

The Efficacies of Secretarial Profession by Ghana Education Service and Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

This project is carried out by employing an empirical method through questionnaire design and administration and tapped the perceptions and knowledge of the target elements of this study. The research frame was about Ghana Education Service office workers within the Accra Metropolis including higher education institutions. A qualitative data analysis is presented more in the literature review to support in conclusions for the purpose of this project work. More importantly, the backbone of the research was based on both primary and secondary sources of data, which helped and revealed a lot of contentions within the secretarial practice. A total of 200 questionnaires was developed and distributed among 200 staffs of G.E.S. based on random sampling technique. This means that it is not the total number of GES in the Metropolis that was considered, it was only the total figure of 200 questionnaires that was considered and administered on the participants randomly. The participants for that matter the respondents included the management, Supervisors, Secretaries/Stenographers, University Administrators and some Teachers/Lecturers.

The questionnaires were directly administered which gave results; hence, all the 200 questionnaires were answered and returned for presentation and analysis. This was an opinion seeking from the elements of the population and drawn clear conclusions from their answers after careful presentation and analysis. Ghana Education Service is one of the Government of Ghana public institutions established by an act of parliament to oversee the Educational systems in Ghana. Secretarial Practice is a professional practice and it has been misconstrued by many public or government administrators in terms of educational advancements and reforms in fulfilling the economic needs of a country. Among all educational programmes at the higher level of education, it is only secretarial practice that has not been considered in the Universities at most. Hence, no organization in Ghana has positions called company or corporate secretary which is meant to be professionally higher position for secretarial practitioners. The career path for people pursuing secretarial studies in Ghana has limited future success and growth since the programme designers at the Universities failed to design courses that will build secretaries skills and knowledge to occupy the executive positions in corporate businesses and government sector to help them professionally to derive the objectives forward for successful development and growth.

Keywords: secretary, roles, perception, company secretary, typewriting, career path, typist, receptionist

1. Background / Introduction

The reasons why this research topic came into consideration is the peer wrong perceptions about the secretarial studies. Colleagues within the same university who are pursuing different programmes like accounting and many others do not see the importance of secretaryship as a study. They always refer a secretary to someone who did typewriting and nothing else.

Most people normally and even including most educators who are not in the field of secretaryship does not recognize the position because since time in memorial the top public universities in Ghana have never created a higher education in secretaryship, hence, no such human capital is developed in the country. There is the need to stress this as a fact because even those students who study secretaryship with colleges are sometimes discouraged by other colleagues because they don't see the career prospects due to the modern technology. In fact, what people don't know is the importance of secretaries and for that matter company secretary to help the executives in carrying out the right policies and laws governing corporate businesses in other countries and organisations.

Even, the public sectors of Ghana has no position like company secretary, all what is assumed is the typist, stenographer, receptionist and secretary working at the lower desk of the organization. Moreover, according to the Ghana Companies Act 1963 (Act 179) has it that "appointment of secretary". This is not very clear because secretary is one of the roles but the top role backed by legislation is the company or corporate secretary in most countries of the world. Therefore, the code needs to be amended to reflect the real position for companies to comply with. Hence forth, a secretary is not company secretary but rather is the basic position required by company formation or business set up to fill its general operation.

In a recent survey conducted by Professional Secretaries International, it was found that only 41 percent of office professional are using the title "secretary" in today's offices. Lethbridge Community College is also not using the term in the program name. So, should reference be made to "secretary?" In the end, it was decided to use "secretary" because students entering the program may not be familiar with the new terms and this may cause them confusion when answering the survey questions. Even if a percentage of the surveyed students were familiar with the updated terms, at least all of them would be able to make reference to the term "secretary."

The term 'Secretarial Practice' has been used to include knowledge, skills, procedure and methods of work to be performed by a Private Secretary or Office Assistant. Persons with secretarial skills find employment in all types of offices e.g., government, public or private, different types of agencies etc. located in big and small cities. The application of modern technology advancements has brought a revolution and greater effectiveness in day to day working of the offices. Due to this, procedures have become more streamlined and office work has become more interesting and challenging. What is commonly known in Ghana in terms of secretarial practice is that we only know Typist grade, Stenographer grade, Receptionist, Secretary, Private Secretary (PA), Executive Secretary and that is all. There is no any other hierarchy specified to the position of secretarial practitioners. According to Adam (2011), published an article with much emphasis on secretarial practice and noted that Secretarial practice for that matter secretarial profession has undergone tremendous changes in advancement of the way it use to be in the past due to the consistent improved technology day in, day out. Due to these challenges faced by professionals and managers in the past is how they try to shape or position the roles and responsibilities of the secretarial title which has a lot of misconceptions.

Secretarial Practice in those days uses to be first of all as possessing the skills of manual/electronic typing, shorthand with good conduct and character. But today, computers are in abundance which is common to majority of the people and also in the offices.

The confusion people or other practitioners have about the concept of secretaryship is an illusion, in that, they assume that since majority of the working class uses computer both at home and in the offices threatens or invades the work of a secretary. Another issue is how the colleges and the universities design the secretarial programme may always affect the credibility of those studying the secretarial course subjects, that is, if not well designed with the necessary subjects to follow the modern trends of technology.

The secretarial role is a profession that demands skills that nobody else can have if you have never studied secretaryship, that is, by way of practicing typing and shorthand. Typewriting skills as a field of study teaches students about how to type with speed and accuracy; how to type memos, letters, reports, tables etc; how to correct people or bosses written errors and mistakes, which has to do with comprehension, English Grammar and spellings; should be able to identify people or bosses handwriting even if it is horrible to be read by any other person; adhering to all the standards and practices under the typewriting skills such as paragraphs, spaces, designs of business letters, creative typing, clear and admirable presentation of work; punctuations; and many, many more.

The later is what the secretary ought to learn as a profession to practice in the work environment and the question one should answer is, is that what everybody who has a computer learn or study? Even if you are called a computer literate – which should refer to secretaries in practice and not just anybody who uses a computer because the principles are standards of typing are not known easily by any other ordinary person? But that is part of what a secretary learns when we talk of TYPEWRITING.

More so, Shorthand is another skill that a secretary should possess in order to write fast and then transcribe them (typing) into plain English text for ordinary person's understanding. In fact, short hand is actually a secret writing whereby if you have never studied or learnt it you can never read or figure out what is being written or said. That is why a secretary is from the word secret.

Another question is does anyone with computer write or transcribe shorthand into plain English text? Absolutely Not. So, it is advisable for both secretarial education providers and Employers or Managers to learn or consult professionals to always help them design courses and the job roles and responsibilities of a secretary which will portray the efficiency and importance of the secretarial practices in every environment.

1.1 Organisational Profile – GES

Ghana Education Service is the national government sector that is in charge of the countries educational policies and control systems. This sector is under Ministry of Education headed by a Minister with a Deputy. G.E.S. is headed by Directors.

According to Wikipedia.com, that Education in Ghana was mainly informal before the arrival of European settlers, who built a formal education system addressed to the elites. With the independence in 1957 comes the political will to provide an Education for all. The magnitude of the task as well as economic difficulties and political instabilities slow down the attempt of reforms. The Education Act in 1987, followed by the constitution of 1992, gives a new impulse to educational policies in Ghana. Statistics show progresses: In 2011, the primary school net enrolment rate is of 84% and described by the UNICEF as « far ahead » of the sub-Saharan average. In its 2013-2014 report, the World Economic forum ranks Ghana 46th out of 148 countries regarding the education system quality. In 2010, literacy rate is of 71.5%, with a notable gap between men (78.3%) and women (65.3%).

Ghana faces a gender gap and disparities between rural and urban areas, as well as between the south and the north parts of the country. Those disparities are key to the public action against illiteracy and inequalities in access to education. Eliminating illiteracy has been a constant objective of the Ghanaian education policies for the last 40 years. Insuring equity in access to education is also a challenge acknowledged by the authorities. Public action in both domains met results judged significant but not sufficient by national experts and international organizations. Increasing the place of vocational education and training and of ICT within the education system are other clear objectives of Ghanaian policies in education. Impacts of public action are however hard to assess in these fields due to recent implementation or lack of information.

The ministry of Education is responsible for the administration and the coordination of public action regarding Education. Its multiple agencies handle the concrete implementation of the policies, in cooperation with the local authorities (10 regional and 138 district offices). The State also frames the training of teachers. Colleges, private or public, prepare applicants to the national examination granting the right to teach in basic education. Two universities offer special curricula leading to secondary education teaching. Education represents 23% of the state expenditure in 2010, including a declining part of international donation. Education in Ghana is divided in 3 phases: Basic education (Kindergarten, Primary school, Junior Secondary School), secondary education (Senior secondary school, Technical and Vocational Institutes) and tertiary education (universities, polytechnics, colleges). Education is compulsory age 4 to 15 (basic education). The school language is mainly English. The academic year usually goes from August to May inclusive.

In the pre-colonial times, Education in Ghana was informal: Knowledge and competencies were transmitted orally and through apprenticeships. The arrival of European settlers brought new forms of learning: Between the 16th and the 19th century, “fort schools”, colonial schools and “mission schools” were providing a bookish education, contributing to the construction of local elite. January 1957; Students with a senior tutor outside Legon Hall, one of the Halls of Residence at the University College of the Gold Coast, near Accra.

Since the independence in 1957, Education in Ghana has known several major reforms: in 1961, the Education Act introduced the principle of a free and compulsory primary education. As a result, the enrollment almost doubled the next year. This sudden expansion was however hard to handle: Ghana quickly fell short of trained teachers and the quality of the curriculum (lacks in English or in Mathematics) was put into question. Despite the rapid increase of school infrastructures, the enrollment slowly declined until 1973. The year 1974 saw attempts of reforms. Based on the “Dozbo committee report”, they followed 2 goals: reducing the length of pre-tertiary education (The structure primary school/Junior High School/Senior High school was created) and modifying programs in order to promote more practical contents at school. Those reforms were however very partially implemented due to financial limitations and political instability. The Gross Enrolment Ratio dropped sharper in the 1980s, falling below the 70%: Into an economic downturn, the country was failing at solving the deficit of teachers, maintaining the infrastructures and convincing the parents to bet on school instead of a paid work.

The year 1987 marked the beginning of new series of reforms, financially backed by numerous international organizations and countries. The 1987 Education Act aimed at turning the 1974’s Dozbo committee measures into reality: a national literacy campaign was launched, pre-tertiary education was reduced from 17 to 12 years and vocational education appears in Junior High School. Education was made compulsory from 6 to 14. The reform achieved to impose a new education structure, as well as to increase the enrollment and the number of

infrastructure. Yet the promise of universal access to basic education was not fulfilled. Vocational programs were also considered as a failure. The return to constitutional rule in 1992 gave a new impulse by reclaiming the duty of the state to provide a free and compulsory basic education for all. The local government Act of 1993 initiated the decentralization in education administration, by transferring power to district assemblies. The Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education(FCUBE) provided an action plan for the period 1996-2005, focusing on bridging the gender gap in primary-school, improving teaching materials and teacher's living condition. It was later completed by significant acts, like the creation of the "Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training" in order to promote vocational education (2006), or the founding of the national accreditation board (2007), introducing a national accreditation for all tertiary level institution. In 2007-2008, the two years in Kindergarten were added to the free and compulsory education (which is now going age 4 to 14).

1.2 Problems

The major problem that prompted this research is that people and many intellectuals don't know the usefulness of the secretarial practice. The following text is adopted from Adam (2011), "Technology has provided new sources of information, new ways of collecting it, storing it, and processing it, and new methods of communicating it. This in turn has meant that information needs have changed and will continue to change as new technologies become available (ICSA, September 2000 Study Text).

Some of the main critical aspects affecting office management are the modern approach to the management process, which places much emphasis on certain networks; the question of company size, which often limits the administrative organisation structure; the vital need for information in the business world of today; and the rapid development of information technology (Betts, 1975)." The confusion people or other practitioners have about the concept of secretaryship is an illusion, in that, they assume that since majority of the working class uses computer both at home and in the offices threatens or invades the work of a secretary. Another issue is how the colleges and the universities design the secretarial programme may always affect the credibility of those studying the secretarial course subjects, that is, if not well designed with the necessary subjects to follow the modern trends of technology.

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Their mandate is to design policies and implement them that best fit the development and growth of the country in terms of education for the people to help manage the affair efficiently and effectively. Their organizational structures are very enormous and also the course programmes they institute in the country are questionable regarding the predicament that the country is going through. Hence, what are the efficacies of secretarial practice is what probably has been poorly practice which is why or it could be something else. Therefore the need to chose this topic and investigate its findings to advice the people and stakeholders to rectify and make inform decisions for the future.

1.3 Objectives

The following are the objectives of the research:

- To compile the relevant literatures available to support the research idea.
- To come out with recommendations that institutions and universities can adapt to and use it to improve their course structures at the higher level.
- To make secretarial students to understand the realities in the practice of secretaryship as a profession.
- To advice companies to create an executive position such as company or corporate secretary role to work with the board.
- To integrate parts of secretarial studies towards improving economic growth in decision making at executive levels.
- To change minds or perceptions about secretarial profession or professionals.
- To bring secretarial knowledge to the fore.

1.4 Research Questions

The questions that this research paper tries to answer are as follows:

- Why students' of secretarial practice look down upon themselves and the secretaryship course they pursue?
- Why is it that the top level universities since time in memorial have never designed secretaryship as an academic and/or professional body of studies to gather such executive corporate human resources to

have impact on the economic development in decision making and policy executions within governance structures?

- What are the myths of secretarial practice from other students and intellectuals?
- Why public sector organizations and companies do not create and employ company secretaries at the executive level even though the law supports this position?

1.5 Significance of this Research

The significance of this research has to do with the underlined aims and purpose of the study as below:

The main purpose of this research topic is to define and explain the usefulness of secretarial practice out of the myths of people who do not understand the principles, concepts and practice of secretarial practice or studies.

The aims of the research topic are:

- To elaborate the efficacies of secretarial practice.
- To clearly show the career paths of secretarial practitioners and future advancement.
- To depict the importance of secretarial studies and the role they can play to an organization.
- To analyze the introduction of technology that posed challenges to secretarial roles, duties and responsibilities.

1.6 The Research Scope

This research will go far to help academic researchers and the government to draw some knowledge as to how to reposition and strengthen the course of a secretary in the country. Secretarial studies is a history that majority of the people are not aware off and so for that matter it would serve as an educative research document for students to always read and understand the prospects of secretarial practice.

2. Literature

According to Adam (2011), wrote that “Students must understand that the study of secretarial course is a business subject and can decide to upgrade their studies in the future into any of the Business Administration course programmes anywhere such as Management, Finance/Accounting, Banking, I.T., Web Development, Journalism, Company Secretary etc. What this means is that secretarial students have upper hand in everything that they do be it Financial accounting, Human Resource Management, Management, Banking and Finance, Law, Strategic Management, etc. All these areas are for secretarial students to upgrade themselves into and become proper managers of all times. Moreover the advancement of secretarial practice to professionalism goes through the following qualification status: Certificate, Diploma, Degree, Masters and others. This means if one is a secretary with a certificate level grade, you have the chance to study diploma, then a degree and to masters. This will earn you the top management or senior executive level post within the administration function of any organisation.

There’s no doubt that secretaries are the best office management and administration practitioners in all over the globe. Since technology is about improving work efficiency within work environments, then it means that secretaries have to be proactive in their profession to be abreast with the technological world as soon as any new development is introduced. Thereby increase their management and administration capabilities as good leaders of all times. Old secretaries who are casualties of new technology have to go for further studies to learn and know them better than any other person, whereas those yet to join the profession need to take courses that actually matches the growth of modern technology and that will make them masters in the future and more marketable in the employment sector.” There’s no doubt that secretaries are the best office management and administration practitioners in all over the globe. Since technology is about improving work efficiency within work environments, then it means that secretaries have to be proactive in their profession to be abreast with the technological world as soon as any new development is introduced. Thereby increase their management and administration capabilities as good leaders of all times. Old secretaries who are casualties of new technology have to go for further studies to learn and know them better than any other person, whereas those yet to join the profession need to take courses that actually matches the growth of modern technology and that will make them masters in the future and more marketable in the employment sector (Adam, 2011).

Also, according to Johnson (2012) ICSA Roundtable issued as a supplementary to Chartered Secretary stated that there is no denying that the role of the company secretary has been impacted by the financial crisis, most significantly through the increased profile of corporate governance in its aftermath. It is more and more the case that good governance is seen as fundamental to securing businesses against instability. A recent report by Linstock for the All Parliamentary Corporate Governance Group has backed up these sentiments, with the majority of respondents to the survey it carried out agreeing that throwing the spotlight on corporate governance has given company secretaries the opportunity to ‘step up to the plate’.

It was further noted that key industry figures gathered at the most recent Chartered Secretary Roundtable to discuss the evolution of the company secretary role and it was concluded that currently there are hurdles in place which are hindering company secretaries when it comes to taking on a more high profile position. The most significant of these is the perception of the role as predominately administrative and that this perception often serves to mask the fact that many company secretaries also possess important soft skills, and play a key role in managing boardroom relationships. More so, at a time when the top role of company secretary is often awarded to someone with a legal or accounting background, rather than a purely company secretarial background, and that it is crucial for those within the secretariat to demonstrate their willingness to take on a boarder remit, which will in turn showcase the skills they have that qualify them to take on that top role. The profession currently has an excellent opportunity to take on a new and challenging position based on fact that it is up to individuals to demonstrate their willingness and ability in these circumstances.

It further stated that understanding the role of the company secretary could never be an exact science as she looks at how the role is currently perceived and how one can stand out from the crowd. The role of the company secretary is one which continues to evolve through the prominence of the role was increased by the financial crisis, which propelled the importance of good governance to the top of the public, political and business agendas. Boards or board members could no longer risk being ignorant about what good governance looks like, nor could they fail to understand the importance of compliance with relevant regulation and legislations. It added therefore that, Directors would continue to look to their company secretary to point and show them in the right direction. Moreover, an exciting opportunity has unfolded for company secretaries to extend their remit and really take ownership of the governance agenda in their organization and what does this really mean in practice; has the day-to-day reality of company secretarial work really changed? This month's Roundtable participants came together to discuss the extent to which the role is changing, as well as considering the best way forward (Johnson, 2012).

2.1 Contributions from the Roundtable Discussion

“A key theme of the discussion was the way in which company secretaries, their deputies and assistants are perceived. Fundamentally, many believe that the role remains predominately administrative. This perception throws up many barriers for company secretaries and their teams. For one, it makes no distinction between the work undertaken by less senior team members – assistant company secretaries or company secretarial assistants – and the work undertaken by more senior company and deputy secretaries. Yet there is an important distinction to be made, with the work of more senior team members being far from administrative, and much more about developing and managing relationships with board members and other influential figures. However, while ever the role is perceived as administrative, companies may remain reluctant to appoint those with a purely company secretarial background to the ‘top job’, instead opting to appoint a lawyer or equivalent as their company secretary, or even combining the role with that of general counsel, or in-house counsel. It is therefore important to dispel this misplaced belief about the profession. As one participant pointed out, it is incredibly de-motivating to see the position that would mark the pinnacle of your career constantly being awarded to those with a different background to you.”

They said that company secretaries are certainly well placed to advise external enquirers, as they are often involved in many different departments across the entire organization, which means they have a unique, holistic view of its workings. They also considered that the company secretary is often the driving force behind the board's development agenda (formally speaking this falls under the remit of the chairman, however, in practice many felt that the company secretary was the one who really made things happen). As such it was also noted that the UK Corporate Governance Code actually does the company secretary a disservice by making the chairman responsible for this area, and ought to attribute it to the company secretary, which would reflect common practice more accurately.

The meeting however concluded by saying, “So, where do we go from here? Perhaps the most important message to take away from this roundtable discussion was that, when it comes to getting the top job, personal skills trump technical ability. The way forward, therefore, lies in honing your soft skills to make you stand out from the crowd. Perhaps it is worth thinking about the way you manage your relationship with your chairman and chief executive, the difficulties you experience and how you overcome them. If you find these relationships difficult, perhaps undergoing training in soft skills would be useful. Fundamentally, it seems, it is the ability to establish and manage relationships with key figures that will prove the most effective route to the top.”

2.2 History of the Secretarial Profession – Men's Job

The word 'secretary' was noted to come from the Latin word 'secretarius' meaning a person entrusted with secrets. That is an employer must be able to 'tell all' to his secretary, knowing what has been disclosed in

strictest confidence will not become part of the daily office gossip; and the higher up the corporate ladder, the more important this becomes (Snelling, 1974).

Angell Day comments on the reinforcement of the importance of the secretary qualities in his 1599 book, *The English Secretorie*, on qualities of a 16th century secretary: This virtue of ordering and keeping the tongue is onto our Secretorie not the least of many other points wherewith he ought especially to be charged, in him that is disposed to speak much, it cannot but ensue that his often babbling must need at one time or other, give proof that he has in himself a little secrecie as silence. (Hildebrandt, 1979)

At this point in time, men occupied the role of secretary and women did not qualify as secretaries. The defense of their superior or lord went beyond their secretarial skills. Since subservience was common during the Renaissance period, it was the norm for a secretary to be under the absolute and autocratic control of a superior or lord. "The Secretorie, as he is a keeper and conserver of secrets, so is he by his Lord or Moister, and by none other to be directed." (Hildebrandt, 1979).

Before 1880, offices were filled entirely with males, predominantly educated middle-class men. The executive "either wrote his own letters in longhand using pen and ink, or summoned a young man to take shorthand dictation and transcribe, later, in longhand" (Bliven, 1954).

The office boys will take all the originals, and by wetting them with evil-smelling felt cloths and then pressing the damp letters against the pages of a book, made one copy of each for the records. Then they quickly folded them, put them in envelopes, and raced with them to the post office, hoping that no one would have time to notice that the copy press had turned the originals into illegible smears (Bliven, 1954).

2.3 The time Women Entered the Profession

It was gathered that in 1881, 1 200 typewriters were manufactured in the United States and that same year a branch of the YWCA in New York started to teach eight (8) young ladies to type as previously, there had been a few young ladies that knew the skill but they used their skill to demonstrate the machines. These original eight (8) ladies were quickly hired in business offices, and the YWCA received hundreds of requests for typewriter operators. Women were now appearing in the office as typewriter operators (typist). It was thought that women had an aptitude for work requiring finger dexterity. Because the YWCA could not train enough typists to keep up with the demand, the Remington Typewriter Company also opened their own schools. The students were mostly females. Other private schools opened with the key components of the curricula consisting of shorthand and typewriting. The first Stenographer's and Typewriter's Union was formed in 1904 with the belief that typists should provide "professional services" and not "companionship." At the end of the 19th century, there were also a large number of educated women needing work. More women than men had completed high school ready to find jobs that required literacy skills. The office had become much routine, and women's passivity suited them to jobs that required carrying out endless routine tasks without complaint. This trend that started in the late 19th century continued throughout most of the 20th century (Goldberg, 1983).

More so, in the early part of the twentieth (20th) century, there were fewer and fewer men employed as secretaries. "Yet for at least two generations after the first secretaries went to work, the nation, for obscure reasons of its own, preferred to pretend that sex had nothing to do with the sensational popularity of female typewriter operators" (Bliven, 1954). Women were said to have an aptitude for work requiring finger dexterity, and to be more conscientious than men and better able to keep business matters confidential. With a vast number of men enlisting in the military in World War I, more women were entering the labour force. Women were also cheaper labour than men. Women now dominated the office as secretaries. Though secretaries have been jokingly portrayed as blond, curvaceous, sitting on the bosses' lap with pad and pencil in hand, the view of the secretary hired for her efficiency in the office has shown greater staying power.

2.4 Changing Role

Prior to the 1980's, secretaries handled all the typing, manual data entry, filing, scheduling, and report generation. With the restructuring of organizations in the late 20th century, the role of secretaries is being transformed. Organizations have adopted a flatter structure and in many cases eliminated middle management. As organizations became flatter and leaner, secretaries took on greater visibility and assumed duties previously performed by middle managers. The secretary's role became more specialized, concentrating on software and equipment knowledge. As the ranks of middle managers decrease, secretarial positions take up the slack in manpower. Kathy Burroughs, International President of Professional Secretaries International stated, "This opportunity allows secretaries to demonstrate their abilities to perform tasks more demanding than traditional

clerical assignments. Not only are secretaries taking on more responsibilities, they are doing so with effectiveness and trademark efficiency" (Creative Secretary's Letter 1997).

In USA today, 99 percent of secretarial positions are filled by women, but the scene is changing. By the beginning of the 21st century, studies indicated that substantial numbers of both men and women will be employed as secretaries. Stereotypes are slowly changing and discrimination toward non-traditional workers become minimal.

2.5 What's in the Name - secretary?

In the early part of the 20th century, the National Office Management Association (NAOMA) wanted the business world to know that "secretary" is a specific job classification and that it should not be confused with "typist," "junior stenographer," or "stenographer." A "typist" was someone that knows how to touch-type but does not know shorthand. A "junior stenographer" knows shorthand as well as typing and can take and transcribe dictation. A "stenographer" is proficient in all these skills, knows proper letter format, and deals with various office routines. A "secretary" is capable of performing all the duties of a senior stenographer and can also relieve the boss of some of the routine work. A "private secretary" works closely with an executive, with confidentiality a key trait.

A survey administered in the United States by Professional Secretaries International (PSI) in 1997 revealed that fewer than half that is, 41% now carry the word "secretary," "executive secretary," and "administrative secretary" in their job titles. Job titles have changed because advancing technology has changed the image and the responsibilities of today's office workers. Professional Secretaries International defines a secretary as "an executive assistant who possess a mastery of office skills, demonstrates the ability to assume responsibility without direct supervision, exercises initiative and judgement and makes decisions within the scope of assigned authority." It should be noted that nowhere in this definition does it narrow the profession to females only.

Professional Secretaries International has been trying in the past years to find a more appropriate name to replace the title "secretary." An appropriate name change cannot be agreed upon by some 400,000 members, so a tag line was added to all written correspondence of Professional Secretaries International and The Association for Office Professionals. New titles have been created to encompass the additional duties. Title such as "secretary," "stenographer," "clerk typist," etc. are being replaced with Office Assistant, Administrative Assistant, Executive Assistant and Information Specialist, etc.

2.6 Typewriting

It has been noted that, office skills learned from the turn of the 20th century into the 1980's were skills that required repetitious practice in order to become efficient. Typewriting classes emphasized learning "touch-typing" and developing speed and accuracy through drills. Typing competitions were popular at one time; with men holding the honor of champion typists. Typewriting has progressed from manual typewriters (where much pressure was needed in order to press the keys), to electronic typewriters (where typists apply slight pressure to the keys), to today's sophisticated computers. Beginners as typists still learn to touch-type, but now are taught using software packages that allow drill practice paced at one's own ability. Typewriting is now referred to as keyboarding.

Popular keyboarding software used in Alberta's colleges today was developed by Cortez Peters Jr. as the former and more traditional method of teaching typing was to have everybody in the class working on the same drills. Cortez's new method is intended to uncover individual weaknesses and to prescribe exercises to eliminate them. Using an individualized method still requires a knowledgeable keyboarding teacher. The challenge for today's keyboarding teacher is that everyone is at a different level which means a close monitoring of each individual's needs. Regardless, of the method used to teach keyboarding, this skill remains the key skill needed in the secretarial profession.

Technology is the driving force behind much of the change. Today's secretaries, in addition to word processing, are knowledgeable in dealing with fax, voice mail and electronic mail, local area networks, budgeting, computer maintenance, desktop publishing, spreadsheets and database applications. They also require skills in planning, organizing, communicating, time management and setting priorities.

2.7 Reason for Choosing a Secretarial Career

To start with, before asking the students their perception of the profession, an investigator felt it was important to know why they had chosen a secretarial career. Their reasons for choosing a secretarial career were varied. Many

had previously worked in a secretarial position through high school work placements. The following were some of their submissions:

One said that “my experience in high school, which was working as a secretary/receptionist for my work experience class. I did a job placement and enjoyed it so much that I checked into the program. I took the testing and was thrilled when I was accepted.”

Many others commented on liking the work involved and felt they had a natural aptitude for organizing, keyboarding and computer related work. All of these skills relate to traditional skills required in the job and that, the job requires organization, efficiency, reliability, responsibility, etc. These are my strengths. I've always enjoyed playing "secretary" as a child. I enjoy the human relations as well. I am an orderly person. I enjoy organizing and working with information, so I assumed this would be a good choice.

Many chose the profession because they enjoyed working with people. Secretaries are seen as assisting and meeting the needs of others. It is a profession that involves working with people and I am a major people person.

Another group of students saw the profession as a quick way to obtain a career but only a temporary career that would eventually move to other career options.

Two students commented that they chose this career because they did not have the academic skills to pursue other careers. This is a very archaic notion that should not be surfacing today. Their comments were:

- *Because I had low marks in science and math classes my career choice was limited so I chose the Information Specialist Program course because I still got to deal with people. I felt that it was something I could handle because I am not very good at some math and sciences.*

2.8 Career Counseling

School Counselor - when asked about career counseling, only 28 indicated that they had received career counseling and the majority had received counseling from high school teachers and counselors and also government agencies. When asked to comment on what the individual counselors had told them about the career, traditional stereotyping was evident. The following comments are examples of counselors' perceptions:

- *Organizing a manager's schedule.*
- *Typing, filing and answering phone.*
- *It is repetitive work, so you have to truly enjoy it. You have to be well organized.*
- *You have to like to work with people.*

They were also told that it could "lead to other opportunities," that their "personality fit the career," "a good 'starter' career," "skills can be used to organize own life." Many confirmed that working with computers would be a large part of the job, while others stated "you will learn to type fast and keep books." Other advice was more positive, such as, a rewarding career and good opportunity for employment.

Experienced Office Professionals – when asked, majority of 58 people surveyed commented they knew someone that was employed as a secretary such as aunts, mothers, stepmothers and friends. Only eight did not. Of the 58 that knew someone in the profession, only 28 felt that this person had helped them make a career choice. Thirty stated "no" they were not influenced by someone else.

In what way, did these people already working in the profession influence their decision? Working secretaries that had a positive influence described the profession as enjoyable, very fulfilling, job satisfaction, ability to meet people, working on computers and interesting. Other comments related to working environment such as reasonable hours as opposed to retail mall hours.

Someone said, a lot of tasks can be monotonous but the rewards far outweighed these tasks. My stepmother and aunt both started as secretaries and over the years they were able to move up the "ladder." They said it happens a lot and they have great jobs. Because I liked the way they did things and the nice clothes they wear!!!

Those that answered "no" they were not influenced by others, commented that it was always something they wanted to do.

2.9 Perception of the Secretarial Profession

A Question: What was your perception of a secretarial career when you entered the Information Specialist program in September?

“Through work placements in high school, counseling by school counselors, friends and family, what was their perception of a secretarial career when they entered the Information Specialist program in September and had their perception changed over the last four months or one semester of courses? If their perception had changed, how and/or what had changed their perception? Twenty-four stated their perception had not change while 38 felt their perception had changed. One reason given for no perception change was that previous work experience gave them a good indication what was expected of them.

Having been in the work force and in an office, I had a pretty good idea of the wide range of skills necessary to be a good secretary. I think my perception was that you have to be a pretty versatile person in order to be good at your job. The remaining comments from students that indicated "no" their perception had not changed varied from being hard work, to describing the traditional duties, to being underpaid and underappreciated for contribution to the office. There were comments that related to the effectiveness of a smooth running of an office and this effectiveness was contributed to the secretary and being the first impression of the company. Someone who is neat, and tidy, well organized, a positive attitude and professional in an office.

Thirty-eight (38) answered that "yes" their perception had changed in the four months since beginning the program. Those whose perceptions had changed had a very traditional image of the profession coming in. It is interesting to note that even though they felt their perception had changed, their comments reflected that they still held a traditional view of the profession. The following statement is an excellent example of the kind of comments made by the majority of the students describing how they saw a secretarial career before entering the program in September:

- *A secretary was someone who just sat at a desk all day and worked nonstop, answering phone, filing and taking messages.*
- *Someone who could type, do what her boss said, be friendly.*
- *The secretary is one who runs the office and keeps everyone else organized. I also thought they were just the "gophers" of the company.*
- *Giving out coffee.*
- *Without a secretary an office cannot run.*

One student commented, "I was a bit disappointed in myself because I thought I was meant for bigger things. I thought that a secretarial position wouldn't be very well thought of." After four months, she now realizes that a secretary has a very important role in an office. As a receptionist she states, "We are the first person a customer may see. Our written work must be very well presented to clients. Because of us the company can lose or gain customers - get sued or avoid such legalities."

Another student commented "I thought it would be just a practical program to take - I entered not thinking of it as a career - but now I want to be a secretary." Those that felt their perception had changed realized there was more to the job, but this same group of students still wrote comments that indicated they did not have a good grasp of the changes within the profession and the skills needed. Twenty-four students did not have a clear picture of the profession they were entering. If the first semester did not change their perception, the curriculum in the second semester had to accomplish this goal.

2.10 Change in Perception

The second survey was administered to 53 students. Thirty-nine (39) of the 53 felt their perception had changed over the past year with 14 feeling it had not. The comments differed from the comments from the first survey for those that felt their perception had changed after four months. The keywords that were stated now included: "very important role and vital position in the company," "most responsible position," "must be well organized and prompt," "the person in charge," "valuable asset," "administrative support," "helpers, but the kind of helper that cannot be missed," "very knowledgeable person," etc.

One student commented:

A secretary must be an excellent communicator, organized, efficient, friendly, responsible and open to change. The secretary has to take charge when the boss is not available therefore she needs to know as much or more than her employer. A secretary is an overworked and underpaid person. Someone that does all the "behind the

scene work. A key player needed to complete the work of administration. And also, must be reliable, dependable and honest.

Another student commented:

The role of a secretary is much more complex than I had first thought. We are very important people in an office. Our job includes more than just typing. We have to be well-rounded and sensible. We also need to be highly disciplined. We need to know how to use our skills for an endless variety of applications.

Another person stated:

Secretary is someone who is essential to a company. A secretary keeps the business working in an office. They have lots of duties. A secretary needs to be a person who is a quick thinker, runner, and a good organizer.

Several other people commented on the downside to the profession, that monetary compensation was inadequate (attrition). "A person who works harder than everyone else and doesn't get paid what they deserve. An overworked, underpaid person.

Even though the comments included the traditional skills needed, they were further added to with comments like the ones stated above.

Those that felt their perception had not changed also included statements that did not appear on the first survey, such as: well organized, really responsible, an integral part of the office environment, requires organizational skills, energetic, very busy, a representative of the company and someone that takes the time to care about the work they are doing, someone who takes pride in a job well done, a "Jane-of-all-trades" and far more than a typist, responsible for all the small jobs that hold an office together and make it run smoothly, must communicate well with others, have a positive attitude and must update his or her skills from time to time.

Two students' comments indicated that their perception had not changed: as they see a secretary as a typical pen pusher, answering telephones, typing letters, sending mail, sorting documents, dealing with customers and taking orders. The way I see the role of a secretary is a person who works behind a desk doing work for the boss. This includes typing, answering phones, scheduling appointments, etc.

The students were asked what they felt was their most important skill they would be taking to the work force. Computer skills topped the list with communication skills coming in a close second followed by document processing skills and the ability to deal with people. Other skills listed include: willingness to learn, accuracy, office procedures, team player, adaptability, work ethics, organizational and time management skills, positive attitude, confidence, promptness, effective and efficient, ability to handle more than one task at a time, willingness to keep learning, well disciplined, creative thinking, enthusiastic, and friendliness.

Only two students surveyed felt the Office Assistant program did not prepare them for the work force. Their comments are confusing to understand.

That is I don't think it has. I have talked with many secretaries and they have told me that more than half of what we have learned we will never use. I find that a little disappointing. This may be because of a particular environment they find themselves. Work ethics there may not be conducive or favourable, hence such conclusion.

Sort of:

It showed you different types of programs for the computer to make things easier for you, it did give you some experience for real life office stuff like simulations and typing letters and how to organize accounting books and your work place, but I think that with technology changing so fast, some of what we learned may be useless, but at least you know the basics.

There was an overwhelming response that "Yes" the program did prepare them for the work world over.

- Yes. I learned important computer skills which I didn't have before. The management course gave me a much better understanding of a manager's role. I have gained confidence and very useful skills. Many of the concepts I've learned for specific situations, can be applied to other professional and personal areas.

- Yes, because before taking it I had no idea that the secretary is responsible for so many things.
- Yes, after doing so many projects for my classes, I learned to become more organized. I also learned to handle office work.
- Yes. The program is excellent. We are not learning to just type. We are learning to process a variety of documents.
- We are excellent proofreaders. We have learned a variety of software applications. We have a bit of management theory behind us. Our grammar and English skills are excellent. And to top it off, we are good communicators.
- Yes, I know more programs. I can produce good, quality documents. I have learned how to work with others. I have gained valuable experiences.

2.11 The 21st Century Secretary

The future looks bright for office and administrative assistants in the 21st century as a result of major changes in the way the business world operates" that is, a future of smart machines, streamlined work spaces, management-oriented responsibilities, communication networks, greater authority and increased professional prestige" (Daily, 1993).

For those with an open mind to continue to grow and develop, there will be exciting opportunities for advancement. One of the challenges will be to cultivate an appreciation for cultural diversity. The Office Assistant of the future will interact with people from many countries. This means learning about other cultures, protocol and being proficient in other languages. Office Assistants in the future may work for employers that work outside the traditional office setting with varying office hours. Already we see individuals working out of their home in order to balance work and family life.

Office professionals will have to be committed to lifelong learning. Technological expertise will be critically important. With the restructuring of corporations and businesses dealing globally, the office professional of the future will be one of an information manager. Familiar objects used around the 20th century will be gone (i.e. file cabinets, calculators, typewriters). Most work will be done through the computer with very little human contact. Electronic mail, voice mail, and fax will be the norms. Just as those employed as office professionals, we as business educators need to be committed to lifelong learning. The challenge should be exciting. Business educators who have been in the classroom for many years will need to spend time in the new office in order to better prepare their students for the work world over. Business educators as well as training and education providers and governments need to adapt to a changing environment by keeping the best of the old and using it as a base for building and to respond positively to the new in order to survive and grow.

2.12 The Institute of Company Secretaries of India

According to The Institute of Company Secretaries of India – In Pursuit of Professional Excellence, Statutory Body under the Act of Parliament designed and stated on Company Secretarial Practice in details as follows:

2.12.1 Typical Roles and Responsibilities of the Company Secretary

Every company must have a company secretary, who cannot be the same person as a sole director (Companies Act 1985 s.283 (1)) of India. The company secretary is responsible for ensuring that the administrative responsibilities set out in company law and the articles of association are properly carried out. The post has no executive or management responsibilities unless these are explicitly delegated by the governing body. So a company secretary cannot, for example, authorize expenditure, borrow money, alter registers or appoint auditors without the authority of the directors or company members. A company secretary who attends general meetings of the company's members has no vote unless he or she is a member of the company, and a company secretary who attends meetings of the governing body has no vote unless he or she is also a company director. Although a company secretary may have no say in the company's decisions, he or she is an officer for the purposes of company law and can be held liable in the same way as a company director for breach of company law duties.

2.12.2 Liability

The company secretary has personal liability if he or she fails to perform duties required under the Companies Acts. Usually such liability arises only if the default was known or deliberate. The company can generally insure against such liability, but if the company is charitable and the secretary is also a member of the governing body, the rules on liability insurance for trustees apply.

When a company is set up the company secretary must:

- open a register of members, and if it is not to be kept at the company's registered office, send form AD02 to Companies House;

- open a register of directors and secretaries and file forms for any directors who were not named when the company was formed;
- open the relevant register of charges if there are any mortgages or debentures, and notify the charges of Companies House;
- display the company's full registered name outside the company's registered office;
- arrange for printed materials such as stationery and cheque books to be produced with the necessary details, or get a rubber stamp or stickers with the details;
- add the same details to the organization's website and the 'signature' used on outgoing emails;
- arrange for safekeeping of the seal (if there is one), registers, minute books and the certificate of incorporation.

2.12.3 When taking over as company secretary of an established company:

The company secretary appointed for an existing company should obtain from the outgoing secretary, or from whoever has them:

- the original certificate of incorporation and any certificate changing the company's name;
- a copy of the memorandum and articles of association and any amendments;
- the company's statutory books;
- copies of forms detailing directors and secretary which have been submitted to Companies House;
- copies of other forms which have been submitted;
- contact addresses and telephone numbers of directors and key staff;
- copies of the company's notepaper, cheques, and forms used for invoices, receipts,
- orders other financial documents;
- print-outs from the company's website and outgoing emails, showing the company and if applicable) charity registration details;
- correspondence files of the previous secretary;
- copies of the previous year's company annual accounts, reports and return and, for a charitable company, the previous year's charity return;
- an up-to-date company search, unless the company secretary is absolutely certain the company's documentation at Companies House is completely up to date;
- blank copies of forms to register, amend or remove directors;
- the company seal, if there is one. If any of these items is missing the company secretary should alert the governing body and take action to replace missing items.

2.12.4 The company secretary should also:

- complete and sign form AP03 and send it to Companies House within 14 days of being appointed;
- find out when the end of the accounting year is, and ensure that company form 255 has been filed if necessary (to notify Companies House of a change in accounting reference date when the accounting year is changed);
- check the correspondence file and if necessary notify key people of any change of address for correspondence;
- if one does not already exist, create a diary with all the key dates (end of financial year, deadline for submitting annual accounts, dates for general and governing body meetings, deadlines for giving notice of general and governing body meetings, etc);
- find out who the company's accountant (if there is one), auditor and solicitor are, and
- introduce himself or herself to them;
- if there is no company solicitor, ask the board how they expect the secretary to obtain legal advice on company matters.

2.12.5 Duties

- Compliance with internal regulations and legislation
Checking the company complies with:
 - Memorandum and Articles of Association and that these are up to date
 - the Companies Act 1985
 - companies and other legislation

- Maintenance of records
Keeping the company's statutory books and records, including registers of:
 - mortgages and charges
 - directors and secretary
 - director's interests
 - members
 - debenture holders **
- Administration of board and general meetings
Procedural compliance and administration in:
 - preparing and sending out notices
 - taking minutes of meetings and keeping the minute books
- Filing forms etc at Companies House
This must be done in the time limits given. Particular importance is attached to filing company accounts and returns, together with notices of changes to registers, especially charges
- Collation of accounts and compliance with legislation
Ensuring that the company's accounting records are:
 - maintained in accordance with company legislation
 - prepared in time
 - in the form required by company law and accounting standards
 - copies of the accounts are distributed to the appropriate persons within the correct time constraints
- Shareholder communications
Not applicable to a charitable company limited by guarantee
- Access to records
Ensuring that eligible persons can review company records and that the company is compliant with the Data Protection Act
- Legal advice
Advising directors on their legal responsibilities and updating them on developments in the law concerning the running of companies
- Share administration
Not applicable to a charitable company limited by guarantee
- Information link Maintaining communication links between
 - directors and non-executive directors
 - shareholders and the board
 - employees and the board
 - media/press and the company
- Running the registered office
Administering the registered office
 - dealing with correspondence
 - receipt and care of official documents
 - making documents required by law available for
 - inspection by third parties
- Security of documentation
Managing the security of
 - company seal *
 - Certificate of Incorporation
 - certificate(s) on change of name
 - Memorandum and Articles of Association
 - directors' service contracts
 - share certificates and stock transfer forms
 - other documents of title"

2.13 Ghana Companies Act 1963 (Act 179) section(s) applicable to secretary

According to Ghana Companies Act 1963 (Act 179) section(s) applicable to secretary is Section 190 which has the following codes:

(1) Every company shall have a secretary and if any company shall carry on business for more than six months without a secretary the company and every officer of the company who is in default shall be liable to a fine not

exceeding five pounds for each day that the company continues to carry on business without a secretary after the expiration of such six months.

(2) Anything required or authorized to be done by or to the secretary may, if the office is vacant or there is for any other reason no secretary capable of acting, be done by or to any assistant or deputy secretary or any officer of the company appointed by the directors to be acting secretary.

(3) Unless the Regulations shall otherwise provide, the secretary shall be appointed by the directors for such term, at such remuneration and upon such conditions as they may think fit, and may be removed by them, subject however to his right to claim damages from the company if removed in breach of contract.

(4) The secretary may be a body corporate.

Also, Section 191 is Avoidance of Acts in Dual Capacity as Directors and Secretary which states, a provision requiring or authorizing a thing to be done by or to a director and the secretary shall not be satisfied by its being done by or to the same person acting both as director and as, or in place of, the secretary.

By far, Igbinedion (2011) stated in the abstract that the paper examines the perceived factors that influence students' vocational choice of secretarial studies in tertiary institutions in Edo State of Nigeria. And the results has indicated that it's due to low enrolment into secretarial education programmes across the universities and college of education and the poor attitude of students with regard to their self worth in spite of the many job opportunities and career satisfaction offered by this all pervasive skill oriented vocational academic programme.

The need for all secretarial staff who are privileged to secure employment in the university (an institution known all over the world as the citadel of learning) to enhance their relevance not just to retain their jobs but to contribute maximally in the attainment of university goals and objectives and enjoy job satisfaction and self fulfillment (Ezenwafor, 2013). According to Ezenwafor and Okeke (2012), secretarial staff consist of staff of different nomenclatures and levels such as confidential/personal secretaries, stenographers, typists and computer operators whose duties revolve around different stages and functions undertaking in an office information processing. He posited that functions of secretarial staff in a university cover production of different types of documents for the office, lecturers and students, proofreading the document for accuracy, disseminating, storing (manually or electronically) and retrieving stored documents when needed. Consequently, Ezenwafor and Okeke (2012) affirmed that the university deals with data and information (records) more than most other organizations and that secretarial staff are the key personnel involved in different stages of data and information processing in the university.

The university deals more extensively with information than other organizations and secretarial staff play key roles in both managing information and utilization of technology for the purpose (Nwosu, 2000). That this is what earned secretarial programs in training institutions the new title of Office Technology Management (OTM) and the graduates as Office Technology Managers rather than Secretaries.

Egbokhare (2011) outlined attributes of a good secretary under two classifications of business and personnel. Business attributes include secretarial and language skills, organizing skills, efficiency, reliability, responsibility, discretion, initiative, punctuality, resilience, enthusiasm, adaptability and interest in business, among others. The personal attributes include being smart, tactful, neat, friendly, helpful, well informed or knowledgeable, courteous, polite and observant, among others. He further stated that some of the local realities of our time are different types of reforms which have led to retrenchment or down-sizing or right-sizing in both private and public sectors. The author concluded that inevitably, those employees who lost their jobs in the exercise are the ones who have become obsolete either because technology or knowledge has left them behind since, in the present knowledge economy, what a person knows is more important than who the person is or where he/she lives.

Joanne Matisonn (The Director of ICOSA and FCIS) wrote "Guidelines for the Role of the Company Secretary" commissioned by the Institute of Directors and states the following recommendations contained in the first King Report on Corporate Governance in 1994, the Companies Act was amended in 1999 providing for the mandatory appointment of company secretaries in public companies. It is good practice for large private companies to also consider appointing a suitably qualified company secretary to ensure that the board and directors fulfill their statutory requirements and to meet the demanding standards of corporate governance now required of companies.

The person appointed to this position must, in the opinion of the directors, have the requisite knowledge and experience to carry out the duties of a company secretary of a public company. The duties are both extremely broad in scope and major. In particular, Section 268G (b) requires that the company secretary must make the directors aware of all relevant laws and regulations and to report any failure to comply. Compliance with this is

extremely difficult due to the scope of this requirement and the evolving nature of UK legal system and the many accompanying regulations. The company secretary should endeavour to devise or establish a system to meet this major obligation, such as taking responsibility for certain areas of the law which relate to his/her expertise and relying on the legal department and/or outside lawyers for other specialized expertise and support.

2.14 Roles and Responsibilities of Company Secretary

Duties are given and responsibilities are known, hence, the duties of a company secretary may vary from one company to another but the position of company secretary is broadly divided into responsibilities to the board, the company and shareowners and relevant stakeholders.

2.14.1 Company Secretary Responsibilities to the Board

- The appointment of the company secretary should be a matter for the board as a whole and his/her removal should be a decision of the board. If the board decides to remove the company secretary, the company secretary is entitled to include a replying statement in the company's annual report.
- The company secretary should be subject to a fit and proper test in line with that required of directors. It is incumbent on the board to empower the company secretary with the necessary authority and support to enable him/her to carry out their duties effectively.
- The company secretary must provide directors with guidance in their duties, responsibilities and powers and make directors aware of all laws and regulations relevant to the company. This should include advice on business ethics and good governance. The company secretary should remain abreast of developments in corporate governance and is pivotal to ensuring that the directors adhere to the highest governance standards as detailed in the second King Report ("King II"). The company secretary should also monitor international developments on corporate governance and bring these to the board's attention where they would add value.
- The company secretary is closely involved in preparing the schedule of board and committee meetings for the year. The company secretary prepares the agendas for these meetings in conjunction with the chairperson and key executives. The company secretary should ensure that information is dispatched timeously to all directors to enable them to prepare adequately for these meetings. The company secretary takes the minutes of these meetings and should ensure that they are distributed as soon as possible thereafter to aid directors in implementing the decisions.
- The company secretary should ensure that the board's policies and instructions are communicated to the relevant persons in the company and that pertinent issues from management are referred back to the board where appropriate. It is important for the company secretary to develop a confident relationship with the chairperson, and to assist the chairperson in formulating priorities in the board agenda for consideration by the board.
- The company secretary should play a key role in the induction process of new directors, encompassing both directors' duties and responsibilities in general and specific matters pertaining to the company itself and the industry in which it operates. The company secretary should provide new directors with an information pack relating to these issues. Visits to major operations and meetings with key executives can be useful for directors to familiarize themselves with the business.
- The company secretary should identify training requirements for inexperienced directors and should also ensure that there is an ongoing programme to keep directors well informed of developments in the company and in respect of matters relevant to their responsibilities generally.
- The company secretary must ensure that the directors and management operate within an authority framework approved by the board and reviewed and updated from time to time.
- The company secretary takes responsibility for preparing all or parts of the annual report and ensuring that statutory deadlines are met and that the statutory and regulatory disclosures are validated, particularly in relation to statements given on corporate governance standards and practices in the company.
- The company secretary is privy to confidential information about the company and needs to act with tact and discretion at all times. The company secretary may not misuse confidential information or disclose it to any third party in line with their fiduciary duties as an officer of the company.
- Equally, the company secretary must act in good faith and avoid any conflicts of interest and to ensure that appropriate guidance is given to the board in these matters.
- A number of these activities and responsibilities can be scheduled in an annual board work plan developed with the chairperson and chief executive, and which can be a useful tool to monitor the performance and effectiveness of the board in discharging its duties and obligations.

2.14.2 Company Secretary Responsibilities to the Company

- The company secretary must comply with all the statutory provisions of the Companies Act, including the lodgment of all documents with the Companies and Intellectual Property Registration Office and the maintenance and updating of the company's register of members. This would extend to include any other legislation or regulations critical to the nature of the company, such as a bank or financial institution and/or company listed on a stock exchange.
- The company secretary is usually responsible for ensuring that all contracts and agreements are kept in safe custody and that an executive summary of each document is maintained for ease of reference, which is useful for orientating new operating executives on critical contractual issues relevant to their areas of responsibility. Accompanying this, should be a monthly diary of significant events that would include issues requiring to be monitored in terms of such contracts and agreements. It is good practice to ensure that duplicate copies of critical documents are held offsite as part of a disaster recovery programme.
- The company secretary is responsible for ensuring compliance with the company's memorandum and articles of association and effecting any changes to meet the needs of the company.
- The company secretary maintains a close relationship with the transfer secretary to oversee movements in shareholdings and the payment of dividends.
- The company secretary is responsible for complying with the listings requirements of any exchange on which the company's shares are quoted. This should be extended to monitoring compliance with the requirements of the Insider Trading Act and STRATE. Part of the fulfillment of these obligations entails the preparation and submission of all relevant communications to the stock exchange through the company's sponsor.
- The company secretary may also assume the responsibilities of the public officer of the company under the Income Tax Act and other taxation legislation.
- The company secretary must certify in the annual financial statements of the company in accordance with the Companies Act that the company has lodged all returns required of a public company and that all these returns are true, correct and up to date.
- The company secretary would ensure that all letterheads, notices and other official stationery and publications of the company display the correct name of the company, registration number, registered office and names of the directors and company secretary.

2.14.3 Company Secretary Responsibilities to the Shareowners and Relevant Stakeholders

- The company secretary prepares the agenda for shareowners' meetings in conjunction with the chairperson and chief executive. This would also require the company secretary to take the minutes of such meetings and to ensure that any special resolutions passed at these meetings are properly registered with the Registrar of Companies. In fact, the company secretary would essentially take charge of the processes and procedures associated with the holding of shareowner meetings, including arrangements for the presence of scrutineers, if required, and validating proxies and letters of representation received for these meetings.
- The company secretary would take responsibility or provide input for any circulars and other documentation sent to shareowners by the company. This would include obtaining approval from the stock exchange and any other applicable regulatory authorities. It would also require the company secretary to verify the statutory and regulatory information contained in such material and to ensure that the directors clearly understand the implications of any statements of responsibility given on behalf of the board.
- If the meeting is an annual general meeting, the company secretary must arrange for all directors to attend and in particular the chairpersons of the remuneration and audit committees.
- The company secretary is responsible for all forms of communication with shareowners and may often be responsible for the relationship with analysts and the media. This may include responsibility for the company's corporate reputation and investor relations activities.
- The company secretary is required to ensure that a copy of the company's annual financial statements is sent to shareowners within the stipulated period and to all persons entitled to receive it.

2.14.4 Other Duties for Company Secretary

- The company secretary may be required to take responsibility for the administration and management of the company's pension and/or provident fund in the capacity as principal officer, trustee or chairperson.
- The company secretary may be required to administer and manage a group life assurance scheme on behalf of the company's employees.

- The company secretary may be required to take responsibility for the administration of the medical aid scheme offered to employees and other similar arrangements. - The company secretary may be required to administer and manage the insurance portfolio and take some role in the company's risk related activities in this context.
- The company secretary may take responsibility for the corporate social responsibility portfolio. This would entail ensuring that the company adheres to its corporate social investment programme and monitoring various aspects directly and indirectly related to this activity, including the supervision of the company's adherence to any industry or sector charter and its black economic empowerment credentials.

2.14.5 Consequences of Non-Compliance

In the event of the company not complying with its statutory requirements under the Companies Act and other relevant legislation, or its listings obligations, or the recommendations of King II, the company secretary should raise the matter with the chairperson of the board or the chairperson of the audit committee (as appropriate). As a last resort, if the matter is not addressed, the company secretary may be compelled to notify shareholders under section 268G (b) of the Companies Act and/or approach the relevant regulator for assistance. This requires considerable courage and resolution on the part of a company secretary, which is the hallmark of this role.

According to Head et al., (1947) published a Manual of Secretarial Practice stated that the word "Secretary" is derived from the Late Latin word Secretarius, signifying a notary, scribe, etc., a title that was applied to various confidential officers, and embraced, as part of the root meaning of the word, the idea of secrecy. The Oxford Dictionary gives the following definitions of the word:

- (1) One who is entrusted with private or secret matters; a confidant; one privy to a secret.1
- (2) One whose office is to write for another; especially one who is employed to conduct correspondence, to keep records, and (usually) to transact various other business, for another person or for a society, corporation, or public body. In early use, the term was applied only to the officer who conducted the correspondence of a king. A private secretary is a secretary employed by a minister of state or other high official for the personal correspondence connected with his official position ; also applied to a secretary in the employ of a particular person (as distinguished from the secretary to a society, company, or corporation). The secretary of an embassy or legation an official of an embassy or diplomatic mission ranking next to the ambassador or envoy and empowered to some extent to occupy his place in his absence.
- (3) Used in the official designation of certain ministers presiding over executive departments of state e.g. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs or for War, etc.

These definitions do little more than indicate what a wide diversity of tasks, similar in kind, are undertaken by the different classes of secretaries, each engaged in performing particular but analogous functions in the social order. Every association of persons, however significant or insignificant, from the smallest sports club right up to the State itself, has at least one person a secretary to whom is allotted the important task of seeing that the everyday routine activity of the society is properly carried on, the standard of attainment and efficiency required of that official differing only in degree with the particular sort of post he fills. A secretary's work is often hidden from the public eye. The precise functions, for example, of Secretaries of State are scarcely known to, and little appreciated by, the great mass of people, who would be astonished to be told that many an important Government decision, based upon the collation of multitudinous facts, was due, in the first place, less to the apparent omniscience of the Minister holding a particular portfolio than to the patient and skilled work of his Departmental Secretaries. It has been said that the profession of Secretary is one of the oldest in the world and that wherever there was a man of action there too was a man of the pen to record his deeds.

Much of our knowledge of ancient times is derived from the Scribes, who were the secretaries of their day. Scriba, in Roman times, was a general designation for any official concerned with writing or the keeping of accounts, and was used of various public functionaries performing secretarial duties. The scribal were graded, the lower ranks performing merely clerk duties. In a lower category were the notarii, or actuarii. These were slaves or freedmen attached to wealthy Romans for taking notes in the law courts, and for other purposes, some doubtless of a personal kind. Under the Empire the term notarius was applied to the secretaries of the Emperors, and these were persons of rank.

The modern Secretary occupies just as honourable a position as his ancient brother. But the passage of time has added enormously to its importance. It is now indispensable to the conduct of industry, commerce and society, and not the less because it's important work may be carried on behind the scenes, and others receive the public

credit primarily due to the secretary. By far the largest group of secretaries and, with the possible exception of Secretaries of State, Embassies and Legations, by far the most important as a whole is that comprising the secretaries to Joint Stock Companies, and it is with them that this work is concerned. By way of introduction, nothing better perhaps could be given than the following digest of some remarks made by Sir Edwin Stockton at a Secretaries' Conference held at Buxton in 1927.

Sir Edwin (1927) said a good secretary endeavours to hide his employer's defects while allowing his virtues to appear in the full light of day. He shields him alike from the ubiquitous interviewer and the garrulous inventor who boasts a remedy for every ill. He keeps from him the things he need not know, and acquaints him only with such things as he ought to know. In short, he is a man of discernment, discretion and tact. He must have sound education, and correct and extensive information of the right kind. No busy man of affairs can find out for himself all that he requires to know; he is bound to be dependent on his secretary to keep him posted in the things that matter. He should have specialized knowledge of the profession or business in which he is engaged, and, if that business be connected with a particular industry, be energetic enough and clever enough to master its technique, and to acquire from published statistics and other sources all that is to be known of similar businesses competing with his own. He should be quick to sense changing conditions, and to suggest appropriate means for meeting those changes, and keep himself abreast of all legislation that may affect or be likely to affect the industry. He must be a man of decision and energy, have self-discipline, self-control, sympathy for others, and a strong, true sense of justice, together with some personal charm, since these are the qualities required for the smooth control and management of a staff, and for securing its willing co-operation. In addition, he must possess the faculty of organization and the habit of using it developed to a high degree, and a mind trained to deduce right conclusions from any given set of facts.

The secretary may have little to do with the determination of policy. That, in general, is the prerogative of his superiors. But he will have much to do with the carrying out of policy once it has been decided. And here those special qualities already mentioned, which in the aggregate make up that elusive thing called personality, will play a most important part. The directors of a large corporation have not the opportunities for personal intercourse with customers or with the staff that the secretary has. The secretary is the liaison officer between the directors and the staff and outside persons dealing with the company, and will ensure by his advice that no policy shall be adopted that will antagonize the one or offend the others. Such a man will perfect himself in all knowledge with which, as a business man, thought to be acquainted. Particularly, will he seek to master the intricacies of modern finance, and its bearings upon the financing of his own company? He will not be content to be a mere creature of routine, but will make his own openings for advancement. Slowly and discreetly he will win the esteem of his employers.

His energy and initiative will diffuse itself throughout the whole organization, bracing it up to full concert pitch, until by and by he will not only be the recipient of his superiors' orders, but their valued adviser as well, in whom an ever-growing trust and confidence is reposed. This is the ideal position to which every secretary should aspire; this is the position which, in a very large number of instances, the secretary attains. As will be gathered from the above summary, the secretary to a limited company may be little more than a mere routine worker, practically a confidential clerk, or he may occupy the enviable and vastly more responsible position described by Sir Edwin Stockton as the proper goal at which every secretary should aim. Legally, the company secretary is the confidential servant of the directors, doing only such work as he is told to do. Practically, when applied to the executive secretary, there must be substituted for the words "as he is told to do" the phrase "as may be delegated to him." A world of difference separates these two phrases.

2.15 The Legal Position of the Company Secretary

The secretary is the link between the directors and the shareholders, the medium through which the company communicates with the outside world. While the directors are the brains of the company, the secretary is its ears, eyes and hands. He has responsibility in plenty, but he is an agent only, and cannot act for the company without authority from the directors. He is, however, an "officer" of the company within the meaning of the Act and, as such, is liable to the penalties imposed, e.g., by Sections 42, 80 and 365 of the Act. He is moreover a "chief officer" for the purpose of making statutory returns or a statement of affairs under section 181; but an assistant secretary is not regarded as a principal or chief officer.

The secretary is not in a fiduciary position to the company in the same way as a director. In *Newlands v. National Employment Accident Association* [1885], 54L.J., Q.B. 428, Lord Esher said, "A secretary is a mere servant: his position is that he is to do what he is told, and no person can assume that he has any authority to represent anything at all nor can anyone assume that statements made by him are necessarily to be accepted as trustworthy without further inquiry, any more than in the case of a merchant it can be assumed that one who is

only a clerk has authority to make representations to induce persons to enter into contracts." The same doctrine was enunciated in *Barnett, Hoares v. South London Tramways* [1887], 18 Q.B.J.D. 815.

Again, in *Houghton & Co. v. Nothard Lowe and Wills* [1928], A.C. 1, where it was held that a letter written by the secretary, purporting to confirm an arrangement not otherwise ratified by his company was not binding on the company, Lord Dunedin said : " The knowledge of directors is in ordinary circumstances the knowledge of the company. The knowledge of a mere official like the secretary would only be the knowledge of the company if the thing of which knowledge is predicated was a thing within the ordinary domain of the secretary's duties." Contracts - It follows that the secretary is not in a position to enter into contracts in the absence of such express or implied authority, and it turns upon a construction of the Articles of Association in each case whether the directors are entitled to delegate their powers to him to enter into a contract.

The position of third persons dealing with the company requires careful consideration, and, except in cases of contracts of trifling importance, they cannot safely enter into contracts purporting to be made on behalf of the company by the secretary alone. It is true that persons dealing with a limited company are not bound to inquire whether the internal arrangements prescribed in the Articles of Association have been carried out. They are entitled to assume regularity in the proceedings As regards contracts, therefore, it is only when he clearly is endowed with the requisite authority that the secretary will be empowered in the words of the Companies Act, 1929, S. 29, s.-s. 1 to sign on behalf of the company as a "person acting under its authority express or implied," or" to enter into a parol contract not reduced to writing on behalf of the company. "Bills of Exchange - The secretary should always sign a bill of exchange "for and on behalf of" the company. If he does so, or otherwise clearly indicates that he signs in a representative capacity, whether he signs as drawer, endorser or acceptor, he will not be personally liable. "But the mere addition to his signature of words describing him as an agent or as filling a representative capacity "will not exempt him from personal liability (Bills of Exchange Act, 1882, S. 26, s.-s. 1).

By the same Section (s.-s. 2),"in determining whether a signature on a bill is that of the principal or that of the agent by whose hand it is written, the construction most favourable to the validity of the instrument shall be adopted." The effect of this is that if the principal is not clearly indicated by the agent, the agent himself is liable rather than that the bill should be ineffective. A promissory note given by the secretary of a railway company in return for a loan to the company was signed "For the X. Railway Company, A.B. Secretary." The secretary was held not to be personally liable, for, clearly, the form of the note, notwithstanding that it began with the words" I promise to pay," indicated that it was made by the secretary not on his own behalf but in a representative capacity for the railway company (*Alexander v. Sizer* [1869], L.R. 4, Ex. 102). The position was explained clearly by Lord Ellenborough in an old case, *Leadbitter v. Farrow* [1816], 5 M. & S. 349:"

Is it not a universal rule that a man who puts his name to a bill of exchange thereby makes himself personally liable unless he states upon the face of the bill that he subscribes it for another or by procuration of another, which are words of exclusion?

Unless he says plainly' I am the mere scribe ' he becomes liable." In signing a bill of exchange for the company the secretary must be careful to see that the name of the company is spelt correctly, and that the word "limited" appears after it. In *Penrose v. Martyr* [1858], E.B. & E. 499, a bill was addressed to the Saltash Steam Packet Company (the word "limited" being omitted), and the secretary signed" J. M., Secretary to the said Company." He was held personally liable.

Civil Services Employee Association under the Labour Education Action Programme wrote in their examination preparation booklet on the topic Secretarial and Typing Series for Counties, Municipalities, and Non-Teaching School District Personnel, Booklet No. 1 published in January 1998 contained courses "designed for those CSEA members working in counties and municipalities who are taking promotional exams in the secretarial and typing series. This exam series includes: Senior Typist, Senior Steno, Principal Steno, Principal Typist, Clerk II with Typing, Clerk III with Typing, and Senior School Secretary."

According to U.S. Office of Personnel Management (1979) published Position Classification Standard for Secretary Series, GS-0318 which included the following classifications: Though these series supersedes the GS-0318 in May 1974.

1. Positions with primary duties of which are typing and associated clerical work, or typing from material dictated on recording media. Such positions are classified in the Clerk-Typist Series, GS-0322.

2. Positions primarily involving performance of clerical work for which a specialized series has been established, such as the Information Receptionist Series, GS-0304, Mail and File Clerk Series, GS-0305, and Correspondence Clerk Series, GS-0309.
3. Clerical, administrative, or other work where the primary duties are identified with an established subject-matter series and require knowledge which constitutes a basis for recruitment, retention, or other personnel management considerations, such as statistical clerk, mathematics aid, or human resources assistant. Such positions are classified in the appropriate subject-matter series.
4. Positions which involve clerical, administrative, or specialized support functions, but which do not serve as the principal clerical or administrative support position in an office may be classified in the Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant Series, GS-0303 or the Clerk-Typist Series, GS-0322 when the work is not covered by an established specialized series as identified in exclusion numbers 2 and 3 above.
5. Positions which involve responsibility for providing or obtaining a variety of management services (for example, budget, personnel, management analysis, accounting) essential to the direction and operation of an organization when the paramount qualifications required are knowledge of management principles, practices, methods, and techniques. Such positions are classifiable to the Administrative Officer Series, GS-0341.

According to Adam (2011), published in Jayee Voice, think that everyone in this world would recognise the most popular and life-time titles in the super power countries such as United Kingdom and the USA and also the UN as a global organisation. In the hierarchy of these countries governance, they have Home SECRETARY and SECRETARY of State respectively whereas the UN has SECRETARY General. As such that, we have Company Secretaries who are Chartered Secretaries especially dominating in the United Kingdom and are known as Corporate Secretaries in the US. The roles and functions performed by each of these positions are broad but below is a summary of the name "secretary" in the world over:

Home Secretary

The **Secretary of State for the Home Department**, commonly known as the **Home Secretary**, is the minister in charge of the Home Office of the United Kingdom, and one of the country's four Great Offices of State. The Home Secretary is responsible for internal affairs within England and Wales, and for immigration and citizenship for the whole of the United Kingdom: that is Great Britain and Northern Ireland http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Home_Secretary.

Secretary of State

Department Mission Statement

Advance freedom for the benefit of the American people and the international community by helping to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world composed of well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty, and act responsibly within the international system (from the FY 2010 Agency Financial Report, released November 2010). <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/index.htm#mission>. Duties and Responsibilities of the Secretary of State can be found on <http://www.state.gov/secretary/115194.htm>.

UN Secretary General

The **Secretary-General of the United Nations** is the head of the Secretariat of the United Nations, one of the principal organs of the United Nations. The Secretary-General also acts as the de facto spokesperson and leader of the United Nations. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary-General_of_the_United_Nations.

Role:

The Secretary-General was envisioned by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a "world moderator," but the office was defined in the UN Charter as the organization's "chief administrative officer" (Article 97). Nevertheless, this more restricted description has not prevented the office holders from speaking out and playing important roles on global issues, to various degrees.

2.16 Company Secretary Defined

Officer appointed by the directors of a firm as responsible for ensuring that firm's legal obligations under the corporate legislation are complied with. His or her formal duties include (1) calling meetings, (2) recording minutes of the meetings, (3) keeping statutory record books, (4) proper payment of dividend and interest payments, and (5) proper drafting and execution of agreements, contracts, and resolutions <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/company-secretary.html>. A **company secretary** is a senior position in a private company or public organization, normally in the form of a managerial position or above. In

the United States it is known as a **corporate secretary**. The Company Secretary is responsible for the efficient administration of a company, particularly with regard to ensuring compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements and for ensuring that decisions of the Board of Directors are implemented.

In Ghana, there is or was a public sector called Workers College and Vocational Schools. I believe that their functions were limited and probably they did not also train themselves to be abreast with the fast moving and changes of the Technological World. Hence the economic prospect in terms of Secretaryship or secretarial role was diminishing in the eyes of the people and at work places. They were also private established secretarial schools in the country which were training students in Secretaryship with the view of them occupying the front desk of an Office and also helping the executives (Adam, 2011).

Furthermore, some of the Polytechnics are running courses in Secretaryship and Management at the Higher National Diploma Level for three years duration of study but after which the progress in this area of study is limited in focus in the Public Universities Curriculum. Most universities in Ghana are not known to be running undergraduate programmes in Secretaryship but only through Jayee University College is known to be offering degree programmes in Secretaryship and Management as an Option. Hence, the career aspirations and top management positions in the country has no reference to the word "Secretary" in the decision making process in our economy due to the fact that probably we fail to look into or consider the role that Secretary can play within the mix of other line managers and top management roles. I think the problem is that we do not have the focus to factor in or emulate the professionalism of Secretary as part of the development decision making within the economy, which I think is a myth and lack of transformation and expansion due to advancement of the Technological World we are in today.

For instance, if all the top most public universities do not consider the role of a secretary as a faculty or department of study then in a long run we are not actually preparing the economy with the best and quality professionals and executives in the decision making process for the country. Why am I saying this, it is because with reference to the roles that are performed by the above positions namely Home Secretary, Secretary of State, UN Secretary General, and Company Secretary. Any role in an economy which reflects the word "Secretary" is able to perform well in the International front due to the capabilities and demands of Secrecy and compliance with policies and laws in the Country.

What we have been doing in this country is producing Secretarial students only to occupy the front desk to serve the executives or managers to do their work by typing, filing, making and receiving calls, receiving and processing of incoming and outgoing calls, receiving visitors, preparing the itinerary of the boss etc. This alone is what the public see every Secretary to be doing within our economy hence the career path has been limited due to the fact that, Universities are not interested or do not have the expertise to develop and grow this important title in the economy and also, there is no any ministerial department for its role in the country entirely. Therefore the value that Secretary can give to the state is not there since there is no any management position or department or ministry created within organisations and companies for its occupancy and delivery. For any business organisation or company or government department to function properly there should be a Secretary performing the line management or top management role for harmony, efficiency, effectiveness and compliance of policies.

Another myth that goes on the people's mind is that Secretary Job is for only ladies or women and therefore the course is always looked down by male counterparts, hence it is obvious that majority pursuing such course are mostly female. This perception has to desist from people's mind since the work of a Secretary demands both sex at all levels. There are also terminologies under the study of Secretaryship namely Stenographer Secretary, Typist and Receptionist. All these titles are basic functions of Secretarial Skills which is pragmatic.

My advice is that we need to create or establish a Secretary General of the State or National Secretary position as a new Ministry with Secretary General Department in this Country. With this, the country public sector management and Administration will be efficient without or with fewer lapses. This is because documents will be controlled and information flow will be of standard and communication systems and outputs will be counterproductive. The word Secretary is from the word Secret, hence, it goes with Secrecy and compliance with law, which is paramount to every economy. If majority of the Ghanaian society study secretarial practice, then we would have a very respectful society because, that is what the Secretaryship is all about. It teaches you how to be smart, dress code in terms of neatness/tidiness, punctuality, respectful, greeting/welcoming people, pleasant so on and so forth. Hence, I would recommend that the study of Secretaryship must be introduced from

the Junior High School Level all the way to the Universities so that in the future we will have young professionals and respectful society to spearhead the development and affairs of our Dear Nation - Ghana.

2.17 B. B. A. Secretarial Education – Undergraduate Degree

Programme Description:

It is stated that the “Management and Secretarial Education Programmes are designed to equip students with the relevant knowledge, professional competencies and attitudes to enable them to teach Management and Secretarial subjects at the pre-tertiary level and to function as administrative or training officers in the public and civil services as well as in the private sector.”

Admission criteria and Entry Requirements- Holders of:

- SHS Certificate Holders
- HND, RSA, DBS, AB and GB Certificate Holders, School Certificate/GCE Holders
- CERTIFICATE PROGRAMMES
- 1-YEAR DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES
- 2-YEAR DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES
- SCHOOL CERTIFICATE/GCE HOLDERS
- DIPLOMA HOLDERS
- DISTANCE EDUCATION APPLICANTS
- MATURE APPLICANTS
- Advanced Business Certificate Examination (ABCE)
- SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (SHS) CERTIFICATE HOLDERS.
- At least 'B3' in any two of the following: Typewriting, Business Management and Economics.
- Any one of the following: Clerical Office Duties, Literature in English, French, Music, Accounting and Costing.

Job Prospects:

On successful completion of the programme, graduates can secure jobs in the public and civil services as:

- Teachers
- Administrative or Executive Assistants
- Training Officers
- Data entry clerks.

Source: <http://www.uew.edu.gh/a-z-listing-of-programmes?title=Secretarial>

Below is a table that shows almost all other tertiary or universities in Ghana which are providing secretarial studies or secretaryship & Management or Secretarial Studies as a course of study:

Table 1. Higher Educational Institutions Providing Secretarial Course Programmes

No.	Name of University or institution	Secretarial Qualification/Award
1	University of Education, Winneba, Kumasi campus	BBA Secretarial Education
2	Jayee University College	BBA Secretaryship & Management, Diploma
3	Most Polytechnics	HND Secretaryship & Management
4	Most Secondary Schools	SHS Secretarial Studies Option
5	Government Secretarial School	Certificate and Diploma
6	National Vocational Training Institute	Certificates

Table 2. Local Government Grading System for Secretarial Staff

Title/Position	Grade by Qualification/Award
Typist/Receptionist	Typist Grade I
Senior Typist	Typist Grade II
Stenographer Grade I	Certificate by Training
Stenographer Grade II	Certificate by Training
Stenographer Secretary	Certificate by Training
Private Secretary	Certificate by Training
Office Manager	Degree

Judicial Service Grading System for Secretarial Staff – Title Position

- Recorder II
- Recorder I
- Principal Recorder
- Chief Recorder

Ghana Education Service Grading System for Secretarial and Administrative Staffs

Source: Ghana Education Service, Single Spine Salary Structure, Across Board Salary Increase 2013, Effective January 2013. Prepared by Philip Kavudoahor, Accounts Officer: Shai-Osudoku District, Greater Accra.

Table 3. Administrative Class

No.	Rank	Level
1	Chief Admin. Officer	22H
2	Chief Admin. Officer II	20H
3	Deputy Chief Admin. Officer	19H
4	Deputy Chief Admin. Officer II	19L
5	Principal Admin. Officer (Chartered)	18L
6	Principal Admin. Officer (Unit Head)	17H
7	Principal Admin. Officer (Base Grade)	16H
8	Senior Admin. Officer	15L
9	Administrative Officer	14L
10	Asst. Admin. Officer	13H
11	Senior Clerk	13L
12	Clerk Grade I	12L
13	Clerk Grade II	8L

Table 4. Secretary Class

No.	Rank	Level
1	Principal Private Secretary	16H
2	Senior Private Secretary	15H
3	Private Secretary	14H
4	Stenographer Secretary	14L
5	Stenographer Grade I	11H
6	Stenographer Grade II	11L
7	Principal Typist	10L
8	Senior Typist	9L
9	Typist Grade I	8H
10	Typist Grade II	8L
11	Ungraded Typist	5L

Table 5. Receptionist / Telephonist

No.	Rank	Level
1	Receptionist	8L
2	Telephonist	7L
3	Telephone Operator	6L

3. Methodology

This project is carried out by employing an empirical method through questionnaire design and administration and tapped the perceptions and knowledge of the target elements of this study. The research frame was about the some of the Ghana Education Service office workers within the Accra Metropolis. A qualitative data analysis is presented more in the literature review to support in conclusions for the purpose of this project work. More importantly, the backbone of the research was based on both primary and secondary sources of data, which helped and revealed a lot of contentions within the secretarial practice. A total of 200 questionnaires was developed and distributed among 200 staffs of GES based on random sampling technique. This means that it is not the total number of GES in the Metropolis that was considered, it was only the total figure of 200 questionnaires that was considered and administered on the participants randomly. The participants for that

matter the respondents included the Directors, Deputy Directors, Accountants, Supervisors, Secretaries/Stenographers and Teachers/Lecturers. The questionnaires were directly administered which gave results; hence, all the 200 questionnaires were answered and returned for presentation and analysis. This was an opinion seeking from the elements of the population and drawn clear conclusions from their answers after careful presentation and analysis. The analysis included the use of graphs and mathematical presentations.

Sources of Data

The following are the various areas that have been considered to affect the project findings for proper analysis.

Primary Data

Here, a questionnaire is been prepared and administered on the target audience of the project work. The people who are expected to answer the questions are the G.E.S. staff and some associated people in education together with students in the second cycle institutions.

Secondary Data

Since there are available written materials on the research topic, I used some existing findings to support the primary data collected with these, certain textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazines, internet search engines are examples, just to mention a few were considered.

Population

The population considered for the sampling of this data are, employees of G.E.S. by this I mean random sampling of the G.E.S. population is considered within the Accra Metropolis. At this juncture the total personnel of G.E.S. was not taken into consideration since the project target figure for the research was 200 interviewees at a random selection together with the higher education institutions.

Sampling Techniques

Random sampling technique was adopted in this study for the primary data analysis. This means both quantitative and qualitative data techniques were adopted.

Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire was designed and administered on the interviewees and collected the data. I used Excel as a software application and analyzed the collected scientifically and mathematically.

Data Analysis Techniques

Both quan and qual techniques were adopted in the data presentation and analysis.

4. Presentation and Analysis of Data

In the methodology, 200 questionnaires were prepared and distributed for responses. But only 192 questionnaires were answered and returned, hence, the presentation and analysis of the data findings would be calculated based on the actual figures compiled as cases and elements of the population considered – GES workers and students and Higher Education Providers.

Table 6. Interviewees understanding of a secretarial role are as below.

Possible choices	Description	No. of Response	% Responds
a	Secretaries are only women job to serve as company servants.	0	0%
b	Secretarial work is not for men to do or perform.	0	0%
c	Secretaries know everything about a company.	171	48%
d	Secretaries keep secrets and meet and talk to outsiders to a company.	189	53%
e	Secretarial course are not common in the universities.	0	0%
Total responds		360	100%

From the above table, shows that many people thought of a secretary to be c and d as they indicated. This is also because it is almost 50% apiece.

Table 7. Secretarial positions that interviewees are most familiar with in their working career are as follows.

Possible choices	Description	No. of Response	% Responds
a	Typist	0	0%
b	Stenographer	0	0%
c	Receptionist	172	48%
d	Secretary	189	52%
e	Company Secretary	0	0%
Total responds		361	100%

This presentation finding shows clearly that the interviewees' are more familiar with receptionist and secretary position in their working career. This means that throughout their working history they only know of a receptionist and secretary positions more than any other secretarial position. It was 48% who choose receptionist and 52% choose secretary.

Table 8. G.E.S. Secretarial course programme as acknowledged by interviews.

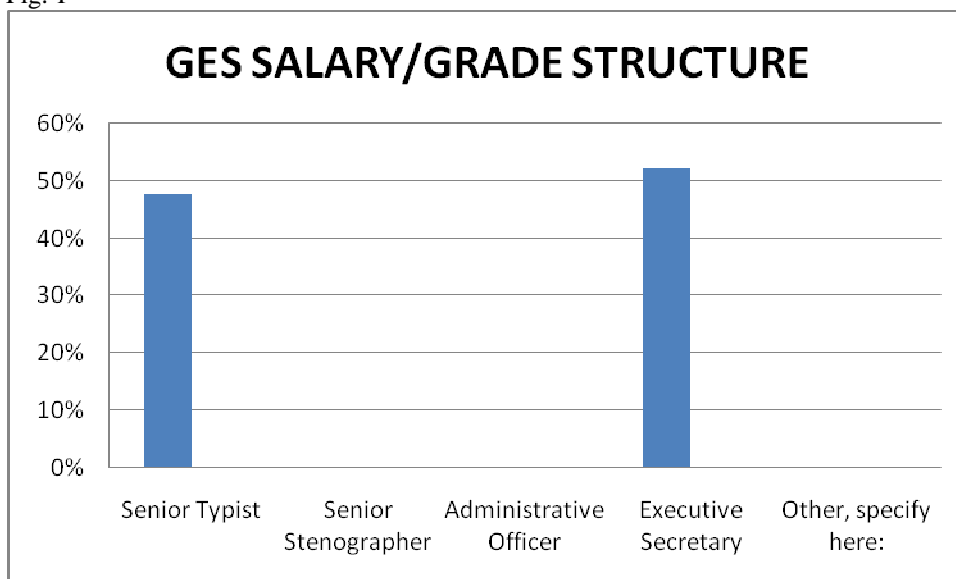
	yes	no
No. of Response	187	0
% Responds	100%	0%

About 187 interviews acknowledged that they know secretarial course programme under G.E.S. representing 100% of the element responded.

Table 9. The highest position of a secretary within G.E.S. salary / grade structure is indicated as below.

Possible choices	Description	No. of Response	% Responds
a	Senior Typist	172	48%
b	Senior Stenographer	0	0%
c	Administrative Officer	0	0%
d	Executive Secretary	188	52%
e	Other, specify here:	0	0%
Total Responds		360	100%

Fig. 1



The highest Secretarial position under GES salary/grade structure is the senior typist and/or executive secretary. Senior Typist had responses of 48% and 52% responded to the Executive Secretary.

Interviewees' acknowledged their understanding of a secretary as follows.

- Keeping up-to-date details
- A secretary takes minutes of company
- Ensuring elections are in line with stipulated procedures
- Checking that agreed actions are carried out
- Retrieving and reviewing all incoming and outgoing mail for the company
- A secretary is the one who keeps secret files or document of a company
- The secretary will function in the office of the director
- A secretary is the one who take care of administrative work of a company
- Scheduling meetings and conference

- Reporting the activities of the organization and future programs to members, the press and public as well
- Compiling lists of names and address that are useful to the organization
- Sitting on appraisal, recruitment and disciplinary panels as required
- Preparing a report of the organizations activities for the year for the annual general meeting
- Responsible to all committee correspondence
- Keeping a diary of future activities

Table 10. How important a secretary position is in an organization according to the knowledge of interviewees’?

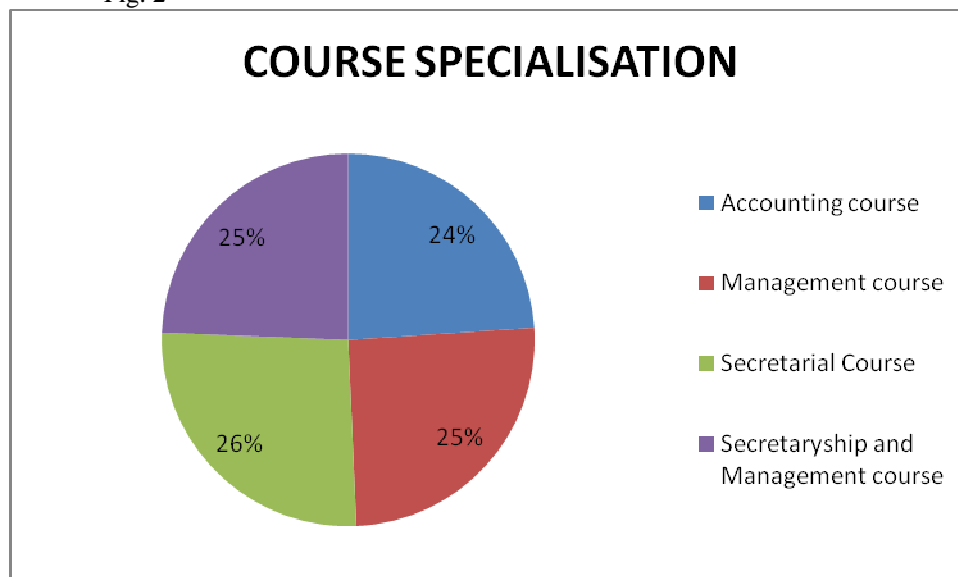
	yes	no
No. of Response	186	0
% Responds	100%	0%

About 186 responded yes that the secretary’s positions are highly important in the operations of an organization. It represented 100% of those who responded to this case of the population.

Table 11. Interviewees career course specialization.

Possible choices	Description	No. of Response	% Responds
a	Accounting course	171	24%
b	Management course	181	25%
c	Secretarial Course	188	26%
d	Secretaryship and Management course	174	24%
e	Other, specify here:	0	0%
Total Responds		714	100%

Fig. 2



Among all the respondents they indicated that their specialization courses as have been accounting, management secretarial, secretaryship and management. This means that they are one way or the other pursued a business course especially secretariat course.

Table 12. The Role of a Company Secretary as identified in Ghana by interviewees.

	yes	no
No. of Response	184	0
% Responds	100%	0%

Many of the respondents agreed that they know the role of company secretary in Ghana. This was 184 respondents who asserted to this representing 100%.

Table 13. Do you know Chartered Secretaries? yes / no

	yes	no	Total Responds
No. of Response	182	172	354
% Responds	51%	49%	100%

From the above table, it is clearly that 51% stated they know chartered secretaries and 49% also stated that no, they don't know any chartered secretaries.

Table 14. A secretary work or position in an organization is part of a managerial role as indicated by the interviewees.

Description	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Mark	0	1	2	3
No. of Response	0	0	0	189
% Responds	0%	0%	0%	100%

The table above indicates that 189 respondents said they strongly agree to that the position of a secretary is part of a managerial role in enhancing the operation of an organization.

Table 15. Interviewees thought of acquiring secretarial skills in contest.

	yes	no	Total Responds
No. of Response	173	183	356
% Responds	49%	51%	100%

It was 49% of the respondent who answered yes that they have ever thought of acquiring secretarial skills whereas 51% of them said they have never thought of becoming a secretary or acquiring secretarial skills from the above table.

Table 16. The following is the Interviewees' choice of recommending secretarial course to a family member or friend or other people in contention.

	yes	no	Total Responds
No. of Response	174	185	359
% Responds	48%	52%	100%

The table above shows that 48% of the respondent said they would recommend secretarial course to others whereas 52% said no, they will not or cannot recommend secretarial course to others.

Table 17. The following is the perception of interviewees' about secretaries at work places.

	yes	no	Total Responds
No. of Response	181	178	359
% Responds	50%	50%	100%

The above shows that 50% indicated that they have confidence in the secretaries that they work with whereas 50% respondents also indicated that they do not have confidence and trust in the secretaries that they work with in terms of standards.

Table 18. Is there secretarial studies course at each of the following level of schools under G.E.S.?

Possible choices	Description	No. of Response	% Responds
a	Primary Schools	0	0%
b	Junior High Schools	0	0%
c	Senior High Schools	0	0%
d	Some Polytechnics	190	100%
e	Some Private University Colleges	0	0%
f	Some Public Universities	0	0%
Total Responds		190	100%

The respondents indicated that secretarial studies course can be found within the polytechnics since 190 of the respondents said this representing 100%.

4.1 Summary of findings

The findings were inconclusive since both the secondary and primary sources of data processed have shown that many people have different opinion about the term secretary and its role together with the career path for secretaries. Those who have not studied secretaryship are a bit bias about the importance of the term secretary but those who are professionally trained in the field have constructive opinions and ideas about the complexity and roles and responsibilities that a secretary and for that matter chartered secretary can perform at the top management or board level within a corporate business organization. Throughout the literature there is no any link of the word secretary to any high academic qualification such as MPhil in Secretaryship or MBA in Secretaryship or a PhD in Secretaryship. The title provided by the Judicial Service as *Recorder* is not a motivational title and therefore needs to be changed to one of the recommended titles in the table below Recommendation.

5. Conclusion

Secretarial practice has been an important position within an organizational structure of any business operation but it always faces challenges and dilemmas and inferior perception granted to the studies of secretarial studies. The following are the basic conclusions that can be drawn as a result of the empirical research findings together with existing materials gathered such as the literatures reviewed.

Generally, it seems the major purpose of the secretarial profession for that matter secretaryship courses are being misplaced by the same authority who design the secretarial course programme. It appears that none of the secretarial course provides or associations and colleges make provision for a clear career path for secretaries or for people in that career to go to the top. It seems all is limited to the administrative and frontline office work or service. ICSA - UK and others has failed to do that. There is no enough publicity and popularity about the progress and career achievements of secretarial professionals. Secretary's position seems to be under appreciated by many people in an organization.

Also there is inefficiency and lack of competence in terms of secretarial knowledge by the educational institutions and supervisors or managers and therefore fails to know how to give responsibilities and promoting the secretary within the organizational structure. It also seems secretaries are always stack with their role and don't move up of the organizational ladder because the structure limits their growth within the organization.

More so, secretarial studies and practice is not seen as a major department under a faculty (academic) or under the organizational structure. Hence, it is not seen as a major organ of an organization but rather seen as a least position across all sectors or departments within work environment. The Ghana Education Service, the Universities and the Polytechnics and other stakeholders in Ghana have failed to publicize the importance of secretarial role and its career advancement, hence, inferior and limited attention or focus is given to the position. This is causing a lot of people in the society not regard the position of a secretary as important as other positions whether intentional or unintentional.

From the presentation discussed above it is clear that people define secretary as someone who knows everything about a company and keeps company secrets and meet and talk with outsiders who are customers or clients. The research also shows that both receptionist and secretary roles are interrelated since the interviewees indicated massively for both positions as the most familiar post they know and have worked with.

It can also be concluded from the findings presented that secretarial courses are part of GES course syllabus and that the bone contention is the highest salary structure of GES secretary is between senior typist and executive secretary positions. Meanwhile it is confirmed also that the secretary position is very important to within any organization set up. The people specialize on secretarial and management courses one way or the other.

It was concluded that there's company secretary role identified in Ghana but the confusing is that 51% of them said they know company secretaries whereas 49% of them said they don't know company secretaries. This particular finding or establishment contradicts whether there are company secretaries in Ghana developed by Ghana Educational System reforms? If almost 50% of the interviewees said that they don't know company secretaries in Ghana means that more work has to be done in this educational and knowledge sector by appropriate government sector.

The research further concludes strongly that the secretary position is part and parcel of the managerial role within an organization structure. Majority of the people would not acquire secretarial skills because it is not important for them though some percentage of them would like to acquire such skills in their career. Again majority of them would not recommend secretarial course to other people because they do not have regard as inspiring course or role for many people to follow. But some also have seen the importance hence will always recommend secretarial course to other people and stress the importance.

There is more respect for secretaries within work environment likewise others looks inferior to secretaries they work with because they don't see or appreciate their role. One can also conclude that secretarial studies are common at the polytechnics.

More so, from the G.E.S. Salary Structure based on the Single Spine Structure for the purpose of this research does not include the actual responsibilities and other duties that they have designed for each position according to job descriptions if there is one. What is amazing from these tables are that the classification and design of the ranks are overly expanded unnecessarily. It does not also lay a proper career path for students or professionals pursuing secretarial studies. Besides, the requirements and qualification for all these ranks would be amazing and interesting to know how it's been designed – which is not looked into at the moment. For example, looking at the ranks that states Telephone Operator and also Telephonist together with Receptionist is very weird structure and it would be interesting to see how they all function. The ridiculous nature of this review is that what are the function and responsibility and duties of a Receptionist? Hence, the structures are not well thought in terms of professional practice. The use of the prefixes chief, principal, deputy and Senior in identifying administrative and secretarial roles are not necessary as it will bring a lot of duplications in various responsibilities and duties.

It appears that both the Local Government Service and Ghana Education Service are using the term “class” in the structure. Why not section or department or organ or sector or unit? The synonyms of class are group of students or group of pupils or group; hence the usage of the class is wrong expression by organizational design.

6. Recommendation

From the conclusions and presentation of the primary data and literature review, it is clear that people don't understand who is a secretary, to that of secretary role, duties and responsibilities in an organization. The answers provided by the interviewees indicates that they don't have the book knowledge of the secretarial studies and practice hence explain their notion by resorting to a secretary role but the actual definition is not given. Therefore from the entire findings, a secretary is both basic and professional position that serves as the centrality of the organizational business operations and communication networks within internal and external contacts and as part of management process for decision making.

It is also clear that people don't know the career path of a secretarial role within an organization which is why there are myths developed around the term 'secretary'. The secretarial career path as recommended from the studies follows the following stages: Typist, Stenographer, Receptionist, Secretary, Executive Secretary/Administrative Secretary, Chartered Secretary (professional and equivalent to any other professional course such as ACCA Chartered Accountants). The Ghana Education Service will have to properly institute courses that will suite this career path in stages formally so that institutions that provide secretarial course will follow it strictly so that the importance of secretarial practice will be known by all. But as it stands, it seems the GES don't know much about the secretarial practice and hence make it look inferior to the public. There should be a stress on the Universities and other Tertiary institutions to train people in the highest professional position known as Chartered Secretaries to enable them to fulfill the corporate governance processes and knowledge needed for proper accountability and management efficiency.

The inferior impression that people have about a secretarial roles would have to cease because GES have to project the image of a secretary throughout the ladder within their organizational structure with clear and professional roles and responsibilities defined in support the governance process in Ghana. Universities have to expand their field of courses established to cover the secretarial practice up to professional standard. It is clear that lack of Chartered Secretaries in the country affect the corporate decision making and hence poor governance in the country economic policies. The skills, knowledge, talents and style of a secretarial practice contain everything about a company business and hence must be considered serious as any other position.

More importantly, the Companies code in Ghana has to be changed or amended because during the formation of a company it must states that company secretaries must be appointed by the company directors and not appointment of a secretary. Company Secretaries works at the top level with management and the Board by given legal directions and instituting compliance measures to the company operations but this is not what you see in Ghana. Secretarial practice is not for only women since the findings have shown that it was even men who were serving the purpose until women were brought in.

Hence forth, the secretarial practice is efficacy to stability and development of a country in terms of human capital development in such professional practice. Meanwhile, this research could not look at whether the admission requirements for secretarial students into institutions is the same or refers to the career path for secretaries since there various titles and position names allocate to secretarial professionals/students by different institutions and organisations. This is what other future scholars can look into as to how those requirements are determined.

Ghana Education service Salary Structure under the Single Spine system must be reviewed according to professional standards and practice according to proper job creations and titles required for available jobs. Besides, the use of rank and level must be contrasted to that of position and job title instead. There are distinctions to terms in terms of practice. Such overly expanded ranks so to speak can blot their expenditures on salaries unnecessary and it post a question whether those ranks are created because there are available jobs and manpower/human resource is needed to fill them or just because they want to upgrade people salary in that other.

If this is the case then it is wrong practice and unprofessional. Organisational Change is required by G.E.S. Secretarial roles and career paths. Also, the secretarial courses and its professional studies as associations must be established to define and direct the career path for secretarial practitioners.

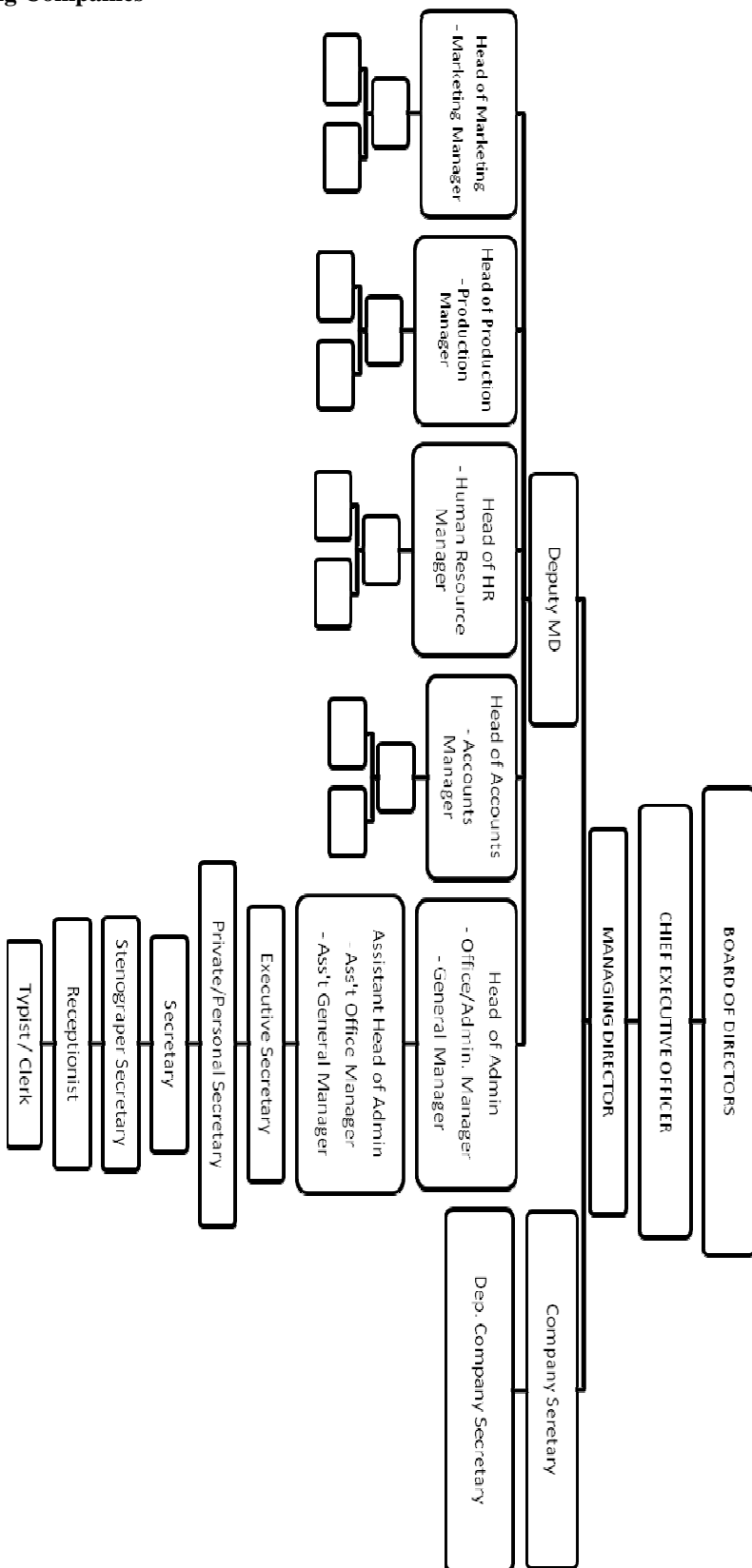
Recommended Secretarial/Secretary Career Path Guide

Table 19. The following table can be considered as the full stages or career path for people under the secretarial profession or secretaryship discipline:

Position Title (Current or old)	Suggested modern titles (equivalent/substitute)	Roles and Responsibilities	Qualification
Company or Corporate Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company or Corporate Secretary Chief Executive Assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working at the Board and Senior Management Level (Top Management) Supported by law Understanding of shares dealings Abreast with governance, finance, law, administration, management. Consultancy Lecturer/Teacher 	ICSA/CS – UK Certified Secretarial Practice Certificate – proposed by author*
a. Office/Admin. Manager b. General Manager c. Executive Secretary d. Administrative Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative Manager Administrative Assistant Executive Assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charge of the administration Working with line managers or heads of departments or sections Implementing meeting outcomes or strategic policies or plans Part of the middle management Teaching and Advisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters / MBA in Secretarial Practice First Degree in Secretarial Practice with years of experience (by promotion)
a. Secretary b. Personal Secretary c. Private Secretary d. Legal Secretary e. Medical Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office Assistant Information Specialist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping Secrets of the company Dealing with visitors and callers Dealing with incoming and outgoing mails Records keeping and its management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diploma in Secretarial Practice Diploma in Related Discipline Diploma in Office Procedure and Practice
a. Stenographer b. Receptionist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office Clerk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shorthand writing Receiving visitors and filing Dispatching and posting mails Routine clerical duties Operation of office machines and equipments Typing of correspondence/letters/reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate in Secretaryship Certificate in Office Procedures and administration
Typist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clerk Typist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typing of correspondence and other documents Data Entry 	Certificate in Typing

If all associations, organizations, secretarial professional bodies can follow this guide then people under the secretarial studies as professionals would be recognized by their academic and professional standing as in the table above.

Fig. 3. Proposed Organizational Chart with Secretarial Titles and Profession for Corporate Companies – Big Companies



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