

PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF WORK SCHEDULE ON JOB PERFORMANCE AND JOB RETENTION OF SECRETARIES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NORTH-EAST

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Abstract

The study examined Perceived Influence of Work Schedule on Job Performance and Job Retention of Secretaries in Tertiary Institutions in North-East Region, Nigeria. Two research questions and null hypotheses were raised to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study was 111 secretaries across Federal Polytechnics in Adamawa, Bauchi, Tarraba and Yobe States of Nigeria. The entire population was used for the study due to its manageable size. Therefore, the study was a census survey of all secretaries in the four Federal Polytechnics in four states in North-East. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Work Schedule on Job Performance and Job Retention Questionnaire (WSJPRQ). It was administered personally by the researcher and two research assistants adequately briefed on the modalities for administration and retrieval of the questionnaire. All copies of questionnaire administered were retrieved and analysed. It was an hundred percent return rate and the exercise lasted for a period of two weeks. The questionnaire was duly validated by two experts from business education, while Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. The demographic variables of the respondents were analysed using frequency count and percentage. Mean and Standard Deviation techniques were used to analyse the data collected from respondents while regression statistical analysis was used to test the two null hypotheses. Results from the data analysed revealed that there was a high influence of work schedule on job performance and job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions. The two null hypotheses were retained because the p-values were greater than the fixed value at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the findings it was concluded that inconsistency in work schedule among secretaries, ineffective use of time management, unfriendly working environment and inappropriate timing for tasks completion were factors that directly determine performance and job retention of secretaries in workplace. It was therefore recommended among others that management of tertiary institutions should allocation balanced designed workload to ensure efficiency and effective performance which will boost the secretaries morale and make them stay longer in their work.

Keywords: Work Schedule, Job Performance, Job Retention, Secretaries, Tertiary Institution

Introduction

Education is an activity which modifies human behaviour from the cradle to the grave. This process begins at the moment of birth and continuously impacts an individual's perception, consciousness, attitude and behaviour overtime (Asogwa & Irorakpor, 2019). Education, especially at the tertiary level, is a key to skills acquisition and socio-economic development of man and his society. Undoubtedly, education's significance cannot be over emphasized because it is the basic instrument for economic growth and technological advancement of any society. According to Fache (2021), education is one of the most important needs for the well-being of the citizenry and society. Hence, It is a powerful instrument of socialization, political and economic progress, without which neither citizens nor society can attain professional growth. No country has succeeded without prioritizing the education of its people. Governments acknowledge this reality and allocate significant resources to ensure that education is available to all citizens. They also adjust their policies to ensure that education is accessible to most of the population (Adegbite, 2019).

According to Paul-Mgbeafulike (2022) and Okute and Agomuo (2021), tertiary institutions are organized forms of learning activities at the higher education level. Contents of tertiary education are organised into specific areas where students are trained for future career development. Polytechnics are an important sector within tertiary education, particularly in the North-East region. These institutions, along with universities, offer Business Education and Office Technology and Management (OTM) programmes that heavily utilize Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities to enhance the teaching and learning process, improve performance, and equip recipients (secretaries) with technology-based skills and knowledge. Tertiary institutions in the Nigerian

education system include Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Monotechnics whose aims and objectives in the education system are to support and progress of the nation by providing advanced and applicable training to individuals, instill proper values that promote self-sufficiency and useful contributions to society, encourage academic excellence and community service, strengthen national cohesion, and encourage mutual understanding and cooperation at the national and international levels (FGN, 2004).

Work schedule refers to the specific days and hours designated to a secretary for paid work or the details of a secretary's work in the workplace (Heliyon, 2020). According to Fedor (2022), work schedule or work load refers to the amount of work or working time expected or capable of being performed. A work schedule is the number of tasks and obligations a secretary has to perform or complete within a specific period. Ali (2019) revealed that the work schedule is the total number of work assigned for completion within a given period. Rahim (2019) saw work schedule as the perceived relationship between the number of mental processing capabilities or resources required to complete a task. The productivity and turnover of an employee are significantly affected by their work schedule, as the excessive or insufficient workload can overwhelm a secretary and lead to negative outcomes such as stress, burnout, breakdowns, dissatisfaction, and a desire to seek less demanding jobs. On the other hand, if their workload is below the standard work, it will promote laziness and allow them to be idle and indulge in non-productive activities like group politics, with its attendant implications on performance. The performance and growth of secretaries and organizations are closely linked to the work schedule, which is influenced by the organizational structure. The complexity of tasks assigned to secretaries may vary even within the same organization, and employees of the same rank may have different task requirements.

Job performance is the total expected value that secretaries carry out over a standard period in an organization (Motowidlo & Kell, 2020). Job performance is a secretary's ability to operate or carry out a task in an organization efficiently or react quickly. Job performance is a means to reach a goal-set within a job, role, or organization but not the actual consequences of the acts performed within a job (Campbell, 2019). It relates to the front of doing a job. In the views of Hunter (2019), and Cummings (2019), job performance assesses whether a secretary performs well or how a secretary carries out their tasks and responsibilities. Conversely, a well-designed work schedule, low-stress levels, and a supportive employer can positively affect job performance. Ultimately, job performance is a crucial component of workplace productivity and safety.

Job performance reflects many important aspects on which a company's growth, expansion, and production depend. A workforce consisting of healthy employees in good working conditions fosters steady production, minimizes risks of accidents or injuries, and curtails health care premiums. However, common debilitating health diseases can place a financial and productive strain on the business. Secretaries' job performance can be partially predicted by testing such as fitness to work and personality tests. However, actual job performance is impacted by many factors, and the result of such impact may not be readily apparent until after it begins to affect performance (Villanova, 2019). Job retention refers to having a stable job that is not at risk of being terminated or eliminated. Job retention relates to the likelihood of an employee, such as a secretary, retaining their position in the organization. A secretary's job retention level is closely linked to their commitment and can negatively impact job performance, satisfaction, and productivity within an organization. When an employee goes to work, he wants to know that his job is safe and that the management values him. The manager of a team of employees must understand that employees want to feel safe and secure. It is very hard for employees to perform satisfactorily if they have to worry and stress about the future of their job. If management wants its employees to work to the highest of their abilities, it needs to communicate that they are valued and their position is safe and secured both now and in the future (William, Davis & D'Agostine, 2019). It is generally believed that in a secured job, employees can do their best in terms of performance when it comes to improving financial stability and keeping career goals on track are very important. Employees who settle into long-term positions are likely to achieve their career goals, positively affecting their personal lives and financial situations. When employees do not constantly worry about their job's future, they can relax and settle into performing their best in their workplaces.

Incorporating advanced technology and well-planned work schedules in modern business offices aims to increase productivity. However, if techno-stress and concerns about work schedule inconsistencies impede their use, there may be a decline in the job performance and increased job insecurity of secretaries. The essence of well-designed work schedule in high-tech e-world offices is to boost productivity but if worries about inconsistencies in workload hinder its use, there is likely to be a downward trend in job performance and job retention. Business of all sizes

employs the services of secretaries to help manage the office and handle administrative matters which are very vital to help an organization stay organised and on track. Educational training received by secretaries influenced their job performance and job retention either positively or negatively in workplaces; hence, modern technological devices should be made available in teaching and learning processes. If these technological devices are made public and utilized in OTM programmes, it helps in the achievement of its objectives and as well enhances the secretaries' job performance and job retention.

Statement of the Problem

The essence of technology innovations and knowledge of carefully designed work schedules in OTM programmes in tertiary institutions is to improve performance and ensure job retention. However, if concerns about workload irregularities prevent its adoption, there is likely to be a decline in job performance and threat to secretaries' jobs. Deplorable performance of secretaries in tertiary institutions in North-East could be as a result of worries about workload irregularities, job insecurity, lack of human relations, stressed about computer skills acquisition, unattractive fringe benefits and inadequate technological facilities. The poor performance of secretaries could be attributed to worries about job discrepancies and job insecurity go unchecked, as such Polytechnics will suffer setbacks in terms of graduating students as and when due and students' results will not be released at stipulated time. Secretaries will continue to suffer from ill health and job insecurity because on employer is ready to retain inexperienced secretaries. Azih and Nwosu (2019) noted that certain secretaries' performance in Tertiary Institutions fall short of what would be considered acceptable in modern offices. This indicates that during their training, secretaries did not effectively learn the technology-based skills, abilities and knowledge required for using new computer technologies in e-world offices.

A balanced well-designed work schedule and ability to use technological gadgets in workplaces are factors directly associated with friendly working environment and high productivity. A friendly/conducive working environment is productive, rewarding, enjoyable and healthy for secretaries. It is however, disheartening that many executives do not create conducive working environment for their secretaries despite the fact secretaries are life-wire and image makers of organisations who handle solicitation calls, help the business organizations stay organised and on track. Lack of friendly/conducive working environment affects morale of secretaries which leads to negativity of job performance and mental depression. Secretaries who work in an unfriendly/unconducive working environment will not perform their best to organisation's set-goals, hence organization will suffer loss of reputation in terms of low performance and unstable job. Management of academic institution realises that there are certain fundamental needs that must be satisfied for secretaries to function their best. Generally, secretaries look out for organisations and polytechnics that offer job security, satisfaction, and a sense of professional achievement. In order to get the most of secretaries, the researcher wants to conduct this research with the goal of improving secretaries' working condition. If this problem is not resolved secretaries, may experience job insecurity, rejection and demotions. This is the foundation upon which the study aims to examine the Influence of Work Schedule on Job Performance and Job Retention of Secretaries in Tertiary Institutions in North-East.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent does work schedule affect the job performance of secretaries in tertiary institutions?
2. To what extent does work schedule affect job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Work schedule does not have a significant impact on the job performance of secretaries in tertiary institutions
2. Work schedule does not have a significant impact on the job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study because it is concerned with collecting data from members of a population in order to determine conditions that exist, opinion that are held and processes that are going on. The population of the study consisted of 111 secretaries from four federal polytechnics in North-East region states of Nigeria (Adamawa, Bauchi, Tarraba and Yobe). The entire population was studied due to its manageable size. The study is therefore, a census survey of all secretaries from the four federal polytechnics stated above. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Work schedule on Job Performance and Job Retention

Questionnaire (WSJPRQ)". The questionnaire was divided into two-parts "A" and "B". Part "A" was designed to elicit demographic information of the respondents such as hours spent on computer technology daily, while part "B" was designed to elicit information based on the research questions. The instrument was developed based on a modified 4-points likert scale of Very High Extent (VHE=4), High Extent (HE=3), Moderately Low Extent (MLE=2) and Low Extent (LE=1). The instrument was validated by two experts in the field of Business Education and one expert in Statistics. Trial testing method (Pilot study) was used to determine the reliability of the instrument using 29 secretaries outside the study area who were not part of the study but have the same similarities. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded an overall coefficient value of 0.82. The researcher personally administered 111 copies of the questionnaire with the help of two research assistants adequately briefed on the modalities for administration and retrieval of the questionnaire. The 111 copies of the questionnaire administered were correctly filled and was retrieved. It was an hundred percent return rate, and the exercise lasted for a period of two weeks. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Decision on the research questions was based on the cluster mean relative to the real limits numbers. Regression statistical tool was employed to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses were tested thus: if the observed p-value is less than or equal to the fixed p-value at 0.05 level of significant the null hypotheses will be rejected, if other-wise it will be retained or accepted.

Results

Research question one: To what extent does work schedule affect the job performance of secretaries in tertiary institutions?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which work schedule influence the job performance of secretaries in tertiary institutions

S/n	Item	Mean	Std	Remarks
1.	The extent to which well-designed balanced workload influence job performance of secretaries	3.47	0.62	High Extent
2.	The extent to which quick identification of factors for job improvement influence job performance of secretaries.	3.41	0.66	High Extent
3.	The extent to which contingent work arrangement such as direct hired/temporary firm workers influence job performance of secretaries	3.14	0.74	High Extent
4.	The extent to which data is possessed and analyzed fast and accurately influence job performance of secretaries	3.26	0.64	High Extent
5.	The extent to which job rotation/navigating influence job performance of secretaries	3.16	0.65	High Extent
6.	The extent to which work allows secretaries participate in decision-making about when a piece of work must be completed influence job performance	3.26	0.69	High Extent
7.	The extent to which work engagement with adequate number of staff with technological –based skills influence job performance of secretaries	3.50	0.62	High Extent
8.	The extent to which work gives secretaries feelings of greater height on the job influence their job performance	3.45	0.64	High Extent
9.	The extent to which creativity on the job influence job performance of secretaries	3.42	0.63	High Extent
10.	The extent to which freedom to carry out tasks with little or no supervision influence job performance of secretaries	3.14	0.65	High Extent
11.	The extent to which conducive/friendly working environment influence job performance of secretaries	3.23	0.63	High Extent
Weighted Mean and Std		3.31	0.65	High Extent

Source: Field survey (2022)

The data presented in table 1 indicated the extent to which work schedule influences job performance of secretaries in tertiary institution. All items 1 -11 listed in table 1 show that they are factors that influenced job performance of

secretaries with mean scores of 3.14 – 3.50. The grand mean score of 3.31 shows that respondents agreed that work schedule influences job performance of secretaries to a high extent. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range meaning that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean rating.

Research question two: To what extent does work schedule affect the job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the extent to which work schedule influences the job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions

S/n	Item	Mean	Std.	Remark
12.	The extent to which changing nature of work load influence job retention of secretaries	2.86	0.74	M/ Extent
13.	The extent to which ability to open and work with more than one application at a time (multi-tasking) for records creation influence job retention of secretaries	3.14	0.60	High Extent
14.	The extent to which work offers secretaries an opportunity for growth and development influence their job retention	3.22	0.63	High Extent
15.	The extent to which motivational talk from superior influence job retention of secretaries	3.39	0.67	High Extent
16.	The extent to which manage time effectively to meet job schedule influence job retention of secretaries	3.47	0.56	High Extent
17.	The extent to which in-time production of malleable document influence job retention of secretaries	3.35	0.70	High Extent
18.	The extent to which completion of tasks with speed and efficiency influence job retention of secretaries	3.46	0.68	High Extent
19.	The extent to which punctuality at work-place influence job retention of secretaries	3.50	0.65	High Extent
20.	The extent to which effective work planning influence job retention of secretaries	3.43	0.69	High Extent
21.	The extent to which effectively delegate authority and monitor performance influence job retention of secretaries	3.12	0.64	High Extent
22.	The extent to which fostering friendly working environment innovation in workload with technological devices influence job retention of secretaries	3.14	0.59	High Extent
Weighted Mean and Std		3.28	0.65	High Extent

Source: Field survey (2022)

The data presented in table 2 revealed the extent to which work schedule affects job retention of secretaries. Item 12 on table 2 with mean score of 2.86 is a factor that influenced job retention of secretaries to a moderately low extent. While items listed from 13 -22 show that they are factors that influenced job retention of secretaries to a high extent with mean scores of 3.12 – 3.50. The grand mean score of 3.28 shows that respondents agreed that work schedule influences job retention of secretaries to a high extent. The standard deviation for all the items is within the same range meaning that the respondents are not wide apart in their mean rating.

H01: Work schedule does not have a significant impact on the job performance of secretaries in tertiary institutions.

Table 3: Summary of regression analysis of influence of work schedule on job performance of secretaries in tertiary institutions

Model	Sum of df Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig	Decision
Regression	2.097	1	2.097	0.190	Not Significant
Residual	1690.587	153	11.050		
Total	1692.684	154			

Source: Field survey 2022

Table 3 shows the output of the Regression Analysis of Variance of work schedule influence on job performance of secretaries in tertiary institution. It shows that $F_{(1,153)} = 0.190$, $p\text{-value} = 0.664 > 0.05$. This implies that there was no significant influence of work schedule on the job performance of secretaries in tertiary institution. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that work schedule does not affect the job Performance of secretaries in tertiary institution is accepted.

Ho₂: Work schedule does not have a significant impact on the job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions.

Table 4: Summary of Regression Analysis of Variance of work schedule influence on job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Decision
Regression	12.055	1	12.055	1.093	0.297	Not Significant
Residual	1687.133	153	11.027			
Total	1687.187		154			

Source: Field survey 2022

Table 4 shows the output of the regression analysis of variance of work schedule influence on job retention of secretaries in tertiary institution. It shows that $F_{(1,153)} = 1.093$, $p\text{-value} = 0.297 > 0.05$. This means that the influence of work schedule on the job retention of secretaries in tertiary institution was not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that work schedule does not have a significant impact on the job retention of secretaries in tertiary institution is retained.

Discussion of Findings

The finding on research question one revealed that there was a high influence of work schedule on job performance of secretaries in tertiary institutions in North-East region. This result agrees with Allen (2019) that a good and balanced designed work schedule will assist and improve secretaries’ job performance. The result shows that work schedule is a factor of goal-setting, prioritizing, planning, monitoring and controlling performance evaluation of secretaries. The finding support the previous study of Duru and Shimowua (2019) which revealed that balanced workload allocation had positively influenced secretaries’ productivity in tertiary institutions of learning.

The finding in table two revealed that there was a high influence of work schedule of work schedule on job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions. This finding corroborates with the previous study of Sam-Eleyi (2020) revealed that work schedule is a strategy of pursuing tasks accomplishment and had a high influence on secretaries’ job retention. This implies that where there is a well-designed balanced workload allocation, effective time management, conducive working environment and appropriate timing range for task accomplishment are factors which enhanced high job performance and job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions in North-East.

The null hypotheses tested in table 3 and 4 revealed that there was no significant influence on job performance and job retention of secretaries. This implies that null hypotheses which stated work schedule does not have significant impact on the job performance and job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions respectively was retained, because the p-values were greater than the fixed value ($p\text{-value} + 0.664 > 0.05$) and $P\text{-value} = 0.297 > 0.05$). This result indicates that effectiveness of secretaries’ job performance is dependent on factors such as technology-based skills and abilities to manipulate modern technologies, balanced designed workload and effective time management for accomplishing tasks. Which are in line with the findings of Institute Educational Leadership (2020) who asserted that tie management helps secretaries enhance job performance and job retention efficiently by allocating timing appropriately to each of the various tasks? This in turn helps promote secretaries’ outcome and enable them work smarter for maximized job performance and job retention.

The results reinforced the findings of Sam-Eleyi (2020) that allocation of balanced designed workload alone cannot influence secretaries level of commitment to organisational goals, but if appropriate timing and conducive atmospheric workplace environment are complemented with technology related ability and knowledge are possessed by secretaries. This result also indicates secretaries believed that skills and competencies in the usage of modern

technologies could be helpful in their quick task accomplishment which in turn leads to achievement of organisational goals and job retention.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that work schedule had influenced performance and job retention of secretaries in tertiary institutions due to inability to modify human resources strategies and policies associated with allocation of balanced designed workload and effective time management of tasks accomplishment. Secretaries are saddled with a lot of responsibilities, while tertiary institutions expect nothing but the best from them due to the dynamic nature of e-world offices coupled with tertiary institutions which have gone highly electronic. To this end global secretaries must be prepared and equipped with technological skills, experiences and abilities to enable them blend technology with local methods with regards to appropriate timing and allocation of balanced workload designed to display of talents for effective and efficient service delivery.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Secretarial profession should be given the required recognition also administrators should be guided to modify their human resources strategies and policies of allocation of balanced workloads design, friendly working environment and appropriate timing for tasks accomplishment.
2. Secretaries should be trained to adapt freely to their working environment to enhance efficiency and effectiveness which in turn will lead to high productivity and job retention.

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