



Efficacy and effectiveness of modern office technology on the performance of secretaries in an organization

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Abstract

This study assessed the utilization and effectiveness of contemporary office technology on the performance of secretaries within a corporate milieu. The study was informed by four key research objectives and employed a descriptive survey methodology. The research encompassed a total of 51 secretaries at Federal Polytechnic Ede. A meticulously designed self-administered questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data acquisition, distributed to 51 secretaries, all of whom completed and returned the questionnaires. The data collected from the field were presented and analyzed using descriptive statistics, utilizing arithmetic mean method. The findings suggested a significant influence of modern office technology on the performance of secretaries within a corporate structure. The study concluded that contemporary office technology enhances the effective exchange of information and markedly reduces the time allocated to critical secretarial tasks, because of editing, proofreading and document duplication. This research advocated that management at Federal Polytechnic Ede should procure sufficient contemporary office technology to augment the efficiency of its secretarial personnel. However, it is essential to consider the potential challenges associated with the implementation of such technologies. Although the benefits are evident, the transition may require adequate training and support to ensure that secretaries can effectively adapt to these advancements.

Keywords: Modern Office, Technology, Performance, Secretaries, Organization.

Introduction

For decades, technology advancements have precipitated fast changes across all aspects of human existence, including office technologies (Davenport, 2013). According to

Margaret and Pac (2018), efficient office operations need factual and precise information for prompt decision-making, and contemporary office technology assist managers in maintaining concentration and communication with colleagues.

Consequently, it can be said that improved office technology enhances a manager's job performance by facilitating more flexibility in tasks.

Ndlovu (2018) asserts that enterprises must be managed efficiently to ensure that personnel are highly productive in achieving goals that fit with the organization's strategic objectives. Office technology contribute to the achievement of these strategic goals for firms. Modern technologies must be handled correctly, since a business's critical information might be readily compromised during its use. In enterprises, a proficient method to enhance production is to elevate the technological standard. Management support is crucial; managers are essential in ensuring that technology is used for the advantage of the organisation.

Kao (2016) said that technology is more advantageous when complemented by effective management methods, and that its contribution to productivity is limited. Business managers are essential in planning, supervising, organising, and leading people to ensure the appropriate technologies are integrated into the organisation.

The effectiveness of secretarial functions is greatly affected by the accessibility of office technology and equipment; however, it is also influenced by the skills and competencies of the secretary. Many organisations have acknowledged the importance of the secretary's role and the necessity of providing suitable office gear and equipment to enhance the secretary's operational efficiency. For decades, rapid changes have transpired in several facets of human life—this includes the professional environment. Although this is a

result of technological advancement, some may argue that the human element remains indispensable. All offices in the modern business environment, whether governmental, industrial, or otherwise, need accurate and exact information for timely decision-making. Office employees, particularly secretaries, anticipate particular support from their employing business. This support may be technical (pertaining to machinery and equipment) or human-related. In prior office settings, supervisors dictated notes and correspondence, then transcribed by secretaries. Recently, enterprises have created word processing centres and used personal computers and electronic mail to diminish the need for secretarial support and improve employee productivity (Ezoem, 2015; Osuala, 2014).

Due to technological advancements, the responsibilities of secretaries in business have significantly evolved beyond typewriting, shorthand dictation, answering telephone calls, and processing mail. Contemporary secretaries use office technology, particularly the internet, which facilitates work and enhances access to information (Edwin, 2018).

Communicating via telex, WhatsApp, Twitter, electronic mail (e-mail), fax, and telephones has become more accessible. Additional office devices accessible to secretaries include photocopiers, duplicators, dictation machines, printers, and others. This is the age of computers and information technology, which has facilitated enhanced convenience. Three prevalent categories of computer software are word processing programs, which assist users in composing and editing memos, letters, and reports; data

management programs or databases, which enable secretaries to manage extensive data lists; and spreadsheet programs, which facilitate the manipulation of tables and numerical data (Dulek and Fielden, 2015). Secretaries today possess several technologically sophisticated office devices that facilitate their tasks and augment efficiency and productivity, resulting in enhanced worldwide access to products and services (Wofersohn, 2016). A diverse array of office devices and technology now empowers secretaries to enhance their effectiveness. These modern devices are electronic typewriters that have supplanted the manual versions. Employers increasingly give word processors with multifunctional capabilities, computers, and other advanced office machinery and equipment. Secretaries use various physical equipment, including computer communication devices and electronic pocket organisers (Lucas, 2017). Recent technology advancements that have transformed office operations include computers, electronic mail, e-commerce, voicemail, and the Internet.

Nonetheless, these recent advancements necessitated by technical constraints need a greater breadth of knowledge and abilities beyond those of professional secretaries. To ensure that secretaries remain current with evolving circumstances, confront obstacles, and transcend outdated practices, they need contemporary training to achieve organisational goals. Information technology has impacted several occupations in recent times. Technology has transformed the job of secretaries. It has equipped secretaries with technologies that transform their function from information recorders to business

strategists (Appah and Emeh, 2017). Numerous writers contend that secretaries must be well trained to address the contemporary difficulties of a modern workplace.

Statement of the Problem

A computerized workplace surely presents new tasks and responsibilities for secretaries. These expanded tasks need that secretaries acquire extra training and skills. Cameron (2013) noted that there is often a lag of 10 to 15 years between the market launch of new technology and its use in small organisations. This is especially distinctive to private enterprises in emerging nations. In contemporary society, it is not unusual for some organisations to still need secretaries to using manual typewriters. When secretaries lack efficient and effective tools, productivity is inevitably diminished.

Duniya (2016) noted that the integration of advanced electronic office equipment necessitates that secretaries acquire new skills and competencies to ensure accuracy and efficiency in their roles within the modern office environment. Technological advancements have consistently influenced secretaries regarding the quality, speed, and accuracy of their job. This research is conducted to comprehend the impact of current office technologies on the performance of secretaries in organisations.

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the research is to analyse contemporary office technology and its impact on the performance of secretaries within an organisation. The research

specifically intends to achieve the following goals.

- 1) To examine the extent of use of contemporary office technologies within an organisation.
- 2) To ascertain if contemporary office technology really contributes to the unemployment of secretaries
- 3) To ascertain if contemporary office technology really improves the efficient work of secretaries.
- 4) To indicate the detrimental effects of contemporary office technology on the efficacy of secretaries inside an organization.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study a number of questions would be explored. The following questions will guide the study;

- 1) To what extent is the level of usage of these modern office technology in an organization?
- 2) Does modern office technology really contributes to the secretary's unemployment?
- 3) To what extent does modern office technology enhance the effective performance of secretaries?
- 4) To what extent could modern office technology negatively affect the performance of secretaries in an organization?

Review of Related Literature

Researchers have determined that performance is influenced by a limited number of factors, which workers often recognize (Armstrong, 2016). Identifying the

individual performance elements at play in a workplace may provide chances for substantial productivity improvements inside organisations. Research on workplace productivity from the past to the 2000s has yielded consistent signs. Koretz (2015) identifies four main productivity factors: poor supervision, lack of employee engagement in decision-making, excessive workload, and insufficient incentives and opportunities for advancement (training and retraining).

Leonard (2018) asserts that less organisational bureaucracy, an enhanced sense of purpose, better communication, well-defined objectives, and the ability to see outcomes are critical to productivity. The performance of a secretary, an essential worker in an organisation, does not vary from that of other workers. Factors that improve the effectiveness of secretaries in an organisation include: competence, remuneration, training, incentives and motivation, and communication.

Pfano (2016) asserts that the impact of technology is most evident in the job performance of secretaries inside an organisation. The performance of workers on online platforms may be readily watched and assessed, in contrast to the efficiency of work in traditional offices, where assessment is conducted by direct supervisors in addition to their punctual submission of mandatory reports. The subsequent effects of contemporary office technology on the functioning of secretaries within an organisation.

Technology directly influences job performance. Pfano (2016) said that the use of

new office technology enhances the job performance of secretaries by providing more flexibility in their tasks. Contemporary technology is often used to encapsulate and systematise critical firm information; thus, it need meticulous management. To enhance performance, technology must be relevant and suitable. The mere availability of new technologies does not guarantee enhanced performance; rather, it is the efficient utilisation, relevance, and suitability of the technology for office tasks that matter. Pfano (2016) discovered a robust association between the effective use of office technology and improvements in management performance inside workplaces. The technology, namely computers and telephones, provide seamless and efficient communication inside workplaces.

Davenport (2013) said that appropriate utilisation of information and communications technology (ICT) may facilitate ongoing engagement between managers and their subordinates. In workplaces, it is essential for managers and subordinates to develop clear communication channels, in which regard ICT plays a crucial role. The use of contemporary office technology enables secretaries to do their tasks with more flexibility and efficiency.

A further characteristic of technology that facilitates enhanced productivity and profitability in enterprises is its mobility. In contrast to desktop computers from previous decades, contemporary personal computers and mobile devices such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets may be transported by employees to work at any location and at any time. The secretary may do business activities remotely at any time. They are able to

respond to and dispatch emails at their convenience.

Mobile technology in contemporary workplaces enhance networking, communication, and marketing. Managers, workers, and customers may seamlessly engage and communicate with one another using mobile technology like as smartphones and tablets, utilising social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, Skype, and Twitter. This accessible communication method enhances workplace efficiency by optimising staff time, improving customer service, and expanding the variety of goods and services offered (Pfano, 2016). This is feasible provided that secretaries exercise sufficient discipline to use mobile technology only for official tasks or job activities. Mobile technology have introduced a novel dimension to advertising and marketing for enterprises globally (Haghirian et al., 2015). In previous decades or centuries, ads were mostly disseminated by television and radio; but, however, they are readily accessible via mobile phones. Mobile technology advertisements are very effective due to the extensive use by a significant portion of the global population. A substantial cohort of consumers now encounters corporate adverts on mobile devices using diverse mobile marketing technologies, including text messaging, mobile websites, and mobile apps (Pfano, 2016).

Offices are increasingly engaged in activities that extend beyond the confines of the physical space owing to globalization. Numerous enterprises expand their markets internationally. Technology is optimally used in offices engaged in worldwide activities,

since it facilitates international communication. Prior to the advent of cellphones and the internet, humans depended on business letters for communication. Currently, conventional printed or typewritten business letters are entirely digitised. Managers need not traverse borders to oversee their enterprises and engage with stakeholders. The significant use of technology is seen in the contemporary global corporate environment. Technology conserves essential resources such as time and money in this regard. In the current competitive business landscape, empirical studies predict that organisations adept at integrating the newest strategic technological breakthroughs into their operations would outperform their counterparts (Pfano, 2016). Automation technology will alleviate staff burden, enabling them to focus on other projects and responsibilities. Innovative computer programs and software applications may facilitate the collection and analysis of data that would often remain unutilised or require significant effort for workers to extract. Innovative technology may enhance work procedures, hence augmenting productivity for both employees and the organisation.

The investigation by Pfano and Beharry (2016) analysed data about managers' utilisation of technology in workplaces and workers' perceptions of technology's significance in the workplace, yielding noteworthy results. The new research by Pfano and Beharry (2016) presents key data pertinent to the use of technology in workplace environments. This result highlights that individuals aged 35 and older are adept in using technology for office tasks,

as 90% of managers use technology, compared to just 80% of those over 35. This indicates that all individuals aged 35 and above possess the abilities necessary for using technology.

Furthermore, the previously mentioned facts emphasize the necessity of technology within the workplace; this is evidenced by the finding that 80% of respondents articulate a belief that technology enhances efficiency. Additionally, 80% acknowledged the imperative for technology in their specific enterprises. The research conducted by Pfano and Beharry (2016) substantiates that technology augments workplace productivity, provided that individuals possess requisite abilities to utilize it effectively. Office technology, in fact, enhances managerial effectiveness, as it facilitates increased communication between managers and other staff members (Pfano and Beharry, 2016). A strong positive correlation exists between technology utilization and job performance, indicating that as organizations adapt to technological advancements, improving their usage of contemporary technologies, work performance simultaneously improves (however, this is contingent upon various factors).

Pfano and Beharry (2016) conducted an empirical investigation involving sixty-seven (67) managers from commercial entities to scrutinize the impact of contemporary office technology on managerial performance. The objective of this study is to elucidate the significant link between office technology, its optimal utilization and managerial efficacy. The research employed Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Pearson's correlation and t-tests to evaluate the proposed hypotheses. The

findings revealed that modern office technology is positively correlated with management performance; however, a robust positive association is evident between the effective application of office technologies and managerial outcomes. This research advocates that office managers should leverage advanced office technology to enhance the organization's quotidian operations and overall performance.

Aliata and Hawa (2014) undertook an empirical investigation concerning the implications of contemporary office technology on office worker performance (utilizing a sample comprising 60 public and private workplaces within the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region in Ghana). They employed descriptive and correlation techniques for data assessment; however, the structured questionnaire was disseminated to selected respondents via simple random selection. The results indicated that knowledge of office equipment is positively correlated with the performance of office staff. Although the findings revealed that no significant correlation exists between workplace devices and the application of technological knowledge, they strongly advocate for the organization of frequent training programs aimed at ensuring office personnel proficiently utilize current office equipment. Because of this, one may consider the necessity of ongoing professional development in enhancing overall productivity.

Lethabo, Olabanji and Tafadzwa (2014) investigated (1) the utilization of integrated marketing communication strategies by small

retailers in South Africa. The empirical evidence revealed that mobile communication significantly enhanced (2) profitability for small merchants in Mankweng City, South Africa. Huthamah and Alruwayyeh (2018) conducted a conceptual study on the relationship between technology and modern office work. The utilization of modern technologies in workplaces improves job performance efficiency; thus, it fosters production and development. It was established that technology in modern office work is positively connected with performance (3), however, one must consider various contextual factors that could influence this relationship.

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research approach which is particularly salient due to its focus on essential aspects of individuals including their beliefs, views, attitudes, motivations and actions. The research population comprised all secretaries engaged at Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun State; indeed, the study's total population amounted to fifty-one (51) secretaries. For this study, the researcher selected all fifty-one (51) secretaries, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection.

The questionnaire is organized in accordance with the study's objectives and research questions. The Likert scale employed was Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) this scale reflects the extent of respondents' agreement with each item in the questionnaire. The arithmetic mean was utilized to address the research inquiries, with the mean of the questionnaire

items calculated and interpreted based on the statistical limitations of the values.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One: To what extent is the level of usage of these modern office technology in an organization?

Table 2: Level of Usage of Modern Office Technology

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES					REMARKS
		SA	A	D	SD	$\overline{X}$	
		4	3	2	1		
1.	If the secretary is proficient in new technology and equipment, they can use them effectively.	2.3	0.58	0.23	0.09	3.2	Accepted
2.	Modern office technology increases speed and productivity of secretaries in workplace	1.9	0.8	0.35	0.03	3.08	Accepted
3.	Modern office technology made corrections of errors easy for secretaries at the workplace	1.56	1.47	0.19	0.01	3.23	Accepted
4.	Telephone makes communication easy and reduces boredom for secretaries in workplace	1.56	0.8	0.43	0.09	2.88	Accepted
5.	Electric typewriters are faster and increase productivity in workplace	1.17	1.76	0.07	0.07	3.07	Accepted

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The data presented in Table 2, showed that the mean of the items ranged from 2.88 to 3.23. All the items had their means above the cut-off point of 2.50. This indicated that level of usage of modern office technology in an organization is alarming, this help to reduce

boredom for secretaries and make correction of errors easier for secretaries in federal polytechnic Ede.

Research Question Two: Does modern office technology really contributes to the secretaries unemployment?

Table 3: How modern office technology really contributes to the secretaries unemployment

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES					REMARKS
		SA	A	D	SD	$\overline{X}$	
		4	3	2	1		
6.	Old staff not in touch with current trend in modern technology should be sacked	0.78	2.05	0.11	0.05	2.99	Accepted
7	Modern office technology have replaced human effort significantly	1.7	0.76	0.35	0.13	2.94	Accepted
8.	Competent and proficient secretaries are essential for optimising the benefits and value of office technology and equipment.	1.96	1.29	0.11	0.01	3.37	Accepted

9.	Secretaries deficient in the requisite knowledge and skills for using contemporary office technology and equipment are likely to impede an organization's development.	2.3	0.8	0.15	0.03	3.28	Accepted
10.	Utilising the internet via personal computers, iPods, and cellphones, individuals may operate in virtual workplaces from the convenience of their residences.	2.19	0.7	0.27	0.07	3.23	Accepted

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The data presented in Table 3, showed that the mean of the items ranged from 2.94 to 3.37. All the items had their means above the cut-off point of 2.50. This shows that Modern office technology have replaced human effort

significantly thereby causing secretaries retrenchment in workplace.

Research Question Three: To what extent does modern office technology enhance the effective performance of secretaries?

Table 4: Extent to which modern office technology enhances the effective performance of secretaries

S/ N	ITEMS	RESPONSES					REMARKS
		SA	A	D	SD	$\overline{X}$	
		4	3	2	1		
8.	Modern office technology has certainly made office work more interesting and more productive	1.9	0.8	0.19	0.11	3.0	Accepted
9.	Modern office technology has created opportunities for many individuals, firms and communities	2.7	0.58	0.11	0.05	3.44	Accepted
10.	Modern office technology has transformed the nature of organizational work and has equally changed work itself.	1.9	0.7	0.15	0.11	2.86	Accepted
11.	Due to advancements in technology, the function of secretaries in business has evolved significantly.	1.7	1.05	0.27	0.07	3.09	Accepted
12.	Management effectiveness in modern technological proficiency can earn huge for the institution	1.8	1.2	0.15	0.03	3.18	Accepted

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 4 indicates that the mean of the components varied from 2.86 to 3.44. All

items exhibited means above the threshold of 2.50. This suggests that contemporary office

technology improves the efficiency of secretaries, hence altering the nature of organizational work and the job itself.

Research Question Four: To what extent could modern office technology negatively affect the performance of secretaries in an organization?

Table 5: How modern office technology negatively affect the performance of secretaries in an organization

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES					REMARKS
		SA	A	D	SD	$\overline{X}$	
		4	3	2	1		
8.	Modern office Technology can increase stress levels, damage eyesight and lead to significant future health problems	2.5	0.76	0.11	0.05	3.42	Accepted
9.	Modern office technology presents an uncertain future for individuals in several sectors, including manufacturing, banking, and automobile.	2.1	0.76	0.27	0.07	3.2	Accepted
10.	Contemporary workplace technological tools, such as email used to enhance communication, may also facilitate the entry of viruses, Trojan horses, and other software or hardware issues.	2.7	0.41	0.23	0.05	3.39	Accepted
11.	Malfunction of contemporary office technology may result in a cessation of operations until the issue is rectified.	2.19	0.7	0.27	0.07	3.23	Accepted
12.	Contemporary workplace technology may sometimes serve as significant distractions, hindering adequate concentration on tasks.	2.4	0.8	0.11	0.05	3.36	Accepted

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 5 illustrates that the mean of the items varied from 3.2 to 3.42. All items exhibited means above the threshold of 2.50. This suggests that contemporary workplace technology might elevate stress levels, impair vision, and result in considerable future health issues that may hinder an organization's effectiveness.

Discussion of Findings

Table 2 analysed the degree of use of contemporary office technologies. The average replies of the participants, as shown in Table 2, demonstrate that an increase in the use of contemporary office technology within an organisation alleviates boredom for secretaries and facilitates mistake correction for secretaries at Federal Polytechnic Ede. The results corroborate Lucas (2017), who said that a varied assortment of office machinery and technology now enables

secretaries to improve their efficiency. These machines include electronic typewriters that have replaced manual models, photocopiers, multipurpose word processors, computers, and many more sophisticated office equipment.

Table 3 analysed the impact of contemporary office technologies on secretary unemployment. The average answer of the participants shown in Table 3 indicates that modern office technology has substantially supplanted human labour, resulting in the retrenchment of secretaries in the workplace. The discovery aligns with Merony's (2013) research, which contends that an automated workplace inherently bestows new tasks and responsibilities onto secretaries, necessitating more training and credentials for these positions.

Table 4 illustrated the extent to which modern office technology enhances the productivity of secretaries. Participants indicated that modern office technology enhances the efficiency of secretaries, hence changing the nature of organisational work and the job itself. The discovery aligned with Akpomi and Ordu (2017), who said that new technology equipment has transformed the procedures and techniques for office operations. They referenced electronic mail, e-commerce, voicemail, cellphones, and the internet as instances. Akpomi (2017) said that this technologically advanced workplace apparatus improves efficiency and production.

Table 5 demonstrated the degree to which contemporary office technology might adversely impact the effectiveness of secretaries within an organisation. The

average feedback from respondents indicated that modern workplace technology may elevate stress levels, impair vision, and result in substantial future health issues that might hinder organisational effectiveness. This aligns with Duniya's (2016) assertion that the integration of advanced electronic office equipment necessitates that secretaries acquire new skills and competencies to ensure accuracy and efficiency in their roles within the modern office environment. Technological advancements have consistently impacted secretaries on the quality, speed, and accuracy of their job.

Conclusions

The study's findings indicated that the presence of contemporary office technology significantly influences the efficiency and efficacy of secretarial roles inside commercial organisations. Contemporary office technology enables efficient information transfer and significantly decreases the time required for essential secretarial tasks, including editing, proofreading, and document replication. The findings confirmed that a secretary's proficiency in current office technology ensures its optimal utilisation, which therefore influences their tasks and productivity. This indicates that the effective use of contemporary office technology and equipment is contingent upon the knowledge and abilities of the secretary managing the facility. Competent and proficient secretaries are essential for optimising the advantages and value of office technology and equipment. The secretary's performance is improved when office technology guarantees adherence to deadlines and reduces mistakes, if not entirely eradicates them, in document processing and records administration.

The research indicated that contemporary office technologies and equipment enhance organizational productivity levels. It is reasonable to conclude that office technology offers the secretary more capabilities for the precise refinement of papers and the clear communication of information. When technology is successful, it may alleviate the secretary's tiredness caused by the excessive physical and mental strain connected with manual secretarial tasks. The findings indicate that the secretary's successful performance is contingent upon the office equipment, as well as the individual's knowledge and abilities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proffered:

- 1) The administration of Federal Polytechnic Ede should acquire

sufficient current office technology and equipment to improve the efficiency of its secretaries.

- 2) The administration of Federal Polytechnic Ede should engage the secretaries in determining the kind of technical devices to be acquired, since they will be the end users.
- 3) Secretaries deficient in the requisite knowledge and skills for using contemporary office technology and equipment should undergo retraining to align with current technological advancements for optimal performance.
- 4) Secretaries should regularly participate in training on the use of new technical devices to strengthen their skills and be informed about the technological advancements of the 21st century.

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