

OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between office technology and socio-economic development in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Thirteen specific objectives, research questions and hypotheses guided the study. Correlation study design was adopted for the study. The population and sample of the study were made up of 109 Ph.D. business education students from the 6 Universities offering postgraduate programme in business education as at 2021/2022 academic session in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Census sampling technique was used because the population was a manageable size. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Business Education Programme and Socio-Economic Development Questionnaire (BEPSEDQ). The instrument was validated by three experts, one expert from Measurement and Evaluation and two others from Business Education, all from the Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to obtain (r) value of 0.76 to test the reliability of stability while Cronbach Alpha test which gave a reliability coefficient of 0.74 was used to test for the reliability of internal consistency. A total of 109 copies of the instruments were administered but only 101 copies were retrieved and this constituted 93% of the entire copies administered. The data collected were analysed using PPMC (r) analysis to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance, while for Multivariate analysis, partial correlation was used to test the mediating effect of government policies on the two variables whose relationship were investigated. The findings revealed among others that business education programme proxies such as office technology have positive and significant relationship with human capital and entrepreneurship development as proxies of socio-economic development of the Niger Delta area. The findings also revealed among others that business education programme proxies such as accounting education have negative and no significant relationship with job creation as proxy of socio-economic development.

Keywords: Office Technology, Socio-Economic Development, Job Creation

INTRODUCTION

Education has been recognized and remains the most desirable tool for the transformation of citizens to enable them attain self-actualization and contribute their quota to the socio-economic development of their immediate environment. This is due to the fact that education develops and refines recipients' knowledge, skills, attitude and experiences needed to facilitate the actualization of their aspirations within socio-economic systems for the benefit of self and the society at large. Realising the significant of education, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) noted that education is an instrument 'par excellence' in equipping individual citizens with the right skills, knowledge, abilities, competence, attitudes, and values needed for effective functioning of the society. The United Nation Education Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020) also described education as a tool for empowering individuals with knowledge and skills capable of transforming their thinking ability and attitude in order to facilitate physical, intellectual, emotional and ethical integration at the societal level and in the place of work.

Nigeria in her developmental drive has invested heavily into planning, designing and establishment of educational structures capable of providing qualitative education for citizens to make them productive and useful to self and the society at large. The educational structures put in place consist

of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education. It is important to note that all these structures are important in the progressive development of the citizen's mind towards a rationale human being; hence, each aspect of the structure is designed to attain specific goals. The goals of each aspect of the established structures are normally attained through the planning; development and implementation of various educational programmes aimed at meeting societal educational needs. Consequently, in this study, the main focus is on Business education as an educational programme offered at the tertiary education level.

Office technology and management is another educational area in Business education capable of driving socio-economic development of the Niger Delta Region to a greater height. This is based on the fact that this educational area is designed to equip recipients with knowledge, skills and attitude related to office career and responsibilities essential for effective information handling and dissemination. According to Ozuruoke and Abdulkarim (2016), the cardinal objective of the office technology and management education in Business education is to empower recipients with competencies needed for office tasks performance as well as for teaching office education programme courses. Titus and Yakubu (2018) explained that OTME is a programme meant for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, office ethics and competencies needed to enter gainful employment in specific business and office occupation. Okolocha and Bestowei (2020) noted that knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by students of OTME can be applied in a wide range of occupational areas in the business world because they deal with technology application in information processing and management.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between business education programme and socio-economic development in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to determine:

1. the relationship between office technology and management education and human capital development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
2. the relationship between office technology and management education and job creation in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.
3. the relationship between office technology and management education and entrepreneurship development in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

Office Technology and Management Education and Human Capital development

Once an individual has a general knowledge and skills of OTME it is easy to function in any office work that related to information and documentation for end-users (Jaderstrom, 2010). Amanda (2010) reported that those trained through office education developed competencies for word processing especially as it relates to creating spreadsheet, creating tables, creating pivot tables, running and creating macros, data analysis, data visualization, validating data, creating documents, managing tables of content, preparing documents for print, proofreading and editing copy, creating slideshows, and embedding video and images. Enterprise (2010) also reported that office education equips recipients with knowledge, skills and attitude to enable them perform tasks such as page setup, text formatting, editing, creating templates, textboxes, SmartArt, quick access, Title and ribbon bar, spell-check, and Grammar check. Berger (2011) noted that graduates of office education as administrative professionals perform administrative tasks such as filing, scanning, faxing, composing reports, conducting research, and data entry. Glenn (2022) reported that graduates of office education can conveniently perform documentation by ensuring control of all documents entering and leaving storage facilities.

Office Technology and Management and Job Creation

According to Akpomi and Ordu (2009), OTME provides recipients with knowledge and skills they can actually be useful in starting their own word processing businesses where they can't find office related occupation. Abdulkarim and Ossiah (2014) reported that office technology and management

education prepares recipients for self-employment opportunities especially in the establishment of business centres and sales of office related stationeries. The Career Guide (2022) reported that there are many jobs or career opportunities that can be created using competencies from office education such jobs include being a receptionist, clerical staff, office attendance, secretary, information-processing office. Sunny (2022) opined that those trained through office education are empowered to create their own job or find work on a part-time basis, or work full-time schedules in office related activities such as word processing, reprographic and office management. According to Lumen (2022), graduates of office education can specialize in the performance of tasks related to a specific area or industry, such as law or the medical field, which might affect their work mobility in terms of how many employers they work with, the types of equipment available and the nature of projects they work on.

Human Capital Theory by Gary Becker (1964)

Human capital theory was propounded by Gary Becker in 1964. The theory focuses on how human being deals with issues surrounding the performance of work and productivity. This theorist states that the stock of human knowledge, skills and attitude that one possesses affects the way he/she behaves at work and contribute to the goal of an organization. The theory also explained that the more appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude human beings possessed in relation to their job responsibilities, the better it is for their productivity when performing tasks. Becker noted that human capital is a product of years of investment in schooling, quality of instructions, training and training facilities, as well as attitude to work.

Becker also explained that human capital is directly useful to career life because most employers value employees with the appropriate skills, experience, knowledge, attitude among others to contribute to the attainment of organizational goals. This is because factors defining human capital have direct influence on employee's production capacity in all tasks. Hence, human capital in ideal cases influences the willingness of the employer to engage individuals for jobs and pay for the wages agreed on the contract entered. The theory also point out to the fact that individuals who possess the ability to adapt to different tasks, organizational culture and working situations are likely going to benefit more from employment mobility and self-employment opportunities than those who don't possess the knowledge, skills and attitude to fit into a peculiar work and organization.

Although, there are many theorists that provided explanation to the advantage of human capital, the relevance of Becker's theory to employability and productivity of individual citizen made the researcher to rely on it for this study. Of importance to this study is the fact that the amount of knowledge and skills possessed by Business education graduating students would enable them take up employment opportunity because every employer seeks for those who can work towards the attainment of predetermined goals. This theory is also relevant to the present study because it shows that individual who possesses knowledge, skills and attitude to adapt to different situations can take up entrepreneurship opportunity to be self-employed in business world, and hence contributing to the socio-economic development of their immediate environment.

Office Technology and Management Education

Office technology and management education as an aspect of Business education is designed for those interested in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitude and experiences capable of empowering them to fit into office related careers. Office Technology and Management is a specialized phase of vocational Business education programme that empowers students to enter teaching and office occupations as capable and intelligent members of the labour force (Wikipedia, 2012). According to Vin-Mbah (2012), Office technology and management education is a functional education leading to self-employment, self-reliance, paid employment, entrepreneurial development and consequently self-actualization. Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN, 2014) described this aspect of Business education as programme intended to expose students to knowledge related to technological development and its application in office functions; knowledge

of different office equipment and their functions; and knowledge of office functions' automation, and the attendant effects as well as associated challenges with automation in developing countries. According to Olawole and Abuya (2011), the Office technology and management program incorporates six components in its design; these are office application, office technology, business and administrative management, numeric component, general studies and Student Industrial Work Experience (SIWES). It is also viewed as a course that is associated with office automation, electronic technology, and office globalization. Consequently, it can be concluded that the attainment of objectives of this educational programme requires exposure to both theoretical and practical contents capable of developing in graduates knowledge, skills and attitude for the effective and efficient functioning in modern offices operated with state-of-the-art technology. Odiike and Nnaekwe (2017) opined that Office technology and management education is an aspect of vocational education program designed in addition to general education equips recipients with knowledge and skills for office careers through initial education and subsequent upgrading leading to employability, entrepreneurial activities and advancement in office occupations. This programme as well as providing students with knowledge and competencies required for managing personal business affairs in the case of opting to be self-employed.

Human Capital Development

Human capital has to do with the knowledge, skills and other competencies individual possesses and utilized in the discharge of required societal roles. The quality of human capital in a nation is directly proportional to quality of educational programmes citizens are acquired. This is based on the fact that human capital is defined as the ability and efficiency with which people work to transform raw materials and capital into goods and services (Son, 2010). Orngu and Magagi (2010) opined that human capital development is the process of training available human resources to develop new potential for increase productivity within an organization context. Enyekit, et al (2011) averred that human capital development is concerned with improving human knowledge, skills and attitude through education and training in order to meet the human resources need of organizations and the nation at large. Obisi and Anyim (2012) opined that through education and training the talent and competencies which constitute human capital of every citizen is being developed to meet the human resources demand of a nation and ensure in actualization of socio-economic goals.

According to Anyanwu, *et al* (2015), human capital is the total stock of knowledge, skills, competencies, innovative abilities possessed by the population. These obviously have education as their bedrock. Todaro and Smith (2011) stated that human capital is the productive investments embodied in human persons, including skills, abilities, ideas, health and locations, often resulting from expenditures on education, on – the – job training programmes and medical care. Minini and Nwinee (2021) averred that human capital is the abilities and qualities of people that make them productive; knowledge to him is the more important of these, although other factors like a sense of punctuality to the state of someone's health also matters.

Concept of Job Creation

The creation of new job opportunities has been receiving much attention globally. The concern for job creation is due to the numerous benefits it has in reducing idleness and crime in same climes. According to the European Fund (2022), job creation is an important social and employment policy across many countries of the globe because it is the process of providing new opportunities to engage people in productive activities, especially those unemployed or inactive. Job creation has to do with engaging unemployed portion of the available workforce in productive activities (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). Glossary of Statistical Terms (2022) noted that job creation can be public or private sector driven, job created can also be temporary, regular jobs, or casual offered to unemployed persons. Ayeni, et al (2022) noted that job creation is the process of creating new opportunities for the unemployed and the under-employed to be fully employed without necessarily displacing other people who are already employed in various economic activities.

According to the Director-General of Small and Medium Enterprises and Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) - job creation has to do with the process of providing new opportunities for unemployed people to be engaged in socio-economic activities that will enable them earn decent income (Umar, 2011). Financial Dictionary (2022) posited that job creation can be measured by determining the difference between the number of existing jobs and the number of current job opportunities within a particular economy at a given period of time. Job creation can be determined by measuring the net new jobs created to engage unemployed people without displacing those in any other economic activity (Cray, Nguyen, Pranka, Schild, Sheu, & Whitcomb 2011). Kalagbor and Harry (2019) noted that job creation has become a top developmental agenda of many countries in order to reduce crime or eliminate it. Igwer (2022) opined that the attentions of governments are on job creation policies because the kinds of jobs citizens are engaged with have far reaching consequents on both socio-economic development and their well-being. Igwer noted that governments serious about job creation in the 21st century promote educational programmes that guarantee high-technology integration and application to production or to improve the quality and variety of outputs in an efficient manner.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

Correlation research design was adopted for this study.

Population of the Study

The population for this study consisted of 109 business education Ph.D students from the six universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria that are offering business education programme at postgraduate level within 2021/2022 academic session. **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample of the study comprised the entire 109 Ph.D. business education students in Universities in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. The entire population was used as sample. The study adopted census sampling technique since the population is of a manageable size.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection used for this study was a structured questionnaire titled Business Education Programme and Socio-Economic Development Questionnaire (BEPSEDQ).

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) r analysis to answer the research questions and tested the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance, while partial correlation was used to answer research question and hypothesis 13. All computations were done with the aid of SPSS version 23.0.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between accounting education of business education programme and entrepreneurship development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Summary of Pearson Rank Correlation on the Relationship between Office Technology and Management Education of Business education Programme and Human Capital Development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

		Office Technology and Management	Human Capital Development
Office Technology and Management	Pearson Correlation	1	.57**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	101	101
Human Capital Development	Pearson Correlation	.57**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

N	101	101
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 reveals that Pearson’s $r = 0.57$, $p > 0.05$, at 0.000. Since the p value obtained at 0.000 is less than level of significance at 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is significant moderate positive relationship between office technology and management education of business education programme and human capital development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This also means that knowledge, skills and attitude developed through OTME can be significantly linked to the human capital of the recipients in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is still balanced.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between accounting education of business education programme and entrepreneurship development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Summary of Pearson Rank Correlation on the Relationship between Office Technology and Management Education of Business education Programme and Job Creation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

		Office Technology and Management	Job Creation
Office Technology and Management	Pearson Correlation	1	-.17
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.090
	N	101	101
Job Creation	Pearson Correlation	-.17	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.090	
	N	101	101

Table 2 reveals that Pearson’s $r = -0.17$, $p < 0.05$, at 0.090. Since the p value obtained at 0.090 is greater than level of significance at 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. This means that there no significant relationship between office technology and management education of business education programme and job creation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This also means that knowledge, skills and attitude acquired through office technology and management education of business education programme has no significant link to job creation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between office technology and management education of business education programme and entrepreneurship development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Summary of Pearson Rank Correlation on the Relationship between Office Technology and Management Education of Business education Programme and Entrepreneurship Development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

		Office Technology and Management	Entrepreneurship Development
Office Technology and Management	Pearson Correlation	1	.22**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.027
	N	101	101
Entrepreneurship Development	Pearson Correlation	.22**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027	
	N	101	101

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows that Pearson’s $r = 0.22$, $p > 0.05$, at 0.027. Since the p value obtained at 0.027 is less than level of significance at 0.05, the hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is significant weak positive relationship between office technology and management education of business

education programme and entrepreneurship development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This translates to the fact that knowledge, skills and attitude acquired through office technology and management is deteriorating can be significantly linked to entrepreneurship development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is still better.

Relationship between Office Technology and Management education of Business education Programme and Human Capital Development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

The results related to this specific objective revealed that there is moderate positive relationship between office technology and management education of business education programme and human capital development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The results of hypothesis testing relating to this specific objective revealed that there is a moderate positive significant relationship between office technology and management education of business education programme and human capital development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This finding emanated from the fact that knowledge, skills and attitude acquired through office technology and management education of business education increases the human capital of the recipients from what it used to be before they enrolled for the programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The finding of this study is supported by the finding of Amanda (2010) who reported that those trained through office education developed competencies for word processing. The finding of this study is also supported by the assertion of Ozuruoke and Abdulkarim (2016) when they noted that OTME primarily empowers recipients with competencies needed for office tasks performance apart from teaching office education programme.

Relationship between Office Technology and Management education of Business education Programme and Job Creation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

The results related to this specific objective revealed that there is very weak negative relationship between office technology and management education of business education programme and job creation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The results of hypothesis testing relating to this specific objective revealed that there no significant relationship between office technology and management education of business education programme and job creation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This finding emanated from the fact that most of the recipients of office technology and management educations of business education programme have not used the knowledge, skills and attitude they have acquired through the programme to create job opportunities for self and others in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The finding of this study is contrary to the finding of Abdulkarim and Ossiah (2014) when they reported that office technology and management education prepares recipients for self-employment opportunities especially in the establishment of business centres and sales of office related stationeries. The finding of this study is also contrary to the position held by Sunny (2022) who opined that those trained through office education are empowered to create their own job or find work on a part-time basis, or work full-time schedules in office related activities such as word processing, reprographic and office management.

Relationship between Office Technology and Management education of Business education Programme and Entrepreneurship Development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria

The results related to this specific objective revealed that there is weak positive relationship between office technology and management education of business education programme and entrepreneurship development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The results of hypothesis testing relating to this specific objective revealed that there is weak positive significant relationship between office technology and management education of business education programme and entrepreneurship development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This finding emanated from the fact that the rate of risk taking to promote entrepreneurship development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria by those who have acquired knowledge, skills and attitude of office technology and

management education of business education is very low compared to the output of the programme. The finding is supported by the assertion of Vin-Mbah (2012) when the author noted that Office technology and management education leads to entrepreneurial development. The finding is also supported by the position held by Odike and Nnaekwe (2017) when they opined that Office technology and management education is designed to equip recipients with knowledge and skills for entrepreneurial activities. This means that office technology and management education provided within the Niger Delta area is meeting with its designed objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the study concluded that accounting education, office technology and management education and entrepreneurship educations of business education programme have positive relationship with human capital development and entrepreneurship development of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The study also concluded that the relationship between these components of business education programme and human capital and entrepreneurship development are significant. However, it was also concluded that marketing education of business education has negative relationship with both human capital and entrepreneurship development of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

1. Business education curriculum developers should review the office technology and management education to provide students with opportunity to study and be certified as professional confidential office managers or secretaries before graduation from universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
2. Business education lecturers should canvass for the creation and use of model business centre where office technology and management students can be given at least three months opportunity to run real business activities before graduation in order to develop their confidence in starting self businesses within Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
3. Business education lecturers should design and expose office technology and management students to more entrepreneurial learning activities capable of stimulating their ability to take risk and provide innovative services after graduation from universities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

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