

**INFLUENCE OF AGILE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT ON JOB
PERFORMANCE OF SECRETARIES IN PUBLIC TERTIARY
INSTITUTIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE**

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Abstract

The study determined the influence of agile workplace environment on the job performance of secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 275 secretaries across four public tertiary institutions in Anambra State, while census sampling was adopted because the population was manageable. Data were collected using two self-structured instruments namely: Influence of agile workplace environment Questionnaire (IAWEQ) and Job Performance of Secretaries Questionnaire (JPSQ). The face and content validation were carried out by three experts. Reliability was established through a pilot test using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.87 for IAWEQ and 0.85 for JPSQ. 275 copies of the questionnaire were administered out of which 226 copies were retrieved in good condition and used for analysis. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while t-test statistics was employed to test the null hypotheses. Findings revealed that agile workplace environment influenced the job performance of older and younger secretaries to a high extent. Agile workplace environment also influenced the job performance of experienced and less experienced secretaries to a high extent. The t-test results showed no significant difference in the mean ratings of older and younger secretaries, and no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced secretaries. The study concluded that agile workplace environment is a general performance support factor for secretaries irrespective of age and years of experience. It recommended that

administrators of public tertiary institutions should put in place policies that would promote and strengthen agile workplace environments.

Keywords: Agile Workplace Environment, Job Performance, Secretaries, Public Tertiary Institutions.

Introduction

Human capital is a critical resource across the world because of the important roles it plays in the achievement of organizational goals. The performance of the organization's human resources is a significant criterion for organisational results and success and it plays an important role in deciding whether an organisation's objectives are met. As a result, owners and managers of organisations and businesses are looking for employees who can perform their jobs effectively, because workforce performance underpins the efficient and effective use of other resources deployed to achieve organizational goals and organisational effectiveness.

Job performance is defined as the output that an employee gives in attaining the organization's objectives through work conduct and interactions that the organisation considers fruitful or not. Adenekan and Jimoh (2021) defined job performance as the parameter that determines if a person does a good job and is still an important indicator of an organization's results and performance throughout time. Employee job performance exposes levels of efficiency and productivity that can help organisations attain their goals (Leonard, 2019). In the present study, job performance of secretaries can be defined as how well secretaries carry out their duties and responsibilities in an office setting. It encompasses the quality, quantity and efficiency of their work output.

Secretaries as important employees in organizations are saddled with the responsibilities of ensuring that organizational activities are well coordinated. The role of a secretary involves a broad spectrum of responsibilities, including managing records, communication, information, people and other resources essential for maintaining the office as the central hub of a business organisation (Ademiluyi, 2018). Secretaries as administrative assistants with specialised training are capable of performing their duties with minimal supervision (Mishra, 2020). Secretaries act as the administrative backbone of any organisation, safeguarding information and designing effective communication systems (Igwe & Utebor, 2023).

In tertiary institutions, secretaries have critical responsibilities in information processing functions, such as accessing and generating information, organising and storing data for future use and ensuring the dissemination and safeguarding of information (Tuke, 2020). They are involved in producing documents for offices, lecturers and students, proofreading documents for accuracy and storing and retrieving documents in both traditional and electronic formats. The ability of secretaries to maintain records for easy retrieval is a fundamental aspect of their role, as it enables them to support decision-making, enhance efficiency, maintain organisation and contribute to the overall success of their organisations (Onoja, 2020).

The global world of work has undergone a profound transformation driven by the rapid digitalization of the workplace. Digital technologies have enabled innovative workplace arrangements that allow for greater flexibility. Employees can now work remotely, collaborate seamlessly across locations and access information and tools from anywhere. This has led to a shift away from the traditional physical office setup towards more dynamic and adaptable work environments. However, it appears that many tertiary institutions in Anambra State are still grappling with the transition to a fully digitalized workplace.

The agile workplace involves changing the physical workspace primarily through the integration of front and back-office tools. Agile workplaces represent the next significant step in workplace evolution (Attaran et al., 2019). They are created through the simultaneous and coordinated development of both the physical spaces and the work conducted within them. Stare (2021) stated that an agile workplace facilitates teamwork, collaboration and productivity without compromising operations. It can be achieved through in-office changes, a work-from-anywhere model, or a hybrid approach. The workplace should be smart, intuitive and seamless (Peeters et al., 2022).

Despite the increasing digitalisation of workplaces, secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State continue to experience challenges that hinder their job performance. One major issue is the digital divide within tertiary institutions. While some institutions have embraced modern digital tools, others still rely on outdated systems, making it difficult for secretaries to adapt to new workplace demands. Additionally, the lack of continuous professional development programmes have left many secretaries ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of digital workplace tools. This seem to have led to delays in administrative processes, increased workload pressure and reduced efficiency in handling institutional tasks.

Age and years of work experience were considered important moderating variables. In the context of the study, secretaries below the age of 40 years were regarded as younger secretaries, while secretaries above 40 years were regarded as older secretaries. Less experienced secretaries were classified as those who had less than 10 years of experience on the job, while experienced secretaries were those with work experience of 10 years and above. It was not clear how the workplace would influence the job performance of secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State. It was this gap that the study filled.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the influence of agile workplace environment on the job performance of secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. investigate the influence of agile workplace environment on the job performance of older and younger secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

2. determine the influence of agile workplace environment on the job performance of experienced and less experienced secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does an agile workplace environment influence the job performance of older and younger secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
2. To what extent does an agile workplace environment influence the job performance of experienced and less experienced secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of older and younger secretaries on the extent of influence of agile workplace environment on the job performance of secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced secretaries on the extent of influence of agile workplace environment on the job performance of secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Methods

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because the researcher used questionnaire to determine the influence of agile workplace environment on the job performance of secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The study was carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria. Anambra State was chosen as the area of the study because it provides a relevant context for examining workplace digitalisation in public tertiary institutions, given the contrast between global advances in digital work practices and the continued reliance on traditional, study-based administrative systems in tertiary institutions in the State.

The population of the study comprised 275 secretaries in the four public tertiary institutions in Anambra State. This included all secretaries in public tertiary institutions according to the data obtained from the Personnel Units of the tertiary institutions as at March, 2025. The sample size of the study comprised 275 secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The entire population was studied without sampling because the size was manageable. Census sampling method was adopted.

The instruments for data collection were two self structured questionnaires developed by the researcher based on the reviewed literature and research questions guiding the study. The first instrument was titled Influence of agile workplace environment Questionnaire (IAWEQ). Section A contained two items on respondents' background information covering age

and years of experience, while section B contained 10 items on influence of agile workplace on the job performance of secretaries. The second instrument was titled Job Performance of Secretaries Questionnaire (JPSQ). It contained 20 items on secretaries' job performance. Both instruments were structured on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE)-4, High Extent (HE)-3, Low Extent (LE)-2 and Very Low Extent (VLE)-1.

The face and content validation of the instruments were conducted by three experts, two from Department of Vocational Education and one expert from Educational Psychology unit in the Department of Educational Foundations all in Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out on 20 secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Enugu State who were not included in the area of the study. Cronbach Alpha reliability yielded coefficient values of 0.82, 0.84 and 0.94 for clusters 1 to 3 respectively, with an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.87 for IODOWQ and 0.85 for JPSQ.

The researcher administered 275 copies of the instruments personally to the respondents with the aid of four research assistants. Out of the 275 copies administered, 226 copies were retrieved in good condition and used for the analysis of data. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The mean value was used to answer the research questions while the standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' responses. For the hypotheses, t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent does an agile workplace environment influence the job performance of older and younger secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Extent Agile Workplace Environment Influences the Job Performance of Older and Younger Secretaries in Public Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State (N=226)

S/N	Item Statement	Older Mean	Older SD	Younger Mean	Younger SD	Remark
1	The flexible work environment enhances my efficiency.	3.18	0.81	3.42	0.69	High Extent
2	Open office spaces improve my communication with colleagues.	2.94	0.78	3.30	0.73	High Extent
3	Remote work opportunities improve my job performance.	2.88	0.84	3.25	0.76	High Extent
4	The agile work setting enhances my ability to meet deadlines.	3.12	0.76	3.38	0.71	High Extent
5	Frequent workplace collaboration increases my productivity.	3.05	0.82	3.40	0.67	High Extent
6	The agile work environment promotes better task management.	3.10	0.79	3.36	0.74	High Extent

7	Agile workspace flexibility helps me adapt to job demands.	3.20	0.74	3.45	0.62	High Extent
8	Agile workplace policies improve my motivation at work.	3.02	0.86	3.28	0.77	High Extent
9	Agile work environment enables me to work under pressure.	2.96	0.80	3.22	0.79	High Extent
10	I experience improved job satisfaction due to an agile workplace.	3.14	0.83	3.41	0.70	High Extent
Cluster Mean / SD		3.12	0.80	3.01	0.72	High Extent

The results in Table 1 show that both older and younger secretaries rated the influence of the agile workplace environment on their job performance to a high extent. Older secretaries rated items 1-10 as influencing secretaries' job performance to a high extent with mean ratings ranging between 2.94 and 3.18. The standard deviation scores ranging between 0.74 and 0.83 indicate that the respondents' opinions were close. The cluster mean of 3.12 indicates that agile workplace influences secretaries job performance in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State to a high extent. Furthermore, younger secretaries rated items 1-10 as influencing secretaries' job performance to a high extent with mean ratings ranging between 3.22 and 3.45. The standard deviation scores ranging between 0.62 and 0.77 indicate that the respondents' opinions were close. The cluster mean of 3.01 indicates that agile workplace influences secretaries' job performance in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State to a high extent.

Research Question 2

To what extent does an agile workplace environment influences the job performance of experienced and less experienced secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondents' Mean Ratings on the Extent Agile Workplace Environment Influences the Job Performance of Experienced and Less Experienced Secretaries in Public Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State (N=226)

S/N	Item Statement	Experienced Mean	Experienced SD	Less Exp. Mean	Less Exp. SD	Remark
1	The flexible work environment enhances my efficiency.	3.25	0.79	3.40	0.70	High Extent
2	Open office spaces improve my communication with colleagues.	3.05	0.82	3.28	0.72	High Extent
3	Remote work opportunities improve my job performance.	2.98	0.86	3.30	0.75	High Extent
4	The agile work setting enhances my ability to meet deadlines.	3.18	0.77	3.36	0.71	High Extent
5	Frequent workplace collaboration increases my productivity.	3.12	0.81	3.42	0.68	High Extent
6	The agile work environment promotes better task management.	3.20	0.78	3.38	0.73	High Extent

7	Agile workspace flexibility helps me adapt to job demands.	3.28	0.75	3.44	0.65	High Extent
8	Agile workplace policies improve my motivation at work.	3.10	0.84	3.26	0.78	High Extent
9	Agile work environment enables me to work under pressure.	3.02	0.82	3.24	0.76	High Extent
10	I experience improved job satisfaction due to an agile workplace.	3.22	0.81	3.39	0.72	High Extent
Cluster Mean / SD		3.14	0.81	3.35	0.72	High Extent

The results in Table 2 show that both experienced secretaries (10 years and above) and less experienced secretaries (less than 10 years) rated the influence of the agile workplace environment on their job performance to a high extent. Experienced secretaries rated items 1-10 with mean scores ranging from 2.98 to 3.28, indicating that agile workplace features influence their job performance to a high extent. The standard deviation scores of 0.75-0.86 show that their responses were close, reflecting consistency in their views. The cluster mean of 3.14 further shows that the agile workplace environment influences their job performance in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State to a high extent. Less experienced secretaries also rated all items to a high extent, with mean scores ranging between 3.24 and 3.44. Their standard deviation scores of 0.65-0.78 indicate close agreement among respondents. The cluster mean of 3.35 shows that less experienced secretaries perceive the influence of the agile workplace environment on their job performance to a high extent.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of older and younger secretaries on the extent of influence of agile workplace environment on the job performance of secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Test of Significance in the Mean Ratings of Older and Younger Secretaries on the Extent of Influence of Agile Workplace Environment on Job Performance

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	α	P-value	Decision
Older Secretaries	168	3.12	0.80	224	0.05	0.356	Not Significant
Younger Secretaries	58	3.01	0.72				

Data in Table 3 show that the p-value of 0.356 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the difference in mean ratings is not statistically significant. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of older and younger secretaries on the extent to which the agile workplace environment influences their job performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, showing that age does not significantly affect secretaries' perception of the influence of an agile workplace environment on their job performance in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced secretaries on the extent of influence of agile workplace environment on the job performance of secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Test of Significance in the Mean Ratings of Experienced and Less Experienced Secretaries on the Extent of Influence of Agile Workplace Environment on Job Performance

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	α	P-value	Decision
Experienced Secretaries	143	3.14	0.80	224	0.05	0.052	Not Significant
Less Experienced Secretaries	83	3.35	0.72				

Data in Table 4 show that the p-value of 0.052 is slightly greater than the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the difference in mean ratings is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, implying that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of experienced and less experienced secretaries on the extent to which the agile workplace environment influences their job performance in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that agile workplace environment influences the job performance of older and younger secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State to a high extent. This finding may have resulted because agile workplace systems expose secretaries to flexible work arrangements, digital communication tools, collaborative platforms and improved task-management processes. Engaging with these work conditions may have strengthened secretaries' efficiency, enhanced their ability to meet deadlines, improved communication flow and supported faster handling of administrative responsibilities. This finding is in agreement with Bhattacharya (2024), who reported that quality work-from-home facilities significantly enhanced employees' satisfaction and performance in the service sector in India, as technological support and structured digital tools improved efficiency. Chipwaza and Semlambo (2024) similarly found that digital technologies positively influenced employees' performance in remote work environments at the University of Dodoma, as a large proportion of employees relied on digital platforms such as Zoom to carry out their duties effectively. Anell and Eriksson (2024) also established that digital collaborative tools improved work efficiency among agile teams even though communication gaps sometimes emerged. In the same vein, Kumari et al. (2024) revealed that hybrid work arrangements lead to improved employee performance and work engagement among employees.

Furthermore, findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference in the perception of older and younger secretaries

regarding how an agile workplace environment influences their job performance in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State. This indicates that the agile workplace environment is an important factor influencing job performance irrespective of age differences among secretaries. This result is consistent with Bhattacharya (2024), who found that employee performance in remote and agile work settings was influenced more by technological support and managerial communication than by demographic characteristics. It also agrees with Chipwaza and Semlambo (2024), who reported that digital technologies enhanced employee performance across different staff categories regardless of age or experience. Kumari et al. (2024) also confirmed that hybrid work arrangements contribute meaningfully to improved work engagement and performance across diverse employee groups.

The findings of the study revealed that agile workplace environment influences the job performance of experienced and less experienced secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State to a high extent. This finding may have resulted because an agile workplace exposes secretaries to flexible work routines, supportive digital systems, shared platforms for collaboration and efficient communication channels. Engaging with these features may have enhanced secretaries' ability to manage tasks effectively, strengthened their work organisation, improved their communication with colleagues and supported timely completion of administrative duties. This finding is in agreement with Prasad and Satyaprasad (2023), who reported that remote working arrangements positively influenced employees' work-life balance in India when supported by strong social support systems, as digital tools and workplace flexibility improved employees' effectiveness. Kumi et al. (2025) similarly found that digital transformation enhanced organisational commitment, professional development and employee wellbeing among healthcare workers in Ghana, indicating that technology-enabled work environments improve overall employee outcomes. Pea-Assounga and Sibassaha (2025) also established that digital transformation contributes positively to employees' innovative behaviour when supported by organisational culture and leadership. Raj et al. (2023) revealed that remote working improves firm performance through frequent communication, accessible technologies and supportive management.

Furthermore, findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced secretaries on the extent to which agile workplace environments influence their job performance in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State. This indicates that the agile workplace environment is an important factor influencing job performance irrespective of differences in experience levels among secretaries. This result is consistent with Prasad and Satyaprasad (2023), who found that remote working improved performance outcomes across employees regardless of experience when adequate social support was available. It also agrees with Kumi et al. (2025), who reported that digital transformation improved employee wellbeing and organisational

commitment across diverse employee groups within the healthcare sector. Raj et al. (2023) further showed that remote work indicators such as frequent communication, accessible technologies and supportive management enhanced firm performance across IT professionals irrespective of their work experience. Muriithi and Ndeto (2023) confirmed that hybrid work systems significantly enhanced employee performance among telecommunication workers in Kenya regardless of tenure, while Kitheka (2021) noted that online working models improved work-life balance and job satisfaction for banking staff across different levels of experience.

Conclusion

The study concluded based on the findings of the study that agile workplace environment positively influences the job performance of secretaries in public tertiary institutions in Anambra State to a high extent. The study revealed that secretaries did not differ in their mean ratings on the influence of agile workplace environment based on age and experience. Agile workplace environment therefore appears to be a general performance support factor for secretaries, regardless of age or years of experience. This means that flexible work arrangements, quick response to tasks, improved work structure and openness to change can improve secretaries' performance across different categories of staff.

Recommendations

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

1. Administrators of public tertiary institutions should put in place policies that would promote and strengthen agile workplace environments. This can be done by providing flexible work arrangements, establishing clear task responsibilities and ensuring supportive office systems that allow secretaries to work efficiently.
2. Institutional managers should support secretaries with office systems that encourage adaptability, flexibility, improved task management and timely completion of administrative responsibilities.

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