
SECRETARY PERFORMANCE IN SOME BUSINESS ORGANIZATION: THE IMPACT OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

In every commercial organization, the secretary's duties and efficacy depend on the secretary's abilities and capabilities, as well as the accessibility of office technologies, Modern business organizations have learned to value the function and significance of the secretary, in addition to the efficiency of the workplace, it is imperative to provide the required and essential office supplies and equipment. The study examined 40 modern corporate organizations in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and its surroundings. For the study, 40 secretaries were employed. 3 tools, including the contemporary office availability of technology and use of contemporary secretarial technology and equipment. The study's findings showed that availability of contemporary office technology tools in small businesses increased the productivity. It was suggested that private businesses, among other Organizations should purchase as many cutting-edge office technology tools to make secretaries' jobs easier so they can produce more.

Keywords: Influence, Performance, Secretary

INTRODUCTION

Due to the rapid growth of technology in all facets of human life, particularly in the workplace, there have been a number of changes surrounding the roles and responsibilities of secretaries in private and public offices during the past few decades. Today's offices, whether in government, business, or other human endeavors, need facts and precise information to make decisions quickly. Every office employee, even the secretary, has specific expectations of the company for which they work. Both technology (machines and equipment) and human assistance may be provided. Managers used to dictate letters and memoranda, and secretaries would type them in various offices. In an effort to reduce the need for secretarial assistance and increase secretary productivity, organizations have most recently built word processing centers and depended on computers and even email (Ezoem, 1995; Osuala, 2004). To keep up with the expanding world of technology, the types of machines and devices that were used to create, copy, and store information have undergone a great transformation. As a result, the role of secretaries in the business setting has drastically changed from that of typewriting, shorthand dictation, answering phone calls, and processing mail to the use of computers and other modern devices (Mumuni & Sam 2014). Today's secretaries are exposed to office technology, such as the internet, which greatly simplifies labor and increases knowledge accessibility (Edwin, 2008). Sending messages by telex, e-mail, fax, and phone is now more convenient. The secretary can also use photocopiers, duplicating machines, dictation machines, printers, and other office equipment. Today's secretaries have access to a variety of technologically advanced office equipment to make their tasks easier, increase their expertise, and increase production, which improves global access to goods and services (Akpomi, 2003). The use of computers, electronic mail, voice mail, and the internet have all changed how office duties are performed due to technological advancements. Automation, according to Spencer (1981), is the process of replacing human labor with that carried out by devices or systems created to carry out a certain combination of tasks automatically or frequently. However, the development of automated office technology in more recent times has allowed the secretary's normal labor to move to a new level. Computers, phones, and other automated office equipment handle the majority of traditional and routine tasks. The availability of office technologies and the secretary's abilities and skills determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the secretary in any business organization (Ordu & Akpomi 2009). The value of the secretary's job and the requirement to supply the essential office supplies and equipment for the effectiveness of secretarial duties are now recognized by modern organizations. The following goals served as the foundation for this study's design and execution: to determine the types of modern office equipment that are available at these chosen business organizations; to assess the secretaries' knowledge of and proficiency with the use of the technology/equipment; and to evaluate the impact of those technological facilities on the performance of secretaries. How does current technology/equipment effect the performance of secretaries in the organization? was one of the key questions arising from those aims that the study tried to address. What kind of office supplies are available and being used by the organizations in question? What impact does the secretary's familiarity with the equipment's functionality have on how it is used? Moreover, how does the Utilizing contemporary office tools and technology enhance the secretary's performance and productivity? The function of the secretary has not been exempted from the widespread acknowledgement that technology innovation has impacted many professionals working in both public and private enterprises. Any productive and dynamic organization depends on the secretary, and their performance is based on the secretary's knowledge, abilities, and office supplies (Mumuni & Sam 2014).

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

A very long time ago, in 1982, Cameron saw that it can take up to ten or fifteen years until the release of the introduction of new technology and its use in small organizations. This is especially odd to private associations for business in underdeveloped nations. Even in the current era, some firms continue to use manual processes while dealing with secretaries. Productivity is undoubtedly reduced when secretaries lack efficient and effective working tools.

READING REVIEW

A secretary is described as a person who manages communications, maintains records, and performs general clerical work for an individual, organization, etc. in the Collins English Dictionary (Complete and Unabridged 2003). According to Mayer (1997), a secretary is an executive assistant who is skilled in office procedures, shows the capacity to take on responsibility both with and without guidance, uses initiative and judgment, and takes decisions within the parameters of delegated authority. According to Armah (2015), in today's technologically advanced offices, the secretary's job is essential to an organization's advancement. This is supported by Akpomi and Ordu (2009), who think that a professional secretary's ability to operate effectively is based on their knowledge, abilities, and office supplies. Modern technology is defined by the condensed Oxford English dictionary as the use of cutting-edge methods and tools as well as the practical application of scientific knowledge. It was published in London, UK. Secretarial tasks that were previously performed manually, according to Atakpa (2010), have been automated or mechanized. Automation, according to Spencer (1981), is the process of replacing human labor with that carried out by devices or systems created to carry out a certain combination of tasks automatically or frequently. The introduction of the word processor has made the professional path for secretaries easier. According to Merony (1983), a secretary needs to be well-versed in the following automated office equipment training in order to be employable in an automated office:

- i. Understanding the various types of equipment, as well as their variations and intended functions.
- ii. ii) The idea and philosophy behind particular automated office machinery.
- iii. iii) The ability to correctly utilise sources of information or references. iv) Training using actual equipment, etc.

Naturally, the secretary has new roles and responsibilities in an automated office. Secretaries must obtain additional training and credentials to fulfill these new tasks. According to Aromolaran's (2003) hypothesis, automation in offices offers secretaries a separate career path and a prominent place in the organizational structure. The secretary now spends less time editing, reviewing, proofreading, and reproducing documents thanks to automation. Additionally, it was noted by Agomuo, 2005, Azuka, 2000, and Nwosu, 2002 that current office skills enable the manipulation of words, phrases, and paragraphs when using a word processor. This cutting-edge office facility enables a wide range of editing choices, such as deleting and insertions, before the document is printed. Additionally, word processors have made processes like drafting documents, filling out forms, finding information, and printing simpler. According to Silver and Silver (1981), the secretary's work is done more quickly and with a professional touch as a result of office reorganization and the introduction of automated office technology. To back up this claim, Spencer (1981) agreed that automation continues to be a key aspect that has greatly contributed and I support the entire revolution in

information processing. The secretary's recent performance due to the development of automated office technology, routine has advanced to a certain level. Computers and telephones, among other automated office technology, handle the majority of traditional and routine duties. According to Lucas (1997), secretaries can now function better because of a wide choice of office tools and equipment. These include the electronic typewriters that have taken the place of manual ones, photocopiers, multipurpose word processors, computers, and other high-tech office equipment that is currently given by management of businesses. Electronic pocket organizers and communication devices are a few examples of the physical equipment. According to Dulek and Fielden (1999), Microsoft computer software programs enable user-secretaries to create and modify memos, letters, and reports, as well as use databases for data management and spreadsheet programs for manipulating figures and tables. According to Akpomi and Ordu (2009), new technological equipment has changed the method and approach for office tasks. They gave the examples of voice mail, smart phones, internet, and electronic mail/commerce. This technologically advanced workplace equipment, according to Akpomi (2003), improves competence and productivity.

METHOD

A descriptive survey is the research method used. In order to draw conclusions about certain traits, attitudes, or behaviors of the population, the descriptive study tries to extrapolate from a sample to the population (Senese, 1997). Because of the cost-effective design and quick turnaround in data collection, the study type was preferred. All secretaries in 10 public offices and 15 private offices made up the study's population. Because the simple random sampling technique ensures that every unit of the target population has an equal chance of being chosen, it was used. Data was acquired from two main sources; primary and secondary. The researcher used questionnaire as the main tool for the collection of primary data and in certain cases interviewed respondents to gather the necessary data for the study. The administration was done directly by the researchers to ensure a safe recovery of the questionnaires. An interview guide was utilized to gather replies from the interviewees. The questionnaire served as the basis for the interview questions. The secondary data was gathered from textbooks, periodicals, journals, and the internet. In all 60 questions were prepared and administered to the secretaries. A 95 percent response rate was achieved out of this when 57 responses were received, and they were appropriate for data analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to examine the data (version 21). The data was organized and presented using a narrative approach and quantitative tools like frequency tables and percentages.

CONCLUSIONS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Respondents' Educational Background

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
A' Level	16	28.1
SSCE/WASSCE	6	10.5
Diploma	25	43.9
Degree	10	17.5
Total	57	100

The respondents' educational backgrounds are shown in Table 1 below. 16 percent of respondents, 6 respondents, or 10.5% of the total, held a "A" level, which represented 28.1%

of the respondents. 25 respondents in the WASSCE, or 43.91%, are diploma holders, while 17.5% were not holders of degrees. This suggests that the majority of respondents had a diploma, which suggests that in order to be an effective secretary, a person must have at least a modest level of education in order to demonstrate certain skills and abilities that are specific to secretarial duties, as stressed by (Akpomi & Ordu, 2009).

Table 2: Do respondents' offices have access to modern office technology or equipment?

Technological equipment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Electronic Typewriters	11	19.3
Computer	57	100
Printers	57	100
Photocopiers	26	45.6
Scanners	31	54.4
Telephones	57	100
Internet facility	57	100

Table 2 above demonstrates that all respondents (100%) agreed they had access to computers, printers, telephones and internet facility. 54.4% had access to scanners in their workplaces. 19.3% had electronic typewriters. 45.6% had photocopiers. This suggests that most modern technology and office furnishings were provided to aid the secretaries in carrying out their responsibilities. This bolsters the notion that the availability of office technologies determines the secretary's efficacy and efficiency in every business organization (Akpomi & Ordu, 2009).

Table 3: The proficiency with which modern office technology and equipment is used.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SD	0	0
D	0	0
U	0	0
SA	57	100
A	0	0
Total	57	100

100% of respondents to table 3 strongly concurred that if the secretary is informed They can make the best use of them when using modern technology or equipment. This supports Mumni and Sam's (2014) claim that a highly experienced and professional secretary will be able to utilize technology/equipment to the most extent possible, saving them time to do other jobs.

Table 4: How does the usage of contemporary workplace technology and equipment affect productivity?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SD	0	0
D	0	0
U	0	0
SA	57	100
A	0	0
Total	57	100

According to Table 4, all 57 respondents, or 100%, strongly agreed that modern office technology and equipment has helped increase productivity in their organizations. This suggests that equipment and technology have helped firms become more productive. This is due to the fact that robots have considerably reduced the need for human labor and that their ability to regularly complete a set of tasks boosts an organization's production level (Spencer 1981).

Table 5: How modern office equipment and technology influenced the secretary's productivity and performance

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SD	0	0
D	0	0
U	0	0
SA	41	72
A	16	28
Total	57	100

Table 5 demonstrates that 72% of respondents strongly agreed and 28% of respondents agreed that the usage of modern office equipment and technology influenced the secretary's productivity and performance. They can now convey data to others more quickly thanks to technology and equipment, which improves their efficiency. This demonstrates how automation has reduced the amount of time the secretary spends editing, amending, proofreading, and reproducing documents. (Aromolaran, 2003), allowing the secretary to devote more time to other tasks schedules. This corroborates Akpomi and Ordu's (2014) assertion that a professional secretary's ability to perform her job well depends on her knowledge, abilities, and office supplies.

CONCLUSIONS

The information on the secretaries' educational backgrounds showed that the majority of them had diplomas. One needs a high level of education to be a secretary. This shows that aspiring secretaries need more education and training in order to gain the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to find employment and carry out their tasks in their desired jobs. For the purpose of facilitating the performance of secretarial duties and responsibilities necessary for the effective and efficient production and management of information, all the organizations involved in this study had purchased and installed sizable quantities and varieties of technology and equipment in their offices. This appears to indicate that the firms in question acknowledge the importance of contemporary office technology and equipment in

attaining the goal of improving performance and boosting productivity in the direction of the accomplishment of their set short- and long-term objectives. The study's findings demonstrated that, in every business organization, the secretary's efficiency and effectiveness are unquestionably impacted by the availability of modern office technology. According to the respondents, modern office technology streamlines information transmission and significantly cuts down on the time needed to complete essential secretarial tasks like document editing, proofreading, and duplication. The findings also showed that a secretary's actions and production are undoubtedly impacted by her understanding of how to use modern office technology to its fullest potential. This shows that making the best use of current office technology and equipment depends on the knowledge and expertise of the secretary using it. Therefore, having knowledgeable and skilled secretaries is a requirement for getting the most out of office technology and equipment. Office technology guarantees that deadlines are met and errors in document processing and records management are minimized, if not entirely eliminated, which improves the secretary's performance. The survey also showed that contemporary office equipment and technology can raise firms' productivity levels. From the aforementioned, it is reasonable to conclude that office technology gives the secretary an additional chance for automatic document editing or information transfer that is clear of ambiguities. Where the technology works well, it may prevent the secretary from being overly exhausted from performing administrative tasks manually, which can occur from an excessive amount of physical and mental effort. In conclusion, the findings showed that a professional secretary's ability to perform effectively is influenced by their knowledge, abilities, and office supplies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions and findings of the study, the following suggestions were made:

1. To increase the productivity of their secretaries, both public and commercial enterprises should invest in suitable current office technology and equipment.
2. Companies should consult their secretaries while choosing the type of technical
3. device they want to buy since those people will utilize it.
4. Secretaries who are insufficiently knowledgeable and skilled in using modern office equipmentFor optimal performance, technology and equipment should be retrained to conform to the current trend of technological growth.
5. Typically, secretaries should receive regular training on how to use newtechnological tools to improve their abilities and keep up with the rapid advancements in technology in the twenty-first century.

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