# JOB SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS IN COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY IN LAGOS METROPOLIS

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***Abstract***

*The purpose of the study was to identify the job skills and opportunities for employment of senior secondary school leavers in computer technology in Lagos Metropolis. Purposive random sampling was adopted to draw 120 Senior Secondary School leavers working in 30 industries, government ministries and parastatals in the study area. Two research questions were answered by the study. Mean and standard deviations were used to analyze the data collected for the study. Findings revealed that senior secondary school leavers have job opportunities in public and private establishment, media houses, metal fabrication and wood processing industries, business and secretarial enterprises, examination bodies, banking and financial institutions. Result also showed that senior secondary school leavers needed to possess job skill required for computer jobs; use of computer aided design, prepare, analyse and store data, prepare and retrieve information, browse for information from the internet and web site maintain and repair hard and soft wares used in computers, scan, photograph and laminate documents, etc. Among the recommendations were that secondary schools should have computer facilities for use by students and qualified teachers in computer technology.*

## Introduction

Opportunities for the utilization of relevant job skills for workers have always been sought by employers to optimize their potentials for social and infrastructural development of the society. Hornby (2000) defines a job as what one does to earn a living; it may be called work, post, position, occupation, trade, profession, vocation or career. It also defines opportunity as a chance to do something or an occasion when it is easy for one to do something. Further, it explains that skills are the possession of the ability to do something well, because one has learned and practiced them.

A computer according to Okafor (2001) and Howard (2002) is an electronic device that has the ability to accept data, internally store and automatically execute a programme of instructions, performs mathematical, logical and manipulative operations on data and report the result. A computer as an electronic machine has the capacity of processing data with the highest level of speed and accuracy.

One of the most serious and challenging problem of many developing countries in recent time is unemployment of their able bodied persons due to job scarcity. In Nigeria, secondary school leavers who could not be immediately admitted into tertiary institutions appear to be the hardest hit by this canker worm of unemployment. To address this problem, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education (2004) directed that the curriculum of senior secondary schools should comprise technical, commercial and vocational subjects in order to make their students immediately employable on their graduation. According to Mkpa (2002) children are sent to school to acquire the type of education that enable them to be self – reliant on graduation or be gainfully employed in public sector of the economy. Further, Anowor (2002) stresses that relevance in education is achieved when

graduates acquired salable vocational skills for self employment and even become employers rather than employees. Education and training are relevant and functional when clientele get the job for which they received the training.

In recent time, computers have the potential for job creation for all categories of workers and senior secondary school leavers are no exceptions, Osuala (2004) identified job opportunities in computer science and technology and they include:

a. Banking and financial institutions,
b. Business and secretarial enterprises,
c. Examination bodies like West African Examination Council (WAEC), Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB).
d. Manufacturing and processing industries and
e. Government ministries and parastatals,

There is no gain saying the fact that computer outfits have expanded and created more and new jobs for senior secondary school leavers in private and public sectors of Nigerian economy. Recently, computer literacy is the determinant for work in computer related business. Akudolu (2001) opines that for computer to be used effectively in education, teachers who are the chief curriculum implementers need to be computer literate. Okafor (2001) affirmed that computer provided knowledge and practical skills for information and data processing, data storage, graphic arts works, office secretarial jobs, computer aided drafting (CAD) computer aided machining (CAM), computer aided instruction (CAI) and robotic engineering. Chukwuemeka and Otiji (2008) identified some computer skills needed by senior secondary school leavers and they included capability for independent learning, collaborative writing, peer editing, grammar review and natural communication.

Other computer skills and knowledge needs identified by Olusanjo (2007) were the ability to handle hardware and software, use of computer word processor, spreadsheet, audiovisual media, multimedia presentations, design of web site, internet and information resources, use of electronic toys to develop spatial awareness, use of e-mail, video conferencing, information storage in data base device, record keeping and reports. The foregoing revelations justify that computer creates jobs rather than unemployment as wrongly perceived by many persons.

The problem of the study therefore is, who are the employers of senior secondary leavers in computer technology jobs and what are the computer skills they needed for work in Lagos Metropolis of Lagos state.

**Research Questions**

1. Who are the employers of senior secondary school leavers in computer technology jobs in Lagos Metropolis?
2. What are the job skills needed by senior secondary school leavers for work in computer technology in Lagos Metropolis?

**Method**

A survey research design was adopted for the study because the opinions of the respondents were sought without manipulating the variables of the study. Purposive random sampling was used to identify all the 120 senior secondary school leavers employed in 30 limited liability industries, government ministries and parastatals in Lagos Metropolis. The Lagos State industrial Directory (2009) was used to identify the establishments that employed senior secondary school leavers in computer technology jobs.

A structured 20 items questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to collect information from the subjects of the study. It comprised two sections; sections A and B had nine and 11 items respectively, according to the research questions the answered. The instrument was face validated by two experts in Computer Science Engineering of Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) Enugu and University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos. Their comments and suggestions formed the basis for the production of the final draft of the instrument which was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed using Cronbach Alpha and the coefficient of reliability computed from the result of a pilot study conducted at Enugu Metropolis of Enugu State which yielded 0.75. It was good enough for data collection from the respondents.

All the items were responded to by the subjects using a four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (DA) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Their scaling values were- 4, 3, 2 and 1. The instrument was administered and collected on the spot by the researcher through the assistance of the sectional heads of the establishments used for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions.

For decisions to be reached, the mean of the scaling values was computed, thus 4 +3 + 2 + 1 / 4 = 2.50. In other words, means of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreed whereas means less than 2.50 were indicated as disagreed responses of the respondents. Tables 1 and 2 contained the details of the findings of the study.

**Table 1:**
**Mean Responses and Standard Deviations of Job Skills Needed by Senior Secondary School Leavers for Work in Computer Technology Jobs in Lagos Metropolis**

| S/N | Questionnaire Items | X | Std. Dev. | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Knowledge and skills needed by senior secondary school leavers for work in computer technology jobs included the ability to: | | | |
| 1 | Design non – complex machine components using computer aided design equipment | 2.84 | 0.22 | Agreed |
| 2 | Repair and service computerized mechanical devices. | 2.51 | 0.26 | Agreed |
| 3 | Prepare, analyze and store data using computers | 2.65 | 0.25 | Agreed |
| 4 | Prepare and retrieve information from the computer. | 2.59 | 0.24 | Agreed |
| 5 | Browse for information from the internet and web site | 2.50 | 0.20 | Agreed |
| 6 | Type documents and prepare table containing data using computers | 3.34 | 0.27 | Agreed |
| 7 | Operate robotic machines – lifters, drillers, cranes, agricultural machines, etc. | 2.76 | 0.21 | Agreed |
| 8 | Design and produce graphics and art works using computers | 3.05 | 0.25 | Agreed |
| 9 | Repair and service noncomplex computer hard wares and soft wares. | 2.80 | 0.21 | Agreed |
| 10 | Scan, photograph and laminate documents using computers | 3.53 | 0.28 | Agreed |
| 11 | Repair and service noncomplex computerized electrical – electronics appliances | 3.10 | 0.23 | Agreed |
| | **Grand $\bar{x}$** | **2.88** | - | **Agreed** |

In table 1, all the items nos. 1-11 have their means above the mean cut off of 2.50 and their grand mean is 2.88. These means reveal that these job skills are needed by senior secondary school leavers for work in computer technology in Lagos Metropolis.

**Table 2:**
**Mean Responses and Standard Deviations of Employers of Senior Secondary School Leavers in Computer Technology Jobs in Lagos Metropolis**

| S/N | Questionnaire Items | X | Std .Dev. | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Employers of senior secondary school leavers in computer technology jobs include: | | | |
| 12 | Federal and state government ministries | 3.52 | 0.28 | Agreed |
| 13 | Federal and state government parastatals – corporations and educational institutions. | 2.58 | 0.21 | Agreed |
| 14 | Public and private media house – radio and television stations | 3.18 | 0.24 | Agreed |
| 15 | Metal fabrication and wood processing industries | 2.53 | 0,21 | Agreed |
| 16 | Business and secretarial enterprises | 3.10 | 0.23 | Agreed |
| 17 | Military and paramilitary services – armed forces, police, etc. | 2.81 | 0.21 | Agreed |
| 18 | Examination bodies – West African Examination Council, National Business and Technical Education Board, etc. | 2.63 | 0.20 | Agreed |
| 19 | Banking and financial institutions | 2.77 | 0.21 | Agreed |
| 20 | Industries for the repair and service of computer soft and hardwares | 2.73 | 0.21 | Agreed |
| | **Grand $\bar{x}$** | **2.87** | - | **Agreed** |

Table 2 reveals that all the items nos. 12-20 have their means above the mean cut off of 2.50 and their grand mean is 2.87. These means imply that all the identified employers in Lagos Metropolis require the services of senior secondary school leavers who possess computer job skills.

**Discussion of Findings**

With respect to research question 1, which sought to identify the knowledge and skills possessed by senior secondary school leavers for work in computer technology in public and private establishment in Lagos Metropolis of Lagos State, findings indicated that these job skills included the ability to design simple machine components using computer aided design, repair and service computerized automobiles, prepare, analyze and store data, prepare and retrieve information from the internet and web site, type documents and prepare tables, operate robotic machines design and produce graphics and art works, repair and service computer hard and soft wares, scan, photograph and laminate documents, service and repair of simple electrical – electronics appliances. These findings corresponded to those of Plomp, Brummelhuis, and Pelgrum, W.J. (1997) who found that knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT) helped persons to familiarize with electronic hard and soft ware packages (Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, etc) and computer literacy. They stress that

ICT helps in the comprehension of computer aided design (CAD), computer aided machining (CAM), computer integrated manufacturing (CIM) and computer aided instruction (CAI) as well as in supporting teaching and learning at all levels of education. Computer literacy demands that school leavers should possess adequate knowledge and practical skills needed by employers.

Regarding research question 2, which sought to identify the employers that required the services of senior secondary school leavers who possessed computer job skills needed for work in Lagos Metropolis of Lagos State, findings revealed that these employers included – federal and state ministries and their parastatals, public and private media houses, metal fabrication and wood processing industries, business and secretarial enterprises, examination bodies, banking and financial institutions, electrical – electronics repair and services industries, the military and paramilitary services. These findings were similar to that of Eren (2004) who identified job skills for school leavers using computer technology included – safety equipment producers, aircraft, boats and land vehicles industries, musical instrument producers simulation games and toys producers, appliances for the handicapped producers. Job opportunities abound in computer technology for school leavers who possess computer skills.

**Conclusion**

Secondary school leavers who are computer literate by possessing adequate theoretical knowledge and practical skills for the job have the potential of being employed by prospective employers in private and public sectors of economy in Lagos Metropolis. This is to adduce that despite the global job scarcity, computer literate person still have more job opportunities than their counterparts who lacked computer literacy skills.

**Recommendations:**

The following recommendations were made:

1. Federal and state governments should provide adequate computer outfits in schools for students to become computer literate prior to their graduation,
2. All teachers at all levels of education should be directed and encouraged to become computer literate to make the teaching of students easier and
3. A law making computer literacy for all teachers and students compulsory should be promulgated in Nigeria.

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