ASSESSMENT OF EXTENT OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY SECRETARIES FOR EFFECTIVE ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN POLYTECHNICS IN NORTH-CENTRAL, NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study was aimed at assessing the extent of skills possessed by secretaries for effective electronic records management in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. Two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 366 secretaries in ten Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire with 27 items was developed by the researcher and validated by two experts. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient measure of internal consistency was used to test the reliability of the instrument. The result of the reliability test for sections of the questionnaire 0.97 and 0.68. The results of the reliability test yielded a value of 0.83 for the entire items in the questionnaire respectively. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the three research questions. The z- test and ANOVA were used to analysis data relating to the hypotheses. The findings revealed that all the electronic records management skill areas assessed were moderately possessed by the secretaries. This implies that secretaries in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria do not optimally possess skills for electronic record management. The findings further showed that there were significant differences in the mean ratings of male and female secretaries regarding the level to which they possess skills for effective electronic records management. Also, there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of secretaries with regards to years of working experience on the extent of electronic records management skills possessed for effective records management. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Secretaries in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria should immediately be trained by employers, through hands on training, in-service training, workshops, seminars, and conferences on effective electronic records management.

Keywords: Assessment, Electronic records and Secretary,

Introduction

The business office is undergoing impressive changes and revolutions which affect the status of the secretarial profession. The changes can be seen in innovation

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and invention pertaining to equipment, nomenclature, environment, technology, attitudes, responsibilities, training, skill, ability and knowledge (Adewale, 2010). Emerging office technologies/innovations are profound changes introduced into office work. Agbamu in Obayi (2007) stated that these technological changes have made traditional office functions to be out modeled. The emergence of various modern technologies has changed the operations in modern offices. As a result of changes in technology, the role of secretaries in business has changed tremendously from that of typewriting and shorthand dictation, answering of telephone calls and processing of mails.

The modern offices lay due emphasis on paperless office as a way of facilitating the process of correspondence handling and operation. Ekula (2010) pointed out that in offices, computers, database management and other accessories are increasingly being used to organize and control records. Secretaries who could be seen as officers in charge of records, correspondence, minutes of meetings and related affairs of an organization, are expected to be able to operate the computer using Database, spreadsheet, graphic designs and word processing packages. Particularly, this calls for training of secretaries in order to possess the dexterity to use most of the business/office related application packages contained in the current Windows.

The 21st century technology has changed the way things are done. Most things are now done online including office work. Luyombya (2010) posited that information technology embraces all modern systems of processing information and communication in data, text, image and voice. It is the technology that supports activities involving creation of data, storage, manipulation and communication of information together with their related methods, management and application. Instead of file cabinets, most organizations now use computerized means to save their records, hence secretaries must key in which requires skill update for proper adaptability to the work environment (Dangata, Odesanya, & Baba, 2012). Therefore secretaries who are not up to date in these applications find it difficult to manage the new proceedings.

The diversities of office technologies, according to Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012), require secretaries to possess new skills and sub-skills to enable them to be relevant in the modern office. The skills required to be possessed by secretaries should not be gender biased. Both male and female secretaries should be competent enough to demonstrate proficiency in the use of the electronic resources.

Experience also determines the degree of skills possession. According to Osuala and Okeke (2006), secretaries that have gained experience on their jobs perform effectively and are amenable to positive change of attitude, work habit, skill, and performance. Experience in this study is classified as low, moderate and high depending on the years of work. Secretaries who work in Polytechnics in North-Central are required to possess skills for ensuring efficient management of records created and stored in computerized systems in order to adequately carry out routine office tasks regardless of their years of working experience.

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Assessment is a process of measuring existing skills against the expected skills in order to develop a vision and skills profile aimed at closing the gap which exists as a result of lack of the required skills among the workers in an organization. The outcome is the training needs analysis that identifies where training is needed. From time to time, there is need for man to assess his action and those of others around him in order to determine whether those actions are good or bad, efficient or inefficient, desirable or undesirable, satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Assessment is a broad term that includes all of the various methods to determine the extent of an individual's achievement. Assessment refers to the methods used to determine skill gap of an employee within an organization (Singh & Goodman, 2006). To improve on the skills of secretaries therefore, there is the need to assess or measure their existing skills against the estimated skills in order to close the gap which exists as a result of lack of the required skills among the secretaries in organizations since secretaries play pivotal role in the achievement of organizational goals.

It is therefore imperative to examine the concept of secretary. The word _secretary' originated from the Latin word 'secretarius' meaning a person entrusted with secrets and employed in an office to acquire or prepare information and transmit information. A secretary has been conceptualized differently by different authors. Anderson in Ogueiofor and Nwogu (2014) saw a secretary as one who can think for you, act for you, anticipate your whims, and increase your output phenomenally. The Professional Secretaries International (PSI) in Akinleye (2012) defined a secretary as an executive assistant who has mastery of office skills, demonstrates the ability to assume responsibility without direct supervision, exercises initiative and judgment and makes decisions within the scope of assigned authority. From the foregoing, a secretary could be defined as an officer, who is in charge of records, correspondence, minutes of meetings, and related affairs of an organization. This implies that both male and female secretaries with different years of experience, work in polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria and are required to possess electronic records management skills in order to cope with the increasing use of electronic information technologies to create and maintain records as with records in other formats.

The problem of this study is that, despite the benefits of electronic records management, most secretaries in Polytechnics still find it difficult to effectively manage records using the electronic system. Secretaries are required to possess electronic records skills of, storage, retrieval, and maintenance, but there seems to be a gap in the level to which the skills are possessed by secretaries working in polytechnics in North-Central Nigeria. This provoked the study on the assessment of extent of skills possessed by secretaries for effective electronic records management in polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Electronic technology has greatly expanded the methods of creating, editing, maintaining, transmitting and retrieving information but observations have shown that

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most secretaries in the Polytechnics are still using the old methods like drawers and filing cabinets which lead to misfiling and loss of records. The results are costly delays, lost of business opportunities, and frustrated office personnel and managers being forced to make decisions based on inadequate information. In line with this scenario, Ayodele and Adeoye (2010) opined that records must be organized and properly managed for it to be of maximum value to the organization. The foregoing seems to point to the need for effective electronic record management skills in Polytechnics. But the extent to which secretaries possess the relevant skills for effective records management is not clear and requires an empirical study such as this.

The problem of this study is that, despite the benefits of electronic records management, most secretaries in Polytechnics still find it difficult to effectively manage records using the electronic system. Okoye (2014) in his study pointed out that secretaries possess electronic records management skills for employment in medium-scale organizations. But there seems to be a gap in the level to which the skills are possessed by secretaries working in Polytechnics in North-Central Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to assess the extent of skills possessed by secretaries for effective electronic records management in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria. Specifically the study sought to determine the extent secretaries possess:

1. Electronic records storage skills for effective records management in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria.
2. Electronic records retrieval skills for effective records management in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

1. To what extent do secretaries possess electronic records storage skills for effective records management in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do secretaries possess electronic records retrieval skills for effective records management in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female secretaries on the extent of skills possessed for effective electronic records management in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of secretaries according to their years of experience on the extent of electronic records management skills possessed for effective records management in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria.

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Literature Review

Literatures relevant to the topic under study are critically reviewed to provide a good basis for understanding of this research work.

Electronic Records

An electronic record is any information that is recorded in machine readable form. Electronic records include numeric, graphic, audio, video, and textual information which is recorded or transmitted in analog or digital form such as electronic spreadsheets, word processing files, databases, electronic mail, instant messages, scanned images, digital photographs, and multimedia files (State of Florida, 2009). Similarly, the Government of South Australia (2012) stated that electronic records are records that are in machine-readable form. They may be any combination of text, data, graphics, images, video, audio, e-mail, internet content, documents, spreadsheets, databases, etc., that are created, maintained, modified or transmitted in digital form by a computer or related system.

According to the University of California (2012), electronic records unlock the content previously difficult to access in paper form, enable more effective sharing of information and contribute to knowledge network flow. They support evidence-based policy making by providing reliable evidence of past actions and decisions, but to do so, they must be managed so as to retain their integrity and authenticity.

University of Greenwich records management Office (2009) pointed out that electronic records have certain attributes including the content or the intellectual component of the document, the structure and the context. The structure represents a second attribute and consists of the appearance, arrangement or format of the content of the document and the context which contains the background information that helps explain the meaning of the document.

Keeping records electronically saves paper, printer and toner costs by reducing the need to print paper documents as single electronic versions can be used over and over. Electronic records enhance staff productivity since less time is spent searching for documents or trying to find the most recent version. Moreover, records are invaluable. Keeping complete records from the beginning can save time and money. Records are also viewed as an important tool to ensure that obligations of an organization are met. Furthermore, they are also of value for reference and management decisions. Accuracy of records will also prevent excessive residues by ensuring that withdrawal time has been met (Bock, 2011).

Electronic Records Storage Skills

Like manual records, electronic records are useless if not stored or properly preserved for future access. This calls for the necessary knowledge and skills on the part of the secretary. Storage, according to Ohakwe (2010) means safekeeping all documents available to the office in files, drawers, boxes, shelves, diskettes and cabinets designed for this purpose. The author pointed out that such facilities must make for easy retrieval of records without undue delay. State Records Authority of

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New South Wales (2009) pointed out that how electronic records should be stored depends on their use. According to Kayode (2010), ten or fifteen years ago, computer technologies were seen as tools used by governments and institutions in wealthier, more developed countries. Today they are increasingly seen as essential resources in countries around the world. The increasing prevalence of information technologies is a challenge to good government and accountable record keeping precisely because computers are seen as so important to business and daily life. Information technologies are considered by many to be the solution to information management problems, and often computer equipment is installed in organizations with little consideration for what tasks they will perform and how the products of those actions – the records – will be managed.

Oborah (2011) stated that there are two types of storage – primary and secondary storage. Primary storage is temporary or working storage while secondary storage is relatively a permanent storage. He further identified traditional storage devices as floppy disks, hard disks, optical disks, magnetic tape, smarts cards and flash memory cards. Oyinloye (2012) pointed out that official electronic records should be housed in a central file repository, ideally on a networked file server, or on a centrally located computer in a non-networked agency, that is secured and backed up on at regular basis. It is important to remember to institute a version control/change control methodology for electronic records. This is similar to the central files that are used for keeping paper records. Secretaries should be trained not to store official records on their local hard-drives as these drives are not routinely backed up and may not be totally secured.

Cory (2012) opined that the data in a database has some inherent meaning. In other words, a random assortment of data cannot correctly be called a database. A database can be of any size and of any degree of complexity, stored by software programmes on computers and organized into a hierarchy of bits, characters, (bytes), fields, records and files. For clearer understanding, the author went further to define *bit* as the smallest unit of data the computer can store in a database – represented by 0 for **off** or 1 for **on**; *character* (byte) as a letter, number or special character such as A, B, C, 1, 2, 3, #, & %, a *field* as a unit of data consisting of one or more characters; *record* as a collection of related fields; and *file* as a collection of related records

Bantin (2008) outlined three storage options. These are Online, Nearline, and Offline. Online is a properly designed storage in the computer system and provides full access to appropriate users. Online access means that the record is accessible immediately through your network. This may be on network server or on personal computer‘s hard drive. This option maintains the greatest functionality. Nearline storage includes storage in a system that is not a direct part of the organization‘s network, but that can be accessed through IT facility, e.g. an optical media jukebox. This option maintains a moderate amount of functionality while Offline storage refers to storage that is not accessible through network, such as removable media like

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magnetic tape and flash disk. This option retains the least amount of functionality, while still maintaining records in an electronic format.

The barrier for adequate electronic records storage skills as noted by Robert (2008) such as subjecting electronic records to undetectable change thereby making it difficult to maintain the evidentiary status of such records is responsible for this moderate level of skills by the secretaries.

Views on electronic records storage cannot be concluded without reference to database storage. An electronic database according to Agomuo (2005), is not just the computer-based version of what used to go into manila folders and filing cabinets. It is a logically organized collection of related data designed and built for a specific purpose – a technology for pulling together facts that allow the slicing, dicing, mixing and matching of data in all kinds of ways.

Electronic Records Retrieval Skills

The most important aspect of electronic record keeping is the ability to retrieve the information without stress. Adibe (2005) stated that the overall aim of any computer system should be to retrieve and provide the right information to the right people (or machine) at the right time and place. The author opined that the choice of retrieval (output) system for any application will depend on speed, cost, reliability, quality and quietness. Retrieval system could take the form of printed output (hard copy) using printers and plotters.

Okolo (2007) also noted that processed data in the computer can only make sense when they are made available to the intending users. Ekemezie and Ngene (2008) equally opined that the beauty of electronic word processing is that one can easily retrieve the saved document for further use or changes. Any data that is stored can be retrieved when necessary by opening the file. When a file that has been saved is reopened, the information in it is said to be retrieved.

Lynch (2011) stated that information retrieval is the activity of obtaining information resources relevant to an information needed from a collection of information resources. The author asserted that the fast retrieval of records depend upon accurate indexing and storage procedures such procedures have special relevance and take on a new meaning when considered at automated age when machines assume some of the storage and retrieval functions of information handling. A full-featured records management system makes retrieval of relevant records fast, easy and efficient and offers multiple methods of indexing or categorizing information.

Jeffry (2011) described records retrieval as the process of locating stored information, critically, an important phase of records control. The author pointed out that the specific procedures for retrieving documents and information varies to a great extent from office to office, depending upon whether a small office manual system is involved or large scale computer storage, which is typically dominated by machines, is utilized. However, in either case, the steps followed for retrieving records are:

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request for records; search for records; retrieval of records; file control procedures followed; and records sent to requestor.

Agomuo (2005) noted that the three major levels of informational retrieval. These are online – where the records are stored on hard drives/network drives for online access in fractions of seconds. This, according to the author makes electronic records continuously available for immediate reference. Nearline –here, the records are stored on optical disk auto-changer, for Nearline access usually under 20 seconds. This makes the storage of voluminous information more efficient. It slows down access time, but frees up space on network drives for more current information. Offline – the records are stored on removable electronic media (optical disks, diskettes, magnetic tapes or cartridges), for offline access usually within the hour.

Retrieval of information from the files in every organization is very essential because various types of records aid management in decision making. Records created are kept in files to be made available as and when needed. There is need to keep tract of events as required. It is therefore important that consideration be given to the ease with which information could be retrieved from the files.

Method

The descriptive survey research design was employed in this research. The design was applied because according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), a survey design allows the collection of a large amount of data from sizeable population in a highly economical way usually involving the use of questionnaire administered on a sample. The focus group is Secretaries working in polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria. The population comprised 366 secretaries drawn from ten polytechnics in the North-Central, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire containing 27 items in two sections, A and B was used for the data collection. The questionnaire adopted a five point response scale of Very High Extent (VHE) 5, High Extent (HE) 4, Moderate Extent (ME) 3, Low Extent (LE) 2 Very Low Extent (VLE) 1. The research instrument was subjected to face validity. Two experts from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka validated the instrument. To establish the reliability of the research instrument employed for data collection, data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha as to measure the internal consistency of the items. The result of the reliability test for the sections was 0.97 and 0.68 respectively. The results of the reliability test yielded a value of 0.83 for the entire items in the instrument. These results were considered high enough and deemed reliable. 366 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the subjects personally by the researchers with the help of research assistants. Out of 366 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 339 copies representing 93% were duly completed and returned. The researcher employed mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the statistical tool of z-test and ANOVA were used to test the two hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was that if the f-calculated is less than or equal to the f-critical value at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypotheses were accepted and if f-calculated is greater than the f-critical value, the null hypotheses were rejected.

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Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do secretaries possess electronic records storage skills for effective records management in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria?

Data collected in respect of research question 1 analyzed and were presented in Table

Table 1

Respondents' mean ratings on the extent of electronic records storage skills possessed for effective records management (N=339)

SN	Electronic Records Storage |Skills		SD	Remarks
1	Save documents in traditional media such as hard disk	3.64	1.12	High
2	Save/arrange documents in files and Folders	2.27	0.70	Low
3	Drag–and-drop files from one location to another	4.01	1.75	High
4	Store templates and graphics for future application	4.02	0.92	High
5	Copy to external/secondary memory drives	3.97	1.22	High
6	Take routing back-ups as appropriate	3.04	0.93	Moderate
7	Reduce bulky documents to microfilms for archive	3.41	1.04	Moderate
8	Store data on digital camera	3.28	0.98	Moderate
9	Copy and paste a group of files for future use	3.84	0.96	High
10	Save only relevant messages	3.09	0.95	Moderate
11	Copy data to network server	3.99	1.04	High
12	Store data on database applications for future updates and use	2.29	0.70	Low
13	Save documents in media such as floopy disk	3.73	1.14	High
14	Save documents in media such as flash drive	3.69	1.13	High
15	Use CD-Rom to save documents	4.00	1.23	High
16	Use DVD to save documents	3.77	1.13	High
17	Save documents with smart cards Devices	3.09	0.95	Moderate
	Cluster Mean	**3.48**		**Moderate**

Table 1 indicates that out of 17 listed storage skills, 10 were rated high, five were rated moderate while the remaining two were rated low. Among the items assessed high are: 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16 with mean scores ranged from 3.64 to 4.02. Items 6, 7, 8, 10, and 17 with respective mean scores ranged from 3.04 – 3.41 were rated moderate. The items rated low are items 2 and 12 with mean score of

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2.27 and 2.29 respectively. The cluster mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.70-1.75 indicate that the opinions of respondents were close or homogeneous on their responses on the electronic records storage skill possessed by secretaries.

Research Question 2

To what extent do secretaries possess electronic records retrieval skills for effective records management in polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria?

Table 2

Respondents' mean ratings on the extent of electronic records retrieval skills possessed for effective records management

S/N	Electronic Records Retrieval Skills		SD	Remarks
1	Download mail or manage brief instructions from laptop, palm top or mobile phone	3.61	1.11	High
2	Research price or product comparison	3.08	1.50	Moderate
	Import and export data files and convert same into a format compatible with the programme being used	3.61	1.11	High
4	Use print options interchangeably	3.99	1.04	High
5	Access and view multiple pages in print preview	3.80	1.16	High
6	Print only by use of tool bar, menu bar or print icon	3.89	1.19	High
7	Access and display short-cuts and programme icons on screen (CRT/VDU)	3.74	1.15	High
8	Recover documents already sent to recycle bin or Trash Can	3.69	1.13	High
9	Reconstruct and retrieve damaged files using appropriate software	2.29	0.70	Low
10	Retrieve records through relational database	2.27	0.70	Low
	Cluster Mean	**3.40**		**Moderate**

The information presented in Table 2 reveals that out of the 10 listed retrieval skills, seven were rated high, 1 item was rated moderate while two items were rated low. Among the items rated high are: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Furthermore, item 2 was rated moderate. Finally, items 9 and 10 were rated low with mean scores of 2.27 and 2.29. Hence, a cluster mean of 3.40 falls within the limit moderate and the corresponding standard deviation of the 0.70-1.50 shows closeness in opinions of the respondents on electronic records retrieval skills possessed by secretaries for effective records management.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female secretaries on the extent of skills possessed for effective electronic records management in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria.

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Table 3
Summary of z-test analysis of the mean ratings of male and female secretaries on the extent of skills possessed for effective electronic records management

Variables	N		SD	df	z-cal	z-crit.	Decision
Male	170	1.17	0.38	337	827.5	1.96	Significant
Female	169	2.00	0.00				

Data presented in Table 3 reveals the calculated z-value of 827.5 is greater than the critical z-value of 1.96 (827.5>1.96)) at 0.05 level of significance and 337 degree of freedom, the result therefore shows a significance difference. This implies that male and female secretaries significantly differ in their mean ratings at the level to which they possess the skills for effective electronic records management. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2
There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of secretaries with low, moderate and high experience on the extent of skills possessed for effective electronic records management in Polytechnics in North Central States, Nigeria.

Table 4
Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for differences in the mean ratings of secretaries according to their years of experience on the extent of skills possessed for effective electronic records management based on their years of experience

Variables	N		SD	df	F-cal	F-crit	Decision	Post Hoc Test
1-5 yrs (Low)	113	1.01	0.90	2.48	7.28	1.96	Significant	High Exp'd
6-10 yrs (Moderate)	98	1.70	0.46					
10 and above (High)	128	2.00	0.00					

Result in Table 3 shows that the f-cal value of 487.28 is greater than the f-tab value of 196 at degree of freedom of 2 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the low experienced secretaries, moderate experienced secretaries, and high experienced secretaries differ in their mean ratings on the extent to which they possess the skills for effective electronic records management. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. In order to determine the direction of difference, a post hoc test using scheffe's test was conducted. The results of the post hoc test show that the direction of difference was secretaries who have worked above 10 years (highly experienced). This means that highly experienced secretaries possess electronic skills for effective electronic records management better than the secretaries who have worked for 0-5 years (low experienced) and secretaries who have worked for 6-10 years (moderate experienced).

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Discussion

The finding of the study showed that electronic records storage skills possessed by secretaries like saving of documents in traditional media such as hard disk; drag-and-drop files from one location to another; and store templates and graphics for future application are possessed by secretaries to a high extent, and these skills form part of the basic electronic records storage skills but other basic routine electronic records storage skills which are essential to the operations of their duties are moderately possessed. The findings also revealed that the skill possessed by secretaries to save only relevant email messages is moderate as compared to copying data to network server. The barrier for adequate electronic records storage skills as noted by Robert (2008) such as subjecting electronic records to undetectable change thereby making it difficult to maintain the evidentiary status of such records is responsible for this moderate level of skills by the secretaries. Similarly, the categorization of electronic records storage by Bantin (2008) as online, nearline, and offline requires divergent possession of skills by secretaries since each of these skills require different degrees of skills and are significant to proper electronic records management.

The findings of the study also revealed that secretaries in Polytechnics in North Central States, possessed electronic records retrieval skills to moderate level. The skills include the following: download mail or manager‘s brief instructions from laptop or mobile phone; research price or product comparison and import; and export data files and convert same into a format compatible with the programme being used. The skills also include use print options interchangeably; access and view multiple pages in print preview; and print only by use of tool bar, menu bar or print icon. This finding is in line with the view of Adibe (2005) who posited that the overall aim of any computer system is the ability to retrieve and provide the right information to the right people at the right time. Furthermore, the author stated that the choice of retrieval largely depends on speed, cost, reliability, quality and quietness which could either be in form of printed output using printers and plotters or through screen display on terminals, work stations and PCs. He also asserted that secretaries are expected to possess retrieval skills because retrieval of information is very essential in records management which aids decision making in every institutions or organizations. The electronic records retrieval skills moderately possessed by secretaries contrast the opinion of Nwaokwa and Okoli (2012) who reported that a secretary is a skilled and specialized type of employee who performs professional functions through his/her acquired skills.

It was revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female secretaries in Polytechnics regarding the level to which they possess electronic records management skills. The skills required to be possessed by secretaries should not be gender biased both sexes need skills to navigate the information landscape (Akande, 2013).

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Experience also determines the degree of skills possession. According to Osuala and Okeke (2006), secretaries that have gained experience on their jobs perform effectively and are amenable to positive change of attitude, work habit, skill, and performance. Experience in this study is classified as low, moderate and high depending on the years of work.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the skills possessed by secretaries in Polytechnics for electronic records management are not adequate. This is because most secretaries in polytechnics still find it difficult to effectively manage records using the electronic system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Secretaries in Polytechnics in North-Central, Nigeria should be trained by employers, through hands-on training in-service training, workshops, seminars, and conferences. These training programmes should incorporate the electronic records management skills for effective records management.

2. Appropriate and relevant information technology equipment should be provided in schools for practical training of office technology and management students. This should be through the collaborative efforts of the government, the business organizations and the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS) to put Nigeria in its rightful place among committee of nations in terms of technological, innovative, entrepreneurial and vocational development.

3. The Government at all levels should see it as a collective responsibility and a matter of urgent national importance to provide enabling environment for electronic records to be properly and effectively managed by providing steady power supply.

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