

# Alternative Methods of Financing Office Technology and Management Programmes of Polytechnics in Delta State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study investigated the strategies of funding Office Technology and Management Programmes of Delta State Polytechnics for results. The design of the study was survey. Research question was raised for the study. An instrument which consisted of 32 items was distributed to 30 respondents in the three polytechnics located in Delta State. Frequency and descriptive statistics were used in analyzing the data. The findings of the study revealed, among others, that the educational sector is experiencing gross under funding as a result of economic down turn in Nigeria; that alumni associations, philanthropists, organizations, clubs, industrial bodies, should assist in funding OTM programmes to enable students acquire appropriate skills needed for the world of work. It was therefore recommended that everybody that takes decisions or handles money in educational institutions should be cost conscious and prudent as well as sending institutional administrators/managers for training or seminars in financial management.

**Keywords:** Strategies; Financing; OTM Programmes; NBTE; Polytechnics; Minimum Standards; Institutional Administrators; Educational Sector.

## Introduction

A consensus is fast emerging among scholars, educationists, policy-makers and parents that the most intriguing and central issue in education today is that of funding. While all seem to agree that money must be made available to prosecute educational programmes because of their value to mankind, there is disagreement as to who should pay for them and how much should be paid by each.

Education is the greatest device man has created for his own continued improvement. It trains his head, hand and heart (3hs) and has placed him in the position of leadership on earth. Education gives man understanding and enlightenment, improves his intellect, knowledge and skills as well as his attitude to his environment. To this end, parents look on education as the principal assurance of opportunities for their children and as insurance for their old age. It enriches life, builds individual awareness. It is a powerful instrument in the formation of a country's elite. It determines access to position of wealth, status and power; it helps to select people for leadership.

Unfortunately, with the economic down turn in Nigeria, the educational sector is experiencing gross under funding. This inadequate funding is made pronounced in OTM which unfortunately is highly capital-intensive. The apparent neglect is highly visible in the level of available facilities, equipment, structure and personnel. Given the poor state of higher institutions in Nigeria, it is doubtful if it can ever meet its unequivocal role of technological growth. As noted by Agbi (2010), if the objectives of OTM programme of Polytechnics must be realized, there is need for adequate funding. This should not be the sole responsibility of the government as the situation is now. Other sources of revenue generation need to be explored. For this to succeed, the community should be actively involved. This will not only enhance the quality of OTM graduates in the society, but will also remote and stimulate community development.

Funding of education, and indeed OTM has always been a problem. For education to achieve the desired effect of development and integration, it has to be functional in order to enable those who receive it to come with life skills. Ile, Nwogu, Udoe and Oru (2013) posited that funding is a tool for quality assurance in a discipline like OTM. According to these authors, OTM, when properly funded will create an avenue through which students develop abilities, attitudes, work habits and other forms of behaviour of positive value to the society. According to Igbeuzor (2006), funding of an OTM programme that is capital intensive in Nigeria should be done jointly.

From time immemorial, secretarial studies which is today referred to as office technology and management has been a useful source of developing skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to enter and make progress in socially useful employment.

According to Folorunso (2006), OTM is an area of study offered in Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Staff Training Centers in Nigeria; and it is aimed at producing personnel who, after successful training can offer secretarial and management services with high level degree of competence. Competence in this context, is the ability to perform work activities to the standards required in employment. It embodies the ability to transfer skills and knowledge to work situation within the occupational area. Hence, the secretaries, office managers/administrative assistants as they are presently called are seen as people who among other skills,

possess a mastery of office skills, who demonstrate the ability without supervision, who exercise initiatives and judgment and also make decisions within the scope of assigned authority and training.

It is to be noted that training in OTM, according to Esene (2013) belongs to two backgrounds – the theory and practice and often bequeathed to the classroom and the office. But when the classroom aspect is bad, practice in the office will be bad. The classroom is thus expected to prepare the students for the office through adequate and practically-oriented training with the use of various equipment and instructional materials.

The OTM Curriculum and Course Specification by NBTE (2004) was designed to equip students with management and secretarial skills for employment in various fields of endeavor. The course programme, in addition to the above, leads to the acquisition of vocational skills in OTM studies, the students are equipped with effective work competence and socio psychological work skills.

The grand objectives of the programme, according to NBTE (2004) is the ability of the OTM graduates to fit properly into the office of any organization and perform professionally the functions of secretary which among other includes – relates the functions of the office to the whole organization, attending meetings and providing information as may be required, make accurate records of proceedings, filing and retrieving information. In addition, OTM graduates are to acquire an indepth knowledge of office administration and management, particularly knowing the concepts, office procedures, office machines and equipment, researching, general services, managing personnel, planning and controlling, etc. At the end, the training received will enable the student to fit into any organization and perform not only as a secretary but also as an office manager in private and public sectors of the Nigerian economy when the occasion demands.

The success of a project is a function of the available instructional materials and equipment to carry out the project. OTM programme as an academic project can only be effectively implemented with adequate instructional materials and equipment. Ugwuanyi (2012) maintained that OTM curriculum is ICT based and cost intensive and since funds are not always adequate to install the equipment and facilities required, there is need to come up with appropriate strategies to augment what the institution can afford. According to NBTE (2004), curriculum, provision of the following basic equipment is mandatory for any OTM training institution. The equipment must be provided in such a way as to allow each student have unrestricted access as to their use either for class work or practice before the right quality of secretaries can be produced. Well-equipped model office include modern typing pool to house enough manual electric and electronic typewriters, shorthand laboratory, computer center loaded with different programme, e-mail and internet service, photocopy machine, shredding machine, duplicating machine, Telex machine, Fax machine, Dictating machine, scanning machine, filing cabinets, machine, survive typing chairs/padded table, English/communication laboratory, telephone systems, stopwatches, Radio cassettes and pre-dictated cassettes, overhead projectors/films and slides, wall or clocks, staple remover, perforator, etc. These facilities and equipment and others must be installed and housed in appropriate workshops and lecture walls or laboratories so that they may function optimally. In a study conducted by Esene and Ovbiagele (2014) with the purpose of determining the quantity and quality of equipment available for OTM students in selected institutions in the south-south of Nigeria, it was revealed that training equipment were grossly inadequate to meet the needs of students.

The National Policy on Education FRN (2009) clearly states that:

education is an expensive social services and requires adequate;  
financial provision...Government welcomes and encourages the participation of  
local communities, individuals and other organizations.

It is a common knowledge that the best schools in terms of availability of infrastructure and learning resources are often those whose parents are involved. The realization of meaningful OTM programmes in Polytechnics for the students therefore demands concerned efforts by the government, individuals and organizations. While supporting the view of Dubey, Edem and Thakur (2010) that promotion of good school – community relationship is essential in the attempt to maximize teaching and learning, Thompson (2011) adds that such relationship enhances self-reliance. This is crucial in community development. Graduates of OTM of polytechnics who are trained with the state of the art equipment can occupy top jobs and other field opportunities in the economy. These opportunities available for OTM graduates make the programme of studies more unique and utilitarian in the society (Esene and Ovbiagele, 2014). On this part, Esene (2014) reported that office work is meant for all professionals who are academically trained, professionally adept and organizationally matured to be gainfully employed, retain and progress in a chosen career.

Funding education, and in particular OTM programmes is capital intensive that cannot be left with government alone. Akinseinde (2012), Aghenta (2012), Ile, Udoye, Nwogu and Oru (2013) were in agreement when they noted that funding education and indeed OTM has always been a problem, stressing that for education to achieve the desired effect of development and integration, it has to be functional in order to enable the recipient who receive it to cope with life skills. These authors emphasized that funding is a tool for quality assurance in a discipline like OTM.

A panel was set up by the federal government to detect the strategies and other sources of financing

education. The findings of the panel were summarized by Olaitan (2010), Okoro, (2010), Imonikebe (1994) and Nwana (1982) as follows

(1) Industries and Chambers of Commerce should contribute to funding education (2) Payment of school fees by students, (3) Special levies to be imposed on student. (4.) Pay studentship to be encouraged (5.) Establishment of consultancy services, (6) Community special tax on contract, (7) Judicious allocation and utilization of resources (8) Increase in private financing of educational programme, (9) Imposition of user's charge of fees, (10) Increasing the investment of industries/business e.g. through providing training for employees or students on industrial attachment, (11) Voluntary contributions through donations of equipment (12) Imposition of higher taxes on industries and businesses (13) Payment of special levies by students (14) Sales of stationeries (15) Obtaining of loan by the school (16) Appeal to philanthropists, organizations, clubs industrial bodies, etc.

For OTM programmes to adequately and sufficiently prepare its graduates for the world of work, each institution should adhere rigidly with the minimum standards set by NBTE which Esene (2011) considered are worthy of serious consideration by every institutional administrator/manager in the management of polytechnic education in Nigeria.

### Statement of the Problem

Office technology and management, as a vocational subject tends towards the acquisition of appropriate skills for the effective management of both human and material resources. It is regarded as a very expensive course. This was pointed out by Ugwuanyi (2012) when he noted that the expensive nature is due to the much practical and costly equipment and materials. As the Nigerian economy started to be in a depressed condition, the government had been finding it extremely difficult to finance education single handedly. As a result of this, most institution cannot meet up with the huge financial involvement in funding education. Many polytechnics therefore lack equipment, materials and facilities for teaching OTM courses. This study was therefore carried out to identify other sources of financing OTM programmes of Polytechnics in Delta State.

The major purpose of the study was to identify the strategies of funding OTM programmes of the Delta State Polytechnic. Specifically, the study:

- i. Identified the various ways that the government and community can help in financing Office Technology and Management programmes of Polytechnics in Delta State.

### Research Question

The study was guided by the question below

1. What are the ways Office Technology and Management programmes of Polytechnics in Delta State can be funded by the government and the community?

### Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will highlight how OTM programmes can be funded. Such measures can be used by the state and the institutional administrators.

### Method of Study

The study adopted a survey research design. It sought information from office educators who teach OTM courses in three polytechnics in Delta State. The population consisted of thirty office educators. Table 1 presents the population distribution.

Table 1 – Population Distribution

State	Institutions	Number of Office Educators
Delta	Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-Uku	10
”	Delta State Polytechnic, OtefeOghara	8
”	Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro	12
		30

**Source:** Field studies, 2014

There was no sampling techniques used since the population was manageable and the respondents were adequately reached.

The instrument which was used for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was developed from the literature reviewed based on the research question.

The instrument was a Likert-type 5 point rating scale designed to attract the followings. SA (Strongly agree 5 points), A (Agreed 4 points), D (Disagree 3 points) SD (Strongly disagree 2 points) and Und (Undecided 1 point). The instrument was validated by three experts in OTM, one of which was in measurement and evaluation from the Faculty of Education of the Delta State University, Abraka. The first part of the instrument sought for the bio-data of the respondents, while the second part sought the respondents rating on the statements. A total of thirty (30) copies of the questionnaires were administered and all were retrieved back. The test-retest reliability

method was used to determine the stability of the questionnaire items. A reliability co-efficient of stability of the items yielded a correlation of 0.79 which was considered high enough. Frequency and percentages were used for the analysis of the data collected. Any item that has an average of 50 percent and above is regarded as an adequate source of finance to OTM programmes.

### Presentation of Data

**Question 1** – What are the ways OTM programmes of Polytechnics in Delta State can be funded? To answer this question, the data in Table 2 were used.

**Table 2 – Sources of Funding OTM Courses.**

Q/I	Sources of Funding	Responses	Percentages
1	The government should provide equipment and facilities.	30	75.3
2	The government should provide fund.	30	77.7
3	The government should encourage quick repairs and adequate maintenance of available equipment and materials.	29	64.2
4	The government should award scholarship to OTM students.	30	63.8
5	The institutions should encourage the community to provide equipment and materials for teaching OTM courses.	30	64.9
6	The institutions should appeal to clubs and organizations to give financial assistance to OTM.	30	67.8
7	The Alumni Association (AA) should give financial aid.	30	60.4
8	The Alumni should provide equipment and materials.	30	59.3
9	The institutions should allocate more funds to OTM courses.	30	59.4
10	The institutions should encourage the community to provide fund.	30	60.5
11	OTM students should pay some amount of money for practicals	29	67.8
12	Periodic activities such as launching ceremonies towards fund raising should be organized by OTM department.	30	76.4
13	OTM students should pay equipment fees.	30	72.6
14	Private sector	30	63.7
15	Missions	30	72.4
16	Philanthropic organizations	29	70.6
17	Tertiary Education Funds (TETFUNDS)	30	80.2
18	Work study programmes	30	56.7
19	Endowment funds	30	60.2
20	Catering services	30	50.4
21	Consultancy services	30	62.6
22	Internally Generated Revenue (IGR)	30	82.7
23	Community special tax on contract	30	72.5
24	Increase in private financing of OTM programmes	30	72.6
25	Donations from individual staff and lecturers of affected institutions.	30	46.4
26	Increasing the investment of industries/business e.g., through providing training for employees or students on industrial attachment.	30	72.9
27	Voluntary contributions through donations of equipment.	28	66.4
28	Imposition of higher taxes on industries and businesses.	39	79.5
29	Gifts from friends of the institutions.	30	60.2
30	Obtaining of loan by the institutions	30	59.1
31	Sales of stationeries.	30	53.6
32	Judicious allocation and utilization of resources.	30	82.6

**Source:** Field trip, 2014

All the above items except item number 25 are above 50 percent. They are regarded as important and adequate sources of funding OTM programmes in Polytechnics in Delta State. Only item 25 is below the average of 50 percent. It was therefore not regarded as an adequate source of financing OTM programmes of Polytechnics in Delta State.

### Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify sources of financing OTM programmes of Polytechnics in Delta State. One of the findings is that the government should provide equipment, materials and facilities for OTM departments. Another was that the government should provide fund for the teaching of the subject. The provision of funds, equipment and facilities will make the subject less expensive for students. Learning will also be greatly facilitated. It was also agreed upon that the government should encourage quick repair and adequate maintenance

of available equipment by each institution. Imonikebe (1994) had such findings as a means of funding Vocational and Technical Education. The government should award scholarship to OTM students. This will attract more students and hence increase the enrolment of students for the course.

It was also revealed that institutions should appeal to clubs and organizations to give generously to support OTM programmes. The institutions should encourage individuals/philanthropists to provide funds and equipment. Aghenta (2012), Akinseinde (2012) and Ile et al (2013) suggested that gifts from friends, staff, lecturers, philanthropists, clubs and organizations are sources of funds to OTM courses.

It was discovered that Alumni Associations, allocation of more funds by the institutions to the teaching of OTM will solve the financial problem facing the course. This will make the course less expensive for the students. These findings were supported by the studies by Esene and Ovbiagele (2014) when they noted that providing more funds available to OTM departments will solve the financial problem facing the implementation of the OTM curriculum.

### Conclusion

The present OTM is a new nomenclature which replaced the old secretarial studies. The OTM Curriculum and Course Specification came into operation in 2004. The curriculum is more ICT based designed to equip OTM students with appropriate skills needed to function effectively, efficiently and productively in the world of work. The various sources for financing OTM courses have been identified from the study. The main sources of funds are through the government's aid, community effort, TETFUNDS, industrial bodies, organizations, e.g., clubs; through the support of philanthropists, Alumni Associations, and the institutions. These are reliable sources be thoroughly examined and utilized to the fullest by the institutions. The institutions should also find out which of these are the best sources of fund. Effort should therefore be made to encourage and adequately utilize such sources of finance.

There is however, the need for the institutional administrators to cooperate and the fund obtained appropriately so as to serve the purpose it is meant for. In order to effect this, it is of utmost necessity for the institutions to maintain an adequate accounting system to check over expenditure of fund.

### Recommendations

On the basis of the findings derived from the study and the conclusion reached, and to reduce educational costs and keep them down at a reasonable level, we can take some of the following steps:

1. Everybody that takes decisions or handles money in education whether he is at the Ministry of Higher Education or in the institution, must be cost conscious and prudent.
2. Effort must be made by the lecturers, students, and institutional administrators to ensure that students do not dropout or repeat classes as a result of poor attitude to work. As much as possible, students should spend the normal period or years in the institutions.
3. The lecturer – student ratio must be raised to save money.
4. Improve the quality of the curriculum and make it more relevant to the student's interests and surroundings in order to prevent and/or eliminate dropouts, etc.
5. Improve the quality of lecturers by professional training so that empirical learning can replace memorization and rote learning.
6. Improve educational research as a tool for improving educational efficiency.
7. Improve the procedures for examinations to avoid wastage of funds and of students.
8. Improve educational technology and teaching equipment to enhance the teaching – learning process.
9. Lecturers and students of OTM should occasionally organize exhibitions of students' products from their practical lessons. The community should be invited and encouraged to pay certain amount as gate fees. Donations should be encouraged during such occasions.
10. Adequate accounting system should be kept by heads of OTM to ensure that the fund obtained is well utilized.
11. Institutional administrators/managers should be sent for training or seminars in financial management. In all cases, we need honesty and hard work to come out of our problems.

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