

An Evaluation of Challenges of Secretarial Education Programme In Nigerian Universities Between 2000 – 2009
By
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Abstract.

The Nigerian universities that offer Business Education programme (Secretarial Option) face some challenges in the area of lack of qualified secretarial lecturers and inadequate modern office technology and information systems for teaching and learning. This paper identifies the modern office technology and information systems relevant for secretarial training, evaluates the availability of the modern office technologies for teaching/learning and examines the adequacy of the qualification of secretarial lecturers in Nigerian universities. It finally draws conclusion and recommendations among others, that the universities' Management should establish a Resource Mobilization Centre that would be responsible for sourcing funds to purchase and install the modern office technology and information systems for teaching and learning.

Introduction

Secretarial education is a component of vocational education that provides knowledge and skills for would-be confidential secretaries to perform efficiently and effectively in the world of work. It also involves acquisition of skills, knowledge and competencies that make the recipient proficient in secretarial profession and also according to Aliyu (2006), Secretarial Education is offered in Colleges of Education, Polytechnic and the Universities primarily to educate and train students to become competent professional secretaries. The Nigerian Universities that offer Business Education, (secretarial option), face some challenges in a bid to provide the desired knowledge, skills and competencies to secretarial students in office technology and information systems. To date, many Nigerian universities that offer Business Education (Secretarial Option) do not have adequate computers and the internet facilities in their laboratories to provide the secretarial students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed in the advanced office technology and information systems. The secretarial students graduate from the universities do not have iota of fundamentals of information processing and computer literacy. They do not possess the basic skills required to utilize computer operating system such as word processing, e-mail and the internet. Those who may boast of having to operate computer or can browse on the internet may have gone extra mile to learn from the 'roadside' computer centre or institutes.

While modern Office technology and information systems in very simple terms depict modern office machines used in office administration by secretarial administrators, clerical workers and managers for the purpose of increased productivity, efficient, effective service delivery and also improved management decision-making. According to McLeod and Jones

(1987), modern office technology (office automation) is the application of electronic and electro-mechanical devices for the purpose of increasing productivity for workers. They further buttressed that modern office technology and information systems include general computers, special purpose office machines and communication equipments. The computer which is the latest office technology is used by the office workers to create, store, retrieve and transmit business communications. The computer is used for processing written communications by using various word processing software and hardware that are currently in use. The secretarial administrators or managers use word processing to prepare written communications. In these instances, word processing usually is regarded as a means of communicating information from the manager to someone else. Word processing is also viewed as a corporate resource for building a strong intra firm communication network facilitating the flow of information to the managers. Other office information systems include Electronic voice and voice mail, videotext, image storage and retrieval, facsimile transmission, electronic calendaring and tele-conferencing. According to Azuka (1998) office technology is a process by which machines and equipment are introduced in an office with a view to facilitating the administrative process. Egbokhan (2000) stated that Office technology entails the use of machines with appropriate skills and techniques to make job easier in the office.

Problem Statement

The researcher observes that most of the Nigerian universities that offer Business Education Programme (Secretarial option) suffer from inadequate modern office technology and information systems for teaching/learning and also acute shortage of qualified secretarial lecturers. This has significantly contributed to the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of

university secretarial graduates in office occupation. This statement is supported by the observation of Njoku (1992) that lack of qualified secretarial lecturers in Nigerian universities accounts for these inadequacies of secretarial graduates in office occupation.

These challenges also make the secretarial graduates half-baked and of course not to effectively compete in the world of work and even in business in this era of technological advancement. The question now is how could these challenges be tackled in order to eliminate the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of graduates of secretarial education in office occupation, improve their service delivery, quality decision-making and also make them competent ready to effectively compete in the world of work?

Objective of the study

The broad objective of this paper is to evaluate the challenges of secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities between 2000 and 2009. While the specific objectives are to:-

1. identify modern office technology and information systems relevant to secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities.
2. examine the availability of modern office technologies and information systems in Nigerian universities.
3. investigate the adequacy of the qualification of secretarial lecturers in Nigerian universities.

Methodology

The study was conducted in five Universities that offered Business Education (Secretarial Option) in Nigeria. These were Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Benin, Benin City and River State University of Science and Technology in Port-Harcourt. The sampling frame which is the total population was 247. This was made of 215 final year students and 32 lecturers in 2008. According to Alamu and Olukosi (2008) in Research, the major concern is the population parameter. Since the total population was not large, all the members of the population were interviewed. The questionnaire method of data collection was used to get information from the respondents.

The analytical tool used was descriptive statistics and the 4 points Likerts scale of rating instrument was employed. For the Likert Scale, Strongly Agreed (SA) was rated 4 points, Agreed (AG) was rated 3 points, Disagreed (D) was rated 2 points, while Strongly Disagreed (SD) was rated 1 point.

Results and Discussion

The survey instrument asked respondents to identify modern office technologies and information systems that are relevant to secretarial education programme. The response of both staff and student is presented in table 1.

Table 1. *Modern office technologies and information systems that are relevant to secretarial education programme in Nigeria universities?*

Questionnaire Items	SA		A		D		SD		TA	TD	TR	%A	%D
	Staff	Student	Staff	Student	Staff	Student	Staff	Student					
Modern office machine such as computer, printer, scanner are useful for secretarial training.	20	236	48	279	14	90	2	11	583	117	700	83.29	16.71
The paper shredders, paper trimmer, folding and sealing machines are not useful in secretarial training.	12	68	6	24	22	172	14	93	110	301	411	26.76	73.24
The digital fax machine and photocopier have significant role in training secretaries	68	368	21	228	6	48	3	18	685	75	760	90.13	9.87
The internet connectivity to computers in the department is relevant for secretarial training.	40	224	33	246	12	96	2	18	543	128	671	80.92	19.08
The students need to know about electronic mail, facsimile and electronic calendaring	20	220	46	276	16	88	1	17	564	122	686	82.22	17.78
The over-head projector is useful for teaching/learning.	40	260	54	264	4	64	0	18	618	86	704	87.8	12.2
									313	829	3932	78.92	21.08

Item 1 dealt with the relevance of the computer, printer, and scanner in secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities. Strongly agreed scored 20 and 236 from both staff and students, agreed scored 48 for staff and 279 students respectively. On the other hand, disagreed had 14 and 90, while strong disagreed scored 2 and 11 from both staff and students. On the whole, 583 representing 83.29% of the total respondents to item 1 affirmed that computer, printer and scanner are

very relevant to secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities.

Item 2 seeks to find out how relevant the paper shredder, trimmer, folding and sealing machine are relevant to secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities. Strongly agreed scored 12 and 68 from staff and students, agreed accounted for 6 and 24 respectively, staff and students scored 22 and 172 for disagreed while strongly disagreed accounted

for 14 and 93 respectively. Total agreed for questionnaire item 2 stood at 110 representing 26.76% against 301 representing 73.24% for disagreed. This implies that paper trimmer, shredder and sealing machines are not relevant in secretarial education programme. The opinions of both staff and students concerning this equipment revealed that it may not be necessary to expose secretarial students to this equipment while in school but they may know how to operate them while in the office.

Item 3 seeks to know how relevant the digital fax machine and digital photocopiers are to secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities for teaching and learning. Strongly agree scored 68 and 368 from both staff and students, agreed accounted for 21 staff and 228 students respectively, disagreed had 6 and 48, while strongly disagreed scored 3 for staff and 18 for students. Total agree stood for 685 representing 90.13% against 75 representing 9.87% disagree. This implies that digital fax machine is relevant for teaching/learning in secretarial education programme.

Item 4 seeks to know whether the internet connectivity to computers is relevant to secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities for teaching and learning. Strongly agreed scored 40 and 224 from both staff and students, agreed accounted for 33 staff and 246 students respectively, disagreed had 12 and 96, while strongly disagreed scored 2 for staff and 18 for students. Total agreed stood at 543 representing 80.92% as against 128 representing 19.08% disagreed. This implies that internet connectivity to computers in the department for teaching and learning is relevant for teaching/learning in secretarial education programme.

Item 5 seeks the relevance of electronic voice mail, and electronic calendaring to secretarial education

programme in Nigerian universities for teaching and learning. Strongly agreed scored 20 and 220 from both staff and students, agreed accounted for 46 staff and 276 students respectively, disagreed had 16 and 88, while strongly disagreed scored 1 for staff and 17 for students. Total agreed stood at 564 representing 82.22% as against 122 representing 17.78% disagreed. Based on the findings we conclude that electronic mail (e-mail) and electronic calendaring are relevant to secretarial education programme.

Item 6 seeks the relevance of over-head projector for teaching and learning in secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities. Strongly agreed scored 40 and 260 from both staff and students, agreed accounted for 54 staff and 264 students respectively, disagreed had 4 and 64, while strongly disagreed scored 0 for staff and 18 for students. Total agreed stood at 618 representing 87.78% as against 86 representing 12.22% disagreed. This implies that over-head projector is relevant for secretarial training.

The overall scores for agree stood at 3103 representing 78.92% as against 829 representing 21.08% for disagreed. This implies that computer, printer, scanner, digital fax machine, the Internet, electronic calendaring, digital photocopier etc are relevant to secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities. This is confirmed by Iseniyi (2006) that secretarial education in tertiary institutions has a lot to do with modern office technology and information systems.

Table2 presents the views of the respondents, which were made up of both staff and students in respect of the availability of modern office technology and information systems in secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities.

Table 2 The Responses on Research Question Two

Questionnaire Items	SA		A		D		SD		TA	TD	TR	%A	%D
	Staff	Student	Staff	Student	Staff	Student	Staff	Student					
There are adequate functional computers for all students in our department.	8	40	9	33	30	234	9	70	90	343	433	20.79	79.21
There are functional printers and scanner installed in our department	8	84	0	30	38	228	9	62	122	337	459	26.58	73.42
We do not at all have scanners and printer for teaching/learning	44	336	42	282	6	22	2	15	704	45	749	93.99	6.10
We have functional overhead projector for teaching/learning.	4	48	9	39	44	250	4	58	100	356	456	21.93	78.07
All computers in the lab. are connected to the internet for the students to browse.	0	12	3	27	28	182	14	104	42	328	370	11.35	88.65
Our model office in the dept, has photocopier, trimmer, folding, sealing machines, fax machines for teaching/learning	12	64	9	45	32	206	8	76	<u>130</u>	<u>322</u>	<u>452</u>	28.76	71.24
									<u>1188</u>	<u>1731</u>	<u>2919</u>	40.70	59.30

Item 1 in table 2 seeks to determine the adequacy of functional computers for secretarial students in the department for teaching and learning. Strongly agreed scored 8 for staff and 40 for students, 9 and 33 scored agreed as against 30 and 234 for disagreed while strongly disagreed scored 9 for staff and 70 for students. On the whole, total agreed scored 90 representing 20.79% while the total disagreed scored 343 representing 79.21%

Item 2 stated that “There are functional printers and scanner installed in our department for teaching and learning”. The responses made by the respondents showed that strongly agreed scored 8 for staff and 84 for students, 0 for staff and 30 for students scored agreed as against 38 and 228 for disagreed while strongly disagreed scored 9 for staff and 62 for

students. On the whole, total agreed scored 122 representing 26.58% while the total disagreed scored 337 representing 73.42%

Item 3 stated that “functional overhead projector for teaching/learning is not available”. The responses of the respondents showed that 44 for staff and 336 for students strongly agreed to this statement that functional over-head projector for teaching and learning is not available, 42 for staff and 282 for students agreed also that over head projector is not available for teaching/learning while 6 for staff and 22 for students disagreed, and 2 and 15 strongly disagreed.

Item 4 stated that “All computers in the laboratory are connected to the internet for the students to browse”. According to the respondents, strongly

agreed scored 0 for staff and 12 for students, agreed scored 9 for staff and 33 for students as against 28 and 182 for disagreed while strongly disagreed scored 14 for staff and 104 for students. On the whole, total agreed scored 42 representing 11.35% while the total disagreed scored 328 representing 88.65%. This result shows that the available computers in the laboratory are not connected to the internet.

Item 5 stated that “**Model offices** in the department have photocopier, trimmer, folding, sealing machines, fax machines for teaching/learning”. The responses for this item showed that strongly agreed scored 12 for staff and 64 for students, agreed scored 9 for staff and 45 for students as against 32 and 206 for disagreed while strongly disagreed scored 8 for staff and 76 for students. On the whole, total agreed scored 130 representing 28.76% while the total disagrees scored 322 representing 71.24%. The result shows that model offices in the department do

not have digital photocopier, digital fax machine, electronic paper shredder for teaching and learning.

On the whole, the grand total of respondents that agreed on the adequacy of modern office technology and information systems for teaching and learning in secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities stood at 1188 representing 40.70% while the respondents that disagreed to that statement stood at 1731 representing 59.30%. In summary, the result as perceived by both staff and students showed that modern office technology and information systems such as computer, scanner, printer, internet, facsimile, digital photocopier etc were not adequately available for teaching and learning in secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities.

Table 3 presents the views of the respondents on the adequacy of qualified secretarial lecturers in Nigerian universities

Table 3 Summary of Responses to Research Question three

Questionnaire Items	SA		A		D		SD		TA	TD	TR	%A	%D
	Staff	Student	Staff	Student	Staff	Student	Staff	Student					
There are no enough secretarial lecturers in our department.	52	272	36	225	8	18	1	86	585	113	698	83.69	16.31
Some of the lecturers we have are not professionals	56	280	36	309	6	50	9	4	681	69	750	90.8	9.2
Adequate qualified staff will facilitate proper implementation of secretarial education curriculum in Nigerian universities.	56	392	45	237	8	18	6	15	730	47	777	93.95	6.05
Students' performance and efficiency will improve if they have additional qualified secretarial lecturers.	52	360	30	264	12	20	7	16	706	55	761	92.77	7.23
Students need support in making use of computer and other office related technologies	56	280	36	309	6	50	9	4	681	69	750	90.2	9.8

Item 1 in table 3 states that: “There are no enough secretarial lecturers in our department”. The responses from the respondents showed that Strongly agreed scored 52 and 272 , agreed scored 36 and 225 from both staff and students while disagreed scored 8 and 86, and strongly disagreed scored 1 and 19 from both staff and students respectively. The total agreed scored stood at 585 representing 83.69% while the total disagreed scored 114 representing 16.31%. This result implies that there are no enough secretarial lecturers in Nigerian universities.

Item 2 states that “some of the lecturers are not professionals”. Strongly agreed scored 56 and 280 from both staff and students, agreed scored 36 and 309 respectively. On the other hand, disagreed scored 6 and 50 from both staff and students while strongly disagreed scored 9 and 4 respectively. The total agreed scored 681 representing 90.8% while the total disagrees stood at 69 representing 9.2% which implies that most of the lecturers in secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities were not professionals.

Item 3 stated that “Adequate qualified secretarial lecturers will facilitate proper implementation of secretarial education curriculum in Nigerian universities”. Here, the opinions expressed by the respondents showed that that strongly agreed scored 56 and 392 , agreed scored 45 and 237 from both staff and students while disagreed scored 8 and 18, and strongly disagreed scored 6 and 15 from both staff and students respectively. The total agrees scored stood at 730 representing 93.95% while the total disagree scored 47 representing 6.05%. This result shows that adequate qualified secretarial lecturers in Nigerian universities would actually facilitate proper implementation of secretarial education curriculum where secretarial education programme is offered.

Item 4 states that “students’ performance and efficiency will improve if they have additional qualified secretarial lecturers”. The opinions expressed by the respondents showed that strongly

agreed scored 52 and 360, agreed scored 30 and 264 from both staff and students while disagreed scored 12 and 20, and strongly disagreed scored 7 and 16 from both staff and students respectively. The total agrees scored stood at 706 representing 92.77% while the total disagreed scored 55 representing 7.23% . The majority opinion is an indication that if with sufficient secretarial lecturers was in Nigerian universities, the performance of the students would improve tremendously in modern office technology and information systems.

Item 5 stated that: “Students need support in making use of computer and other office related technologies”. The result of the analysis of this item showed that strongly agreed scored 56 and 280, agreed scored 36 and 309 from both staff and students while disagreed scored 6 and 50, and strongly disagreed scored 9 and 4 from both staff and students respectively. The total agrees scored stood at 681 representing 90.2% while the total disagree scored 69 representing 9.2%. This means, the students need support in making use of computer and other office related technologies.

Items 6-10 were designed to answer research question 4. The overall total of agree scored 3383 representing 90.53% while the over total disagree scored 354 representing 9.47% With this result, it could be concluded that the qualification of secretarial lecturers in Nigerian universities were not adequate and this has hindered the teaching of practical application of modern office technology and information systems to secretarial students.

Following the majority opinion, it could be assumed that students need someone who is computer literate to direct them how to operate computer application packages and other communication devices. A further interaction by the researcher with the minority of the respondents who disagree to the statement said that computer has a tutor that can teach the students how to operate it without necessary needing an external support from any one.

Hypotheses

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and T-test were used to test the relationship between Modern Office Technologies and Secretarial Education Programme in Nigerian Universities, the difference between modern office technology and information systems expected in secretarial education programme and the those available in Nigerian universities and the difference between the expected qualification of secretarial lecturers and those available in Nigerian universities, all the tested were carried out at the significant level of 0.05.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant relationship between modern office technology and secretarial education programme in Nigeria universities”.*

Table 4 presents a result that shows that modern office technologies had a mean of 19.4211 with a standard deviation of 2.39744, while Secretarial Education Programme had a mean of 22.8947 with a standard deviation of 3.08083 The r-calculated was .258 and r-critical was 0.195. The probability value was less than the alpha value (P<0.05). The implication of this result is that there is significant

relationship between modern office technology and secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore, rejected.

Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference between modern office technology and information systems expected in secretarial education programme in Nigerian universities.*

The modern office technology and information systems available for teaching and learning had a mean of 20.9731 with a standard deviation of 3.94944, while the expected modern office technology and information systems for teaching and learning in secretarial education programme had a mean score of 23.1875 with a standard deviation of 3.13474. The t-calculated stood at 33.667 and the t-critical stood at 1.96. The probability value was less than the alpha value (0.00<0.05). This signifies that there is significant difference between modern office technology and information systems expected in secretarial education programme **and** those available in Nigerian universities. The null hypothesis was therefore, rejected. The results are shown in table 5.

Table 4: Testing of Hypothesis One

	Mean	Standard Deviation	No. of Respondents	r-Cal	r-critical	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Modern office technology and information systems	19.4211	2.39744	240	.258**	.195	239	.000
Secretarial education programme	22.8947	3.08083					

r = Co-efficient of correlation, r-cal = r-calculated, Df – Degree of freedom sig. = probability value

Table 5. Testing of Hypothesis Two

Status	N	MEAN	STDV	DF	t-cal.	t-crit	Sig. (2-tailed)
Modern office technology and information systems available	240	20.9731	3.94944	239	-33.667	1.96	.000
Modern office technology and information systems expected		23.1875	3.13474				

N=Number of respondents, STDV = Standard Deviation, DF=Degree of Freedom, t-Cal.= value of t= calculated, t-crit = t-critical

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between the expected qualification of secretarial lecturer and those available in Nigerian universities.

The result of the tested hypothesis is presented in table 5.

Table 5: Testing of Hypothesis Three

Status	N	MEAN	STDV	DF	t-cal.	t-crit	Sig. (2-tailed)
The qualification of secretarial lecturers available.		15.7292	2.73012				
The qualification of lecturers expected in Nigerian universities	240	17.5691	2.43045	239	2.886	1.96	.000

N=Number of respondents, STDV = Standard Deviation, DF=Degree of Freedom, t-Cal.= value of t= calculated, t-crit. = t-critical

This hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics. The mean score of the qualification of secretarial lecturers available stood at 15.7292 with the standard deviation of 2.73012 while the mean score of the qualification of lecturers **expected** in Nigerian universities stood at 17.5691 with the standard deviation of 2.43045. The t-calculated stood at 2.886 and t-critical stood at 1.96. The probability value is less than the alpha value ($0.00 < 0.05$). This means that there is significant difference between the **expected** qualification of secretarial lecturer **and** those available in Nigerian universities. The implication of this finding is that secretarial lecturers in Nigerian universities are not enough and could account for the improper implementation of secretarial education curriculum. The hypothesis was therefore rejected at 0.05 level of significant

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is concluded that many Nigerian universities that offer Business Education Programme (Secretarial option) did not have enough modern office technology and information systems for teaching and learning. At the same time, they do not have adequate qualified secretarial lecturers. These factors, based on the findings, were responsible for the half-baked secretarial graduates in an era of modern office technology and information systems.

Recommendations.

In line with the findings, it is recommended that the:

1. the Universities’ Management should establish a Resources Mobilization Centre that would be charged with the responsibilities of sourcing for money from the Alumni, non-governmental organizations, philanthropists to purchase and install computers, printers, scanner, internet for teaching and learning. The departments should create Model Offices, and equip them with digital fax machines, digital photocopiers, digital over-head projectors, electronic paper trimmer etc for teaching and learning.
2. graduates of secretarial education with second class upper division should be employed as Graduate Assistants and be given further training in higher degrees. Also they should be made to attend workshops, conferences and seminars. This would enable them to acquire more knowledge and skills in modern office technology and information systems for onward transmission to the students, and this would subsequently solve the problem of acute shortage of secretarial lecturers in Nigerian universities.

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