

# Corporate Social Responsibility

## Chapter 10

### Digital Literacy and Secretary's Job Performance of Rivers State

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#### **Introduction**

Secretaries play a crucial role in the operational success of real estate companies, particularly in a city like Port Harcourt, where the industry is rapidly growing. However, there has been a notable decline in secretaries' job performance in some real estate firms, attributed to issues such as low productivity, ineffective communication, and poor management of administrative tasks (Brown, 2020). Managers have expressed concerns over the increasing workload that secretaries face without adequate training or technological support, which affects their ability to efficiently handle document management, client communication, and scheduling (Smith, 2021). Additionally, the absence of structured reward systems and inadequate organizational support have further diminished their job satisfaction and overall performance (Adams, 2022). These performance-related issues have impeded the ability of real estate firms to maintain smooth operations, ultimately affecting business outcomes.

A significant challenge contributing to this decline is the neglect of digital literacy among secretaries in these firms. Many real estate companies in Port Harcourt have not prioritized equipping their secretaries with essential digital skills, such as creativity, innovation, and effective use of digital communication tools (Wilson, 2021). This lack of training hampers secretaries' capacity to utilize modern technologies that could improve efficiency and productivity. Without strong digital literacy, secretaries struggle to manage complex tasks, leading to miscommunication, data breaches, and administrative delays that undermine organizational performance (Garcia, 2022). The failure to incorporate digital literacy into administrative roles creates a digital divide that not only affects individual performance but also poses a broader threat to the real estate industry's competitiveness and growth in Port Harcourt. This implies that this area of research is demanding for attention, which this study is focused on.

#### **Digital Citizenship**

Digital citizenship as defined by Chukwu, (2021) is the responsible use of technology and digital platforms by individuals and organizations to engage in online environments safely, ethically, and legally. In the context of real estate companies, digital citizenship encompasses the appropriate use of digital tools, platforms, and practices to interact with clients, market properties, and manage operations while adhering to ethical standards and ensuring data privacy and security. With the increasing reliance on digital tools for marketing, customer engagement, and transactions, real estate companies must prioritize digital citizenship to maintain trust, protect sensitive data, and ensure the ethical use of technology (Adewale, 2020). Real estate companies, like many other industries, have embraced digital platforms to facilitate transactions, advertise properties, and communicate with clients. As digital citizens, real estate firms must uphold ethical standards in their use of these platforms. This includes avoiding misleading advertisements, protecting client information, and complying with relevant digital laws and regulations (Chukwu, 2021). For instance, real estate agents should ensure that property listings are accurate, providing correct information about the property's location, size, and pricing. Misleading information can harm a company's reputation and erode client trust.

One of the key components of digital citizenship in real estate is data privacy and security. Real estate companies handle sensitive information such as financial records, personal identification

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details, and contractual agreements. Protecting this data is essential to avoid breaches that could expose clients to identity theft or fraud. Real estate firms in Nigeria must adhere to data protection regulations such as the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR), which mandates that organizations safeguard client data through secure digital practices (Ibrahim, 2019). Implementing encryption, secure storage systems, and data access controls are crucial elements of responsible digital citizenship. Social media use is another significant aspect of digital citizenship for real estate companies. Many firms use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to market properties, engage with clients, and build brand presence. However, responsible digital citizenship requires that these companies use social media ethically and professionally. This means avoiding false claims, respecting user privacy, and engaging in transparent communication. For example, real estate companies must ensure that online reviews and testimonials are genuine and not manipulated to mislead potential buyers or tenants (Okechukwu, 2021). Additionally, companies should respect copyright laws when using images or videos for property listings. Digital citizenship also involves the responsible use of digital tools to enhance customer experience. Real estate companies are increasingly using digital tools such as virtual tours, online booking systems, and mobile apps to improve convenience for clients. While these tools offer significant advantages, companies must ensure they are accessible, user-friendly, and secure. For example, virtual tour software should accurately represent the property, and online booking systems must be designed to protect payment details and personal information (Adegbite, 2021). Companies that prioritize user-friendly, secure digital tools demonstrate good digital citizenship and are more likely to attract and retain clients.

## Concept of Secretary's Job Performance

A secretary plays a pivotal role in the overall functioning of any business, including real estate companies, where their responsibilities often extend beyond routine clerical duties. Job performance refers to the efficiency and effectiveness with which a secretary carries out these responsibilities, and in real estate companies, this performance is crucial for ensuring smooth operations, effective communication, and overall organizational success. Secretaries in real estate companies handle various administrative tasks, maintain schedules, coordinate communications, and ensure that the office runs smoothly. Their job performance directly influences the productivity of the entire company and the satisfaction of clients (Adewale, 2020). One of the critical aspects of a secretary's job performance in real estate companies is communication management. Secretaries act as the bridge between real estate agents, clients, vendors, and other stakeholders. They are responsible for answering phones, responding to emails, and handling inquiries in a professional and timely manner. In a real estate company, where time-sensitive transactions and client relationships are key, effective communication management is essential. Secretaries who manage communications effectively ensure that information flows smoothly within the organization, and externally between clients and other parties, helping to build trust and maintain client satisfaction (Chukwu, 2021). Poor communication management, on the other hand, can lead to missed opportunities, misunderstandings, and even lost clients.

Another essential component of a secretary's job performance is document management. In the real estate industry, there is a significant amount of paperwork involved in property transactions, such as contracts, leases, property agreements, and regulatory filings. The secretary is responsible for organizing, storing, and retrieving these documents in a manner that ensures accuracy and compliance with legal standards. Efficient document management is crucial for ensuring that all real estate transactions are completed smoothly and that the company meets its legal and regulatory obligations (Okechukwu, 2021). A secretary's ability to maintain well-organized, up-to-date, and easily accessible documents directly impacts the company's operational efficiency and legal compliance. Secretaries in real estate companies also play a significant role in scheduling and time management. They are responsible for managing the appointments and schedules of real estate agents, executives, and other staff members. This involves coordinating property viewings, meetings with clients, inspections, and other critical activities. The performance of a secretary in managing schedules can significantly impact the company's efficiency and its ability to meet client expectations. For example, if property viewings are not scheduled effectively, it could lead to wasted

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time and potential loss of sales. On the other hand, a secretary who excels in time management ensures that agents are always in the right place at the right time, maximizing productivity and client satisfaction (Ibrahim, 2020).

In addition to these core duties, secretaries in real estate companies are often tasked with office management responsibilities. This includes ordering office supplies, managing office equipment, and ensuring that the work environment is conducive to productivity. A well-managed office is critical to ensuring that real estate agents and other staff members can perform their jobs efficiently. For example, if an office is poorly stocked with supplies or if equipment malfunctions regularly, it can lead to delays in completing tasks, which in turn affects overall job performance and client satisfaction (Adegbite, 2021). Furthermore, secretaries must demonstrate technological proficiency in their roles. With the increasing use of technology in the real estate industry, secretaries must be skilled in using various software programs for tasks such as document management, scheduling, customer relationship management (CRM), and property listing management. For example, secretaries must be proficient in handling CRM systems that help manage client interactions and property listings, ensuring that all data is accurate and up to date (Chukwu, 2021). Technological proficiency not only enhances a secretary's job performance but also improves the overall efficiency of the company by automating routine tasks and reducing errors. Secretary's job performance in real estate companies encompasses various responsibilities that are crucial to the overall success of the organization. From communication and document management to scheduling and office management, secretaries play an integral role in ensuring that real estate operations run smoothly. Effective secretarial performance enhances organizational efficiency, client satisfaction, and the company's overall competitiveness. As real estate companies continue to evolve, the role of the secretary will remain essential, particularly as technological advancements create new opportunities for improving administrative functions.

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## Digital Citizenship and Job Content Reward

Digital citizenship and job content reward play vital roles in shaping a secretary's job performance in the context of real estate companies in Port Harcourt. Digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of technology and digital platforms in a manner that is ethical, legal, and efficient (Adewale, 2020). In real estate, where administrative efficiency and client communication are critical, secretaries need to be digitally literate and exhibit digital citizenship. Job content reward, on the other hand, refers to the intrinsic satisfaction an employee gains from their daily tasks, such as the variety of duties, the sense of achievement, and professional growth (Chukwu, 2021). The relationship between digital citizenship and job content reward significantly influences how secretaries perform their duties, affecting their productivity, job satisfaction, and overall contribution to the company. The increasing reliance on digital tools in real estate has made digital citizenship an essential factor in job performance. Secretaries are required to manage a variety of digital platforms, including customer relationship management (CRM) systems, property management software, and communication tools such as email and social media. Effective digital citizenship means secretaries must handle these technologies responsibly, ensuring data privacy, maintaining professionalism online, and utilizing digital tools to enhance operational efficiency (Ibrahim, 2021). For instance, a secretary who effectively uses CRM software can better manage client information, coordinate property viewings, and streamline transactions, which directly impacts job performance. A lack of digital competence or failure to follow digital best practices can lead to inefficiencies, errors, and even breaches of confidentiality, all of which negatively affect performance.

Job content reward is another critical factor that influences how secretaries approach their tasks. Secretaries in real estate companies often handle a range of responsibilities, from administrative tasks to client interactions. The variety and meaningfulness of these tasks provide intrinsic motivation and can greatly enhance job satisfaction (Okechukwu, 2021). When secretaries find fulfillment in their work, whether through the diversity of tasks or the sense of responsibility in handling important client transactions, they are more likely to perform well. Job content reward fosters a sense of accomplishment and professional growth, which in turn leads to higher levels of engagement and productivity. In real estate, secretaries who feel challenged and valued in their roles are more likely to contribute to the company's success by improving client service and streamlining operations. The intersection of digital citizenship and job content reward creates a synergy that significantly enhances job performance. Secretaries who exhibit strong digital citizenship are better equipped to handle the complexities of modern real estate operations, such as managing multiple digital platforms, protecting sensitive client data, and ensuring timely communication. When these responsibilities are paired with the intrinsic rewards of engaging, meaningful work, secretaries are more motivated to excel in their roles (Adegbite, 2021). For example, a secretary who takes pride in efficiently managing digital communications and coordinating high-stakes property deals will derive both professional satisfaction and a sense of achievement from their work. This combination of digital competence and job content reward not only improves individual job performance but also contributes to the overall success of the real estate firm. The relationship between digital citizenship and job content reward plays a crucial role in influencing the job performance of secretaries in real estate companies in Port Harcourt. By fostering strong digital citizenship and providing fulfilling work content, real estate firms can enhance the productivity, job satisfaction, and overall contribution of their secretarial staff. This, in turn, leads to improved client service, operational efficiency, and organizational success.

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## Technological Determinism Theory (McLuhan, 1964)

This study is anchored on Technological Determinism theory propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1964. It is the belief that technology is the primary driver of societal change and shapes human behavior, culture, and organizational dynamics. According to McLuhan (1964 in Smith, 2020), technology acts as an independent force that influences how individuals (secretaries) think, communicate, and interact with their environment. The theory argues that as new technologies are introduced, they have the power to alter not only individual behaviors but also the structure and performance of entire organizations Headrick and Winston (2008). The assumptions relevant to this study are as follows:

- 1) The theory assumes that technology evolves independently of human control and dictates the direction of societal change. The development of digital tools, for instance, has restructured the way people work, communicate, and manage information.
- 2) That technological advancements necessitate changes in the behaviour and skills of employees within organizations. As technology evolves, so must the workforce's digital literacy to keep up with new demands (Chandler, 2000).
- 3) The theory assumes that technology directly influences the way individuals (secretaries) perform tasks. It compels individuals to adapt their behaviours, competencies, and routines to the requirements imposed by new technological tools.

Implication of Technological Determinism Theory to the study is that Technological Determinism provides a strong framework for understanding how digital literacy relates to and enhances secretaries' job performance in real estate companies in Port Harcourt. In real estate firms, where accurate and timely information is key, secretaries increasingly rely on digital tools such as property management software, customer relationship management (CRM) systems, and online communication platforms to manage documents, communicate with clients, and coordinate property transactions. According to this theory, as the work environment in real estate companies becomes more digitized, secretaries must develop strong digital literacy skills to remain competitive and effective. Their ability to use modern office tools effectively determines their productivity, as tasks such as managing electronic calendars, filing digital documents, and handling online customer inquiries become critical aspects of their job (Headrick & Winston, 2008). Furthermore, digital literacy empowers secretaries to adapt to technological changes, ensuring they can manage more complex tasks, such as data analysis and document automation, which are increasingly essential in real estate operations. In this context, the Technological Determinism Theory helps predict that secretaries who possess high levels of digital literacy are likely to perform better in real estate companies, where technology plays a central role in organizational processes. The theory suggests that digital tools shape secretaries' job performance by altering the way they handle office management tasks, thereby enhancing their efficiency and overall contribution to the firm's competitive advantage (Smith, 2020).

The relevance of Technological Determinism to this study is that Technological Determinism Theory posits that technology is the primary driver of social and organizational changes, influencing how individuals work, communicate, and engage within their environment. In the context of real estate companies, this theory is highly relevant to understanding the relationship between digital literacy and secretary's job performance. As technology continues to shape the real estate industry, secretaries must possess the digital literacy skills necessary to navigate various digital platforms and tools that have become integral to their roles. These tools include customer relationship management (CRM) software, digital communication platforms, and data management systems, all of which significantly impact a secretary's productivity and efficiency (Ibrahim, 2020). Technological determinism emphasizes that advancements in technology can dictate the skills and competencies required in the workplace. For secretaries in real estate companies, the ability to effectively use technology is no longer optional but essential. The theory suggests that secretaries who are digitally literate and proficient in using these technological tools are better equipped to manage tasks such as scheduling, communication, and document management, ultimately leading to improved job performance. As technology evolves, secretaries who fail to develop their digital literacy skills may find themselves unable to meet the demands of their roles, thus supporting the core argument of

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technological determinism—that technology shapes human behavior and work dynamics (Adewumi, 2021).

Moreover, technological determinism highlights the need for continuous skill development in response to technological advancements. In real estate companies, where digital platforms now dominate property management, marketing, and client communication, secretaries must adapt to these changes by developing their digital literacy skills. The theory underscores the idea that as technology advances, the role of the secretary becomes more complex and requires higher levels of technical proficiency. This evolution directly affects job performance, as secretaries who remain up to date with new technologies are more likely to be efficient, accurate, and effective in their roles, thereby contributing to the overall success of the company. In conclusion, technological determinism is a useful framework for understanding the impact of digital literacy on secretary's job performance in real estate companies. As technology continues to evolve, secretaries must develop the necessary digital skills to keep pace with the demands of their roles. Through the lens of technological determinism, it is clear that technology not only dictates the tools and platforms secretaries use but also shapes their overall job performance.

## Conclusion

The relationship between digital literacy and secretary's job performance of real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State highlights the critical influence of creativity/innovation, communication/collaboration, and digital citizenship are better positioned to steer the densities of creative/innovative idea in insuring productive manager's attitude, effective management as well job content and reward enables secretaries to effectively performance tasks leading to the growth of an organization such real estate companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

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