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ASSESSMENT OF THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGIES ON SECRETARIES IN AUTOMATED OFFICES

EMEASOBA NNEKA CHARITY (PhD)
Department of Educational Management
(Business Education Programme)
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
Abia State – Nigeria nnekaemeasoba@yahoo.com
(+2348033429094)

Abstract
This study assessed the negative influence of technologies on secretaries in automated offices. Survey research design was used in the study. Four research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population consisted of 89 Secretaries from seven banks in the state. No Sample was drawn. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire which was validated by experts. Data collected was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The two hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that secretaries face challenges with the use of the technologies in automated offices such as health challenges, power failure, human relation and moral challenges. There was a significant difference in the mean ratings of responses of the male and female secretaries on the influence of power failure on secretaries job performance in the automated offices and no significant difference in the health challenges of secretaries in automated offices.. It was recommended that secretaries should have in-depth knowledge of the health hazards associated with the use of technologies in automated offices and that managers should provide medical assistance or service secretaries.

Keywords: Negative Influence, Technologies, Secretaries, Automated Offices.

Introduction

In the public and private sectors of the Nigeria economy, secretaries are usually very helpful to the management in the accomplishment of organizational goals. With the advent of technical know-how in our modern establishments, there is an increase in the demand for modern technologies and automated offices in Nigeria. In the office of the past, manager's dictates memos and letter and secretaries typed them. Most recently, offices have developed word processing centers and relied on personal computers and even electronic mail in an effort to lessen the need for secretarial support and make the secretary very productive (Osuala, 2004).

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 technologies including internet facilities which, makes work much easier and knowledge more accessible (Edwin 2008). Akpomi (2003) noted that secretary is a person employed

in a office to work for another person, dealing with letters, typing, keeping records and making appointments and arrangements. The National Secretaries Association (NSA) in Ejeka (2006), defined a secretary as 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 her authority.

Therefore, secretary can be defined as a person who has acquired basic knowledge of secretarial skills, such as shorthand, typewriting, use of computer software and other sufficient knowledge and practical experience in an office routine, depending on the objective of the organization. Secretary is a person whose work consists of supporting management, including executives, using a variety of project management, communication, or organizational skills. Secretary is associated with male and female gender. Gender is the state of being a male or female (typically used with references to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones). A secretary can be a male or female as the case may be depending on the organizational choice of selecting their secretary.

Prior to the technological development in offices, secretarial works were done manually and the sizes of offices were small and little work done manually. Then there was nothing like the modern equipments like computers, mobile phones, photocopying machines, addressing machines not to talk of being fully automated.

Agbo (2006) defined technology as the purposeful application of information in the design, production, and utilization of goods and services in the organization of human activities. They also saw technology as application of scientific principles and knowledge to solve societal problems. Agbo also noted that technology is the development and application of tools, machines, materials and processes that help in solving human problems. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2000), defined technology as the application of science, especially to industrial, used to achieve commercial or industrial objectives. Considering the degree of accuracy, convenience, speed and efficiency provided by modern technological aids, people have increased their awareness and utilization of automated offices and their organizations. Therefore, technology can be defined as application of scientific principle and knowledge to solve societal problems.

Chukwumezie (2000) described automated offices as totally integrated work station where the secretary would have access to the electronic tools required to create, process, store, retrieve and distribute information. Ejeka (2006) also defined automated office as an office where the secretary utilizes personal computers such as word processors and electronic intercom mail plus other technologies to upgrade workers productivity and efficiency. Wikipedia the free encyclopedia (2015) defined automated office as an office where the secretary uses varied computer machinery and software used digitally to create, collect, store, manipulate and delay office information needed for accomplishing basic tasks. Therefore, automated offices refers to those offices were machines or technological tools serves as an aid to the secretary who make constant use of those machines to execute daily routine or task in the office.

Though, modern technologies assist the secretaries in carrying out their daily tasks in the office, but challenges of new techniques and innovations demand from executive secretaries much greater responsibilities and improved performances on their jobs. The introduction of modern technologies and program has lessened the numerous tasks of the

modern secretary. These range from production, reproduction, storage, retrieval among others. With this advancement of technology, the use of computer and software programmes facilitates the work of the secretary. These include the use of machines such as printer, fax, pen drive, cell phones, photocopier, telex and internet. These requisite knowledge and skills make the position of the secretary rather challenging.

Skill is an ability to translate knowledge into action that results in the desired performance. For a skill to be acquired, the learner should be exposed to the relevant activities embodying the skill. Ejeka (2006) also stated that secretaries supposed to possess the following skills: operate modern office equipment including computer equipment; type at a speed necessary for successful job performances; take dictation at a speed necessary for successful job performance. Onoyovwi, Donald and Aijene (2009) stated that the skills required of secretaries includes the following; word processing skills which is the handling of alphabetical and alphanumeric information electronically; communication skills: most organizations requires communication to solve problems and accomplish goals in order to persuade, instruct, direct, request, present, inform, stimulate or develop understanding, the secretary requires a god communication skill . Management/Supervisory Skills: The role of a secretary in an office is gradually moving from that of mere taking dictation and transcribing on the machine to problem solving and assuming more responsibilities. The secretary is now seen as executive assistant to the boss. Book-keeping/Accounting work skills: Secretaries should have book keeping and accounting work skills to enable them keep accurate record of business transactions in the office.

Akpomi (2003) lists word processing functions as standard editing functions (insert, delete, amend) text enhancement (centering, bold, fonts) block operations (copy, re-copy, move, deletion) text manipulation (search and replace, arithmetical functions, word counts, auto referencing), text formatting (tabs, margin, arithmetic tabs) graphics (diagram, photograph, desk-top publishing and main merged (keyboarding, file). The acquisition of word processing skill will lead to the following benefits; reduce the length of time required to do works ensure accuracy and efficiency, eliminate drudgery, ensure standardization of work, accelerate the speed and capacity of office work done. However, these new developments brought by technological challenges require even more knowledge and skills beyond a secretary. For the secretary to be abreast with the changing times, face the challenges and overcome the old ways of doing things. He needs training requirements in recent times to help meet organizational objectives and cope with the challenges. Therefore, the researcher seeks to assess the negative influence of technologies on secretaries in automated offices in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

There is an increasing rate of demand for the use of automated process in our organizations in order to enhance the duties of a secretary. The world is undergoing a rapid change due to the innovation of office automation as new millennium and evolution continues, in order to cope with the modern age needs.

It is clear that technologies in automated office have influenced the secretaries' job performance in an office positively. However, several literatures, noted that secretaries are also faced with so many challenges as a result of frequent use of these modern technologies. Therefore, the researcher intends to assess the negative influence of technologies on secretaries in automated offices in Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the negative influence of technology on secretaries in automated offices in Enugu State. Specifically the study seeks to assess the;

1. Health challenges faced by secretaries in an automated office.
2. Influence of power failure on secretaries job performance in an automated office.
3. The human relation challenges faced by secretaries in an automated office.
4. The moral challenges faced by secretaries in an automated office.

Research Question

Four research questions that guided the study are as follows:-

1. What are the health challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices?
2. What are the influences of power failure on secretaries' job performance in automated offices?
3. What are the human relation challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices?
4. What are the moral challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the health challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices.
2. There is no significant different between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the influences of power failure on secretaries job performance in automated offices.

Methodology

Survey research design was used to carry out this study. The population of the study consists of 89 secretaries from the seven banks in Enugu State. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two main parts, Section A and B. Section A of the questionnaire elicits personal information of the respondents. Section B contained 31 items. The response options of the questionnaire items were arranged under the following rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The instrument was validated by experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. Data were collected by the researcher and with the help of a research assistant. Mean and standard deviation were used for analyzing the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. When the mean value of an item 2.50 and above it was regarded as Agreed and below 2.50 was regarded as Disagreed. For the hypotheses, when the t-calculated value is less than the t-tabulated it suggests that there is no significant difference in the responses and the null hypothesis is upheld otherwise it is rejected.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

What are the health challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the respondents on health challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices.

N=89

S/N	Items	Male X	SD	Female X	SD	Remarks
1	Visual impairments due to constant view of the VDU of a computer.	3.04	0.81	3.14	0.73	Accepted
2	Psychological and physical stress that leads to inability of the secretary to meet the demands of the job	2.64	0.63	2.84	0.72	Accepted
3	Waist pain as a result of sitting in a place or position for so long	2.76	0.71	2.64	0.81	Accepted
4	Swollen legs as a result of sitting at a place for so long	2.98	0.72	2.63	0.78	Accepted
5	Hearing loss and neck strain	2.76	0.83	2.71	0.63	Accepted
6	Increase in weight and size	2.80	0.74	2.78	0.93	Accepted
7	Exposure of secretaries to electromagnetic waves affecting their reproductive organ and also cause damage to the DNA	2.44	0.80	2.32	1.13	Rejected
8	Secretaries constant indulgence on technologies may be giving headache	3.21	0.56	3.41	0.58	Accepted
9	Secretaries staying at the phone all day might wreck spine	3.02	0.61	3.61	0.57	Accepted
10	Poor sleeping habits due to late night completion of take home assignments	2.87	0.93	2.63	0.98	Accepted
	Grand mean	2.85	0.73	2.77	0.81	Accepted

Data present in Table 1 showed that 9 out of 10 health challenges had mean values ranging from 2.6 to 3.61 which shows that respondents strongly agreed that secretaries faces health challenges in automated offices. The remaining 1 item, specifically, item 7 had mean value of 2.4 indicated that respondent strongly disagreed that secretaries faces health challenges in automated offices. This shows that secretaries faced a lot of health challenges in the use of technologies in the automated offices.

Research Question 2

What are the influences of power failure on secretaries' job performance in automated offices?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the influence of power failure on secretaries job performance in automated offices?

N=89

S/N	Items	Male X	SD	Female X	SD	Remarks
1	Increased expenditure on alternative source of power	2.36	0.93	2.26	1.02	Rejected
2	Increased cost of the repair and services, and cancelled orders due to delays	2.41	0.81	2.33	0.96	Rejected
3	The job productivity of secretaries is reduced to unbearable level	3.43	0.84	3.36	0.71	Accepted
4	Secretaries get stucked in the midst of carrying out a task as a result of power failure	3.13	0.64	3.26	0.63	Accepted
5	It brings about unexpected computer shutdown & leave the computer in an inoperable stage	3.18	0.71	3.31	0.84	Accepted
6	Unsaved work on the computer is loosed	2.86	0.92	2.91	0.68	Accepted
7	Power failure affects the efficacy and effectiveness of secretaries job performance.	2.90	0.83	3.11	0.56	Accepted
	Grand mean	**2.90**	**0.81**	**2.93**	**0.77**	Accepted

Data in table 2 showed that 5 out of 7 influence of power failure on secretaries in automated offices had mean values ranging from 3.86 to 3.44 which shows that respondent strongly agreed that power failure influences secretaries' job performance in automated office negatively. The remaining 2 items specifically 1 and 2 had mean value of 2.36 and 2.41 shows that respondents strongly disagreed that power failure has negative influence of the secretaries job performance in automated offices.

Research Question 3
What are the human relation challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the human relation challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices.

N=89

S/N	Items	Male X	SD	Female X	SD	Remarks
1	Secretaries inability to build team work among colleagues	2.76	0.67	2.81	0.71	Accepted
2	Secretaries inability to employ fact and initiative in dealing with people	2.69	0.83	2.74	0.92	Accepted
3	Secretaries unfriendliness & helpless to other	3.01	0.73	2.98	0.81	Accepted
4	Secretaries unable to promote harmony between people of different culture	3.21	0.84	3.01	0.65	Accepted
5	No cordial relationship with friends and customers	3.11	0.71	3.12	0.59	Accepted
	Grand Mean	2.96	0.76	2.93	0.74	Accepted

Data in table 3 showed that 5 of the human relation challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices had mean values ranging from 2.69 to 3.21 which shows that respondents strongly agreed that secretaries in automated offices faces a lot of human relation challenges.

Research Question 4

What are the moral challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices?

Table 4: Mean and Standard deviation of the respondents on moral challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices.

S/N	Items	Male X	SD	Female X	SD	*Remarks*
1	Secretaries watch ponographic movies on the internet at the expense of their job	2.84	0.71	2.93	0.73	Accepted
2	Criminal minded secretaries also uses these technologies to perfect their criminal activities	3.02	0.81	3.00	0.68	Accepted
3	Technology promotes corrupt practices among secretaries because at times they lie with it	2.76	0.71	2.91	0.56	Accepted
4	These technologies causes lack of privacy on the side of the secretaries	2.86	0.81	2.73	0.73	Accepted
5	It makes secretaries lazy because they spent a lot of time on the technologies	2.78	0.91	2.81	1.12	Accepted
6	Secretaries can also use these technologies to promote fraud through hacking and tracking people's account	2.69	0.87	2.63	0.83	Accepted
	Grand Mean	**2.83**	**0.80**	**2.84**	**0.78**	**Accepted**

Data in table 4 showed that 5 of the moral challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices had mean value ranging from 2.69 to 3.02 indicated that respondents strongly agreed that secretaries faces a lot of moral challenges in the automated offices.

Testing of the Null Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant different between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the health challenges faced by secretaries in automated office.

Table 1

Result of t-test analysis of the responses of male and female on the health challenges faced by secretaries in automated offices.

S/N	Groups	X	SD	N	df	t-cal	t-critical	P. value	Remark
1	Male	2.85	0.73	49	87	0.49	1.96	0.63	
2	Female	2.77	0.81	40					Accepted

The t-test analysis presented in Table 1 revealed that the t-calculated value of 0.49 is less than t-critical value of 1.96 with a p value of 0.63 at 0.05 level of significant and 87 degree of freedom (df). This showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the responses of male and female secretaries facing health challenges in automated offices. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the response of male and female respondents on the influence of power failure on secretaries' job performance in automated offices.

Table 2

Result of t-test Analysis of the responses of male and female on the influence of secretaries' job performance in automated offices

S/N	Groups	X	SD	N	Df	T-cal	T-critical	P value	Remark
1	Male	2.90	0.81	49					
2	Female	2.93	0.77	40	87	-0.18	1.96	0.859	Accepted

The t-test analysis presented in table 2 revealed that the t-calculated value of -0.18 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 with a p value of 0.859 at 0.05 level of significance and at 87 degree of freedom (df). This showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female on influence of power failure on secretaries' job performance in automated offices. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were reached. Secretaries in automated offices faces all the 28 items in the health challenges, influence of power failure, human relation challenges and moral challenges of technologies used in automated offices. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of responses of male and female secretaries in automated offices. Secretaries in different banks agreed that the problems identified through this study represent true problems of technologies in automated offices.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations:-

- Managers should provide medical assistance or services to secretaries and acquaint them of indent knowledge of the health hazards associated with the excess utilizations of these technologies in automated offices.
- Government should provide steady power supply to enable the secretaries perform their job effectively and efficiently in automated offices.
- The managers should provide good working environment to enable secretaries build a cordial relationship with colleagues and customers.
- Managers should put checks that will prevent the secretaries using the internet in watching pornographic movies at the expense of their job.

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