

OFFICE COMPETENCIES REQUIRED OF OTM GRADUATES FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE IN MODERN OFFICES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN OSUN STATE

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Abstract

This study was carried out to identify the office competencies required of OTM graduates for effective performance in modern offices in tertiary institutions. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 101 OTM graduates of four state owned tertiary institutions in Osun State. No sample was drawn as the population was manageable. A structured questionnaire containing 18 items was used for data collection. The study revealed that Word Processing and Power Point presentation competencies are required of Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern offices in tertiary institutions. The study concluded that equipping Office Technology and Management graduates with these competencies will help them to perform office tasks effectively when employed in business organizations upon graduation. The study recommended that Office Technology and Management administrators should periodically organize ICT training and re-training programmes for lecturers to up-date their ICT competencies so as to equip students with these competencies needed to perform job effectively after graduation.

Key Words: Office competencies, OTM graduates, Modern office.

Introduction

Higher education in Nigeria is the education given to students after secondary education in universities, colleges of education and polytechnics. The aim of tertiary education is to develop students with relevant competencies and skills needed to contribute to the development of the society and the nation.

Office Technology and Management which is offered at the Universities, Polytechnic and Colleges

of Education is concerned with the development of office skills to enable an individual to function effectively in the world of work (Onojetah, 2012). Abuokwen (2010) asserted that Office Technology and Management is an education for office and business skills required for use in business offices, clerical occupation and business policy analysis. Office Technology and Management programme, according to Amoor (2009), is a group of courses designed to prepare an individual to

acquire specific skills and competencies for efficient office services.

The dynamism of the 21st century has propelled Office Technology and Management programme in tertiary institutions to emphasize more on preparing students in the current practices shaping today's modern offices. Modern offices are gazette with information and communication technologies devoid of the manual way of performing office tasks. Nwazor and Onokpaunu (2016) stated that modern offices are automated offices that provide new ways of performing daily business activities. In modern offices, tasks are performed electronically rather than manually. Office Technology and Management programmes in Nigeria, however, are often criticized for deficiencies in producing competent students needed for optimum performance in technologically-oriented offices (Jackson, 2013). The outcome is graduates' poor performance in organizations, increase in graduate unemployment rate as well as global economy.

Azike (2012) observed that Office Technology and Management programme has continued to produce incompetent graduates who cannot adapt to the technological changes. Despite higher institutions efforts in equipping Office Technology and Management students with competencies and knowledge, it appears that the complaints are still prevalent that Office Technology and Management graduates possess little or no competencies for effective job performance in modern offices. So there is need to identify areas of competencies industries mostly required from graduates and incorporate them in the Office Technology and Management curriculum.

According to Olaitan (2013), to be competent means that the individual has acquired the knowledge, skills, attitude and judgment which he requires in order to perform successfully at a specified proficiency level in any given work. In the context of this paper, competency means the ability of students most especially Office Technology and Management graduates to put into practice the competencies and skills acquired by them to improve the office work/responsibilities for effective performance in modern office.

Competencies are abilities, knowledge, attitudes and facts necessary for accomplishing tasks (Okoro, 2012). The success of Office Technology and Management programmes can be measured by the official duty performance level of graduates of the programme in the world of work. Office competencies of Office Technology and Management for effective performance in modern offices include Word Processing, Microsoft Presentation, Desktop Publishing and Database Management.

Word processing competencies enable OTM graduates to work through a document and delete, insert and replace text, and also perform additional features such as creating, formatting, printing and saving of document without much stress (Brain & Stacey, 2010). Office Technology and Management competencies are in evitable in the activities of modern offices because they enable OTM graduates to utilize modern office machines for producing office correspondence, printing of textbooks, journals, articles and newspapers etc.

Microsoft Presentation (PowerPoint) competencies on the other hand enable OTM graduates to communicate without necessarily seeing one another. These competencies enable OTM graduates

to understand the benefits of teamwork, collaboration and information sharing features of the modern office.

Akpomi and Ordu (2009) reported that many tertiary institutions have computers and other modern office technological gadgets. Some however do not have and this affect the productivity of Office Technology and Management graduates in such organizations. In support, Aliata and Hawa (2014) disclosed among others that the availability and use of modern office equipment will inevitably affect the activities and output of Office Technology and Management graduates in offices and business organizations. Currently, the fact that Office Technology and Management graduates are roaming the streets instead of being employed in business offices intensified the need for this study which sought to determine the office competencies required of business education graduates for effective performance in modern offices.

Statement of the Problem

Before the advent of ICT in offices, Office Technology and Management graduates mainly required basic office competencies such as ability to read, write and communicate, keyboarding with speed and accuracy and ability to follow instructions to perform office functions. However, the invasion of ICT in offices demands that Office Technology and Management graduates need other competencies in order to fit into the era of technologically induced modern offices. Poor acquisition of these competencies by Office Technology and Management graduates would likely render them unfit for modern office functions. The problem of this study, therefore, is that there seem to

be a wide gap between competencies required by Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern business organizations and what they are being taught in the programme. This could be the reason why many Nigerian Office Technology and Management graduates are roaming the streets instead of being employed in business offices (Azike, 2012). If this trend is not addressed, it could worsen the already existing graduate unemployment rates. It could also lead to non-achievement of objectives of Office Technology and Management programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Based on the foregoing, this study sought to determine the office competencies required of Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern offices in tertiary institutions.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to identify office competencies required of Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern offices in tertiary institutions. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the Word Processing competencies required of Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern offices in tertiary institutions;
2. determine the PowerPoint presentation competencies required of Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern offices in tertiary institutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the Word Processing competencies required of Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern offices in tertiary institutions?
2. What are the PowerPoint Presentation competencies required of Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern offices in tertiary institutions?

Literature Review

Concept of Competency

Competency in the view of Robenson (2010) is the ability to do something to a level that is acceptable. According to Olaitan (2013), to be competent means that the individual has acquired the knowledge, skills, attitude and judgment which he requires in order to perform successfully at a specified proficiency level in any given work.

Competency has two dimensions: knowledge and skill. Knowledge may be seen as our understanding of how our everyday world is constituted. Skills involve the ability to pragmatically apply, consciously or unconsciously our knowledge in practical settings (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2014). If such practical setting includes business organizations, then as pointed out by Ezeana (2014) in Ojukwu & Ojukwu (2016), competencies are the knowledge, skills and behaviours that will enable an employee to meet established performance criteria.

According to Buxton (2013), competency is the state of having the necessary skills or knowledge. European Commission Cedefop Glossary (2014) saw competency as the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified, having the ability to perform a specific role. It is the ability to do something well. Judy and Chris

in James (2014) contended that competency is the combination of knowledge, attitude, values and skills required to perform tasks in determined situations.

Competencies needed of Office Technology and Management Graduates

Competencies are a group of skills or attributes that employees need to carry out their work effectively. Competencies are the measurable or observable knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors (KSABs) critical to successful job performance. The following competencies are needed by OTM graduates for effective job performance:

1. **Writing Competencies:** Being able to communicate clearly and concisely is an important skill for a number of reasons. You may be required to draft reports or prepare correspondence. Even communicating with fellow colleagues and partners is often achieved through email, so it is important to be able to convey what you need to succinctly and effectively.
2. **Speaking and Listening Competencies:** Professionals must be able to communicate effectively when speaking to people. Demonstrating that you can communicate complex information to a non-technical audience is also valued by employers. In any verbal communication, you should always ensure that you speak carefully and clearly so that you are easily understood.
3. **Data Management Competencies:** This is important for collecting, managing and reporting data. It involves the capacity to use data

to improve processes and operations while analysing results and presenting findings to others.

4. **Modern Technology Competencies:**

Modern technology skills required by secretaries include: ability to use computer to create spreadsheets with packages like Microsoft excel, compose correspondences using packages like Microsoft words, word star, word perfect; manage data bases using software like Microsoft access, create presentations with Microsoft power point, publish reports and documents using desktop publishing software like Microsoft office publisher etc. OTM graduates are to acquire these technological skills so as to be technologically acquainted with innovations in the modern offices.

5. **Communication**

Competencies: Communication competencies refer to the knowledge of effective and appropriate communication patterns and the ability to use and adapt that knowledge in various contexts (Cooley & Roach, 2014). NCA (2011) has explained the following communication competencies as:

1. State ideas clearly.
2. Communicate ethically.
3. Recognize when it is appropriate to communicate.
4. Identify their communication goals.
5. Select the most appropriate and effective medium for communicating.
6. Demonstrate credibility.
7. Identify and manage misunderstandings.

6. **Technological**

Competencies: Professional and pedagogical knowledge, conics, mastering of advanced technologies that enrich skills, use of modern tools, techniques and technologies.

7. **Information Competencies:**

Is searching the necessary, important, useful information in an information environment, collection, sorting, processing and their targeted, reasonable, effective use.

Methodology

The design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. The population for the study consisted of 101 OTM graduates of four state owned tertiary institutions in Osun State. The population was not too large and therefore there was no sampling. The researcher distributed copies of the questionnaire to the respondents in their offices. Section 'A' of the questionnaire sought the demographic data of the respondents, while section 'B' contained Eighteen (18) items questionnaire which the respondents were requested to indicate their views and opinions on a 4-points scale of 'Strongly Agree' = 4 points, 'Agree' = 3 points, 'Disagree' = 2 points, 'Strongly Disagree' = 1 point. All copies of the questionnaire distributed were returned and considered valid. Simple mean measure of central tendency was used to analyse the data collected. Mean score of 2.50 and above were accepted as positive responses while below 2.50 were rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the Word processing skills required by OTM graduates in modern office in tertiary institutions?

Table 1: Word processing skills required by OTM graduates in modern office

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Remarks
The following are Word processing skills required by OTM graduates in modern office in tertiary institutions:			
1.	Ability to use different word processing packages/software	2.7	Positive
2.	Ability to type accurately and with speed	2.5	Positive
3.	Ability to change line spacing, margin and tabs	3.0	Positive
4.	Ability to emphasizes text by the use of underline, embold and italics	2.8	Positive
5.	Ability to move cursor round the active document	2.5	Positive
6.	Ability to select/highlight text	2.5	Positive
7.	Ability to understand the use of Tab to indent and paragraph	2.8	Positive
8.	Ability to add table to a document and edits rows and columns	2.9	Positive
9.	Ability to understands cut, copy, paste, bold, justify, centered and undo	3.0	Positive
10.	Ability to check and correcting spelling/grammatical errors	2.6	Positive
Grand mean		2.8	

Table 1 revealed a grand mean of 2.8 which is rated as “positive”. This shows that respondents agreed that ability to use different word processing packages/software, type accurately and with speed, change line spacing, margin and tabs, emphasize text by the use of underline, embold and italics, move cursor round the active document and check correct spelling/grammatical errors are Word

processing skills required by Office Technology and Management graduates in modern office in tertiary institutions.

Research Question 2: What are the Power Point presentation competencies required of Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern offices in tertiary institution?

Table 2: PowerPoint presentation skills required by OTM graduates in modern office

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	Remarks
The following are PowerPoint presentation skills required by OTM graduates in modern office in tertiary institutions:			
1.	Ability to creates project templates	3.0	Positive
2.	Ability to create effects and animations	2.8	Positive
3.	Ability to create tables, charts and graphs	2.5	Positive
4.	Ability to insert clickers	2.5	Positive
5.	Ability to use slides and motion graphics	2.8	Positive
6.	Ability to insert audio, sound and video	2.9	Positive
7.	Ability to insert music to time with slides	3.0	Positive
8.	Ability to set up projector for presentations	2.6	Positive
Grand mean		2.7	

Table 2 revealed a grand mean of 2.7 which is rated as “positive”. This shows that respondents agreed that ability to creates project templates and effects, animations and motion graphics, tables, charts, and graphs,

insert clicker, use slides, insert audio, sound and video, and insert music to time with slides are Power Point presentation skills required by Office Technology and Management

graduates in modern office in tertiary institutions.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study indicated that respondents agreed that Word Processing competencies are required of Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern offices in tertiary institutions. The findings of the study is in line with Olayanju and Asogwa (2010) who revealed that just as the business offices have changed as a result of the introduction of ICT in offices, so do Office Technology and Management graduates need to possess electronic document processing competencies such as word processing, data processing and reprographics in order to perform effectively in the offices.

In support, Brain and Stacey (2010) posited that electronic document processing competencies are required of graduates of tertiary institutions so as to perform job tasks effectively. Brain and Stacey (2010) further stated that these competencies enable Office Technology and Management graduates to work through a document and delete, insert and replace text, and also perform additional features such as creating, formatting, printing and saving of document without much stress.

Findings of the study also revealed that respondents agreed that PowerPoint presentation competencies are required of Office Technology and Management graduates for effective performance in modern offices. The findings of this study concurs with that of Roy (2012) which revealed that since electronic collaboration technologies are used to accomplish organizational goals in modern offices, Office Technology and Management graduates require such electronic collaboration competencies as relationship building, communication,

collaboration, and internet skills, in order to succeed.

Conclusion

The findings have shown that employers want 'well-rounded' graduates with a broad range of competencies for performance in modern offices. The researchers conclude that equipping Office Technology and Management graduates with these competencies will help them to performance office tasks effectively when employed in business organizations upon graduation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Office Technology and Management lecturers should lay more emphasis on equipping their students with Word processing and PowerPoint presentation competencies identified in this study. This will help them to gain employment in modern business organizations upon graduation and perform office functions effectively.
2. Office Technology and Management administrators should periodically organize ICT re-training programmes for lecturers to up-date their ICT competencies so as to equip students with these competencies needed to perform job functions effectively on graduation.
3. Curriculum planners should review the curriculum of Office Technology and Management graduates to incorporate ICT competencies as required by the graduates for effective performance in business organizations.

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