

**DIRECTORS' AND PERMANENT SECRETARIES APPRAISAL OF OFFICE  
TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT GRADUATES' WORK PERFORMANCE IN  
IMO STATE CIVIL SERVICE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study was designed to determine Directors' and Permanent Secretaries' appraisal of adequacy of work performance of office technology and management graduates' employees in Imo State Civil Service South East Nigeria. Three research questions were raised to guide the study while one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The entire population of 166 Directors and Permanent Secretaries who supervise secretaries in Imo state civil service were used for the study. Data were collected for the study through the administration of validated questionnaire on the respondents. Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The mean statistics was used to answer the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the hypothesis. The result of this study revealed that the work performance of OTM graduates employees in Imo state civil service is adequate in terms of records management, human relations and information and communication technology functions. It was therefore recommended among others that academic board of various polytechnics in Nigeria should ensure that the quality of training and education in Office Technology and Management programme is sustained so that the quality of graduates produced do not fall below the required standard specified by National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and expected by employers of labour and that NBTE should continue to emphasize on adequacy of physical facilities and equipment in office technology and management programme.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Directors and Permanent Secretaries Appraisal, Work Performance, Office Technology and Management Graduates*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Background to the Study***

Over the years, the global world has experienced technological changes in business and office activities/functions. In Nigeria, many government and private sector offices, are fast adapting to modern technologies. This trend appears to be one of most viable ways to survive the industrial and group competitions as well as the evolving global technological culture. Many organizations make use of new technologies to handle people, coordinate activities, and evaluate performance directed towards organizational goals and objectives. Enyakit (2006) asserted that the modern business office is rapidly changing as a result of office automation, which has brought about new methods in carrying out functions performed by people in organizations. One office employees that constantly use this ever-changing technology in the office is the office manager who is expected to handle numerous office functions related to information processing.

According to Ejeka (2017) an office manager or a secretary is a member of staff who is concerned with the preparation, preservation and transmission of different types of office documents as well as conventional secretarial duties of confidential nature at various levels in an organization. This implies that a qualified secretary should possess basic office technology skills, have sufficient business acumen, be versatile in office information and communication technology and have sufficient knowledge of the operations of all departments within the organization where he/she works.

In view of the above, Office Technology and Management programme was designed to prepare the graduate for office works in public and private sector of the economy. On graduation, the graduates would occupy position such as confidential secretaries, office manager, personal assistants et cetera, and be expected to perform office function of administration, personnel, record keeping, human relations and information and communication technology.

It is anticipated that the curriculum of OTM programme would equip the graduates sufficiently for office work. The training is also expected to create a harmonious working environment and relieve their executives their tedious duties. In most cases, the top executives rely on secretaries on personal and official correspondences, and were relieve of pressure in office functions. The graduates of OTM programme are called secretaries or office managers. A professional secretary should be acquainted with all the competencies required in information and communication technology and be able to apply such knowledge in her duty performance in the office (Iro, 2016). This is because the present digital work place demands practical knowledge of modern office machines which, according to Peters (2010), are more complex and sophisticated but facilitate secretarial duties in the office and make secretaries information managers and communication technologists and not just secretaries called with bell at intervals.

Therefore, it is required that secretaries should possess the relevant skills and competencies in various electronic gadgets needed to function effectively in the modern office. Nevertheless, the mixture of modern equipment, people and procedure demands that the automated office be handled with changing styles as things change. Coordinating both human and material involvement of the new environment are all problems which the OTM graduates will have to contend with under the present dispensation. Hence, there is need to appraise the work performance of office technology and management graduates.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

In Nigeria, some recent developments and innovations in technology have brought about a tremendous change in the office environment. Innovations in office technology demand greater responsibilities and improved performance from the secretary office manager. Government remains the highest employer of labour in Imo State with many secretaries of different levels in her ministries whose performance should positively contribute to the effectiveness of their ministries and the government. However, this can only happen if the OTM graduates are effective and efficient in their work performance. It is important to note that efforts to improve the training of secretaries to meet the demands of office automation in many government offices have not met

success as wide gaps still exist between the present knowledge of secretaries and the knowledge required of them to operate effectively in a modern office (Isifeh-Okpokwu, 2003). Similarly, Iro (2012) noted that at times, executives complain of missing documents; delays in retrieving files/stored documents rudeness to the visitors by their secretaries, inability to compose secretaries routine correspondence, take minutes of meeting et cetera.

In view of the fact that evidence of the appraisal of performance of the functions of OTM graduate employees is difficult to come by in government ministries in Nigeria, there is need to ascertain empirically the actual level of work performance of OTM graduates in government ministries in Imo State. This necessitated the study on appraisal of work performance of office technology and management in government ministries in Imo State to reveal their deficiencies and facilitate their retraining for enhanced performance.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The main purpose of this study was to determine how adequate supervisors consider OTM graduates' work performance in the following areas:

- ✓ Records management functions
- ✓ Human relation functions
- ✓ Information and communication technology functions.

### ***Research Questions***

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1 How adequate do supervisors rate the work performance of OTM graduate employees on record management functions in government ministries in Imo State?
- 2 How adequate do supervisors rate the work performance of OTM graduate employees on human relation functions in government ministries in Imo State?
- 3 How adequate do supervisors rate the work performance of OTM graduate employees on information and communication technology functions in government ministries in Imo State?

### ***Hypothesis***

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female supervisors on adequacy of OTM graduates' work performance in government ministries in Imo State

## **METHOD**

The research design used for this study is survey design to appraise the work performance of office technology and management graduates employees in government ministries in Imo State Nigeria. The population of this study comprised 166 Directors' and Permanent Secretaries in Imo State civil service made up of 137 Directors' and 29 Permanent Secretaries in each of the 35 ministries and non-ministerial departments in inState (Imo State Scheme of Service, 2018). The population size was not too large for the study and therefore, there was no sampling. A 30 item questionnaire was used as instrument for the study. The research instrument has two parts – Part A and Part B.

Part A contains information on the respondent's biographic data. Part B is divided into three sections in line with research questions raised for the study. The instrument was structured to elicit information from the appraisal of respondents on a 4 point rating scale as follows:

Very Adequate	(VA)	4
Adequate	(A)	3
Barely Adequate	(BA)	2
Not Adequate	(NA)	1

To establish the validity of the instrument, it was given to three experts in Department of Vocational Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State Nigeria. Their observations were effected on the questionnaire before final copy was written. The test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire was administered to ten directors in government ministries outside their area of study. After an interval of two weeks, the same instrument was administered to the set of respondents. The result was computed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.86 which was high enough to consider the instrument reliable.

The questionnaire constructed was administered by the researcher to the respondents with the aid of research assistants. The researcher was able to collect some of the questionnaire on the spot while others were collected after few days. Out of a total of 166 questionnaire distributed 162 copies were returned base on which analysis for this study was done. In analyzing the data collected from the instrument administered, simple mean was used to analyze the responses for research question while t-test was used to test the hypothesis formulated for the study. The Decision Rule is this: Any item with a mean rating that is equal to or greater than 2.5 was considered 'Adequate' while any item with a mean rating that is less than 2.5 was considered 'inadequate'. The null hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at  $p < 0.05$ .

## RESULT

The results of the study were presented in tables according to research questions while the test of hypothesis was presented in Table 4

### ***Research Question 1***

*How adequate do supervisors rate the work performance of OTM graduate employees on record management functions in government ministries in Imo State?*

**Table 1: Respondents' Mean Rating on OTM Graduates' Work Performance in Records Management Functions (N=162)**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
1	Keep records of staff and organizations assets	2.60	Agreed
2	Keep and retire imprest	3.53	Agreed
3	Keep minutes of meeting	3.34	Agreed
4	Categorize meetings appropriately	2.61	Agreed
5	Keep records in flash drive and other electronic system	2.05	Disagreed
6	Keep petty accounting and legal records	3.60	Agreed
7	Maintain proper filing and indexing system	3.55	Agreed
8	Conversant with filing rules and procedures	3.00	Agreed
9	Keep records of committee reports	3.20	Agreed
10	Monitor diary of executive activities	3.00	Agreed
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.05</b>	Agreed

The data in Table 1 revealed supervisors' views on the work performance of office technology and management graduate employees in Imo State civil service. Apart from keeping records in flash drive and other electronic system, the respondents were of the opinion that the work performance of OTM graduates employees work performance is adequate in terms of keeping records of staff and organizations assets, keeping and retiring imprest, keeping minutes of meeting, categorizing meetings appropriately keeping petty accounting and legal records, maintaining proper filing and indexing system, being conversant with filing rules and procedures, keeping records of committee reports and monitoring diary of executive activities

The grand mean of 3.05 shows that the respondents agreed that the work performance of OTM graduates employees in government ministries in Imo State is adequate.

**Research Question 2**

*How adequate do supervisors rate the work performance of OTM graduate employees on human relation functions in government ministries in Imo State?*

**Table 2: Respondents' Mean Rating on OTM Graduates' Work Performance in Human Relation Functions (N=162)**

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
11	Having self-control and offering useful suggestion in the office	3.22	Adequate
12	Admitting for wrong doings and apologizing as soon as possible	2.60	Adequate
13	Avoiding victimization of fellow workers while discharging official functions	3.00	Adequate
14	Sharing experience with colleagues and discussing developmental programmes with colleagues	2.82	Adequate
15	Having a cordial relationship with colleagues and superiors in the office	3.20	Adequate
16	Welcome superiors and visitors cheerfully	3.61	Adequate
17	According respect to everybody in the office/ organization	2.54	Adequate
18	Reliable in accomplishing tasks on schedule	3.20	Adequate
19	Being trustworthy and responsible in discharging duties	2.89	Adequate
20	Knowing his executive's likes and dislikes and sympathizes with his executive personal problems	3.12	Adequate
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.92</b>	Adequate

Table 2 reveals how Directors and Permanent Secretaries appraise the work performance of OTM graduate employees in Imo State civil service. All the items in this section received mean rating greater than 2.50. The grand mean of 3.84 is a further indication of respondent agreement to the items that the work performance of OTM graduate employees in Imo State civil service is adequate in terms of human relation functions.

*How adequate do Directors and Permanent Secretaries rate the work performance of OTM graduate employees on information and communication technology functions in government ministries in Imo State?*

**Table 3: Respondents' Mean Rating on OTM Graduates' Work Performance in Information and Communication Technology Functions (N=162)**

S/N	Information Technology Functions	Mean	Remark
21	Creating word processing documents	2.60	Adequate
22	Reorganizes text or images	3.53	Adequate
23	Edit information	3.64	Adequate
24	Insert columns and rows	2.63	Adequate
25	Paginating documents	3.05	Adequate
26	Prints documents	2.60	Adequate
27	Insert borders and shading	2.55	Adequate
28	Manage files and folders effectively	3.00	Adequate
29	Change page orientation and formula	3.20	Adequate
30	Sending and receiving emails with attachment	3.00	Adequate
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

Table 3 reveals Directors and Permanent Secretaries appraisal of OTM graduates' work performance in information and communication technology functions in Imo State civil service. All the items in this section received mean rating greater than 2.50. The cluster mean of 2.98 indicates that the respondents agreed that the work performance of OTM graduates' Imo State civil service is adequate in terms of information and communication technology functions.

### *Testing of Hypothesis*

**Table 4: The z-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Male and Female Respondents on Adequacy of OTM Graduates' Work Performance**

Gender	N	X	S	z-cal	$\alpha$	Df	z-crit	Remark
Male	89	62.52	0.28					
Female	63	70.41	0.34	1.41	0.05	160	1.96	Retained

Table 4, shows z-test analysis of responses of male and female supervisors on the adequacy of OTM graduates' work performance in Imo State civil service with mean scores of 62.52 and 70.4 respectively. The z-calculated value of 1.41 is less than the z-tabulated value of 1.96 at 160 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained which implies

that, there is no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female supervisors on the adequacy of OTM graduates' work performance in Imo State civil service

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The findings of this study showed that the work performance of OTM graduate employees in Imo State civil service is adequate in the area of records management functions. This result is in line with the position of Aminu (2009) maintained that a well-trained office manager or secretary is capable of establishing and maintaining his organization's records and documents including meeting minutes, reports and other important documents. Aminu went say that where necessary, such OTM graduate employee must create appropriate and logical filing systems to ensure that organization's needs are easily accessible by the relevant staff and/or members. That is why Iro (2016) maintained that the position of an office manager is a key to an organization's success. The role of filing document requires commitment, abilities and enthusiasm. Hence, secretaries have the primary responsibility of maintaining good filing system capable of providing an accurate data/information needed at any point in time.

Again, the result in Table 2 reveals Directors' and Permanent Secretaries appraisal of OTM graduates' employees work performance in Imo State civil service with respect to human relation functions. The result revealed that OTM graduates' employees work performance in terms of human relation is also adequate. This result is in agreement with the view of Ahukannah and Ikelegbe (2008)] who posited that secretary must maintain good human relations with his executive/boss, with other executives, with colleagues and with other employees. They also maintained that human relations promote team spirit and serve as important tools for harmony and a great source of strength to the organization.

The result in Table 3 shows Directors' and Permanent Secretaries appraisal of OTM graduates' employees work performance in Imo State civil service with respect to information and communication technology functions. The result revealed that OTM graduates' employees work performance is also adequate in terms of creating word processing documents, reorganizing text or images, editing information, inserting columns and rows, paginating and printing documents, inserting borders and shading, managing files and folder effectively, changing page orientation and formula, sending and receiving emails with attachment

The result is supported by Duniyain Okoro and Ndinechi (2013) who found that information processing function are required in the electronic office. This is because information, being the bedrock of office functions was rated high in the frequency table. Acquiring professional and up to date skills in this area of office technology cannot be overemphasized considering its importance. Information and communication technology competencies just like other sphere of life have actually had impact on the modern office due to the rapid change that the office is undergoing. Similarly, the finding agreed with Yakubu in Okoro (2018) who posited that emphasis on secretarial training in this 21<sup>st</sup> century ha change from shorthand to information and communication technology. Therefore, the revolution of information technology currently

sweeping through all facets of human endeavor must be adequately woven into curriculum to meet the expectation of employers of OTM graduate workers.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the result of the study, it is concluded that the work performance of office technology and management graduates' employees in Imo State civil service is adequate in terms of records management, human relations and information and communication technology function. It therefore means that the objectives of office technology and management programme which is to produce graduates who can fit properly into the office of any organization and perform professionally, the functions of a secretary is being achieved.

## Recommendations

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

- The academic board of various polytechnics in Nigeria should ensure that the quality of training and education in Office Technology and Management programme is sustained so that the quality of graduates produced do not fall below the required standard specified by NBTE and expected by employers of labour. This can be achieved when lecturers in the department are properly supervised to ensure that they maintain the standard enshrined by the N.B.T.E. particularly 25% theory and 75% practical for all information and communication technology courses
- NBTE should continue to emphasize adequacy of physical facilities and equipment in office technology and management programme. Any OTM programme without adequate number of functional facilities and equipment should be asked to provide it for accreditation to be granted.
- There is need for NBTE to pay closer attention to academic content of office technology and management programme through its accreditation exercise. It should be periodically reviewed to ensure currency and consistency with the needs and expectations of industry and society that is constantly changing.
- Government should ensure that adequate fund is made available for polytechnics bearing in mind that technical manpower need of the nation depends heavily on quality of training in polytechnics.
- Industrial organizations being one of the major beneficiaries of the products of polytechnics should be made to realize that it is part of their cooperate social responsibility to help polytechnics in producing highly skilled manpower by providing funds, technical support and instructional materials such as ICT facilities to polytechnics.

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