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# **Influence of Office and Information Management (OIM) on Job Prospects of Business Education Students in Bayelsa State**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the relevance of office and information management on job prospects of Business Education students in Bayelsa State. The study was guided by two objectives and two research questions. The study adopted the descriptive survey design with a population of 62 final year secretarial education students in business education in Bayelsa State. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the study. An instrument was constructed and designated with a reliability coefficient of 0.70 with the aid. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while z-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.5 level of significant. The findings revealed that office management and technology education have significant effect on the labour market and that office machine operation and manages data base are the job-task which are require by the office management and technology education graduates in labour market. It was therefore recommended that Business Education students should be given access to technology devices owned the Institution from their year one to encourage student participation in technologically-oriented course and Business Education lecturers should adopt the usage of technology in delivering their lectures, this will help reduce students' phobia about technology-integration in the learning process.

**Keywords:** Office and information Management, Education, Job Prospect, Business Education

## **INTRODUCTION**

Office and information management is a component of vocational education that provides knowledge and skills needed to perform efficiently and effectively in the world of work. It involves acquisition of skills, knowledge and competencies and makes the recipient proficient in secretarial profession. Office and information management prepares the secretarial students for performing all roles of the secretary, the accountant and office manager. Aliyu (2006) opines that Business Education (secretarial inclusive) is an education offered in colleges of education, polytechnics and the universities primarily to educate and train students to acquire knowledge, skills and competence to become professional secretarial educators and administrators. Also, according to Okolo (2011) Office and information management provides students with adequate skills and information needed to function well in office occupation. In addition to the scholars' contributions, secretarial education provides adequate training and education in Office administration, Office Technology and information system would be secretarial administrators to understand complex assignments and to play a major role in the general operations of a business office. It guides individuals for suitable placement in office to earn his living, improves personal qualities and builds attitudes that are necessary for adjustment to personal and employment situation.

However, certain job-tasks are required by the Office and information management graduates to function effectively in the world of work. Tasks can include many varied duties – like research, typing, producing flyers, filing, transcription, screening telephone calls, appointments, liaising with clients and other staff members, attending meetings, composing of letters, making travel arrangement, supervising, training staff etc. The major roles or tasks the secretary performs are to provide assistance to a manager or managers. The traditional roles or tasks of secretaries in office occupation are as follows: Organising the office physically, take shorthand note from the boss, keep diary of events for the boss, ensure that mails are received, recorded for dispatch, prepare tea for the boss, ran errands for the boss (Agumuo, 2005). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is defined as the tools, facilities, processes, and equipment that provide the required environment with the physical infrastructure and the services for the generation, transmission, processing, storing and disseminating of information in all forms including voice, text, data, graphics and video (Asabere & Enguah, 2012). Therefore, it is evident that ICT is playing an important role in several sectors of world development. This development included the office management where the secretary also contributes as an employee in the organization as well as the vital role the secretary plays in the achievement of the organizational goals and objectives (Justina, 2013).

Oyeronke (2012) reported that information accelerates the level of individual advancement as well as the level of corporate and educational development; he further reported that, Information is indispensable, and access to information is very crucial. James (2013) recounted that information is a basic resource in today's society. Therefore, it is generally accepted that information is a data that have been processed into a meaningful and useful context which the secretary uses to execute his official duties. To further buttress this point, Adejimiola, (2008) maintained that Information involves the transmission and reception of intelligence or knowledge. Nana & Education (2008), held that, information is an amalgamation of data, images, texts documents, voices and many other 'items, intelligently organized to make meaning. James (2013) explains that information notifies surprises, stimulates, reduces uncertainties, reveals available options, influences individuals and expresses feelings among other roles.

Hayes (2003), recounted that, advances in information and communication technologies have created a new space within which individuals and organizations can operate. Those individuals and organizations that have learned to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by operating in this new space have realized significant competitive advantages over those that have ignored the opportunities of the ICT advancements (Funmilola 2015).

It was observed that despite the level of awareness created on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) world-wide, it is embarrassing and disheartening those public services in the developed nations is still lagging behind Okoro (2015). This attitude necessitated delays in information processing, lack of necessary ICT competencies and lack of expertise in information handling (Elham & Reza 2010). Although, ICT poses relative challenges to developing countries where the main challenges arise from international rules on copyright, database protection etc, but at the same time offer opportunities (Okediji, 2014).

It is well acknowledged that developed countries have already entered into the 'Information Age' an era characterized by electronic transmission and processing of information (Elham & Reza, 2010). Technologies involving computers, computer based learning packages, interactive video and multimedia, audio graphic communication systems and videoconferencing have now emerged (Castells, 2010). For a very long time, secretaries have been using ICT in performing their different official duties.

As reported by (Hepp, 2014), ICT is playing a major role in the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge which are fundamental aspects of education process. This provides a greater opportunity for the secretary to acquire more knowledge of managing modern office technologies, continuous learning, and acquisition of new working skills and experiences which implied in using ICT. In this view, as regards to the secretary's learning potentialities in the office, Yuan & Sha (2012) reported that "learning is the basic cognitive activity and accumulation of experiences and knowledge. Further to the above assertion by Yuan and Sha, that "through the learning process, the secretary's performance will be improved thereby resulting to increase of his office experiences. Perceptual learning, cognitive learning and implicit

learning are active research topics in the learning area” these methods would bring changes to the secretary’s ICT skills and behaviours to his duties (Hepp, 2014).

Technology enables individuals to coordinate the logistics of face-to-face meetings. Technology is also used to catalogue expertise of organizational members and as a result facilitating access to the right people and enhancing knowledge sharing (Zahra & Nasser 2013) .Computer-mediated communication such as electronic mail or computer-conferences can help to maintain continuity and connection between conversations, especially for those in different locations. Al-Hawamdeh (2022), an important focus of any management activity is the task of managing information, (Eze, 2020) believed that there are some compelling reasons why the modern secretary must be concerned with information and communication technology. Decision making are policies, objectives and plans interpreted into tangible actions, therefore, quality of decisions taken by management is critically dependent on the quality and quantity of information supporting the decisions (Shaker, 2011).

The new world order of competency in secretarial administration and the demands for technological advancement, transparency and responsiveness in governance have increased the need for efficient organisational information needs. Today modern organization (whether public or private) must promptly access adequate and timely information to remain relevant. The tremendous advances recorded in the technology for the management of information (word processors, Internet etc) which now come at cheap rates have aided the average/secretary to acquire the needed skills and utilize sophisticated information/management systems (Akpomi & Ordu, 2009). This assertion makes information to be seen as vital resources available to secretaries for the performance of their duties.

Effective information management in an organisation promotes efficiency in the business operations, as well as enhances effective management of resources and competitive advantage. For instance, intercoms and ordinary telephones were the earliest forms of automated office communication especially with respect to voice messages. Currently, a whole array of advanced means of communication, including mail, facsimile transmission, remote conferencing and hand phones are now available in many offices. There is currently a wide collection of information processing devices at the reach of the secretaries in the modern office (Nwaoka & Okoli 2012).

It is on the foregoing that Akpomi & Ordu (2009) stated that, the functions and effectiveness of the secretary in every business organization depends on the availability of office technologies as well as the skills and competencies of the secretary. Organisations both public and private have come to appreciate the role and importance of the secretary as well as the need to provide the needed and necessary office machines and equipment for the efficient secretarial functions delivery. The need for Office and information management (OIM) graduates who are potential high level of competencies cannot be overemphasized

It is unfortunate ,to note that in spite of these changes in the world of work, OIM programs are still being taught theoretically in schools, thereby rendering the graduates incapable of handling all this sophisticated equipment because teachers themselves are not acquainted with the use of these machines. Waziri (2016), in his own contribution said that business discipline lack basic instructional tools for effective and efficient skills training. For example, he continued, many institutions are without computer for instruction in office education, data processing and allied subjects. He concluded by saying that there is a serious death of textbooks and other instructional materials for business subjects especially in the area of vocational business education. The few books available are obsolete and do not reflect the socio-economic values of Nigerian business environment.

**Low Societal Value for OIM specialists:** It is observed that all parents do not encourage their wards to offer secretarial education at all levels. This is because the society does not place any significant value or dignity on the secretarial profession. In support of the above, Clark (2002) says that business education products have over the years with other technical and vocational education programmes been deprived of accountability by the society because of their reluctant to expunge themselves of the colonial grammar education and white-collar jobs which often business education graduates are referred to as typist’ because the programme is associated with typing and shorthand. Also Ezugwu (2002) contributes that the

society which includes the students, looks at manipulative skills with contempt so the students cannot be interested in the contemptuous subjects.

But Office and information management (OIM) is a tool for alleviating poverty. This means that a secretarial graduate that is well trained, well equipped with technological knowledge could be employed and could also be on his/her own and as well be an employer of labour. Secretarial Education is useful to modern business offices both private organization, governmental organization and Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) in terms of employment opportunity, job creation and self-reliance (Amoor, 2009). In a dynamic society, things change fast, techniques and technology easily become obsolete making fresh demands on new skills and procedures (Arukwe, 2009). Technological influx to the society demands continuous and regular monitoring of skills that employers of labour want and prefer for maximum productivity.

Also according to Okolo (2021) office management and technology education provides students with adequate skills and information needed to function well in office occupation. In addition to the scholars' contributions, secretarial education provides adequate training and education in office administration, office technology and information systems to would be secretarial administrators to understand complex assignments and to play a major role in general operations of a business office. It guides individuals for suitable placement in office to earn his living, improves personal qualities and builds attitudes that are necessary for adjustment to personal and employment situation.

According to Amoor (2008), the functions of professional secretaries both in private and public sectors of the economy have gone far beyond their traditional orthodox duties. Today, professional secretaries in office occupation are charged with the responsibilities of manipulating and managing databases, creating presentations and 'reports using suitable computer software and digital graphics. Professional secretaries also use computer to generate, process, store, retrieve, handle and disseminate information to staff and clients as well as handle administrative responsibilities with little or no supervision. In most of the organizations, professional secretaries are called information managers. The education and training made available for these professionals in tertiary institutions to enable, them handle multi-task, business communications and participate in executive decision-making processes especially in today's office occupation is far inadequate.

The daunting tasks and competitiveness of labour market makes it mandatory for office management and technology education students to be current with the trends or ever changing office administration, office technology and information systems so as to remain relevant in d world of work and business. One of the main objectives of higher education to provide its graduates with the skills needed to succeed in the labour market. This mission is especially important in the context of today's innovation-driven skills-based, globalised economies. It also corresponds to one of the main expectations of students, namely that they will be able to get a good job at the conclusion of their studies.

There's no doubt that secretaries are the best office management and administration practitioners in all over the globe. Since technology is about improving work efficiency within work environments, then it means that secretaries have to be proactive in their profession to be abreast with the technological world as soon as any new development is introduced. Thereby increase their management: and administration capabilities as good leaders of all times. However, it is against this background the study is to examine the relevance of secretarial education in universities and secretaries labour market prospects in Bayelsa State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The functions of professional secretaries both in private and public sectors of the economy have gone far beyond their traditional orthodox duties. Today, secretaries in office occupation are charged with the responsibilities of manipulating and managing databases, creating presentations and reports using suitable computer software and digital graphics. However, office technology has developed very rapidly but schools have not yet matched it up by giving the type of training required for the automated office. The education and training for these professionals in Nigerian universities include courses such as shorthand, computer appreciation, organization and management, accounting, business law, economics, communication skills, office procedure, business statistics. These courses, do not adequately expose

students to the knowledge of office administration, office technology and information systems. In view of this, most students graduate from universities without knowing how to operate a computer. This trend poses a lot of challenges to secretarial graduates in the labour market hence their lack of skills and competences in the operation of office technology and information systems today. The minimum computer application packages needed in the labour market for Office and information management graduates are Microsoft word, Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint. In addition to these, the secretarial graduates are expected to handle busy and upwardly mobile executive calendar. Ironically, most of the universities do not expose their secretarial graduates to these packages. Hence, the study is to examine the relevance of Office and information Management on labour market prospects Bayelsa State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine the relevance of Office and information management on job prospects in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the job-tasks that are required by the Office and information management graduates in the labour market.
2. Examine the influence of information technology on the performance of Office and information management graduates in the labour market.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the job-tasks required of Office and information management graduates in the labour market?
2. What are influences of Information Technology on the performance of Office and information management graduates in the labour market?

### **Hypotheses**

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students responses on the job task required of Office and information management graduates in the labour market.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of information technology on the performance of Office and information management graduates in the labour market.

### **METHOD**

The population of this study comprised of OIM students in Business Education programme in Bayelsa State. The total population was 62 respondents. The purposive sampling techniques was adopted to select the entire population for this study because, the population was not too large to warrant sampling. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. The instrument used for data collection was a self-constructed instrument tagged "Relevance of Office and information management and job prospect of Business Education students (ROIMJPBES). The research instrument comprised of two sections. Section A consist of demographic data of respondents and section B contains questions aimed at answering the research questions posed to guide the study. The response options are Strongly Agree (SA-4 points), Agree (A-3 points), Disagree (DA-2 points), Strongly Disagree (SDA-1 point) respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was determine through the Cronbach Alpha Statistic which yielded a value of 0.76, showing that the instrument reliable and can measure what it purports to measure. 62 copies of the instruments were distributed to respondents and a hundred percent return was recorded. Mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions posed, while z-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses stated.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1:** *What are the job-tasks required by the Office and information management graduates in the labour market?*

**Table 1: Mean Scores of Respondents on the Job-Tasks which require by the Office and Information Management Graduates in the Labour Market**

S/No	Items	Male N = 27			Female N = 35		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Organising the office physically.	2.95	1.05	Agreed	3.00	0.72	Agreed
2.	Computer based word processing job-tasks	2.90	1.11	Agreed	2.85	0.93	Agreed
3.	Office machine operation job-tasks	2.80	0.89	Agreed	2.70	0.80	Agreed
4.	Disseminate information by using telephone/mail services	2.75	0.91	Agreed	2.50	0.88	Agreed
5.	Managers data base	2.85	0.93	Agreed	2.55	0.99	Agreed
<b>Grand Mean <math>\bar{X}</math> and SD</b>		<b>2.85</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviation analysis of the job-tasks require by the Office and information management students in the labour. The result showed mean scores of 2.95, 3.00 for organizing the office physically, 2.90, 2.85 for computer based word processing job-tasks, office machine operation job-tasks, 2.80, 2.70, disseminate information by using telephone/mail services 2.75, 2.50 and 2.85, 2.50 managers data base, above the criterion mean of 2.50 with a grand mean of 2.85, 2.72 and standard deviation of 0.98, 0.86, this means that the respondents agreed that the items are the job-tasks require by the Office and information management graduates in the labour.

**Research Question 2:** *What is the influence of Information Technology on the performance of Office and information management graduates in the labour market?*

**Table 2: Mean Scores of Respondents on the Influence of Information Technology on the Performance of Office and Information Management Graduates in the Labour Market**

S/No	Items	Male N = 27			Female N = 35		
		$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
6.	Information Technology helps in performing internet services.	2.75	0.78	Agreed	3.00	0.85	Agreed
7.	Information Technology helps in performing e-mail services.	2.80	1.15	Agreed	3.05	0.88	Agreed
8.	Information Technology helps in storing information using electronic devices.	2.90	0.96	Agreed	2.75	0.78	Agreed
9.	Information Technology helps in retrieving information using electronic devices.	3.00	0.85	Agreed	3.15	0.93	Agreed
10.	Information Technology helps in performing telecommunication/voice activating tasks	2.70	0.97	Agreed	2.60	1.18	Agreed
<b>Grand Mean <math>\bar{X}</math> and SD</b>		<b>2.84</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>2.91</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 2 shows the mean scores and standard deviation analysis of the impact of Information Technology on the performance of Office and information management graduates in the labour market. The result

showed mean scores of 2.75 and 3.00 for the item that says that Information Technology helps in performing internet services, 2.80 and 3.05 for item 7 that says that Information Technology helps in performing e-mail services, 2.90 and 2.75 for the items that says that Information Technology helps in storing information using electronic devices, 3.00 and 3.15 for item 9 that says that Information Technology helps in retrieving information using electronic devices and 2.70 and 2.60 for item 10 that says that Information Technology helps in performing telecommunication/voice activating tasks above the criterion mean of 2.50 with a grand mean of 2.84, 2.91 and standard deviation of 0.74, 0.92 this means that the respondents agreed that the items are the impact of Information Technology on the performance of Office and information management in the labour market.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the job task required of Office and information management graduates in the labour market.

**Table 3: Z-test Analysis of the difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Students on the Job-Tasks required by the Office and Information Management Graduates in the Labour Market**

Category	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	z-cal	z-crit Level of significant	Decision
Male	27	2.85	0.98	60	0.60	± 1.96	0.05
Female	35	2.72	0.86				

A critical look at table 5 shows a summary of means, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean scores of the significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female Business Education students on the job-tasks require by the office management and technology education graduates in the labour market. The z-test statistics calculated and used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.60 while the critical z-test value stood at ±1.96, using 60 degree of freedom at 0.5 alpha level of significance. Since the z-cal is less than the z-crit value, the null hypothesis (Ho) is therefore upheld. That is  $z\text{-cal} < z\text{-crit} = 0.6 < \pm 1.96$ , at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the job-tasks required by the Office and information management graduates in the labour market.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the influence of information technology on the performance of Office and information management graduates in the labour market.

**Table 4: Z-test Analysis of the difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Students on the Influence of Information Technology on the Performance of Office Management and Technology Education Graduates in the Labour Market**

Category	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	z-cal	z-crit Level of significant	Decision
Male	27	2.84	0.94	60	0.30	± 1.96	0.05
Female	35	2.91	0.92				

A critical look at the table 6 shows a summary of means, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean scores of the significant difference between the mean ratings of students in on the influence of Information Technology on the performance of Office and information Management graduates in the labour market. The z-test statistics calculated and used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.30 while the critical z-test value stood at ± 1.96, using 60 degree of freedom at 0.5 alpha level of significance. Since the z-cal is less than the z-crit value, the null hypothesis (Ho) is therefore upheld. That

is  $z\text{-cal} < z\text{-crit} = 0.6 < \pm 1.96$ , at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of students in on the influence of Information Technology on the performance of Office and information Management graduates in the labour market.

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Table1 shows that items 1-5 had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. Collectively, the result revealed a grand mean of 2.85 and 2.72. This means that the respondents agreed that the items are the job-tasks which are required by the office and information management graduates in the labour market. This finding agrees with the view Amoor (2008), the functions of professional secretaries both in private and public sectors of the economy have gone far beyond their traditional orthodox duties. Today, professional secretaries in office occupation are charged with the responsibilities of manipulating and managing databases, creating presentations and reports using suitable computer software and digital graphics. A corresponding research question from hypothesis tested find a no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the job-tasks required by the office management and technology education graduates in the labour market

Table 2 of the result showed that items 6-10 had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. Collectively, the result revealed a grand mean of 2.84 and 2.92. This means that the respondents agreed that the items are the impact of Information Technology on the performance of office and information management graduates in the labour market.

This finding agrees with the views of Akpomi & Ordu (2009) opined that the tremendous advances recorded in the technology for the management of information (word processors, Internet etc) which now come at cheap rates have aided the average secretary to acquire the needed skills and utilize sophisticated information management systems. A corresponding research question from hypothesis tested find a no significant difference in the mean ratings of students on the influence of Information Technology on the performance of office and information management graduates in the labour market.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study affirms that office and information management has a significant effect on the labour market. Based on findings of the study, it was revealed that office machine operation and management data base are some of the job- tasks which are require by the office and information management graduates in labour market. Hence, business education lacks necessary amenities for effective teaching and learning.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. Business Education students should be given access to technology devices owned by the Institution from their year one to encourage student participation in technologically-oriented courses
2. Business Education lectures should adopt the usage of technology in delivering their lectures as this will help reduce students' phobia about technology-integration in the learning process.

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