



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



The effect of secretarial profession on organizational development in some selected organizations in Lagos metropolis

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Abstract

The research was carried out to examine the effects of the secretarial profession on organizational development. The secretarial profession remains indispensable to organizational growth despite the evolution of technology and shifting workplace practices. It was carried out in some organizations in Lagos Metropolis. This study aims to develop the interest of readers in the duties, roles, and importance of secretaries in business organizations, using survey data from 200 respondents across management, senior staff, and general staff categories. The research highlights the contributions of secretaries to organizational efficiency, managerial support, and organizational success. The findings indicate that the secretarial profession significantly enhances productivity, complements modern technology, and contributes to effective communication and administration.

Keywords: Secretarial Profession; Organizational Development; Administrative Support; Organizational Efficiency; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Workplace Productivity; Office Management

1. Introduction

The secretarial profession has often been undervalued, with misconceptions portraying secretaries as mere typists or assistants with limited influence. However, secretaries serve as the custodians of organizational processes, communication, and records, making them vital to the growth of any institution (Fasanmi, 2002; Harrison, 1984). This article examines the effect of secretarial functions on organizational development in Lagos, Nigeria, highlighting their evolving relevance in the age of information and communication technology (ICT) (Osibo, 2003).

2. Literature Review

Scholars have described secretaries as indispensable professionals who possess mastery of office skills, discretion, and organizational knowledge (Whitehead, 1977). These roles extend beyond clerical functions to include administrative, financial, public relations, and managerial support (Odiagbe, 1994). Modern secretaries now operate as office technology managers, reviewing organizational projects, managing customer relations, and adapting to ICT-driven environments while sustaining organizational efficiency (Marshall & Beamer, 1996).

3. Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to 250 employees across selected organizations in Lagos Metropolis, of which 200 were fully completed and returned. Respondents

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included management staff, senior staff, and general staff. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution and percentage analysis to highlight perceptions of secretarial roles in organizational development.

4. Data Analysis

This chapter presents an analysis of all data gathered during the study. The total responses given to each questionnaire item and their corresponding percentages are displayed below. Out of 250 questionnaires administered across four organizations, 200 were fully completed and returned. Data are grouped under a single column of respondents for clarity. Questions were subjected to simple frequency and percentage analysis.

4.1. Bio-Data of Respondents

Table 1 Sex Distribution

Sex	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	80	40%
Female	120	60%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 1 shows that 80 respondents (40%) were male while 120 respondents (60%) were female, indicating that females formed the majority of survey participants.

Table 2 Educational Qualifications

Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
ICSA	24	12%
M.Sc.	10	5%
PGD/B.Sc.	10	5%
HND/ND	100	50%
WASC/GCE	56	28%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 2 reveals that HND/ND holders constituted the largest group at 50%, followed by WASC/GCE holders at 28% and ICSA (chartered secretaries) at 12%.

Table 3 Marital Status

Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Single	100	50%
Married	60	30%
Divorced	16	8%
Widowed	24	12%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 3 shows that 50% of respondents were single, 30% were married, 12% were widowed, and 8% were divorced.

Table 4 Working Experience

Years of Experience	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1 – 5 years	100	50%
6 – 10 years	49	24.5%
11 – 15 years	26	13%
16 years and above	25	12.5%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 4 indicates that half of the respondents had 1-5 years of working experience, reflecting a relatively young workforce in the sampled organizations.

4.2. Perceptions of Secretarial Roles

Table 5 Secretarial Services Are Necessary in an Organization

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	100	50%
Agree	27	13.5%
Undecided	31	15.5%
Disagree	23	11.5%
Strongly Disagree	19	9.5%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

A combined 63.5% of respondents agreed that secretarial services are necessary in an organization, affirming the continued relevance of the profession.

Table 6 ICT Cannot Fully Replace Secretaries

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	130	65%
Agree	70	35%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Remarkably, 100% of respondents agreed that ICT cannot fully take over the roles of secretaries, underscoring the irreplaceable human element in organizational management.

Table 7 Secretaries and Organizational Efficiency

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	120	60%
Agree	30	15%
Undecided	27	13.5%
Disagree	23	11.5%

Strongly Disagree	-	-
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 7 confirms that 75% of respondents believe secretarial services significantly improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Table 8 Effects of Secretarial Services on Organizational Development

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	110	55%
Agree	88	44%
Undecided	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly Disagree	2	1%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

A striking 99% of respondents acknowledged that secretarial services have a positive and significant effect on organizational development.

Table 9 Secretarial Functions Are Necessary

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	100	50%
Agree	100	50%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

All 200 respondents affirmed that secretarial functions are necessary in an organization, with an even split between strongly agree and agree.

Table 10 Modern Technology Cannot Succeed Without Secretaries

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	100	50%
Agree	47	23.5%
Disagree	50	25%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 10 shows that 73.5% of respondents agreed that modern technology cannot produce the desired organizational results without being operated by skilled secretaries.

Table 11 Secretary Productivity Without Advanced Equipment

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	100	50%
Agree	100	50%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

All respondents agreed that a secretary can still be productive even without access to computers and other sophisticated equipment, highlighting the value of core professional competencies.

Table 12 Computers Make the Secretary's Job Easier

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	100	50%
Agree	97	48.5%
Undecided	3	1.5%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 12 reveals that 98.5% of respondents agreed that computers ease secretarial work, though they do not replace the human role.

Table 13 Secretaries Can Manage Office Affairs in the Boss's Absence

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	100	50%
Agree	100	50%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

All respondents confirmed that modern secretaries are capable of running office affairs in the absence of their supervisors, demonstrating their leadership potential.

Table 14 Secretaries Reduce the Workload of Managers

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	100	50%
Agree	100	50%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

All respondents agreed that modern secretaries play a vital role in reducing the workload of managers, enabling senior staff to focus on strategic responsibilities.

Table 15 Secretaries as Image Makers of Their Organizations

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	90	45%
Agree	57	28.5%
Disagree	50	25%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 15 shows that 73.5% of respondents agreed that secretaries serve as image makers for their organizations, projecting a professional first impression to clients and visitors.

Table 16 Modern Secretaries Play a Leadership Role

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	100	50%
Agree	57	28.5%
Disagree	43	21.5%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

A total of 78.5% of respondents agreed that modern secretaries play leadership roles, including supervising subordinates and coordinating office operations.

Table 17 Secretaries Using Modern Equipment Are More Productive

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	100	50%
Agree	25	12.5%
Undecided	25	12.5%
Disagree	35	17.5%
Strongly Disagree	15	7.5%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 17 indicates that 62.5% of respondents agreed that secretaries equipped with modern technology are more productive than those using manually operated tools.

Table 18 Modern Technology Has Expanded the Functions of Secretaries

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	100	50%
Agree	50	25%
Disagree	47	23.5%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 18 shows that 75% of respondents agreed that modern technology has broadened the scope of secretarial functions, enabling secretaries to take on higher-level administrative tasks.

Table 19 Secretaries Who Use Modern ICT Experience Greater Job Satisfaction

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	120	60%
Agree	40	20%
Disagree	10	5%
Strongly Disagree	30	15%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 19 reveals that 80% of respondents agreed that secretaries who use modern ICT tools experience higher job satisfaction, suggesting that technology adoption positively influences professional well-being.

Table 20 Computers and the Role of Secretaries

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	87	41.5%
Agree	40	20%
Undecided	30	15%
Disagree	13	6.5%
Strongly Disagree	30	15%
Total	200	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 20 presents mixed views on whether computers take over the role of secretaries: 61.5% agreed to some degree, while 21.5% disagreed. This suggests that while computers assist secretarial work, they are not perceived as complete substitutes.

5. Key Findings

The following key findings emerged from the data analysis:

- Secretarial services are indispensable: 94.5% of respondents agreed that secretarial services are necessary in organizations.
- ICT cannot replace secretaries: 100% of respondents agreed that ICT cannot fully substitute the role of secretaries, as technology requires human supervision and coordination.
- Contribution to organizational efficiency: 75% of respondents strongly agreed that secretaries significantly improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness.
- Impact on organizational development: 99% of respondents acknowledged that secretarial services positively affect organizational development.
- Leadership and managerial support: Respondents affirmed that modern secretaries reduce managerial workload, act as organizational image makers, and play leadership roles by supervising subordinates.

6. Discussion

The findings reveal that secretaries serve as the backbone of organizational operations, enhancing efficiency, facilitating communication, and ensuring the effective use of ICT tools. Despite technological advancements, the secretarial role cannot be eliminated or downgraded. Rather, technology has expanded the scope of secretarial functions, allowing

professionals in this field to engage in higher-level administrative and managerial responsibilities. The results challenge the widespread assumption that digitization renders secretaries redundant; instead, they demonstrate that secretaries are indispensable human assets who direct, coordinate, and maximize the value of organizational technology.

7. Conclusion

The findings confirm that secretaries serve as the backbone of organizational operations, enhancing efficiency, facilitating communication, and ensuring the effective use of ICT tools (Harrison et al., 1979; Osibo, 2003). Despite technological advancements, this role cannot be eliminated; rather, technology has expanded its functions, allowing secretaries to engage in higher-level administrative and managerial responsibilities (Marshall & Beamer, 1996). The secretarial profession must therefore be recognized, valued, and invested in as a strategic organizational asset.

Recommendations

- Organizations should prioritize continuous training and professional development for secretaries to keep pace with ICT advancements.
 - The secretarial profession should be repositioned as a respected and rewarding career path, with corresponding recognition and remuneration.
 - Employers should recognize secretaries as strategic partners in organizational growth, rather than merely support staff, and involve them in higher-level administrative planning.
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Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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