Information and Communication Technology Skills and Job Prospects of Office Management Graduates in Rivers State Universities

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ABSTRACT
The study examined Information and Communication Technology Skills and Job Prospects of Office Management Graduates in Rivers State Universities. Two specific objectives, two research questions were postulated and answered while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level of significance. The study adopted the correlational research design. The population of this study comprised 158 Office Management and Technology students from Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Due to the manageable size of the population, census technique was adopted. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The instrument consists of 14 items in four clusters and was structured in a four- point Likert-type rating scale ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The validity of the instrument was done by three experts, two in the field of Business Education and one in the field of Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Faculty of Education in Rivers State University. A reliability coefficient of 0.69 was obtained through test- retest method of estimating reliability using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r). Research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient. The hypotheses were tested by transforming the coefficient of correlation obtained into z-value. Findings revealed amongst others that there is a relationship between information technology and job prospect of Office Management graduates in Rivers State Universities. It was recommended among others that (1) Government should employ lecturers with high skills for teaching ICT skills as to enhance students' knowledge for self reliance. (2) School management should assign independent monitors to ensure that constant provision of electricity to assist students training on ICT skill is made available.
Keywords: ICT, Word processing, Internet, Skills, Office Management Graduates.

INTRODUCTION
Information and Communication Technology is an umbrella term that includes any communication device and application, radio, television, cellular phone, computer and network, hardware and software, satellite system among others and can be used interchangeably for Information and Communication Technology (ICT). These gadgets contribute to processing, communication, assessing, retrieving, storing and simplifying information when needed and in the form which they are needed. Information Technology centered education covers the use of computers, online self-learning packages, interactive CDs, satellites, radio, optical fiber technologies and all types of Information Technology hardware and software, (Adebayo 2011). All offices in today's business world, be it government, industry or other human endeavors, require facts and accurate information for quick decision-making. The office workers, including the secretary, expects certain support from the organization into which he/she is employed. This support can be technological (machines and equipment) and human. In the past, managers dictated memoranda and letters while secretaries typed them. Most recently, business organizations have developed word processing centers and relied on personal computers and even electronic mail in an effort

to lessen the need for secretarial support and make the employee-secretary very unproductive which is as a result of technological advancement (Ezoem, 2011; Osuala, 2012).

The role of secretaries, also known as Office Management and Technology workers in the present business world has changed tremendously from that of typewriting and shorthand writers, answering of telephone calls and processing of mails. Before the advent of Information Technology (IT), professionals in the field of Office Management dealt a lot with paper-work and the typewriter served as the working tool. In recent time, Information Technology has introduced a new dimension to the field through computer and other electronic devices that give the profession a day-to-day transformation as Blanton (2010) posits that these new computer technologies have changed the way we engage in common activities. This is as an outcome of technological advancement. The means of information is restructured on daily basis to meet the demands of the current tendencies in the technical activities of the world. No doubt, secretaries are recognized as the custodian of information in most organizations. However, Business Education which is an essential element of this general education is concerned with the impartation of business orientation and skill for personal and national development. It involves teaching students the fundamentals, concepts, theories and processes of business. It is an important part of the general education which emphasizes skills and competencies acquisition for use in offices and business-related occupations Therefore, Abdulkadir (2011) highlighted one remarkable, important and functional characteristic of Business Education programme which is, its products can function independently as self-employed and employers of labour. The principles of Business Education includes basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office environment and vocational practices. Business Education which is an integral part of vocational and technical education is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment, and self-employment (Idialu, 2007). In line with this input, Koko (2019); Koko & Okogun (2020) opine that computer application, keyboarding, shorthand and basic accounting are basic office management and technology skills required for effective management of an office. This form of education plays a significant role in the economic development of a country by providing knowledge and skills to the learners which in turn will enable them to impart knowledge to others, handle sophisticated office technologies and information system. Its goal is primarily aimed at producing competent, dynamic and skillful business teachers, office administrators and business men and women that can comfortably compete in the work place.

Concept of Information Technology and Office Management

Information Technology (IT) is a generic term that covers the acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination of information (Adebayo, 2011). According to McLeod and Jones (2011), it involves the application of computers and communication technology in the task of information handling, information and information flow from the generation to the utilization levels. McLeod and Jones further buttressed that it is restricted to systems dependent on microelectronics based combination of computers and telecommunication technologies. Information Technology (IT) is a new technology applied to the creation, storage, selection, transformation and distribution of information of many kinds. Information Technology Association of America (2009), opined that IT is the study, design, development, implementation, support or management of computer-based information systems, particularly software applications and computer hardware. It deals with the use of electronic computers and computer software to convert, store, protect, process, transmit and retrieve information, securely. Sucre (2015) considers IT as science of information handling, particularly by computers, used to support the communication of knowledge in technical, economical and social fields. Igwe (2012) viewed IT as the acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination of vocal, pictorial, textual and numerical information by micro-electronics based combination of computing and telecommunication. According to Light (2016), IT means various means of obtaining, storage, and transforming information using computer, communication and micro-electronics. It is also the scientific technology and engineering disciplines and the management techniques used in information handling and processing their application, computers and their interaction with men and machines and associated social, economic and cultural matters (Zeal, 2011).

However, Godfrey (2017) viewed IT from four different viewpoints such as society, economics, technology and the individual. Godfrey is of the view that the common element of IT is the concept and volume information. He further mentions the four features which affect the quality of information such as accuracy, content (The breadth/Scope), regency and frequency of presentation. According to Hicks (2014), IT is the application of the computers and other technologies to the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information. It consists of a group of technologies which particularly cover the computers capability to store and process information known as information processing and telecommunication technology which are capable of transmitting information to distances. Thus information science and technology, deals with the study of computers, telecommunication among others, for storing organizing and retrieving information of all kinds.

Thong and Yap in Fritz (2016) posit that Information Technology is a computer software and hardware solutions that provide support of management, operations, and strategists in organizations. Fritz stated that the goal of having Information Technology is increasing productivity of a co-operation. Ben (2009) defines Information Technology as those technologies engaged in the operation, collection, transport, retrieving, storage, access presentation, and transformation of information in all its forms. Also information technology could be regarded as technological aspect of systems of information as it is reported by (Hollander, 2013). Information technology is aimed at creation of computer-based systems of information by using computer system in an organization. However, looking at it from the term of business relationships, Information Technology is the use of automated purchasing systems, supplier links through electronic data interchange, computer-to-computer links with key suppliers and finally systems of information (Souras, 2010). It is used by an organization to collect, process, and disseminate information in all its form. Therefore, the component of information technology will include hardware (scanner, printer, computer among others), software (operating systems, application development language, office application among others).

According to Attan (2013), Information technology is defined as capabilities offered to organizations by computers, software applications, and telecommunications to deliver data, information, and knowledge to individuals and processes. Tan (2009) viewed IT as the application of Information and Communication Technologies tools including computer network, software and hardware required for internet connection. Based on this review and align with afore-mentioned views, the term information technology will cover wide range of information processing and computer application in organizations. It will cover systems of information, Internet, information and communication related technologies, and their infrastructure including computer soft wares, networks and hardwares, which processes or transmit information to enhance the effectiveness of individuals and organizations.

Office management on the other hand, is the process of planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling the administrative functions of an office in order to achieve the objectives of the organization. According to John (2013), it is the process of utilizing the office resources efficiently to obtain the best result with less effort and cost. It helps in receiving, recording and processing, supplying and retaining information. It is the branch of management which deals with performance of these functions. Light (2017) remarked that office management is that part of management concerned with the systematic management of office work in order to ascertain the objective of the office. Light further stated that it is the process of planning, organizing, leading, directing and controlling of official activities. Office management is very much important for the achievement of organizational goals. It helps bring smoothness to the performance of business activities, provides a regular flow of communication between each department and level of people in an office. George (2013) posits that office management is the task of planning coordination, motivating the efforts of others towards the specific objectives in the office.

Office management refers to the process of planning, organizing, guiding, communicating, directing, coordinating and controlling the activities of a group of people who are working to achieve business objectives efficiently and economically (Mayor, 2015). Office management is not only necessary to business organization but also essential to non-business organization. In modern internet society also, there is a need of direction to the individual efforts towards common purpose or objective. The direction is given from a place i.e. office. Furthermore, office management is the art of guiding the personnel of the

office in the use of means appropriate to its environment in order to achieve its specified purpose (Mills & Standingford, 2013).

Information Technology Skills and Job Prospects of Office Management and Technology Students
Office management graduates in most organizations sometimes hold the position of a secretary, an assistant to an executive officer or a manager. They are trained to type and perform many office and clerical duties, and possess personal and business attributes (Morris, 2010). They guard their professional ethics of confidentiality, good appearance and absolute loyalty (Onifade, 2010). The work of an office management graduate is characterized by handling and processing of information using diverse information technologies in the execution of their tasks. Secretarial practices in the public and private sectors have therefore witnessed several changes with regard to the roles and tasks of the secretary (Akpomi & Ordu, 2009). Office machines and equipment that were used to store records, produce, duplicate and disseminate information in organizations has undergone numerous transformations in order to go in line with the fast growing world of technology (Austin, 2015). In the present day practice, an important aspect that makes organizations exceptional is in their use of modern IT equipment (Austin, 2015).

The secretary/office management graduate, due to the nature of his or her work has remained to be a key player in the success of achieving organizational goals and objectives. Many organizations relied on the secretary's abilities for the achievement of their organizational goals and objectives (Nwaokwa & Okoli, 2012). According to Akpomi and Ordu (2009), every organization needs correct facts and accurate information for appropriate and beneficial decision making. Akpomi and Ordu further opined that the role played by the secretary or office management graduate in the organization is very important as regards to the progress of that organization were they work and the need for technological and human support for the secretary/office management graduate from the organization where he/she works is much desirable. Their efficient and effective performance in the organization depends on the optimal utilization of the office technologies as well as the knowledge and skills of manipulating the available office technologies (Godstime, 2014). The emergence of modern office ITs has reduced the tedious tasks of repeating tasks several times. Their nature of production, reproduction, storage and retrieval of information has been removed by the presence of the IT (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall 2009). However, the development of office technologies which resulted in the creation and use of computers and software programmes has simplified the work of office management graduates. The output of the present day secretary/office management graduate is quite higher if compared with that of the old time secretary/office management graduate. This is evident if the benefits of using these technologies such as the printer, pen drive, hand phones, photo copier, e-mail, the internet were viewed as factors maximizing the secretaries' general output.

According to Adeyinka (2010), there is no clear job description for office managers at each career level. As a result, clear job description for secretaries/office management and technology workers at each career level needs to be addressed. The present career structure for this level of workers seem to show much of job limitation and restricted scope of authority which negate his/her promotion to the managerial level. This situation limits the opportunities open to the office management and technology job prospects and performance.

Conclusively, irrespective of the enormous advantages of information technology and her gadgets such as computer, telephone amongst others, the graduate of office management and technology and his/her world of work has not been without challenges which include inadequate information technology equipment such as computers in tertiary institutions for proper teaching and learning of the course office management, lack of competent and qualified lecturers for effective teaching of the course and absence of a professional body that will intermediate between the government and the office management graduates. This situation demands a closer look at the relationship between information technology skills and job prospects of Office Management and Technology students in Rivers State universities.

1.2   Statement of the Problem
Information Technology in business has been known to attract some concerns by prospective office workers, particularly those who do not possess adequate skill and training in their use. Okwuanaso and

Obayi as cited in Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012), asserted that Information Technology has posed challenges to office management and technology graduates as they communicate in the present-day office unlike in the past where secretaries' functions were performed manually such that documents and records were maintained on papers, stored in files and drawers. Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012) maintained that many office functions and secretarial duties which were previously done manually have now been mechanized. Thus, the diversities of these office technologies require the office manager to possess new skills and sub-skills to enable him/her to be relevant in the modern office. These observations may signal doom for secretarial workers who may seem irrelevant in today's modern offices without Information Technological skills (Koko, 2018). According to Koko, the use of Information Technology has reduced the work in offices and with its usage, organizations have been able to reduce the work strength by using one employee to do the work done by three people in the past. For example, the work of a receptionist has been replaced with the use of mobile or cellular phones.

The work of a copy-typist can easily be accomplished by an executive and thereby office management functions can easily be centrally coordinated. Therefore, the question that readily comes to mind is, what does this new development portray for Office Management and Technology students at the point of graduation? Can Information Technology use in modern offices pose a challenge for the arduous work of office management and technology students and therefore affect their job prospects? What will be the relationship between the use of information technology and job prospects of Office Management and Technology students in Rivers State universities. However, the introduction of Information Technology is expected to create better employability of office management graduates particularly where they are well trained in their use.

To this end, the study sought to examine Information Technology skills as it relates to job prospects of office management graduates in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the relationship between Information Technology skills and job prospects of office management graduates in Rivers State Universities. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1   Determine the relationship between word processing skills as an aspect of Information and Communication Technology and job prospects of office management and technology graduates in Rivers State Universities.

2   Examine the relationship between the use of the internet skills as an aspect of information technology and job prospects of office management graduates base on their perceptions in Rivers State Universities.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered to guide the study.

1   What is the relationship between word processing skills as part of Information and Communication Technology as it affects the job prospects of office management and technology graduates in Rivers State Universities?

2   What is the relationship between the use of the internet skills as an aspect of Information and Communication Technology and job prospects of office management and technology graduates in Rivers State Universities?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1   There is no significant relationship between word processing skills as part of Information and Communication Technology as it affects the job prospects of office management and technology graduates in Rivers State Universities?

2   There is no significant relationship between the use of the internet as an aspect of Information and Communication Technology and job prospects of office management and technology graduates in Rivers State Universities?

METHODOLOGY

The correlational research design was adopted for the study because it enabled the researchers to determine the interrelationship between the variables (Nwankwo 2013).

The study was carried out in two Universities in Rivers State. The Universities are; Rivers State University, (RSU) Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) Port Harcourt. The choice was made because these two universities offer Office Management and Technology as a programme in Business Education. The population of this study consists of 158 male and female office management and technology graduates from Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt.

Due to the manageable size of the population of study, census technique was adopted. A self-structured and validated instrument titled "Information and Communication Technology Skills and Job Prospects of Office Management and Technology Students" (ITSJPOMG), was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument consists of 14 item in four clusters. Participants responded to the question statement on a modified four point likert scale ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by three experts. Two Business Educators and one in measurement and evaluation all in the faculty of Education. Fifteen copies of the questionnaire were administered to the office management graduates that are not part of the population in Bayelsa State using test re-test method. Their responses were collated and analyzed using Cronbach Alpha. A reliability coefficient (r) of 0.82 was established for the instrument. Based on the achieved coefficient, the instrument was therefore adjudged reliable and suitable enough for the study.

The research instrument was personally administered on the respondents by the researchers together with two research assistants who were carefully trained on the contents of the instrument by the researcher. Copies of the questionnaire were collected after two weeks interval, so as to enable accuracy in their responses where on the spot collection was not feasible. The retrieved copies of the questionnaire were used for analysis of the results. The data collected for the study were collated and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) formula. Research questions were answered based on the value of the correlation coefficient. Hypotheses were tested for significance of relationship at 0.05 level of significance with 156 degrees of freedom. This was further tested by transforming the coefficient of correlation (r) to z in order to establish the significance or otherwise of the value. If the calculated value of z (zcal) is less than the critical value of z (zcal), the null hypothesis is accepted but if the calculated value of z (zcal) is greater than the critical value of z (zcal), the null hypothesis is rejected.

RESULT/FINDINGS

Research Question 1: *What is the relationship between word processing as part of Information and Communication Technology as it affects the job prospects of office management and technology graduates in Rivers State Universities?*

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the analysis of responses on the Relationship between Word Processing Skills and Job Prospects of Office Management and Technology Students in Rivers State Universities

Variables	n	ΣX	ΣY	ΣX^2	ΣY^2	ΣXY	r	Remark
Word Processing (X)								
Job Prospect (Y)	158	158	15	5528	55	528	0.87	Very Strong Relationship

Table 1 shows the relationship between word processing skills as part of Information Technology as it affects the job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities. The result indicated that the relationship that exist between word processing as part of Information Technology and job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities is very strong.

Research Question 2: *What is the relationship between the use of the internet as an aspect of Information and Communication Technology and job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities?*

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the analysis of responses on the Relationship between Use of Internet and Job Prospects of Office Management and Technology Students in Rivers State Universities

Variables	n	ΣX	ΣY	ΣX^2	ΣY^2	ΣXY	r	Remark
Internet IT (X)								
	158	158	15	7274	55	603	0.85	Very Strong Relationship
Job Prospect (Y)								

Table 2: shows the relationship between the use of the internet as an aspect of Information and Communication Technology Skills and job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities. The result indicated that the relationship that exist between the use of the internet as aspect of information technology skills and job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities is very strong.

Test of Hypotheses
Null Hypothesis 1
There is no significant relationship between word processing skills as part of Information and Communication Technology as it affects the job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities.

Table 3 **Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between Word Processing skills and Job Prospects of Office Management and Technology Students in Rivers State Universities**

Variables	n	df	r	Zcal.	Zcrit.	Sig.	Decision
Word Processing (X)							
	158	156	0.87	22.03	1.96	0.05	Reject: H_{O1}
Job Prospects (Y)							

Table 3 indicated that the r = 0.87, Zcal = 22.03, Ztab = 1.96, and df = 156. Thus, since Zcal > Ztab, then the result implied that the null hypothesis one is rejected at the 0.05 significant level. This implies that there is a significant relationship between word processing as part of Information and Communication Technology as it affects the job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities.

Null Hypothesis 2:
There is no significant relationship between the use of the internet as an aspect of Information and Communication Technology and job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities.

Table 4.: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between use of Internet and Job Prospects of Office Management and Technology Students in Rivers State Universities

Variables	n	df	r	Zcal.	Zcrit.	Sig.	Decision
Internet IT (X)							
	158	156	0.85	20.06	1.96	0.05	Reject: H_{O4}
Job Prospect (Y)							

Table 4. Indicated that the r = 0.85, Zcal = 20.06, Ztab = 1.96, and df = 156. Thus, since Zcal > Ztab, then the result implied that the null hypothesis four is rejected at the 0.05 significant level. Hence, there is a

significant relationship between the use of the internet as an aspect of Information and Communication Technology and job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The researchers made a combined discussion of results gotten from the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Information Technology and job prospects of office management students in Rivers State Universities.

From the data analysis, the result from research question one and hypothesis one revealed that there exist a very high and significant relationship between word processing skills as part of Information Technology and job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities is very high. This findings are consistent with the findings of Ola (2015), whose study revealed that ICT use is connected with workers skills, suggesting that firms that use high levels of ICT also employ more skill workers.

The use of the internet as aspect of information technology and job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities.

The result from research question two and hypothesis two revealed that there exist a very high relationship that exist between the use of the internet as aspect of information technology and job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities. Furthermore, the result indicates that there was significant relationship in the mean ratings of male and female of information technology and job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities. This is in line with Oris (2015), whose study revealed that a secretary who is well trained in the modern way finds it easy to work with modern equipment of information technology.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it was concluded that word processing skills and internet as an aspect of Information and Communication Technology relates to job prospects of office management graduates in Rivers State Universities. The use of the internet as aspect of information technology relates to job prospects of office management and technology students in Rivers State Universities.

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings the researchers recommended that:

1. Government should employ lecturers with high skills for teaching ICT skills in other to enhance student's knowledge for self reliance.
2. The school management should assign independent monitors that will ensure that constant provision of electricity to assist students training on ICT is made available.

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