SUPERVISORS' RATING OF COMPETENCIES POSSESSED BY OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT GRADUATE WORKERS IN PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS IN KATSINA STATE

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Abstract

This research was necessitated by dividedly reported lack of relevant competencies by Office Technology and Management graduates by employers. It determines supervisors' rating of competencies possessed by OTM graduates working in public organisations in Katsina State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 248 supervisors in public organisations. Instrument used for data collection was a 36 items questionnaire validated by of experts. The internal consistency of the items was ensured through split half method and Pearson Product Moment Co-relation Co-efficient was used to determine the reliability. Mean ratings and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses. Findings revealed that OTM graduates possessed word processing competencies to a great extent and desktop publishing competencies at a low extent. Gender did not significantly significantly influence respondents' mean ratings as the extent OTM graduates workers possessed word processing competencies but type of organisation significantly influenced the respondents' mean ratings as the extent workers possessed desktop publishing competencies. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that OTM graduates should be given adequate training on desktop publishing.

Introduction

In recent times, fast changes have been taking place in all facets of human life including the office environment. This is as a result of global technological advancement. Every office in today's business world, be it government, industrial or other human endeavour, requires accurate information for quick decision making. The information processing and management functions in various offices rest squarely on secretaries who are office information managers. Hence the management of organisations expects Office Technology and Management (OTM) graduates in their employment to possess relevant competencies to perform the functions effectively and efficiently.

Organizational proficiency depends largely on the competencies of the secretaries (OTM graduates) who serve as pivots upon which organisations rotate. Organisations combine effectiveness and efficiency of their secretaries to achieve their goal of growth. To

employers, competencies mean producing the desired results. As a result of changes in technology, the nomenclature of secretarial studies was changed to office technology and management and so also the roles of secretaries changed from typewriting, writing notes in shorthand, answering of telephone calls and processing of mails to information and communication technology (ICT) driven operations. Edwin (2008) observed graduates of OTM are exposed to office technology based tasks including the internet to make

their work much easier and knowledge more accessible. This is the era of computers and information technology which has become enabler of greater conveniences.

Offices are places where administrative functions of organisation are carried out. The word administration is derived from the word administer. To administer means to oversee, to manage, to control, to supervise in order to ensure that the goals of the organisation or establishment are achieved. Offices render clerical, executive and other functions to facilitate organizational growth and effectiveness. ICT based functions in today's office include data processing, word processing, record management, webpage design, desktop publishing and management information system.

Competency means the ability to do something well. Competencies expected of OTM graduates in public organisation can be referred to as those abilities required for carrying out the ICT related and other office functions effectively and efficiently. The competencies expected of office personnel vary as the office activities vary.

OTM graduates are required to be competent in word processing, communication and desktop publishing right from the institution so as to cope technology-driven era. Ezenwafor (2012) defined word processing as the art of using word processor to produce different type of personal or office text based document such as letters, memos, agreements and reports among others and to typeset materials for newspaper, magazine and book publication as well as to store soft copy for use in future. Similarly, Grove, MacDonald and Vender in Okoro (2013) explained that word processing is the process of creating and editing documents. Hence, NBTE (2004) curriculum include word processing among various skills that would make the graduates perform satisfactorily in employment in order to remain relevant. Similarly, desktop publishing is another important are that OTM graduates need to be competent. Azuka in Okoro (2013) posited that desktop publishing is a process of using computer in a specific type of software to combine text with graphics to produce documents such as newsletter, brochure, posters and books among others.

Statement of the Problem

One of the objectives of the OTM curriculum is to equip graduates with relevant competencies to enable them to be gainfully employed in business organisations or become self-employed. The work place is a dynamic environment that changes with time requiring new skills by workers for effective performance. Some years ago the need for training in technological office equipment did not arise because office functions could be performed

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using manual typewriters, electric typewriters, manually operated photocopying or duplicating machines among other office equipment operated manually to carry out office functions. Manual office functions in the past were a little easier but were characterized with monotonous operations that were time consuming. Besides, dirty work output, illegibility and repetitive corrections on such work often resulted in re-typing which led to time and stationery wastages.

Today's office functions and activities have gone beyond manual process to technological processes and as such office employees trained in manual and mechanical operations seem not prepared to fit in. However, the ability or competencies of graduates coupled with their limited experience may lead to their low rating by employers. To adequately equip OTM graduate with entry level employment competencies, requirements were set by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) (2004). These include two computer laboratories each having 35 computers, one electronic typewriter typing pool with35 typewriters, and a model office with modern office equipment/facilities.

The problem of this study is that there seems to be a disparity between the word processing and desktop publishing competencies possessed by OTM graduate workers and those required by their employers. Factual situation regarding word processing and desktop publishing cannot be determine without an empirical study, hence this study on supervisors' rating of competencies possessed by OTM graduate workers in public organisations in Katsina State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine supervisors' rating of competencies possessed by OTM graduate workers in public organisations in Katsina State. Specifically, the study determined the supervisors' ratings of OTM graduates in:

1. Word processingcompetencies
2. Desktop Publishingcompetencies

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do OTM graduates working in public organisations in Katsina State possess word processing competencies?
2. To what extent do OTM graduates working in public organisations in Katsina State possess desktop publishing competencies?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Male and Female supervisors in public organisations in Katsina State do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on word processing competencies possessed by their OTM graduate workers.
2. Supervisors in government ministries and Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on desktop publishing competencies possessed by their OTM graduate workers.

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This was in line with Akuezuilo and Agu (2007) recommendation that a survey research design is suitable for any study aimed at collecting and analyzing data from a given population or its representative sample on a given phenomenon. The area of the study was Katsina State Nigeria. Katsina State was carved out of Kaduna State on 23rd September, 1987 by the then regime of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, with capital as Katsina. it is made up of two emirates (that is Katsina and Daura Emirates) which feature prominently in the establishment of the seven Hausa kingdoms. Katsina was founded by Kumayo and before the Fulani conquest; it had been an important seat of learning and a commercial centre of the trans-Saharan trade. It provided one of the earliest education centres in the north. Until the beginning of the 20th century; the people of Katsina lived a relatively stable agricultural life.

The choice of the area for conducting this study was based on the fact that no research on this topic was known to have been carried out in the area. The population of this study comprised 248 supervisors in Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic and government ministries in Katsina state. The researchers used the entire population as sample because the size was manageable.

Instrument for data collection was structure questionnaire developed by the researchers based on the purpose of the study. It has two sections, sections A and B with 20 and 16 items respectively. In order to determine the face validity, the researchers subjected the instrument to validation by three experts. Split half method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the two halves and obtained the reliability coefficient of 0.80 and 0.93. The instrument was administered to the study sample in their offices by the researcher with the help of a research assistant. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and determine the closeness of the respondents' mean ratings. Any item with a mean score above 3.00 was possessed at a great extent and one with mean score below 3.00 was possessed at a small extent. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using z-test where the calculated z value was less than the critical z value, the hypothesis was not rejected but where the calculated z value was equal or greater than the critical value the hypothesis was ejected.

Results

Research Question 1:

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To what extent do OTM graduates working in public organisations in Katsina State possess word processing competencies?

Table 1:
Supervisors' mean ratings on the extent OTM graduate workers in public organizations in Katsina State possess word processing competencies

S/N	Word processing competencies	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Ability to type using appropriate finger	4.47	0.64	GreatExtent
2.	Ability to sort text, merge text, insert text delete text	4.44	0.66	GreatExtent
3.	Ability to search for word/characters as appropriate	4.37	0.70	GreatExtent
4.	Ability to replace word/characters as appropriate	4.35	0.65	GreatExtent
5.	Ability to spell check for errors, correct the errors	4.38	0.74	GreatExtent
6.	Ability to recall/retrieved documents	4.23	0.76	GreatExtent
7.	Ability to Save and retrieved documents	4.35	0.79	GreatExtent
8.	Ability to erase documents	4.40	0.75	GreatExtent
9.	Ability to control system against errors, virus, and theft	4.04	0.86	GreatExtent
10	Ability to control to use ms word, word perfect, excel	4.12	0.84	GreatExtent
11	Ability to set margins/tabs	4.18	0.82	GreatExtent
12	Ability to format text such as centre, align, justify, under score, Italize and embolden	4.35	0.73	Great Extent
13	Ability to rename document	4.35	0.74	GreatExtent
14	Create column	4.33	0.74	GreatExtent
15	Paginate	4.17	0.72	Great Extent
16	Select Font Size	4.25	0.77	Great Extent
17	Select group of words in a text	4.22	0.75	Great Extent
18	Copy the selected text	4.28	0.67	Great Extent
19	Operate Photocopying machine easily, to enlarge	4.39	0.67	Great Extent
20	Print Document/text	4.31	0.76	Great Extent
	Cluster Mean	**4.20**		**Great Extent**

Data in Table 1 indicate that all the mean ratings for all the word processing competencies were above the cut off mean of 3.00. This means that the supervisors rated their OTM graduate workers to possess them at a great extent. The cluster mean of 4.20 indicates that OTM graduate workers in public organisations in Katsina State possessed word processing competencies to a great extent. The standard deviation scores where within the same range showing that the respondents were not wide apart in their ratings.

Research Question 2
To what extent do OTM graduates working in public organisations in Katsina State possess

desktop publishing competencies?

Table 2:
Supervisors' mean ratings on the extent OTM graduate workers in public organizations in Katsina State possess desktop publishing competencies

S/N	Desktop Publishing competencies	Mean	SD	Remarks
21	Ability to set margins	2.26	0.87	Small Extent
22	Ability to increase work area	2.22	0.72	Small Extent
23	Ability to decrease work area	2.07	0.75	Small Extent
24	Ability to create new publication	2.17	0.81	Small Extent
25	Ability to insert images in a publication	2.14	0.81	Small Extent
26	Ability to use ruler guide	2.28	0.75	Small Extent
27	Ability to set columns	2.11	0.78	Small Extent
28	Ability to work in columns	2.08	0.83	Small Extent
29	Ability to create line text boxes	2.07	0.82	Small Extent
30	Ability to resize objects with precision	2.11	0.78	Small Extent
31	Ability to add borders	2.17	0.79	Small Extent
32	Ability to edit colours	2.18	0.74	Small Extent
33	Ability to design checker	2.23	0.75	Small Extent
34	Ability to delete unwanted work	2.39	0.91	Small Extent
35	Ability to save a template	2.23	0.77	Small Extent
36	Ability to print quality publication with balanced column	2.08	0.84	Small Extent
	Cluster Mean	**2.17**		**Small Extent**

The data in Table 2 indicate that all the competencies listed on the desktop publishing had mean scores below the cut off mean of 3.00 with a cluster mean of 2.17. This means that supervisors rated OTM graduate workers in public organizations in Katsina State to possess desktop publishing competencies to a small extent. Standard for all the scores were within the same range showing that the respondents were not wide apart in their ratings.

Hypothesis 1:
Male and Female supervisors in public organisations in Katsina State do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on word processing competencies possessed by their OTM graduate workers.

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Table 3:
Summary on male and female supervisors' mean rating on the extent OTM graduate workers in public organisations in Katsina State possess word processing competencies.

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Level of Significance	z-Cal	z-Critical	Decision
Male	165	4.30	0.73					
				221	0.05	2.19	1.96	S
Female	58	4.27	0.75					

Data in Table 3 show that at 221 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, z-cal. value of 2.19 was greater than the z-crit. value of 1.96. This means that there is significant difference on the mean rating of male and female respondents on the extent OTM graduate workers in public organizations in Katsina State possess word processing competencies. The hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 2:
Supervisors in government ministries and Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on desktop publishing competencies possessed by their OTM graduateworkers.

Table 4:
Summary on supervisors' mean rating on the extent OTM graduate workers in public organisations in Katsina State possess desktop publishing competencies.

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Level of Significance	z-Cal	z-Critical	Decision
HUK POLY.	125	2.23	0.75					
				221	0.05	1.38	1.96	NS
Government Ministry	98	2.10	0.83					

Data in Table 4 show that at 221 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, z-cal. value of 1.38 was less than the z-crit. value of 1.96. This means that there is no significant differences on the mean rating of supervisors mean ratings on the extent OTM graduate workers in public organizations in Katsina State possess desktop publishing competencies.

The hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Discussion

The result of the analysis to this research question as presented showed that, supervisors of OTM graduates workers in public organisations in Katsina State rated OTM graduates workers as high extent on word processing competencies as required by public organisations in Katsina State. This confirms the views of Thomas (2006) that word processing competencies make OTM graduates valuable in any organisation. competencies in word processing as rated high extent by supervisors of OTM graduates also agrees with the definition of it as stated by Ezenwafor (2012), that it assisted OTM graduates in producing different types of personal or office text based documents such as letters, memos, reports, and so on.

The findings of this research also agree with Garba (2012) findings that, OTM students in north-west Nigerian Polytechnics were proficient in word processing. It also in consonant with the finding of Okoro (2013) that OTM lecturers in south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria considered themselves competent in word processing. Therefore, the competencies of the lecturers results to teaching the students effectively in the course unit which make them to be competent.

The study also found that there is significance difference in the mean rating of male and female supervisors on word processing competencies as possessed by OTM graduates in public organisation and both government ministries and Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic. This indicates that neither gender nor type of organisation has any influence on their responses.

The result of the analysis presented indicates that supervisors of OTM graduates workers in public organisations in Katsina State rated OTM graduates workers in desktop publishing competencies as low extent. This is a sign that OTM graduates workers in public organisations perform poorly in this aspect. This finding contradicts Garton (2004) expectations of OTM graduates as regards to desktop publishing where the author stated that desktop publishing assist secretaries/OTM graduates in consistency, contrast and alignment. It also contradicts Smith (2014) benefits of desktop publishing competencies which states that quality document will be produced with simplicity and at low cost to the organisation. Also the finding is in disagreement with Chukwumezie (2006) finding that desktop publishing competency is regarded high by managers and therefore, needed by secretarial assistant (OTMgraduates).

The study equally revealed that male and female supervisors of Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic and government ministries in Katsina State did not differ significantly in their mean ratings regarding desktop publishing competencies possessed by OTM graduates workers in public organisation in Katsina State.

Conclusion

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From the findings of the study it can clearly been seen that OTM graduates workers in public organisations in Katsina State can perform to a great extent (competently) on word processing. This was clearly seen from the ratings by the supervisors in public organisations in Katsina State. It could be concluded that, OTM graduate workers in public organisations in Katsina State possessed low extent of competencies on desktop publishing. This shows that, the OTM graduates workers in public organisations in Katsina State cannot perform as expected in desktop publishing.

Recommendations

Base on the findings of the study, following recommendations were made:

1. OTM graduate workers in Katsina State should make concerted efforts to acquire desktop publishing competencies by enrolling for further training in the applications.
2. OTM lecturers should assist students to possess desktop publishing competencies by giving adequate training in the application.
3. OTM departments should sponsor lecturers to workshops and seminars in order to acquire different ways of imparting desktop publishing competencies to students.
4. Supervisors of OTM graduates in public organisations in Katsina State should sponsor them to further training to acquire relevant competencies for effective work performance.
5. The NBTE should ensure that all the specified equipment for OTM training are provided in school offering the programme to facilitate acquisition of relevant competencies by the students during accreditation exercise.

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