

Bridging Traditional Skills and Technology: Transforming Secretarial Practices for Modern Organisations

Rahma Abdulrahman Mabrouk¹

Abstract

This study examined how traditional secretarial skills can be effectively integrated with modern technology to enhance organisational performance. A total of 44 studies covering the period of 1951 to 2025 were used as data sources. The study addressed the evolution of secretarial practices, the integration of digital tools into administrative practices, emerging competences required in contemporary organisations, the organisational implications of digital transformation, and strategies of professional development and institutional support. Existing theories and empirical findings were examined to understand current trends and developments in the secretarial profession. The study revealed that while traditional secretarial functions such as typing, shorthand, filing, scheduling, and correspondence management once relied heavily on manual systems, modern administrative environments are increasingly digital, automated, and interconnected. As such, contemporary secretarial professionals are now expected to manage electronic records, coordinate virtual meetings, utilise enterprise software, support digital communication systems, and contribute to organisational information management strategies. This paper concludes that the sustainability of the secretarial profession depends on continuous professional development, institutional investment in digital infrastructure, and adaptive capacity among administrative professionals. This paper therefore recommends that all stakeholders involved should emphasise continuous ICT training programmes, curriculum updates in education, supportive leadership, change management, and the provision of clear policies and ethical guidelines.

Keywords: Secretarial practice, office technology, digital transformation, administrative professionals, organisational efficiency

1.0 Introduction

The secretarial profession has traditionally occupied a fundamental position in organisational administration by providing clerical, technical, and managerial support to executives and departments (Ajayi, 2024). Historically, secretaries were responsible for shorthand, manual typing, filing records, scheduling appointments, handling correspondence, and managing office communications (Okoro, 2013). These responsibilities required high levels of accuracy, confidentiality, time management, and interpersonal competence

¹ Tanzania Public Service College, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. rahma.mabrouk@tpsc.go.tz

(Okoro & Okoro, 2023). As a result, the secretary was often regarded as the gatekeeper of information flow within organisations, ensuring effective communication and coordination of administrative activities (Adebayo & Olatunji, 2021).

However, the rapid expansion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the late 20th and early 21st centuries significantly transformed the nature of office work (Laudon & Laudon, 2022). The introduction of personal computers, the internet, enterprise software, and mobile communication devices shifted administrative functions from paper-based systems to digital platforms (Laudon & Laudon, 2022), prompting traditional secretarial duties to evolve to accommodate new technologies and changing organisational needs. According to the International Labour Organisation (2019), digitalisation has transformed clerical and administrative occupations, requiring workers to acquire new technological and analytical skills.

As organisations increasingly embrace digital technologies, secretarial roles now extend far beyond routine clerical duties as administrative professionals are expected to manage electronic document systems, coordinate virtual meetings through platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom, maintain digital calendars, support data entry in enterprise systems, and facilitate communication across geographically dispersed teams (Laudon & Laudon, 2022). This transformation was further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which contributed to the widespread adoption of remote and hybrid work models (International Labour Organisation, 2021). Consequently, secretarial responsibilities have expanded, positioning administrative professionals as key facilitators of digital collaboration and organisational connectivity (World Economic Forum, 2023). Moreover, digital transformation strategies in both public and private organisations have increasingly emphasised efficiency, transparency, and information sharing (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023).

In response to these developments, governments and institutions worldwide, including those in Africa, are increasingly adopting electronic records management systems (ERMS) to improve accountability, transparency, and service delivery (International Council on Archives, 2023). This transition requires secretaries to combine traditional competencies, such as attention to detail and organisational skills, with technical proficiency in digital tools, cybersecurity awareness, and information governance (World Economic Forum, 2023). Despite these advancements, integrating technology into secretarial practice poses several challenges, including skills gaps, resistance to change, cybersecurity concerns, and the need for continuous professional development (World Economic Forum, 2023). Against this background, this paper examines how traditional secretarial skills can be effectively integrated with modern technology to enhance organisational performance. Specifically, it explores the historical evolution of secretarial roles, the integration of digital tools into administrative practice, the emerging competencies required in contemporary organisations, the management of technological change, the organisational implications of digital transformation, and strategies for professional development and institutional support.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study is guided by the Socio-Technical Systems Theory (STS), developed by Eric Trist and Kenneth Bamforth in 1951. The theory argues that organisational effectiveness depends on the successful integration of two interdependent subsystems: the social subsystem (employees, skills, values, and work relationships) and the technical subsystem (technologies, tools, procedures, and work processes) (Trist & Bamforth, 1951). According to the theory, technology alone cannot improve performance unless employees possess the competencies needed to use it effectively, and organisational success requires continuous alignment between human and technological elements (Laudon & Laudon, 2022; OECD, 2023).

Although the theory has been criticised for offering broad guidance rather than specific implementation procedures and for being developed in industrial settings, its relevance has expanded to modern contexts such as digital transformation, information systems, and knowledge-based organisations (Trist & Bamforth, 1951; Emery & Trist, 1960). These limitations do not significantly affect the present study, as the focus is on understanding the integration of traditional secretarial skills with modern technologies rather than on developing a detailed technology implementation model.

The theory is particularly applicable to secretarial practice because it highlights the need to balance traditional competencies such as communication, confidentiality, time management, accuracy, and interpersonal skills with technological capabilities, including electronic records management, enterprise software, virtual collaboration platforms, and digital communication tools. STS suggests that neither traditional skills nor technology alone can achieve optimal organisational performance; rather, effectiveness is realised when administrative professionals combine strong human competencies with technological expertise (Castells, 2010; OECD, 2023).

In contemporary organisations, technological advancements have transformed secretarial roles by changing communication processes, information management, and skill requirements (Okoro & Okoro, 2023). STS explains this transformation by emphasising that technology should complement rather than replace human expertise (Laudon & Laudon, 2022; International Council on Archives, 2023). Therefore, the theory provides a suitable framework for examining how integrating traditional secretarial skills with modern technologies can enhance organisational efficiency, communication, service delivery, knowledge management, innovation, and overall organisational performance.

2.2 Empirical Evidence

Empirical studies provide evidence supporting the theoretical claims about the transformation of secretarial practices. Research indicates that administrative professionals who combine traditional skills with digital competencies are more effective in managing electronic workflows and coordinating virtual teams (Bashari et al., 2023; Oluwasina, 2022). In Indonesian organisations, Musty (2025) found that the use of digital tools for document management and procedural coordination reduced operational time and errors,

improving overall workflow efficiency. Similarly, global reports by the International Labour Organisation (2021) and World Economic Forum (2023) demonstrate that continuous ICT training and institutional support significantly enhance administrative effectiveness, especially in hybrid and remote environments. However, challenges such as resistance to change, limited infrastructure, and skill gaps continue to impede full digital adoption (Sultana & Akter, 2024).

2.3 Integrating Theory and Practice

The integration of theoretical perspectives with empirical findings shows that the evolution of secretarial roles is not only a technological phenomenon but also a socio-organisational process. Socio-Technical Systems Theory emphasises the importance of balancing traditional administrative competencies with technological skills to maintain organisational continuity, whereas empirical studies highlight the measurable benefits of this integration, including increased productivity, efficiency, and professional growth among administrative staff (Roberts & Grewal, 2023; Bashari et al., 2023). Together, these insights reinforce the conclusion that modern secretarial practice is a hybrid role that requires continuous professional development, adaptive capacity, and alignment with organisational strategies to remain relevant in digitally transformed workplaces.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopted a desk review design and relied exclusively on secondary data to examine the integration of traditional secretarial skills with modern technology and its implications for organisational performance. The design was appropriate because it enabled a systematic review of the existing literature without primary data collection. Data were drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, government publications, policy documents, institutional reports, conference papers, and publications from professional and international organisations. Literature was included if it addressed secretarial practices, digital competencies, office automation, ICT adoption, workplace digitalisation, records management, or administrative performance and was published between 1951 and 2025. Sources that were opinion-based, duplicated, outdated, or not directly related to the study objectives were excluded. Relevant documents were identified through systematic searches of databases and repositories using keywords such as secretarial practices, digital transformation, office technology, administrative professionals, ICT adoption, and electronic records management. Data were analysed using thematic and narrative approaches to identify major trends, patterns, and emerging issues relating to the evolution of secretarial roles, technology integration, and competency requirements. Quantitative evidence reported in the reviewed studies was incorporated where relevant to strengthen interpretation. The validity and reliability of the findings were enhanced through triangulation of multiple credible sources and the application of clear inclusion and exclusion criteria. Ethical considerations were observed by using only publicly available documents and appropriately acknowledging all sources to ensure academic integrity and avoid plagiarism.

4.0 Findings and Discussions

4.1 Evolution of Secretarial Practices

The secretarial profession has evolved alongside the development of bureaucratic institutions, industrial capitalism, and technological innovation (OECD, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2023). Historically, the role of the secretary can be traced to early administrative systems in government and large commercial enterprises, where literate individuals were entrusted with confidential correspondence and record-keeping (International Council on Archives, 2023). The term “secretary” originates from the Latin *secretarius*, meaning a person entrusted with confidential matters or secrets (Oxford English Dictionary, 2024). This historical role reflects early bureaucratic systems in which secretaries served as trusted record-keepers and intermediaries in governance and organisational administration (United Nations DESA, 2022). As modern bureaucracies expanded during the 19th century, particularly in Europe and North America, the growth of large corporations created an increasing demand for clerical workers capable of handling written communication and documentation (Yates, 1989). In the late nineteenth century, industrialisation significantly expanded office-based employment. One of the most transformative innovations was the typewriter. The commercialisation of the typewriter in the 1870s and 1880s fundamentally changed office work by standardising written communication and increasing speed and legibility (Davies, 1982).

Later, vertical filing systems were introduced in the early twentieth century, further enhancing administrative efficiency by improving document storage and retrieval (Yates, 1989). These innovations contributed to the formalisation of clerical roles and the emergence of the modern secretary. By the early twentieth century, secretarial work had become a recognised occupation, increasingly dominated by women. This led to the expansion of commercial education institutions offering training in shorthand, typing, and office procedures, thereby professionalising the occupation (Davies, 1982). As a result, secretaries became central to the functioning of corporate and governmental offices, serving as communication intermediaries, document managers, and schedulers for executives. Although the work was often viewed as subordinate within hierarchical organisational structures, secretaries played a crucial role in maintaining organisational continuity and information flow.

Nevertheless, the mid-20th century saw the mechanisation of office systems through electric typewriters, duplicating machines, and telephone switchboards, which increased productivity while largely preserving paper-based administrative structures (Yates, 1989; Sellen & Harper, 2002). During this period, secretarial responsibilities remained centred on document production, correspondence management, and records maintenance (O'Brien & Marakas, 2011; Yates, 1989). However, organisational theorists began to recognise the importance of information processing in managerial decision-making, positioning secretarial work as integral to administrative coordination (Chandler, 1977). A profound transformation began in the late twentieth century with the advent of computers and office automation technologies. The introduction of personal computers in the 1970s and 1980s replaced typewriters with word-processing software, enabling faster editing, storage, and reproduction of documents. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation

and Development (OECD, 2019), digital technologies restructured clerical occupations by reducing routine manual tasks and increasing demand for cognitive and technological skills. Secretaries increasingly became users of digital tools rather than operators of mechanical devices.

The coming of the internet in the 1990s further revolutionised administrative work. Email replaced much physical correspondence, electronic databases supplanted manual filing systems, and digital scheduling systems replaced handwritten diaries (Laudon & Laudon, 2022). These changes marked a clear shift from paper-based record management to electronic information systems. The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2021) notes that digital transformation has significantly altered the skill composition of administrative occupations, emphasising ICT literacy, adaptability, and continuous learning. Furthermore, with the entry into the 21st century, globalisation and digital integration intensified these changes, as enterprise systems, cloud computing, and collaborative platforms reshaped organisational communication and workflow coordination (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2022).

It is worth noting that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of remote work technologies, requiring administrative professionals to coordinate virtual meetings and manage digital workflows (International Labour Organisation, 2021; World Economic Forum, 2023). This shifted administrative and executive support roles to increasingly require analytical thinking, technological proficiency, and resilience in response to automation and digital transformation (World Economic Forum, 2023). Despite these technological shifts, the historical evolution of secretarial practice demonstrates both continuity and change. Core competencies such as organisation, confidentiality, communication, and coordination have remained central across generations of technological development (Okoro & Okoro, 2023; OECD, 2019). While tools have evolved from handwritten manuscripts to typewriters, computers, and now cloud-based platforms, the fundamental purpose of the secretary as a facilitator of organisational communication and information management remains consistent (Laudon & Laudon, 2022).

4.2 The Integration of Digital Tools into Administrative Practice

The integration of digital tools into administrative practice has profoundly reshaped the secretarial and administrative professions, shifting from manual, routine operations to strategically significant, technology-driven functions (Laudon & Laudon, 2022; World Economic Forum, 2023). Historically, administrative roles were centred on typewritten correspondence, physical filing systems, shorthand transcription, and manual appointment management (Yates, 1989; Sellen & Harper, 2002). With the advent of personal computers in the late twentieth century, these tasks transitioned to electronic systems, allowing faster document creation, editing, and storage, as well as improved accuracy and accessibility (OECD, 2019). Electronic records management systems (ERMS) have replaced traditional filing cabinets, enabling structured digital storage, rapid retrieval, and enhanced data security. Administrative professionals now play a critical role in maintaining information integrity, ensuring regulatory compliance, and implementing governance policies to safeguard sensitive organisational data (United Nations, 2022). In addition, digital communication platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Slack, and enterprise email

systems have transformed how offices operate, enabling collaboration across departments, geographic regions, and international boundaries. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated reliance on these platforms, positioning administrative professionals as coordinators of virtual meetings, digital workflows, and hybrid work processes (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Cloud-based technologies have further expanded the scope of administrative work, allowing professionals to manage shared digital workspaces, coordinate projects remotely, and streamline cross-functional communication (Laudon & Laudon, 2022; World Economic Forum, 2023). This has facilitated flexible work arrangements, improved productivity, and enhanced the ability to track progress across multiple teams simultaneously (International Labour Organisation, 2021; OECD, 2023). Automation tools, including scheduling software, automated reminders, voice-to-text systems, and AI-powered data-processing applications, reduce time spent on repetitive tasks while enabling administrators to focus on oversight, analysis, and strategic coordination (McKinsey & Company, 2017). Moreover, the integration of digital tools has elevated the professional status of administrative personnel, as they are no longer confined to clerical duties but now function as administrative professionals who contribute to organisational decision-making and coordination (World Economic Forum, 2023; OECD, 2023). Administrative personnel are now expected to combine traditional competencies such as organisation, accuracy, confidentiality, and communication with technological literacy, digital problem-solving, and adaptability (International Labour Organisation, 2021; Laudon & Laudon, 2022). This hybrid skill set ensures both operational efficiency and strategic contribution to organisational goals (United Nations, 2022; World Bank, 2022).

As a result, modern secretarial professionals are increasingly expected to demonstrate strong digital literacy that extends beyond basic computer use to include advanced proficiency in office productivity software, electronic communication platforms, cloud-based collaboration tools, and electronic data and records management systems (Laudon & Laudon, 2022; World Economic Forum, 2023). These competencies enable secretaries to manage information flows efficiently, coordinate organisational activities, and support decision-making in technology-driven workplaces (International Labour Organisation, 2021; OECD, 2023). Empirical evidence suggests that technology management competencies, such as selecting appropriate digital tools, managing digital workflows, and ensuring data accuracy and security, have become critical determinants of secretarial effectiveness, job performance, and career advancement in modern organisations (Bashari et al., 2023; Oluwasina, 2022). As such, secretaries are required to combine technical, analytical, and interpersonal skills to respond effectively to evolving digital workplace environments.

However, digital competence alone is insufficient to ensure effective administrative support. The successful integration of technology into secretarial practice must be supported by traditional competencies, including discretion, ethical conduct, professionalism, and strong interpersonal communication skills (World Economic Forum, 2023; United Nations, 2022). These foundational skills remain essential for effective administrative performance even in highly digitalised workplaces (OECD, 2023; International Labour

Organisation, 2021). Research indicates that these human-centred skills are essential for maintaining confidentiality, managing professional relationships, and facilitating effective communication within increasingly digital and remote work environments (Akinsanya & Olugbogi, 2017; Roberts & Grewal, 2023). Consequently, modern secretarial effectiveness depends on a balanced combination of technological proficiency and traditional administrative expertise, reinforcing the view that technology enhances rather than replaces the human dimension of secretarial work.

4.3 Emerging Competencies Required in Contemporary Organisations

In contemporary organisations, the role of administrative professionals has evolved beyond traditional clerical duties to encompass strategic, technology-enabled functions (World Economic Forum, 2023; OECD, 2023). This shift has created a need for emerging competencies that integrate traditional administrative skills with modern digital and organisational requirements (International Labour Organisation, 2021; United Nations, 2022). One of the most critical competencies is technological literacy, which involves proficiency in office productivity software, cloud-based platforms, enterprise systems, and digital collaboration tools (Laudon & Laudon, 2022; World Bank, 2022). Administrative professionals must be able to use multiple digital systems with ease to support efficient workflow management, coordinate tasks across departments, and contribute to organisational responsiveness (ILO, 2021). Another essential competency is information governance and data management, which entails organising, storing, and retrieving electronic records accurately while ensuring data integrity, confidentiality, and compliance with regulatory and legal standards. With the rise of digital documentation and online information systems, administrative professionals play a vital role in safeguarding organisational knowledge and supporting transparent decision-making processes (United Nations, 2022).

Analytical and problem-solving skills have also become increasingly important. Modern administrative professionals are expected to interpret data, generate insights, and support managerial decision-making. These skills allow them to identify workflow inefficiencies, recommend improvements, and contribute to the strategic planning of administrative operations (OECD, 2023). Closely related is the competency of virtual collaboration and communication, which has become indispensable in hybrid and remote work environments. Administrative professionals must effectively coordinate virtual meetings, manage online communication platforms, and facilitate collaboration across geographically dispersed teams to ensure smooth operational continuity (World Economic Forum, 2023).

In addition, adaptability and continuous learning are crucial competencies in an era of rapid technological change. Administrative professionals must remain flexible, embrace new tools and systems, and proactively update their skills to meet evolving organisational demands. This ensures they can respond effectively to innovations such as artificial intelligence, automated scheduling, and cloud-based project management tools (McKinsey & Company, 2017). Finally, strategic coordination and project management have become integral to administrative work. Administrative professionals are increasingly responsible for managing complex tasks, overseeing multiple projects simultaneously, aligning schedules and resources with organisational goals, and ensuring that operational

processes support broader strategic objectives (ILO, 2021). In short, these changes imply that administrative professionals are no longer primarily supporting staff; rather, they now act as information managers, digital workflow coordinators, and strategic partners within organisations (World Economic Forum, 2023; OECD, 2023). By combining technical proficiency, analytical capacity, and adaptive skills, they enhance organisational efficiency, facilitate informed decision-making, and ensure that modern organisations remain agile and responsive in an increasingly complex and technology-driven business environment (Laudon & Laudon, 2022; United Nations, 2022)

4.4 Managing Technological Change

Technological change in organisational settings often introduces varying degrees of resistance, especially among administrative professionals whose training and experience are rooted in traditional office systems (OECD, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2023). Resistance can manifest as hesitation to adopt new software, reluctance to engage in virtual collaboration tools, or reduced confidence in managing digital workflows (International Labour Organisation, 2021; Laudon & Laudon, 2022). Empirical studies suggest that inadequate training, limited access to appropriate technological resources, and concerns about job security or displacement are among the primary barriers inhibiting effective technology adoption among secretarial staff (ILO, 2021; Sultana & Akter, 2024). Such challenges are further compounded by generational differences in digital literacy, organisational cultures that undervalue continuous learning, and the rapid pace of technological evolution, which can overwhelm employees who have relied on long-standing traditional practices (Yildiz, 2022; Roberts & Grewal, 2023).

Despite these obstacles, scholars emphasise that technology should not be perceived as a threat to secretarial roles but rather as a tool to enhance professional effectiveness, expand responsibilities, and facilitate higher-order contributions to organisational decision-making (Fasae, 2024; Bashari & Yusuf, 2023). Organisations that implement structured training programmes and foster positive attitudes toward technological change report higher adoption rates, greater job satisfaction, and improved productivity among administrative personnel (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2023; Alhassan & Mensah, 2022). Consequently, embracing technology as a complementary skill set rather than a replacement strategy is essential for sustaining secretarial relevance and optimising modern organisational performance. As such, continuous professional development is essential for bridging the gap between traditional and technological secretarial practices. Empirical studies show that regular ICT training improves job performance, confidence, and adaptability among secretarial professionals (Oluwasina, 2022). Organisations that invest in training benefit from improved efficiency and reduced administrative errors.

4.5 Organisational Implications of Digital Transformation

The integration of traditional secretarial expertise with modern digital technologies has profound implications for contemporary organisations, fundamentally enhancing efficiency, resilience, and service delivery (OECD, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2023). Historically, secretaries were primarily responsible for clerical and administrative support, including typing, filing, and scheduling (Yates, 1989; Sellen & Harper, 2002). However, with the advent of digital tools, secretarial roles have expanded to encompass coordinating digital

workflows, managing information systems, and facilitating virtual collaboration networks, positioning administrative professionals as critical enablers of organisational operations (Boladale, 2025). Digital technologies, including document management systems, cloud-based platforms, and virtual communication tools, streamline administrative processes by reducing manual handling, minimising errors, and accelerating task completion. This shift allows organisations to operate more responsively, allocate resources more effectively, and focus on strategic objectives rather than routine clerical functions (Holistique Training, 2025). The reduction of administrative burden also enhances organisational resilience, enabling teams to maintain continuity of operations during periods of remote work, distributed team structures, or rapid organisational change.

Professionally trained administrative personnel equipped with digital competencies play a pivotal role in ensuring smooth information flow across organisational units (Laudon & Laudon, 2022; World Economic Forum, 2023). They manage virtual meetings, electronic correspondence, and digital records, enabling timely decision-making and accurate reporting (International Labour Organisation, 2021; OECD, 2023). In contemporary work environments where hybrid and remote arrangements are increasingly common, secretaries' ability to effectively deploy collaboration tools is a key determinant of organisational efficiency and operational accuracy (Musty, 2025). Empirical studies reinforce the value of digital literacy in administrative functions. Research in Indonesian organisations demonstrates that secretaries' use of digital tools for document filing, database management, and procedural coordination reduces operational time, lowers costs, and improves workflow efficiency (Musty, 2025).

4.6 Strategies for Professional Development and Institutional Support

The rapid digital transformation of administrative work has made continuous professional development and institutional support central to the effectiveness of secretarial and administrative professionals (World Economic Forum, 2023; International Labour Organisation, 2021). Digital change in workplaces requires ongoing upskilling to keep pace with evolving technologies, systems, and organisational processes (OECD, 2023; United Nations, 2022). Continuous learning initiatives, such as ICT training programmes, workshops on digital workflow management, and practical sessions on cloud-based platforms, are essential for equipping administrative personnel with the technological literacy required in contemporary organisations (ILO, 2021). These programmes enable secretaries to manage complex digital systems, coordinate virtual teams, and contribute strategically to organisational goals, rather than performing purely routine tasks (World Economic Forum, 2023; OECD, 2023). Continuous digital upskilling supports administrative professionals in adapting to evolving workplace technologies and participating in higher-level organisational functions (International Labour Organisation, 2021; United Nations, 2022).

Educational institutions play a complementary role by revising secretarial and office administration curricula to integrate digital competencies, including document management systems, data privacy protocols, collaborative platforms, and emerging technologies like AI-assisted workflow tools. By doing so, graduates are better prepared to meet the demands of modern organisations, bridging the gap between academic preparation and

practical workplace requirements (Boladale, 2025). Mentorship programmes and peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing initiatives within organisations further strengthen professional development by promoting the transfer of practical skills and fostering innovation in administrative practices (OECD, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2023). Institutional support also extends to the provision of adequate digital infrastructure, access to software and collaboration tools, and organisational policies that encourage experimentation and innovation (World Bank, 2022; United Nations, 2022). Leadership that actively promotes the adoption of technology, recognises digital innovation, and provides constructive feedback fosters a positive work culture, reduces resistance to technological change, and enables administrative staff to maximise the value of digital systems (Holistique Training, 2025). Policies on data security, ethical use of technology, and information governance ensure that administrative professionals can operate effectively while safeguarding organisational integrity and complying with legal and ethical standards (United Nations, 2022).

4.7 Challenges and Ethical Considerations

Despite the benefits of technology integration, administrative work faces several challenges and ethical considerations. A significant barrier is the digital skills gap, which affects some administrative personnel's ability to effectively adopt and utilise new technologies (World Economic Forum, 2023; International Labour Organisation, 2021). Inadequate infrastructure, limited access to modern software, and unreliable internet connectivity, especially in developing countries, further hinder digital transformation efforts (World Bank, 2022; International Telecommunication Union, 2023). Additionally, cybersecurity risks, including data breaches, phishing attacks, and unauthorised access to sensitive information, present ongoing threats to organisational integrity and operational continuity (OECD, 2023; United Nations, 2022).

Ethical concerns are equally critical. Administrative professionals manage large volumes of confidential and sensitive information, making data privacy, informed consent, and responsible technology use paramount (United Nations, 2022; OECD, 2023). Organisations must adopt a socio-technical perspective, balancing technological systems with human skills, values, and ethical norms to ensure that digital adoption enhances productivity without compromising ethical standards or employee well-being (Trist & Bamforth, 1951; Emery & Trist, 1960). Addressing these challenges requires not only technical solutions but also a strong emphasis on professional ethics, awareness, continuous training, and organisational accountability (World Economic Forum, 2023; International Labour Organisation, 2021).

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that the secretarial profession has undergone significant transformation due to rapid technological advancement and changing organisational structures. While traditional competencies such as organisation, communication, confidentiality, and accuracy remain essential, their relevance is now strengthened by integrating them with digital tools and systems. The transition from manual clerical duties to technology-enabled administrative functions demonstrates that modern secretarial work has evolved beyond

routine support to encompass more strategic, coordination-oriented responsibilities within organisations. Findings further indicate that contemporary secretarial professionals operate in increasingly digital and interconnected environments that require competencies such as ICT literacy, information management, virtual collaboration, analytical thinking, and adaptability. However, the study confirms that effective performance cannot be achieved through technology alone; rather, it depends on the balanced integration of human skills and digital capabilities. In line with the Socio-Technical Systems Theory, organisational effectiveness is achieved when social and technical systems are harmonised and continuously adjusted to meet emerging workplace demands. In sum, the sustainability and relevance of the secretarial profession depend on continuous professional development, institutional support, and professionals' ability to adapt to evolving technologies while maintaining ethical and professional standards.

6.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that organisations strengthen continuous professional development programmes by providing regular ICT and digital skills training for secretarial staff to ensure competence with emerging office technologies, such as cloud-based systems, electronic records management, and digital communication platforms. Training institutions should also review and update their curricula to align with current workplace demands by incorporating modules on digital literacy, cybersecurity, data governance, and the use of modern office technologies, including emerging artificial intelligence applications in administrative work. In addition, organisations should invest in reliable digital infrastructure, including modern software, stable internet connectivity, and appropriate technological tools, to support efficient administrative operations. Management should also promote a supportive organisational culture that encourages innovation, continuous learning, and positive adaptation to technological change while minimising resistance through mentorship and change management initiatives. Furthermore, clear ethical and data governance policies should be established to guide confidentiality, cybersecurity practices, and responsible use of digital systems. Lastly, organisations should encourage mentorship and knowledge-sharing programmes to facilitate the transfer of skills between experienced and digitally skilled personnel, while also redefining administrative roles to include broader responsibilities, such as information coordination, digital workflow management, and strategic support functions.

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