



## DIGITAL COMPETENCIES AS CORRELATE OF SECRETARIAL PERSONNEL EFFICIENCY IN OSUN STATE POLYTECHNIC, IREE

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### Abstract

*With numerous digital technologies being introduced into contemporary office management, and the changing business environment, achieving efficiency in office operations will require digital competencies. This study surveyed the digital competencies of secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree and examined the correlation between the competencies and the personnel's efficiency. The study adopted descriptive research design. The population of the study consisted forty-eight (48) secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree. The study used total enumeration. Four research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection, and the data collected were analyzed using simple mean to answer the research questions while the hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient with the aid of SPSS. The analysis revealed that the secretarial personnel do not possess digital document management and digital meeting management competencies. It was however revealed that the personnel possess digital communication competencies. The analysis also showed that the secretarial personnel are generally slightly efficient in performing duties relating to digital technology. The hypothesis tested revealed digital document management and digital communication competencies both have moderate positive correlation with efficiency of the personnel. The study concluded that digital competencies generally have positive moderate correlation with the efficiency of the secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic. The study recommended that management of the institution should continuously provide training and retraining opportunities on the digital technologies for secretarial personnel as these technologies keep evolving.*

**Keywords:** Digital competencies, Secretarial personnel, efficiency

### Introduction

Changes in technological environment is radically overhauling office management processes. The contemporary office is being transformed by the influx of digital technologies useful for office management functions. Digital transformation of offices is a recurrent issue as new technologies are always on



the horizon as viewed by Peladeau (n.d). Zain, Eryanto and Marsofiyati (2019) in their study, found that larger percentage of office works are now being automated with the use of ICT. Office automation, they opined, is a must in every office as new technology occupy the business environment. Automation and digitalization, according to Deloitte (2017), require rapid response associated with equipping people with required skills and competency. In his view, usage of digital technologies spans through varieties of office functions including staff recruitment. Using digital devices like iPhone with internet access is shaping everyday lives and becoming integral part of many occupation including office management.

Achieving efficiency is the goal of every office. Alozie and Nnorom (2015) attested to this when they viewed every office as always striving to achieve efficiency in her daily activities in order to realize target goals which can only be achieved by going digital. For organizations to achieve success, employees, especially secretarial personnel at the centre of office management functions must be effective and efficient in their job performance. Meanwhile, Zain *et al* (2019) had observed that office work can be easily and efficiently performed through the use of digital office equipment. Deloitte (2017) also opined that use of computers and other digital devices make office staff more productive rather than making them redundant.

Managing the office for success involve efficient correspondence and document management, effective communication process, effective meeting management, and functional record management. Office management is thus dominated by sharing/filing documents, chairing and attending meetings and transmitting information among others. AIIM (2015) observed that correspondence can be managed through digital mailroom. Core business processes and office management functions are steadily being transformed into digital forms. They opined that digital mailroom can be used to scan inbound mails, minimizing the use of paper. Similarly, Zain *et al* (2019) found 96% of their respondents responding in the affirmative that MSOffice is now widely used for correspondence management. It is important for secretarial personnel to be able to manage the filing and indexing for both digital and hard copy documents. They also affirmed that mobile and smartphones are now being used as digital tools not only for communication, but also for performing wide range of office functions. Many IT-based applications are being employed for office works including Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Team etcetera to organize and host meetings. While at the same time, proceedings of the meetings can be recorded by the host. AIIM (2015) observed that most people in the office now use video link and multimedia to attend meetings and conferences remotely, and virtual presence systems are becoming ubiquitous. Also, meeting documents can be shared via email and cloud technology as viewed by AIIM (2015).

Although the use of social media is largely discouraged at work, Bizzi (2018) saw it as a powerful communication tool for employees. He opined that



social media serves as means of collaboration amidst employees. Video Conferencing System was also identified as digital meeting management technology with features of identity which control and manage the system. Multimedia conferencing like Multiplex are useful for video conferencing solutions, bridging the gap of social distancing and geographical barriers in meeting management.

Competency, according to Akarahu and Ile (2014), is a standardized requirement for an individual to properly perform a specific job. It is the capability for doing something well. In the context of this study, digital competencies refer to skills and capabilities for handling and manipulating digital technologies for performing office management functions in relation to the secretarial personnel. Digital competency therefore, can be viewed as physical, psychomotor and sensory capabilities to manipulate digital devices/technologies well to bring about required results. The study therefore, aimed at surveying the digital competencies of secretarial personnel in document management, communication and meeting management and also correlate these with the level of efficiency of the secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree

### **Statement of the Problem**

Numerous digital technologies are being introduced into contemporary office management. The business environment keeps changing with continuous technological innovations. Most office management functions like documents management, internal and external communication, filing and record keeping, and meeting management are being digitalized for cost and space management and for higher productivity and efficiency. Organizations that will remain competitive in the dynamic socio-economic and business environment are being faced with the challenge of adopting digital transformation. It was observed that although most organizations strive to embark on digital transformation, most employees have not developed the skills and competencies to effectively manage the digital workplace. Since secretarial personnel are considered to be at the center of office management, they are mostly expected to possess competencies required for managing the digital office. It is against this background that the study seeks to survey the digital competencies possessed by the secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree and find out how these relate to their work efficiency.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the digital document management competencies possessed by the secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree?
2. What are the digital communication competencies possessed by the secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree?
3. What are the digital meeting management competencies possessed by the secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree?



4. How efficient are secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree?

### Research Hypothesis

There is no significant correlation between digital competencies and efficiency of secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree

### Methods

The study adopted descriptive research design. The population of the study consist forty-eight (48) secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree. The entire population formed the sample size. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire consists 20 items structured in 4-point Likert type mode with responses ranging from Highly Possessed/Highly Efficient (HP/VE – 4), Moderately Possessed/Moderately Efficient (MP/E – 3), Slightly Possessed/Slightly Efficient (SP/SE – 2), to Not Possessed/Not Efficient (NP/NE – 1). The questionnaire was administered through personal contact to give room for clarification where necessary. All copies of questionnaire distributed were returned duly completed. The data was analyzed using simple Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient with the aid of SPSS.

### Results

**Research Question 1:** What are the digital document management competencies possessed by the secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree?

*Table 1: Mean responses on digital document management competencies possessed by Secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree*

		N=48		
S/N	Digital document management competencies	X	SD	Remark
1.	Ability to use digital mailroom to scan inbound mails	1.50	0.50	Not possessed
2.	Ability to manage document using cloud technology	1.00	0.00	Not possessed
3.	Ability to use digital signature for electronic documents	1.00	0.00	Not possessed
4.	Ability to use digital storage devices for electronic filing &	2.38	0.48	S. Possessed
5.	indexing	3.15	0.79	M. Possessed
	Ability to use computer to produce documents			
	Grand Mean	1.80		S. Possessed

Table 1, showing grand mean of 1.80 indicated that the secretarial personnel slightly possess digital document management competencies. The Table revealed that they however, moderately possessed the competence of manipulating the computer to produce documents.

**Research Question 2:** What are the digital communication competencies possessed by the secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree?

*Table 2: Mean responses on digital communication competencies possessed by Secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree**N=48*

S/N	Digital Communication Competencies	X	SD	Remark
6.	Ability to use email technology for internal and external communication	2.71	0.65	Moderately
7.	Ability to manipulate iPhone for online communication	2.58	0.67	Possessed
8.	Ability to use smartphone to transmit written and oral messages internally and externally	3.35	0.48	Moderately
9.	Ability to connect with clients online via the internet	2.60	0.48	Possessed
10.	Ability to use social media to transmit information	2.73	0.44	Moderately possessed
				Moderately Possessed
				Moderately Possessed
				Moderately Possessed
				Moderately Possessed
	Grand Mean	3.00		Moderately possessed

Table 2 revealed a grand mean of 3.00 indicating that the secretarial personnel moderately possess digital communication competencies. All the items in the Table rated between 2.58 and 3.35 which fall within the moderately possessed response.

**Research Question 3:** What are the digital meeting management competencies possessed by the secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree?

*Table 3: Mean responses on digital meeting management competencies possessed by Secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree**N=48*

S/N	Digital Meeting Management Competence	X	SD	Remark
11.	Ability to send notice and agenda of meeting via email	2.85	0.61	M. Possessed
12.	Ability to organize online meeting using Zoom Application	1.00	0.00	Not possessed
13.	Ability to use Google Meet Application to host meeting	1.00	0.00	Not possessed
14.	Ability to record proceedings of online meeting on Zoom and Google Meet	1.00	0.00	Not possessed
15.	Ability to use Video Conference System (VCS)	1.00	0.00	Not possessed
	Grand Mean	1.37		Not possessed

Table 3 showed a grand mean of 1.37 indicating that the secretarial personnel do not possess digital competencies for meeting management. The Table, however revealed that they possessed the competence for using email to send notice and agenda of meetings.

**Research Question 4:** How efficient are the secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree?



Table 4: Mean responses on the effectiveness of secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree

N=48				
S/N	Areas of Secretarial Efficiency	X	SD	Remark
16.	Document production	3.60	0.49	Highly Efficient
17.	Conversion of paper document to digital form	1.65	0.00	Slightly Efficient
18.	Quick retrieval of record for reference	2.60	0.00	Moderately Efficient
19.	Organizing online meetings	1.00	0.48	Not Efficient
20.	Electronic transmission of official information to reach target audience within few minutes	1.65	0.79	Slightly Efficient
Grand Mean		2.10		Slightly efficient

Table 4 showed that the secretarial personnel are highly efficient and moderately efficient in document production and retrieval of records with the mean responses of 3.60 and 2.60 respectively. They are however slightly efficient in converting paper document to digital form and also in transmitting official information electronically within few minutes with both having the means of 1.65. The secretarial personnel are not efficient in organizing online meetings. The grand mean of 2.10 indicated that the secretarial personnel are generally slightly effective in performing duties relating to digital technology.

### Testing of Hypothesis

There is no significant correlation between digital competencies and efficiency of secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree

Table 5: Correlation between digital competencies and efficiency of secretarial personnel

Dependent Variable		N	SPE	Remark
Independent variables				
DDMC	Pearson Correlation	48	.672	Moderate positive correlation
	Sign.		.000	
DCC	Pearson Correlation		.670	Moderate positive correlation
	Sign.		.000	
DMMC	Pearson Correlation		-.116	Weak negative correlation
	Sign.		.434	

Table 5 showed correlation between DDMC (digital document management competencies) and SPE (secretarial personnel efficiency) to be .672. This is a moderate positive correlation. Similarly, DCC (Digital communication competencies) have moderate positive correlation with SPE with  $r=.670$  However, DMMC (Digital meeting management competencies) have a weak negative correlation with SPE with  $-.116$

### Discussion of Findings

On the digital document management competencies possessed by secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree, it was found that secretarial personnel slightly possessed digital document management competencies except ability to use personal computer to produce document.



This finding contradicts Deloitte (2017), who opined that digitization of the contemporary office requires rapid response associated with equipping workers with required digital skills and competency. This deficiency implies there will be need for training and retraining if the secretarial personnel will be able to manage the contemporary digital office.

Secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree were found to moderately possess digital communication competencies. This implies the personnel have access to the identified digital communication technologies and that they are user-friendly. However, the secretarial personnel were found to be deficient in the acquisition and use of digital technologies for meeting management. This implies most offices in the said institution still engage in brick and wall, face-to-face meeting and are yet to adopt digital meeting management technologies like Zoom, Google Meet, Video Conferencing System etcetera.

On efficiency of secretarial personnel, it was found that the personnel are highly efficient only in document production and record retrieval but not efficient in organizing online meetings and converting paper documents to digital form for easy storage and future references. This reflects and confirms the finding on the deficiency of the secretarial personnel in digital meeting management competency.

The hypothesis tested showed moderate positive correlation between DDMC, DCC and SPE. This finding corroborates Zain et al (2019) who observed that efficiency of office works can be achieved through the use of digital technologies.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it was concluded that secretarial personnel in Osun State Polytechnic, Iree moderately possess the competence to use personal computer to produce documents but are lacking in the ability to use digital technologies like cloud technology, digital signature and digital mailroom scanning. The personnel possess digital communication competencies but are lacking in digital meeting management competency. The secretarial personnel are generally slightly efficient in the performance of their digital-technology related duties.

It could also be concluded that these digital competencies (DDMC and DCC) generally have positive moderate correlation with the efficiency of the secretarial personnel.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion, this study recommends the following:

1. Management of the institution to continuously provide training and retraining opportunities on the digital technologies for office management for the secretarial personnel as these technologies keep evolving.



2. The secretarial personnel should avail themselves of the opportunity to learn the use of digital office technologies to update themselves and keep pace with the technological changes.
3. Training institutions should update the curriculum for training secretarial personnel for acquisition of required competence for manipulating digital office technologies.

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