AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF NEW OFFICE TECHNOLOGY FOR EFFECTIVE JOB PERFORMANCE OF CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY IN OYO STATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated the availability and utilization of new office technology for effective job performance of confidential secretary in Oyo State tertiary institutions. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. One hundred and ten secretaries from 3 tertiary institutions in Oyo State were used as a sample for the study. Self-designed of 4 rating scale structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was face-validated by experts in Business Education and the reliability of 0.73 was obtained using Cronbach alpha. Two research questions were raised and 2 null hypotheses were formulated and tested. Data collected were coded into Statistical Packages of SPSS. Weighted mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions using an index score of 2.5 for agree. T-test was employed in testing the null hypotheses. The study revealed that availability and utilization of new office technology tools improve the job performance of secretaries. It was recommended among others that tertiary institution authority needs to provide adequate modern office technology equipment for the use of secretary to improve their productivity, make their work fast, neat and accurate; secretary must make sure that they make use of the available resources judiciously and make sure that the tools are well maintained.

Keywords: Availability, Utilization, New Office Technology, Confidential Secretary, Job Performance

Introduction

The emergence of secretarial personnel into Nigeria's economic development can be traced to the colonial days. The British colonial administration saw the need to have Nigerians to serve them in different lower capacities as typists, messengers, court clerks, interpreters etc. To make this a reality, they introduced into Nigeria's educational curriculum some subjects that could make students become secretaries. These subjects include Typewriting, Shorthand Secretarial Duties, Office Practice among others. According to National Secretaries Association (United States of America) as cited by Ejeka (2006) a Secretary is an assistant to an executive, possessing mastery of office skills and ability to assume responsibility without direct supervision, who displays initiative, exercises judgment and takes decision within the scope of his/her authority. Onosanya (1990) sees a secretary as the chief administrator of an organization or a person who performs the functions of organizing and recording the proceedings of a meeting.

A secretary is an office-staff who combines the mastery of secretarial skills of typewriting and shorthand with office routine functions. Automation is an innovation and a consequence of the industrial revolution. It is a collection of methods for controlling machinery and production processes by mechanical method, usually with electronic equipment. Spencer (1981) defines automation as the process of replacing human work with work done by machines or system designed to perform a specific combination of action automatically or repeatedly.

The work of a secretary is very essential in any business organization. The smooth and efficient working of the organization depends in part upon quality of the secretary. She is the wheel upon which the various activities of the organization radiates. She has a lot to do with the practical running of the organization. According to Ejeka (2010) a secretary is a person who has been trained in both science and secretary-ship and who is capable, efficient and proficient in carrying secretarial instruction (training) and employed to see to the secretarial, monitoring and participation of an individual in an organization. He further stressed that a secretary can be regarded as an expert capable of dealing with communications and correspondence in skilled manner. And since the word secretary is derived from "secret" it can be added that, in dealing

with all such specialized duties their secret or utmost confidentiality are also guaranteed to the last letter.

Information is required for a business to function effectively, and to highlight performance of different units of the business, and to direct attention to areas requiring review. Most information required for management purpose is either available, in a form in which they can be readily used or they exist in form of raw data. Thus for the champions of offices to meet with demands of the job, they need secretaries both male and female (Olugbeko & Akinmusire, 2016). The services of the secretary therefore are one that is commonly needed across various departments in an organization. It is also essential to not that an organization without a secretary will run into problems since the chief executive cannot handle those duties performed by the secretary. Modern Technology has captured the Secretarial profession and made it challenging. As a result of changes in technology, the role of secretary in business organization has changed tremendously from that of Typewriting and Shorthand dictation.

As a result of changes in technology, the role of secretaries in business 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 including the internet that make work much easier and knowledge more accessible (Edwin, 2008). It is now easier to send messages by telex, electronic mails (e-mails), fax and telephones. Other office gadgets available to the secretary are photocopy machines, duplicating machines, dictating machines, printers, among others. This is the era of computers and information technology which has becomes an enabler of greater convenience (Adiele, 2015). The most popular types of computer software programme are word processing, which help the user to write and edit memos, letters and reports, data management programmes or databases, which help the user-secretary to use long lists of data and spreadsheet programmes, which handle tables and numbers (Dulek & Fielden, 1999). Secretaries now have many technologically advanced office gadgets to ease their jobs and enhance proficiency and productivity leading to improved access to goods and services.

There are wide range of office machines and equipment which now enable secretaries to improve their performances (Adiele, 2015). Such new machines take the form of electronic typewriters that have replaced the manual ones. Word processors with milt-purpose facilities, computers and other sophisticated office machines and equipment are now provided by employers. Some of the physical equipment used by secretaries includes computer communication equipment and electronic pocket organizers (Lucas, 1997). New technological equipment that has altered the procedures and technique for office functions include the computers, electronic mail/commerce, voice mail, and the Internet.

Statement of the Problem

New technology has captured the secretarial profession and made it challenging. The effect of electronic development has become a visible reality in our days. When we talk of electronic equipment we mean those classes of electronics that affect office activities such as telephone and other electronic typewriters, photocopier, scanners, and the computer. The digital telephone and other electronically powered machines reduces the long hours to mere pressing of buttons, thus making the world a small global place where contacts could be made between people at different continents in seconds. In modern times, it is common to find some organizations still subjecting secretaries to the use of manual typewriters.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study is to evaluate the availability and utilization of new office technology for effective job performance of confidential secretary in Oyo State tertiary institutions. Specifically; the study seeks to:

1. Extent of availability of new office technological tools in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions?
2. Extent of confidential secretary utilization of new office technological tools in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions?

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent are new office technology tools available in Oyo State Higher Institutions?

2. To what extent does Confidential Secretary utilize new office technology tools in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were raised to guide the study. The Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant different in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the availability of Modern Technology facilities in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions.

2. There is no significant different between the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on utilization of Modern Technology facilities in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive research design. Oyo State was the study area. The study covered 3 tertiary institutions in Oyo State, namely, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. The sample comprises of 110 confidential secretaries from the total population of 2,412 secretaries in tertiary institutions in Oyo State distributed as follows: Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora (30), Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo (45), Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo (35). The instrument tagged Availability and Utilization of New Office Technology on job Performance of Confidential Secretary in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions were faced and content-validated by 3 experts in the Department of Business Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti (EKSU). The experts were presented with the instruments containing purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses and were asked to scrutinize the instrument in terms of relevance and clarity of languages. Their suggestions and corrections were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument.

The questionnaire used for this research work was self-structured and personal interview; The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A dealt with personal data of the respondents while Section B of the questionnaire contained questions on the Availability and

Utilization of New Office Technology on Job Performance of Confidential Secretaries with 14 items. Reliability test was carried out to determine the consistency of the instrument in collecting the data as required. The researcher administered on the 30 confidential secretaries at Federal School of Survey, Oyo. The researcher chose this institution because it is outside the study area but has similar characteristics with the study subjects. A total of 30 copies of the instrument were administered on secretaries who are not part of the study and the data collected were subjected to analysis using Cronbach alpha method. The results yielded 0.73. This shows that the instrument is reliable.

Frequency counts and Percentage was used to analyse demographic variables of the respondents. Mean and Standard deviation was used to answer research questions while t-test statistics was used to test research hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. For opinion purposes, any item mean above 2.5 and above was accepted while any item mean below 2.50 was rejected. For hypotheses, if the observed p-value is less than the fixed value p-value (0.05), the null hypotheses will be rejected. On the other hand, if the observed p-value is greater or equal to the fixed p-value (0.05), the null hypothesis will not be rejected.

Results

Research Questions 1: To what extent are new office technology tools available in Oyo State Higher Institutions?

Table 1: Mean responses and Standard Deviation on the Level of Availability of New Office Technology tools

S/N	Variables	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Computer	3.70	.46	Available
2.	Dictation Machine	1.63	.48	Not Available
3.	Laminating Machine	3.57	.60	Available
4.	Shredder	1.41	.63	Not Available
5.	Telephone	3.37	.56	Available
6.	Paper Cutter and Trimmer	1.37	.62	Not Available

7.	Folding Machine	1.33	.62	Not Available
8.	Binding Machine	3.20	.74	Available
9.	Electronic Dictionary	2.19	.71	Not Available
10.	Business Card Scanners	2.16	.82	Not Available

In table 1, many of the mean scores were below the cut-off point of 2.50 which indicated that all the items were not available in the offices of various respondents. It can be deduced that the respondents were closed in their response and showed that new office technology tools were not available in Oyo State Higher Institutions.

Research Question 2: To what extent does Confidential Secretary utilize new office technology tools in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions?

Table 3: Mean responses and Standard Deviation on the Level of Utilization of New Office Technology Equipment

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	I use Modern office tools to print out documents	110	2.10	.78	Not Accepted
2.	I keep office records in a disc	110	2.73	.93	Not Accepted
3.	I use computer to type my office documents	110	2.60	.86	Not Accepted
4.	I do use photocopier machine to reproduce office documents	110	1.68	.64	Not Accepted

In table 2, mean scores were all below the cut-off of 2.50 which indicated that all the respondents were not using new office equipment in the office. The result further indicated that the respondents were close in their response and that confidential secretaries do utilize new office technology tools in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions.

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant different in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the availability of Modern Technology facilities in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions

Table 2: Two tailed t-test result of the Mean Response of Male and Female Respondents on the availability of modern technology facilities

S/n	Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-table	Decision
1.	Male	33	2.01	0.61	108	1.15	1.96	NS
2.	Female	77	3.94	0.64				

Table 2 revealed that the overall value of calculated t-value was 1.15 which was less than t-table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and at 108 degree of freedom (df). Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the availability of modern technology facilities in Oyo state tertiary institutions was accepted. As such from the analysis, it can be concluded that the views of male and female confidential secretaries are the same.

Research Hypothesis 2: There is no significant different between the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on utilization of Modern Technology facilities in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions

Table 4: Two tailed t-test result of the Mean Response of Male and Female Respondents on the utilization of modern technology facilities.

S/n	Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-table	Decision
1.	Male	33	2.10	0.65	108	1.12	1.96	NS
2.	Female	77	3.91	0.63				

Table 4 revealed that the overall value of calculated t-value was 1.12 which was less than t-table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and at 108 degree of freedom (df). Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female

respondents on the utilization of modern technology facilities in Oyo state tertiary institutions was accepted. As such from the analysis, it can be concluded that the views of male and female confidential secretaries are the same.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study indicated the availability of new office technology on job performance of Confidential Secretaries in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions. It was revealed from the findings that new office technology tools are not available for use by various secretaries (respondents) in their offices. This goes in line with Esene and Okoro (2008) assertion who asserted that in modern offices, there are different types of office machines and equipment, which the personnel e.g. managers, supervisors, secretaries, clerks, etc use in discharging their duties and functions.

Also, the findings of the study also revealed how confidential secretary utilize modern technological tools in Oyo State Tertiary Institutions and that the usage of modern technological tools was very low. This was supported by the assertion of Duniya (2011) who recounted that offices in the 21st Century are well equipped with office technology devices that facilitates productivity, accuracy and efficiency of work output.

Furthermore, the study also revealed no significant difference in the male and female confidential secretary with the use of modern office technology tools. This goes in line with the assertion of Edwin (2008) who opined that the emergence of office technologies has made the male secretary's role to change from traditional roles to modernity. The secretaries have access to modern office technology such as the computers, telephones, shredding machine, photocopier, stapler, printers, laminating machines, scanner, binding machines. These new office technology tools make the work of the secretary much easier and based on gender.

In the same vein, the study indicated that both male and female have similar opinion on the availability of modern technology facilities in Oyo state Tertiary institutions as it was revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the availability of modern technology facilities in Oyo state tertiary institutions.

This is in line with Adiele (2015) who found that most popular types of computer software programme are word processing, which help the user to write and edit memos, letters and reports, data management programmes or databases, which help the user-secretary to use long lists of data and spreadsheet programmes, which handle tables and numbers (Dulek & Fielden, 1999). Secretaries now have many technologically advanced office gadgets to ease their jobs and enhance proficiency and productivity leading to improved access to goods and services.

Conclusion

The result of this study has provided an empirical basis that availability of modern office technology tools and utilization of modern office technology tools enhances level of job performance of confidential secretary. In conclusion, the absence of those aforementioned factors may affect the effective job performance level of confidential secretary in tertiary institutions and this may lead to a very low productivity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Tertiary institution authority needs to provide adequate modern office technology equipment for the use of secretary to improve their productivity, make their work fast, neat and accurate.
2. Secretary must make sure that they make use of the available resources judiciously and make sure that the tools are well maintained.
3. Seminar and Conferences on the use of modern office technology should be attended at an interval by the secretary.

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