

# Technological Advancement and Office Efficiency Amid Covid-19 Pandemic Era Among Some Selected Local Government In Lagos State

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated on how technological advancement aid the office professional efficiency during the Covid-19 Pandemic Era, how organization coped with the changes covid-19 brings focusing on Technological Advancement for office Efficiency with specific reference to Office Workers in some selected Local Government in Lagos State. Four (4) relevant research questions and three research hypotheses were formulated to achieve the study's objectives. Survey research design was adopted with the use of a structured questionnaire. A population sample size of thirty (30) workers each were gathered through stratified sampling method, from six local government in different geographical locations in Lagos State, twenty-five (25) questionnaires were dully filled and ratified were retrieved from the each local government with total study population of (150) respondents this constituted 85% of the total population. Obtained data were analyzed using descriptive methods. Findings of the study revealed that; Covi-19 has bring landmark changes to the office arena even though the covid-19 period is not a good time to the whole world, the period has given room for advancement in technology, Technological advancement has positive effects on the performance of Office Professionals especially in rendering office functions or services for the purpose of achieving organizational goals. Advanced in technology have revolutionized the way information is processed. It has also necessitated the need for today's office professionals to acquire good technological skills. This study revealed that, Technological advancement has expanded the scope of office functions of Office Professionals in organizations. The study concluded that technological advancement and efficiency of office professionals during COVID-19 pandemic era are significantly related and correlated. It was therefore recommended among other things that Office Professionals should always be ready and open-minded to acquire additional training, skills , knowledge and self-development, bearing in mind that changes occur frequently in the line of their chosen career so that they are not left behind in the use of modern office technologies required of them in this digital age.

**Keywords: Technological Advancement, Office Efficiency, Covid-19**

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## 1.1 Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were formulated for this study

### Hypothesis 1

H<sub>0</sub>: Technological advancement does not have any effect on office functions performed by the office professionals.

H<sub>1</sub>: Technological advancement will have effect on office functions performed by the office professionals

### Hypothesis 2

H<sub>0</sub>: Competencies required of office professionals will not be influenced by technological advancement.

H<sub>1</sub>: Competencies required of office professionals will be influenced by technological advancement.

### Hypothesis 3

H<sub>0</sub>: Level of technological knowledge required of office professionals will not be influenced during COVID-era.

H<sub>1</sub>: Level of technological knowledge required of office professionals will be influenced during COVID-era.

## 2. REVIEWS & RELATED ISSUES

### 2.1 Conceptual Review

#### 2.1.1 Technological Advancement

Olayanju (2016) conceptualized technological advancement as continual redefinition and successful changes in technology, which is a set of productive techniques that offers a significant improvement (whether measured in terms of increased output or savings in costs) for a given process in a specific historical context. It is the continuous and systematic application of science or an organized knowledge to practical tasks performed by the office professionals. The advancement in technology made possible many innovations in the computer software, hardware and telecommunications technologies; the world has attained the level of a global village predicted by Marshal Mchluhan in the mid 1960s. This integration, according to Chineye (2012) gave rise to a new distinct technology, revolutionizes ways of administration, and advantages in administration include phenomenal growth of information, new ways of conducting businesses by capturing data more easily from the field.

Advances in modern technologies which bring about modern office equipment has transformed not only the management functions but also imparted the secretarial duties. It has increased office efficiency and has made accessibility of information easy for decision making. It has made today's office look more sophisticated and more interesting place of work.

#### 2.1.2 Technological Advancement and Office Professional

The role of the office professional in dealing with technology has changed over the past decade as management philosophies in the occupational world have also changed. Technical advances, new business procedures, and global markets are only a few of the forces which have contributed to the new demands on today's office professional's contributions towards ICT

Efficiency can be regarded as almost any behavior, which is directed toward task or goal accomplishment. In the submissions of Fagbamiye (2010), the importance of technology, its impact on employee efficiency and motivation, are recognized by many human resource practitioners and organizations today.

Employees in both business and non-business organizations are usually assigned jobs to do or tasks to perform. This could be on daily or weekly basis. And at the end of a particular period, which could extend to biannual or annual, such employees are appraised to ascertain their level of efficiency. Promotions and other benefits are often based on the efficiency level. So, employees who are found to have performed their jobs efficiently will be rewarded accordingly while those whose efficiency level falls below expectation will be encouraged to buckle up. This is done because the overall organizational performance and growth depends upon the level of efficiency of its employees.

#### **2.1.4 Efficiency and Office Professionals**

Aitokhuehi and Ojogho (2014) described efficiency of office professionals as their job performance, which relates to how well and effectively they are able to carry out their office functions or services in their respective organizations. Maria-Gorretti and Nwalo (2013) pointed out that efficiency of office professionals involves their abilities, skills and competencies to use computers and technology efficiently which include:

- (i) Plugging in and turning the computer on;
- (ii) Composing, editing and printing documents;
- (iii) The ability to communicate with others using computer through electronic mail (e-mail) or instant messaging services;
- (iv) Managing and editing pictures (from cell phones, digital cameras and even scan); and
- (v) Opening files and recognizing different types. That is, to perform several common functions such as open and file, save a file, quit the programme.

The use of computer and other ICT-related facilities or electronic resources searching depends on the office professional's knowledge of the search system, as well as the ability to identify the information problem as the starting point of the search.

Ogbuiyi (2015) posited that an office professional is considered efficient if he or she possesses all the following six skills:

- i. Skills in basic hardware and basic operating system functions – identifying computer parts; powering up and shutting down the computer, open/save files, and recognize different file types.
- ii. Skills in word processing – Create, save, print document, insert tables/charts/ labels/symbols, format page layout (margins, page numbers, and page borders)
- iii. Skills in spreadsheet – Create/save/print spreadsheets, insert tables/charts, insert function and formula.
- iv. Skills in presentation graphic – Create/save/print slide shows, insert new slide/ layout/tables/charts and create animations.
- v. Skills in database – Design basic databases with queries and reports/forms.
- vi. Skills in internet and e-mail – Surfing the Internet and sending e-mail messages.

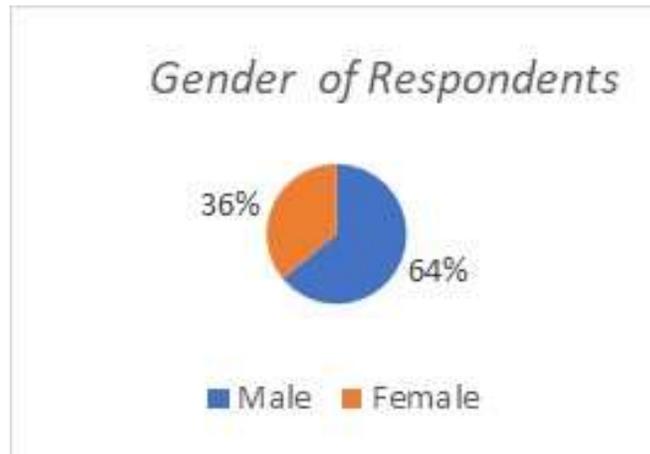
Discussing further on technological skills generally for office professionals' efficiency, Ndinechi and Chukwumezie (2006) opined that word processing was developed in order to improve office productivity. This skill is a commonly used skill by everyone especially office professionals.

impact of the pandemic on different professions, which thus justifies the need to examine the influence of technological advancement on efficiency of office professionals during COVID-19 pandemic. Justifying the need for a study of this nature, Sigahi, Kawasaki, Bolis and Morioka (2021) in their works on a systematic review on the impacts of COVID-19 on work contributions and a path forward from perspectives of ergonomics and psychodynamics of work reiterated that, one aspect that permeates transformations owing to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic which deserve more scholarly attention, is work – including office professional’s work. This is because the impact of COVID-19 on work and office professionals is diverse. After its outbreak, some of the ongoing transformations, such as the digitalization of work and the growing prevalence of mental health disorders, have accelerated. Also, novel discussions emerged on topics including changes in work procedures, personal protection equipment (PPE), infection control strategies, behaviour, gender, and ethics. Hence, there is still much more to explore on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on work and office professionals, and the implications for management.

### **2.2.1 Covid-19 and Technological Advancement**

Factors influencing technological advancement and COVID-19 include the following:

- i. **Stay At Home Policy:** One of the challenges of the pandemic to technological advancement and efficiency of office professionals was the Stay at Home order in place, as Njoku et al (2020) observed that most of the people in developing countries across the world including Nigeria were experiencing serious hunger and lack of income. Some office professionals had their salaries cut downwards as their organisations struggle to pay due to shut down of business operations.
- ii. **Social Distancing**  
With the protocol of maintaining social distancing, the office professionals are not able to carry out face-to-face business transactions with their colleagues, managers or bosses and the public (the customers). During the pandemic, most office professionals had to work from home, where access to majority of the work tools, heavy duty machines and equipment was highly constrained; thereby affecting level of efficiency in delivery of office functions or services.
- iii. **Skill Gap Deficiency**  
During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, Office professionals working in the media were part of those groups of people who were given a work permit by the government as essential workers, they were given an artificial intelligent (AI) powered tool that can analyze real-time event to check whether social distance rules are being appropriately observed (Njoku, et al. 2020). This implies that office professionals who have skills-gap would have found it difficult to operate this tool to enhance his or her efficiency in office service delivery. Patacsill and Tablatin (2017) defined skills-gap as the difference between the market’s need (demand) and the current skills possessed by an office professional (supply). In this context, office professionals who lack technological skills are unaware of the needs of current employers in the modern business environment and thus will find it difficult to relate their abilities to be able to meet the requirements of such employers.
- iv. **Poor Communication Skills**



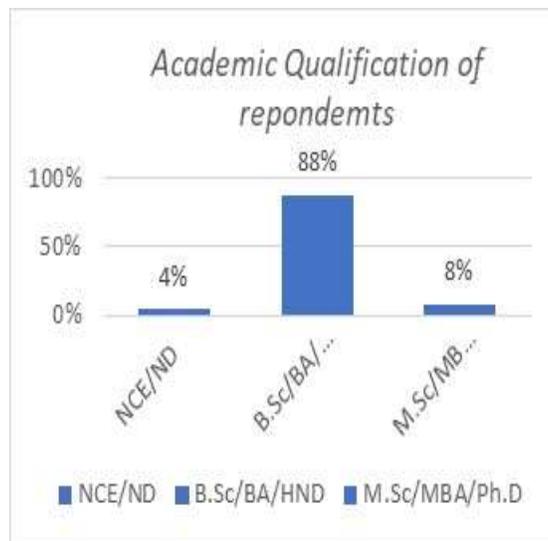
In the table and pie chart above, the highest valid response of 60% derived from the distribution of respondents by gender revealed that majority of the respondents were female.

**Table2: Marital Status of Respondents**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage%</i>
<i>Married</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Single</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Separated/Divorced/Widowed</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>100</i>

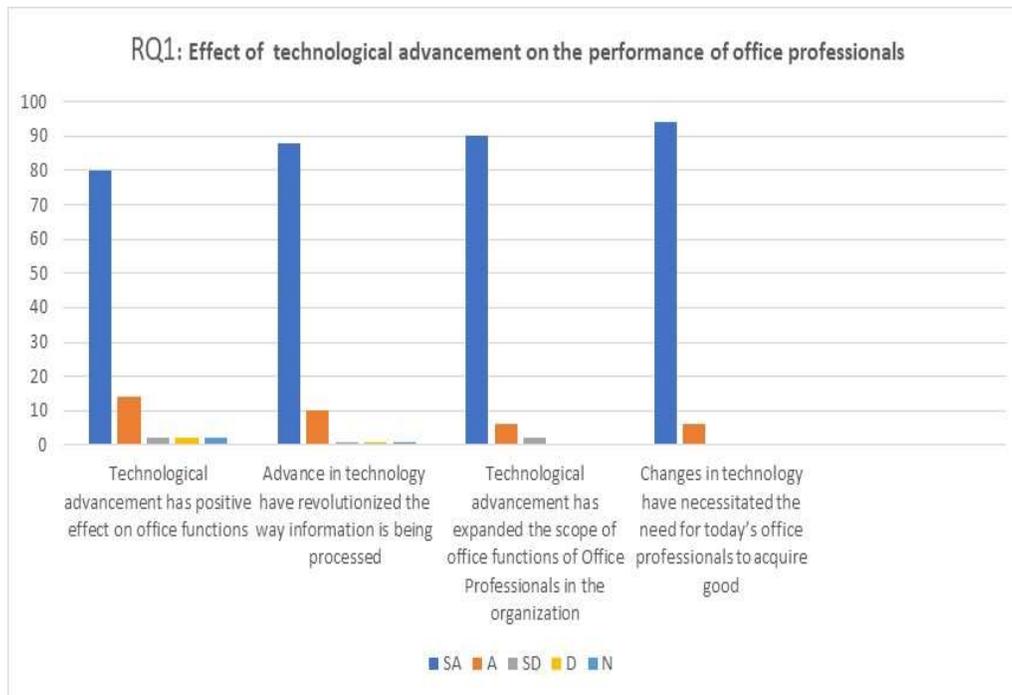
**Table4 Academic Qualifications**

Table 4 Academic Qualifications		Frequency	Percent
Valid	NCE/ND	6	4
	B.Sc./BA/HND	132	88
	M.Sc./MBA/PGC/PhD	12	8
	Total	150	100



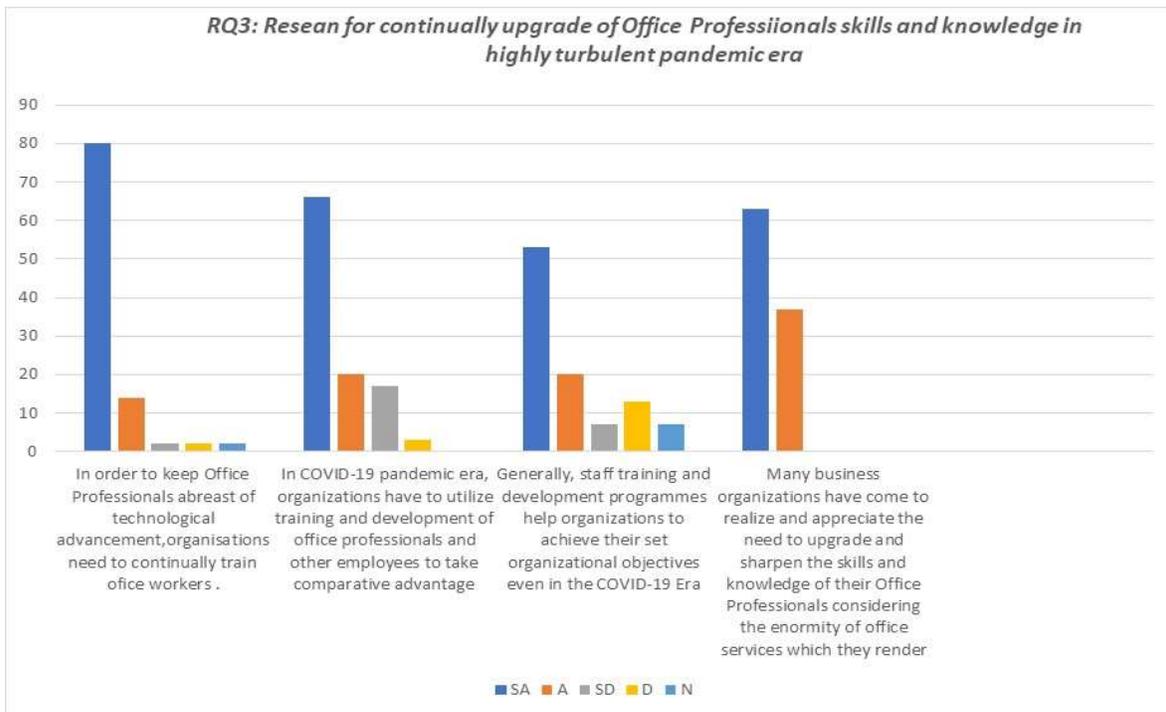
**Table5: Years in Service of Respondents**

Ages	Frequency	Percentage
1 - 5 years	18	12
6 - 10 years	99	66
Above 11 years	33	22
Total	150	100



**Research Question Two: What technological knowledge required of office professionals in during COVID-19 era**

Statements	Response Rate									
	SA	%	A	%	SD	%	D	%	N	%
One of the technological competencies required of Office Professionals is computer literacy skill.	120	80	21	14	3	2	3	2	3	2
An Office Professional is expected to be able to operate modern office machines such as scanner, laminating machine, photocopier,	100	67	25	16	12	8	10	7	3	2
An office manager is expected to have technical competency in sending and receiving e-mails, use Social Media platforms.	88	59	35	23	20	13	7	5	Nil	Nil
In the automated office, an office manager is required to have competency in internet surfing and Google Search	96	64	40	26	10	7	4	3	Nil	Nil



### Decision Rule

Where the correlation coefficient value shows **+1**, it is concluded that there is a statistically significant association between the response variable and the term. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected while the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted. Where the correlation coefficient value shows **-1**, it is concluded that there is no statistically significant association between the response variable and the term. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted while the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is rejected.

### Hypothesis 1

- $H_0$ : Technological advancement does not have any effect on office functions performed by the office professionals.  
 $H_1$ : Technological advancement will have effect on office functions performed by the office professionals.

### Correlation between Technological Advancement and Office Functions Performed by the Office Professionals

		ST1	ST3
ST1	Pearson Correlation	1	.706**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
ST3	Pearson Correlation	.706**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Interpretation

The result of 0.706 is within the region of +1 obtained from the calculation on the hypothesis means positive correlation coefficient of **+1** which revealed that  $H_0$  which stated that technological advancement does not have any effect on office functions performed by the office professionals was rejected while  $H_1$  which stated technological advancement will have effect on office functions performed by the office professionals was accepted.

### Hypothesis 2

- $H_0$ : Competencies required of office professionals will not be influenced by technological advancement.  
 $H_1$ : Competencies required of office professionals will be influenced by technological advancement.

### Correlation between Competencies of the Office Professionals and Technological Advancement

		ST6	ST8
ST6	Pearson Correlation	1	.925**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
ST8	Pearson Correlation	.925**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Technological knowledge required of Office Professionals during COVID-19 era include but not limited to the following:

- Computer literacy skill
- Ability to operate modern office machines such as scanner, laminating machine, photocopier, etc.
- Skill in internet surfing and Google Search
- Technical competency in sending and receiving e-mails, use Social Media platforms.

Level of technological advancement employed by Office Professionals in today offices during COVID-19 era involves the ability of office professionals to:

- Make use of computer systems
- Communicate with their bosses and colleagues via Zoom, Facebook and Instagram handles.
- Make use of earphones, personal laptops and smart-phones to conduct reporting and information processing.
- Make use of Videoconferencing facilities for public for a participation.

organizations now need, as a matter to necessity, to continually upgrade and sharpen the skills and knowledge of their Office Professionals in this highly turbulent pandemic era in order to:

- Keep them abreast of technological advancement.
- Take comparative advantage or beat keen competition.
- Achieve organizational objectives even in the COVID-19 era.
- Give cognizance to the enormity of office services being rendered.

The knowledge of modern office technology by office professionals will contribute to their work efficiency in an organization as this will aid their ability to handle office technologies professionally and this will also enhance work efficiency, effectiveness and productivity

## **6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

As revealed in this study from the findings an available literature it could deduced that, the outbreak of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the business world both challenges and opportunities. The lockdown period was meant to reduce the spread of the virus through physical contact, the global economy including that of Nigeria has taken the advantage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure in providing health and social cares, remote sensitization and awareness campaign on the reality and impact of the pandemic on the economy. Governments of nations from time to time brief their citizens using various channels of electronic media.

In effect, the role of office professionals changed tremendously from traditional ways to more sophisticated ways of operations. Today's office professionals are exposed to office technology including the internet that makes work much easier and knowledge more accessible. It is now easier to send messages by electronic mails (e-mails), and telephones; organize virtual meetings or conferences through video-conferencing, Zoom or Google Hangout facilities. Other office gadgets available to the office professionals are digital photo-copy machines, duplicating machines, dictating machines, printers, among others.

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