



## **ORGANIZATIONS' WORKPLACE HOUSEKEEPING IN OFFICE OF SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS IN IMO STATE.**

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### **Abstract**

*This study attempted to investigate issues on organizations workplace housekeeping in office of selected organizations in Imo State. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The entire population of 100 secretaries from some selected organizations in Imo State were used for study. Three research questions were formulated and the instrument used for data collection was a structured and validated questionnaire on the respondents. Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Data which was collected was analyzed, using mean and standard deviation. The result of this study revealed benefits of good housekeeping including: standard office layout, reduction and elimination of office accidents, space management. Based on the findings, it was recommended that organizations should implement a clear plan for office housekeeping, training on housekeeping for office managers need a strategic position in the preparatory programmes in school and as a new employee.*

**Key words:** *Housekeeping, Workplace, Organization.*

### **Introduction**

Workplace Housekeeping can be referred to as keeping workplace clean, orderly and free of obstruction in a way that work can go on safely and properly. Everyday new technologies evolve which influence the world of work with both positive and negative effects. Office managers have their share in the use of such gadgets by their stay in the office environment. Hence, a pragmatic approach is needful to accommodate workers and materials with minimal hazards.

The Workers become possible victims to housekeeping challenges due to accidents, injuries, suffocation and even death. Noise generated from the use of some equipment like generators can lead to deafness and hearing impairment (Kerk and Rhodes, 2011). Explaining further, Saptare (2013) view that tactile sensation, object shapes and sizes in design can cause the prevalence of accidents affecting finger injuries and musculoskeletal disorders. Each office equipment has directions on usage which office managers are to communicate prolonged exposure to the radiation of computer which is the most common may cause nervous system cancer and leukemia (Barroso and Wilson, 2010).



Turnbull, Deuter and Bradbery (2015) defines Housekeeping as cleaning and running a house. However workplace housekeeping is beyond cleanliness but extends to reducing hazards by controlling it with the right equipment, training and staff supervision.

Inadvertently a good housekeeping programme plans on human and materials, space, management from entry to exit. The traffic control and flow plan facilitates effective movement and handling of materials. Good housekeeping requires paying attention to details embracing the entire work layout as marking the aisle, adequacy of waste and storage facilities and maintenance as contributed by (Tarina 2019).

Similarly Gibson (2014) maintained that housekeeping is an ongoing operation and not a one-time or hit-and-miss cleaning done occasionally. Periodic clean-ups would only decrease the volume of workplace accidents.

Canadian centre for occupational Health and Safety (2019) identified some elements of housekeeping and cleanliness practices at a workplace as mentioned below:

- (i) Dust and dirt removal, (ii) Adequate provision of cleaning facilities materials, (iii) Floor, wall and surfaces maintenance, (iv) Lightning, (v) Aisle and stair ways, (vi) Spill control (vii) Waste disposal, (viii) Tools and equipment (ix) Maintenance (x) Storage (xi) Clutter control (xii) Individual workspace.

Workplace housekeeping is a share responsibility between the employer, manager and other workers in tandem to this point, Nigeria safety standards manual identified the roles to be played by each party. Hence the employer provide a safe workplace establishes and maintains a written policy support supervisors who (i) train workers (ii) assign duties (iii) ensure the right use of equipment (iv) correct and advice where necessary. Workers have the obligations of (i) adhering to organizational culture (ii) correct or report incidents (iii) use their initiative in matters that arise. Generally, policies of the organization are the major concern that create conducive atmosphere to operate housekeeping rules. An office manager by training is capable of knowing the right positions of office equipment which may not constitute a nuisance to health or obstruction. He/she is equally professional competent to instruct and supervise subordinates to comply with office friendly matters.

Growing tendencies in new technologies and office techniques put pressure on both the employer and office managers to update housekeeping rules.

However orientation programs for new employees requires to contain:

- (i) Basic safety information in the environment
- (ii) Company polices and work rules
- (iii) Right proactive procedures
- (iv) Right procedures to report in case of accident
- (v) System and facilities usage
- (vi) Safe methods of handling hazardous materials.

Methods and information of orientation programs can be reviewed and updated with a checklist of accidents and sickness recorded in the organization.

There is so much that can accrue to the profitability of an office manager and the organization by implementing a good housekeeping order. Roy (2019) identified them as follows: Good housekeeping and cleanliness normally results into (i) a workplace which is cleaner, safer, well organized and more pleasant for work, (ii) improved utilization of floor space, (iii) smoother and systematic workflow with substantial reduction in non-value added activities, (iv) better inventory control of tools and materials, (v) reduced handling to ease the flow of materials, (vi) reduction in wastages of materials, (vii) more efficient equipment clean-up and maintenance leading to lower break-downs, (viii) minimization of errors leading to better products, (ix) safe environment for work and lower exposure of employees to hazardous substances (such as dusts,



and vapours etc.), (x) more hygienic workplace conditions which lead to improved health of the employees, (xi) improved overall look and feel of the work environment, and (xii) improved morale of the employees. Poor housekeeping and cleanliness, on the contrary, creates workplace hazards which lead to various accidents such as (i) slips, trips and falls, (ii) caught in-between objects, (iii) struck by falling objects, (iv) struck by moving objects, (v) Cut/stabbed by objects, and (vi) struck against object. Furthermore, poor housekeeping and cleanliness also create fire hazards which inevitably lead to increased fire risk.

Poor housekeeping practices can be worrisome to the services of an office manager in the sense that frequent accidents can discourage subordinates and intending qualified job seekers. An attractive, well ordered work environment sets the right tone of work habits for all.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Productivity is a core target of any well-established organization. There are multiple factors attached to this. Okoli and Mbaegbu (2020) summarized the statement of Okoro and Dajur (2011) that the success of an organizational management relies on their ability to coordinate human and material resources. It cannot be achieved without good housekeeping. Organizational housekeeping is not just cleanliness but creating a corporate culture which drives safety for both materials, employees and in turn enables them realize organizational goals (Roy 2015). Workplace accidents as simple as falls and as fatal as choking or fire incidents are very costly and can be avoided. A consciousness of danger by the management starts from workplace layout. Whereas, arrangement of materials, distractions from closely placed equipment are not considered.

Housekeeping structures are scarcely embedded in the orientation of new employers and makes office managers vulnerable because school curriculum does not adequately prepare them to look out for it following the backup, the study on Workplace Housekeeping.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the benefits of good Housekeeping?
2. What are the methods of improving housekeeping in organizations?
3. What are the poor housekeeping processes?

### **Method**

The research design used for this study is descriptive survey design.

The population of the study comprised 100 secretaries from some selected organizations in Imo State and covered the organizations as stated: Ogwa Ventures Limited- Garden Park Business Centre - 40, First Bank PLC Owerri - 10, Access Bank PLC Owerri – 10 and Imo State polytechnic Umuagwo - 40. There was no sampling because the entire population was used for the study. The instrument used was a 30 point structured questionnaire on 4 point scale of Strongly agree =4, Agree =3, Disagree=2 and Strongly disagree =1. The instrument was validated by three experts. Two lecturers from the field of Office Technology and Management and one from measurement and evaluation. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the data generated from the answer to the research questions. The decision rule were based on a cut-off point of 2.5 and above for Agree and below 2.5 point for Disagree, t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. The hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected where the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the table t-value for a given degree of freedom at  $P = 0.05$  level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was applied where the calculated t-value was less than the table t-value of  $0.05$  level of significance.

### **Research Question 1**

What are the benefits of good housekeeping in an organization.



Table1 : Mean and standard Deviation ratings of the respondents on benefits of good Housekeeping.

S/No	Items	X	SD	Decision
1.	Good office layout.	3.70	0.44	Agreed
2.	Proper space management.	3.68	0.52	Agreed
3.	Good management of work way traffic.	3.47	0.80	Agreed
4.	Improved hygienic conditions.	3.41	0.77	Agreed
5.	Safety of workers.	3.59	0.51	Agreed
6.	Reduction in medical costs.	3.42	0.72	Agreed
7.	Reduction I trips, slip accidents.	3.32	0.53	Agreed
8.	Reduction or elimination of fire accidents.	3.49	0.58	Agreed
9.	Longevity of office equipment.	3.27	0.58	Agreed
10.	Boosting of office managers morale.	3.56	0.51	Agreed
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34.91</b>	<b>5.96</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 1 shows that all the items in the table are benefits which can be maximized from developing a good housekeeping culture in any organization. The mean ranging from 3.00 to 3.78 and standard deviation of 0.44 to 0.80

### Research Question 2

What are the ways on how to achieve good housekeeping?

Table 2: Mean and standard Deviation ratings of the Respondents on methods of improving housekeeping in organizations.

S/No	Items	X	SD	Decision
11	Periodic housekeeping trainings.	3.48	0.63	Agreed
12	Creating new staff orientation exercise.	3.59	0.51	Agreed
13	Expanding the content of housekeeping in office education.	3.27	0.58	Agreed
14	Apply safety rules in office layouts.	3.37	0.58	Agreed
15	Encourage housekeeping by placing directional signs and safety cautions.	3.42	0.72	Agreed
16	Make organizational budgets should be elastic on hygiene and safety management.	3.0	0.87	Agreed
17	Office managers will assume supervisory roles over housekeeping.	3.47	0.80	Agreed
18	Training on use of new equipment.	3.57	0.68	Agreed
19	Keep checklist of injuries and accidents.	3.27	0.58	Agreed
20	Repairs on broken facilities.	3.64	0.52	Agreed
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34.08</b>	<b>6.47</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 2 above indicates that all the discovered ways in attaining good housekeeping were agreed upon by the respondents. The mean response ranging from 3.00 to 3.80 indicate agreement with standard deviation of 0.51 to 0.87

### Research Question 3

What are the poor housekeeping processes?



Table 3: Mean rating of poor housekeeping processes.

S/No	Items	X	SD	Decision
21	Poor ventilation will impede health of workers.	3.60	0.55	Agreed
22	Trips over objects on floors or walking	3.32	0.53	Agreed
23	Slips on wet, dirty or greasy floors.	3.41	0.77	Agreed
24	Industrial injuries from badly arrange equipment (smoke, cuts on the body, wire straps).	3.53	0.64	Agreed
25	Litigation matters on damaged products.	3.47	0.80	Agreed
26	Litigation matters arise from staff affected by industrial accident.	3.59	0.52	Agreed
27	Slow service delivery process.	3.37	0.58	Agreed
28	Staff downtime is high and productivity lower.	3.41	0.77	Agreed
29	Electrical hazards, fire explosion, Toxic gases and fumes.	3.48	0.63	Agreed
30	Poor or no orientation program.	3.58	0.57	Agreed
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34.76</b>	<b>6.36</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

The table 3 reveals that all the identified effects of poor housekeeping processes in organizations were agreed upon by the respondents. The mean response ranging from 3.00 to 3.86 reveals agreement with standard deviation of 0.52 to 0.80

### Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male secretaries and female secretaries on their view as regards methods of improving office housekeeping.

Table 4: T-test Analysis of male and female secretaries on the methods of improving office housekeeping.

Ownership of Institution	N	X	SD	Df	p-value	Decision
Female	61	43.71	2.91			
				96	0.05	Not significant
Male	39	44.38	2.81			

Data in table 4 shows that the p-value of 0.06 at 96 degree of freedom is greater than the criterion value of 0.05 ( $p\text{-value}=0.06 > 0.05$ ). This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of secretaries on their view as regards methods of improving office housekeeping in some selected organizations in Imo State. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

### Discussion of findings

Findings of this study indicate that housekeeping and cleanliness are beneficial activities and clear indicators of the general standard of quality at the workplace. This also agrees with the assertion of Kaiser (2016) that housekeeping and cleanliness promotes efficient production and good environment in a workplace. Austin (2013) noted the benefits like: (i) Health challenges are



reduced, (ii) Office managers and employees work with greater satisfaction, workers are more consistent, company profile and reputation keeps accelerating.

It was again revealed that there are practices which may hasten workplace housekeeping. It is a culture determined by the organizational management. Austin (2013) agrees that these housekeeping practices are to be safe and simple so that employees are motivated to implement it. According to National Health and Safety Commission (NHSC) manual however stipulates that employers are better poised to create an acceptable working environment. Organizational management also has the responsibility to determine standards of operating facilities. Poor position of equipment, lack repairs and maintenance, blind intersections, are situations that management can change.

Organizational management need to create supervisory roles on housekeeping for implementation, and inspection. Office managers can fit into these roles. Ndinechi and Gude (2014) firmly categories their competence to perform professional office roles. This is so because the new curriculum for National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) (2004) was enriched with the intention to equip students with office and secretarial Skills.

In addition, the study dictated the possible outcomes of not maintaining a profitable housekeeping program.

Stacked items spilling over may piece the skin, cause trips. Similarly Trotto 2015 supports the view that poor standards maintained in these areas influence also employees perception of work in their respective units. (Barroso and Wilson, 2010) dictated that brief exposure to high intensity sounds from office technology or equipment can produce a transient impairment in hearing while a long exposure may lead to permanent hearing damage. An example is noise from power generating sets placed close to the office.

## **Conclusion**

Through healthy housekeeping and cleanliness practices, the organization not only keeping the workplace neat and clean, but also save on a whole lot of resources which in turn helps in improvement of the profitability of the organization. All the employees of the organization play an integral role in housekeeping and cleanliness. It is important to establish a housekeeping schedule. At a minimum, housekeeping is required to be done at the end of each shift. Good housekeeping and cleanliness practices are normally difficult to maintain since there are pervasive problem. Additionally, a few individual employees who are not committed to housekeeping and cleanliness practices can make a significant difference. Hence, continuous, unrelenting management attention to this issue is necessary to achieve and maintain the desired level of housekeeping and cleanliness in the organization.

## **Recommendations**

Base on the discussion above, the following recommendation are made to ensure effectiveness in housekeeping in business and institutional organization.

1. Organization should ensure they have a clear plan of progression for office and housekeeping staff. Understanding where you are heading and achieving milestone along the way can be highly motivational to people.
2. Organization should invest in training their staff regularly and providing new training relevant to that progression is important. Staff turnover can be high so ensuring staff feel valued and have pride in their work will help in the retention of staff. A provision for a positive team working environment where staff understand their value and importance within the whole organization is recommendable.

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