

**Information Application Packages Skills Required by Office Management and Technology Graduates for Improved Job Performance in Rivers State****EGBUNEFU, Chibuike (PhD)**Department of Business Education,
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Rumuola**Abstract**

This study sought to determine the information application packages skills required of Office Management and Technology Graduates for improved job performance in Rivers State. Two specific objective, two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated and used the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 418 Office Management and Technology students with sample size of 125 respondents selected using stratified random sampling from higher institutions of learning in Rivers State. A structured and validated instrument titled "Information Application Packages Skills for Office Management and Technology Students Questionnaire" was used for collection of data for the study. Cronbach Alpha procedure was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and it produced a coefficient of 0.81 which showed that the instrument was reliable. Mean and Improvement Need Index (INI) were used to analyse the responses from the research questions, while the null hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that Publishers and Graphics application skills are highly needed with positive improvement need index. Internet services application skills of OMT Graduates for improved job performance. The two skills need were statistically significant at .05 alpha level. Based on the findings, it was reviewed that Microsoft graphic application skills are need by OMT Graduates for improved job performance, Microsoft publishers' application skills are needed by OMT Graduates for improved job performance, Microsoft Graphics application skills need by OMT Graduates for improved job performance, There is no significant difference between the Mean responses by OMT Graduates for improved job performance. the following recommendations were given among others: that OMT Graduates in the public service should be given awareness by their employers on the need to acquire information systems application skills and Training institutions should develop programmes that would assist OMT Graduates update their skills at confidence time and space.

Keywords: Information, Application, Packages, Office Management, technology, performance.

Introduction

The functions of office management and technology graduates in every organisation have become broader in recent times. The OMT graduates responsibility in utilizing information systems requires certain skills that will enable them perform efficiently and effectively (Okubotimibi, 2010). According to Ubulom (2007), the duties of a secretaries have gone beyond performing the normal manual daily official routines. He asserted that, in today's automated office environment, secretaries are expected to acquire modern information system application skills in order to be efficient in their duties.

Secretaries in some establishments are most times referred to as information managers since the functional processes to which they are continually exposed to, are synonymous with normal office information managing activities. However, Uche (2004) opined that secretaries also oversee the implementation of office procedures, establish work priorities; conduct analyses of secretarial operations and co-ordinate acquisition of office services such as office space, supplies and other secretarial services. Morton (2012) listed new office technologies to include multi-functional printers, ICT multi-media devices, the computer system and its array of office integrated software. The office secretary has found a new application of personal digital assistance handheld computers, bulletin board/electronic discussion environment, online library, database, LCD projector, overhead projector, direct to home tech, two way messaging papers, Internet, video and teleconferencing, twither and other social media platforms.

Information systems, according to Askenas and Westalius (2003) are objects, technical constructions that are used by people, including offices/institutions to generate, create, organize and disseminate information that are specific to an organization. Onuekwa (2014) opined that information system is an umbrella of interconnected technological components that are used to collect, process, store as well as disseminate information to support decision making in any organization. The author observed that information system propels production in any organization because no organization can exist without information. Yasser, Alina and Nor (2014) explained that information systems technically is a set of interrelated components that are used to collect (or retrieve), process, store, and distribute information to support decision making, coordination and control, in any organization. Supporting this, in the same vein, Adakole (2015) described information systems as a term used to describe hardware and software elements that allow an individual to access, retrieve, store, organize manipulates and present information by electronic means.

Information systems application skills according to Chijioke (2006) are the skills that enable users to operate and manipulate all the equipment and machines that can enhance and accelerate the collection of data, its processing, analysis, transmission and presentation as facts to aid rational decision making, planning and control of business operations. It comprises ability to use various office technical devices in executing every day office activities. Information systems application skills also involve the ability to use computer application software such as, Microsoft suits in the collection, organization and management of office information that relates to the management of clients, sales records, and staff payroll information. It also includes the ability to use Internet facility in receiving, processing and

dissemination of information that will enhance the performance of the organization. The aforementioned abilities can be attained through effective training in the use of office technical devices, computer applications such as Microsoft office, relevant software applications and Internet among others.

Secretaries need for information system skills varies across organizations. This is due to the fact that their job responsibilities vary in line with their various organizations' objectives and goals. Therefore, even though secretaries generally are information managers, the type and nature of information they receive, generate, process, maintain and disseminate differ significantly. While some handle only text-inclined information, others may be required to handle text-numeric and graphic information. However, whatever type of information or data a secretary may be handling or have to handle, it is ideal that the secretary be well equipped with wide-range of information systems applications skills to enable easy mobility across jobs and have edge over others in this era of scarcity of job opportunities. There are many information systems application tools commonly used in various offices in public parastatals. These information systems application tools include: Microsoft suits, Internet services, graphic application tools like CorelDraw etc. The utilisation of these information system tools does not come with ease, it requires the development of certain level of competencies that will enable the users perform their jobs efficiently and effectively, thereby, enhancing the accomplishment of the public parastatals' objectives.

Another information systems application is the Microsoft graphic application software. Microsoft graphic, is application software that runs on windows. It is a set of programme which enables secretaries and information managers to manipulate graphics images by the use of information systems. Ubani (2008) stated that Microsoft graphics are software package which are used to produce graphics and drawings, ranging from graphs and logos to complex drawings. Ubani also maintained that Microsoft graphics software provides predefined background and sample page to assist in the creation of complete computer-driven slide shows, which in combination with a data projector can be used to present any kind of report.

Additionally, the publisher software application is a software application which a secretary utilizes to carry out his office duties effectively. Microsoft publisher is also referred to as desktop publishing tool and it is used with the aid of the computer to create documents that have the combination of text and graphics. Ndinechi and Ementa (2013) noted that publisher entails an application software that allows for the combination of text and graphics which aim at producing typeset quality documents such as: newsletters, flyers, brochures, magazines and so on. McGoldrick (2010) noted that publisher allows users to manipulate, typeset, and align images, graphics, and page layout with a single integrated system. According to Nwaosa, Egbule and Olannye (2013) office information managers need to develop their competencies on the use of desktop publishing application in order to be able to create documents that have the combination of charts, graphic, text and headlines with variety of typefaces.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that in order to take advantage of the advancement in technologies, governments across the country invested hugely in the procurement and maintenance of technologies used for information collection, processing, maintenance, storage and dissemination in higher institutions. As a result, there is virtually no office management and technology studio today that does not have one form of computer system or the other as well as networking cables or wireless connection for teaching and learning as well as acquisition information skills. However, despite these provisions, the researcher observed that many OMT Graduates find it difficult to utilise information systems for improvement of their jobs. Some of OMT graduates informations systems for typing of documents. Some of the computers in most public parastatals in Rivers State lie idle without being put to functional optimal use and where it is being used, only typing of textual documents are done with it. Most times, graphic and Microsoft publishers applications are neglected. Other times, publishers and graphics jobs are taken to commercial business centres for production. This exposes official documents to the public even before they are signed for implementation.

Most OMT graduates in public parastatals in Rivers State seem not to be trained in being ICT-office compliant, most of the OMT graduates seems to lack the basic skills for utilizing the information systems for effective job performance. Furthermore, most of the OMT graduates who find it difficult to utilize and apply ICT skills in producing official documents needed for official decision making. All these indicate lack of adequate exposure of today's public OMT to appropriate information system skills required for job performance. If these problems are to be solved, there is need to ascertain the specific information system skills need of secretaries for improved job performance in the tertiary institutions, especially as it relates to the secretaries in Rivers State.

Conceptual Review of OTM/Secretarial Graduates

Information system is an interconnected constituent of equipment that works in consonant with individuals to collect, process, stored and disseminate the processed data as information for policy control, coordination as well as decision-making of organizations. Agomuo (2014) observed that the concept of information system describes a set of people, procedures and resources that collects, transforms and disseminates information in an organisation. Agomuo also view information system as a system that accepts data resources as input and process them into information products as output. This makes it an imperative tool for the public institutions that use information system in facilitating their administrative activities. Information systems are integrated in everyday life of every organization in maximum utilization in carrying out the office routines, especially in public parastatals. It is worth noting that the activities of such organisations determine the type of information systems they procure and install for usage.

Laudon and Laudon (2013) opined that information system can be technically defined as a set of interrelated components that collect (or retrieve), process, store, and distribute information to support decision making and control in an organization. Thus, they stated that in addition to supporting decision making, coordination, and control. Information systems

involve the technical equipment used by secretaries to enhance office activities as well as facilitate work-force for more production in organizations. Okagbare and Ejeka (2011) opined that information systems are methods through which information could be disseminated in an organization, which includes; the equipment and machines used. Okagbare and Ejeka also stressed that information systems is concerned with the various methods by which information could be gathered, processed, reproduced, communicated, distributed, stored, protected and retrieved. According to Vincent in Agomuo (2014), information system is an attribute of value system which consists of three components, such as human, task and application systems. Information systems comprised the totality of office equipment and resources used for collection, process, storage as well as dissemination of information for organisational decision-making. It is important equipment which enhances secretaries' job performance in any organisation. Agomuo (2014) viewed information system as the discipline concerned with the development used, application and influence of technologies. Agomuo also stressed that information system is a specific type of system in general.

Information system is an object and technical construction that can be utilized by secretaries in creating, organizing and disseminate information in public parastatals system. Francis (2013) opined that information system is a set of interrelated sub-system that work together to collect, process, and store, transform, and distribute information for planning, decisions making and control in organizations. Information systems involve the combination of technological components and telecommunication networks such as the software, hardware and data. The ability of public parastatals to accomplish its purpose of operation depends on the performance of secretaries in carrying out their various office duties using the information systems application skills. Meanwhile, Atakpa (2013) defined application skill as the rapidly, precision, expertise, dexterity and proficiency exhibited through mental and manual repetition of performance of an operation. Atakpa also stated that application skill is a well-established habit of doing something through acquisition of performance capabilities. In the same vein, Etonyeaku (2008) observed that skill is the capability of a person to accomplish a task with desired precision and certainty, he also reiterates that skill involves practical knowledge in combination of cleverness, expertise, dexterity and ability to perform a function which could be acquired or learnt in school.

Information system is also viewed by Agomuo (2014) as a system, automated or manual that comprises people, machines and methods organized to collect, process, transmit and disseminate data that represent user information. Owens (2011) stated that sub-systems namely, telecommunications (voice, data and videos), mail room and courier services, record management etc. enhance office job accomplishment. According to Owen, the office secretarial function is therefore, to coordinate the increasing work and make sure that the technology is applied. Ihunda (2004) viewed information systems as a set of a procedures and methods designed to provide instant information to the organisations for effective and efficient business operation.

Theoretical Framework

System Theory by John Dunlop (1958)

The system theory was propounded by John Dunlop 1958. The major factors associated with job satisfaction such as a positive feeling about job performance are referred to as motivators or satisfiers and they include; sense of achievement, recognition of achievement, sense of responsibility and possibility of achievement/promotion. These factors encourage the growth and the development needs of people at their place of work. They are satisfiers and dissatisfiers factors as well as motivators 'achievement, recognition, advancement and growth. Therefore, public parastatal is part of system which displays the organizational system properties.

The system as an entity is made up of some components which is the sub-systems of any organization. The sub-systems of every public parastatal, as an organization are the public/civil servants working under Government supervision. There are other sub-systems such engineering (works), counsellors, medical as well as secretarial sub-systems. While in the public parastatals, there are administrative staff as well as other environmental factors that made up the entire public parastatals and finally the secretaries are a sub-system of the organization which the public parastatals must recognised and work with, as to achieve the goal of the organization.

Relatedness needs involve relationship with other people, such as co-workers, superiors, subordinates and friends including the ability of an individual to exist in harmony with other people in the organization. Growth needs relate to the need for unique personal development of the individual and the need for an individual to reach his highest potential at the work place.

Therefore, secretaries should work hard as to be able to acquire the necessary skills that will enable him operate the necessary information system applications to effectively discharge his secretarial duties. The system theory provides a measure and steps to secretaries in the utilization of systems applications skills such as Microsoft word, Internet services, excel, power point, database etc in performing efficiently in their assigned duties. The utilization of the afore-stated information systems application skills in public parastatals would revive the traditional state of the secretarial officers' job performance. The management authorities should encourage job performance and work towards motivating the best secretaries as to motivate them for effective job performance.

Secretaries cannot effectively carry out their office duties in a modern office without being equipped with information systems application skills for efficient job performance. The systems theories are those theories that consider an organization as a system or as an interrelated and interdependent set of elements functioning as a whole. Therefore, the theory is relevant and relates to this present study because secretaries are expected to acquire certain application skills that can enable them to perform in their secretarial duties.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the information application packages skills required by Office Management and Technology Graduates for Improved Job Performance in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Determine the publishers' application packages skills required by Office Management and Technology Graduates for improved job performance in Rivers State?
2. Determine the Graphics, application packages skills required by Office Management and Technology Graduates for job performance in Rivers State?

Research Questions

The research question guided the study

1. What are the publishers' application packages skills required by Office Management and Technology Graduates for improved job performance job performance in Rivers State?
2. What are the Graphics application packages skills required by Office Management Technology Graduates for job performance in Rivers State?

Null Hypotheses

This null hypothesis was tested at $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Ho₁ There is no significant difference in the Mean responses of Office Management Technology (OMT) graduates on the publishers' application packages skills required by OMT graduates for improved job performance in Rivers State.

Ho₂ There is no significant difference in the Mean responses of Office Management Technology (OMT) graduates on the Graphics application packages skills for OMT graduates for improved job performance in Rivers State.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The survey research design was employed because; the study attempted to elicit the opinions of Office Management Technology (OMT) Graduates. This study was carried out in Rivers State of Nigeria. The population for this study comprised 418 respondents in Rivers State. A sample size of 125 respondents sampled from tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The sample size is the representation of 30 percent of the population of the study. The sample size was selected using stratified random sampling technique. Office Management Technology Graduates were sampled using systematic random sampling technique. The researcher developed instrument titled "Information Application Packages Skills for Office Management and Technology Students Questionnaire (IAPSOMATSQ). The instrument was subjected to face-validation by three experts. The experts checked, corrected and clarified the items on the questionnaire. The experts' comments and input were used for the modification of the final copy of the instrument, to ensure that it measures the intended attributes. To determine the reliability of

the instrument, the validated IAPSOMATSQ was administered to 20 OMT graduates from Government owned higher institutions of learning. Cronbach’s Alpha test was used to test the internal consistency of the instrument items. The test yielded a coefficient index of 0.81 which was deemed reliable. The copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. The research assistants were briefed on the procedures for administration and collection of the instrument from the respondents. The respondents were given enough time to complete the questionnaires. The instrument was administered and retrieved within one week. The data collected were analysed using Mean and Improvement Need Index (INI) to answer the research questions, the weighted Mean for improvement application skills required of OMT graduates was represented by (x_1) while the weighted Mean of the job performance was represented by (x_2). The difference between the two Mean (\bar{x}), that is, (x_1-x_2) was determined to indicate the performance gap (PG), which yielded a positive or a negative value. The null hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test at .05 level of significance.

Research Question1: What are the Publishers application packages skills required by OMT Graduates for improved job performance in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and INI on Microsoft Publishers’ Application Skills Need of OMT Graduates for Improved Job Performance ($N=125$)

S/N	Items	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2$ (INI)	Remark
1	Ability to produce business documents	2.18	2.01	.17	Needed
2	Skills in manipulating documents	2.38	2.20	.18	Needed
3	Ability to produce magazines	3.21	3.02	.18	Needed
4	Ability to produce news letters	2.86	2.62	.24	Needed
5	Skills in typesetting of images	2.48	2.69	-.21	Not needed
Cluster Mean				.11	Needed

Data in Table 1 showed that the INI for Microsoft publisher applications are positive except on skills in typesetting of images with INI of - .20 in which the performance level of OMT exceeds the level of skills required. The positive cluster INI of .11 implies that the level at which the Microsoft publishers application skills are needed are higher than the level at which the OTM Graduates could perform.

Research Question 2: Determine the Graphics application packages skills required by Office Management and Technology Graduates for Improved job performance in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and INI on Microsoft Graphics Application Skills Need of OMT Graduates for Improved Job Performance (N=125)

S/N	Items	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	$\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2$ (INI)	Remark
1	Skills for drawing	1.82	1.76	0.6	Needed
2	Skills in manipulating pictures	1.87	1.84	0.3	Needed
3	Ability to create signs	1.68	1.66	.02	Needed
4	Ability to create animation	2.72	2.76	-.04	Not needed
5	Skills in manipulating symbols	2.88	2.66	.22	Needed
6	Ability to manipulate images	2.87	2.84	.43	Needed
7	Ability to create graphic identities	2.68	2.34	.34	Needed
Cluster Mean				.15	Needed

Data in Table 2 show the Mean ratings of OMT Graduates, the Mean performance of OMT graduates on Microsoft graphics application skills and INI for these skills. The INI for these skills are positive except on ability to create animation which has a negative index of -.04 which means that the level of OMT graduates performance exceeds the skill required for the application. But with the cluster INI of .15 there is need to improve upon the skills for the OMT to perform optimally.

Testing of Null Hypotheses

Ho₁ There is no significant difference in the Mean responses of Office Management and Technology (OMT) graduates on the publishers’ application packages skills required for improved job performance in Rivers State.

Table 3: The t-statistic testing the difference in the Mean responses of OMT Graduates on Microsoft publishers’ application skills (N= 125).

S/N	Items	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
1	Ability to produce business documents	2.18	2.01	1.21	1.96	NS
2	Skills in manipulating documents	2.38	2.20	1.26	1.96	NS
3	Ability to produce magazines	3.21	3.03	1.16	1.96	NS
4	Ability to produce news letters	2.86	2.62	1.04	1.96	NS
5	Skills in typesetting of images	2.48	2.69	-1.41	1.96	NS

NS= Not Significant at 0.05 alpha level and df = 123

Data in Table 3 showed the t-statistic testing the difference in the Mean responses of OMT graduates on Microsoft publishers’ application skills need of OMT for improved job performance. The test yields calculated t-values that are less than the t-critical value (1.90) at .05 level of significant and df = 123. The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference the Mean responses of OMT graduates on Microsoft publishers’ application skills need of OMT graduates for improved job performance is retained.

Ho₂ There is no significant difference in the Mean responses of Office Management and Technology (OMT) graduates on the Graphics application packages skills for OMT graduates for improved job performance in Rivers State.

Table 4: The t-statistic testing the difference in the Mean responses of OMT graduates on Microsoft graphics application skills (N=125)

S/N	Items	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
1	Skills for drawing object	1.82	1.76	.86	1.96	NS
2	Skills in manipulating pictures	1.87	1.84	.43	1.96	NS
3	Ability to create signs	1.68	1.66	1.33	1.96	NS
4	Ability to create animation	2.72	2.76	-1.74	1.96	NS
5	Skills in manipulating symbols	2.88	2.66	1.10	1.96	NS
6	Ability to manipulating images	1.87	1.84	14.43	1.96	NS
7	Ability to create graphic identities	2.68	2.84	8.23	1.96	NS

NS = Not Significant at 0,05 alpha level and df =123

Data in Table 4.11 show the t-statistic testing the difference in the Mean responses of OMT Graduates on the Microsoft graphic application skills need of OMT for Improved job performance. The test yield calculated t-values for two skills were greater than the critical t-values and were less than critical t-value (1.96) for five skills at .05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 123. Hence, the null hypothesis tested was rejected for two items and retained for five items.

Findings of the Study

Based on the results of data analyses the study reveals that:

1. Graphic application skills are need by OMT Graduates for improved job performance.
2. Publishers' application skills are needed by OMT Graduates for improved job performance. .
3. There is no significant difference in the Mean responses of OMT Graduates on publisher Application skills required for improved job performance.
4. There is no significant difference in the Mean responses of OMT Graduates on Graphics Application skills required for improved job performance.

Discussion of Findings

Publishers' Application Skills of OMT graduates for Improved Job Performance

Publishers' application skills of OMT graduates have been revealed by this study to be highly needed for job performance. The skills need yields a positive INI and is statistically significant at .05 level of significance. This result is influenced by the fact that OMT graduates need these skills to manipulate, typeset align images, graphics and page layout with single integrated system.

The result of the study also supported the findings of Nwaosu, Egbule and Olannye (2013) that Office Management and Technology (secretaries) need to develop their competencies in publishers' application skills otherwise referred to as desktop publishing application to be able to create document that has the combination of charts, graphic, text and headlines with variety of typefaces. The author further stressed that as a new version of this software emerge overtime, secretaries would have to review their skills need and embark on a career development programme that would enable them update their skills. This implies that Microsoft publishers' application skills need has a positive improvement need index as it is occasioned by emerging technologies.

Graphic Application Skills of OMT Graduates for Improved Job Performance

The result of the study revealed that graphic applications package skills of OMT graduates are highly needed for improved job performance, it shows a positive INI and the need is statistically significant at .05 alpha level. This result is influenced by the fact that OMT graduates use graphic Microsoft to display pictures such as advertisement, conferences, memoranda, events, printing of materials.

This result is supported the findings of Ubani (2008) stating that secretaries need Microsoft graphic skills to enable them combine variety of visual objects and text to create attractive and highly stylized images for slide shows and reports (messages) presentation to an audience. The result also supported the findings of Maxwell (2015) that variety of skills are need in Microsoft graphic application by secretaries to perform such tasks as presentation of information in text, graphs, diagram or in picture form to people. Graphic application skill packages is needed for production of graphics and drawing such as logo, simple graphics etc. Osungwu, Omuodu and Ugwu (2008) stressed that the knowledge and skills of CorelDraw and other aspects of Microsoft graphic application would enhance secretaries job performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Employers of labour should collaborate with training institutions on developing contents and instructional strategies for improving the Publishers application skills for secretaries and would-be secretaries improved job performance.
2. Management of academic institutions and curriculum planners should collaborate with employers of labour to identify graphic application skills needed by secretaries from time to time as technology advances. This will ensure continuous curriculum reforms in office technology management.
3. Federal and State governments should come out with policies that will ensure standards in the training and employment of secretaries for the public sector of the economy, especially as it relates to publisher's application skills acquisition.

4. OMT graduates and would-be OMT graduates should make concerted effort to develop their spreadsheet application skills in order to be proficient on the job.

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