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Keywords: secretarial education and future office 2020.

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The Place of Secretarial Education in Tertiary Institutions in Kaduna State, Nigeria, for Future Office 2020

Dr. S. S. Amoor α & Z. B. Magaji σ

Abstract- A research conducted by the International Association of Administrative professionals reveals that the Future Office 2020 will be characterized with highly advanced office technology and information system that requires expertise and advanced technological skills. The administrative and technological advancement will transform the workplace and will place high premium on technical abilities and interpersonal skills of professional secretaries. Ironically, the more advanced office technology becomes, the more confidential secretaries' interpersonal skills, knowledge and competence are showcased. The paper examined the place of secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Kaduna State for future office 2020. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were postulated for the study. The descriptive research design of the survey type was used for the study. A self-structured questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents. Section A dealt with the bio-data of the respondents while section B dealt with questionnaire items on the availability and usage of mobile-note-taking device and web based conferencing for teaching and learning in the secretarial option of business education programme of tertiary institutions in Kaduna State. The reliability of the instrument was ensured through the test and re-test reliability method and reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings revealed that there was significant relationship between mobile-note taking device and web-conferencing services and secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Kaduna State. Based on these findings, the paper concludes that secretarial education has to provide adequately up-to-date knowledge, attitudes, skills and competencies to students in modern office administration, technology and information systems to meet the demands of the ever-advancing office administration, technology and information systems in future office 2020. Among the recommendations made are that the curriculum of secretarial education in tertiary institutions be reviewed to accommodate an in-depth study of information technology using modern office devices and services like mobile note taker, web conferencing service, lap-tops, I phones and I pads which is the vague internationally.

Keywords: secretarial education and future office 2020.

I. Introduction

In the 1980s, the traditional functions of confidential secretaries in office occupation were strictly answering of phone calls, filing, faxing, photocopying, typing of letters, memos, taking notes in shorthand, keeping of office imprest, running errands and preparing tea for the manager of executive. The educational training made available to would be secretaries at the secondary schools or commercial colleges then were courses like typewriting, shorthand, bookkeeping, office practice, English Language while the tertiary institutions offered courses like business management, economics, principles of accounts, communication skills, shorthand, typewriting, commerce, human relations (Aliyu, 2006).

In the 1999s, the International Association of Administrative Professionals, according to Fenner (2005) in a research finding, revealed that between 1999-2010, office occupation would experience an explosion of new office technology and information systems to improve productivity and enhance service delivery. This became a reality and indeed not only enhanced the functions of professional secretaries in office occupation but also elevated the status of secretarial professionals positively. Since 1999 to date, the rapid advancement of office technology and information systems, and its influx in industries, manufacturing companies, banking, educational and research institutes have in no small measure changed the structure, content and methodology of office occupation for secretarial administrators.

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

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Akinyemi (2001), Okoli (2006) and Amoor (2010) posit that office technology has developed very rapidly but schools and training institutions have not yet matched it up by giving the type of training required for the automated office. The education and training for these professional in Nigerian tertiary institutions include courses such as shorthand, computer appreciation, organization and management, accounting, business law, economics, communication skills, office procedure, business statistics. In some tertiary institutions, in addition to the list above, also offer computer appreciation. These courses, Amoor (2010) further stresses do not adequately expose students to the knowledge of office administration, office technology and information systems. In his views, some tertiary institutions do not teach a single computer application package to their students. In view of this, most students graduate from tertiary institutions without knowing how to operate a single computer application package. This trend poses a lot of challenges to secretarial graduates in the labour market hence their lack of skills and competences in the operation of office technology and information systems today. The minimum computer application packages needed in the labour market for secretarial graduates are Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and Power Point. In addition to these, the secretarial graduates are expected to handle busy and upwardly mobile executive calendar. Ironically, most of the tertiary institutions do not expose their secretarial graduates to these packages, (Amoor 2009).

II. Concept of Secretarial Education

Secretarial education is a component of vocational education that provides knowledge and skills needed to perform efficiently and effectively in the world of work. It involves acquisition of skills, knowledge and competencies and makes the recipient proficient in secretarial profession. Secretarial education prepares the secretarial students for performing all roles of the secretary, the accountant and office manager. Aliyu (2006) opines that business education (secretarial inclusive) is an education offered in Colleges of education, Polytechnics and the Universities primarily to educate and train students to acquire knowledge, skills and competence to become professional secretarial educators and administrators.

Also, according to Okolo (2001) secretarial education provides students with adequate skills and information needed to function well in office occupation. In addition to the scholars' contributions, secretarial education provides adequate training and education in office administration, office technology and information systems to would be secretarial administrators to understand complex assignments and to play a major role in the general operations of a business office. It guides individuals for suitable placement in office to earn his living, improves personal qualities and builds attitudes that are necessary for adjustment to personal and employment situation.

In 2011, the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP), in Http://www.iaap-hq.org retrieved on 20th May, 2014 posits that another research finding that the Future Office 2020 will be characterized with much more sophisticated office technology and information systems and more tasking administrative responsibilities for professional secretaries. This implies that secretarial education has a responsibility to adequately prepare the graduates to face the challenges of the future office 2020.

III. Future Office 2020

The research carried out by the Office Team sponsored by the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) (2005) raised alarm in connection with the new office administration, office technology and information systems in the next ten to fifteen years. Bill (2005) posits that research findings reveals that the office of the future 2020 will be increasingly mobile, with technology enabling employees to perform their jobs virtually anywhere. The Office of the Future 2020 study warns that greater control over where and how people work will not necessarily translate into more free time. The International Association of Administrative (IAAP) stresses that forty-two percent of executive polled said they believe employees will be working more hours in the next ten to fifteen years. Daine (2010) observes that technology will continue to re-shape the work-place, change how and where business will be conducted in the next ten to fifteen years. The trend identified in 1999 is a reality today, so also the projections for ten to fifteen years shall also be a reality.

The daunting tasks and competitiveness of future office makes it mandatory for secretarial education students to be current with the trends or ever-changing office administration, office technology and information systems so as to remain relevant in the world of work and business. International Association of Administrative Professional (2005) says that the future office will be increasingly mobile with the use of multifunctional wireless office technology and information systems such as mobile note-taker, web-based conference services and telecommuting, enabling office workers to perform their duties from virtually anywhere. The IAAP(2005) stresses that the future office will create new administrative roles for professional secretaries. These include human resource coordination, workflow control, information management and virtual-meeting organization. The miniature wireless devices, WiFi, Wimax and mobile technology will

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continue to allow workers to work outside of the office with greater ease.

Additionally, virtual environments and web-based conferencing services will provide off-site employees with real-time access to meetings, reducing the need to travel. Improved wireless connectivity will allow for an increasingly flexible workforce. The study according to Daine Domeyer (2010) revealed that 87% of executives surveyed believe that telecommuting will increase in the next 10-15 years. This enables employees to work where it is most convenient. These will include entrepreneurial duties, resource coordination, workflow control, virtual meetings organizations, internet research, desktop publishing, computer training for the junior staff and website maintenance.

IV. Mobile-Note-Taker

This is a portable device designed to store handwritten data so that it can be transferred to a computer at a later date. The concept consists of an electronic pen with real ink and a memory unit with a c monochrome LCD display and 2 MB memory that when positioned above the writing surface, records all strokes on its scrolling screen. The effect is twofold; while you are making real world written notes a virtual copy of every mark you make is being recorded. The mobile note taker can be plugged directly into a private computer, allowing handwritten notes to be made within Microsoft Office documents and e-mails.

The skills needed by the graduates of secretarial education from tertiary institutions will be analysis of information and exercising good judgment, establishing rapport and facilitating team building, selecting the best technical tools and using them effectively, identifying and adapting to the needs and work styles of others and participating in business discussions that produce positive results. This is a signal to secretarial education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions to provide secretarial training and education to professional secretaries to understand the complex assignments and to play a major role in the general operations of business office; multi-taking, expert business communication and participating in executive decision-making processes.

V. Web-Conferencing Service

This refers to a service that allows conferencing events to be shared with remote locations. These are sometimes referred to as webinars or interactive conferences or online workshops. Ukunegbu (2003) posits that web-conference is the meetings that take place with people who are at physically different sites through the use of tele-communications technology. The web-conference is the service that is made possible by Internet technologies particularly on TCP/IP connections. The services allow real time point to point communications as well as multicast communications from one sender to many receivers. It also offers data streams of text-based messages, voice and video chat to be shared simultaneously across geographically dispersed locations. Applications for web conferencing include meetings, training events, lectures or short presentation from any computer.

VI. Statement of the Problem

Office occupation in 2020 according to International Association of Administrative Professional (IAAP) (2005) will be characterized with much more sophisticated office technology and information systems and more tasking administrative responsibilities for secretarial graduates that will opt to work in office occupation. In support of this, Bill (2005) opines that the office of the future 2020 will be increasingly mobile with technology enabling employees to perform their jobs virtually anywhere. Despite the alarm raised by these scholars, the researcher observed that tertiary institutions in Kaduna States that offer secretarial option of business education programme, at best, provide only computer appreciation to the students; some of the tertiary institutions offer computer appreciation and micro-soft word only. The education and training provided to the secretarial students in office management, technology and information systems in tertiary institutions today are far inadequate for secretarial education graduate to match up with the future office 2020. This problem forms the gap this study seeks to fill.

VII. Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to determine the place of secretarial option of business education programme for future office 2020. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. To find out the relationship between mobile-note-taking device and secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Kaduna State.
2. Ascertain the relationship between web-based conferencing service and secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions of Nigeria.

VIII. Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between computer mobile-note-taking device and secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between web-based Conferencing and secretarial option of

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business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

IX. Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consists of seven lecturers from the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Samaru, Zaria, twenty-eight lecturers from the Department of Business Education, Federal College of Education, Zaria and twenty-two lecturers from Gidan Waya College of Education, Kafanchan, Kaduna State. The entire population of fifty-seven lecturers was used for the study hence there was no sampling technique since the population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire for the purpose of the study titled "Electronic Paperless World" (EPW). Before the use of the instrument, it was validated by experts in the field . With its internal level of consistency of 0.78 from the pilot study, the instrument was found reliable for the purpose in which it was constructed.

Section A of the instrument was for the bio-data of the respondents while section B was made up of the 20 items of questionnaire approved for the study. On the rating of the instrument, the researcher used a 4-point rating scale with 4 points for strongly agree (SA), 3 points for agree (A), 2 points for Disagree (D) and 1 point for strongly disagree (SD). The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher and 48 copies of the questionnaire were duly completed and returned.

X. Analysis of Data

The research questions were analyzed using weighted mean score. In the course of answering research question, "strongly agree' and "agree" were classified as "agree". Similarly, "strongly disagree" and "disagree" was classified as "disagree" A mean score of 2.5 and above was considered as an index for agree, while the weighted mean score of less than 2.5 was considered as disagree. The opinions of the students were coded, entered into the computer and analyzed. The SSPS statistical package was employed to run Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test all the null hypotheses at the significance level of 0.05

a) *Data Presentation And Analysis*

Data collected in respect of the research questions were summarized and presented in table 1 and 2 as follows:

Table 1 : Respondents' opinions on the relationship between mobile note-taking device and secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions of learning

Option	Total Score	Mean Score	SD	Decision	Remarks
Agree	126	3.0			Mobile-note-taking device has significant relationship with secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions of learning.
Disagree	41	1.0	0.66	3.0>2.5	
Total	167	4			

Source: Result from the field work

Table 1 shows that the respondents who agreed that mobile-note-taking device has significant relationship with secretarial education in tertiary institutions of learning scored 126 points representing 3.0 weighted mean while the respondents who had contrary views scored 41 points with weighted mean of 1.0, with mean deviation value of 0.69. From the analysis, the result revealed that the calculated weighted mean of 3.0 is greater than 2.5 (3.0 > 2.5). This signified that mobile-note-taking device has significant relationship with secretarial education in tertiary institutions of learning.

Table 2 : Respondents' opinions on the relationship between web-based conferencing and secretarial education in tertiary institutions of learning

Option	Total Score	Mean Score	SD	Decision	Remarks
Agree	138	3.7			Web-based tele-conferencing has significant relationship with secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions of learning.
Disagree	10	0.3	0.66	3.7>2.5	
Total	148	4			

Source: Result from the field work

Table 2 shows that the respondents who agreed that web based conferencing has significant relationship with secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions of learning

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scored 138 points representing 3.7 weighted mean while the respondents who had contrary views scored 10 points with weighted mean of 0.3, with mean deviation value of 0.69. From the analysis, the result revealed that the calculated weighted mean of 3.7 is greater than 2.5 (3.7 > 2.5). This signified that web-based tele-conferencing has significant relationship with secretarial option of business education in tertiary institutions of learning.

XI. Hypothesis One

Table 3 : PPMC test analysis of the responses of lecturers on relationship between mobile-note-taking device and secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions of learning.

Model	N0	±	SD	DF	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Sec. Education Mobile note taking device	57	3.04	0.80	56	2.89	1.96	There is significant relationship

(*Source: Result from Field Work*

Table 3, revealed that the calculated r-value of 2.89 is higher than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected. This then signifies that there is a relationship between the mobile note taking device and secretarial option of business education in tertiary institutions of learning.

Table 4 : PPMC test analysis of the responses of lecturers on relationship between web- based tele conferencing and secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions of learning

Model	N0	±	SD	DF	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Sec. Education Web conferencing service	57	3.00	0.80	56	2.64	1.96	There is significant relationship

(*Source: Result from Field Work*

Table 4, revealed that the calculated r-value of 2.64 is higher than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected. This then signifies that there is a relationship between the web-based tele-conferencing and secretarial option of business education in tertiary institutions of learning.

XII. Discussion of Findings

The study, in tables 1-4 reveal that computer mobile note taking device and web-based conferencing services have significant relationship with secretarial option of business education programme in tertiary institutions of learning. The study discovered that business education lecturers are not conversant with these advanced learning technologies; talk less of the secretarial students in tertiary institutions of learning in Kaduna State. These findings agree with Aliyu (2010) who asserts that business education teachers are not adequately exposed to ICT for teaching and learning, and recommended that it must be made mandatory for business teachers in tertiary institutions to possess a certificate in some application software, especially Microsoft office package. Amoor (2010) posits that secretarial students in business education in tertiary institutions were not adequately exposed to the modern office technology and information systems to keep pace with ever-advancing office technology and information systems.

XIII. Conclusion

In view of the findings, the researcher concluded that the skills and competencies provided for secretarial students of business education in Nigerian tertiary institutions in Kaduna State may soon become obsolete and useless if secretarial students are not adequately provided with an up to date knowledge, skills and competence in advance office technology and information systems so as to remain relevant in the future office 2020.

XIV. Recommendation

Based on both current and future trends in office administration, office technology and information systems, it has become necessary to restructure secretarial education programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions and broaden its scope to meet the ever-advancing office administration, office technology and information systems so as to produce competent secretarial administrators that will effectively and efficiently man the future office 2020 and withstand the competitiveness of the labour market. To ensure that

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secretarial graduates withstand the competitiveness of the labour market and also function well in office occupation in Future Office 2020, the curriculum of secretarial education in tertiary institutions needs to be restructured to include courses such as:

1. *Information and Technology.* This consists of Operating systems and Utilities, Information technology and major business functions, application software, input technology, Databases management systems, programming and application development, Communication and networking infrastructures, Information and Retrieval, Systems Analysis and Design.
2. *Communication:* These include: Foundation of communication, Technological communication, Organizational communication.
3. *International Business.* This consists: Foundations of International Business International Business Communication International management.
4. The model offices for practicals should be adequately equipped with devices and services such as mobile note taker, web conferencing services and host of the latest office technology and information systems for teaching and learning. The students should be made to know how to operate them while still in the school. This will subsequently enable them to be acquainted with these ones so that they will have no difficulties in understanding the enhanced version of the equipment in the Future Office 2020.

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