

Digital Devices and Job Performance of Secretaries in Government Parastatals in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the contribution of the digital devices to the job performance of secretaries in Government parastatals in Ekiti State Nigeria. The study also determined digital devices that were available for the job performance of secretaries and level of job performance of secretaries in government parastatals. Descriptive research design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of all 196 secretaries in Ekiti State government offices. The instrument used for data collection was titled 'Digital Devices and Secretary's Job Performance Questionnaire (DDSJPQ)' constructed on 4-point scale. The instrument was validated by two experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using test re-test method, which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.71. Data collected were analyzed using mean, simple regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Findings of the study revealed that there were enough digital devices in government offices, contributions of the digital devices to the job performance of secretaries were not significant among others. It can be concluded that despite the availability of digital devices in government offices they contributed less to the job performance of secretaries in government offices. The study recommended among others that secretaries need to be trained on how to use digital devices so as enhance their job performance in the office.

Keywords: *Digital devices, job performance, secretaries, office*

1.0 Introduction

Office is one of the major components that performs important functions in the organization. Office is a point where all various activities are coordinated for the entire organization to function as expected. Wikipedia defined office as a place where an organization's employees perform administrative work in order to support the goals and objectives of the organization. There is no organization either private or public without one form of office or the other. Generally, the nature of an office usually depicts types or forms of activities to be carried out in such office. It must be noted that for a functional organization, it must contain one form office or the other. Office may be created to take of administrative, personnel, finance, marketing, purchasing and so on. Office cannot function as expected without categories of personnel such as clerk, messenger, secretary, and so on.

Secretary is one of important personnel in an office and its functions and responsibility cannot be downplayed for the smooth running of an organization. A secretary is an administrative professional who plays an integral role in business and other organizational environment. This implies that secretary plays an important role in the administration of the organization. According to Oyerinde (2015), secretary is an officer who is generally entrusted with the responsibilities of

writing and exchanging letters, maintain documents and performing confidential activities on behalf of someone or any organization. Thus, for any organization to be successful and productive, the secretary has an indispensable role to play. Similarly, secretary is a person whose work consists of supporting management, including executives, using a variety of professional ethics and communication and organizational skills. Buseni 1(2013) stated that the secretary is a member of a team in the workplace and therefore should always be cooperative and supportive. Secretary in an organization is of different kinds, which include; confidential, personal, private, administrative, among others. Each type of secretary has unique function to perform in order to move the organization forward. Igbiniedion (2010) listed some of the job responsibilities of secretary to include but not limited to answering and directing phone calls; organizing and distributing messages; maintaining company schedules; organizing documents and files; scheduling meetings and conferences among others. In an ideal situation, secretary is expected to perform the above obligations and other related tasks that may be assigned to him by the superior from time to time. A performing secretary either in private or public organization must be able to discharge all professional tasks assigned to him with high level

of professionalism. In the past, the secretary's job is limited in scope and the raw material of an office is only information and the responsibility of an office secretary is to receive the information, process it or convert it to data.

Recent observations concerning the performance of secretaries in government parastatals in Ekiti State revealed that all is not well as some secretaries could not get their promotion as and when due as a result of their low performance. It was also noticed that some secretaries could not raise a simple memo while some did not know procedure to be followed in scheduling activities for their parastatals. In addition, Buseni (2013) stated that some secretaries appeared unable to answer some questions on behalf of their bosses. This is an indication that all is not well with the job performance of secretaries in the government parastatals. A secretary who is supposed be familiar with the government policies regarding how government activities should be conducted turned to do otherwise signal that all is not well with the job performance of the concern secretary. A performing secretary is expected to write and present accurate reports and disseminate information using websites and e-mail among other digital devices. Observation however showed that some secretaries were unable to write and present accurate reports using contemporary technological devices.

The unfavorable job performance of secretaries in government parastatals could be attributed to several factors ranging from deficiency in secretarial skills, working environment, work incentives, pre-service training to usage of digital devices. Some secretaries were trained when technology was still far away from the country and without regular in-service training for category of such secretaries, their job performance will fall below expectation. The latest technologies that have surrounded the contemporary office could pose a great challenge to secretary's jobs. Latest technology has been described as using different terms such as modern equipment, information technology, communication technology, digital devices among others. The terms Information and Communication Technology (ICT) or digital devices has changed the environment of the present office to the effect that any secretary that is not ICT compliant would find it difficult to cope let alone to perform well in today's office. There are wide range of office machines and equipment which now enable secretaries to improve their performance. Edwin (2008) stated that the roles of secretaries in contemporary times have changed tremendously from traditional roles, this was due to access to modern office technology such as internet, intercom and fax. The modern technology can be termed digital devices. A digital device is an electronic device that uses discrete,

numerable data and processes for all its operations. Digital device can host software to work in order to carry out the task assigned to it. Edwin (2008) stated further that among digital devices that can be found in contemporary office include but not limited to the following: digital clock, dictation machine, printer, scanner, label maker, computer, projector and so on. In view of recent development in terms of technology in office, Atakpo (2010) submitted that the diversities of office technologies require the secretaries to possess new skills and sub-skills to enable them relevant in the modern office. Also, Olore and Adepoju (2019) stated that as a result of changes in technology, the role of secretaries in office has changed tremendously from that of typewriting and shorthand dictation, answering of phone calls and processing of mails. The import of the foregoing is that any secretary who failed to possess new office skills in view of the latest development in office environment would not be able to perform his job satisfactorily.

There seems to be a connection between technology and job performance of secretaries in office. Again, studies and opinions of researchers are replete about technology and job performance of secretaries. Dosumu, Bukki and Akintola (2017) stated that the effect of office automation is to increase the organizational productivity by redefining the office work,

improve the quality and accuracy of office output. This implies according to authors that office automation which is the product digital devices is capable of enhancing the job of secretaries in the office. Abosede and Akintola (2015) discovered in their study that the utilization of ICT facilities gives optimum performance to secretary's job. This suggests that the job performance of secretaries is closely connected with ability of secretaries to utilize ICT facilities. In another study conducted by Odia and Iyamu (2021) on influence of ICT skills on secretaries' job retention in tertiary institutions in Delta State revealed that ICT skills did contribute to secretaries' job retention in tertiary institutions in Delta State. Meanwhile, the present study investigated the relationship between digital devices and secretaries' job performance in government parastatals. In same vein, Olore and Adepoju (2019) carried out a study on availability and utilization of new office technology for effective job performance of confidential secretary in Oyo State. The outcome of the study revealed availability and utilization of new office technology tools improve the job performance of confidential secretaries. Oden (2014) conducted a study on benefits of information technology on the job performance of secretaries employed in the Federal Polytechnic Oko. The study discovered that information technology plays an important role in the job performance of a

secretary. Again, Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012) carried out a study on the influence of information and communication technology on the performance of secretaries in government ministries in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study revealed that ICT influenced the performance of secretaries in much different ways. Also, Boseni (2013) investigated the effects of ICT on secretary's performance in contemporary organizations in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The study showed that the usage of computer, telecommunication and video techniques positively and significantly related to productivity of public sector secretaries in Bayelsa State. Still on the connection between technology and performance of secretary, Aliata and Hawa (2014) conducted a study on modern office technology and the performance of professional secretary in contemporary organizations in Ghana. The outcome of the study revealed that knowledge on the use of office equipment contributed positively to productivity of secretaries.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Office is one of the important segments in an organization. Generally, the nature office usually indicates functions expected to be carried out in the office from time to time. There are different categories of personnel that make an office to be

functional which include clerk, secretary, messenger and so on. Secretary is one of the personnel in an office whose duties and responsibility cannot be over-emphasized in a functional organization. The role of secretary both in private and public organization is essential to extent that it could influence the degree of accomplishment of organizational goals and objectives. Some decades ago, the nature of role of secretary in organization is traditional in nature. During that period, the job performance of secretaries appears to be satisfactory especially in the government parastatals because the schedules of activities in offices posed no challenge to them.

In recent time, the job performance of secretaries in government parastatals seems to be on the downward trend. This is because some secretaries could not get their promotion as and when due just because of their inability to meet the performance standard already set for them. The downward trend in the job performance of secretaries in government parastatals could be attributed to several factors, which include poor work incentives, unfriendly working environment, inadequate secretarial skills, utilization of digital devices among others. The contemporary offices had been surrounded by digital devices therefore it has changed the role and responsibilities of secretary. This implies that if a secretary will

perform his job according to the prescribe standard such secretary must have been able to possess requisite technological skills and received up to date training on how to use digital devices in the offices. Observation also revealed that some secretaries in government establishments find it difficult to make use of latest technology to perform their duties in their offices. It was against this background that this study investigated digital devices and job performance of secretaries in government parastatals in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the digital devices and the job performance of secretaries in government parastatals in Ekiti State. Specifically, the sought to:

1. Find out types of digital devices available in government offices
2. Determine the contribution of digital devices to the job performance of secretaries in government offices.
3. Establish the difference in the job performance of secretaries in government offices.

1.3 Research Question

This research question was raised to guide the study.

1. What are the digital devices that were available in government offices in Ekiti State?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. Digital devices will not significantly contribute to the job performance of secretaries in government offices.
2. There is no significant difference in the job performance of secretaries in government offices.

2.0 Method

Descriptive research design was used for the study. This design was appropriate because it enables the researcher to describe the existing situation the way it occurs without manipulation of any variable. The population of the study consisted of all 196 secretaries in Ekiti State government offices. The population includes all categories of secretaries such as; confidential, personal and private secretaries in government parastatals. In view of the size of population, the entire figure was used therefore, no sampling was done. The instrument used for data collection was

titled ‘Digital Devices and Secretary’s Job Performance Questionnaire (DDSJPQ)’. The instrument which has 30 items was constructed on 4-point scale to elicit information on digital devices and job performance of secretaries in government offices. The instrument was validated by two experts from Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State. All comments and suggestions of validators were taken into consideration to prepare the final draft of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using test re-test method. The instrument was administered to 20 secretaries in

other state (Ondo State) that shared similar characteristics with the study area twice within the interval of two weeks. Data collected were correlated using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation and co-efficient of 0.71 was obtained. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the aid of one trained research assistant. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean to answer only research question raised for the study. Inferential statistics such as simple regression and ANOVA were used to test the two hypotheses formulated for the study at 0.05 level of significance.

3.0 Results

3.1 Research Question

1: What are the types of digital devices that available in government offices in Ekiti State?

Table 1: Types of digital devices that are available in government offices

S/N	Items	\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
1.	Software that produces printer-based products	3.44	0.87	Available
2.	Networking devices	3.57	0.56	Available
3.	Telecommunication gadgets	3.51	0.70	Available
4.	E-mail facilities	3.45	0.69	Available
5.	Video-conferencing	3.46	0.72	Available
6.	Word processing facilities	3.43	0.74	Available
7.	Database management resources	3.42	0.72	Available
8.	Desktop publishing software	3.21	0.71	Available

9.	Voice mail facilities	3.23	0.75	Available
10.	Spreadsheet program	3.26	0.73	Available
11.	Photocopiers that sort out pages of documents	3.30	0.76	Available
12.	Micrographics	3.23	0.77	Available
13.	Electronic typewriters with visual display	3.24	0.94	Available
14.	Electronic calendar scheduling	1.43	0.35	Not Available
15.	Dictating machine	2.88	1.18	Available

Table 1 shows result of 15 digital devices that are supposed to be in the contemporary offices. The results indicate that 14 of them with mean ranging from 2.88 to 3.57 are available in government offices, while only one item that is; electronic calendar scheduling with a mean of 1.43 was not available. Digital devices found to be available in

the offices include; software that produces printer-based products (3.44) networking devices (3.57), telecommunication gadgets (3.51), E-mail facilities (3.45), Video-conferencing (3.46), Word processing facilities (3.43), Database management resources (3,42) among others.

3.2 Hypothesis 1: Digital devices will not significantly contribute to job performance of secretaries in government offices.

Table 2: Table showing regression analysis between digital devices and job performance of secretaries in government offices

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.391	0.376		6.359	0.000
	Digital Devices	0.240	0.108	0.223	2.213	0.695

R = 0.250, Adjusted R² = 0.149

In table 2 above, Digital devices as the only independent variable accounts for 15% of the

total variance in secretary job related skill (R² = 0.149) and the remaining 75% of secretaries' job

performance is explained by other factors. Also, the result shows that $P > 0.05$, which means that the contribution of digital devices to job performance of secretaries in government

parastatals is not significant. Therefore, digital devices did not significantly contribute to performance of secretaries in government parastatals in Ekiti State.

3.3 Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the job performance of secretaries in government offices

Table 3: Table Showing the One-Way ANOVA of Job Performance among Secretaries in Government Parastatals

One-Way ANOVA
Digital Devices

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.243	2	2.622	5.983	0.004
Within Groups	40.747	193	0.438		
Total	45.990	195			

In order to determine whether digital devices bring about variations in the job performance of secretaries in government parastatals, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) one-way was used. The set alpha value for the test was set at $p < 0.05$. From the table, p-value of 0.004 is less than the set alpha value of 0.05. This means that there is a significant difference in the job performance of secretaries in government parastatals due to the influence or contribution of digital devices.

4.0 Discussion

Finding of the study revealed that government offices are equipped with majority of the digital devices identified in the study. From table 1, out of 15 digital devices that are supposed to be in the government offices, 14 of them were actually available. This means that government on her part has done well by providing the needed digital devices that could enhance the job performance of secretaries in the office. In this era of information and technological age, offices in organizations are expected to be fully equipped with necessary information and communication devices. This finding is in line with submission of

Edwin (2008) who posited that contemporary offices are supposed to be equipped with but not limited to the following: digital clock, dictation machine, printer, scanner, label maker, computer, projector and so on.

Finding of the study showed that digital devices do not significantly contribute to the job performance of secretaries in government offices. From table 2, the contribution of the digital devices to job performance of secretaries was just 15% while other factors accounted for the remaining 85%. The reason for this could be attributed to inability of secretaries to make use of available digital devices when performing their job. It is not enough for the government to acquire relevant digital devices without making necessary efforts to train secretaries on how to make use of those devices. Secretaries without relevant ICT skills may not be able to make good use of digital devices when performing their job in their respective offices therefore regardless of number of digital devices available, it may not contribute to the job performance of secretaries. This finding however, does not support Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012) in their study which revealed that ICT devices influenced the performance of secretaries in much different ways. The finding of the study again contradicts Boseni (2013) who discovered that the usage of computer, telecommunication and video techniques

positively and significantly related to productivity of public sector secretaries in Bayelsa State. Also, the finding of the study is not in line with Odia and Iyamu (2021) who reported that ICT skills did contribute to secretaries' job retention in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

Finding of the study revealed that there is significant difference in the job performance of secretaries in government offices. The reason for this finding could be attributed to the variation in the availability of digital devices during the pre-service training. Some secretaries were trained when there was little or no technology in place, while some were trained with modern office equipment. Again, variation in the in-service training given to secretaries on the use of digital devices could make some secretaries performed their job better than the others. This finding is in line with Abosede and Akintola (2015) who discovered in their study that the utilization of ICT facilities gives optimum performance to secretary's job. Similarly, this finding supports Dosumu, Bukki and Akintola (2017) who stated that the effect of office automation is to increase the organizational productivity by redefining the office work, improve the quality and accuracy of office output. Also, the finding of the study is in line with the outcome of the study conducted by Olore and Adepoju (2019) which discovered that availability and utilization of new office

technology tools improve the job performance of confidential secretaries.

5.0 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that there are enough available digital devices in the government offices in Ekiti State. Again, looking at the findings of this study, conclusion can be drawn that the level with which digital devices contributed to the job performance of the secretaries in government offices is very low as only 15% of the job performance could be explained by digital devices. Also, it can be concluded that the use of digital devices brings about difference in the job performance of secretaries, which implies that those who were able to utilize digital devices to discharge their duties performed better than those who could not.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should provide more digital devices that are capable of enhancing job performance of secretaries in the current digital age.

2. Government should ensure relevant training programmes are in place to expose secretaries to effective utilization of all digital devices that are available in government offices so as to improve their job performance.

3. Opportunities should be made available to secretaries to acquire relevant ICT skills by government and its agencies so as to update their knowledge and keep them abreast of the current trend in the secretarial profession. This will go a long way to enhance job performance of all categories of secretaries in government offices.

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