MICROSOFT OFFICE COMPETENCIES REQUIRED BY SECRETARIES FOR EFFECTIVE JOB PERFORMANCE

[1]Dr Enonche Adakole (*MIPS, MABEN*), 08063016097, agaba.idukaako@gmail.com

[2]Folake Abiodun Lasisi (*MIPS, MABEN*), 08065437009, folakelasisi@yahoo.com

[3]Abdullahi A. Ndawancin *(ABEN, NIOIM), 08032884602, aawanci@yahoo.com*

**Department of Office Technology and Management
The Federal Polytechnic, Bida
Niger State**

Abstract

The study identified Microsoft office competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study comprised of 28 directors in four selected organizations in Minna Metropololis. The entire population was used for the study because it was sizeable and manageable. The study therefore adopted census sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire which was validated by three research experts in the department of Office Technology and Management, The Federal Polytechnic Bida. The researchers administered 28 copies of the questionnaire and retrieved only 25 copies for the study. However, 3 copies were not retrieved. Mean and standard deviation were the statistical tools used for data analysis. Findings from data analysis revealed among others that ability to manipulate keyboard for word processing (Mean=3.35 & SD=0.97), ability to insert and edit multimedia element (Mean=3.31 & SD=0.50), ability to create engaging and interacting multimedia contents(Mean= 3.18 & SD=0.85), ability to utilize online meeting tools (Mean= 3.22 & SD=0.94), ability to create and manage queries(Mean= 3.87 & SD=0.53), skills for data analysis and reporting techniques (Mean=3.88 & SD=0.57) were the Microsoft office competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance. The study concluded that secretaries must possess Microsoft Word competencies that enable them to effectively utilize Microsoft facilities without which they may become redundant or be out of job in this modern day of rapid technological advancement. The study therefore recommended among others that secretaries in the selected organizations should constantly seek avenue to update their knowledge and skills of Microsoft office applications in order to maintain their job and for effective performance.

***Key Words**: Microsoft Office, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, competencies, secretary*

Introduction

Secretaries are expected to have a variety of abilities in today's technologically advanced workplace in order to properly handle duties, communicate, and maintain a smooth office workflow. Proficiency with Microsoft Office is one of the fundamental abilities needed for

secretaries to succeed in their positions. The majority of businesses utilize Microsoft Office, which consists of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook, extensively for processing documents and information (Foulk, 2020). Therefore, a secretary is an administrative expert tasked with giving secretarial and administrative support to their superiors or head in today's technologically advanced workplace. For efficient office administration or management, the secretary acts as a bridge between coworkers, clients, and management. Majority of a secretary's administrative responsibilities are related to correspondence, including typing letters, keeping track of paper documents, recording meeting minutes, and so on. Thus, a secretary a person who is employed to perform secretarial and administrative duties such as typing, completing forms, photocopying, preparing mail, and taking minutes during meetings, attend to visitors for the smooth running of the office . According to Adakole et al. (2020), the secretary is a competent professional who can manage correspondence, complete paperwork, take minutes at meetings, conduct interviews, and manage day-to-day office activities without direct supervision.

Duties of a secretary

Abiola (2020) argued that a secretary's responsibilities have changed over time, moving from routine secretarial work to a more strategic role in business organisations. Hence, secretaries are essential for upholding workflow, boosting output, and assisting with executive duties.

Managing correspondence and calls

For internal teams, partners, and clients, secretaries serve as the first point of contact. They answer inquiries, manage phone lines, screen calls, and ensure that all contact is promptly followed up on. This ensures that all communications, both internal and external, are professional and responsive.

Manage Appointments

Effective time management is essential for both teamwork and leadership. To ensure efficiency, secretaries plan meetings, manage calendars, and avoid conflict. They act as gatekeepers, relieving CEOs of administrative responsibilities so they can focus on strategic tasks.

Typing and compiling reports

Whether they are writing proposals, letters, or performance evaluations, secretaries are crucial to the production of professional documents. They ensure timely delivery, consistent formatting, and accuracy of the information required for decision-making processes.

Documentation and Filing

An important administrative duty is maintaining the organization of both digital and physical data. Secretaries maintain orderly, safe processes that provide timely access to important documents and compliance with information governance regulations.

Maintaining Meetings

Secretaries are crucial to the smooth running of meetings since they assist with everything from scheduling and room setup to creating agendas and keeping minutes. They ensure clear follow-up and accountability for action items with their detailed notes.

The highlighted duties of secretaries, means that they have specific competencies that set them apart in their workplace. Competency is therefore, the ability to carry out certain works or job efficiently by having the requisite skills, knowledge, and abilities, according to Anderson (2023). It entails being able to utilize information, abilities, and dispositions to attain desired results.

Conversely, Microsoft Office applications are a group of software packages created to improve document creation, teamwork, and communication in a variety of business contexts. Microsoft Office applications include Word, Excel, and PowerPoint for presentations and slide shows, Outlook for managing emails and calendars, Publisher for desktop publishing and design, One Note for taking and organizing notes, A ccess for managing databases, and more, according to AbdulSalam (2020). A key component of Microsoft Office proficiency is Microsoft Word competency, which is necessary for secretaries to carry out their duties efficiently. The most popular Microsoft Word program is an essential tool for creating and modifying documents, composing and formatting reports, preparing letters and memos, creating resumes and correspondence, creating meeting minutes and notes, and more (Daff, 2021).

According to Amir (2020), Microsoft Word competences are the skills necessary to efficiently produce, edit, and format documents using Microsoft Word's features and functions. Accuracy and speed of typing, knowledge of document layout and design, proficiency with

formatting tools (e.g., font, size, color, alignment), use of styles and templates, ability to insert and edit tables, images, and other graphics, knowledge of page setup and printing options, proficiency with track changes, comments, and collaboration tools, familiarity with document security and password protection, knowledge of how to use macros and add-ins (optional), and an awareness of best practices for document management and organization are all examples of Microsoft Word competencies.

According to Olumakinwa (2019), secretaries must possess the following Microsoft Word competencies: Document Creation: The capacity to produce, store, and access Word documents for a range of business needs, including memos, reports, and letters. Formatting and Styling: The ability to format text, change fonts, margins, and line spacing, as well as apply uniform styles across pages. Table creation and management: The ability to prepare, insert, and oversee tables in documents for well-organized data display. Use and Creation of Templates: The capacity to use and produce document templates in order to guarantee uniformity and expedite formatting in official documentation. Mail Merge: The ability to create customized documents, such as letters and labels, from a database using the Mail Merge capability. The ability to modify page layout and design, add headers, footers, and page numbers, and arrange documents for printing or digital distribution. Features of Collaboration: knowledge of how to work with others on documents by utilizing the Track Changes, Comments, and document sharing capabilities.

PowerPoint competence is the ability to use PowerPoint software to create, design, and deliver engaging presentations. PowerPoint is application packages that can help the secretary create slides for presentations. With PowerPoint, users can easily create vibrant and memorable presentations that quickly communicate meaning in a professional setting. They can add animations, transitions, graphics, and other imagery to their slides, ensuring they produce presentations that are both impressive and communicative for their audience (Gleeson, 2023). Knowledge of presentation structure and design principles, proficiency in creating and editing slides with text, images, and graphics, proficiency with templates, themes, and masters, proficiency with animation, transition, and timing effects, proficiency with multimedia elements like audio and video, and familiarity with collaboration tools like co-authoring and commenting are all examples of PowerPoint competency.

Gleeson (2023) mentioned some essential skills needed to manipulate PowerPoint presentation to include but not limited to slide creation, design and formatting, multimedia

integration; Animations and Transitions, Presentation Delivery Tools, Chart and Graph Creation, Collaboration Features, Hyperlink and Action Buttons. Microsoft PowerPoint competence is a vital aspect of Microsoft Office proficiency, essential for Secretaries to effectively support their organizations' presentation and communication needs. Proficient Microsoft PowerPoint skills enable Secretaries to: Create engaging and professional presentations, Design and format slides, including text, images, and graphics, Use templates, themes, and master slides etc.

According to Chang-Boon (2018), a secretary with good knowledge of Microsoft Access is one who possesses the competencies that enable him or her to design and create effective databases to manage and store data, develop user-friendly data entry interfaces and forms, create and manage queries to extract and analyze data, and generate reports to present data in a clear and concise manner. Access competence is the ability to use Microsoft Access to design, create, and manage databases.

Furthermore, Belkis (2017) found that secretaries require the following Microsoft Access competencies: the ability to design tables, define fields and data types, set primary keys, manage relationships between tables, and create and structure a new database to store and manage large amounts of information. They also need to be proficient in creating queries to retrieve specific information from the database using filtering, sorting, and criteria functions.

A key component of Microsoft Office competency is Microsoft Access competence, which is necessary for secretaries to efficiently organize and analyze data in order to enable well-informed decision-making and organizational effectiveness. According to Bipp (2020), secretaries with strong Microsoft Access abilities can design and administer databases, create and modify tables, forms, and reports, create queries to extract and analyze data, and create links between database items. Even though Microsoft Office is essential for processing information, many secretaries still find it difficult to use its features in areas like professional typing skills, creating and managing slides, creating and managing databases, etc., which results in inefficiencies and decreased productivity. This emphasizes how important it is for secretaries to have the Microsoft Office skills they need to do their jobs well (Lloyd, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The use of Microsoft Office tools has become essential for secretaries as the office tasks are becoming more increasingly digital and technology-driven; the ability to efficiently utilize

Microsoft office is therefore sacrosanct. In spite of the fact, that secretaries might not have received adequate training or may not have possess the required skills in these applications, the onus is on them to personally make effort to acquire the skills for effective operation of Microsoft office application if the must sustain their jobs. Solomon (2021) stated that poor knowledge of digital technologies cum lack of office suit could limit the performance of secretary which can lead to errors at work and overall inefficiency as a result of the lack of basic skills for operating Microsoft office applications. This problem is further compounded by the continuous updates and new features introduced in Microsoft Office, which secretaries need to master to stay relevant in their roles. This is why the study was carried out to identify Microsoft office competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance in selected organizations in Minna Metropolis.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The main aim of the study was to identify Microsoft office competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance in selected organizations in Minna Metropolis. Specifically, the study was carried out to:

1. Identify Microsoft Word competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance in selected organizations in Minna Metropolis.
2. Identify Microsoft Power point competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance in selected organizations in Minna Metropolis
3. Find out Microsoft Access competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance in selected organizations in Minna Metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the Microsoft Word competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance in selected organizations in Minna Metropolis?
2. What are Microsoft power point competencies required by Secretaries for effective job performance in selected organizations in Minna Metropolis?
3. What are the Microsoft Access competencies required by Secretaries for effective job performance in selected organizations in Minna Metropolis?

Research Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 28 directors randomly selected from four different organizations in Minna Metropolis. A breakdown of the population shows that 8 directors were from Niger State Government House, 6 from National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB), 5 were from Chanchaga local government secretariat and 9 from Niger State Ministry of Education. The entire population was used for the study because it was sizeable and manageable. The study therefore adopted census sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire which was placed on five point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) =5points, Agreed (A) = 4points, Disagreed (D) =3points, Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 2points and Undecided (UD) = 1 point. The research instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three research experts in the department of Office Technology and Management, The Federal Polytechnic Bida to ensure that it accurately measures the research questions before it was administered to the respondents. The researchers administered 28 copies of the questionnaires to the respondents in the selected organizations in Minna Metropolis and retrieved only 25 copies of the questionnaires representing 89.2% return for the study. However, 3 copies representing 10.7% were not retrieved. Means and standard deviation were the statistical tools used for data analysis. The decision rule for the mean was set at any mean score greater than or equal to 3.00 as accepted and any mean score less than or equal to 2.99 as not accepted.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table 1 Analysis of responses on Microsoft Word competences required by secretaries for effective job performance

S/N	ITEMS	$\overline{X}$	SD	REMARK
1	Ability to understand document security and password protection	3.51	0.56	Agreed
2	Ability to store, share and retrieve document	3.17	0.90	Agreed
3	Ability to use styles, templates and themes	3.34	0.64	Agreed
4	Ability to manipulate the keyboard for word processing	3.35	0.97	Agreed

5	Ability to insert and edit multimedia element (images, videos, audio)	3.31	0.50	Agreed

Field: research data, 2025

Table 1 shows that majority of respondents agreed that ability to understand document security and password protection (Mean=3.51 & SD=0.56), ability to store, share and retrieve document (Mean=3.17 & SD=0.90), ability to use styles, templates and themes (Mean=3.34 & SD=0.64), ability to manipulate the keyboard for word processing (Mean=3.35 & SD=0.97) and ability to insert and edit multimedia element (images, document, videos, audio) (Mean=3.31 & SD=0.50) as the Microsoft Word competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance

Table 2 Analysis of responses on Microsoft PowerPoint competences required by secretaries for effective job performance

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	REMARK
6	Ability to insert audio and video playback	3.08	0.67	Agreed
7	Ability to use add-ins and extensions (PowerPoint online, PowerPoint mobile)	3.67	0.49	Agreed
8	Ability to access tables and chart structure	3.83	0.58	Agreed
9	Ability to create engaging and interacting content (animations, transitions multimedia)	3.18	0.85	Agreed
10	Ability to utilize online meeting tools	3.22	0.94	Agreed

Field: research data, 2025

Data in Table 2 show that ability to insert audio and video playback (Mean= 3.08 & SD=0.67), ability to use add-ins and extensions such as PowerPoint online, PowerPoint mobile (Mean=3.67 & SD=0.49), ability to access tables and chart structure (Mean=3.83& SD=0.58), ability to create engaging and interacting content (animations, transitions multimedia) (Mean= 3.18 & SD=0.85), ability to utilize online meeting tools (Mean= 3.22 & SD=0.94) as the power point competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance.

Table 3 Analysis of responses on Microsoft Access competences required of secretaries for effective job performance

S/N	ITEMS	$\overline{X}$	SD	REMARK
11	Ability to create and manage queries, including filtering, sorting and grouping	3.87	0.53	Agreed
12	Ability to use add-ins and extensions (eg data macros, web service)	3.02	0.76	Agreed
13	Ability to understand data analysis and reporting techniques	3.88	0.57	Agreed
14	Ability to validate data, data normalization and data integrity	3.10	0.60	Agreed
15	Ability to implement the best practice for database management and organization	3.96	0.43	Agreed

Field: research data, 2025

Analysis of data in Table 3 show that respondents affirmed that ability to create and manage queries, including filtering, sorting and grouping (Mean= 3.87 & SD=0.53), ability to use add-ins and extensions such as data macros and web service (Mean=3.02 & SD=0.76), ability to understand data analysis and reporting techniques (Mean=3.88 & SD=0.57), ability to validate data, data normalization and data integrity (Mean= & SD=)3.10, ability to implement the best practice for database management and organization (Mean=3.96 & SD=0.43) as the database management system competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance.

Discussions of Findings

Data analysis in table 1 to answer research question 1 indicated that ability to store, share and retrieve document, ability to use styles, templates and themes, ability to manipulate keyboard for word processing and ability to insert and edit multimedia element (images, document, videos, audio were the Microsoft Word competencies required by secretaries for effective job performance. These findings agreed with the study of Amir (2020) which stated that one of the important skills a secretary should possess in this technological era is the ability to manipulate the computer key board for accuracy and speed typing of document, understanding of document layout and design, proficiency in using formatting tools among others.

Data analysis in table 2 to answer research question 2 revealed among others that ability to access tables and chart structure, ability to create engaging and interacting multimedia contents, ability to utilize online meeting tools were the PowerPoint competencies required by secretary for effective job performance. These findings aligned with the work of Nonyelum, (2018) which stated that technology has changed the administration of office activities to ease the work of the secretary. As such, the secretary must acquire digital competencies such as slide creation, engaging and interacting content, creation of charts, sound effects, graphic and transition effect among others.

Data analysis in table 3 to answer research question 3 showed that ability to create and manage queries, skills for data analysis and reporting techniques, knowledge of data validation, data normalization and data integrity were the database management system required by secretary for effective job performance. These findings corroborated the study of Bipp (2020) which stated that the digital secretary is that individual professional who possesses the ability to use various applications to create query, form and report generation. Possess the ability for data entry and validation, importing and exporting data in order to meet with the enormous tasks of the modern day and business office.

Conclusions

When secretaries receive adequate training, they will make better use of material and equipment which will minimize wastages of organization's resources. Effective utilization of Microsoft office application software is sacrosanct to training and development. Hence, training and development will significantly affect the secretarial profession in terms of the quality, speed and accuracy of works performed. Training has therefore improve secretaries' behaviour and competencies in the use of various computer applications software which make them participate and add more value to the organisation's goals.

Based on findings of the study therefore, it was concluded that secretaries are required to possess Microsoft Word competencies that would enable them understand document security and password protection, possess the ability to manipulate computer keyboard for accurate and speedy typing of document among others.

For the secretaries to be gainfully employed, they must possess PowerPoint competencies that would allow them to access tables and chart structure, use add-ins and extensions, create engaging and interacting content for effective job performance.

Modern day office secretaries are required to possess database management system competencies that enable them to create and manage queries, including filtering, sorting and grouping data, understand data analysis and reporting , data validation, data normalization, best practice for database management and organization in order to remain relevant and employable.

Recommendations

Based on findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. The selected organizations should prioritize computer applications training and development programmes for secretaries to enhance their skills to effectively operate Microsoft office applications for effective job performance in the office.
2. Secretaries in the selected organizations should constantly seek avenue to update their knowledge and skills towards Microsoft office applications in order to maintain their job and to effectively performance.
3. The management of the selected organizations should periodically update and upgrade Microsoft Office Application and train secretary on new features and suite of the applications. This gesture will boost the competencies of secretaries and enhance their performance.

References

AbdulSalam, T. I. (2020). Microsoft office concept. *Journal pengabdian Nasional (JPN) Indonesia 1 (1)* , 10-15.

Adakole, E., Kolo, J. & Lasisi, F. A. (2020). Administrative skills possessed by Office Technology & Management Graduates for effective work performance in Federal Polytechnic, Bida Niger State. KWASU Business Education Journal

Amir, H. Z. (2020). Enhancing ERP Learning Outcomes Through Microsoft Dynamics. *Journal of Information Sytem Education 31 (2)*, 83-95.

Anderson, k. (2023). *introduction- contextualising global flows of competency based education: polysemy hybridity and silences 1st Edition.* Routledge.com.

Belkis, L.-H. (2017). *Database Administration: Concepts, Tools, Experiences, and Problems.* NBS Special Publication.

Bipp, T. (2020). *Digital competence: A review of the Literature and application in work place.* computer and education Ltd.

Chang-Boon, H. T. (2018). Spreadsheet Proficiency: which spreadsheet skills are important. *Journal of Inormation Technology Managemet*.

Daff, L. (2021). *Employers perceptive of accounting graduates and their world of work: software use and ICT competencies.* Taylor & francis Ltd.

Foulk, L. (2020). *A Comprehensive guild to getting started with microsoft office.* Packt Publshing Ltd.

Gillenson, M. L. (2023). *Expanding the use of Micrososft Power Point.* John Wiley & Son.

Lloyd, I. (2020). *Information Technology Law.* Oxxford University Press.

Olumakinwa, C. D. (2019). Assessment of Computer Based Competencies by confidential Secretaries for effective work performance in tertiary institutions in . *International Journal of Educational Research and Manament Technology*.

Solomon, T. (2021). *Evaluation of causes of inadequate fund and training in public universities.* academia.edu.

Yeo, L. Y. R. (2020). Antecedents of Company Secretaries' behaviour and their relationship and effect on intended whistleblowing. *The Internationl Journal of Business in   Society*