

ASSESSMENT OF DIGITAL OFFICE SKILLS REQUIRED BY SECRETARIES FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to assess the digital office skills required by secretaries for effective administrative service delivery in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. To achieve this, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population for the study consisted of 145 secretaries in Delta State University, Abraka, Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Warri, University of Delta, Agbor, Southern Delta University, Ozoro, Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku, Federal College of Education, Asaba and Denis Osadebe University, Asaba. The sample for the study was 75. The instrument used was structured questionnaire items of four (4) point rating scale. The reliability of the instrument used was 0.86 which was determined using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The instrument was content and face validated by three experts in Business Education. Two research questions were raised to guide the study, while one hypothesis was formulated. The data collected for the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using z-test. The findings revealed that digital computer application skills, data based management, video based and photo based social media skills are required by secretaries in tertiary institutions for effective administrative service delivery. It was recommended among others that state of the art ICT facilities and regular training should be given to the secretaries to enable them perform their duties effectively and efficiently.

Keywords: Digital, ICT Skills, Secretaries, Service Delivery, Tertiary Institution.

Introduction

In today's office, the duties of secretaries in organization have become very dynamic and challenging. The emergence of information communication technology is speedily advancing on daily basis. The secretarial profession in both public and private organization therefore requires the secretary to equip him/herself with the requisite digital employability office skills in office technology and management Practice, as to remain relevant in the 21st century world of work. Ezeonwurie (2017) stated that the system of office information generation, acquisition, processing, storage, dissemination and even the business environment all over the world have witnessed tremendous changes and challenges in its traditional methods and practices; this has made the secretarial profession to fall among office personnel who have come face to face with the challenges of new technologies. In the same vein, Okolocha and Baba (2017) asserted that it is an undisputed fact that there is a wide spread of technological advancement in ways and means that if secretaries do not brace up would render office services by secretaries irrelevant.

A secretary according to Adozoga and Massnawain (2017) is expected to be computer literate and proficient in word processing, spreadsheet and desktop publishing software, others are, proficiency in sending and receiving electronic mail (e-mail) and browsing the World Wide Web (www) (that is the

internet). Also, Bolade (2012) opined that the secretary's value to the organization is often measured by response to those functions and challenges.

Statement of the Problem

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2019), asserted that occupation of specific skills are no longer sufficient for graduates of office technology and management to meet the needs of digital world of work, and that it takes a set of employability skills. The required employability skills for OTM practitioners can be referred as acquisition of the digital soft skills. Higher vocational training institution are often criticized as a result of the gap in skill possessed by secretaries and the required employability skills needed in the 21st century world of work. It is in the light of this situation that this paper would want to assess the digital office skills required by secretaries/OTM practitioners for effective administrative service delivery in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is specifically to;

1. Determine the digital office skills required by secretaries for effective administrative service delivery in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study

1. What are the digital office skills required by secretaries for effective administrative service delivery in tertiary institutions in Delta State?

Hypothesis

One hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant for the study as follows:

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female secretaries on the digital office skills required by secretaries for effective administrative service delivery.

Methods

A descriptive survey research design was used to carry out this study. The design is appropriate for this study because it makes use of questionnaire to elicit respondents' opinion on the subject matter. The population of the study is made up of 75 secretaries drawn from tertiary institutions from Delta State. There was no sample used as the entire population was reached and managed. The instrument used to elicit information for the study was a structured questionnaire containing 35 structured items. The instrument was validated by two experts from the Department of Office Technology and Management, Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability formula which yielded 0.74. The descriptive statistical design was used for the analysis. Mean score of 2.50 and above was used for the acceptance of items on digital work place skills. T-test at 0.05 level of significance was used to test the hypothesis. The decision rule with respect to hypotheses was not to accept the null hypotheses when the calculated value is greater than the critical value, while, the hypotheses be accepted when the calculated value is less than the critical value.

Result

Research Question 1: What are the digital work place skill needs of the secretarial profession.

Table 1: Digital work place skill needs of the secretarial profession.

S/N	Digital Work Place Skill Needs	X	SD	Remark
1.	Mastery of word processing packages/Software	4.06	0.51	Needed
2.	Ability to create and organize computer files and folders	4.08	0.50	Needed
3.	Ability to use storage devices (hard disk, diskette, CD, flash	3.85	0.82	Needed

	etc.) for storing and sharing files			
4.	Generate MS office document using integrated application	3.76	0.85	Needed
5.	Manipulate hardware devices like printer, scanner, digital camera and projector to create electronic records.	3.88	0.58	Needed
6.	Inserting pictures and symbols into a document	4.07	0.60	Needed
7.	Using computer aided design such as digital camera, digital camera, touch screen, trackballs etc. for record creation	3.92	0.96	Needed
8.	Opening and working with more than one application at a time (multi-tasking) for records creation	3.91	0.70	Needed
9.	Using word art to create and shape text in a document	3.95	0.61	Needed
10.	Use of electronic document imaging for the storage and retrieval of bitmapped documents	4.00	0.62	Needed
11.	Use of Microsoft Excel to generate management reports	3.41	0.73	Needed
12.	Use of Microsoft Access to generate management reports	3.82	0.84	Needed
13.	Knowledge to access the internet application software of web browser	3.88	0.61	Needed
14.	Creating an e-mail account	3.85	0.79	Needed
15.	Opening and composing mail online	3.86	0.80	Needed
16.	Sending and receiving mails with attachment	3.89	0.62	Needed
17.	Uploading information into the internet	3.82	0.76	Needed
18.	Ability to communicate with colleagues and clients online	3.42	0.90	Needed
19.	Ability to use shared devices with a network	3.89	0.71	Needed
20.	Refreshing and saving a web page	4.06	0.48	Needed
21.	Downloading information from the interne	3.88	0.72	Needed
22.	Ability to print a web page document	4.06	0.48	Needed
23.	Generate and use electronic mail	4.05	0.49	Needed
24.	Placing and confirming orders online (electronic marketing)	3.92	0.68	Needed
25.	Use the internet to store specifically formatted documents in multimedia and graphics	3.92	0.68	Needed
26.	Opening a PowerPoint work area	4.08	0.36	Needed
27.	Ability to create slides using different layout	4.07	0.38	Needed
28.	Adding titles and subtitles to a slide	4.11	0.57	Needed
29.	Changing font and sizes of text in a slide	4.17	0.53	Needed
30.	Applying the slide show effects	4.02	0.34	Needed
31.	Adding sounds and videos to presentation	4.09	0.64	Needed
32.	Applying transition effects	4.10	0.42	Needed
33.	Running slide show in a power point	4.11	0.40	Needed
34.	Create PowerPoint graphics/slides of business products to be sent online (Electronic marketing	4.08	0.42	Needed
35.	Ability to make presentation using slides and projectors	4.11	0.57	Needed

The data shown in Table 1 reveals that all thirty-five items listed to answer research question One, were accepted by the respondents as the digital work place skill needs of the secretarial profession. This implies that secretaries across ministries, department and agencies unanimously accepted all the items listed as digital skill needs of secretaries.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female secretaries/OTM practitioners on the digital office skills required by secretaries for effective administrative service delivery in Delta State tertiary institutions.

Table 2: t-test analysis of male and female secretaries/OTM practitioners on the digital office skills required by secretaries for effective administrative service delivery in Delta State tertiary institutions.

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	50	3.18	0.72	73	0.35	1.96	Accepted
Female	25	3.11	0.79				

Table 2, present t-test analysis of male and female secretaries/OTM practitioners' perceptions on digital office skills required by secretaries for effective administrative service delivery in Delta State higher institutions. The table shows that the calculated t-value of 0.35 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted and that means that there is no significant difference between the mean responds of male and female secretaries on the required digital office skills for secretaries/OTM practitioners in tertiary institution in Delta State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are discussed based on research questions as follows:

The findings of this study regarding office skills required by secretaries' shows that the respondents agreed that the secretarial profession needed the thirty- five identified digital office skills. The identified office skill required by secretaries include: mastery of word processing packages/software, ability to create and organize computer files and folders, Use the internet to store specifically formatted documents in multimedia and graphics for storing and sharing files, ability to make presentation using slides and projectors among others.

The findings of this study on office skill needs agreed with the findings of Ezeonwurie (2017) who identified computer skill needs of secretaries to include, Create PowerPoint graphics/slides of business products to be sent online, opening an existing document, using page set-up and paper sizes, others include ability to communicate with colleagues and clients online, Use the internet to store specifically formatted documents in multimedia and graphics. Furthermore, The findings are also in agreement with Ezeonwurie (2021) who stated that for the secretarial profession to remain relevant in the digital work place, there is need for the secretaries to acquire skill that will enable them to be able to create PowerPoint graphics/slides of business products to be sent online, use computer aided design such as digital camera, touch screen, trackballs for records creation, placing and confirming orders online (electronic marketing), Opening and working with more than one application at a time amongst others.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the Secretarial profession of the 21st century required digital office skills for effective administrative delivery in tertiary institutions. This need is further compounded by the dynamic nature of today's offices which have gone highly electronic. Thus, the secretaries need to be adequately equipped with relevant knowledge, attitude and competencies in digital office skills to be relevant and also to be able to effectively and efficiently execute tasks.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Secretaries in tertiary institutions should attend periodic training and retraining on ICT in order to

- acquire current digital office skills and competencies needed to utilize and manage digital offices.
2. There should be an orientation programme organised by the head of tertiary institutions for newly employed secretaries where they will be taken through skills and competencies needed digital office as identified in this study.
3. The office technology and management education curriculum should be constantly reviewed, revised and adjusted by specialists in the field in collaboration with the industries. This is necessary to enable graduates fit properly and competently in the digital workplace of the 21st century.
4. Governments should recognize the need for Information Communication Technology skills and their benefits to the progress of every organization. Consequently, adequate training and resources should be provided. Model offices should be equipped with the latest equipment's/facilities to enable students have adequate exposure to practical's.

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