



Digital Filing Models and Secretaries' Job Performance in Business Organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis

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Abstract

The study investigated digital filing models and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The research design used in the study was correlations design. The population of the study was made up of one hundred (100) office secretaries drawn from the business organizations within Port Harcourt Metropolis. The census sampling technique was adopted, hence the total number of the population becomes the sample. The instrument used in the study was questionnaire. Out of 100 copies of questionnaire distributed, 80 representing 80% were duly completed and returned. The study used the returned copies for the analysis of the study. Three experts from in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, from Rivers State University, validated the instrument. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation at 2.5 mean benchmark. The null hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) at .05 significance level. The study concluded that digital filing models are gainful in today's office. The effective performance of office secretaries largely depends on their ability to manipulate or use email, desktop and cloud facilities. The study recommended among others that business managers or owners should make internet facilities available in the offices.

Keyword: Digital, Filing, Secretaries, Organization, job Performance



Introduction

In every organization, an office exists and the need therefore arises for these offices to be managed in order that they achieve their functions. Document processing and management is a vital role of the office for easy reference and facilitation of business activities. The office in a very traditional sense is seen as room, or building where clerical processes are carried out to start, develop and control the many activities of a business. However in modern terms, office may not necessarily be a physical building or room but may consist of the laptop, i-pad, i-phone, and other smart devices that function to save and disseminate files.

There are head offices, branch offices, facto offices, cost offices, transport offices, sales offices and many more. These offices exercise controlling influence over the business and assists in the general management of the business. Filing in business offices include contracts, cheques, letters, memoranda, invoices, vouchers, price lists, catalogues, cost analysis statements, personnel reports, purchase requisitions and stock control figures. The objective of keeping these records is to enable information to be made readily available when it is required.

Mills and Standingford (2012) revealed that the records maintained should present in words and figures, the activities of the business. These records make it possible to trace every transaction, every movement of goods and every expense incurred. Files or records are valuable assets to the office and the organization as a whole. Some records are irreplaceable, so that when they are destroyed or lost, the organization may likely be forced out of business. Records according to Whitehead (2013) have largely migrated to digital forms and formats and organizations are expected to absorb the contemporary approaches.

It is vital to be able to answer queries from employees, customers and others efficiently and quickly. Accurate records, Whitehead adds, enable us to compare present performance with past achievements and to detect problems that are arising long before they would be noticed. Such systematic records have saved many firms from bankruptcy. Organizations therefore need the assistance of valuable records for it to survive. The office can be likened to the heart of a man, pumping blood to all parts of the body. So if the office stops functioning, the activities of the organization would be grounded. Thus, for the office to function well it needs all available records required by the organization.

There are digital filing models which allow for easy access to files and records. They include cloud filing, e-mail archiving, and desktop folder models which have replaced the traditional alphabetical filing, geographical filing, chronological and index filing (Nweke, 2017). Apart from quick and easy access to information, records management also has a role to



play in promoting an organizations competitive position. Lack of attention to records management can therefore negatively affect the survival of an organization against its competitors. Perhaps organization that lacks interest in proper records management do not know how to manage them, records management is concerned with the generation, receipt, processing, storage, retrieval, distribution usage and retirement of records (Harry, 2008). It encompasses a wide variety of activities and sub-discipline, such as the management of mail, correspondence, report, copies/ forms and directives. In support of the above definition, Quible (2011) indicates that the ever-increasing volume of an organization's records that must be maintained requires their efficient management.

Statement of the Problem

Digital filing has proven to be more convenient compared to the traditional filing methods. However, as it has been observed, most organizations do not still subscribe to modern or contemporary ways of digital filing. Secretaries are not able to use digital filing as a result of their not being trained in the use of the facilities required in digital filing. It appears that only very few organizations train their staff on cloud filing, Google drive, email archiving and other related digital filings. Some secretaries also appear to be slow to learning the process thereby hampering the organizational goals in information management. The issue of winning contracts or deals by business organizations depends largely on speed and competence, since there is so much competition. Adopting various filing models to deliver on task and how it influences the secretary's job performance in business organizations is the drive for this study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to investigate digital filing models and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis; with the following specific objectives:

1. To find out the extent of influence of e-mail archiving model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis
2. To ascertain how cloud filing model, relate to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. To find out how desktop folder filing model relates to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:



1. How does e-mail archiving model relate to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
2. How does cloud filing model relate to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
3. How does desktop folder filing model relate to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between e-mail archiving model and to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. There is no significant relationship between cloud filing model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. There is no significant relationship between desktop folder filing model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Literature Review

Archival Theory: This study anchors its theory on Archival Theory by Livia Iacovino in 1890, cited in Ade 2017. The study draws its link to this theory because of its similarity to documentation rules and principles as obtained in business organizations. It advocated in the nineteenth-century European concept of state had a powerful influence on the adoption of the record creator as the unit of and organization. It was an all-embracing concept of state, which drew its juridical power from a legal system that controlled what was documented, how it was documented, who could have access and how long documents were preserved. In the late twentieth century the state's control was mitigated by citizens attaining political and legal rights which included access to public records and protection from the inappropriate disclosure of their personal information. The current commercialization of government has introduced a number of third parties that have altered the citizen's relationship with the state and their rights to records of government services (Menkus, 2014).



Society has become an inclusive term, encompassing all humanity, and the state is the legal representation of a specific society. Within the juridical view of society, a legal and ethical boundary is defined by the rules sanctioned and enforced by a community which depends on records to enforce the rights and obligations of its members. These communities of common interest include organized interest groups, professional groupings, occupations, industries, multinational corporations, families and like-minded individuals as well as sovereign states. Their driving force is their collective self-interest. As a community of common interest cuts across national and jurisdictional boundaries it has conceptual relevance to global governance, as well as providing a legal and ethical boundary in which internal controls on creators-preservers ensure records are reliable and authentic, and contribute to personal, group and collective identity (Elendu, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

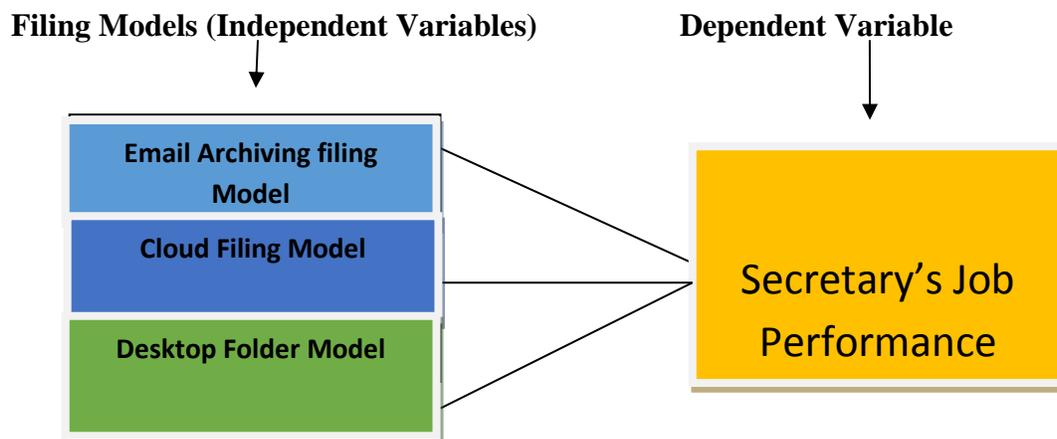


Fig. 1 Researcher's Guide, 2022

Email Archiving and Secretary's Job Performance

Electronic mail (email or e-mail) is a method of exchanging messages ("mail") between people using electronic devices. Email entered limited use in the 1960s, but users could only send to users of the same computer, and some early email systems required the author and the recipient to both be [online](#) simultaneously, similar to instant messaging. Ray Tomlinson is credited as the inventor of email; in 1971, he developed the first system able to send mail between users on different hosts across the ARPANET, using the @ sign to link the user name with a destination server. By the mid-1970s, this was the form recognized as email (Nweke, 2017).



Email operates across computer networks, primarily the Internet. Today's email systems in the office, are based on a store-and-forward filing model. Email servers accept, forward, deliver, and store messages. Neither the users nor their computers are required to be online simultaneously; they need to connect, typically to a mail server or a webmail interface to send or receive messages or download it (Batty, 2012). Originally an ASCII text-only communications medium, Internet email was extended by Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions (MIME) to carry text in other character sets and multimedia content attachments. International email, with internationalized email addresses using UTF-8, is standardized but not widely adopted. The history of modern Internet email services reaches back to the early ARPANET, with standards for encoding email messages published as early as 1973 (RFC 561). An email message sent in the early 1970s is similar to a basic email sent today. Emails are used to section office correspondence in their order of occurrence. Such emails are easily fetched when the need arises by just clicking on the archive folder of such email. This makes office correspondence ease to access and disseminate without having to go through the hurdle of traditional file search (Nweke, 2017).

Historically, the term electronic mail is any electronic document transmission. For example, several writers in the early 1970s used the term to refer to fax document transmission. As a result, finding its first use is difficult with the specific meaning it has today. The term electronic mail has been in use with its current meaning since at least 1975, and variations of the shorter E-mail have been in use since at least 1979:

1. email is now the common form, and recommended by style guides. It is the form required by organizations requests and working groups. e-mail is the form favored in edited published American English and British English writing as reflected in the Corpus of Contemporary American English data, but is falling out of favor in some style guides.
2. Email is has become a contemporary form used in sending files from staff to staff or from organization to organization on real time.
3. E-mail is sometimes used, capitalizing the initial E as in similar abbreviations like E-piano, E-guitar, A-bomb, and H-bomb.

Appleby (2010) opined that an internet e-mail consists of an envelope and content; the content consists of a header and a body. Archiving deals with majority of information collections are made up of published resources, which are usually secondary sources of information compiled by an author. The author will have sifted through other sources of information on a particular topic and compiled a synthesis of that information for readers. Even where a book purports to be a collection of archival materials, such as a series of records or letters about a particular topic, it will have been selected, compiled and edited by someone and then published, providing a number of copies for sale.



Cloud Filing Model and Secretary's Job Performance

A file system in the cloud is a hierarchical storage system that provides shared access to file data. Users can create, delete, modify, read, and write files and can organize them logically in directory trees for intuitive access through a network system (Nweke, 2017).

A secretary may work from home or any other place away from the physical office and transmit files to the boss. There are few things more important than sharing your work files remotely with your fellow team members (Nuener, 2015). Online file storage, syncing, and sharing services like those included here can play a huge role in accomplishing this. Computer systems have been steadily moving away from local storage to remote, server-based storage and processing also known as the *cloud*. Consumers are affected too we now and music from servers rather than playing them from discs. By keeping your own documents and media in the cloud, you can enjoy anywhere-access and improve collaboration. There have been cloud storage and file-sharing and file-syncing services to help the office achieve speed and real time dispatch (Quibble, 2013).

The cloud filing model provides seamless access to all your important data, Word docs, PDFs, spreadsheets, photos, and any other digital assets from wherever you are. You no longer need to be sitting at your work PC to see your work files. With cloud syncing you can get to them from your laptop at home, your smartphone on the go, or from your tablet on your couch (Mills, 2019). Using one of these services means no more having to email files to yourself or plug and unplug USB thumb drives.

If the secretary has a service for storing and syncing data in the cloud, there may not be need for fear of loss of documents or files as it can always be recalled anywhere possible. Which you choose depends on the kinds of files you store, how much security you need, whether you plan to collaborate with other people, and which devices you use to edit and access your files. It may also depend on your comfort level with computers in general. Most of these services are extremely user-friendly, while others offer advanced customization for more experienced techies (Nweke, 2017).

Desktop Folder and Secretary's Job Performance

Dennis, (2012) states that having files all over your desktop, some computer applications can help manage it into folders; files that are categorized according to use. There are three main ways you can structure your file system: project or client-based, date-based, and file type-based. There are pros and cons to each method of organizing folders and you can use a combination, for example grouping everything by project but within each project grouping things by file type or grouping everything by year but within each year grouping it by client. Let's look each way to



organize computer files. You should pick the method that seems to fit your workflow best and stick to it (Elendu, 2013). A project or client-based structure is perhaps the simplest to stick to. Every project or client how you split things up really depends on what sort of work you do gets its own dedicated folder. Within each project or client folder, you keep all the relevant files and documents.

What makes a project or client set up work so well is that it's brainless. If file A is to do with client X, it goes in folder X. If file B is to do with client Y, then, shockingly, it goes in folder Y. If you've got multiple projects for the same clients, you can either give each project its own top-level folder or have individual project folders within each client folder. Where a project or client-based file system starts to fall apart is when you deal with a lot of general files that have to do with multiple projects or the organization as a whole. You can shave a "General" project file folder, but that can quickly create more problems than it solves. Similarly, duplicate files are almost never the answer (Nweke, 2017). The other time you might run into difficulties with a project or client set up is when there are lots of different files so each folder is a total mess. The solution there is to use one of the two following set ups within your project or client folders. In general, is recommended that a project or filename or client set up by default. It's so simple to stick to and it'll give your computer a bit of much needed organization. Even if each project or client folder is a little bit messy, things will be a lot better than they were (Benice, 2013).

Methodology

The research design used in the study was correlational design. The population of the study was made up of hundred (100) secretaries drawn from the business organizations within Port Harcourt Metropolis, thus: Nigerian national petroleum commission (NNPC), 34 Secretaries, Union Bank PLC, 33 Secretaries, Saipem NIG LTD, Secretaries 33. The sample for this study is a total of Hundred (100) respondents (office secretaries). The census sampling technique was adopted. Therefore, the total number of the population becomes the sample size which is Hundred (100). The instrument used in this research was questionnaire. Out of 100 copies of questionnaire distributed, 80 representing 80% were duly completed and returned. The study used the returned copies for the analysis of the study. Three experts from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, from Rivers State University, validated the instrument. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation at 2.5 mean benchmark. The null hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) at .05 significance level.



Results

Research Question 1: How does e-mail archiving model relate to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 1: Relationship between mail archiving model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis

S/N Items	N=80	Mean	SD.	Remark
1. Emails are used to send memo within the organization		2.76	.48	Agreed
2. Customers relate with company via email		2.99	1.32	Agreed
3. Secretaries use emails to respond to office requests		2.90	1.13	Agreed
4. Files are saved in email platforms		2.15	1.16	Disagreed
Grand Mean		2.7	1.01	Agreed

Table 1 showed in item 1 mean score of 2.76 and SD .48 which implied that respondents agreed that emails are used to send memo within the organization in item 1. In item 2 mean score of 2.99 and STD 1.32 equally showed that respondent agreed that customers relate with company via email. In item 3 mean score of 2.90 and STD 1.13 proved that respondents agreed that secretaries use emails to respond to office requests. In item 4 mean score of 2.15 and STD 1.16 showed that respondents disagreed that files are saved in email platforms. Thus, aggregate mean score of $2.7 > 2.5$ showed that respondents agreed that e-mail archiving model relate to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Question 2: How does cloud filing model relate to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 2: Relationship between cloud filing model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis

S/N Items	N=80	Mean	SD	Remark
5. Staff have access to surf the internet all through work hour		1.38	.48	Disagreed



6. Files are encrypted and saved in organization website	1.18	.38	Disagreed
7. There are backup on Google drive	2.80	1.24	Agreed
Grand Mean	1.79	.70	Disagreed

Table 2 showed in item 5 mean score of 1.3 and STD .48 which proved that respondents disagreed that staff have access to surf the internet all through work hour. In item 6 mean score of 1.28 and STD .38 showed that respondent equally disagreed that files are encrypted and saved in organization website. In item 7 mean score of 2.8 and SD 1.24 showed that respondents agreed that there are backup on Google drive. Thus, aggregate mean score of 1.79<2.5 showed that respondents disagreed on how cloud filing model relate to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Question 3: How does desktop folder filing model relates to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 3: Relationship between desktop folder filing model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis

S/N Items	N=100	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
8. Files are available on local files of the computer		2.9529	1.15031	Agreed
9. Folders are created on computer desktop to differentiate use		2.7471	1.21534	Agreed
10. Files are stored in secondary memory devices for future use		2.4882	.48879	Disagreed
Grand Mean		2.72	.951	Agreed

Table 3 showed in item 8 mean score of 2.95 and SD 1.15 which showed that respondent agreed that files are available on local files of the computer. In item 9 mean score of 2.74 and SD 1.21 showed that respondent agreed that folders are created on computer desktop to differentiate use. In item 10 mean score of 2.48 and SD .488 showed that respondents disagreed that files are stored in secondary memory devices for future use. Thus, aggregate mean score of 2.71>2.5 showed that respondents agreed of 2.72>2.5 showed that respondents agreed that desktop folder filing model relates to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis



Test of Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between e-mail archiving model and to secretaries’ job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis

Table 4: PPMC test of significant relationship between e-mail archiving model and to secretaries’ job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis

Variables		Secretaries’ Job Performance			
E-mail Archiving	Pearson Correlation	1	.083**	-.151**	.544**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.000	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
	Pearson Correlation	.083**	1	.600**	.475**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.000	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
	Pearson Correlation	-.151**	.600**	1	.039
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.150
	N	80	80	80	80
	Pearson Correlation	.544**	.475**	.039	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	80	80	80	80

Table 4 showed N-value of 80, correlation coefficient (Spearman rho) value of .039, p-value of .002<.05 which showed that there is significant relationship between e-mail archiving model and to secretaries’ job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between cloud filing model and secretaries’ job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis



Table 5: PPMC test of significant relationship between cloud filing model and secretaries’ job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis

Variables	Secretaries’ Job Performance				
Cloud Filing Model	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.048	.613**	.805**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.000	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
	Correlation Coefficient	.048	1.000	.576**	.113**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.000	.007
	N	80	80	80	80
	Correlation Coefficient	.613**	.576**	1.000	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
	Correlation Coefficient	.805**	.113**	.540**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	80	80	80	80

Table 5 showed N-value of 80, coefficient value of .805, p-value of .006>.05 which showed that there is no significant relationship between cloud filing model and secretaries’ job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between desktop folder filing model and secretaries’ job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis?



Table 6: PPMC test of significant relationship between desktop folder filing model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis

Variables		Desktop Filing Model			
Desktop Folder	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.056*	.127**	.652**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.040	.000	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
	Correlation Coefficient	.056*	1.000	.780**	.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
	Correlation Coefficient	.127**	.780**	1.000	.233**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
	Correlation Coefficient	.652**	.026	.233**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.000	.
	N	80	80	80	80

Table 6 showed n-value of 80, coefficient value of .652, p-value of .003<.05 which showed that there is a significant relationship between desktop folder filing model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Summary of Finding

The findings of the study showed that:



1. There is a significant relationship between e-mail archiving model and to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. There is no significant relationship between cloud filing model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. There is a significant relationship between desktop folder filing model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are hereunder discussed:

Email Archiving and Secretaries' Job Performance

The findings of the study revealed that significant relationship between e-mail archiving model and to secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The position of the respondents was aligned by Batty, (2012) stating that email operates across computer networks, primarily the Internet. Today's email systems in the office, are based on a store-and-forward filing model. Email servers accept, forward, deliver, and store messages. Neither the users nor their computers are required to be online simultaneously; they need to connect, typically to a mail server or a webmail interface to send or receive messages or download it.

Cloud filing and Secretaries' Job Performance

The findings of the study revealed that there is no significant relationship between cloud filing model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Nweke, (2017) disagreed with the position of the respondents stating that cloud filing is a file system in the cloud is a hierarchical storage system that provides shared access to file data. Users can create, delete, modify, read, and write files and can organize them logically in directory trees for intuitive access through a network system.

A secretary may work from home or any other place away from the physical office and transmit files to the boss. There are few things more important than sharing your work files remotely with your fellow team members (Nuener, 2015).

Desktop Folder and Secretaries' Job Performance

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between desktop folder filing model and secretaries' job performance in business organizations in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The stance of the respondents has been buttressed by Dennis, (2012) states that having files all over your desktop, some computer applications can help manage it into



folders; files that are categorized according to use. There are three main ways you can structure your file system: project or client-based, date-based, and file type-based. There are pros and cons to each method of organizing folders and you can use a combination, for example grouping everything by project but within each project grouping things by file type or grouping everything by year but within each year grouping it by client.

Conclusion

The findings of the study have shown that digital filing models are gainful in today's office. The effective performance of office secretaries largely depend on their ability to manipulate or use email, desktop and cloud facilities. For the any business office to perform effectively therefore, there is need to incorporate digital filing models in order safeguard documents, and hasten production or service process.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Business managers or owners should make internet facilities available in the offices
2. Business owners in Port Harcourt Metropolis should train and retrain secretaries to match with the contemporary demands of their job roles
3. Business proprietors should provide hands on training by using experienced staff to guide the ones that do not know.

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