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Modern Office Skills and Career Enhancement of Office Management and Technology (OMT) Graduate Employees in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

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Article Info

Abstract
The study examined modern office Skills and career enhancement of Office Management and Technology Graduate Employees in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated. The correlational research design was adopted for the study with a population of 258 respondents; this comprises all secretaries in the 5 tertiary institutions in Rivers State who studied Office Management and Technology as a course. There was no sample nor sampling technique because the researchers considered the population small and comfortable. The instruments for data collection were two sets of questionnaires titled "Modern Office skills (MOSQ) and Career Enhancement Questionnaire (CEQ). Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses was tested using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Based on the finding, the study revealed that the hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is a significance relationship between word processing skills, internet navigational skills and career enhancement of Office Management and Technology graduates' employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Based on the findings the study concludes that there is a strong positive relationship between office management skill and career enhancement of OMT graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. It was recommended among others that institutions should organize hands-on workshops and training sessions aimed at improving specific skills identified in the study, particularly in word processing and internet navigational skills. It is vital to create awareness among students about the significance of these skills for career advancement.

Keywords: Modern Office, Office Skills, Career enhancement, Word processing, Internet navigation

Introduction
Office is considered to be an important place, section or an area for the conduct of any works, jobs, businesses or transactions. By the term business, it is understood to be any work that is related to the office. The meaning of the term office is a place for the operation of business, the room or department, where the clerical work is done, or it can be stated that it is a place where professional and commercial transactions are implemented, or it is, a place where all sorts of activities within the organization are dealt with. Within an organization, there are various kinds of departments such as financial, production, clerical, technical, personnel, managerial, manufacturing, advertising, marketing, sales, training and so forth. The activities and functions of all the departments are implemented in places that are termed as offices. In educational institutions, there are various kinds of clerical and technical jobs that are implemented by the office workers; hence, office is stated to be an integral part of any organization or an institution. To make the more inclusive are introduction of many gadgets that transform the office to modern (Hattersley, 2024).

A modern office is a workspace designed to meet the needs of contemporary businesses and employees, emphasizing flexibility, technology integration, and collaboration. It reflects the evolving trends in how people work and the tools they use. These are characterized by some key features that are technology-driven which involves equipping the office with high-speed internet,

smart devices, and cloud-based systems which incorporates tools like video conferencing, collaborative software (e.g., Slack, Microsoft Teams), and ergonomic workstations. Others include IoT (Internet of Things) devices to automate lighting, temperature, and security. The flexibility of the modern office is also considered as a vital feature, this includes a mix of open areas, private rooms, and shared spaces, hot-desking or activity-based working (ABW) is common, allowing employees to choose where they work and designed for hybrid work models, accommodating both in-office and remote workers. Modern office cannot bear the name without considering ergonomic design which has to do with adjustable desks, ergonomic chairs, and standing workstations to enhance comfort and reduce strain, focuses on employee well-being and productivity through thoughtful furniture and layouts. Lowrey (2023) outlined the following features of the modern office:

1. **Sustainability**: Energy-efficient lighting, renewable energy sources, and eco-friendly materials. Designs that minimize waste and support a smaller environmental footprint.
2. **Collaborative Areas**: Breakout zones, meeting pods, and brainstorming rooms encourage team interaction. Technology-integrated spaces to facilitate teamwork across in-person and virtual platforms.
3. **Employee-Centric Amenities:** Relaxation zones, fitness areas, and wellness rooms. Cafeterias, snack bars, and even recreational options like game rooms or meditation spaces.
4. **Aesthetics and Branding**: Clean, modern design with natural lighting, open layouts, and biophilic elements (e.g., plants, natural materials). Interiors often reflect the company's brand identity and values.
5. **Focus on Well-Being**: Prioritizes mental and physical health through air quality, natural light, and spaces for mindfulness or relaxation. Promotes a healthy work-life balance. A modern office adapts to the needs of diverse teams and prioritizes creating an environment where employees can thrive both personally and professionally (Jenkinson, 2025).

Today's modern offices provide varied support services ranging from word processing of reports, letters, and many other documents, to provision of specialized services. Leelakulthanit (2021) stated that modern office offers workers a follow up with the modern trend of development and enhance their productivity and efficiency. The demand for effective office administration is on a high increase in today's business. This is because of the sensitivity and functionality of modern office management skills required to enhance the effectiveness of day-to-day operations as well as routine functions in the office that are necessary for any meaningful success and productivity to be recorded in any organization. According to Alhassan (2021), office management skills is referred to as the abilities, attributes, and talents required to plan, organize, coordinate and control effectively the office activities with a view to actualizing set goals and objectives. Office management skills include both soft and hard skills, such as a high level of technical acumen and the ability to work in a team. In essence, a qualified office manager should possess basic office management and technology skills and have sufficient knowledge of the operations of all departments within the organization where he/she works. In view of the above Elena, Mercedes, and Margarita (2022), identified the following skills and trait as the modern office skills: word processing skills, records management skills, meeting management skills, internet

navigational skills, presentation skills, social media management skills, time management skills and communication skills. These skills are required for effective and efficient running of the modern office operations but for the purpose of this study, the researchers limited the study to word processing and internet navigation skills. According to Joseph, Ezemma, Ejedoghaobi, Ibrahim, Eze and Abiola (2022), word processing is an application programme that allows users to create letters, reports, newsletters, tables, edit, charts, upload pictures and many other features. Comer (2021), pointed out that many people now turn to the Web to find information in their daily lives. The internet per se allows information to be disseminated with speed, accuracy and detail.

Word Processing Skills and Career Enhancement
Different groups of people, such as students, teachers, and employers have different ideas about what the fundamentals of word processing skills mean. The concept of word processing skills can best be explained as the ability to make use of computer system to process documents, analyze data, develop small computer programmes, browse internet and install software (Idowu 2021). Therefore, the word processing skills can be defined as the knowledge and ability of the basic skills necessary to type and processes documents efficiently, with a range of skills covering Microsoft office packages (Ms Word, Ms Excel, Ms Power point, and Ms Access) and CorelDraw (Brady & Monk, 2023). This can also be referred to as the comfort level someone has with using computer Programs and other applications that are associated with word processing (Owens, 2021). Adeyinka and Mutala (2021) described word processing skills as knowing some fundamental or basics competencies using the computer, for example, to save and open a file, use a word processing program, send and receive e-mail etc. It also means having some sort of level of comfort around computers rather than having some fear or a feeling of foreboding (Hall 2021). The role of basic computer knowledge in the life of every average Nigerian student cannot be underestimated. Adagunodo and Idowu (2021) indicate that knowledge, skills and confidence with computer technology are now an asset for entering the competitive employment market. They pointed out that every aspect of life from education, leisure and work environment to social interactions is being influenced by computer technology. With the increasing use of ICT in education the world over, new skills and competencies among students are required for them to executively learn. Having basic computer skills is a significant asset in the well-developed countries. Eisenberg and Johnson (2022) state that there are five fundamental areas in word process application; these include: the typing and editing, graphics, spreadsheets, presentation applications and storage and retrieval system. This synchronizes with Owens (2021) who identifies database concepts, general computer knowledge, presentations, spreadsheets and graphics. Miller (2022) asserts that students are expected to have certain basic computer skills that will enable them to perform computer related tasks, such as Microsoft Word that is to keyboard efficiently copies, cuts and pastes texts within a document and from one document to another. Also, it saves files under a designated name, sets proper page margins, inserts page breaks, bookmarks, and pictures, creates hyperlinks within a document and to internet sites, uses heading styles and frames to create a linked table of contents, uses bookmarks and hyperlinks to create a linked table of contents, properly documents formatting using fonts, paragraph format, bullets and numbering, creates and uses appropriate

tables when necessary, and uses spell check and thesaurus. Microsoft Excel: Microsoft Excel uses basic tools such as copy, paste, cut, edit, print, page setup and format appropriately. It creates and uses database functions and conditional formatting; imports text files, enters data, imports and exports data, creates and uses formulas including relative addressing, organizes data, sorts data, and generates charts. PowerPoint: Students should be able to create impressive presentations that utilize more than templates and defaults; generating slides with figures, texts, tables, etc., as well as to work with the slides inserting animation, including: printing, editing, copying, pasting and drawing, and inserting graphics. Windows Operating System: It uses general operations effectively including Windows Explorer and My Computer Effectively; manages files on drives (copy, move, delete, create folders), controls desktop environment, formats the computer and installs and uninstall software. Graphics: This requires the use of CorelDraw application in drawing logo letter headings and other graphic designs. The effective and success of this application relies on high level of creativity in drawing and designs

It must be noted that many examinations in Nigeria are conducted using the computer technology. The National Open University which was opened to cater for those who could not get direct admission in the regular universities now writes their examinations using the computer and also, most universities have adopted the use of the computer in conducting examination for the Post Unified Matriculation Examination. Plans have also been concluded to conduct the Unified Admission and Matriculation Examination using the computers. So, it becomes imperative that students should be equipped with the fundamentals of word processing application to be able to function effectively in the changing word (Ademola, 2021). Hall (2015) pointed out that in most places of business, a computer is a standard tool. In the banking sector, classroom interactions as well as automated library environment, the computer remains a standard tool that must be used and it is in the best interest of students to have a sound knowledge of computer technology. Okebukola (2020) affirms that institutions of higher learning in Nigeria especially, the universities have made frantic efforts to enforce computer literacy among the students by introducing computer studies as a General Studies course which is geared to teach the basics of word processing application; this remains a basic requirement for graduation. However, a greater percentage of the Nigeria undergraduate students apply a theoretical approach to the learning of computer studies and do not possess any practical skill in computer operations. One would expect that such training will be focused at making the average Nigerian undergraduate to be computer literate and not merely to pass the examination at the end of the semester.

Internet Navigational Skills and Career Enhancement
The Web technology that is now being enjoyed is one of mankind's most empowering developments. Comer (2021), pointed out that many people now turn to the Web to find information in their daily lives, including e-commerce rather than using the telephone or other traditional means. The Web allows information to be disseminated with speed, accuracy and detail. Web addresses are now included in most radio, television and print address, offering customers a more personalized and specific method of information access to assist in learning and decision making. The use of the Internet and World Wide Web has exploded in exponential growth over the past decade. The adoption of Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) as the Internet standard

protocol in 1983 heralded the coming to full maturity of the Internet. At that time, there were several hundred nodes to the Internet, but all shared an affiliation with the military or ARPA. The Internet is a medium that enables the user to decide what information to access and when to access it (Dilligan, 2020). This fact makes the Internet a one-to-one medium as opposed to a broadcast medium. The entire Internet experience, from logging on to Web browsing is predicated on user requests and server responses, in other words, it is more of transactions and by its nature the Internet is non-linear. The user constantly makes transactional decisions, first leading to the site, then staying within the site, conducting e-commerce, and finally deciding to return to the site. However, users can switch to another site and another business at any time they choose.

Career enhancement can be described as various measures of adding value to one's career job and improving efficiency of production. According to Basu, and Fernald, (2021), Career enhancement could be referred to as a measure of improvement of a person, machine, factory, system, etcetera; in converting inputs to useful output. Diewert, and Fox, (2022), defined Career enhancement as the improvement deployed in the use of resources, labour, capital, materials, energy and information, in the production of various goods and services. Dowrick, (2020), defined Career enhancement as an upgrade of skills, knowledge and abilities to enhance the use of physical resources, human resources, and other factors in a way that resulting increase in productivity. Therefore, it can be deduced that career enhancement is determined by the value added and the effective and efficient utilization of every productive resource available in other to achieve a desired output within a specified period of time. Career enhancement entails the management of an individual growth and progress in work life. Career enhancement is "the lifelong process of managing training, work, leisure and transitions in order to move toward a predetermined and preferred future". Career opportunities are identified through job analysis, this made possible by providing employees with relevant information regarding job requirements, and job postings that are available in the organization and, for future reference, this will enable them to fulfill and achieve their career opportunity. Therefore, emphasis is placed on the training, on- and off-the-job, counselling and coaching by supervisor, and planned rotation in positions of fluctuating roles and in different positions. The process is pursued further with the help of periodic performance appraisals. It is important to note that training and counselling will be a wasteful exercise if the employee does not make progress along his career path. Regular Monitoring is also in the process. It is required to regularly monitor the progress of the employee towards his career enhancement plans and see that the provision is being provided to develop those career plans. If there is an inappropriateness, steps should be taken to recast work as necessary to confirm that career enhancement plans are met. Career consists of different stages and the individual is faced with different issues during each of these stages. It will therefore be accurate to assume that different individuals have different challenges that confront them as they move on in their work lives and it may be possible for this to generate different views about career enhancement and progression in different individuals.

Statement of the Problem
Modern office management is becoming complex on daily basis because of technological innovations. Variety of occupational problems and decisions confront every individual in an office today. Effective functionality of

personnel depends solely on the acquisition of these skills which makes them see work as a play rather than a duty. Elena, Mercedes & Margarita (2022), observed that most organizations fail because employees lack basic modern office management such as word processing, records management, meeting management, internet navigational, presentation, and social media management, time management and communication skills. and do not know how to set attainable goals, plan, organize, analyze situations, identify and solve problems for the organization. It is not clear whether lack of office management skills in modern office could negatively affect the career effectiveness and performance of most Office Management and Technology graduates. However, it is believed that without the modern office skills such as word processing and internet navigational skills most business organizations will likely experience either stagnation or low productivity. The extent to which these aforementioned skills enhance the role of the office manager is yet to be empirically ascertained. Although some studies might have been conducted on office skills but none has been carried out to determine in a broad form the modern office skills have on career effectiveness of Office Management and Technology graduates. Therefore, it is needful for this study to fill the gap. Based on this, the study is undertaken to empirically examine modern office skills (word processing and internet navigational) and career enhancement of OMT graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between modern office skills acquisition and career enhancement of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Specifically, the study seeks to:
1. Examine how word processing skills enhance the career of Office Management and Technology (OMT) graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
2. Discover how internet navigational skills enhance the career of Office Management and Technology (OMT) graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Questions
The following research questions were raised to guide this study.
1. How does word processing skills enhance career of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
2. How does internet navigational skills enhance career of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Hypotheses
The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.
1. There is no significant relationship between word processing skills and career enhancement of OMT graduates' employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between internet navigational skills and career enhancement of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Methodology
The researchers adopted correlational research design for the study because it was aimed at examining the relationship between modern office management skills and career enhancement of OMT graduates in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The area of the study is Rivers State, Port Harcourt Metropolis, that is the employees (secretaries) who studied Office Management and Technology as a course and are employed in these five (5) tertiaries institutions in Rivers State namely, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Elechi Amadi Polytechnic and Ken Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic. The population of the study is 258 respondents, there was no sample nor sampling techniques hence the entire population was studied. Two (2) research instruments were used to gather data for this study. They are office management skills rating scale (OMSRS) and career enhancement Rating Scale (CERS). The researchers adopted a four-point rating scale with response options of Strongly Agree (SA-4points, Agree (A-3points), Disagree (D-2points) and Strongly Disagree (SD-1. The instruments were subjected to face and content validation by two Business Educators and one Measurement and Evaluation Expert (all in Faculty of Education, Rivers University. The data collected for the study were coded according to the response sets on the instruments. The research questions were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and the t-transformation was done to determine the strength of the calculated r.

Research Question 1: How does word processing skills enhance career of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table: 4.2: Descriptive Statistics on how Word Processing Skills Enhance Career of Office Management and Technology Graduate Employees in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

S/N	Items	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	I can type fast and accurately to produce letters etc.	3.53	0.42	SA
2	I can plot tables and charts accurately for business proposals	3.58	0.45	SA
3	I can design logos, posters, and graphic images for presentations accurately.	3.53	0.43	SA
4	I can design letter-headed paper for official correspondence perfectly	3.98	0.12	SA
5	I can analyze data very well using the spreadsheet	3.55	0.25	SA
6	I can plot graph and charts with the spreadsheet accurately.	355	0.37	SA
7	I can create database to manage and track information accurately with the spreadsheet	3.53	0.45	SA
	Grand Mean/SD	3.52	0.37	SA

Field Survey Data (2025)

Table 1 showed that the respondents strongly agreed that word processing skills enhance career of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Above all the aggregate grand mean scores of 3.52 indicates that the respondents are of the view that word processing skills enhance career of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Furthermore, the low values of standard deviation 0.37, is an indication that the responses are contiguous and the opinions are homogenous.

Research Question 2: How does internet navigational skills enhance career of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on how Internet Navigational Skills Enhance Career of Office Management and Technology Graduate Employees in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

S/N	Items	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
8	I can login into a website perfectly	3.99	0.63	SA
9	I can create structured documents in which data can be manipulated.	3.94	0.93	SA
10	I can create a database on the Website seamlessly	3.88	0.78	SA
11	I can search for information on a Web page.	3.98	0.53	SA
12	I can lodge in a complaint on the website	3.95	0.72	SA
13	I can upload information into the website	3.92	0.63	SA
14	I can download information from the website	3.96	0.59	SA
	Grand Mean/SD	3.94	0.61	SA

Field Survey Data (2025)

Table 2 has a grand mean score of 3.94 and Standard deviation of 0.61indicates a strong agreement that internet navigational skills enhance career of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The homogeneity of the responses is suggested by the observed low values of the standard deviation. In other words, the respondents have a high opinion that internet navigational skills significantly relate to career enhancement.

Hypothesis 1
There is no significant relationship between word processing skills and career enhancement of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 3: Correlation Result for Word Processing Skills and Career Enhancement Correlations

		Word processing skills	Career Enhancement
Word Processing Skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.972**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	251	251
Career Enhancement	Pearson Correlation	.972**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	251	251

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS 20.0 Data Output, 2025

The result in table 3 shows that word processing application correlate with students Career Opportunities (r = 0.972, p = 0.000 < 0.001). This represents a very strong correlation. The relationship that exists between word processing skills and career enhancement is shown to be significant at 0.01 significant levels. Since an r value that is less than 0.20 (r < 0.20) is the benchmark for accepting the null hypotheses and an r value that is greater than or equal to 0.20 (r 0.20) is the benchmark for rejecting the null hypotheses, the researchers rejected the null hypothesis and uphold the alternate hypothesis. This was because, the r value obtained from our SPSS computed output is greater than 0.20 i.e. r 0.972 is greater than 0.20. Hence the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between word processing skills and career enhancement was retained.

Hypothesis 2
There is no significant relationship between Internet Navigational Skills and career enhancement of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 4: Correlation Result Internet Navigational Skills and Career Enhancement Correlations

		Internet Navigational Skills	Career Enhancement
Internet Navigational Skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.967**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	251	251
Career Enhancement	Pearson Correlation	.967**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	251	251

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS 20.0 Data Output, 2025

The result in table 4 shows that Internet Navigational Skills correlate with Career enhancement (r = 0.967, p = 0.000 < 0.001). This represents a very high correlation indicating a strong relationship. The relationship that exists between Internet Navigational Skills correlate with Career enhancement is shown to be significant at 0.01 significant levels. Since an r value that is less than 0.20 (r < 0.20) is the benchmark for accepting the null hypotheses and an r value that is greater than or equal to 0.20 (r 0.20) is the benchmark for rejecting the null hypotheses, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and upheld the alternate hypothesis. This was because, the r value obtained from our SPSS computed output is greater than 0.20 i.e. r 0.967 is greater than 0.20. Hence the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between Internet Navigational Skills and Career enhancement was retained.

Discussions of findings
Word Processing Skills and Career enhancement of Office Management and Technology Graduate Employees
The findings from research question one revealed that the respondents strongly agreed that word processing skills enhance career of office management and technology graduate employees are rated very high extent This finding is in agreement with Okebukola (2020) who laments that a greater percentage of the Nigeria undergraduate students apply a theoretical approach to the learning of computer studies and do not possess any practical skill in computer operations. In line with Okebukola, Ademola (2021) depicts that it becomes imperative that students should be equipped with the fundamentals of word processing application to be able to function effectively in the changing word. Hall (2021) observed that It also means having some sort of level of comfort around computers rather than having some fear or a feeling of foreboding These assertions indicate that knowledge, skills and confidence with computer technology are now an asset for entering the competitive employment market. Result on hypotheses 1prove that there is a significant relationship between word processing skills and career enhancement of Office Management and Technology graduates' employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

Internet Navigational Skills and Career enhancement of Office Management and Technology Graduate Employees
The findings from research question 2 revealed that the respondents strongly agreed that internet navigation skills enhance career of office management and technology graduate employees are rated very high extent. This finding is in agreement with Dilligan, (2020) who opined that Internet is a medium that enables the user to decide what information to access and when to access it. In agreement with Dilligan, Ambegaonkar (2020) viewed that Scripts are lists of instructions for the computer to follow in response to a user's input, and can be used to perform calculations, or return a file as a result of that user's input. It also has the ability to encode and decode messages to construct, understand, and exchange meaning with other humans using message systems such as, e-mail, chat boxes, or instant messaging; searching, selecting, evaluating, and acting upon contacts online. The researchers are of the view that the Internet is a medium that allows the user to choose what information to access and when to do so. Result on hypotheses 2 prove that there is a significant relationship between internet navigation skills and career enhancement of Office Management and Technology graduates' employees

in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Conclusion
Based on the findings of the study the researchers conclude that there is a strong positive relationship between modern office management skills and career enhancement of OMT graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. It was also concluded that effective teaching and learning of these office management skills will greatly enhance the career of Office Management and Technology graduate employees in Rivers State tertiary institutions. This study further concludes that it necessary to adopt the teaching and learning of these core courses as this will go a long way to prepare the minds of the people towards office career.

Recommendations
Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:
1. Institutions should organize hands-on workshops and training sessions aimed at improving specific skills identified in the study, particularly in word processing and internet navigational skills. These workshops can be facilitated by industry professionals to provide real-world insights and applications.
2. It is vital to create awareness among students about the significance of these skills for career advancement. Engagement campaigns that illustrate success stories of OMT graduates who effectively utilized these skills can inspire current students.

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