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## THE INFLUENCE OF OFFICE AUTOMATION ON SECRETARIES JOB PERFORMANCE IN GOVERNMENT MINISTRY IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** ICT has enhanced the proficiency of secretaries on their jobs by enabling them to process accurate and relevant information within the shortest possible time. The advent of ICT has dramatically changed the roles and effectiveness of secretaries in government offices; hence there is need for availability of ICT resources/equipment in government offices as well as acquisition of requisite skills and competencies by the secretaries. Structured questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection and 96 copies of this questionnaire were administered in six government ministries in Ondo state. With the population of 84 secretaries, no sampling was drawn due to the small number. The mean statistics and standard deviation were used to analyze the ICT resources available for the secretaries and the skills acquired by them. Items with mean score of 2.50 and above on the 4-point response scale were accepted while those below 2.50 do not qualify to be accepted. The regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance were used to analyse the effects of office automation on secretary personal quality, interpersonal skills, job related skills, and professional behaviour. The researcher recommended among others that government ministries should procure the latest model of ICT facilities to enhance secretarial functions and create opportunity for training and re-training of the secretaries to be abreast with the new changes and advancement.

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### INTRODUCTION

The introduction of sophisticated office technology equipment like computers, word processors and other information technology resources coupled with new management techniques have completely changed old work habits in the office and triggered off a new business orientation thus making moribund the older methods of business transaction. Secretarial functions everywhere in the world have undergone a lot of technical changes. As a result, modern office equipment which gives the secretary the opportunity to increase her efficiency abound. Many office functions and secretarial duties which were previously done manually have been mechanized (Nwaokwa and Okoli 2012). In the contemporary work environment, employers are in search for secretaries who possessed knowledge, skills and competencies that would



enhance better job performance. As such the development of high level of efficacy in ICT will affect the success of the secretary's job performance in the ever increasing information-based environment. Information technology has drastically changed the office functions, jobs are now done in a new way. Information could be transferred, stored, retrieved and processed for onward transmission with the use of technology. As opined by Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012), many secretaries lack the communication technology skills required in the various offices and this has greatly affected their performance. The effect of office automation is to increase the organizational productivity by redefining the office work, improve the quality and accuracy of output (Dosumu et al 2017). For an office secretary, office automation reduces the stress of role overload/identification; it affects the perceived status and job satisfaction and it has a significant influence on the workers' feelings towards the organizational goals. The introduction and development in Information Communication Technology (ICT) have changed the methods and procedure of doing office work by the Secretarial staff. Thus, the diversities of these office technologies require the secretary to possess new skills and sub-skills to enable him/her to be relevant in the modern office (Atakpa 2010). According to Okwuanaso and Obayi (2003), information communication technology has posed challenges to secretaries as they communicate in the present day office. In the past, secretaries' functions were performed manually such that documents and records were maintained on papers, stored in files and drawers. The consequences of global development in the modern information and communication technology area, calls for corresponding development of new skills in office communication by all secretaries and office managers.

Investment in networks of computer-based workstations and other automated equipment is transforming traditional manual office methods and paper communications media. This transformation has resulted in the development of automated systems that rely on electronic collaboration and communication networks, text processing, image processing and other information and communication technologies (Adedoyin 2010). Information is a basic resource in today's society. We are living in a global information society, with a global economy that is increasingly dependent on the creation, management and distribution of information resources. People in many

nations no longer live in agricultural societies, composed primarily of farmers, or even industrial societies, where a majority of the workforce consists of factory workers. Instead, the workforce in many nations consists primarily of workers in services occupations or knowledge workers, that is, people who spend most of their workday creating, using and distributing information, (O'Brien, 1996). Today, the Information and Communication Technology revolution has dramatically changed all these and is moving quickly towards changing the work itself.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The emergence of office technologies in modern day organizations has challenged the occupational skills of the employees including the secretaries. Hence, these communication technologies have recently revolutionized office skills and rendered some skills such as transcription skills, typing on the manual typewriter obsolete and has also given rise to previously unknown skills such as webpage design, desktop publishing, networking, internet skills etc., in modern organizations. This development has obviously challenged the skills and functions of secretaries. Again these advancements in communication technologies has led to the need for secretaries to reposition themselves in order to continue to be relevant in their performance of office functions as well as cope with the trend of technological changes in today's modern offices.

The incorporation of ICT facilities as an important tool in the administration and execution of job in the government and private sector cannot be overemphasized. Less importance has been placed on the contribution of ICT to job effectiveness of secretaries whose major responsibilities are to process information, disseminate and manage information. The ineffectiveness of some secretaries in handling ICT in today's ever-changing techno-office seems conspicuous. One of the main causes of poor performance among secretaries in most organizations is their abject lack of communication technology skills as highlighted above. 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, etc., among secretaries in government offices have often been a source of worry to the management of such organizations. Researchers have described a secretary as a person who is versatile in the effective use of modern office automation and ICT. Despite the introduction of these emerging technologies to organisations, some secretaries are still being subjected to old method of handling office tasks. Such old method of operation leads to ineffectiveness and unproductivity among the office workers. Consequently, the study was designed to examine the influence of office automation and information technology on secretaries' work-related effectiveness.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to ascertain the influence of office automation on the performance of secretaries in government ministries in Ondo State. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine ICT resources available and skills required by secretaries in government ministries in Ondo State
2. Establish the relationship between the ICT skills acquired by secretaries and their utilization of Internet for effective job performance.
3. Determine the effects of office automation on secretary personal quality, interpersonal skills, Job related skills, and professional behaviour

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "secretary" is another term that has a wide meaning and it is important to appreciate the various meanings associated with it. According to Whitehead (1994), the secretary is usually thought to be a person who takes dictation from a manager or other senior members of staff and turns the notes into typed correspondence. The term means all sorts of things for many people and certainly many of those who work in offices choose to be under the secretarial umbrella (Harding 1994). Office automation is the use of self-regulating machines to execute office tasks formerly done manually or through semi-mechanical means. Office automation has changed the secretarial duties from the manual method to purely mechanized process. According to Olsgaard (1989), office automation involves the application of integrated information handling tools and methods to improve the

productivity of people in an office operation. As such, office automation is the integration of the computer application into the office tasks to make the work faster, easier and consistent. Spencer (1981) described office automation as the process of replacing human work with work done by machines or system designed to perform a specific combination of action automatically or repeatedly.

As noted by (Edwin, 2008), the roles of secretaries in contemporary times have changed tremendously from the traditional roles. They have access to modern office technology such as the internet, intercom and fax. These technologies make work much easier. Dulek and Fielden (1999) also noted that it is easier to send messages using telex, electronic mails, fax and telephones. He noted that the era of computers and information technology helps users to write and edit and send memos, letters and reports. According to Duniya (2011) modern day offices are equipped with technologically sophisticated gadgets that inform accuracy and efficiency of work output.

Chukwumezie (2002) stated that, if an office must function effectively especially in this country, the organization must go technologically in its basic operation. Onifade (2009) stated that machined make for higher accuracy and speedy operations and reduces work tensions and also relieves monotony and fatigue on the part of workers. As noted by (Edwin, 2008), the roles of secretaries in contemporary times have changed tremendously from the traditional roles. They have access to modern office technology such as the internet, intercom and fax. These technologies make work much easier. Dulek and Fielden (1999) also noted that it is easier to send messages using telex, electronic mails, fax and telephones. He noted that the era of computers and information technology helps users to write and edit and send memos, letters and reports. According to Duniya (2011) , modern day offices are equipped with technologically sophisticated gadgets that informs accuracy and efficiency of work output.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is concerned with managing and processing information. This is made possible through the use of electronic computers and computer software to manage information (Okute, 2001). According to Atakpa (2010), secretarial functions the world over have undergone tremendous technical transformations. He noted further



that secretarial functions which were previously done manually have been mechanized. On the other hand, Okwuanaso and Obayi (2003) have noted that ICT has posed several challenges to secretaries in the execution of their duties. Supporting this claim, Eze (2000) asserted that any office staff of today that is lacking in Information Communication Technology would find work boring and uninteresting.

According to Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012), the introduction of ICT has changed the roles of secretaries. They opined that ICT has influenced the performance of secretaries in delivery of information, accuracy and effectiveness at the work place. Nonye (2013) researching into the need for capacity building of secretaries in modern office technology concluded that secretaries should be abreast of the use of modern office technology and recommended the need for periodic training programmes to be organized for secretaries to update their knowledge on modern office skills.

Examining the effects of information and communication technology on the performance of public sector secretaries, Buseni (2013) asserted that the quality of a secretary is a function of reliable and reporting framework. The study revealed that the use of computer, telecommunication and video techniques positively and significantly affected productivity of public sector secretaries. Defining a computer, Oliver and Chapman (1993) espoused the functions in an office setting. Kenedy (2004) stated that, influence of workers in job performance will reshape our society and will continue to be a dynamic force in future generations. It is important that social workers understand the role that technology plays in shaping the lives of clients and the services that are delivered. These rapidly developing technologies, and the individual that utilize them are producing virtual networks of greater size and value.

Turban et al (2008), argues that, today's internet sites produce vast social networks that provide opportunities for professionals and employers to advertise and communication to effectively use social networks, whether need to understand the capabilities of these networks, and how they can be effectively understood, managed and utilized within a digital environment. Technology innovations are encouraging a trend towards the digitization of the world is information and knowledge, essentially creating stores of the

accumulated human experience. Chukwumezie (2002) asserted that, ICT has become integrated into the modern global society, serving a whole range of functions and purposes with such growth are extensive arguments that internet access is a human right because it is necessary to fully participate in today's ICT reform as the use of ICTs continues to grow, it is important to realize the importance of convergence, and low convergence shapes the transmission of information and services delivery. This concept refers to the coming together of information technologies.

Schwalbe (2013), stated that the internet and other telecommunication networks have an enormous impact on defining the future of human interaction, and to date, these changes have largely been positive across social contexts. Boladale (2000) opined that, the field of social work needs to understand how these changes are influencing and will continue to influence all aspect of social work. As it related to social work, it is critically important that such a research agenda builds an understanding of both the positive and negative impacts of ICT and human interaction. Ayelotan (2012) stated that, information communication technology has replaced the traditional equipment used by office managers which are now considered obsolete and office professionals task are now modified. Office activities and functions are today being undertaken by electronic and computer based technology leading to office automation and a paperless office. Ayelotan (2012), in his remark, stated that the emerging growth of information communication technology and drastic change in office operations is posting serious changes to office managers.

### **Organizational Information Theory (OIT)**

Organizational Information Theory (OIT) is a communication theory, developed by Karl Weick offering systemic insight into the processing and exchange of information within organizations and among its members. Unlike the past structure-centered theory, OIT focuses on the process of organizing in dynamic, information-rich environments. Given that, it contents that the main activity of organizations is the process of making sense of equivocal information. Organizational members are instrumental to reduce equivocality and achieve sensemaking through some strategies - enactment, selection, and retention of information (Richard and Lyman 2014).



With a framework that is interdisciplinary in nature, organizational information theory's desire to eliminate both ambiguity and complexity from workplace messaging builds upon earlier findings from general systems theory and phenomenology. Unlike senders and receivers models, OIT stands on the situational perspective (Putman and Sorenson 1982). Karl Weick views a human organization as an open social system. People in that system develop a mechanism to establish goals, obtain and process information, or perceive the environment (Karl and, Richard 1984). In this process, people and the environment come to conclusions on "what's going on here?" Weick's posits that numerous feasible interpretations of reality exist when organizations process information. Their varying levels of understandability lead to different outcomes of information inputs (Richard and Lyman 2014). OIT proposes that information processing within organizations is a social activity. Sharing is the key feature of organizational information processing (Karl and, Richard 1984) in that particular context; members jointly make sense the reality by reducing equivocality (Colville 1994). In other words, the sense making is a joint responsibility which includes numerous interdependent people to accomplish. In this process, organizations and its members combine actions and attributions together in order to find the balance between the complexity of thoughts and the simplicity of actions (Colville 1994).

In applying this theory to our study, internet for communication technology involve dynamic process of making sense of equivocal information. Secretaries are instrumental to reduce equivocality and achieve sense making through some strategies - enactment, selection, and retention of information. The basic objective of the organisation, through the ICT is to eliminate both ambiguity and complexity from workplace. In this process, secretaries and its members combine actions and attributions together in order to find the balance between the complexity of thoughts and the simplicity of actions through the ICT.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The survey method was adopted for the study. This is a quantitative study, and an appropriate quantitative data analysis approach is undertaken.



According to Willis (2010), quantitative research is about asking people for their opinions in a structured way so that facts and statistics can be produced to guide the researcher in answering the research question.

### **Population of Study**

The target population comprised of 96 secretaries working in the various departments and units in six government ministries in Ondo Central Senatorial Zone, Ondo State. The population of the study comprises male and female, as well as high and low experienced secretaries.

### **Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

The sample for this study comprised of the ninety-six (96) secretaries which was sampled from the entire population on probability based on simple random techniques. In random sampling the researcher adopted the technique whereby all the workers in an organization were given chance of being chosen in the sample, where in the non-random sampling, the researcher applied the selection methods in which personal knowledge and opinion are examined in the process of getting information.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument used in gathering the data in this research was a self-designed structured questionnaire. Section A of the questionnaire was tagged "Personal Data of Respondents" and this dealt with the demographic-data of the secretaries such as age, marital status, sex, highest educational qualification, etc. Section B, consists of 34 items, while the four Likert rating scale format to elicit information on office automation and secretaries' effectiveness. All negatively worded items were reversely scored before data analysis. In an attempt to validate the instrument, experts in evaluation ascertained the face and construct validity. Ambiguous items were identified and some items were restructured. Test-retest method of reliability was used to ascertain the constituency of the instrument within two weeks intervals and yielded a correlation coefficient of 70.

### **Procedure and method of Data Collection**

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher, who was assisted by 2 field assistants in the administration of the questionnaires in the 6 local



governments. Copies of the questionnaire designed for the study were administered on the 96 secretaries in the ministries personally by the researcher and two assistants. The team returned to the studied ministries of the secretaries two weeks after the administration for the collection of the completed copies of the questionnaires. The researcher used information from these respondents and then, draws conclusions about the entire population. A 4-point response scale of degree of agreement/disagreement based on the options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A); Indifferent (IN); Disagree (D) were used. In addition, the use of: Very Much; Much; Little; Not at all, were also adopted

### Procedure for Data Analysis

The process of analysis began by doing open coding and microanalysis. This process entailed deep routine interaction with data. All generated data were crosschecked, and sorting of the data according to the research objectives involved the writing of study objectives on separate sheets of paper, which were referred to as “objective cards” (this enables the researcher to constantly check the cohesion of his findings in line with the aims and outputs of research – one could call this a “running point” of reference). The mean statistics and standard deviation were used to analyze the ICT resources available for the secretaries and the skills acquired by them. Items with mean score of 2.50 and above on the 4-point response scale were accepted while those below 2.50 do not qualify to be accepted. The regression analysis at 0.50 level of significance were used to analyse the effects of office automation on secretary personal quality, interpersonal skills, job related skills, and professional behaviour.

## RESULT

Table 1: Mean scores on the ICT resources available for use by secretaries in government ministries (N = 96)

S/N	Items	FX	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Decision
1	Software that produces printer-based products	256	3.1	0.28	Accepted
2	Networking devices	186	2.2	0.25	Rejected
3	Internet facilities	213	2.5	0.24	Accepted
4	Telecommunication gadgets	226	2.7	0.24	Accepted
5	E-mail facilities	281	3.3	0.30	Accepted
6	Video-conferencing	183	2.2	0.25	Rejected
7	Word processing facilities	257	3.1	0.28	Accepted

8	Database management resources	232	2.8	0.25	Accepted
9	Desktop publishing software	246	2.9	0.26	Accepted
10	Voice mail facilities	208	2.4	0.24	Rejected
11	Spreadsheet program	274	3.2	0.28	Accepted
12	Personal information managers	242	2.8	0.25	Accepted
13	Photocopies that sorts out pages of documents	172	2.0	0.26	Rejected
14	Micrographics	190	2.2	0.25	Rejected
15	Electronic typewriters with visual display	274	3.2	0.41	Accepted
16	Electronic calendar scheduling	222	2.6	0.24	Accepted
17	Dictating machine	212	2.5	0.24	Accepted

Table 1 showed the responses of the respondents on the ICT resources available for use by secretaries in government ministries. The data indicated that 12 out of the seventeen items relating to availability of ICT resources in government ministries were accepted. Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16 and 17 recorded mean scores of 3.1, 2.5, 2.7, 3.3, 3.1, 2.8, 2.9, 3.2, 2.8 and 2.5 and the corresponding standard deviation of 0.28, 0.24, 0.30, 0.28, 0.25, 0.26, 0.28, 0.25, 0.41, 0.24 and 0.26. On the other hand, items 2, 6, 10, 13 and 14 in the Table 2 the criterion mean and were thus rejected.

**Table 2: Mean Scores on ICT Skills Required by Secretaries in Government Ministries (N = 96)**

S/N	Items	FX	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Decision
18	Ability to enter, edit, store and retrieve information properly	295	3.5	0.32	Accepted
19	Ability to show accuracy in inputting information	386	4.5	0.50	Accepted
20	Ability to install network services	177	2.1	0.26	Rejected
21	Ability to download information from the net	253	3.0	0.26	Accepted
22	Ability to handle server and host	192	2.2	0.25	Rejected
23	Ability to manage correspondence through the computer	284	3.3	0.30	Accepted
24	Ability to receive and link outside calls with the right executive concern	298	3.5	0.32	Accepted
25	Ability to use facsimile machine, security devices and other modern means of communication	266	3.1	0.28	Accepted
26	Ability to use accounting programs such as spreadsheet, lotus etc.	237	2.8	0.25	Accepted
27	Ability to organize video-conferencing, tele-conferencing etc leading to fast and accurate conference and efficient information exchange	242	2.8	0.25	Accepted



28	Ability to use desktop publishing	276	3.2	0.28	Accepted
29	Ability to use power point to produce electronic slides	224	2.6	0.24	Accepted
30	Ability to connect / log on properly to the internet	217	2.5	0.24	Accepted

Table 2 showed that 14 out of the listed ICT skills are required by secretaries in government ministries. From the table, items 18, 19, 21, 23-32 and 34 were accepted with the mean scores of 3.5, 4.5, 3.0, 3.3, 3.5, 3.1, 2.8, 2.8, 3.2, 2.6, 2.5, 2.5, 2.7 and standard deviation of 0.32, 0.50, 0.26, 0.30, 0.32, 0.28, 0.25, 0.25, 0.28, 0.24, 0.24, 0.24, 0.24, respectively, while items 20, 22 and 33 were rejected with the mean scores of 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 and standard deviations of 0.26 and 0.25, respectively. Judging from the cut off mean, it is evident that fourteen items were accepted and three rejected.

**Table 3: Regression Analysis of the Effect of ICT on Government Secretaries Personal Qualities**

Parameter	Co-efficient	Standard Error	T-Cal	Probability
Constant	33.15	2.65	12.645	0.000
Office Automation	0.011	0.03	0.283	0.779

$R^2=0.002$ ; Adj  $R^2=0.019$ ; F Statistics – 0.080

In the table, office automation as the only independent variable accounts for 0.2% of the total variance in secretary personal quality ( $R_2 = 0.002$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This is not significant. Therefore, office automation leads to a non-significant influence on secretaries' personal quality.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis of the Effect of the Office Automation on Secretarial Staff Interpersonal Skills**

Parameter	Co-efficient	Standard Error	T-Cal	Probability
Constant	10.270	2.849	3.605	0.000
Office Automation	0.045	0.043	1.055	0.297

$R_2 = 0.023$

Adjusted  $R_2 = 0.002$

F-Statistics = 1.113

In the table 4, office automation as the only independent variable accounts for 2.3% of the total variance in secretary interpersonal skill ( $R_2 = 0.023$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). This is not significant. Therefore, office automation leads to a non-significant influence on secretary interpersonal skills.

**Table 5: Regression analysis of the effect of office automation on secretarial staff job related skills**

Parameter	Co-efficient	Standard Error	T-Cal	Probability
Constant	52.24	4.441	12.213	0.000
Office Automation	0.038	0.067	0.563	0.576

$$R_2 = 0.007$$

$$\text{Adjusted } R_2 = 0.0014$$

$$F\text{-Statistics} = 0.317$$

In table 5 above, office automation as the only independent variable accounts for 0.7% of the total variance in secretary job related skill ( $R_2 = 0.007$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). This is not significant. Therefore, office automation leads to a non-significant influence on secretaries' job related skills.

**Table 6: Regression analysis of the effect of ICT on government secretaries staff professional behaviour**

Parameter	Co-efficient	Standard Error	T-Cal	Probability
Constant	29.697	2.225	13.144	0.000
Office Automation	- 0.020	0.034	-0.598	0.576

$$R_2 = 0.007$$

$$\text{Adjusted } R_2 = 0.013$$

$$F\text{-Statistics} = 0.357$$

In table 6 above, office automation as the only independent variable accounts for 0.7% of the total variance in secretary professional behavior ( $R_2 = 0.007$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). This is not significant. Therefore, office automation leads to a non-significant influence on secretaries' professional behavior.

## DISCUSSION

The findings in Table 1 showed that most of the ICT resources are available for secretaries' use in government ministries and these have enabled the secretaries to manage and process information effectively and contributed significantly to the growth of the ministries. They have also helped to equip them with necessary operational competencies. This finding is in line with the views of Okute (2001) who noted that ICT is concerned with the aspects of managing and processing information through the use of electronic computers, computer software and other communication gadgets as cameras, telephones etc. Information Communication Technology has become an integral part of modern offices which enables deadline and other office



schedules to be met on targets. It was discovered that most of the ICT resources which are not available such as networking devices, video conferencing, voice mail facilities, copiers that sort out pages of documents and micrographic equipment are being considered to be purchased by the ministries.

Table 2 revealed the skills required by secretaries in offices. These included the ability to enter, edit, store and retrieve information and ability to use power point to produce electronic slides etc. The findings of this study are in line with the views of Nworgwugwu (2002) who opined that the technological equipment and machines have at present mechanized so many office functions and secretarial duties, which were previously done manually. For this reason, there is a complete job re-designation and the need for acquisition of new skills by the secretaries. Due to the introduction of sophisticated technological (electronic) office equipment in today's office and the role secretaries need to play in ensuring accuracy and efficiency in their jobs, the secretaries need to meet the challenges by acquiring new skills and competencies for efficient operation in the electronic office. Agomuo and Isu (2003) enumerated a variety of office skills in electronic offices as the ability to use facsimile machine and other modern means of communication; accounting programs such as spreadsheet, desktop publishing, power point, organize video conferences, use of the internet etc. As stated by Nwosu (2000a, b), the challenges in modern office situation have altered the skills required by Nigerian workers. The result is that certain professional skills were no longer suitable for the automated office, hence the need for acquisition of new skills. Buxbaum (2002) asserted also that ICT skills enable an individual to use computer software application, database and other technologies to achieve a variety of academic, work related and personal goals.

The findings showed that there was no influence of office automation on secretaries' interpersonal skills, personal quality and job related skills. This, according to Briggs (1993), in office environment automation improves the job performance of staff. They further stressed that in some cases, it affects their work because of lack of ICT skills and knowledge. According to them, the benefits of office automation to secretaries' effectiveness are far better than

working with manual machines. The findings were in line with several scholars like Eze (2000) who indicated that modern office technology facilitates operations and improves the secretary's performance in the office. The result of the findings showed that the secretary were effective in terms of job related skill. The findings were in line with that of Water (1988) who indicated that due to information and communication technology, most of the office staff in industrial establishment and educational institutions were effective in their job compared to the era of modern method. According to him, office automation has reduced the stress the secretary faces in the office thereby improving their job effectiveness.

The result of the findings also showed that secretaries were effective in terms of professional behavior. This findings corroborated the findings of Fredman (1984), who ascertained that office automation has not only improve the job effectiveness of individuals but also improve the professional behavior thereby making their job easier and effective to do. This indicated that as a result of office automation, individual behavior will change compared to when the office is not automated. It then means that office automation has brought about changes that are positive to the employee and employer of labour including the office secretaries. Also, the result of the findings showed that the secretary were effective in terms of personal quality. This was in line with the submission of Akinsanya (2004) that staffers are effective in their work; based on different component of information and communication technology they are exposed to. He further reiterated that the use of ICT improves the quality of work of workers and it makes work to be done faster.

Furthermore, the result of the findings showed that the secretary were effective in interpersonal skills. This was in line with Tella (2011) who carried out a study on information technology and interpersonal skills of employees in the industrial organization. He found out that the staffers were effective in their work based on their skills and the use of ICT improves the interpersonal skills of the secretaries. Ultimately, it is important to stress that the reason for non-significant effect of office automation to secretaries' effectiveness might be as a result of the automation provided were not being used by the secretaries due to lack of technical skills. Some office automation might be available, while the secretarial staff may not be able to use them



due to non-availability of knowledge on how to use it. Also, some offices are not properly equipped for to aid effectiveness. The knowledge and the technical usage of office automation is much more important than equipping the office. If an office is adequately furnished and the secretarial staff lacks the knowledge to use the facilities then effectiveness will not be achieved. Hence, the training of the secretarial staff on new office automation is paramount. As much as ministries are procuring the office equipments, training on how to use the equipment is equally essential for better performance.

## CONCLUSION

The study examined the influence of office automation on the performance of secretaries in government ministries in Ondo state. The result of the study showed that most of the ICT resources such as software that produces printer-based products, e-mail facilities, telecommunication gadgets, internet facilities etc are available in government ministries and these have greatly enabled the secretaries to manage and process information effectively and has also contributed significantly to the growth of the ministries. Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusion was made: Advances in ICT and availability of ICT resources such as internet, e-mail, videoconferencing etc have made information and communication processes a lot easier in modern organizations. The secretaries on their part need to acquire new and requisite skills to remain relevant on their jobs. The effectiveness of a secretary in a modern organisation strongly depends on the availability of office technologies as well as their skills. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that office automation greatly influence secretaries' interpersonal skills, personal quality, professional behaviour and job related skills.

## RECOMMENDATION

Having examined the influence of office automation on secretaries' performance in government ministries, the following recommendations are made:

- Government ministries should endeavor to organize training and development programmes that will further enhance the effective performance of secretaries through acquisition of additional skills. Job training is the



ultimate purpose to reach a level of productivity. Therefore, there is need for training and re-training of secretaries on ICT in order to achieve maximum output.

- Secretaries should always be ready and open-minded to acquire additional training/skills development, bearing in mind that changes occur frequently in the line of their chosen career and they are not left behind in the use of ICT in this digital age.

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