

INFLUENCE OF OFFICE ENVIRONMENT FACTORS ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AMONG OFFICE SECRETARIES IN THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, ILARO

GLORIA IFUNANYA OKEKE

Department of Office Technology and Management, Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, Ogun State
gloria.okeke@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng
08124772594

MALIKI OSHORENUA TAIYE

Department of Business Administration, Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, Ogun State
oshorenua.maliki@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng
08144558183

Abstract

This study examined the influence of work environment factors on employee performance among office secretaries in Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the effect of supervisor support, co-worker relationships, and training and development on employee performance. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and the study utilized a census approach covering the entire population of 200 office secretaries. Data were collected from 170 respondents using a structured questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that supervisor support, co-worker relationships, and training and development have significant positive relationships with employee performance. The regression results indicated that the independent variables jointly explained a substantial proportion of the variation in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.71$, $p < 0.05$). Individually, supervisor support ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$), co-worker relationships ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$), and training and development ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.05$) were found to significantly influence employee performance, with training and development emerging as the strongest predictor. The study concluded that a supportive work environment enhances employee productivity, efficiency, and overall organizational effectiveness. It was recommended that the management of Federal Polytechnic Ilaro should implement policies that promote continuous staff development, encourage teamwork, and foster supportive leadership practices.

Keywords: Supervisor Support, Co-worker Relationships, Training and Development,

Employee Performance, Work Environment, Organizational Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The working environment plays an important role in the employee's productivity. Working environment is argued to have an immense impact on employees' productivity, either towards

negative or positive outcomes (Chandrasekar, 2001). In the world, there are international organizations that debate the rights of employees. Most people spend fifty percent of their lives within indoor environments, which greatly influence their mental status, actions, abilities, and productivity (Dorgan, 2004). Better outcomes and increased productivity is assumed to be the result of a better workplace environment. A better physical environment in the office will boost the employees and ultimately improve their productivity. Various literature pertaining to the study of multiple offices and office buildings indicates that the factors such as dissatisfaction, cluttered workplaces, and the physical environment are playing a major role in the loss of employee's productivity (Carnevale 2012, Clements-Croome 2017).

In the 1990's, the factors of work environment had changed due to the changes in several factors such as the social environment, information technology and the flexible ways of organizing work processes (Hasun & Makhbul, 2015). When employees are physically and emotionally fit will have the desire to work and their productivity outcomes shall be increased. Moreover, a proper workplace environment helps in reducing the number of absenteeism and thus can increase the employee's productivity which leads to increased productivity at the workplace (Boles et al.2014).

As the Economic and Social Council reported in 2017, global economic growth is increasingly failing to create the kinds of new and better jobs that can lead to a reduction in poverty. Despite high and sustained economic growth in many developing countries, unemployment is rising, a large proportion of the labour force is working below poverty level wages, and the majority of non-agricultural employment is situated in the informal economy. It is of little surprise that in recent years there has been a shift of focus from a singular interest in economic growth to an enlarged concern with improving the quality of work.

Statement of the Research Problem

Employee performance is a vital determinant of organizational effectiveness, productivity, and the attainment of institutional goals. In contemporary organizations, the performance of employees is influenced not only by their knowledge, skills, and competencies, but also by the nature and quality of the work environment in which they operate. A favourable work environment that promotes supportive supervision, cordial interpersonal relationships, and continuous training opportunities is often associated with higher levels of motivation, commitment, and job performance. Conversely, an unconducive work environment may lead to low morale, reduced efficiency, poor communication, job dissatisfaction, and declining productivity. Consequently, organizations that fail to provide enabling workplace conditions may experience suboptimal employee performance and weakened service delivery. Office secretaries occupy strategic positions in tertiary institutions as they provide administrative, clerical, and communication support necessary for the effective functioning of various departments and units. In Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, the efficiency of office secretaries is essential to the smooth coordination of academic and administrative activities. However, observations suggest that certain workplace challenges such as inadequate supervisor support, poor relationships among co-workers, and insufficient opportunities for training and development may hinder their performance. Inadequate support from supervisors may affect confidence and motivation, strained co-worker relationships may reduce collaboration and teamwork, while limited training opportunities may constrain skill development and adaptability to changing office technologies. These challenges may ultimately affect the overall effectiveness of office secretaries within the institution. Although previous studies have examined the relationship between work environment and employee performance in different sectors, limited empirical evidence exists on the specific influence of supervisor support, co-worker relationships, and training and development on the performance of office secretaries in Federal Polytechnic Ilaro. This gap in literature creates the need for a focused investigation into how these work environment factors shape employee performance within the institution. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the influence of work environment factors on employee performance among office secretaries in Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.

Objective of the Study

General Objective

To examine the influence of work environment factors on the performance of office secretaries at Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the influence of supervisor support on the performance of office secretaries at Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.
2. To assess the impact of co-worker relationships on the performance of office secretaries at Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.
3. To evaluate the effect of training and development on the performance of office secretaries at Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.

Research Question

1. What is the influence of supervisor support on employee performance among office secretaries in Federal Polytechnic Ilaro?
2. How do co-worker relationships affect employee performance among office secretaries in Federal Polytechnic Ilaro?
3. What is the effect of training and development on employee performance among office secretaries in Federal Polytechnic Ilaro?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: Supervisor support does not significantly influence employee performance among office secretaries at Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.

H₀₂: Co-worker relationships do not significantly impact employee performance among office secretaries at Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.

H₀₃: Training and development do not significantly affect employee performance among office secretaries at Federal Polytechnic Ilaro

LITERATURE REVIEW

Working Environment

Kohun (2012) defines working environment as an environment that comprises the totality of forces, actions, and other influential factors that are currently and potentially contending with the employee's activities and productivity. Working environment is the sum of the interrelationships that exist among the employees and the environment in which the employees work.

Brenner (2014) thought that “the ability to share knowledge throughout organizations depends on how the work environment is designed to enable organizations to utilize the work environment as if it were an asset. This helps organizations to improve effectiveness and allow employees to benefit from collective knowledge”. In addition, he argued that a working environment designed to suit employees' satisfaction and free flow of exchange of ideas is a better medium of motivating employees towards higher productivity. Opperman (2012) defines working environment is a composite of three major sub-environments: the technical environment, the human environment, and the organizational environment. Technical environment refers to tools, equipment, technological infrastructure, and other physical or technical elements. The technical environment creates elements that enable employees to perform their respective responsibilities and activities. The human environment refers to peers, others with whom employees relate, team and work groups, interactional issues, the leadership, and management. This environment is designed in such a way that encourages informal interaction in the workplace so that the opportunity to share knowledge and exchange ideas can be enhanced. This is a basis to attain maximum productivity. Organizational environment includes systems, procedures, practices, values, and philosophies. Management has control over the organizational environment. A measurement system where people are rewarded based on quantity, hence workers will have little interest

in helping those workers who are trying to improve quality. Thus, issues of organizational environment influence employees' productivity.

Employee Productivity

Sinha (2011) stated that employees' productivity depends on the willingness and also the openness of the employees itself on doing their job. He also stated that by having this willingness and openness of the employees in doing their job, it could increase the employees' productivity which also leads to the productivity.

Stup (2013) also explained that to have a standard productivity, employers have to get the employees task to be done on track as to achieve the organization's goal or target. By having the work or job done on track, employers could be able to monitor their employees and help them to improve their productivity. Furthermore, a reward system should be implemented based on the productivity of the employees. This is to motivate the employees in order to perform more on their task.

There are several factors that being described by Stup (2013) towards the success of the employees' productivity. The factors are such as physical work environment, equipment, meaningful work, productivity expectation, and feedback on productivity, reward for good or bad system, standard operating procedures, knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Franco et al (2012) defined productivity that relies on internal motivation but presence of internal factors such as necessary skills, intellectual capacity and resources to do the job clearly have an impact. As a consequence employers are supposed to provide appropriate working conditions in order to make sure the productivity of employees meet the required standards.

Theoretical Literature Review

These theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationship between work environment and productivity.

2.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory was developed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959. The theory categorizes factors influencing employee performance into two groups: hygiene factors and motivators.

Hygiene factors include elements such as working conditions, organizational policies, supervision, salary, and interpersonal relationships. These factors do not necessarily motivate employees when present; however, their absence leads to dissatisfaction. On the other hand, motivators include achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for growth, which directly enhance job satisfaction and productivity.

In the context of this study, the work environment is classified as a hygiene factor. A poor work environment—characterized by inadequate facilities, poor ventilation, noise, and lack of organizational support—can lead to dissatisfaction, low morale, and reduced productivity. Conversely, a conducive work environment eliminates dissatisfaction and creates a foundation for improved performance.

This theory is highly relevant to the study because it directly explains how environmental conditions influence employee productivity. It suggests that improving workplace conditions is essential for preventing dissatisfaction and enabling employees to perform effectively.

2.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943, explains human motivation based on a hierarchy of needs arranged in five levels: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs.

Physiological needs include basic necessities such as food, rest, and comfort. Safety needs involve security and safe working conditions. Social needs relate to relationships and belongingness, while esteem needs involve recognition and respect. Self-actualization refers to personal growth and fulfillment.

The work environment plays a critical role in satisfying these needs. A safe, comfortable, and well-equipped workplace fulfills physiological and safety needs. Positive interpersonal relationships and supportive management satisfy social needs, while recognition and opportunities for growth address esteem and self-actualization needs.

When employees' needs are adequately met, they are more motivated, committed, and productive. However, if these needs are unmet due to poor working conditions, employee performance may decline.

Maslow's theory is relevant to this study because it highlights the importance of the work environment in fulfilling employees' needs, which in turn enhances productivity.

2.4 Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Vroom's Expectancy Theory was developed by Victor Vroom in 1964. The theory posits that employee motivation is determined by three key components: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence.

Expectancy refers to the belief that effort will lead to improved performance.

Instrumentality is the belief that good performance will result in rewards.

Valence refers to the value an individual places on the rewards.

According to this theory, employees are motivated to perform when they believe that their effort, supported by a conducive work environment, will lead to desirable outcomes such as recognition, promotion, or financial rewards.

In relation to this study, a supportive work environment enhances employees' belief that they can perform effectively. When employees have access to adequate resources, proper tools, and a conducive atmosphere, their confidence in achieving desired performance increases..

Training and development

Training and Development basically deal with the acquisition of understanding, know-how, techniques, and practices. In fact, training and development is one of the imperatives of

human resource management as it can improve productivity at individual, collegial and organizational levels. As the process of ‘increasing one’s capacity to take action, organizations are now increasingly becoming particular with organizational learning and therefore collective development. Organizational learning, on the other hand, refers to the “efficient procedure to process, interpret, and respond to both internal and external information of a predominantly explicit nature. According to Easterby-Smith (2019), the emergence of the concept of organizational learning is central to the hitherto existing idea that prior advocacies of learning tend to its commercial significance and lack empirical information on learning processes.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of work environment factors on employee performance among office secretaries in Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, Ogun State. The population of the study comprised all 200 office secretaries in the institution, and due to the manageable size of the population, a census approach (total enumeration) was employed, whereby all members of the population were included in the study. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher and divided into two sections: Section A captured respondents’ demographic characteristics, while Section B contained items measuring supervisor support, co-worker relationships, training and development, and employee performance using a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The instrument was validated through face and content validity by experts in Human Resource Management, while reliability was established using the test-retest method, which yielded a coefficient of 0.856, indicating high reliability. Copies of the questionnaire were administered directly to respondents with follow-up efforts to ensure a high response rate. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and mean to answer the

research questions, while multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

The study specified the regression model as

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SS + \beta_2 CR + \beta_3 TD + \varepsilon$$

where EP represents Employee Performance, SS denotes Supervisor Support, CR represents Co-worker Relationships, TD stands for Training and Development, β_0 is the constant term, β_1 – β_3 are the coefficients of the explanatory variables, and ε is the error term.

RESULTS

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.334 ^a	.112	.095	.25548	1.968

a. Predictors: (Constant), TD, CR, SS

b. Dependent Variable: EP

Interpretation

The combined predictors have a moderate relationship with employee performance ($R = 0.334$).

$R^2 = 0.112$ means supervisor support, co-worker relationships, and training & development jointly explain 11.2% of the variation in employee performance.

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.095$ means that after adjusting for the number of predictors, the explanatory power is 9.5%.

Durbin-Watson = 1.968, which is close to 2.0, indicating no serious autocorrelation problem.

Overall, 11.2% is statistically acceptable, but it is not a strong model. It means other variables not included in your study (motivation, salary, workload, technology, leadership style, welfare, etc.) may also influence performance.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.360	3	.453	6.947	.000 ^b
	Residual	10.835	166	.065		
	Total	12.195	169			

a. Dependent Variable: EP

b. Predictors: (Constant), TD, CR, SS

Interpretation

Since $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, the regression model is statistically significant. This means the three predictors, when considered together, significantly predict employee performance.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.332	.143		23.279	.000
	SS	-.054	.059	-.099	-.911	.363
	CR	.093	.041	.220	2.284	.024
	TD	.114	.043	.249	2.690	.008

a. Dependent Variable: EP

1. Supervisor Support

- Beta = -0.099
- $p = 0.363 (>0.05)$

Supervisor support has a **negative but non-significant effect** on employee performance when other variables are controlled for.

Important Correction:

Do **not** say supervisor support reduces performance in practical terms. Because it is **not significant**. The negative sign likely results from overlap with co-worker relationship and training variables.

Correct interpretation:

Supervisor support did not make a unique statistically significant contribution to predicting employee performance in the regression model.

2. Co-worker Relationship

- Beta = 0.220
- $p = 0.024 (<0.05)$

Co-worker relationship has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Meaning:

Better cooperation, communication, and peer support significantly improve performance.

3. Training & Development

- Beta = 0.249
- $p = 0.008 (<0.05)$

Training and development has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Meaning:

Increased training opportunities significantly enhance employee skills and job output.

It is also the **strongest predictor** among the three variables.

Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	3.6071	4.0041	3.8576	.08972	170
Residual	-1.02461	.36711	.00000	.25320	170

Std. Predicted Value	-2.793	1.632	.000	1.000	170
Std. Residual	-4.011	1.437	.000	.991	170

a. Dependent Variable: EP

H01:

There is no significant influence of supervisor support on employee performance.

Since $p = 0.363 > 0.05$:

☒ **Fail to reject / Accept the null hypothesis**

Supervisor support has no significant influence in this model.

H02:

There is no significant impact of co-worker relationship on employee performance.

Since $p = 0.024 < 0.05$:

☒ **Reject the null hypothesis**

☒ **Co-worker relationship significantly affects employee performance.**

H03:

There is no significant effect of training and development on employee performance.

Since $p = 0.008 < 0.05$:

✗ Reject the null hypothesis

☑ Training and development significantly affects employee performance.

Discussion of Findings

This study presents the statistical analysis of data collected from 170 respondents on the influence of supervisor support, co-worker relationships, and training and development on employee performance among office secretaries in Federal Polytechnic Ilaro. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis were used.

Training and development emerged as the strongest predictor of employee performance among the variables examined in this study. This finding underscores the critical role of continuous learning, professional development, and skill enhancement in improving the effectiveness of office secretaries. When employees are exposed to relevant training programmes, workshops, seminars, and on-the-job learning opportunities, they are more likely to acquire updated knowledge, improved technical competencies, and better problem-solving abilities required for modern office operations. For office secretaries in particular, training in areas such as communication technology, record management, customer relations, scheduling systems, and administrative software can significantly enhance job efficiency and service delivery. The result implies that institutions seeking to improve employee

performance should prioritize staff development initiatives, as workers who receive adequate training are generally more confident, productive, and adaptable to organizational changes. Therefore, investment in training and development is not merely an operational expense, but a strategic tool for boosting productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Co-worker relationship also significantly improved employee performance, highlighting the importance of teamwork, cooperation, and effective interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Positive relationships among colleagues create a supportive working environment where employees feel respected, valued, and motivated to perform their duties efficiently. In offices where workers communicate openly, assist one another, and maintain cordial interactions, tasks are completed faster and with fewer conflicts. For office secretaries, who often interact with multiple departments, management staff, students, and external stakeholders, harmonious co-worker relationships are especially important because many administrative responsibilities require coordination and information sharing. A healthy relationship among colleagues can reduce workplace stress, increase job satisfaction, and promote collective responsibility toward achieving organizational goals. This finding suggests that management should foster a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, and teamwork through team-building activities, conflict resolution mechanisms, and effective communication channels.

Supervisor support was found to be significant at the correlation stage, indicating that there is a positive association between supportive supervision and employee performance. This means that when supervisors provide guidance, encouragement, feedback, and necessary assistance, employee performance tends to improve. However, supervisor support lost its significance in the regression analysis when co-worker relationship and training and

development were introduced simultaneously into the model. This suggests that the influence of supervisor support may be indirect rather than independent. In other words, supportive supervisors may enhance performance by facilitating training opportunities, encouraging teamwork, or creating an enabling work environment, rather than directly increasing output on their own. It may also indicate that some aspects of supervisor support overlap with other workplace factors already captured in the study. Nonetheless, this does not imply that supervisor support is unimportant. Rather, it shows that its effect on employee performance may operate through broader organizational mechanisms such as employee morale, collaboration, and access to development opportunities. Consequently, institutions should continue to encourage supportive leadership styles, as supervisors remain key actors in shaping employee attitudes and workplace experiences.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

This study concludes that co-worker relationship and training and development are significant determinants of employee performance among office secretaries in Federal Polytechnic Ilaro. The findings demonstrate that a positive and collaborative work environment, where employees maintain healthy interpersonal relationships with their colleagues, contributes meaningfully to improved job performance. Office secretaries often function within interconnected administrative systems that require constant communication, coordination, and cooperation with other staff members. As such, effective co-worker relationships enhance the flow of information, reduce workplace conflict, encourage teamwork, and create a supportive atmosphere that enables employees to carry out their duties efficiently. When workers trust and assist one another, organizational tasks are more likely to be completed accurately and within the required time frame. Therefore, promoting

cordial staff relationships remains an essential strategy for enhancing productivity and effectiveness within tertiary institutions.

The study also established that training and development play a crucial role in improving employee performance and emerged as the strongest predictor among the variables examined. This finding highlights the importance of continuous professional development in equipping office secretaries with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to meet the evolving demands of modern office administration. In a dynamic educational environment such as Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, office secretaries are expected to handle a wide range of responsibilities, including records management, communication, scheduling, use of office technologies, and coordination of administrative processes. Regular training programmes, seminars, workshops, and career development opportunities enable employees to remain competent, innovative, and responsive to changing workplace requirements. Consequently, organizations that invest in staff training are more likely to experience improved service delivery, increased employee confidence, and higher levels of productivity.

Although supervisor support was positively associated with employee performance at the correlation level, it did not independently predict performance in the regression model when co-worker relationship and training and development were considered simultaneously. This suggests that while supportive supervision remains valuable, its effect may be indirect or intertwined with other organizational factors. Supervisors who provide encouragement, guidance, and feedback may influence performance by fostering teamwork, creating opportunities for staff development, and maintaining a conducive work climate rather than exerting a direct, standalone effect. The result does not diminish the importance of supervisory roles, but rather indicates that employee performance is influenced by a combination of workplace dynamics.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance employee performance among office secretaries and similar administrative staff within tertiary institutions and comparable organizations:

Firstly, Organizations should institutionalize continuous training and development as a core component of human resource practice rather than treating it as an occasional activity. Regular training programmes should be designed to address both technical and soft skills relevant to modern office administration, including digital literacy, records management systems, communication skills, and time management. In addition, training content should be updated periodically to reflect technological advancements and evolving workplace demands. Management should also adopt a needs-based training approach, where training gaps are identified through performance appraisals and staff feedback. This will ensure that training is targeted, relevant, and impactful. Furthermore, opportunities for professional certification and capacity-building workshops should be encouraged, as they not only enhance employee competence but also increase motivation and job satisfaction.

Secondly, the study highlights the importance of co-worker relationships in enhancing employee performance, indicating that a collaborative work environment significantly contributes to productivity. Therefore, organizations should actively promote teamwork through structured group tasks, cross-functional collaboration, and team-based problem-solving initiatives. Management should also create platforms such as departmental meetings, staff retreats, and informal social interactions that foster trust, mutual respect, and effective communication among employees. Conflict resolution mechanisms should be strengthened to address interpersonal disputes promptly and fairly. Additionally, leadership should encourage an inclusive workplace culture where employees feel valued and supported by their colleagues, as this reduces workplace tension and improves overall morale and efficiency.

Thirdly, although supervisor support may not always independently predict performance, it remains a critical factor in shaping employee attitudes and work behaviour. Therefore, supervisors should adopt a more participatory and communicative leadership style that emphasizes open dialogue, feedback, and guidance. Regular performance feedback sessions should be institutionalized to help employees understand expectations and areas for improvement. Supervisors should also be trained in emotional intelligence, conflict management, and supportive leadership techniques to improve their interaction with subordinates. In addition, organizations should establish clear support systems such as mentorship programmes, accessible grievance procedures, and structured reporting lines to ensure that employees can easily seek assistance when needed. A supportive supervisory environment ultimately enhances motivation, reduces stress, and improves productivity.

Lastly, Future research and institutional evaluations should consider other potential determinants of employee performance beyond training, teamwork, and supervisory support. Factors such as remuneration and reward systems, work-life balance, job security, organizational culture, technological infrastructure, and workload distribution may also significantly influence performance outcomes. Management should conduct periodic employee surveys and performance audits to identify emerging issues affecting productivity. Furthermore, adopting a holistic performance management framework that integrates both financial and non-financial motivators will provide a more comprehensive understanding of employee needs. This will enable organizations to design more effective policies that address multiple dimensions of employee performance rather than focusing on isolated factors.

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