

THE DIFFERENCES IN THE SECRETARIAL JOB FUNCTIONS AND
COMPETENCIES BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR IN KINTA VALLEY,
PERAK

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to identify the differences of the secretarial job functions and competencies between public and private sectors in Malaysia. Additionally, from the results obtained, the needed changes to improve the implementations of public sector service and productivity are also examined and suggested for improvement. The scope of the study was the secretarial staffs in the public and private sector employed in Ipoh, Kinta Valley, Perak. The secretarial staffs' position in the public sector is under the title Administrative Assistant (Secretarial). A set of questionnaires consisted of close-ended questions were used to gather the needed information. The main instruments used for this study is the questionnaire. The questionnaires were tested for face and content validity. The questionnaires were personally distributed to all the respondents in the public and private sectors in Ipoh, Perak and specific time was given for them to answer the questionnaires. From the results obtained via questionnaires, the finding shows that there are significant differences in the job functions and job competencies aspects between the public sector and private sector. Most of the respondents agreed regarding the essentiality of the job qualification which consists of skills, knowledge and abilities (SKA's) to perform the job functions. It was also found that several aspects such as the secretarial job governance are discussed and emphasized. Finally, the discussion retrieved from the data analysis suggested several recommendations includes the perspective of change to the public sector from the relevant and revised entry level requirements, salary scheme restructuring, career advancement opportunities and the systems to improve and organized the secretarial job functions within the public sector organizations based on the successful story and criteria implemented by the private sector organizations.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

With the advent of office technologies in recent years, the secretarial job functions have widely expanded and showing increase responsibility not only to their job functions and competencies, hence also to their organizational commitment. A lot of articles today elucidate the essentiality of how the title "secretary" has expanded and growing; from the normal office assistant or managers assistant to the office manager and become one of the most important person in the organization. Hellerstein (1995) noted that secretaries working in pools support one or more departments and office technologies act as a bridge to mid-management jobs. Furthermore, *their salaries and career* opportunities now compete with other executive *level* positions. It clearly defined that secretarial functions were growing rapidly and encountered enormous changes. Unfortunately, the emergence of changes frequently occurred mostly in the private sectors which enable managers and professionals to operate more independently and the technology redefined the secretary's roles and career path.

Enormous comparison can identified with regards to the practices and implementation of the secretarial position between the Malaysia public sectors (i.e. Government Agency) and the private sectors. The private sectors offered the secretarial staffs with interesting salary schemes and opportunities due to the emerging variety of secretarial functions and tasks involving the office and organizations. Secretarial duties were not only limited to the basic traditional functions such as dictating and typing only, but they also performed managerial functions such as planning, organizing, directing and controlling in assisting the management. However, the Malaysian public sectors still overlook the evolution to these secretarial job functions.

The Malaysian public sectors classified the secretarial post as a clerical service with minimum job descriptions which can lead to unprofessional workforce. The entry requirements necessitate for this job is only SPM holder with minimum qualification. In fact the Shorthand/Trengkas speed tests are still the qualifying tests for acceptance into the public sectors. With reference to the spa.gov.my, the secretarial position still undertaken by the public sectors is Administration Assistant (Secretarial) with low salary scheme. The job specification enlisted dictation, typing and handling records as their main tasks.