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) is a course for training of Secretaries and preparing students to participate fully in rapidly technological society. This implies that all Business Education students who opted for OTME for specialization must be adequately trained and be retrained in Office Information Systems in order to be relevant and effective either in the office or as Business Centre entrepreneurs. The curriculum of the Office Technology and Education programme at the tertiary level of education in Nigeria provide for core skills and competency in specialized disciplines as entrepreneurship, accounting, human relationship, word processing, organization management, office management, economics, business communication, information technology and computer application and management, in addition to general education courses, (NCCE 2020).

Webster (2013) defined skill as the familiar knowledge of any science, art, or handicraft, as shown by dexterity in execution or performance or in its application to practical purposes. Equally, Collins (2014), sees skill as special ability in a task acquired by training. Skill could also be defined as the capacity of a person to accomplish a task with desired precision and certainty. It involves practical knowledge in combination with cleverness, expertise, dexterity and ability to perform a function which could be acquired or learnt in school. From educational perspective, skill is the activity subject that requires controlled movements to be made under the guidance of the mind, which may receive its stimulus through sensory inputs (Osuala, 1998).

Functional skills provided by Office Technology and Management Education curriculum are those skills acquired by Secretaries and Business Centre entrepreneurs to be able to operate effectively. This is because anyone who possesses a mastery of office skills will demonstrate the ability to assume responsibility without direct supervision, exercises initiative, judgement and make decisions within the scope of assigned authority.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The nature of services provided by Business Centre Entrepreneurs are public oriented. Business Centres deal with all manner of members of the public behavior and disposition that cannot be easily predicted. While some customers are tolerable, others are emotionally indifferent. Therefore, to serve customers with such diverse personality disposition, the Business Centre Entrepreneurs must be equipped with inter personal relation and communication skills. It is equally worrisome to note that most Business Centre entrepreneurs lack adequate skill in data processing and analysis, standard formatting, communication, and are basically poor in their human relationship. Many of them fold up within very short time due to inability to utilize management skills. It is against this background that this paper strive to bring to the fore the various functional skills that the Business Centre Entrepreneurs need to have in order to remain relevant in business and provide satisfactory services for national development.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the business and functional skills needed by Business Centre Entrepreneurs for effective service delivery. Specifically, the study sought to:

- a) Determine the computer system skills needed for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs.
- b) Determine the human relation skills needed for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs.
- c) Determine the communication skills for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were asked to guide the study:

- a) What computer system skills are needed for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs?
- b) What human relation skills are needed for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs?
- c) What communication skills are needed for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a purposive and survey design to elicit respondents' opinions on the subject matter. The study was located in Jimeta and Yola metropolis of Adamawa State. Twenty-four (24) registered Business Centres were used for the study. Thus the population for this comprised forty-eight (48) computer operators and 24 proprietors of the centres, totaling seventy-two (72) respondents.

### **Data Collection**

The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire that contained fifteen (15) question items. They were distributed by hand directly by the researcher and retrieved on a call-back basis. All the questionnaires were correctly filled and returned for analysis. The data were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation for all the Research Questions. The response items in the questionnaire were assigned values as follows: Highly Needed (5.0), Needed (4.0), Undecided (3.0), Undecided (2.0), Highly Not Needed (1.0). The midpoint for the scale was 3.0. Any item with a mean value below 3.0 was regarded as "Not Needed".

### Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: What Computer system skills are needed for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs?

The research question was answered using the data shown in the table below:

**Table 1: Respondents' Mean rating on the computer system skills are needed for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs.**

S/N	Items Identified computer system skills for Business Centre operation	X	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to typeset all types of documents According to standard Microsoft word/data Processing system	4.83	0.37	Needed
2	Ability to handle special documents by utilizing The text editing features of the word processor	4.31	1.023	Needed
3	Ability to handle graphic and architectural Designs e.g. Corel Draw	4.64	0.63	Needed
4	Ability to perform statistical analysis e.g. Use of SPSS package	4.36	0.90	Needed
5	Ability to perform desktop publishing task	4.53	0.48	Needed

Research Question 2: What human relation skills are needed for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs?

The research question was answered using the data shown on the table below:

**Table II: Respondents' Mean Rating on the human relation skills needed for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs.**

S/N	Item Identified	Human Relations skills for Business Centre Operation	X	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to create a positive atmosphere of trust and confidence in customers		4.89	0.12	Needed
2	Ability to interact positively and get along with all types of people		4.61	0.63	Needed
3	Ability to exhibit courtesy and appreciation to customers		4.61	0.63	Needed
4	Ability to keep appointments on job contracted		4.64	0.63	Needed
	Ability to tolerate customers of aggressive disposition		4.78	0.45	Needed

Research Question 3: What communication skills are needed for effectiveness by Business Centre Entrepreneurs?

This research question was answered using the data shown on the table below:

**Table III: Respondents' Mean Rating on the Communication Skills Needed by Business Centre Entrepreneurs.**

S/N	Item Identified	communication skills for Business Centre Operation	X	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to communicate clearly and fluently to the understanding of the listeners		4.86	0.35	Needed
2	Good knowledge of grammar, spellings and punctuations		4.76	0.45	Needed
3	Good listening ability		4.83	0.37	Needed
4	Ability to exercise control over emotional situation		4.50	0.87	Needed
5	Good knowledge of letter formats and other documents		4.83	0.37	Needed

The data on the three tables above show that all the items on the functional skills needed for effectiveness by business centre entrepreneurs recorded Mean ratings above the criterion level of acceptance of 3.0. This shows that all the skills identified on system operation, human relations, as well as communication are needed by business centre entrepreneurs for effective service delivery to their customers.

### **Findings of the Study**

From the analysis of the data collected for this study, the following findings were made on the research questions answered.

1. That business entrepreneurs needed all the skills in computer system operation including typesetting of all types of documents in their standard format, handling of special documents, handling of graphic and architectural designs, performing statistical analysis as well as performing desktop publishing tasks.
2. Business centre entrepreneurs needed all the skills identified in human relations. Ability to create positive atmosphere of trust and confidence in human relations. Ability to create positive atmosphere of trust and confidence, interact positively with people, exhibit courtesy and appreciation, avoid disappointments, and tolerate all kinds of customers including difficult ones are the basic human relations skills found to be useful for an effective discharge of satisfactory service at a business centre.
3. Business centre entrepreneurs needed communication skills to render effective service to his customer. The skills identified include ability to communicate fluently and clearly, good use of grammar, spellings and punctuations, listening ability, exercising control over emotional situations, and ability to format business letters and other documents.

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings of the study revealed that there are basic business and information processing skills needed by the office secretary and the business centre entrepreneur in order to render satisfactory service to their customers. The findings are consistent with the opinion of O'Neil as cited in Asuquo (2010) who contended that to prepare for a meaningful job output, several skills are required. He added that to be successfully



employed in the information processing and service occupation areas, one must acquire basic computer system operation skills. The findings also revealed that business centre entrepreneurs agreed that all the five basic human relations skills are needed for efficient service delivery. This finding supports Vandal (2006) who established interpersonal relation strategies that give business centre entrepreneurs the information they need to render efficient service. Furthermore, Vandal explained that communication is not just about how to talk but also about making connections with people based on a pleasant disposition, being cooperative and trusted team worker.

## **CONCLUSION**

The following conclusions are drawn based on the findings of this study. Skills in computer system operation are identified in the study as paramount attributes of a business centre entrepreneur whose main aim is to meet the satisfactory service desire of his customers. He requires these skills to handle all types of documents for his customers. He needs these skills to retain existing customers and win new ones. The skills will also enable his business to grow and expand. No matter how efficient the business centre entrepreneur may be in his ability to process documents, if he lacks good human relation skills or deficient in his communication ability, he might not be able to combine all the skills identified in this paper in order to render efficient and satisfactory service to his customers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made in this paper.

1. Relevant working equipment and machines as well as trained personnel in Office Technology and Management Education should form the basis for the establishment of a business centre.
2. Office Technology and Management Educators and graduates should occasionally update their skills through training in information technology in order to remain relevant in new and emerging technologies.
3. Human relations and communication skills should be up graded to form a major component of the curriculum for the training Office Technology and Management Education students.

4. The reviewed Business Education curriculum need adequate implementation so as to accommodate the ever changing challenges of technology in the modern office.
5. Being a major player in government efforts towards building a generation of Nigerian youths that are self-reliant and self-dependent, the Business Education program should be well funded and equipped with relevant and modern equipment and machines that would enable it achieve the goal of turning out business and information processing graduates sufficiently equipped to teach at the Junior school level, effectively manage the modern office and strive to be employers themselves through the establishment of business centres.

## REFERENCES

- Asuquo, Effiong E. (2010). Business and Information Processing Skills Needed by Business Centre Operators. *Business Education Journal*. Vol. VII, No. 2. P.99.
- Collins (2014). *English Dictionary*. Harper Collins Publishers. Glasgow C64 2QT. 12<sup>th</sup> Edition.
- Etonyeaku, Ernest A. C. (2010). Office Operational Skills Perceived as Necessary for Office Information System by Secretaries in University of Nigeria Nsukka. *Business Education Journal*. Vol. VII, No. 2. Pp.132
- Godspower, Y. J. (2017). Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Job Creation for Business Education Students in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. A project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in the department of Business Education, Rivers State University. Unpublished.
- Khan, S. H; Hassan, M. and Clement, C. K. (2012). *International Journal of Instruction*. Accessed from <http://www.eji.net> on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2014
- Kire, C. G., Ajao, J.O.; Anyanwu, C.C. (2020). *Introduction to Business and Office Procedure for Schools and Colleges*. Knowledge Printing Press Publications, Jimeta/Yola. ISBN 978-976-412-9

Kire, C. G. (2021). Technology Competence of Business Graduates and Employability in Automated Accounting Economy. Unpublished Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the School of General Studies and Management Technology, Federal Polytechnic Bali - 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June.

La Shun, L. C. (2017). A Comprehensive Definition of Technology from an Ethological Perspective. *Social Sciences*, 6,126; doi:10.3390/socsci6040126www.mdpi.com/journal/socsci.

NCCE (2020). Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards for Vocational and Technical Education. [www.ncce.edu.ng](http://www.ncce.edu.ng)

Osuala, E. C. (1998). *Foundations of Vocational Education*. Onitsha Cape Publishers International

The New International Webster's *Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language* (2013). Standard Media Holdings. ISBN 9781600815447. USA

Vandal, D. (2006). *Winning Solution. High Performance Organizational Strategies and Training in Interpersonal Communication*. Retrieved August 29, 2009 from <http://www.winning-solution.com/aboputdiana.html>

Zakari, A. S. (2021). Assessment of Availability and Utilization of Information and Communication Technology in Primary Schools in Central Senatorial District of Adamawa State, Nigeria. *Dougirei Journal of Education*. ISSN:1116-4239 Vol. 13. Pp. 27-36