COMPUTER SKILLS POSSESSED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITIES FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE IN AUTOMATED OFFICES.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the computer skills possessed by Business Education students of Universities for effective performance in automated offices. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 745 made up of: 425 students of Business Education from Godfrey Okoye University Enugu. The sample of the study was 384 made up of 206 and 178 respondents. A structured questionnaire containing 63 items was used to elicit responses from respondents and generate data for the study. The instrument was face-validated by three experts in the Department of Vocational Education was used to collect data from the respondents. The study made use of Cronbach Alpha reliability method to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The data collected for the study was analyzed using mean to answer the research questions and standard deviation to determine the closeness or otherwise of the responses from the mean, while t -test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis of no significant difference at the probability of 0.05 level of significance at relevant degree of freedom with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings from the analysis showed that Business Education students of Godfrey Okoye University Enugu slightly possess creative skills, information and communication skills, marketing skills and accounting skills for effective performance in automated office. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended amongst others that Business Education students should mandated to learn how to operate the computer before graduation from school.

Keywords: Computer, Skills, Business, Education and automated Office

Introduction

Business Education is an educational programme that prepares students for entry and advancement in jobs within business and to handle their business affairs as well as to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. Osuala (2004) defined Business Education as that aspect of vocational education, which emphasizes job competency, career preparation and work adjustments. It involves acquisition of special skills in business subject areas. Njoku (2006) defined Business Education as an educational programme that equips individuals with functional and sustainable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable the individuals operate in the environment such individuals find themselves. Business Educationprogramme is offered at various levels of tertiary education: Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges of Education.

The Business Educationprogramme is very relevant in Enugu State, which is tagged a "Civil Service State" due to few companies, industries and businesses that

employ the youths, thus, the burden of employment in the State lies mainly on Government. The lack of employment generating agencies has led to high rate of unemployment in the State since the government alone cannot absorb all the graduates. Evidence of unemployment and under-employment in the State remain at high level. According to State Planning Commission (2012), the unemployment rate of the youths in 2009, 2010 and 2011 were 32.9%, 35.3% and 35.9% respectively. To possess is to have as an attribute, knowledge or power to acquaint or inform at any point in time. The attitude or quality possessed by an individual is the key factor to the realization of the potentials within the individual. Knowledge possession only is not enough for individual to be self sufficient' as is the case in Universities which emphasizes knowledge acquisition to practical dexterity of the individual. Therefore the individual has to possess skills in computer, attitude as well as general knowledge.

Creativity according to Onu (2009) is a mental process undertaken by an individual or group to solve specific problems resulting in the production of statistically infrequent solutions which are useful to the society and the creator. Creativity obviously involves some form of display of ability to do something and most often in a new way. It involves developing problem solving skills, evolving new technologies and ways of solving problem. Lemchi (2012) asserted that possession of creative skill gives rise to self employment. Creativity and innovation are considered to be inseparable from entrepreneurship, which in turn, manifested in the act of starting up and running enterprise. (Pretorios, Millard & Kruger, 2005). The reverse of creativity, which is the hall mark of business students according to Omeke (2011), is poverty, bottle necks in

bureaucracy, decrease in potentials for improved social norms, lack of reforms, poor mindset, lack of new ventures and poor organisation. When creativity is lacking, it is obvious that a coherent framework for the implementation of a strong entrepreneurial culture will equally be missing; thus, resulting in unemployment, lack of due process to encourage innovation, and growth of crime. Therefore, creative skill acquisition is advocated for business students.

Skill is the ability to do a task expertly. Bolt-Lee and Foster (2003) posited that skill is the art of possessing the ability, power, authority, or competency to do the task required of an individual on the job. Two fundamental issues are used when a skill is to be acquired According to Okoro and Ursula (2012), the first is the conditions which promote acquisition and the second is the change that will occur when the skill is acquired. Igwe (2008) says that when somebody acquires skills in any occupation, such a person can establish his own business and even employ others. The person becomes self-reliant, self-sufficient and self employed.

A major concern of graduates is on what constitutes employability competencies. The competencies possessed by graduates seem to be different from what the employers want. Some employers have tried to outline some of these skills they want from job seekers. In a bid to creating harmony in their skills, the Secretary Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) prepared reports on ways of assisting educational institutions and schools in producing younger generations who are willing to work. The report outlines both 'fundamental skills' and 'workplace competencies' to include: basic, thinking, personal qualities, resources, interpersonal,

information, systems technology skills (SCANS, 2001).

The above skills are no doubt invaluable to Business Education graduates. Uwameiye (1992) as cited in Imeokparia and Ediagbonya (2009) defined Business Education as the development of appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding required to fit into chosen occupation or occupations. There are certain competencies that are particular to Business Education graduates. For instance, secretarial and accounting competencies remain as relevant as ever before. Though dynamism in the educational system and world of work have informed innovations in the field. The extent or degree to which Business Educator possesses these skills determines his/her relevance in the world work. Thus, the need to investigate into competences needs required by graduates of Business Education in tertiary institutions to becomes employable in modern office in Enugu state. Therefore, this study was designed to identify the employability competencies needs required of Business Education graduates for employment in Enugu State.

Computer skills fit into two categories: hardware and software.

Hardware skills allow you to physically operate a computer. Hardware skills can be as simple as knowing how to turn devices on and off. They might also involve more complex tasks like connecting machines to networks, changing parts or fixing broken devices. For these complex tasks, many employers hire trained technicians with advanced computer skills.

Software skills help you to efficiently use computer programs and applications. There are some software skills that employers may consider as prerequisites to employment. Employers may not include some software skills on job posts under the assumption they are universally understood. For example, many employers may believe all applicants have a basic knowledge of word processing programs, like Microsoft Word.

Some common computer skills include:

- Analytics
- Social Media
- Graphic Design
- Microsoft Office
- Spreadsheets
- Email Communication
- Marketing Automation
- Data Visualization

Certain software skills are more commonly desired in different fields. If you're a computer programmer, you may be required to know various coding languages like Python, C++, Java or HTML, among others. Those who are applying for positions in administrative assistance will likely need be experienced with Microsoft Office Suite, Google apps and accounting software. To find out which skills employers in your industry might expect, spend some time researching the most common software skills for your career. Carefully read job descriptions and take note of the requirements listed there.

Most jobs now require the use of computers, mobile devices or software applications in some capacity. Some employers will require prior knowledge or experience with specific applications, while others will offer on-the-job training. If you have a working knowledge of commonly used software, you may be able to more easily learn how to use new programs. Whether you're employed in customer service, manufacturing, food

service or tech, employers use computer applications to automate certain tasks, streamline communication and more.

Job applicants with computer skills are highly sought-after due to the increase of technology in the workplace. You can showcase your computer skills by identifying computer-related requirements on job postings and explaining on your resume how you meet or exceed those requirements with past experience.The types of computer skills employers expect will vary depending on your career or industry. For example, if you're applying for a job as an office manager, you will likely be required to have a basic knowledge of word processing programs, spreadsheets, email platforms and other communication tools. There are many other computer skills, however, that are commonly used across all industries that are important for most job applicants to know.

Some of the most important computer skills to learn include the following:An operating system is the software that supports and manages a computer's basic functions. Although there are many different operating systems, most employers use either Windows or MacOS. If you have more experience in one or the other, it may be helpful to spend some time learning the basics of the other operating system. You can often find both systems on computers at your local library, although you may also be able to learn on the job as well.Basic knowledge of productivity software suites can add value to your resume. Office software suites are composed of various collaboration and productivity tools, like Microsoft Word, Outlook and Excel. Knowing how to use these applications can help you perform tasks on the job.

Word processors, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs, are among the most commonly used productivity tools. They are writing programs used to help produce digital documents. Employers often assume that most applicants know how to use word processing programs. As a result, these programs may not be listed on a job posting. If you find you are unfamiliar with how to use word processors, it may be helpful to spend time researching the basic skills required to use these programs. You may also want to practice navigating the most common features of these applications. Google Docs is a free word processor that you can access online for practice.

Presentations skills are both valuable soft and computer skills. Presentation software is important to have a basic knowledge of in many careers both for organizing and presenting ideas in a company, internally and externally. There are several programs you can use to create presentations, including PowerPoint, which is the most widely used software across industries.Spreadsheets are applications used to organize data and other information into tables and quickly calculate numbers. Spreadsheets can also be used for advanced data analysis. Some employers may expect you to possess basic working knowledge of spreadsheet software. If you're applying for more technical jobs, you may need to know how to use advanced spreadsheet features. Refer to the job posting to understand whether the employer is looking for these skills, and if so, to what level they require you to manipulate data in spreadsheets. If it seems your skills are not advanced enough, spend some time practicing. There are many online and in-person classes you can consider taking.

Many businesses use communication and collaboration tools to help with productivity. If relevant to the positions you're applying to, you might consider listing relevant tools you're experienced with on your resume. Carefully review the job description to understand whether you should include this information. Tools such as Slack and Skype are popular among businesses where workers often telecommute.Accounting software skills are important if you are applying for positions in the finance or business sectors. If you're applying to work for a small business, accounting software skills may be useful if you are required to assume multiple roles in the business. That may include helping manage accounts, payments or other financial data.

Social media skills are now highly desired as companies look to increase and manage their online presence. These skills are more commonly desired for positions in public relations, marketing and advertising. Knowledge of specific social media software like Hootsuite is often required for many of these positions. If you're looking for a career in social media, you might be able to take on small projects at your current company to add these skills to your resume.

Alongside basic knowledge of spreadsheets, having data visualization skills might also be helpful in a data-heavy role. Many data visualization tools are built into the spreadsheet programs like Excel, while some others, such as Tableau or Datawrapper, allow you to take data from spreadsheets for more advanced visualization and analysis. Data visualization is growing in popularity as data analysis becomes more important for businesses, making this a good computer skill to learn.

Word Processing is the handling of alphabetical and alphanumeric information electronically. According to Kantos (1981), the term was coined to emphasize the manipulation of certain types of data, characters combined to form words, sentences, paragraphs, memos, letters and reports. A word processing system comprises equipment, procedures, and people whereby thought and ideas are expressed and distributed in hard copy (paper) and/or soft copy (CRT screen) form. The equipment itself (the word processor) consists of a keyboard, an electronic memory, a display screen and a printer. Text is typed on the keyboard, but instead of being printed, it is entered into the machines electronic memory. The secretary/typist can see the material on the screen and check it as she types it in. She can also use the keyboard to display the text on the screen and to enter corrections and amendments. Once the document is entered and corrected, it can be printed out on the printer. Text can be held in the machine's memory and printed out later with or without amendments.

Azuka (1997) lists word processing functions as standard editing functions (insert, delete, amend) text enhancement (centering, bold, fonts) block operations (copy, re-copy, move, deletion) text manipulation (search and replace, arithmetical functions, word counts, auto-referencing) text formatting (tabs, margin, arithmetic tabs), graphics (diagram, photograph, desk-top publishing and mail merged (keyboarding, file). Speaking on the importance of Word Processing/Modern office machines, Nwogwugwu (2002) noted that many years ago, the need for modern office machines, and equipment did not arise. This was mainly because, the secretaries then could make do with the

manual typewriters, manually operated photocopying and duplicating machines and other office equipment operated manually to do their work irrespective of the length of time and energy they exert in doing so, especially if they are engaged in narrow and non-competitive business. The inaccuracies, inefficiencies and non-standardization of these machines notwithstanding, once these traditional secretaries were able to take down dictation in shorthand and transcribe same on the manual typewriter, they would be satisfied that they have done their work.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered:

1. What are the computer skills possessed by Business Education students of Universities in Enugu State?

2. What is the importance of automated office in Enugu State?

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students of Business Education in Universities on the ICT skills possessed for self- employment

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female Business Education students in Universities on the accounting skills possessed for the management of small scale businesses. The test of this null hypothesis can be seen as summarized in table below

Method

The design for the study was a survey research. The study was carried out in Enugu State of Nigeria. Enugu State is chosen for this study because it has higher institutions where Business Educationprogrammes are offered. The population of the study consists of 264 students of Business Education from Enugu State University of Science and Technology. A sample of 100 was used for the study. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was subjected to face validation using the expertise of three business Educators. The instrument after the face validation was subjected to a one time reliability test to further evaluate the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. To this end the questionnaire was administered to twenty employers in Ebonyi State and using Cronbach Alpha formula to compute the coefficient of the internal consistency (stability) of the instrument. The coefficient computed yielded 0.68 which was quite high. The questionnaire was administered students in Enugu State. The instrument was administered and retrieved through personal contact employing the services of three research assistants. A total of 264 copies of the questionnaire were administered while 240 copies retrieved.The data collected was analysed using mean and standard deviation statistics scores for each response category.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the computer skills possessed by Business Education students of Universities in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean ratings on computer skills possessed by Business Education students of Universities in Enugu State.

S/NO	Items Statement	X_1	SD_1	Remarks
1	Communicate fluently	2.09	.87	A
2	Independently operate personal computer systems	3.09	.64	A
3	Use word processing programmes	2.23	.87	A
4	Perform data analysis with a computer package	2.32	.25	A
5	Access and use information from the internet	2.13	.88	A
6	Use Database programs	2.32	.05	A
7	Use spreadsheet programs	2.48	.13	A
8	Use Desktop publishing software	2.18	.13	A
9	Use Graphics and design programs	2.13	.12	A
10	Use Presentation software	2.32	.20	A
	Grand Mean	2.90	**.73**	A

Table 1 presents the mean ratings of respondents on ICT skills possessed by Business Education students of Colleges of Education for sustainable development. Items 6, and 8-15 recorded mean scores ranging from 1.00 to 1.05 indicating not possessed, on the other hand, items 1, 3, 5, and 7 recorded mean ratings ranging from 2.09 to 2.24 indicating slightly possessed, while items 2 and 4 had mean scores of 2.59 and 3.09 respectively, indicating moderately possessed. standard deviation ranges from 0.05 – 0.88 indicating that the respondents were not far from each other in their opinions. With a grand mean of 1.51 and standard deviation of 0.73, Table 1 indicated that Business Education students of Universities slightly possess Computer skills for an automated office.

Research Question 2: What is the importance of automated office in Enugu State?

Table 2: Mean ratings on the importance of automated office in Enugu State.

S/NO	Items Statement	X_1	SD_1	remarks
11	Automation facilitate efficient and detailed information through the use of mechanical aids like computers.	2.32	.72	A
12	It ensures speedy recording processing and presenting of information.	2.13	.72	A
13	Increased volume of work, scarcity of time and the slow manual processes necessitates the introduction of automation.	2.32	.74	A
14	It facilitates better quality work by reducing errors which are created on manual work.	2.48	.76	A
15	Automation increases the goodwill and reputation of the	2.18	.82	A

	firm because it adds to the prestige and status symbol of the enterprise.				
16	Revolution in office has been brought by automation because increased volume of work is handled in a better manner with greater accuracy and speedy because of automation. This process results in increased output	2.13	.80	A	
	Grand Mean	**2.21**	**.10**	**A**	

Table 2 presented the mean ratings of respondents on the importance of automated office in Enugu State. All the six items recorded mean scores ranging from 2.10 to 2.48 indicating slightly possessed. standard deviation ranges from 0.65 – 0.82 indicating that the respondents were not far from each other in their opinions.With a grand mean of 2.21 and standard deviation of 0.10, Table 3 indicated importance of automated office in Enugu.

Test of Hypothesis
The null hypotheses of the study were tested using independent t-test to find the significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and students. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The summary of the test of hypotheses are presented in Tables 7 to 10 as follows:

Table 4: Summary of t-test of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the office technology and management skills possessed for the management of small scale businesses

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Male	74	2.81	1.00	2.68	187	0.008	S
Female	115	2.41	0.98				

Source: Field survey, 2023P<0.05

The data in Table 3 revealed that there are 74 and 115 male and female Business Education students respectively. Male students had higher mean (X= 2.81; SD = 1.00) than female students (X= 2.41; SD = 0.98).The Table revealed that there was significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students regarding office technology and management skills possessed for the management of small scale businesses (t187= 2.68, P=0.008).Therefore, the hypothesis that stated that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business students in colleges of education on the office technology and management skills possessed for the management of small scale businesses was rejected. This indicated that male and female Business Education students differ statistically significantly in their responses regarding office technology and management skills possessed for the management of small scale businesses. The implication is that male students (mean = 2.81) possessed office technology skills more than their female counterparts (mean = 2.41).

Table 5:Summary of t-test of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the accounting skills possessed for the management of small scale businesses.

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	p-value	Decision
Male	74	2.62	1.08	1.474	187	0.142	NS
Female	115	2.39	1.00				

Source: Field survey, 2017   **P>0.05**

The data in Table 5 revealed that there are 74 and 115 male and female Business Education students respectively. Male students had higher mean (X= 2.62; SD = 1.08) than female students (X= 2.39; SD = 1.00).The Table revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female students regarding the accounting skills possessed for the management of small scale businesses (t187= 1.474, P=0.142).Therefore,the hypothesis that stated that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business students in colleges of education on the accounting skills possessed for the management of small scale businesses not rejected. This indicated that male and female Business Education students did not differ statistically significantly in their responses regarding the accounting skills possessed for the management of small scale businesses. Though, slight difference can be observed with male students having higher mean (mean = 2.62) than their female counterparts (mean = 2.39), but the mean difference was not statistically significant.

Discussion of Findings
The findings of this study revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that the identified 10 items word processing office work skills are required of Business Educationgraduates in the modern office. This result finding is related to the finding of Ohakwe and Okwuanaso (2006) that

computer skills (word processing skills) are highly required of Business Education graduates. Similarly, Chukwumezie and Ndinechi (2006) revealed that computer skills such as word processing have brought about a lot of improvement and efficiency over the previous manual operations. This finding is also supported by the findings of Nwosu (2001) who identified a high percentage of word processing skills and other computer competencies needed by graduates of Business Education. One major area that the computer has been applied almost on daily basis is in the area of word processing for typing of documents, letters, memos, reports etc. It is preferred to the manual word processing hence most organizations now employs its services in the typing of documents, letters, memos, reports etc. and it required competent hands to operate it.

Table 2 presented the mean ratings of respondents on the importance of automated office in Enugu State. All the six items recorded mean scores ranging from 2.10 to 2.48 indicating slightly possessed. standard deviation ranges from 0.65 – 0.82 indicating that the respondents were not far from each other in their opinions.With a grand mean of 2.21 and standard deviation of 0.10, Table 3 indicated importance of automated office in Enugu. Greenspan (2000) also indicated that employers require workers who are equipped not simply with technical know-how but also with equipments that will

enable their works more efficient. To this end there is the requirement of automated machines for effective performance.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to determine the computer skills possessed by Business Education students of Universities for effective performance in automated office in Enugu State. Data were collected, analyzed and interpreted. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Business Education students of Universities slightly possess computer skills for effective use in automated office.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, discussions and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Modern information and communication technology tools and packages should be provided for the Business Education students to practice with. Also, trained personnel should be employed to handle the ICT Units for effective impartation of knowledge and skills on the students.
2. Instructional delivery should be more or less practical rather than theoretical, as this will avail the students the opportunity of practicing the skills taught to them by their teachers.
3. On the job training opportunities should be provided to the students so as to enable students learn firsthand the actual task required in the work place. Also, excursions could be organized periodically for the Business Education students companies with automated machines.

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