

INFLUENCE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF SECRETARIES IN THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN ENUGU STATE

¹Asogwa, U. Uchechukwu and ²Agusiobo, C. Hilda

¹Department of Science and Computer Education, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu: uchechukwuasogwa@yahoo.com

²Department of Educational Foundations, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu: hildagusiobo@gmail.com

Abstract: The secretarial functions and its effectiveness depend much on the availability of office technology and equipment, as well as the skills and competencies of the secretary. This study aimed at ascertaining the influence of modern technology on job performance of office secretaries in private Universities in Enugu State. A structured questionnaire containing 20 items was administered to 56 Secretaries in four private Universities in Enugu State. The research instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability test which yielded co-efficient of 0.87. A descriptive analysis was performed, where weighted mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings from the study revealed that modern technologies enhance the secretaries job performances and that secretaries are facing some problems using modern technologies from enhancing their job performances. It was therefore concluded that Private universities should have sufficient modern office equipment and technologies because modern office equipment increases productivity of secretaries.

Keywords: Modern Technology, Office Secretary and Job Performance

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Introduction

The secretarial functions and its effectiveness depend much on the availability of office technology and equipment, as well as the skills and competencies of the secretary. Many organizations have come to appreciate the role and importance of the secretary, and also the need of providing the needed office machines and equipment for the efficacy of the secretary's performance in their functions (Adedoyin,2010). For decades now, changes have been taking place in all facets of life including the office environment. This is as a result of technological advancement. Every office today requires facts and accurate information for quick decision- making and high productivity (Appah& Emeh,2011). The office worker including the secretary expects certain supports from the organization into which he/she is employed (Boladele,2012). This support can be technological

(machines and equipment) and human. In the past, office managers dictate memo and letters, while the secretary types them (Nonye2018). Most recently, word processors have been developed and used, personal computers are relied on and even electronic mail in an effort to lessen the need for secretarial supports and make the employee (secretary) very productive (Frenzel, 2014). As a result of the changes in technology, according to Jaiyeola (2017), the role of the secretary has changed tremendously from that of typewriting and shorthand, dictation, answering of telephone calls and processing of mails.

Today's secretaries are exposed to office technology/ automation including the Internet that makes work easier and knowledge more accessible (Edwin, 2014). It is now easier to send messages by telex, electronic mails (e-mails) fax and telephones. Other office gadgets available to the secretary are photocopying machine, duplicating

machines, dictating machines, and printing machines among others. This is the era of computers and information technology, which has become an enabler of greater convenience. According to Agbatogun (2011), three of the most popular types of computer software programs, they are; Word processor, which helps the user (secretary) to write and edit memos, letters and reports; Data management programs or data based, which helps the user (secretary) to use long lists of data; Spreadsheet programmes, which handles tables and numbers.

Secretaries now have many technologically advanced office gadgets to ease their jobs and enhance proficiency and productivity, leading to improved access to good and services. The office of today is highly mechanized/automated (Nwaokwa & Okoli, 2012). In many companies, the rate of turnover among office employee continues to be high with the result that proposed reduction in manpower requirements, are compensated by these technological innovations (Olibie & Akudolu, 2012). Many people have wrong views of who a secretary is, some take a secretary for a typist, clerk or a receptionist (Mishra&Akman,2010). Having said much on the general effects, it is good to talk or see how modern technology influences the secretary one by one. Technology has greatly affected secretarial performance much to the improvement of the profession.

Performance is completion of a task with application of knowledge, skills and abilities (John & Michelle, 2015). In work place, performance or job performance means good ranking with the hypothesized conception of requirements of a role. There are two types of job performances: contextual and task. Task performance is related to cognitive ability while contextual performance is dependent upon personality (Ivan & Cary, 2015). Task performance are behavioral roles that are recognized in job descriptions and by remuneration systems, they are directly related to organizational performance, whereas, contextual performance are value based and additional behavioral roles that are not recognized in job descriptions and covered by compensation; they are extra roles that are indirectly related to organizational performance (Paul & Martin, 2011). Citizenship performance like contextual performance means a set of individual

activity/contribution (prosocial organizational behavior) that supports the organizational culture (Winston, Charles& David, 2014). Technology has completely enveloped secretarial performance in a way that it is now safe for one to say that without technology, there is no effective secretarial performance (Onifade, 2019). Some of the ways by which technology has influenced secretarial performance includes: the speed and accuracy with which documents are produced are unrevealed in the history of human skills (Ukeje, 2010); Technology has enriched secretarial job and this enrichment has resulted to job satisfaction on the side of the secretaries (Harding,2013). Technology has brought the whole world to the secretary's table. He takes organization to the world and brings the world to the organization. For this reason, every member of the organization including his boss respects him (Atakpa, 2014); Technology is gradually revising the general misconception and poor perception of secretaries in the society. Instead of their downgrading, they are now being respected and instead of looking down on secretaries as in previous cases, they are now being looked upon (Atakpa, 2014); Technology has broadened the scope of secretarial performance it has severed the secretary from the derogatory appendage status to an independent member of the organization, information manager and custodian of organizational information reservoir.

Statement of the Problem

It was discovered by the researcher that many secretaries graduate with low knowledge and skills of operating machines like computer, duplicating machines among others in their working place because of inadequacy. However, most secretaries have problem in their workplace, because they were unable to operate these machines. Another problem encountered by secretaries is technological unemployment, which sometimes result from advancement in technology. The most common technological unemployment occurs especially when workers have no knowledge of the newly improved equipment. This problem may result to the displacement of the secretary. Furthermore, another problem is that most of the machines are very costly and most small- scale organization finds it difficult to afford them. When they are able to acquire them, they find it difficult to sponsor their

secretaries for the required training. This study is focused on investigating these modern technologies on secretary job performance.

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the study is to ascertain the influence of modern technology on job performance of office secretaries in private Universities in Enugu State. Specifically, the study tends to;

1. determine the modern technology that enhances the performance of office secretary.
2. determine the problems associated with the use of these modern technologies by office secretary.

Research Questions

1. What are the modern technologies that enhance the performance of office secretary?
2. What are the problems associated with the use of these modern technologies by office secretary?

Methodology

This study was conducted using a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out among private Universities in Enugu State of Nigeria. The population for the study was 56 Secretaries. The population comprises all

the secretaries in the four private universities in Enugu State. There was no sampling technique due to the fact that the population was manageable. A structured questionnaire containing 20 items in two clusters was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was structured on a 4-point rating scale with response option of Strongly Agreed – SA (4), Agreed – A (3), Disagreed – D (2), Strongly Disagreed – SD (1). The instrument was faced validated by three experts. The data collected were analyzed using weighted mean and standard deviation for the research questions. Mean score that was within the real limit of 4.00 - 2.50 was ruled accepted(A) and 2.49 – 1.00 was ruled rejected (D)

Results

The result for this study was obtained on the research questions answered through the analysis of the data collected.

Research Question 1: What are the modern technologies that enhance the performance of office secretary?

The data for answering research question one was presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean ratings of the Modern Technologies that enhance the Performance of office Secretary.

S/N	Item Statements	Mean (X̄)	SD	Remark
1	PowerPoint application package helps me in report presentation	3.16	0.73	Accepted
2	Electronic mailing helps me in easy and fast communication	3.12	0.70	Accepted
3	Using projector during report helps my presentation	3.11	0.71	Accepted
4	Printing official letters and memo are easy with the office printer	3.30	0.83	Accepted
5	Laptops helps to retain power supply each time DC power goes off while discharging my duties	3.97	0.93	Accepted
6	Network modems makes my internet access stable	3.02	0.46	Accepted
7	The use of photocopy machine makes document duplication faster	3.08	0.54	Accepted
8	Microsoft word application software makes typing and preparation of minutes of meetings, memo and official letters effective and efficient	3.04	0.51	Accepted
9	Having meetings via zoom, google meets, skype among others makes recording minutes of meetings very easy	3.12	0.59	Accepted
10	The use of Wi-Fi in connecting my smart phones or tablets or laptops to the internet makes it easy for me to discharge my duties anywhere	3.08	0.63	Accepted
Cluster Mean		3.20	0.66	Accepted

Key Note: Standard Deviation (SD)

Data presented in table 1 revealed a mean cluster ($X = 3.20$) which was within the real limit of 2.50 and above with 0.66 standard deviation, indicating that the secretaries in private universities in Enugu State agree with all the item statements. Specifically, secretaries agree with all the

item statements. This is an indication that modern technologies do enhance the secretaries job performances from the responses of the respondents.

Research Question 2: What are the problems associated with the use of these modern technologies by office secretary? The data for answering research question two was presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean ratings of the Problems associated with the use of modern technologies by office Secretary

S/N	Item Statements	Mean (\bar{X})	SD	Remark
1	Lack of ICT in-service training	3.15	0.89	Accepted
2	Lack of knowledge	2.23	0.69	Rejected
3	Lack of ICT equipment	2.92	0.46	Accepted
4	Sustainability and scales	3.82	0.91	Accepted
5	Changing roles and norms	2.01	0.38	Rejected
6	Adverse Health Effects	3.00	0.46	Accepted
7	Lack of genuine software	2.03	0.00	Accepted
8	Lack of technical support	2.87	0.47	Accepted
9	Unstable and unreliable internet	3.03	0.55	Accepted
10	Resistance to change	1.47	0.44	Rejected
	Cluster Mean	2.65	0.53	Accepted

Key Note: Standard Deviation (SD)

Data presented in table 2 revealed a mean cluster ($X = 2.65$) which was within the real limit of 2.50 and above with 0.53 standard deviation, indicating that the secretaries in private universities in Enugu State agree with the associated problems stated in the table. Specifically, secretaries agree with item statements (1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9) and disagree with item statements (2, 5, 7, 10). This is an indication that secretaries are facing some problems militating modern technologies from enhancing their job performances from the responses of the respondents.

Discussion of the Findings

The discussion of the findings of this study were organized according to the research questions

Table 1 addressed the modern technology that enhances the performance of office secretary. It is crystal clear from

the result in table 1 that modern technologies improve secretary’s job performance. This study supports Nonye (2018) who stated that the use of ICT has great impact on job performance as it improves productivity. The study recommended that staff should be trained to use advanced searching techniques for retrieving the material of their interests since majority of the respondents admitted that they use ICT tools for their day-to-day office routine.

Table 2 addressed the problems associated with the use of these modern technologies by office secretary. The findings from the result in table 2 that secretary’s job performance is affected by some problems linked with either secretaries lack of technical support or employer inability to procure machines or equipment’s to enable secretaries discharge their day-to-day office duties. This is

to affirm the study of Olibie and Akudolu (2012) which stated that stakeholders such as the State Government, Local Government, GSM companies, banks and the immediate community have roles to play in providing ICT infrastructure and training for secondary school teachers to solve the problems facing effective utilization of ICT.

Summary

The findings showed that most of the ICT resources that are available for secretaries' use in private universities have enabled the secretaries to manage and process information effectively and contributed significantly to the growth of the institution. Information Communication Technology has become an integral part of modern offices which enables deadline and other office schedules to be met on targets. It was also discovered that secretaries face some challenges that's affecting their job performance due to non-availability of networking devices, sustainability, unstable and unreliable internet among others.

Conclusion

In line with the objectives of the study and the data gathered, the following conclusions have been reached; Private universities should have sufficient modern office equipment and technologies to enhance secretaries day-to-day job routine.

There is a high level of usage of modern technologies by secretaries, as such secretaries should keep brace with the changes in technology.

The use of modern office equipment increases productivity of secretaries.

Secretaries believe they are highly productive, with secretarial technologies.

Recommendations

Haven completed the study, the researcher recommends the monitoring of the routine and systematic accumulation of information on secretarial technology against a plan. The information might be about activities, products or services, users, or about outside factors affecting the institution. Secretaries should always be ready and open minded to acquire additional training/skills development, bearing in mind that changes occur frequently in the line

of their chosen career and they are not left behind in the use of ICT in this digital age.

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