VOL. 10 NO. 7,
NOVEMBER, 2025
E-ISSN 3026-9679
P-ISSN 3026-9423

African Scholar Publications & Research International
www.africanscholarpub.com

Journal of Business Dev. and Management Res. (JBDMR)

Office Management Skills Required by Secretaries for Effective Job Performance in the Federal Polytechnic, Bida

Enonche Adakole (PhD); & Folake Abiodun Lasisi
Dept. of Office Technology and Management, the Federal Polytechnic, Bida, Niger State
Corresponding Author: agaba.idukaako@gmail.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.70382/ajbdmr.v10i7.048

Abstract

The study was carried out to identify office management skills required by secretaries for effective job performance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted by the researcher for the study. The population of the study comprised 59 respondents in The Federal Polytechnic, Bida, Niger State. The 59 respondents formed the sample for the study since the population was considered sizeable and manageable. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire based on modified four points Likert Rating Scale of Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2) and Strongly Disagreed (1). The questionnaire was validated by three experts in the Department of Office Technology and Management, The Federal Polytechnic, Bida. The researchers administered 59 copies of the questionnaire and retrieved only 51 copies from the respondents which were used for data analysis. Mean and Standard Deviation were the statistical tools used to answer the research questions while SPSS Statistic was used for data analysis. Finding from the data analysis revealed among others that ability to initiate correspondence, ability to maintain secrets and ability to prioritize activities were the office management skills required by secretaries for effective job performance. The study concluded that secretaries needed communication skills, confidential skills and organizational skills for effective job performance. Where these skills are lacking, secretaries may remain redundant, irrelevant and may lack the skills for effective job performance. The study recommended among others that secretaries should be proficient in communication by initiating correspondences, imbibe the habit of maintaining secrets and plan the activities of the office in order to meet deadline.

Key Words: Office Management, skills, organizational skills, confidentiality skills, organizational skills

Introduction

The office continues to play a significant role in the organization since it serves as a location for all organizational-related activities and the means by which the organization can accomplish its objectives. To accomplish the organization's objectives, daily tasks like bookkeeping, communication, records administration, and meetings are carried out in the office by office managers or secretaries. Consequently, the duties of secretaries or office managers in meeting the objectives of the office have been revolutionized especially in the areas of communication, telecommunication, digitalization, records management, conflict management and the host of others as a result of the advent of technology or office automation. These activities have placed more demands and responsibilities on the office managers, thus the need to possess certain skills for effective performance in order to satisfy the demand of modern business office cannot be overemphasized as there is hardly any modern business organization that operates without the use of one form of modern office technology or the other. According to Ejeka (2021), an office manager or a secretary is a member of staff who is concerned with the preparation, preservation and transmission of different types of office documents as well as conventional secretarial duties of confidential nature at various levels in an organization. For the secretaries or office managers to be able to perform their duties and make meaningful contributions to the success of the organizational goals, they also need to acquire relevant office skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving and so on. Corunacchione (2021) stressed that office skills provide a sound basis for consistent and objective performance standards about what is needed and expected in an organization in terms of human relations skills and communications skills. On the other hand, office management is a field that mainly handles all administrative works while office management skills refer to the competencies that enable office workers to manage office activities through effective planning, organizing, controlling and coordinating of human and material resources in order to achieve the goals of the organization. According to Chukwukelu and Ile (2019), office management skills needed by secretaries include data entry, word processing, telecommunication, records keeping, confidentiality, organization or scheduling of work for effective job performance.

The Latin term secretum, which means "secret" or "an officer or trustworthy employee," is where the word "secretary" originates. Consequently, a secretary is someone who helps others with private correspondence, writing, information gathering, and other duties (Sedarmayanti, 2017). According to Onoja (2020), the secretary is a professional and valuable personnel who is employed to handle office

administration such as incoming and outgoing information, filing, word processing, e-mailing, attending to visitors, preparing itinerary, taking down minutes of meeting and reporting to the boss as the case may be. The secretary is an employee who does clerical and administrative work in an office for a person or organization or somebody elected or appointed to keep records of meetings of an organization such as a club, society or committee, his duties among others are to write or respond to letters on the behalf of another person called the Principal or Boss (Alfa, Duru and Adakole, 2014).

Due to advancements in technology, a secretary's duties now extend far beyond typing and recording shorthand dictation. These days, the secretary's responsibilities included processing, editing, storing, retrieving, and occasionally creating computer-based designs for effective and efficient service delivery. This is why Nonye (2018) postulated that a secretary is a skilled and specialized employee in an organization who is expected to perform secretarial technology tasks such as: producing manuscripts, memos, letters, notice of meetings, agenda, minutes etc. According to Onoja (2020), a secretary possesses the administrative abilities necessary to manage an office efficiently, set priorities, and exercise discretion when issuing directives. By screening calls, mail, and visitors, they also save the boss' time. Furthermore, the secretary coordinates the daily routine of an office and organizes office schedules and paperwork.

One of the main causes of poor performance among secretaries in most organizations is their abject lack of communication technology skills. Many of them do not possess communication technology skills required in the various offices and have continued to negatively affect their general performances. Lack of skills in the area of webpage design, desktop publishing, office application, networking, proficiency in accessing the internet, among secretaries in offices has often been a source of worry to the management of such organizations Baba et al, (2018) maintained that any office staff of today that is lacking Information Communication Technology (ICT) would be boring, repetitive and would produce very little. Secretaries have to get themselves acquainted on how to operate new office automation such as information storage systems, the internet and other new software packages.

According to Onoja (2020), a secretary's duties have evolved over time, shifting from routine secretarial labor to a more strategic position in corporate organizations. Maintaining workflow, increasing output, and supporting executive responsibilities all depend on secretaries. Onoja lists the following as some of the secretary's duties:

1. Taking messages, managing correspondence, and returning calls
2. Keeping Track of Diaries and Setting up Appointments
3. Creating, compiling, and typing reports
4. Documentation and Filing of records
5. Setting Up and Maintaining Meetings

Ejeka (2021) defined an office manager or secretary as a staff member who handles the preparation, delivery, and preservation of numerous office papers in addition to traditional secretarial tasks of a confidential nature at different levels within an organization. This implies

that a qualified secretary should possess basic office technology skills, have sufficient knowledge of the operations of all departments within the organization where he/she works. According to Ejeka (2019), office skills offer a solid foundation for uniform and impartial performance criteria for what is required and anticipated in an organization with regard to interpersonal and communication skills. Office managers are responsible for a number of responsibilities that are fundamental to daily workplace operations. They write travel plans, organize events, handle correspondence, and maintain documentation.

Good communications skills are keys to success in life, work and relationships. The ability to show empathy, listen effectively, edit and effect valuable corrections will impel errors misunderstanding, frustration and disaster. Koko and Okogun (2020) stated that communication is the transmission of information from one source to another which involves dialogue and social exchange. Agboola and Ademiluyi (2021) argued that integrating ICT into communication processes can enhance effectiveness by ensuring that messages are received, accurately interpreted, understood, accepted, acted upon by the recipient, and confirmed through feedback. Agboola and Ademiluyi argued that, one of the main causes of poor performance among secretaries in most organizations is their abject lack of communication and technology skills. Fahmi and Oktavini (2019) mentioned that communication skills are essential for a secretary, requiring a broad vocabulary, effective listening, proper grammar and good spelling. Possessing good communication skills enables the offices manage to be neat, attractive, and polite while dealing with different people in the organization. It helps the office manager to explain facts and figure clearly, keep sentences short, meaningful and cheerful, keep paragraph short and end letters on firm and positive impression.

Many attempts have been made by academics to define "confidentiality" as a moral norm and guideline for professionals in a variety of disciplines. The word "confidentiality" is derived from the Latin word "confidentia," which means secret, confide, faith, trust, countable, and conformable (Adepoju & Akinola, 2019). Therefore, the idea of confidentiality presupposes a responsibility to keep information private within a specific group of people; it is not supposed to be known to the general public. According to Bok (2019), maintaining confidentiality is a conscious attempt to safeguard close human and material ties. Bok went on to define confidentiality as the boundaries that surround shared secrets and the process of maintaining those limits. Bok (2019) defined the duty of confidentiality as that, which is kept intentionally hidden, set apart in the mind of office administrator as requiring concealment. Confidentiality is therefore the methods used to keep things secret.

According to Coursera (2025), organizational skills are tools used by individuals to stay focused and efficiently plan, prioritize, coordinate and delegate responsibilities in order to meet set goals. Practicing organization skills is a day-to-day activity that can help manage employees' workload and equip them with the tools and strategies needed to thrive in any role. Organizational skills also include processes to keep work structured and measurable. Practicing these skills helps the individual employee to effectively complete all tasks thoroughly and on time. According to Coursera (2025), timeliness, setting priorities for office

tasks, and the capacity to settle disputes among coworkers, collaboration, delegation, and goal setting are some of the essential organizational skills that allow workers to effectively manage and collaborate with others in the company. According to the author, developing these organizational skills can help an office manager or secretary accomplish organizational objectives.

Statement of the Problem

Development and innovation in technology have brought about tremendous changes in today's offices and business environments. These innovations demand grater responsibilities and improved performance on the part of the current office managers/secretaries in view of their vital role in processing office information. This implies that today's office managers who are unable to cope with the demands of office technology will become irrelevant, low priced or even unemployed as the case may be. In order to remain relevant in the office, secretaries or office managers must possess and display certain qualities in handling office activities. Unfortunately, the problem of meeting deadline, unorganized and poor scheduling of office activities, inability to keep secrets, poor communications skills among other problems seem to have affected the effective performance of secretaries/office managers in carrying out their duties. It was as a result of the aforementioned statement, that the study was carried out in order to find out the office management skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance in The Federal Polytechnic, Bida

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to identify office management skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance in The Federal Polytechnic, Bida. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the office communications skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance in The Federal Polytechnic, Bida
2. Find out the office confidentiality skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance in The Federal Polytechnic, Bida
3. Find out the office organizational skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance in The Federal Polytechnic, Bida

Research Questions

In order to effectively carry out the study, four research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the office communications skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance in The Federal Polytechnic, Bida?
2. What are the office confidentiality skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance in The Federal Polytechnic, Bida?
3. What are the office organizational skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance in The Federal Polytechnic, Bida?

Research Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was the method adopted by the researcher to effectively carry out the study. The population of the study comprised 59 respondents in The Federal Polytechnic, Bida, Niger State. The population of 59 respondents formed the sample for the study since the population was sizeable and manageable. The instrument used for data collection was a closed ended structured questionnaire placed on modified four point Likert Rating Scale of Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2) and Strongly Disagreed (1). The questionnaire was validated by three experts in the Department of Office Technology and Management. The researchers administered 59 copies of the questionnaire and retrieved only 51 copies of the questionnaire which represents 86% returned rate. However, 8 copies of the questionnaire were not retrieved which represents 14% of the returned rate. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while SPSS statistics was used to analyze the data. The decision rule for the Mean was set at any Mean Point equal to or greater than 2.50 as accepted and any Mean Point equal to or less than 2.49 as not accepted.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 1: Analysis of responses on office communications skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance

S/N	STATEMENT	SUM	MEAN	SD	REMARK
1	Ability to initiate correspondence	109	3.76	0.45	Agreed
2	Ability to be polite	109	3.76	0.42	Agreed
3	Ability to answer telephone calls	114	3.93	0.47	Agreed
4	Ability to listen patiently and effectively	115	3.96	0.43	Agreed
5	Ability to show empathy in communication	109	3.76	0.45	Agreed
6	Ability to be persuasive	107	3.69	0.40	Agreed

Data Survey (2025)

Data in Table 1 revealed that respondents confirmed that ability to initiate correspondence, ability to be polite, ability to answer telephone calls with mean and standard deviation of 3.76, 3.76, 3.93 and 0.45, 0.42, 0.47 respectively. In addition, respondents agreed that ability to listen patiently and effectively, ability to show empathy in communication and ability to be persuasive with mean and standard deviation of 3.96, 3.76, 3.69 and 0.43, 0.45, 0.40 were the office management and communication skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance.

Table 2: Analysis of responses on office confidentiality skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance

S/N	STATEMENT	SUM	MEAN	SD	REMARK
1	Ability to safeguard sensitive information in the cabinet	112	3.76	0.38	Agreed
2	Ability to use effective password	111	3.83	0.47	Agreed
3	Ability to mark confidential information	113	3.89	0.36	Agreed
4	Ability to shred and dispose information effectively	114	3.93	0.45	Agreed
5	Ability to be deliberate in keeping secret during conversation	113	3.89	0.48	Agreed

Data Survey (2025)

Data analysis in Table 2 indicated that respondents agreed that ability to safeguard sensitive information in the cabinet, ability to use effective password, ability to mark confidential information with mean and standard deviation of 3.76, 3.83, 3.89 and 0.38, 0.47 0.36 respectively. Respondent further align their thought with ability to shred and dispose information effectively and ability to be deliberate in keeping secret during conversation with mean and standard deviation of 3.93, 3.89 and 0.45, 0.48 as the office management skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance.

Table 3: Analysis of responses on office organizational skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance

S/N	STATEMENT	SUM	MEAN	SD	REMARK
1	Ability to plan the day-to-day activities of the office	112	3.86	0.34	Agreed
2	Skills required to prioritise work	112	3.86	0.41	Agreed
3	Skills required to delegate duties to junior workers	114	3.93	0.47	Agreed
4	Ability to manage workload and stress	112	3.86	0.45	Agreed
5	Ability to solve problems	104	3.58	0.36	Agreed
6	Ability to meet deadline	108	3.72	0.38	Agreed

Data Survey (2025)

Data in Table 3 show that ability to plan the day-to-day activities of the office (mean=3.86 and SD=0.34), skills needed to prioritise work (mean=3.86 and SD=0.41), skills needed to delegate duties to junior workers (mean= 3.93 and SD=0.47), ability to manage workload and stress (mean=3.86 and SD=0.45), ability to solve problems (mean= 3.58 and SD=0.36) and ability to meet deadline (mean= 3.72 and SD=0.38) were the office management and organizational skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance according to the responses of the respondents

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings of the study was based on three research questions stated in chapter one.

1. Data analysis in in table one to answer research question 1 revealed among others that ability to initiate correspondence, ability to be polite, ability to answer telephone calls, skills to listen patiently and effectively were the office management communication skills requiredby secretaries for effective job performance. These findings aligned with the study of Fitriana, Fahmi and Oktavini (2019) which stated that excellent communication skills are essential for a secretary, requiring a broad vocabulary, effective listening, proper grammar and good spelling. Possessing good communication skills enables the offices manage to be neat, attractive, and polite while dealing with different people in the organization.

2. Data analysis in table 2 to answer research question 2 showed among others that ability to lock away sensitive information in the cabinet, ability to use effective password, ability to mark confidential information, ability to shred and dispose information effectively were the office management skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance. These findings corroborated the studies of Peschke (2017) and Bok (2019) which explained that a secret is something hidden, fact which may not be divulged. Confidentiality is that which is kept intentionally hidden, set apart in the mind of office administrator as requiring concealment. Therefore the office manager or secretary can take concealment, or hiding, to be the defining trait of secrecy.
3. The study revealed among others in table 3 that ability to plan the day-to-day activities of the office, skills required to prioritise work, skills needed to delegate duties were the office management and organizational skills needed by secretaries for effective job performance. These findings confirmed the study of Coursera (2025) which state that organizational skills are tools used by individuals to stay focused and efficiently plan, prioritize, coordinate and delegate responsibilities in order to meet set goals.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that secretaries need effective communication, confidential, organizational and technological skills for effective office management and job performance. Where these skills are lacking, secretaries may remain redundant, irrelevant and may lack the skills for effective job performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researcher recommended the following:

1. Secretaries should always be proficient in effective communication by initiating correspondences, detect errors and make corrections, especially in written communication.
2. Secretaries should always be confidential in their discussion with clients and people who may not be relevant in the achievement of organizational goals.
3. Planning, delegation and being able to meet dead line are significant for effective performance and in meeting the day-to-day activities of the organizations. As a result, secretaries are hereby advised to always organise and their work schedule for effective job performance.

REFERENCES

Adepoju, B. M. & Akinola, O. V. (2019). Duty of confidentiality and office administration: a moral consideration. African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research, 2(1) 48-56. www.abjournals.org

Agboola, J.O. & Ademiluyi, L.F. (2011). Communication competencies needed for successful entrepreneurship: Implications for polytechnic education. Business Education Journal, 8(1), 155- 168.

Alfa, M., Duruh, F. N. & Adakole, E. (2014). Accessing the impact of motivational packages on the productivity of secretaries in an organization. Journal of Professional Secretaries and Office Administrators, 22 (1) 217-226

Baba, B. A.; Aburiya A. D. & Azeesi R. (2018). Assessing the Impact on the Job of Secretaries on the Use of Information Communication Technology in Public Institutions: The Case of Bolgatanga Polytechnic. Journal of Culture, Society and Development, 44 1-7 www.iiste.org

Bok, S. (2019). Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment& and Revelation, (New York: Vintage Books. African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research, 2(1) 48-56. www.abjournals.org

Chukwukelu, E. P., & Ile, C. N. (2019). Office competencies required of business education graduates for effective performance in modern offices in imo state. *Nau Journal Of Technology And Vocational Education*, *3*(1), 54-64.

Corunacchione, E. B (2021). Fidelity and game based technology in management education, Brazilian administration review 9(2), 147-167.

Coursera, S. (2025). Organizational Skills: What They Are and Why You Need Them. www.wikipaedia.com

Ejeka, C. A. (2019). Directors' and Permanent Secretaries appraisal of office technology and management graduates' work performance in Imo State civil service, Nigeria. British Journal of Education, *7*(7), 27-35.

Ejeka, C. A. (2021). Office Management Skills Required of Office Technology and Management Graduates In Ebonyi State Civil Service. Nigerian Journal of Business Education, 8 (1), 182-189

Fitriana, N., Fahmi, M., & Oktaviani, R. (2019). Pengaruh Komunikasi, Motivasi Dan Lingkungan Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Karyawan Hotel Horison Ultima Palembang. JournalKompetitif, 8(1),153–161. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.52333%2Fkom

Koko, M.N. & Okogun, G.F. (2020). Perceived influence of modern office automation on administrative performance of staff of private business organizations in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. International Journal of Innovative Information Systems & Technology Research, 8(1), 44-53.

Nonye, A. (2018). Capacity Building in Modern Office Technology: An Imperative for Effective Secretarial Productivity. Asian Journal of Business Management, 5(2), 193- 196. doi.org/10.56910/jvm.v8i3.233

Onoja, B.L. (2020). Office automation and secretarial productivity in Rivers State university. American International Journal of Nursing Education and Practice, 1(1), 22-34

Peschke, K.H. (2017). Professional Ethics and Moral Obligation. Alcester: Goodliffe Neale). African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research, 2(1) 48- 56. www.abjournals.org

Sedarmayanti. (2017). Perencanaan dan Pengembangan SDM untuk Meningkatkan Kompetensi, Kinerja dan Produktivitas Kerja. Bandung: PT Refika Aditama.