



## **Electronic Work Skills Required By Office Education Graduates For Effective Job Performance In State Government Ministries**

Comfort Elemchi Chima-Uduma<sup>1</sup> & Prof. B. E. Okoli<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business Education  
Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business Education  
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria

### **ABSTRACT**

The study was carried out to identify the electronic work skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The design of the study was a survey design. The population of the study comprised 126 directors and administrative officers of State government ministries in Ebonyi State. The entire population was studied. So, there was no sampling. A structured questionnaire, validated by two experts in Business Education and one expert in Science Education Departments was used for the study. Using Cronbach alpha statistics, the instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.95. One hundred and seven copies of the questionnaire were accurately completed and returned. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The results of the study showed that: internet skills and database management skills were very highly required by office education graduates for effective job performance. There is significant difference between the mean responses of directors and administrative officers on internet skills and there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on database management skills. The implication is that office education workers in state ministries may be displaced if they do not have the required skills in this era. It was recommended among others that office education workers should update their knowledge on the latest internet and database management skills to stay relevant in this era.

**Keywords:** Electronic work skills, Office education graduates, Job performance

### **INTRODUCTION**

Oyesode (2006) stated that the general functions of an office which include; gathering information, keeping information, arranging information, giving information, protecting information and accessing electronic systems among others are now performed by electronic devices. Osagie in Peter (2010) stated that office education is a type of education that is concerned with office occupation or the acquisition of the skills, aptitudes, attitudes and knowledge for carrying out successfully the functions in the office. Akarahu (2010) opined that office education makes significant impact on the nation's economy through the preparation of clerical workers for entry into the labour market.

Ejeka (2010) also stated the objectives of office education to include;

- i. To make judicious, socio-economic decisions as citizens;
- ii. To provide career information that helps students relate their interests, needs and abilities to occupational opportunities in business;

iii. To provide educational opportunities to students for career in fields other than business and to acquire knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in these careers for example, to handle effectively both oral and written communication and to develop effectively interpersonal and human relation skills;

iv. To provide skills needed to compete effectively in this challenging global world.

These objectives are in line with the Nigeria National Policy on Education objective as contained in NPE (2013). The policy stressed the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society. Office education as part of business education offers skill acquisition courses which made its graduates the manpower source of the nation.

Office education graduates work with the administrative officers and directors in government ministries. According to FRN (2000) the administrative officer is a government worker in the office of the Head of Civil Service from Grade Level 8-14 in the administrative cadre. Administrative officers are involved with the implementation of objectives, plans and internal operator efficiency (Hartzell in Ajike, 2015). They work with the office education staff in the ministry to carry out organizational functions for the day-to-day running of the ministry. So they are in a better position to determine the modern office work skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in their establishment. FRN (2000) stated that the directors in the state government ministries are senior officers in the office of the Head of Civil Service in Grade Level 16 in the administrative cadre. A government official in the administrative cadre can actually climb to the rank of the director through promotion. The directors utilize the services of the office education graduate for the day-to-day running of the government ministries.

Gender is generally classified into masculine and feminine, and they are connected with the attitude that describes males or females in the social and cultural content (Eze 2013). According to Dowrak and Toulemon (2007), the term gender is socio-cultural and is built based on the biological expectation of the individual on the basis of being a male or female. The directors and administrative officers can be either males or females.

Okoli (2013) posited that skill is the economic tool with which entrepreneurs confront and solve societal problems. The author further stressed that skills are practical activities which make one to be employable, self-reliant and relevant in the society. Okorie (2001) opined that skill is a well-established habit of doing something. Internet skills are important skills that may be required of office education graduates to function effectively in this era. Internet according to Awake in Atakpa (2014) is described as a gateway into the world of seemingly inexhaustible resources. It enables the user to exchange information with other users anywhere in the world provided they are connected to it. Today, the internet skills are increasingly making their presence felt, not only playing important roles in research and education but also equipping the office educators with skills that will help them function effectively and efficiently in their offices in this era of technology. It is therefore not a surprise that the internet skills have become development of the highest significance. No wonder Press in Agomuo (2014), stressed that the importance attached to internet development has naturally led to notice the gap in technology between industrialized and developing nations, exacerbating an already significant moral and practical problem. Ovbaigele (2006) described database as containing a great deal of information on business activities, facilities, operations and maintenance or any other information relevant to the operation of a business. In utilizing a database, a centralized database management skill increases speed, improves data management and decreases cost.

Today's workplace has changed rapidly due to economic and technological factors. The impact of technology has rendered manual skills inadequate for the world of work. The new technologies demand that workers should be highly equipped with electronic skills. The office education graduates face a job market or organization that is decidedly different from a generation ago and the truth is that they must compete with these changes and make themselves capable for the current requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century modern workplace. According to Shafe and Nayan (2010) workers globally need to be highly skilled with academic, technical and general competencies so as to meet the demands of the ever changing technology. Njoku in Ndinechi and Ementa (2013) also observed that one of the major aims of business

education (office education inclusive) is to empower the recipients with desirable skills, knowledge and values to perform specific functions. However, the author regretted that business education graduates exhibit little or no skills when engaged in office occupation requiring the use of office skills.

In this era, office education graduates need to be equipped with electronic skills for effective job performance in their places of work. However, the extent to which they have these skills has not been ascertained. Again, personal observations and interactions with the office education graduates in Ebonyi State showed that in this era of modern office technology and information systems, they are fast losing their employment relevance to roadside trained computer operators and computer education graduates who may not be knowledgeable and versatile in computer application packages. The study therefore tries to identify the electronic work skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to identify the electronic work skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the internet skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.
2. Identify the database management skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.

### **Research Questions**

The following formulated research questions guided the study:

1. What are the internet skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State?
2. What are the database management skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

Ho1 There is no significant difference between the mean responses of directors and administrative officers on internet skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.

Ho3 There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on database management skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The study made use of survey design. The study was carried out in Ebonyi State. The population of the study comprised 126 directors and administrative officers of state government ministries of Ebonyi State. The entire population was studied because it was of a manageable size. So, there was no sampling. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. It was validated by three experts. Using Cronbach alpha, the four (4) scale instrument yielded a reliability of 0.95 and was considered reliable for the study. The researchers distributed 126 copies of the questionnaire but only 107 were correctly filled and returned for analysis. Data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions.

When:  $x < 1$  = Not Required (NR)  
 $1 < x < 2$  = Required (R)  
 $2 \leq x < 3$  = Highly Required (HR)  
 $3 \leq x = 4$  = Very Highly Required (VHR)

T-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis is rejected if the t-calculated value is greater than the t-critical value. Otherwise, the null hypothesis is accepted if the t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1: Mean results of the internet skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.**

S/N	INTERNET SKILLS: The Ability to:	N	X	SD	REMARK
1	Access the internet	107	3.24	0.80	VHR
2	Perform basic internet search	107	3.11	0.76	VHR
3	Scroll in web page	107	3.12	0.77	VHR
4	Compose message	107	3.18	0.80	VHR
5	Send message	107	3.14	0.78	VHR
6	Open message	107	3.21	0.81	VHR
7	Read message	107	3.35	0.75	VHR
8	Reply message	107	3.25	0.76	VHR
9	Forward message	107	3.21	0.75	VHR
10	Store-email message	107	3.15	0.76	VHR
11	Retrieve e-mail message	107	3.14	0.86	VHR
12	Attach a file	107	3.16	0.77	VHR
13	Open an attachment	107	3.28	0.67	VHR
14	Understand basic e-mail etiquette	107	3.28	0.73	VHR
15	Knowledge of common e-mail providers	107	3.22	0.80	VHR
16	Conduct a basic technology-based reference interview related to software	107	3.17	0.73	VHR
17	Search for text in a web page	107	3.01	0.87	VHR
18	Add bookmarks/favorites	107	2.91	0.87	HR
19	Use bookmarks/favorites	107	3.10	0.84	VHR
20	Message bookmarks/favorites	107	3.09	0.81	VHR
21	Change the default home page	107	3.00	0.84	VHR
22	Clear temporary internet files	107	3.14	0.81	VHR
23	Search history of internet files	107	3.12	0.76	VHR
24	Use the print preview feature	107	3.17	0.78	VHR
25	Print all or part of a web page	107	3.10	0.84	VHR
	<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.15</b>		VHR

Result in Table 1 revealed that all items on internet skills have mean ratings that range from 3.28 to 2.91 and grand mean of 3.15. This indicated that the respondents rated the above listed skills as the internet skills very highly required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.

**Table 2: Mean Results of the database management skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.**

S/N	DATA BASE MANAGEMENT SKILLS: Ability to:	N	X	SD	REMARK
41	Enter data using existing templates and other techniques	107	3.22	0.81	VHR
42	Upload database forms to the web	107	3.07	0.79	VHR
43	Upload database tables to the web	107	3.16	0.82	VHR
44	Create database queries	107	3.05	0.73	VHR
45	Create database reports	107	3.02	0.71	VHR
46	Create database files	107	3.11	0.76	VHR
47	Design databases file	107	3.02	0.71	VHR
48	Preview database files	107	3.01	0.80	VHR
49	Print database files s	107	3.11	0.70	VHR
50	Merge data. With word processing	107	3.05	0.82	VHR
51	Query a database	107	3.06	0.88	VHR
52	Recognize parts of a database like records fields	107	3.16	0.89	VHR
53	Manage file	107	3.28	0.86	VHR
54	Find information	107	3.20	0.73	VHR
55	Sort information	107	3.20	0.73	VHR
56	Create payroll for workers of different grade levels	107	3.25	0.75	VHR
57	Create forms	107	3.02	0.82	VHR
	<b>Cluster Mean</b>		<b>3.11</b>		VHR

From the data presented in the Table 2 above, the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents range from 3.01 to 3.28 and grand mean of 3.11. This implied that the respondents rated all the skills as database management skills very highly required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.

**Table 3: Summary of t-test of difference between the mean responses of directors and administrative officers on internet skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.**

Variables	Status	N	X	SD	DF	P	t-cal.	t-Critical	Decision
Internet skills	Administrative	63	3.56	0.95	105	0.05	3.974	1.98	S
	Officer								
	Director	44	3.16	0.32					

**Key:** N= No. of Respondents, X = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, Df = Degree of freedom, P= level of significant, t-Cal. = t-calculated, t-Critical (tables)

The above table showed that a t-calculated value of 3.974 is less than t-Critical of 1.98. This indicated significant result. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. This implied that there is significant difference between the mean responses of directors and administrative officers on internet skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.

**Table 4: Summary of t-test of difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on database management skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.**

Variables	Status	N	Mean	SD	DF	P	t-Cal	t-Critical	Decision
Database management skills	Female	56	3.10	3.32	105	0.05	0.93	1.98	NS
	Male	51	3.31	3.04					

**Key:** N= No. of Respondents, X = Mean, SD = Standard deviation, Df = Degree of freedom, P= level of significant, t-Cal. = t-calculated, t-Critical (tables)

Table 4 showed that a t-calculated value of 0.93 is less than a t-critical value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance and 105 degree of freedom. This indicated no significant result. Therefore, the hypothesis was upheld. This implied that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on database management skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State.

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The study with regards to research question one found that internet skills are highly required by office education graduates for effective job performance in government ministries in Ebonyi State. This finding is in agreement with that of Abuokwen (2010) who found that internet skills are required by business education students in the area of study. The finding further supports the views of Agomuo in Oguejiofor and Nwogu (2014) who posited that internet skills will enable the secretary exchange ideas, values, interests in an interactive manner to people and organization all over the world. The implication of this finding is that in this era of technology, office education graduates who lack the internet skills may lose their jobs or employment relevance to computer science and computer education graduates.

This study also showed that there is significant difference between the mean responses of directors and administrative officers on internet skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State. This is in agreement with earlier findings of Emeje (2009) who found that office education graduates require internet skills to be able to work effectively in today's office. In support of this Agomuo (2004) asserted that business educators (office educators inclusive) should be skilled and knowledgeable in the use and application of internet. This

therefore implied that office education graduates should be very knowledgeable and skilled in the uses and application of internet skills for effective performance in the today's office.

The study with regards to research question two found that database management skills are highly required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State. The finding is in agreement with that of Ugwuja (2013) who found that database management skills are required by business education students in the area of study. In support of this, Agomuo (2014) posited that database application provide tools which enable records one holds to be conveniently manipulated. The implication is that office education graduates highly require skills in database management to work in an automated office and also to enable them work effectively in uploading database forms to the web, create database tables, create payroll for workers, create forms, sort information and others.

The study also found that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on database management skills required by office education graduates for effective job performance in state government ministries was upheld. This finding is not in agreement with the earlier finding of Sadik (2005) who found that females respond differently from males when it comes to technology. Samak (2006) also found that females and males are technophobia. This implied that office education graduates require database management skills for effective job performance in their offices.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the study concluded that in this era, office education graduates require skills in internet and database management skills for effective job performance in state government ministries in Ebonyi State. These skills lead to efficiency and productivity in the office. Office education graduates who do not possess these skills may be displaced in the office in this era of office automation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Office education graduates need to work with the continually evolving technology by constantly updating their knowledge on internet and database management skills. This will help them to stay effective and relevant in this 21<sup>st</sup> century office work.
2. The state ministries should organize seminars, conferences, and workshops for training and re-training of their office workers. This will enable them to improve on internet skills and perform effectively in this era of office automation.
3. The state government should provide modern office equipment or facilities for office education graduates working in the state government ministries in Ebonyi State.
4. Trainers of office educators in tertiary institutions should ensure that their departments have well equipped laboratories with internet facilities since it is imperative that learning facilities should be replica of those in the intending offices.

## REFERENCES

- Abuokwen, C. U. (2010). Electronic office skills required by business education students in universities in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States. *Unpublished M.Ed Thesis*. UNN, Nsukka.
- Agomuo, E. E. (2004). Co-operative efforts to business teacher preparation. *Business Education Journal*, 4 (2), 25-36.
- Agomuo, E. E. (2014). *Modern office technology; issues, procedures and practice*. Nsukka: Debees Printing Services.
- Ajike, V. O. (2015). ICT based skills required by secretaries for effective administration of local governments in Abia State. *Unpublished ME.d thesis*. University of Nigeria Nsukka.
- Atakpa, R. A. (2014). Information technology skills required by secretaries for global service market. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 2 (1), 149-154.

- Dowrak, W. N. & Toulemon, D. (2007). *Gender difference in the transition of adulthood in France: Is there any convergence over the recent period.* Retrieved on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015, from [http://www.oea.ac.at/vis/download/wp\\_2007.pdf](http://www.oea.ac.at/vis/download/wp_2007.pdf).
- Ejeka, A. U. (2010). The impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on the development of office education. *Association of Business Educators of Nigeria Book of Readings*, 1 (10), 103-108.
- Eze, D. N. (2013). *Science without a woman: A Paradox.* An inaugural lecture of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka: Faculty of Education
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). *National policy on education.* Lagos: NERDC press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2000). *Schemes of service.* Abuja: Office of the Head of Service of the Federation.
- Ndinechi, G. I & Ementa, C. N. (2013). Business education students' rating of the teaching of word processing and desktop publishing skills in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 1 (2), 75-82.
- Oguejiofor, C. S. & Nwogu, F. (2014). Professional competencies of secretaries for managing new office technology in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education*, 1 (3), 114-121.
- Okoli, B. E. (2013). The entrepreneurial skills needed of business education students in information and communication technology driven business environment. *Journal of Business and Vocational Education*, 2 (1), 91-96.
- Omeje, T. S. (2009). An assessment of ICT skills required by secretarial studies teachers in tertiary institution in Kogi State. *Business Education Journal*, vii (i), 81-93.
- Ovbiagele, A. O. (2006). Common uses of information and communication technology in organization. *Journal of Office Management and Technology*, 1 (1), 33-41.
- Oyesode, S. A. (2006). The impact of office automation on secretarial practice. *Journal of Office Management and Technology*, 1 (1), 160-166.
- Peter, C. B. (2010). Technology in office education: challenges and implications for secretaries and business educators. *Association of Business Educators of Nigeria Book of Readings*, 1 (10), 11-16.
- Sadik, A (2005). Factors influencing teachers' attitude towards personal and school use of computers: New evidence from a developing nation. *Evaluation Review*, 2 (1), 1-29.
- Samak, Z. A. (2006). Exploration of Jordanian English Language teachers' attitude, skill and access as indicators of ICT integration in Jordan. *Unpublished Doctoral Thesis*, Florida State University.
- Shafe, L. A. & Nayan, S. (2010). Employability awareness among Malaysian undergraduates. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5 (8), 119-123.
- Ugwuja, S. I. (2013). Computerized office skills required by computer education students of colleges of education for employment in business organizations in Enugu State. *Unpublished M.Ed Thesis.* University of Nigeria, Nsukka.