



**MONEY GRAM E-PAYMENT SKILLS NEEDED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION
GRADUATES FOR EMPLOYMENT IN SELECTED COMMERCIAL BANKS IN KOGI
STATE**

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Abstract

This study ascertained the Money Gram e-payment skills required by business education graduates for employment in selected commercial banks in Kogi State. The population of the study comprised all the 56 business educators in the four tertiary institutions in Kogi State offering business education and Office Technology and Management (OTM) programmes. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. A 15-item questionnaire was used to elicit responses from business educators in Federal Polytechnic, Idah, Federal College of Education, Okene, Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa and Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja. Out of the 56 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 41 copies were completed and returned. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The respondents agreed that all the items listed were Money Gram e-payment skills needed by business educators for employment in selected commercial banks in Kogi State. The t-test analysis equally showed that the null hypothesis was accepted by respondents as not significant. The researcher concluded that adequate business education programme will help to provide the needed Money Gram e-payment skills for employment of Business Education graduates in commercial banks in Kogi State. The researcher recommended that business education curriculum must contain cognate skills that will prepare the recipients to be employable in commercial banks in view of modern technological advancements.

Keywords: *E-payment, Business Education, Employment, Commercial Banks, Money Gram*

Introduction

Modern enterprises, both locally and internationally, face technological innovations which have practically affected every aspect of office work as well as business transactions. The effects of these office technological innovations are globally felt in science, commerce, industry, education, politics and in all facets of business, particularly in the banking industry (Anigbogu, 2011). As a result, skill requirements in many office occupations including the banking industry are changing. These new technologies have facilitated new business procedures from the traditional office to the electronic office. This has in recent times given birth to what has been variously described as 'virtual office', 'paperless office', 'electronic office', 'automated office' or simply office of the future (Doswell, 2008).



Most bank transactions are rapidly changing as a result of office automation (Bank Financial Review, 2016). This has brought about new methods in carrying out functions performed by workers in the banking industry. According to Bank Financial Review (2016), modern electronic payment skills are found in Money Gram, Western Union, Telegraphic Money Transfer, Instant Transfer, Real Time Gross Service, and Alternate Channels electronic transactions. At the centre of these new trends are the soft-skill transaction competencies in the banking industry. These new trends in technological innovations have placed greater responsibilities on business educators, especially on subject instructions in the area of office technology and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Business Education graduates are those who went through the programme of Business Education either at the NCE or first degree levels. The programme of Business Education is designed to produce graduates with adequate skills of teaching business subjects at different levels of education, manage their own small scale businesses or work in organizations including banks (Osuala, 2012).

Etonyeaku (2009) observed that business education graduates in the past dealt with papers, worked with manual machines, relied on postal services for external communications and kept office records in the cabinets. The advent of office technological advancements requires new skills, new attitudes and the development of new professional and intellectual concepts among employees in the banking industry (Adekambi, 2007).

Furthermore, technological advancements have equally led to the emergence of new office occupations as well as the disappearance of some previously known office works especially in the banking industry. This scenario has in recent times challenged the soft skill re-tooling of office employees especially in today's modern offices. It has, in fact, given Business Education graduates in Kogi State a new task in the acquisition of competitive soft skills in order to remain relevant in their jobs. Office automation has permanently affected the roles of the bank employees (Bank Financial Review, 2016).

With the continued development of new telecommunication equipment, Business Education graduates must now be prepared to learn new and modern technologically oriented office procedures. Business Education graduates who have 'technophobia' or the fear of computers may likely not be able to impart skills related to the electronic transaction processes in the banking industry (Menzies, 2009). Thus, such bank employees may not be able to source, search, transact or communicate with most of the prospective and intending customers. Again, they will not be able to negotiate on terms of transactions or to make further clarifications on existing terms of transactions for the mutual benefit and convenience of the parties involved (Doswell, 2008, Harvey, 2009). Since the primary business of the modern office is to collate, record, sort, analyze, store and distribute information, electronic transactions therefore integrate all available software procedures as well as human resources such that transactions are not only done accurately, speedily and comprehensively but also made available as, when, where and in the manner or format required (Doswell, 2008).



Similarly, Nwogwugwu (2008) observed that as new businesses and job opportunities spring every day, there is the need for Business Education graduates to be well nurtured for the new challenges by acquiring new soft skills for the use of these new technologies. Nwogwugwu (2008) further maintained that bank employees who are not well equipped skillfully to face the new challenges occasioned by the new technological advancements and tomorrow's banking business environment as well as transactions, are sure to be embarrassed as their electronic skill deficiencies will render them irrelevant in their discharge of routine office functions in modern offices. Thus, Business Education graduates need to re-tool their skills in order to cope with the new challenges. That is, they need to be digitally compliant (Harvey, 2009). Digital skills are described by Katz (2009) as specific abilities in the use of electronic office gadgets that are required for effective office operations and transactions especially in the banking industry. Digital skills make the difference between up-dated soft skilled Business Education graduates and out-dated skilled Business Education graduates. Digital skills cover all the electronic office competencies needed by office employees in today's modern offices.

To be effective in the discharge of office routine functions, employees, especially in the banking industry, need to be proficient in the use of digital electronic office gadgets. Balogun (2010) described skill as knowledge, competency and behaviour that enable business studies bank employees meet established performance criteria. It is therefore imperative for Business Education graduates in Kogi State to possess the mastery of word processing skills, micrographic skills, data processing skills, telecommunication skills and reprographic skills in order to enhance their performance and increase output in their routine office functions in the banking industry.

Bank employees usually operate from offices and make use of office equipment. Hence, the observation made by Osuala (2012) that the most common pieces of office equipment before the electronic office revolution were typewriter, telephone and filing cabinet. These provided the means by which the three main information activities were carried out, namely document production, communication (exchange, gathering and sorting information) and filing. With the use of such equipment, office work was drudgery, slow and labour intensive. Osuala (2012) further opined that these traditional technologies were still very much part of office life but the electronic office has introduced a number of innovations which complemented or replaced them and these are very important for banking operations and for the discharge of routine office functions in the bank. These innovations are very vital in the face of the present challenges especially in the discharge of transaction activities of commercial banks in KogiState.

Similarly, Nwosu (2000) observed that office automation will enable secretaries, bank employees and other workers to perform their jobs more easily and with greater efficiency. Nwosu further maintained that these automated systems will also enable Business Education graduates to attain levels of procedures and operations found in modern banking operations.



Another similar view was shared by David-Newton (2010) when he explained that the nature of modern office automation permits access to financial, research, personnel, technology, economic and competitive data through the use of word processing equipment, on-line computer terminals and networking services. Others include electronic mail, telecommunicating and teleconferencing.

Anigbogu (2011) stressed that the major challenge in the effective operations of the automated office technology vis-à-vis electronic transaction skills are the psychological and social factors involved in training employees to understand, accept and adapt to new organizational and human relationships and assimilate new procedures. Anigbogu (2011) further explained that with insufficient socio-technological training, bank employees often resist change in the work environment. Agomuo and Isu (2007) noted that there is acute shortage of trained personnel in the application of software operating systems, network communications and local technicians to serve and repair computer facilities. Even where they are found, they are not proficiently trained and are not versatile in the use of available Office Technology gadgets (Anigbogu, 2000). In commercial bank operations, some Business Education graduates lack the requisite skills/knowledge to use these technological equipment/machines (Bank Financial Review, 2016).

Kadiri (2009) in his investigation on the extent of utilization of computer office facilities reported that some Business Education graduates lack requisite office skills needed for smooth operations in the discharge of their functions in the banking industry.

McDonald and Wilson (1999) defined e-payment skills as the use of modern office equipment and platforms to conduct company office functions as well as discharge office routine works on daily basis. The essence of the use of e-payment equipment is to enhance and facilitate efficiency and effectiveness in generating better output at minimum cost. Electronic banking transactions are also referred to as web transactions or the use of electronic communication technologies including the Internet, mobile phones and digital televisions to accomplish bank transactions (McDonald and Wilson, 1999). Specifically, electronic transactions portray banks' efforts to function and communicate with customers as well as discharge customer services more effectively at the satisfaction of the customers through the use of modern Office Technologies (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

Electronic transaction skills involve the different Office Technology competencies and abilities applied in the use of modern office equipment in the efficient discharge of routine office functions in commercial banks. It is, in fact, targeted at enhanced performance and greater output (Bank Financial Review, 2016).

Kotler and Keller (2006) defined enhanced performance as the level when an employee brings out his or her maximum ability in the discharge of his or her duties for the benefit of the organization. Every organization expects best performance from her employees or an output that is commensurate with the salary being earned by such employees. This is the only way that organizations can succeed or maximize their profit (Kotler and Keller, 2006).



In their own contribution, Kotler and Keller (2006) maintained that there is a serious competition in the banking industry in today's banking operations. Specifically, commercial banks in Kogi State function in a competitive environment. In this experience, Business Education graduates are challenged to continue to devise efficient means of improving performance on daily basis. Part of the survival strategies is to be in tune with the use of modern office technology in the discharge of their routine office functions. Improved performance in the banking industry today has led to the provision of such services as Western Union Money Transfer, Telegraphic Transfer, Real Time Gross Services, Money Gram, etc. All these are some of the electronic transaction strategies and methods requiring the use of specialized electronic skills.

Money Gram refers to an alternate channel platform through which money is sent from one person to another irrespective of the country of origin or recipient. Money is usually sent in different currencies like pounds, dollar, euro, naira, etc. The recipient is always at liberty to cash money sent in any denomination of his or her choice. Usually, the current exchange rate is applied if the withdrawal is to be made in a different currency other than that through which the money was sent. The recipient must be able to prove his or her identity beyond all doubts before he or she is allowed to receive the money.

Furthermore, Money Gram makes bank transactions paperless and decongests the banks (Valluri, 2016). Again, Valluri (2016) further noted that alternate channels play an important role in the ever-changing banking environment especially now that every bank around the world is searching for solutions that can reduce costs without impacting customer service. It is important that banks efficiently manage vendors for different service delivery channels along with the versions of software. Although alternate channels are not the most effective at generating new sales, they improve customer satisfaction and retention. With the help of technology, the Banking Industry can develop or expand into new channels to survive in the current competitive environment. Any new channel involves cost and in alternate channels, technology plays a vital role in terms of providing a near to branch experience to the well-informed wealth management customer.

Statement of the Problem

The present day challenges arising from advances in technology and technological work skills require Business Education graduates in Kogi State to possess competitive Money Gram electronic transaction skills in order to be able to secure jobs in selected commercial banks and remain relevant in their jobs. Furthermore, the discharge of customer satisfactory services in the banking industry in recent times equally requires that Business Education graduates should be re-tooled to be effective in the use of Money Gram electronic transaction skills. It becomes imperative therefore, that Business Education graduates, especially in Kogi State, require necessary Money Gram e-payment skills to keep abreast of current work challenges in the banking industry. For the fact that technology is rapidly changing today's business environment, bank employees are finding it increasingly challenging to cope with modern technological innovations that characterize automated



bank office work environment (Bank Financial Review, 2016). However, most Business Education graduates, especially in Kogi State, lack the requisite Money Gram e-payment skills to fully utilize modern office machines (Bank Financial Review, 2016). This experience has forced some commercial banks not to compete favourably in business with other banks and therefore had become victims of the challenges of superior performance competition that now characterize the banking business environment (BFR, 2016).

In today's technological trend, the banking industry is challenged with varied electronic transaction strategies. These electronic transaction strategies require specialized soft skills for their operations and Business Education graduates in Kogi State lack these skills. It is on this premise, therefore, that this study sought to ascertain the Money Gram e-payment skills required by Business Education graduates for employment in selected commercial banks in Kogi State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the Money Gram e-payment skills required by Business Education graduates in Kogi State for employment in selected commercial banks.

Research Question

What are the Money Gram e-payment skills required by Business Education graduates in Kogi State for employment in selected commercial banks?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho: The mean ratings of the respondents on the Money Gram e-payment skills required by Business Education graduates for employment in selected commercial banks in Kogi State will not differ based on gender.

Methods

The study was a descriptive survey of the opinions of business educators from four tertiary institutions offering Business Education and Office Technology and Management (OTM) programmes in Kogi State. The population is made up of 56 business educators from the four tertiary institutions in Kogi State. The institutions are Federal College of Education, Okene, Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa, Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja and Federal Polytechnic, Idah. The entire population was used since it was small. A structured questionnaire which was divided into part A and part B was used for data collection. Part A was on personal data of the respondents while part B contained 15 items structured to provide answers to the research question. A total of 56 copies of the questionnaire were distributed but 41 were correctly filled and returned. Analysis of data was done with the use of mean and standard deviation for the research question while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Mean ratings below 2.5 were rejected while those rating of 2.5 and above were accepted by the respondents.

Results

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Money Gram E-Payment Skills Required by Business Education Graduates in Kogi State for Employment in Selected Commercial Banks (N=41)

S/N	Item	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Verification of transactions before effecting payment	3.86	0.35	Required
2.	Recording of data in a machine readable form	3.46	0.53	Required
3.	Checking of the customer codes	3.68	0.53	Required
4.	Checking of customers' passwords	3.44	0.50	Required
5.	Checking of senders' country codes	3.57	0.51	Required
6.	Checking of area codes	3.50	0.52	Required
7.	Retrieve information in a suitable storage media	3.58	0.50	Required
8.	Classify data into convenient groups	3.40	0.49	Required
9.	Checking of exchange rates of different currencies	3.80	0.42	Required
10.	Apply basic processing methods including online real time and batch processing	3.46	0.50	Required
11.	Interpret and execute programme instructions	3.60	0.51	Required
12.	Organize, sort, calculate and summarize data	3.43	0.60	Required
13.	Differentiate between different available social media that can be used	3.61	0.50	Required
14.	Understand various customers and adjust to work with them on daily basis	3.44	0.50	Required
15.	Save and assign file names to documents	3.63	0.49	Required
Money Gram E-payment Skills		3.57	0.12	Required

The result of the study shows that all the items in Table 1 are accepted by the respondents as Money Gram e-payment skills required by Business Education graduates for employment in selected commercial banks in Kogi State. They all scored mean points above 2.5 while the grand mean of 3.57 was equally greater than 2.5.

Hypothesis

Ho: The mean ratings of the respondents on the Money Gram e-payment skills required by Business Education graduates for employment in selected commercial banks in Kogi State will not differ based on gender

Table 2: t-test Testing Null Hypothesis of No Significant Difference in Mean Ratings of Male and Female Business Education Graduates on Money Gram E-payment Skills Required for Employment in Selected Commercial Banks in Kogi State.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	p-value	Dec.
Male	68	3.55	0.11	1.508	0.134	NS
Money Gram E-payment Skills						
Female	74	3.58	0.12			

NS = Not significant at $p > 0.05$



The t-test analysis in Table 2 shows that the p-value of 0.134 was greater than critical value of 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis was accepted by the respondents. It means that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on Money Gram e-payment skills needed for employment in commercial banks in Kogi State.

Discussion

The result of the study showed that all the items listed as the Money Gram e-payment skills required by business educators for employment in selected commercial banks in Kogi State were accepted by respondents. The test of hypothesis on the opinions of male and female business educators on Money Gram e-payment skills needed for employment in commercial banks showed no significant difference. This finding is in line with the views of Kotler and Keller (2006) who maintained that commercial banks can only maximize profit and retain their customers through a crop of workers with the right e-payment skills and experiences.

McDonald and Wilson (1999) saw e-payment skills as the use of modern office equipment and platforms to conduct company office functions as well as discharge office routine works on daily basis. The essence of the use of e-payment equipment is to enhance and facilitate efficiency and effectiveness in generating better output at minimum cost. It seems that the level of skills provided by the curriculum of Business Education has not been adequate or that the right type of e-payment skills acquired through the programme of Business Education has not be adequate for employment of Business Education graduates in commercial banks in Kogi State. Therefore, the findings of this study are timely to reposition the programme of Business Education as well as Office Technology and Management (OTM) so as to provide the relevant skills.

Conclusion

It is necessary to state here that a call for refocusing Business Education and Office Technology and Management to provide relevant e-payment skills for employment in commercial banks is a clarion call. This is because Nigerians cannot effectively harvest the opportunities in Business Education when basic needs for effective business education programme are not available and/or not adequate for effective teaching and learning of business courses. Business Education programme is a vital tool for imparting the relevant e-payment skills for employment in commercial banks in the face of gross unemployment that is ravaging the nation. This is based on the vocational nature of the programme and hence it is imperative that adequate administration of business education and office technology and management are instituted in all tertiary institutions for effective e-payment skill development of Nigerian graduates for good job creation.



Recommendations

1. The programmes of Business Education and Office Technology and Management (OTM) should be reviewed in tertiary institutions in Kogi State to impart the relevant Money Gram e-payment skills to students.
2. Provision and improvements in the areas of equipment and manpower are the prominent needs of Business Education and OTM in most tertiary institutions. Since the business world is under constant changes especially in the area of information and communication technology (ICT), it will be rewarding to adequately equip Business Education classrooms with necessary ICT facilities.

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