

DIGITAL RECORD MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AS PREDICTORS OF SECRETARIAL STAFF PRODUCTIVITY IN LAGOS STATE PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of digital record management practices as predictors of secretarial staff productivity in Lagos State public universities. Specifically, it investigated how digital record classification, security, and storage influence the productivity of secretarial staff. To achieve this objective, three research questions were raised and two hypotheses formulated and tested. The study population comprised 792 secretarial staff and 248 administrators across one federal and three state-owned universities in Lagos State, namely: the University of Lagos, Akoka; Lagos State University, Ojo; Lagos State University of Education; and Lagos State University of Science and Technology. Using the Taro-Yamane sampling technique, 265 secretarial staff were selected, while purposive sampling was applied to 50% of administrators (124) to ensure representation, yielding a total sample of 389 respondents. Administrators included heads of departments, directors, and deans, who were well positioned to assess the productivity of secretarial staff attached to their offices. Data were collected using two validated instruments: the Secretarial Staff Productivity Questionnaire (SSPQ) and the Digital Record Management Practices Questionnaire (DRMPQ). Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, and percentages were used to summarise demographic data and address the research questions. A t-test was used to test Hypothesis One at a 0.05 level of significance. Results revealed a t-value of 4.066 with a p-value < 0.001, confirming a significant difference in job productivity between staff with effective and less effective record management practices. The study concluded that better record management practices enhance secretarial productivity and recommended continuous workshop training on digital record maintenance for secretarial staff in Lagos State universities.

Keywords: Productivity, Public Universities, Management, Record and Secretarial staff

Introduction

The importance of productivity among secretarial staff in Lagos State Public Universities is crucial because it directly impacts how Lagos State Public Universities efficiently and effectively use their resources, which ultimately contribute to the achievement of their goals and objectives. By focusing on productivity, secretarial staff can make the most of available time, knowledge, information, people, equipment, materials, and effort, leading to better overall institutional performance. Efficient and effective secretarial work, therefore, contributes to the smooth functioning and overall progress of higher institutions, while also affecting the nation's education system and potential of its economy. In the context of this study, Secretarial staff is defined to be a personal assistant or administrative

assistant in a Public Universities who handles correspondence, manage records and budgets, safe keeps documents, answering telephone calls, interacting with customers, maintaining websites, and operating the computer among others. Secretarial staff productivity is a measure of the quantity and quality of work done, considering the amount of resources or inputs (time, materials, money, technology, and etcetera) used in satisfying customers in tertiary institutions (Zayum *et al.*, 2018).

Reports from studies on digital records management practices have shown mixed findings which necessitate a comprehensive investigation into the complex interplay. For instance, studies showed significant influence of record management practices (records capture/creation, records maintenance and use and records preservation and disposition) on job performance and organisational effectiveness of registry staff in tertiary institutions in Oyo State and universities in South West Nigeria (Ajibola, 2022; Dada and Ogunwemimo, 2024). On the other hand, records capture or creation, security and disaster management, and records maintenance did not statistically and significantly influence job satisfaction of university registry personnel in South-West, Nigeria (Otuza *et al.*, 2023).

Within the context of this study, four measures of secretarial staff productivity include customer satisfaction, time efficiency, quality of work performed and innovativeness (Hatam *et al.*, 2014). Customer satisfaction refers to the total of attitudes, perceptions and feelings that customers or people have as regards the secretarial services delivered in tertiary institutions. If customers have positive attitudes or good feelings about the secretarial staff service delivery or work done, it indicates that the secretarial staff are productive within tertiary institutions, Nigeria.

Time efficiency refers to how quickly and resourcefully secretarial staff complete their tasks. It is about doing things with minimal wasted time and effort within tertiary institutions to how quickly and resourcefully secretarial staff complete their tasks. (Priyanshu, 2024). Thus, the ability of secretarial staff to get a great deal of work done promptly is a pointer to their productivity. Quality of work performed by secretarial staff implies the degree to which their work done conforms to the established standard, appropriateness of the inputs available, right processes, method of working, and quality of organisational information and work environment within tertiary institutions, Nigeria (Hatam *et al.*, 2014). Innovativeness is the deliberate behaviour of secretarial staff to develop or apply new ideas to enhance role performance in secretarial duties in tertiary institutions, Nigeria (Bawuro *et al.*, 2018).

Digital records management can be defined as the administrative tasks aimed at attaining cost-effectiveness and efficiency in the creation, usage, storage, security, and disposal of educational institutions' records over their whole life cycle, as well as in making the data they contain accessible to assist tertiary institutions. It consists of various practices that secretarial staff carry out for efficient and systematic control and handling of digital or electronic records. As stated by Eze and Uzoigwe (2019), effective digital record management practices enable faster access to data, which in turn accelerates decision-making processes and reduces bureaucratic delays. As most traditional office routines are going technological in this 21st century, there is a need for secretarial staff to be able to perform digital records management practices to meet up with the changing institutional environment and secretarial functions in this digital age. These practices include creation,

classification, maintenance/use, storage, retrieval, security/protection, and final disposition of digital records (Babalola *et al.*, 2021).

The study focuses on three key digital records management practices: digital record creation, classification, and storage. Digital record classification involves systematically arranging documents based on content, value, sensitivity, and legal or regulatory requirements to ensure compliance, reduce risks, and facilitate effective storage, retrieval, and disposal in tertiary institutions. Digital record storage refers to the systematic preservation of documents, files, or information by secretarial staff for fiscal, legal, research, or administrative purposes, ensuring their availability for as long as needed. Digital record security entails safeguarding and preserving records against loss, damage, unauthorised access, or criminal threats, thereby maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of institutional information.

Statement of the Problem

They seem to be fair to a moderate level of productivity among Lagos State Public Universities' secretarial staff, which has been observed by some researchers. Some of the secretarial staff are not meeting the expected demand for productivity of their respective public tertiary institutions. Some are not proficient in the utilization of modern office technology and have below average innovative work behaviour and moderate level of organizational citizenship behaviour. Literature is replete with evidence of low to average level of productivity and performance among secretaries (Adeyeye & Erwat, 2024; Bankole *et al.*, 2020; Dosunmu, 2020; Onche, 2023). Existing literature seems to have also failed to adequately explore digital record management practices in areas of digital record classification, security/protection and storage on secretarial staff job productivity in tertiary institutions which creates a gap in literature that this study sought to address. This study therefore seeks to investigate the extent to which digital record management practices predict secretarial staff productivity in Lagos state Public Universities, Nigeria

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine digital record management practices as predictors of secretarial staff job productivity in tertiary institutions. Mainly, this study seeks to:

1. Find out the level of productivity (customer satisfaction, time efficiency, quality of work performed and innovativeness) among secretarial staff in Lagos state Public Universities, Nigeria
2. Examine the level at which secretarial staff can carry out digital record management practices (digital record classification, digital record storage and digital record security/protection) for productivity in Lagos State Public Universities, Nigeria

Research Questions

This study attempts to find answers to the following questions:

- i. What is the level of job productivity (customer satisfaction, time efficiency, quality of work performed and innovativeness) among secretarial staff in Lagos state Public Universities, Nigeria?

- ii. What is the level of record management practices among secretarial staff in Lagos State Public Universities, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the level at which secretarial staff can carry out record management practices for productivity in Lagos State Public Universities, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There are no significant differences among secretarial staff job productivity (customer satisfaction, time efficiency, quality of work performed and innovativeness) in Lagos state Public Universities, Nigeria

H₀₂: There is no significant joint and relative difference of record management practices (digital record classification, digital record security and digital record storage) on productivity among secretarial staff in Lagos state Public Universities, Nigeria

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. quantitative data collection and analysis techniques were used to generate a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter. This design will thus employ the use of questionnaires to gather responses from participants. The use of a questionnaire helps to provide a thorough examination of the link between digital record management practices and secretarial staff job productivity in Lagos State Public Universities, Nigeria. The population of the study consists of 792 Secretarial staff and 248 Administrators from Lagos State Public Universities. The Taro-Yamane sampling technique was used to sample several Two hundred and sixty five (265) secretarial staff for the study while the purposive sampling technique was used to select 50% of the two hundred and forty- eight (248) Administrators in the sampled universities in the four Lagos state federal and state Public Universities (University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos State University of Education (LASUED) and Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH) to make a sample size of one hundred and twenty-four (124) Administrators, In total 389 respondents participated in this study. The percentage of 50% was used because the population size of Administrators is an average size using structured questionnaires. The Administrators comprise Heads of Departments, Directors, and Deans, who are directly or indirectly in charge of secretarial staff or have secretarial staff assigned to their office at the selected Lagos state public universities. Secretarial staff are chosen because this study concerns them, as it deals with their job productivity in secretarial duties. Hence, they are this study's target population. Administrators are chosen because they know the secretaries well, as most of them have secretarial staff assigned to their offices. They can therefore judge the productivity of their secretaries in areas of customer satisfaction, time efficiency, quality of work performed and innovativeness. This will be done to eliminate bias in responses in the secretarial staff's job productivity. Universities are chosen because of the crucial role of government tertiary institutions in the nation's building and production of manpower for the society's industrial, educational, health and economic sectors. The productivity of secretarial staff is crucial to achieving the goals of universities in the nation. The research instruments for this study were two self-designed and structured questionnaires, tagged: "Secretarial staff productivity questionnaire (SSPQ) to be responded to by Administrators in Lagos state

public universities, and Digital Record Management Practices Questionnaire (DRMPQ) to be responded to by secretarial staff in Lagos state public universities.

Data Presentation

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between record management practices and secretarial staff productivity in Lagos State Public Universities, Nigeria

Table 1:

T-test result of the difference between record management practices and secretarial staff productivity in Lagos State Public Universities, Nigeria

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig.	Mean Difference
Score	Equal variances assumed	2.874	0.092	4.066	155	0.000	5.42
	Equal variances not assumed			4.041	150.392	0.000	5.42

The independent samples t-test yielded a t-value of 4.066 with a p-value less than 0.001, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that there is a significant difference in job productivity between staff with effective and less effective record management practices.

Therefore, since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant difference between record management practices and secretarial staff job productivity in Lagos state Public Universities, Nigeria is hereby rejected. The results show that secretarial staff who engage in better record management practices demonstrate significantly higher job productivity compared to those with lower engagement in such practices. This finding correlates with Ajibola (2022) undertook a study on record management practices as a predictor of registry staff job performance in selected tertiary institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study covered three oldest tertiary institutions in Oyo State. The study was conducted using a survey research design. The study's population consisted of one thousand, eight hundred (1,800) registry employees. Using Krejcie and Morgan's sample size calculation, the sample size was determined to be three hundred and seventeen (317). The questionnaire was utilized as a research tool, which was validated by professionals in the field of study. To evaluate the reliability of the research instrument, a pilot study was undertaken and the Cronbach's alpha reliability test was used to evaluate the data collected. The data acquired through the questionnaire was examined using the SPSS package's frequency distribution and basic correlation analysis. The major findings revealed there is a significant relationship between record management practices and job performance of registry staff in tertiary institutions in Oyo State. The null hypothesis was

rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. It was recommended amongst others that the management of tertiary institutions in Oyo State should upgrade facilities in the registry for proper record management practices.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant joint and relative difference of record management practices (digital record classification, digital record maintenance/use, digital record storage) on job productivity among secretarial staff in Lagos state Public Universities, Nigeria.

Table 2:

Joint and Relative difference of record management practices (digital record classification, digital record maintenance/use, digital record storage) on job productivity among secretarial staff in Lagos state Public Universities, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
1 (Constant)	0.107	0.371	0.288	0.773
Record Classification	0.259	0.052	4.945	0.000
Maintenance/use	0.307	0.049	6.248	0.000
Records Storage	0.207	0.052	3.975	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job productivity

$R = .577$, $R^2 = .333$, Adj. $R^2 = .316$, Std. Error of the Estimate = .521

The regression results indicate that record management practices, which are digital record classification, digital record maintenance/use, and digital record storage, have significant positive contributions to job productivity ($R = 0.577$). This implies that the more these practices are effectively implemented, the higher the productivity level of secretarial staff. Since the joint and relative effects of digital record management practices are statistically significant, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant joint and relative difference of record management practices (digital record classification, digital record maintenance/use, digital record storage,) on job productivity among secretarial staff in Lagos state Public Universities, Nigeria is rejected. This analysis established that record management practices, particularly digital classification, use/maintenance, and storage, are important predictors of job productivity.

This finding correlates with Obulor et al. (2021) carried out a study on records maintenance as determinants of job performance of employees in Ogba/ Egbema/ Ndoni local government council, Rivers state, Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design. The population of the study consisted of two hundred and two (202) administrative staff who handled records in the LGA. A self-developed questionnaire was used to obtain data for the study. The questionnaire was subjected to content and face validity type and Cronbach's Alpha for estimation of its reliability, which yielded a coefficient value of 0.892. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that there

is a significant influence of record maintenance on the job performance of employees. Specifically, records maintenance had a significant positive influence on the job performance of employees. Results also showed that there is a high level of job performance of employees in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council, Rivers State, Nigeria. It was concluded that records maintenance contributed to the high level of job performance of employees in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Council, Rivers State, Nigeria. It was recommended that the high level of employees' job performance should be sustained by improving record maintenance practices.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were made by the researcher based on the study:

1. Results show that secretarial staff who engage in better record management practices demonstrate significantly higher job productivity compared to those with lower engagement in such practices
2. The regression results indicate that record management practices, which are digital record classification, digital record maintenance/use, and digital record storage, have significant positive contributions to job productivity (R 0.577).

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by the researcher;

1. It was recommended amongst others that secretaries in Lagos state public universities should always organise in-house training as well as enrol the secretaries in workshops and training programmes for them to acquire relevant records maintenance practice.
2. Policies to be formulated by university management to guide effective records maintenance to enhance the job satisfaction of secretarial staff in Lagos state public universities.

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