



LECTURERS' PERCEPTION OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS (IPS) REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE KEYBOARDING SKILLS ACQUISITION BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN EBONYI STATE.

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Abstract

The study ascertained the interpersonal skills required for effective keyboarding skills acquisition by business education students as perceived by lecturers. Two research questions guided the study while one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The researcher used descriptive survey research design. All business education lecturers in tertiary institutions in Ebonyi State constituted the population and a census was taken since the population was manageable. Questionnaire entitled (LEIPSREKSA) was used to collect data. The questionnaire was face and content validated by three senior lecturers in the department of business education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The internal consistency reliability for the instrument was established using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the two research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. The findings shows that lecturers consider positive attitude and taking responsibility as skills required by business education students for effective keyboard skills acquisition. The result of the research hypothesis shows that the t-cal value of 0.220 is less than the t-crit value of 2.021. Thus, the null hypothesis was retained. It was therefore concluded that establishing positive relationship based on corresponding interpersonal relationship between lecturers and learners is key to effective keyboarding skills acquisition. The study recommended among others that keyboarding lecturers should see the need to begin keyboarding courses with orientation on the behavior expected of the students in order to truly connect with them for effective learning of the course. Moreover, NBTE should review the course content of keyboarding in such a way that each level of the keyboarding courses: Keyboarding I, II, III and IV should be made to begin with interactive session that will teach the students to have positive attitude towards the teacher, the course and team mates and also to take responsibility for their actions and inactions.

Key words: Interpersonal skills, Keyboarding skills, skills acquisition, Business education students.

Introduction

Skill is the ability to do something well. It could refer to capability and capacity acquired by a person through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort. Such ability enables one to smoothly and



adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas, technology, and people. Skill acquisition is the process of acquiring a certain skills by an individual which is always through thorough and intensive training over a given period of time. Acquisition of skill involves both theoretical and practical training. Skill can be classified into three major parts which are cognitive, technical and interpersonal skills. Nwaozor (2022) averred that cognitive skill deals with ideas; technical skill is the ability to handle certain human endeavors while interpersonal skills are dexterity in relating with people around you.

Keyboarding is a technical skill needed for imputing data with the use of the keyboard. It has to do with dexterity in the manipulation of the keyboard which has the components of alphabetic keys, figures and symbols. As a cumulative psychomotor skill, keyboarding develops like any other motor skill through cognitive, associative and autonomous stages. It involves the touch method of input into the keyboard.

The wide spread in the use of computers in all spheres of life suggests that the need for keyboarding skills will continue to increase in the nearest future. The use of Computer Based Test (CBE) for Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) in Nigeria and other professional employment interviews underscores the need to be versatile in keyboarding skills. According to Ngaloru (2015) keyboarding though traceable to typewriting, came into use during the information age. The advent of information and communication technology (ICT) has extended the use of keyboarding to all areas of human endeavor. Keyboarding has become a household name across the nation's educational strata in teaching, learning decision-making, evaluation and record keeping processes and therefore essential to the development of the economy (Ezenekwe, 2016).

The need for skill acquisition in keyboarding is germane because most of the economic, social, medical, academic, health and other endeavours are carried out through the use of computer which is accessible by a press of the buttons (keys). In fact, keyboarding skills have become part of the important skills required in the 21st century's world of work as the use of computer has dominated today's business environment. Effective keyboarding and computer operation skills are necessary for majority of occupations and they are also expected tools for communication throughout one's life (Adebayo & Igbenedion, 2019).

Skilfulness in keyboarding entails being able to type without looking at the keyboard or touching the key while maintaining a healthy posture and pressing each key with the proper finger. Since the goal of keyboarding instruction is to enable students to utilize the computer or typewriter keyboard more efficiently and effectively, keyboarding skills acquisition involves learning to use QWERTY keyboard; starting with the home keys to every other key. The home keys are learnt first so as to establish the position of the fingers on the keyboard. In keyboarding, high proficiency in the use of the keys to produce error proof and mailable documents is emphasized. The skills acquisition begins with learning to manipulate the keys; word building; consolidation or application of skill for speed and accuracy; production and proofreading of typescript. It therefore means that proficiency in keyboarding entails concentrated use of the eyes, the brain and the hands. Acquisition of keyboarding skills equips business education students with the capacity to maintain a proper posture during typing, master the keyboard to an extent that they can type without looking at the keyboard and pressing each key with the proper finger in order to produce error proof typescripts within a stipulated time,

Keyboarding as a course in business education programme, offers a learner, skills to input data at a keyboard smoothly while typing which comes as a result of one's understanding of the keyboard layout and its functions. Though keyboarding skill is a survival skill according to Idih (2020); and therefore, needed by every individual in order to fit into the technological environment, it is very valuable and necessary to every business education student as it stands out in the programme as an employable skill for entrepreneurship and basic competence required for employment in office management. It is one of the most essential skills required by a business education graduate. The



skill is important in the delivery of timely and mailable documents in business offices in the information society that is increasingly dependent on information/data processing using keyboard (Okoduwa, 2009).

A business education student as an undergraduate offered admission into a tertiary institution is expected to receive education 'for' and 'about' business. Such student is guided through carefully planned experiences that offer him the opportunity to master the knowledge, skills, competencies and attitude required to succeed in business and in life generally. Keyboarding which was titled Typewriting is one of the business courses taught in business education. Business education students should be taught keyboarding skills not only with the proper technique but also in an atmosphere and environment that is conducive for learning as every skill building requires practice. This will enable them fit in properly and also stand out in the competitive world of work. Students who have adequate keyboarding techniques do not employ 'hunting and pecking' techniques to key-in data because the instruction process moves them from 'hunt and peck' to 'touch type'. This allows them to proficiently manipulate the computer or typewriter keyboard to produce mailable documents. They accomplish their typing tasks quickly and proficiently. High proficiency in keyboarding does not only affords business education students a deeper understanding of the 'how' but also 'the what' and 'why' to produce a document. In the views of Ojukwu in Idih (2013) it equips students with skills in the creation of clean, error-proof and mailable copies of documents within a given time. Ojukwu further stated that keyboarding skills give business education students the ability to deal adequately with the sorting and typing of tabular statements, letters, meeting documents and technical reports. Idih (2020) confirms that perfection in keyboarding is a matter of time and constant practice which presupposes that a business educator who teaches keyboarding is expected to have a clear sense of direction in order to make learning more meaningful. This could be attained by ensuring that there is interaction between him and the students and among the team mates. The argument therefore is that since the teacher needs IPS in order to set the learning environment right, the learners as well require IPS for proper receipt of what is set before them more so when demonstration is required.

In the opinion of Bailey and Butcher (1983) interpersonal skills are widely regarded as being a very important aspect of relationship since the social skills of key people in a setting have a direct impact on the effectiveness of others in such setting especially, teaching and learning. They went further to describe IPS as the behaviours people adopt in dealing and communicating with one another. It could also be referred to as peoples' skills, social skills or social intelligence. Interpersonal skills involve reading the signals that others send and interpreting them accurately in order to form effective responses. Individuals show their IPS all the time simply by interacting with others (Investopedia.com, 2022).

Most of the things we do in life especially teaching and learning require interaction with other people, we have to be good at getting along with others if we must succeed or be effective. In the opinion of Elom (2016) we listen and deal with people to the extent that our interactions with them are rewarding and reinforcing. This is to say that interpersonal skills (IPS) are basic for other skills acquisition. Interpersonal skills are behaviours and tactics a person uses to interact with others effectively. It ranges from communication and listening to attitude and conduct. We need to learn to work with people to bring the best out of them and to achieve the objective of any learning process. It is one gesture that does not cost anything but makes the learning environment very positive. More smiling faces and less frowning faces can light up an entire classroom.

Interactions are established through interpersonal relationship. Interpersonal relationship can thrive when the people involved have the correct skills for interpersonal attraction. Moreover, perception formation and influence processes affect the manner in which we relate to other people. Our relationship with others affects how we receive whatever they release to us whether physical, intellectual or mental (Elom, 2016). Therefore interpersonal relationship emphasizes social and



emotional status and plays the important role of creating attractive teaching and learning process. This assertion goes a long way to confirm that the status of students' interpersonal skills could affect their disposition to learning a skill since skills are acquired through a thorough intensive training over a given period of time. Interpersonal skills (IPS) are essential in conveying ideas clearly, smoothly and in an easy-to-understand way. It equips one with effective language, interesting intonation and outspoken behaviour movement that is able to attract and retain a recipient's interest. It bears on displaying positive attitude which helps one to demonstrate maturity in a task. It has to do with mastering good communication skills; being able to take responsibilities; avoiding complaints and mumuring; being appreciative; being an ardent listener and paying attention to others. Najid (2017) opined that possession of these skills helps one to transform the 'boring' into the 'interesting' which manifests good environment and creates more effective learning situation.

Keyboarding lesson is never one sided, the teacher communicates the principles and techniques and the students respond in demonstration and questioning. Teacher and students responding to each other deepen the content learning. The teacher demonstrates interpersonal skills to create correct environment for learning; the students of necessity need to be versatile with the interpersonal skills that will correspond with the teacher's for effective teaching and learning. Moreover the interaction among students as they co-construct knowledge becomes important as a collaborative activity. This phenomenon requires IPS skills in the part of both teacher and students for them to be able to share experiences and work together. Correct IPS will foster good relationship and encourage students to share the problems they encounter during skill acquisition and practice classes. Hence interpersonal skills have a role to play in teaching and learning especially in skill acquisition as it creates conducive learning environment. Therefore, the paper is concerned with finding out lecturers' opinion on the interpersonal skills that business education students should possess for them to excel in the acquisition of keyboarding skills.

Statement of the Problem

Ability to relate effectively at an interpersonal level is vital in human life. Interpersonal skills have been reported to contribute to success in relationships (Majid, 2017). Therefore knowledge of various IPS and of their effects in social interactions is crucial for interpersonal functioning. Knowledge of interpersonal skills by students and teachers is seen as a necessity to closely recognize students' needs and give space to the teacher in understanding all the problems and the expression that needs to be shared. Interpersonal skills are necessary because the effectiveness of teaching is determined by the skills of teachers and students in creating relationships.

Despite the number of studies on the role of IPS in effective teaching and learning, it is observed that business education students are still having difficulties to interact with the teachers because teachers could easily misunderstand and misconstrue their intentions while teaching in the classroom due to weakness of the students to handle their feelings and convey their intentions correctly. Students should be able to gain teacher's attention through proper disposition and responsiveness. The students' failure to relate effectively will not only cause teacher to be disappointed but will also irritate and dampen his spirit in demonstrating skill and giving personal attention to students. This invariably affects the achievement of teaching objectives and therefore makes learning meaningless. This lack of corresponding interpersonal relationship between students and lecturers is manifested in the scanty number of students that attend keyboarding classes (Okoduwa, 2009).

Keyboarding as one of the core business courses prepares a business education student for job functions in the office. Every office deals with information and data processing; such data must be inputted through the use of the keyboard. It is however disheartening to observe that most business education graduates 'pick' keys thereby wasting a whole lot of business hours even though Okeke-



Ezenyanwu and Oguejiofor (2020) observed that business education is meant to prepare business students in tertiary institutions to fit into world of work and be able to combat unemployment in Nigeria.

Moreover, The Association of Business Educators of Nigeria has set a standard of what Nigerian students need to know and be able to do in business. The second and third provisions which are stated as follows must be achieved.

- *Demonstrate interpersonal, teamwork, and leadership skills necessary to function in multi-cultural business settings.*
- *Develop career awareness and related skills to enable them to make viable career choices and become employable in variety of business careers.* (ABEN, 2017.P. 9)

If these standards must be achieved and if business education graduates must gain meaningful employment or be able to create jobs, there is need to ensure corresponding interpersonal relationship in our learning environments, considering that our courses are skills-driven. In effect, the study is concerned with identifying the IPS required by business education students for acquisition of keyboarding skills.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. In what ways do lecturers consider positive attitude as IPS required for business education students' effective keyboarding skills acquisition?
2. In what ways do lecturers consider taking responsibility as IPS required for effective keyboarding skills acquisition by business education students?

Hypothesis

This null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female lecturers on their perception of the interpersonal skills required by business education students for effective acquisition of keyboarding skills.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey design. In the opinion of Otache in Tony-Okeme and Umoru (2021) descriptive research design describes the elements or subjects being studied. Thus, the design was used because the study sought the opinions of lecturers on the interpersonal skills required by business education students for effective keyboarding skills acquisition. The population of the study comprised 45 lecturers of tertiary institutions in Ebonyi State that are offering business education as Office Technology and Management; Office Technology and Management Education or Business Education. The entire population was used as the sample size because it was manageable. The researchers developed a well structured, 21-item instrument titled: - 'Lecturers' Perception of Interpersonal Skills Required for Effective Keyboarding Skills Acquisition (LEIPSREKSA) for data collection. The response categories were strongly Agreed - 4, Agreed - 3, Disagreed - 2 and Strongly Disagreed -1. Part A contained information on demographic data while part B contained information relating to research questions. The instrument was validated by three experts in business education. The questionnaire had an overall reliability index of 0.83 using Cronbach Alpha reliability method and this was established through a pilot test of 10 lecturers of Institution of Management and Technology, Enugu.

Forty five copies of the questionnaire were administered through personal contact by the researchers with the help of two research assistants. The 45 copies were returned and used for the analysis. Data collected were analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test statistics. The



analyses were done with statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions with decision rule based on real limit of numbers. Items with mean rating of 2.50 and above were accepted as IPS required for effective keyboarding skills acquisition by business education students and vice versa. Statistical t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected where the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the table t-test value for a given degree of freedom at P=0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld where the calculated t-value was less than the table t-value of 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1

In what ways do lecturers consider positive attitude as IPS required for business education students' effective keyboarding skills acquisition?

Table 1: Mean responses and standard deviation on positive attitude as IPS required for Business Education Students' effective keyboarding skills acquisition *N=45*

S/N	Items on Positive Attitude	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	Decision
1	Cheerful disposition during lectures enables learning of keyboarding principles	3.3333	0.707	Strongly Agreed
2	Considering keyboarding skills as basic for business educators career growth enhances skill acquisition	3.2444	0.679	Strongly Agreed
3	Displaying confidence and poise in finger reaches or movement consolidates typing with correct finger without looking it up.	3.1333	0.726	Strongly Agreed
4	Avoiding face-off with lecturers and team mates boosts concentration in keyboard skills acquisition	2.8000	0.869	Agreed
5	Listening well enhances consolidation or application of keyboarding principles	2.8222	1.029	Agreed
6	Interacting with team mates enhances review of keys already learnt	3.1778	0.777	Strongly Agreed
7	Good facial expression reinforces proper finger reaches.	2.7778	0.795	Agreed
8	Good Self management helps in creation of clean, error proof copies of documents	2.9778	0.753	Agreed
9	Encouraging team mates improves word building in keyboarding practice	3.2444	0.645	Strongly Agreed
10	Students' expression of interest in the lecture increases lecturers' enthusiasm in teaching keyboarding	3.2889	0.661	Strongly Agreed
Grand Mean		3.08	0.76	Strongly Agreed

The result in Table 1 shows the perception of lecturers regarding positive attitude as IPS required by students for effective keyboarding skills acquisition. The respondents all agreed to items 1-10 with mean ranging from 2.77 to 3.33 as skills that are required for effective keyboarding skills acquisition. However, the respondents strongly agreed that items 1, 2, 3, 9, and 10 are highly required. This implies that cheerful disposition during lectures; placing priority on keyboarding skills; displaying confidence in finger reaches; interacting with team mates; encouraging team mates and expression of interest by students are very necessary IPS skills for effective keyboarding skills acquisition.



Research Question 2

In what ways do lecturers consider taking responsibility as IPS required for effective keyboarding skills acquisition by business education students?

Table 2: Mean responses and standard deviation on taking responsibility as IPS required for effective keyboarding skills acquisition by Business Education Students. *N=45*

S/N	Items on Taking Responsibility	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	Decision
1	Not playing 'blame game' helps in speed and accuracy development	2.822	0.889	Agreed
2	Learning to control your frustration helps to know 'the how', 'the what' and 'the why' to produce mailable document	3.311	0.793	Strongly Agreed
3	Asking for help increases learning of correct keyboarding technique	3.288	0.727	Strongly Agreed
4	Accepting your mistakes hampers speed building	3.066	0.809	Strongly Agreed
5	Keeping your mistakes in mind with a view not to repeat it reduces the chances of producing mailable document within a given time	3.066	0.889	Strongly Agreed
6	Proper handling of criticisms endangers learning of new keys	2.355	0.773	Agreed
7	Self control improves speed building	3.333	0.674	Strongly Agreed
8	Students' choice not to complain increases their chances of mastering the keyboard.	2.689	0.973	Agreed
9	Displaying maturity in communication ensures high degree of proficiency in keyboarding	2.600	1.156	Agreed
10	Self control improves students' ability to deal adequately with the sorting and typing of tabular work, letters, meeting documents and technical reports.	3.156	0.737	Strongly Agreed
11	Irritable expression affects sitting posture in keyboarding classroom	2.733	0.863	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.947	0.844	Agreed

The result of the data analysis in Table 2 indicates that respondents agreed that items 1 to 11 are IPS required for effective acquisition of keyboarding skills. The respondents therefore agreed that students must take responsibility in keyboarding classes to enable them acquire the skills; this is confirmed by the grand mean rating of 2.95 with the mean rating of the items ranging from 2.36 to 3.33.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female lecturers on their perception of the interpersonal skills required by student for acquisition of keyboarding skills.



Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of male and female lecturers mean ratings on the IPS required for effective acquisition of keyboarding skills by Business Education Students.

Experience	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision	Significance
Male	18	3.0476	0.38462	40	0.220	2.021	Accept	Not significant
Female	27	3.0247	0.28166					

From the data presented in Table 3 above, it is observed that the calculated t-value (0.220) is less than critical t-value of 2.021 at 0.05 level of significance; hence H_0 is accepted which means that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female lecturers on the IPS required for effective keyboarding skills acquisition by business education students. This is based on the data which revealed that male lecturers were 18 and female lecturers 27. Therefore, male and female lecturers consider IPS as essential if business education students must effectively acquire keyboarding skills.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that positive attitude required by business education students are cheerful disposition during lectures; considering keyboarding skills as basic for career growth; displaying confidence and poise in finger reaching; avoiding face-off with lecturer and team mates; listening well; interacting well with team mates; good facial expression; good self management; encouraging team mates and expression of interest. The finding is in tandem with the assertion of Bailey and Butcher (1983) that IPS are widely regarded as being very important aspect of teaching and learning activities because according to them, the social skills of teachers and learners have direct impact on the effectiveness of learning. Interpersonal skills are not only important, but they also show your ability to use every possible thing as a scope and resource (Elom, 2016) this view also agrees with the result of the analysis that interpersonal skills are essential for effective keyboarding skills acquisition.

The study also revealed that business education students' ability to take responsibility in keyboarding classes is a necessity for effective skills acquisition. This finding is in agreement with the findings of DeVITO (2017) that there is increasing importance of interpersonal skills and students' need for insights into the ways in which interpersonal skills function in the learning process. Therefore if students will learn not to play 'blame games'; control their frustration; ask questions when confused no matter how foolish it looks; accept their mistakes; learn the act of proper handling of criticism; self control; to display maturity; to avoid complaining and irritable expression, acquisition of keyboarding skills acquisition will be effective. According to Morgan, Armfield and Lindsey (2010) interaction is not just knowing the word to say to get your way; it is truly connecting with another person in a way that creates substantive change in each of you. This goes to buttress the fact that when students take responsibility for their actions and inactions, they will be able to connect with the teacher in the right way in order to create the correct atmosphere for effective teaching and learning of keyboarding.

Findings based on test of hypotheses indicated that there was no significance difference in the mean ratings of male and female lecturers on the perception of the interpersonal skills required for effective keyboarding skills acquisition by business education students. This is in line with uncertainty reduction theory, which states that relationship development is a process of reducing uncertainty about each other. The more relationship uncertainty you have, the more you are reserved in sharing your views and confusions, as you cannot predict how the views will be received (Knoblock & Carpenter-Theune in DeVITO, 2017). No wonder male and female lecturers all agree that positive attitude and taking responsibility are required for effective keyboarding skills acquisition.

Conclusion

In line with the findings of the study, establishment of positive relationship based on corresponding interpersonal relationship between lecturers and learners is key to effective keyboarding skills acquisition. Therefore, keyboarding teachers should familiarise keyboarding students with interpersonal skills which not only foster correct student-teacher relationship but also create positive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Keyboarding lecturers should endeavour to make students relax and focus on success, familiarize themselves with the learning situation and then prepare and practice; for keyboarding skills acquisition to be effective.



Ordinarily, students develop apprehension largely because they see themselves as unable to gain skill. Therefore the best, the teacher can do is to make students to be in the correct learning disposition.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were advanced based the findings of the study:

1. Keyboarding teachers should see the need to begin keyboarding courses with orientation on the behaviour expected of the students in order to truly connect with them for effective learning of the course. They should inculcate this very important skill by being willing to reach a little further, dig a little deeper and give a little more in order to make the students feel at home in keyboarding lessons. The keyboarding teacher should encourage the students to open up and correct every interpersonal anomaly that is noticed.
2. NBTE should review the course content of keyboarding in line with the findings of this study. Each level of keyboarding course: Keyboarding I, II, III and IV should be made to begin with interactive session that will teach the students to have position attitude towards the teacher, the course and team mates and also to take responsibility for their actions and inactions.
3. Keyboarding text authors should include this all important heading of 'engaging interpersonal skills by lecturers and students alike in keyboarding skills acquisition' in keyboarding manuals.

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