
TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS USAGE AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT OF OFFICE MANAGERS IN PUBLIC POLYTECHNICS IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined influence of technological tools usage on office managers' career advancement. A descriptive survey was adopted for the study. The study's population comprised 245 office managers in 3 public polytechnics in South-west Nigeria. The Taro Yamane formula was used to derive a sample size of 148. A structured questionnaire whose reliability (0.761) was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha test was used for data collection. Out of 148 expected responses, 126 were successfully retrieved. The study hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 significance level using multiple regression. The findings were that technological tools usage () significantly influence office managers' career advancement. The study thus concludes that technological tools usage have positive influence on career advancement of office managers in public polytechnics in South-west, Nigeria; and recommends that office managers must develop required skills to use technological tools in the performance of the job responsibilities.

Keywords: Career advancement, office managers, technological tools, public polytechnics

INTRODUCTION

Office managers in most organizations use modern technology and equipment to store data and prepare correspondences. Current technology trends that impact office managers' job performance are advances in technology and the continued focus on measuring value and relevance of office managers to organizations. Technology has forged its way in every sector of business in today's technology-driven world. The advantage of utilizing technology, especially for office managers who are custodians of organizations' information, is that it enables them to work more efficiently and enhance organizational performance.

Technology is one of the most important aspects of the business environment that provide opportunities for businesses to flourish. It is also one of the current study areas in which academics are particularly interested is technology and the workplace. Technology's role in the workplace is growing, and fears that it could eventually displace several occupations in the next decade or less are not unwarranted. The most commonly used modern office technological tools and equipment include computer, telephone, photocopier, the Internet and internet-enabled applications. Computer systems facilitate office operations and activities of office managers. The machine has word processing programs that assist office managers to type, edit, and format letters, memos, and reports. It also has data management

programmes that enable office managers to work with large data; and of course, spreadsheet programmes that is used to prepare accounting and simple and complex mathematical operations.

In today's business environment, the use of telephones (especially mobile phones) has facilitated smooth running of business transactions. Office managers can now transfer files and other data using Bluetooth and Wi-Fi on their mobile phones. The mobile phone also has internet access, making it simple for the user to obtain information and download files from the Internet. Another accomplishment made possible by mobile technology is video call conferencing. Managers, vendors, and other staff now have a way to interact without having to meet face-to-face. It is now possible to keep up with all forms of entertainment from the comfort of your own home thanks to mobile technology.

Modern office photocopiers can perform four operations at a glance. The office managers can network the copier with their laptops or computer systems and request that the copier print, collate, and staple their documents without much stress. On the other hand, the provision of Internet facilities can easily aid office managers' daily business activities. Sending the document from their laptops or computer systems to the copier can be facilitated by the network connection and the use of phones to upload and download materials for office use can also be facilitated by the Internet.

Over the past many decades, there are dramatic innovations within the forms of technologies offered to businesses whether public or private. The rapid development and diffusion of current data technologies such as computers, communications, and networks have altered the work process in several organizations. Technology has become a part of every organization. It has become a need for an organization to get updated with new technologies. Other than profit, the success of an organization is measured by its employees and their attitude toward their work. An employee's attitude toward his employer may be predicted through his actions. Work environment – provision of modern technological tools and resources fosters mutual relationships between office managers and their bosses and colleagues which in turn influence office managers' career advancement.

The absence of modern technologies can adversely affect the productivity and efficiency of an organization by affecting the working system and job duties of office managers. It is in view of this reality that this study intends to examine the influence of technological tools usage on career advancement of office managers' in public polytechnics in South-west Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Technological Tools Usage

Technological tools encompass a wide range of digital and physical devices (computer systems, mobile phone, printer, scanner, Internet, etc.), software applications, and systems designed to streamline processes, facilitate communication, and enable efficient decision-making across various domains (Yusuf, 2015). It is also the utilization of various technological resources and instruments to accomplish tasks, solve problems, enhance productivity, and achieve goals. The effective usage of technological tools require a combination of technical skills, adaptability, critical thinking, and understanding of the specific context in which these tools are applied.

As technology continues to advance, the concept of technological tools usage also evolves, influencing how individuals, businesses, and societies interact with and benefit from these tools (Yaw-Obeng & Boachie, 2018; Charles 2014). Technological tools are employed to increase efficiency and productivity by automating repetitive tasks, reducing manual efforts, and enabling faster execution of processes. Workplace technology's primary goal is to save or improve labour in the form of work tasks, which are defined as a unit of work activity that produces output (Lilly & Durr, 2012). Complementing information technology and innovation activities could lead to higher improvements in employee productivity than applying them individually since technology can only contribute to increased productivity when used with other resources effectively (Dauda & Akingbade, 2011).

Technological tools usage have tremendously changed the way we engage in business, communicate with one another, and how security agencies fight criminalities. These tools have equally enabled the smooth of running business in Nigeria - the sales and purchase of goods and services like Jumia, Konga, Olx, and several online trading firms; payment of utility bills, school fees, as it is observed in Nigerian tertiary institutions where school fees are paid online; applying and filling job vacancies; and several other means.

In support of this view, Lawal and Ogbu (2015) posit that the Internet and internet enabled systems have given commercial enterprises new business opportunities in the areas of e-commerce; and that offering services through emerging digital technologies has the potential to enhance economic growth and development. Technological tools enable remote work, as employees can complete tasks using their phones, tablets or mini-laptops when on trips or at home after the close of work. Other technological tools that deliver value to organizations include radio, television, intercoms, smart card, WiFi, e-mail (Ebere & Ateke, 2019).

Casey (2012) states that with the help of these tools, work is no longer something one does at a particular time or place, it could be done anywhere and anytime. Presently, technological tools have been embraced by companies worldwide, even as employees become challenged to become computer literates. In this study, we adopt use of computer systems, mobile phone, modern photocopiers and Internet as dimensions of technological tools usage.

Computer system usage

A computer according to Khan (2013) is an electronic machine that processes data, stores and retrieves information and performs calculations faster and more efficiently than humans. GCF Global (2021) defines a computer as an electronic device that manipulates information or data and has the ability to process data, store, and retrieve information, prepare or edit presentations and videos, send emails, play games, and browse the Internet. Computers enable users to input and process, store, retrieve, and edit information for proper dissemination.

A computer system on the other hand, is the combination of a computer and its accessories. Amuno (2018) asserts that a computer runs on three major systems namely hardware, software, and humanware. These are known as the components of a computer which also makes a computer system. The computer is incomplete without these elements/systems. Amuno (2018) claims each of the components is necessary for meaningful productivity; and that hardware and software need human input for easy key-in of data, process, and manipulation, storing and retrieving the end result.

Mobile phone usage

In today's world, use of mobile phone has become a crucial requirement, and has also provided employment possibilities and boosted economic progress. People do not only use cellphones to meet social demands but also to effect good change on both an environmental and social level (Yihong, 2010). For the previous three decades, the world's economy has undergone revolutionary shifts, and advancements in ICT has resulted in significant social, economic, and environmental upheaval. Cellphones are incredibly useful instruments for increasing productivity. Almost 80% of phone calls are made to obtain information about price, market trends, and currency rates, and to contact family members living overseas (Donya & Afari-Kumah, 2011). Employees' attentiveness may not be affected by all phone calls made during working hours. For example, if staff is working in a manufacturing line, an emergency request for a suggestion may increase productivity (Ronald, 2011).

Modern Photocopier Usage

Modern photocopier performs multiple tasks and managers will need to understand how to handle them because it increases and enhances daily business activities and operations. Employees might become frustrated and that could affect organizational performance when an old or outdated printer and copier are in use or not functioning well (Griffin, 2017). Having a contemporary printer/copier makes multitasking a breeze. Multifunctional machines have now become industry standards, which implies that most printer/copiers can also do scanning, faxing, and a variety of other activities. Being able to

scan a document, name the file, and email it all from the printer/copier make staff's lives simpler (Hanna, 2021). Advancement in networking capabilities of computers and printer/copiers has made it relatively simple to connect many computers to a single printer with modern devices, allowing the device to operate as a hub for the entire business (Qualpath, 2021; Hanna, 2021).

Internet usage

Over the years, the Internet has become a crucial instrument for facilitating business activities in Nigeria. The ICT revolution is sweeping through the world and the gale has even caught up with developing countries like Nigeria. There has been a tremendous growth in the use of the Internet for finding and sharing information. The Internet originated in government and academia and spread to businesses and industries (Ivwhighrehweta & Igere, 2014). The creation and popularization of the Internet have resulted in a huge shift in business. Indeed, the Internet made the global marketplace more accessible through instant contacts and communication channels (Farsi, 2021).

Olorode and Akangbe (2022) describe Internet as the transport vehicle for information stored in files or documents on a computer. It carries various information and services, such as electronic mail, online chat, file transfer, the interlinked Web pages and other documents on the World Wide Web. This new form of information resources has, as its greatest advantage, a virtually unlimited wealth of information resources that is widely and readily available and accessible to hundreds of millions of people simultaneously in many parts of the world (Ivwhighrehweta & Igere, 2014). The Internet is an efficient tool for searching, retrieving, and disseminating information. It can be consulted, and like a reference resource, it is broad, highly dynamic, provides a means of scholarly conversation (Sepehrdoust & Khodaei, 2013); and has liberated scholarship from academic, social, legal, political, economic, and geographical constraints associated with traditional media (Okoro & Ekpo, 2016).

Concept of Career Advancement

Career advancement can be described as progression within an individual's work or professional life. It involves moving up the hierarchy, taking on higher responsibilities, and achieving higher levels of expertise and recognition (Taser-Erdogan, 2022; Zikode, 2020). Career advancement is driven by various factors, including skills, performance, education, experience, networking, and personal development. Career advancement is a gradual process. It is advisable for office managers to be persistent, adaptable, and committed to their growth and regularly assess their progression, adjust strategies as needed, and remain open to new opportunities that may emerge.

Technology Tools Usage and Career Advancement

The usage of technology tools can significantly impact career advancement of office managers by enabling them to perform roles more effectively, demonstrate value to their organizations, and position themselves as capable and innovative leaders. Office managers can utilize project management and task tracking tools to efficiently manage their own tasks and those of their teams. Communication tools such as email, instant messaging, and video conferencing enable office managers to facilitate clear communication within teams or with stakeholders (Farsi, 2021; Yihong, 2010).

Proficiency in tools like Microsoft Excel, data visualization software, and analytics platforms allows office managers to analyze data and generate insightful reports (Ayannuga et al., 2013). They can leverage automation tools to streamline repetitive tasks and optimize processes. Implementing workflow automation demonstrates their commitment to efficiency and innovation, making them valuable assets to the organization. With the rise of remote and hybrid work models, office managers who are adept at using remote collaboration tools, video conferencing platforms, and cloud-based document sharing can effectively lead and manage teams across different locations, showcasing their adaptability and versatility (Olorode & Akangbe, 2022; Ivwhighrehweta & Igere, 2014).

By staying up-to-date with relevant tools and trends, continuously improving their technical skills, and leveraging technology to drive efficiency and innovation, office managers can position themselves for career advancement and take on more strategic and impactful roles within their organizations. In view of the forgoing, the following hypotheses are formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho₁: Usage of computer systems has no significant influence on career advancement of office managers in public polytechnics in South-west Nigeria.

Ho₂: Usage of mobile phone has no significant influence on career advancement of office managers in public polytechnics in South-west Nigeria.

Ho₃: Usage of modern photocopiers has no significant influence on career advancement of office managers in public polytechnics in South-west Nigeria.

Ho₄: Usage of the Internet has no significant influence on career advancement of office managers in public polytechnics in South-west Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. The study focused on office managers (confidential secretaries) in 3 public Polytechnics in South-west Nigeria. The population of the study comprise 245 office managers (Chief Confidential Secretaries, Principal Secretaries, Confidential Secretaries I, and Confidential Secretaries II). Taro Yamane formula was used to determine a sample size of 148. The instrument used to obtain data from the respondents was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered and responses were received through the Google Form from 91 respondents. Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested with the use of the Multiple Regression at the 0.05 significant level.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Computer Systems Usage and Office Managers' Career Advancement

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.
1	My office workloads are perfectly prepared with the use of a computer system	49	24	13	5	3.29	1.81
2	My computer system is flexible to perform various tasks at a time	10	17	35	29	2.09	0.95
3	Preparing documents in Ms Word enhances my professionalism	59	23	4	5	3.49	2.30
4	Ms. Excel helps to prepare accurate budgeting and cash flow	33	39	16	3	3.12	1.43
5	Ms. PowerPoint provides an opportunity to create suitable slides for my boss	39	51	1		3.42	2.12
Average						3.08	1.72

Source: Survey field (2023)

Table 1 indicates that 80.2% and 9.8% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that their office workloads are perfectly prepared with the use of computer system. 29.7% and 70.3% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that their computer systems are flexible to perform various tasks at a time. 90.1% and 9.9% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that the preparation of their documents with the use of Ms Word enhances their professionalism. 79.1% and 20.9% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that Ms Excel helps them to prepare accurate budgeting and cash flow. 99.9% and 1.1% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that Ms PowerPoint provides opportunity to create suitable slides for their bosses. The average mean and standard deviation were 3.08 and 1.72 respectively.

Table 2: Mobile Phones Usage on Office Managers' Career Advancement

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.
1	Jobs done with the use of a computer system can be easily transferred to my mobile phone	23	44	13	11	2.87	0.85
2	My phone is of high quality to accommodate large files and documents	51	26	8	6	3.34	1.94
3	I can make use of my phone to perform some office workloads	17	13	40	21	2.29	0.49
4	With my phone, I can send documents to the printer	12	9	48	22	2.12	0.88

5	My phone camera is of quality to take a high-class photographs of projects on the site and send to directors	14	16	37	24	2.22	0.65
6	I can confidently attend or host multiple meetings through my phone	23	44	13	11	2.87	0.85
Average						2.62	0.94

Source: Survey field (2023)

Table 2 indicates that 73.6% and 26.4% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that jobs done with the use of a computer system can be easily transferred to their mobile phones. 84.6% and 15.4% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that their phones are of high quality to accommodate large files and documents. 33% and 67% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that they can make use of their phones to perform some office workloads. 23.1% and 76.9% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that with their phones, they can send documents to the printer. 22% and 78% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that their phones' camera is of quality to take a high-class photograph of projects on the site and send to the director. 73.6% and 26.4% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that they can confidently attend or host multiple meetings through their phone. The average and standard deviation were 2.62 and 0.94 respectively.

Table 3: Modern Photocopiers Usage and Office Managers' Career Advancement

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.
1	The office photocopier can perform multiple tasks at a glance	11	13	43	24	2.12	0.88
2	Office photocopiers are capable of organizing and collating papers during printing	9	12	43	27	2.03	1.08
3	Office photocopier can be connected to my phone and I can print directly	12	18	34	27	2.16	0.77
4	Office photocopier can staple a set of a printed document	2	3	14	72	1.29	2.80
5	Office photocopier can handle paper up to 12" x 18" and cardstock up to 90lb	11	9	34	37	1.93	1.31
Average						1.91	1.37

Source: Survey field (2023)

Table 3 shows that 26.4% and 73.6% respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that their office photocopiers can perform multiple tasks at a glance. 23.1% and 76.9% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that their office photocopiers can organize and collate papers during printing. 33% and 67% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that their office photocopiers can be connected to their phones and they can print directly through it. 5.5% and 94.5% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that their office photocopiers can staple a set of printed documents. 22% and 78% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that their office photocopiers can handle paper up to 12" x 18" and cardstock up to 90lb. The average mean and standard deviation were 1.91 and 1.37.

Table 4: Internet Usability and Office Managers' Career Advancement

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.
1	My relationships and collaboration with other colleagues (junior and senior) are well-facilitated with the use of the Internet	48	35	5	3	3.41	2.09
2	I gain more insight and better knowledge of my daily work through materials I source online	61	26	2	2	3.60	2.55
3	I am exposed to other areas where my potential can be fully utilized with the provision of the Internet	37	45	5	4	3.26	1.76
4	I learn new things every day from different individuals around the world that enhance my official works	40	45	4	2	3.35	1.97
5	The Internet provides opportunities for me to download video clips that I study after the live streaming lectures	48	35	5	3	3.41	2.09
Average						3.41	2.09

Source: Survey field (2023)

Table 4 shows that 91.2% and 8.8% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that their relationships and collaborations with other colleagues are well-facilitated with the use of Internet. 95.6% and 4.4% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that they gain more insight and better knowledge of their daily work through various materials they source online. 90.1% and 9.9% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that they are exposed to other areas where their potential can be fully utilized with the provision of the Internet. 93.4% and 6.6% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that they learn new things every day from different individuals around the world that enhance their official duties. 91.2% and 8.8% of respondents agreed and disagreed respectively that the Internet provides opportunities for them to download video clips that they study after the live-streaming lectures. The average mean and standard deviation were 3.41 and 2.09.

Table 5: Model Summary and Coefficient of Simple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.651 ^a	0.424	0.405	.05

a. Predictor: (constant): Computer systems usage, Mobile phone usage, Modern photocopiers usage, and Internet availability and usage.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.09	3	10.363	7.440	.000
	Residual	171.31	123	1.3928		
	Total	202.40	126			

a. Dependent variable: Career Advancement

b. Predictors: (constant), Computer systems usage, mobile phone usage, modern photocopiers usage, and Internet usage. (*p-value is significant at 0.05**)

Source: Field study (2023)

Table 5 revealed a significant relationship between technological factors and office managers’ career advancement ($R = .651$). The coefficient of multiple determinations (R^2) is 0.424; this means approximately 42.4% of systematic variation of office managers’ career advancement was due to variation in *computer systems and programs, mobile phone usage, modern photocopiers and Internet usage*.

The F value (7.440) and its relevant p-value (.000) showed that the relationship was significant at 0.05 level because the p-value was less than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative accepted which states that there is a significant combined influence of technological tools usage *computer systems and programs, mobile phone usage, modern photocopiers and Internet usage* on office managers’ career advancement at the three selected public polytechnics in South-west, Nigeria.

Table 6: Coefficients of Multiple Regression Analysis

		Coefficients				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	6.713	2.518		2.666	0.00
	Computer systems usage	0.461	0.067	0.35	6.881	0.00
	Mobile phone usage	0.357	0.054	0.26	6.611	0.01
	Modern photocopiers usage	0.288	0.061	0.14	4.721	0.00
	Internet usage	0.401	0.073	0.21	5.493	0.00

a. Dependent variable: Career Advancement (*p-value is significant at 0.05*)

Source: Field survey, (2023)

The result shows that the estimates of regression parameters of the data on the influence of technological tools usage on office managers’ career advancement are: $B_0 = 6.713$ which shows office managers’ career advancement when technological tools usage is zero; $B_1 = 0.461$ which shows office managers’ career advancement with a unit increase in computer systems usage (X_1); $B_2 = 0.357$ which shows

office managers' career advancement with a unit increase in mobile phone usage (X_2); $B_3 = 0.288$ which shows office managers' career advancement with a unit decrease in modern photocopiers usage (X_3); *and* $B_4 = 0.401$ which shows office managers' career advancement with a unit increase in Internet availability and usage (X_4).

The regression equation is given by: $Y = 6.713 + 0.461X_1 + 0.357X_2 - 0.288X_3 + 0.401X_4$

As it is shown in Table 6, computer systems usage, mobile phone usage, modern photocopiers usage and Internet usage in the regression equation appeared as significant predictors of career advancement. Computer system usage contribute 46.1% ($\beta_1 = .461 < 0.05$); mobile phone usage contribute 35.7% ($\beta_2 = .357 < 0.05$); modern photocopiers usage contribute 28.8% ($\beta_3 = .288 < 0.05$); and Internet usage contribute 40.1% ($\beta_4 = .401 < 0.05$). The null hypotheses are therefore rejected. Thus, there is significant influence of technological tools usage (computer systems usage, mobile phone usage, modern photocopiers usage and Internet usage) on office managers' career advancement.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study found that computer systems usage enhance office managers' career advancement significantly. The study revealed that offices where modern facilities and machines are provided are in a better position to boost productivity. In affirmation of this finding, Lilly & Durr (2012) opine that workplace technology's primary goal is to save or improve labor in the form of work tasks, which are defined as a unit of work activity that produces output. Also, office managers who do not have formal skills and competencies will find it difficult to operate technological office tools. Employees without formal knowledge of technological tools will become overwhelmed by number of activities required for career advancements (Agboola et. al., 2019).

The study revealed that as some office managers can connect their phones to the computer system for easy transfer of documents and files, other managers do not understand the importance of these high-powerful phones with such features. Cheng-Min (2019) states that employees are not only utilizing cell phones to meet their social demands, but they are also employing mobile technology to effect good change on both an environmental and social level. The study found that modern photocopiers usage impacts effectively on office managers' career advancement. A photocopier with these aforementioned features will find their jobs interesting and satisfying. Griffin (2017) opines that employees might become frustrated and that could affect organizational performance when an old or outdated printer and photocopier are in use or not functioning well.

The study also revealed that Internet usage significantly enhance office managers' career advancement. Office managers interact and collaborate with colleagues through use of Internet which facilitates one of the fastest means of communication. This is in accordance with the view of Olorode and Akangbe (2022) that described the Internet as the transport vehicle of passing information stored in files or documents on a computer to other individuals. Also, office managers are exposed to several materials, workshops and conferences through the Internet. Farsi (2021) asserted that Internet has made the global marketplace more accessible through instant contacts and communication channels.

Office managers have gained enough insight and knowledge as a result of using the Internet. Sepehrdoust and Khodaei (2013) opines that Internet provides a means of scholarly communication. Office managers, in this study, acknowledged that they gained more knowledge via the Internet, attend lectures online and can download several materials and video clips which they watch later after the live streaming lectures. Technological tools and devices have significant impact on career advancement of office managers in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

Advanced technologies are veritable tools that improve employees' service delivery. Even though technologies enhance career advancement, there are obsolete ones that needs to be replaced. In this 21st

century, office managers that handle manage office resources need modern technological tools for better job performance. An organization that makes use of obsolete machines will continue having high turnover of employees and poor productivity. However, if the organization equips an office manager with appropriate technologies, they will perform more efficiently. The provision of these tools helps to improve managerial effectiveness and efficiency. This imply that organizations must acknowledge the importance of current office technologies to attaining long-term goals, as well as enhancing productivity and performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned results, the following recommendations are made:

1. Management of public polytechnics should provide modern technological tools for office managers who handle office resources.
2. Management should ensure office managers are well-trained on how to use modern technologies in order to increase productivity.
3. Management should liaise with office managers for better understanding of technological tools that suit their offices and the kind of job functions they perform before purchasing the tools.
4. Training of office managers on the use of technological tools should be an ongoing process as such training improves the technical skills of office managers.

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