

**INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES OF SECRETARIES ON ORGANISATIONAL SUCCESS OF UNIVERSITIES IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA****<sup>1,\*</sup> Onche, Virginia Ochanya, <sup>1</sup> Adenekan E. Tolulope and <sup>2</sup> Sabboh Godwin Matthew**<sup>1</sup>Department of Information Management, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria<sup>2</sup>Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria**Received 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021; Accepted 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021; Published online 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

---

**Abstract**

Every organisation is established in order to meet its goals, mission and vision. Its success is most paramount as it keeps such organisation to continue to exist. For its to be successful, secretaries have a role to play as they need to exhibit and display good personal and professional attributes in the course of discharging their duties as it goes a long way in determining the success of such organisation. Therefore, the study investigated the influence of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success in University of Ibadan. The study adopted the descriptive research design. Four universities were purposively selected in Oyo State. A total enumeration was adopted in the study as 193 secretaries were used as the sample size. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Descriptive statistics of simple percentage and mean was used in analyzing the research question and inferential statistics of Pearson's moment product correlation was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. It was revealed that punctuality, good interpersonal relationship, good communication skills, good dress sense and good team spirit were some of the personal and professional attributes possessed by secretaries. There was a significant of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success ( $F= 1.705$ ;  $P<0.05$ ) A significant positive relationship was found between personal and professional attributes and organisational success ( $r=0.179$ ;  $P <.05$ ). Secretaries should be trained and also allow to attend seminars and conferences so that they can acquire some professional attributes that would help them to be productive and efficient in the office as this would also enhance organisational success.

**Keywords:** Personal and professional attributes, Organisational success, Secretaries, University.**INTRODUCTION**

One of the key factors to other personnel in the university are the secretaries. It is quite impossible to by-pass the secretary to other executives; hence the role of the secretary cannot be over emphasised. A secretary has been given so many titles as pillar, mirror and skeletal structure of a university. A secretary is an employee in an office, who deals with correspondence, keeps record, make arrangements and appointment for a particular member of staff in the university. The tasks which the secretaries perform fall into four categories; communication, coordination, organisation and record maintenance (Obi, 2012). Within these categories, secretaries perform a variety of tasks which enable managers and staff to accomplish the mission of the university and also record organisation success. Organisational success can be defined as the process of attaining the goals and vision of the organisation through application and implementation of strategies. It also refers to state of achievement where an organisation attains excellence in both profitability and market share. In order to achieve increased and sustainable results, organisations need to execute strategies and engage employees (Almazán *et al.*, 2017). Success in the university could be measured by analyzing where the organisation is in regards to its goals and mission. A successful organisation needs to think about the future of their business and think of better ways to be successful and also to survive. Organisations that are efficiency-oriented and tend to survive focus on sales, quality and creation of benefit, outputs, innovation and cost reduction (Zheng *et al.*, 2015). Organisational success aids in the assessment of the progress made towards fulfillment of mission and achievement of goals.

Aligning an organisation to the strategy assists in solving the problem of communication, especially challenges of formal reporting and bureaucracy that affect organisation effectiveness (Basuony, 2014). For universities to be successful, the personal and professional attributes of its secretaries is pertinent. Some of these attributes include; punctuality, level of education, dress sense, inter-personal relationship, late submission of tasks, romantic relationship communication among others. Punctuality is the ability of secretaries to get to work before the stipulated time that is set for resumption. It is often believed that when a secretary arrives at office very early, he/she tends to finish the task being given to do for the day, with this, university/organisation tend to meet the objectives and goals, hence organisational success is achieved. The level of education is positively related to receptivity to innovation, where that, more educated managers have greater cognitive complexity, which will increase capacity to absorb new ideas, thus, the tendency to accept innovations will increase. Also, education level is as a proxy for cognitive skills, education levels have positively associated to learning by enhancing the performance of people (Liu, Ravichandran 2007). Another personal attribute among secretaries is dressing. It is believed that the way you dress is the way you will be addresses. Dressing in an organisation is key as it determines the pattern of relationship of secretary. Poor dress sense could make a secretary to have low self-esteem as this could in turn affect the quality of job performed and consequently inhibit organisational success.

**Review of Related Literature**

In the modern organisational environment, organisations are becoming more complex because of its employees attributes

---

\*Corresponding Author: Onche, Virginia Ochanya,  
Department of Information Management, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria

that could either make or mar its success. Secretaries in the organisations that can effectively use useful information and exploit the cognitive abilities of their human resources can assure their continuity and success. This requires innovation, creativity and strategic thinking and also personal and professional attributes of secretaries in order to achieve success (Analoui, Moghimi and Khanifar, 2009). In most organisation, personal and professional attributes are very key, in that if they are not well displayed could hinder the success of the organisation image. The common poor personal and professional attributes that can be found in organisations including universities are; sexual harassment, information mismanagement, rumor mongering, trading in work places/offices, bribery and corruption, falsification of documents, duplicating software for use at home, falsifying the number of hours worked, embezzling money from business/organisation, making long distance calls on office line disregard of organisational policy Failure to honor commitment, inappropriate use of the computer among others.

Zakharova and Korobeynikova (2015) conducted a study on the influence of personal characteristics of secretaries on organisational success in Russia using the survey design and 120 secretaries were selected using purposive sampling. Questionnaire was employed in the collection of data and data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Result revealed that some of the personal characteristics that enhance organisational success included: good communication skill, good interpersonal relationship, creativity, morality. The authors concluded that these personal characteristics of are very germane for secretaries to exhibit if they want to be productive and crave for the success of the organisation. Exhibiting good personal behaviour in the office could make secretaries to be efficient and effective in the discharge of their duties and this could make such organisation to be successful. In another similar study conducted by Schuetz (2016) on the impact of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success in Poland using cross sectional research design and purposive sampling was adopted in selection 132 secretaries. The instrument that was used in the collection of data is the questionnaire and data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics of ANOVA and result revealed that personal and professional characteristics had significant influence on organisational success. The author surmised that exhibiting unethical behaviour such as making noise in the office, poor interpersonal relationship poor communication skill, absent from work among other could inhibit the growth of such organisation and could in turn hinder its success. The authors concluded that there is no doubt, however, that secretaries have to possess outstanding skills and abilities such as knowledge, sensitivity, credibility, values, and charisma which combined with professional attributes which will make organisation to be successful.

Milana and Maldaon (2015) conducted a study on the impact of managerial characteristics on organisational success in Syria using the descriptive research survey and simple random sampling was adopted to select 138 secretaries. Questionnaire was adopted in the collection of data and data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics and results revealed that there are no significant effect of age, level of education and functional track in performance of secretaries. It was also revealed that there is a positive, strong and significant relationship between personal and professional characteristics and organisational success, which indicates that managerial

characteristics are relevant with performance which consequently enhances organisational success. Onyije and Nweke (2017) conducted a study on the influence of personal and professional attributes on organisational productivity among secretaries in Niger Delta University using survey design and convenience sampling technique was adopted in selecting 35 secretaries. Questionnaire was used in the collection of data and data were analysed using correlation. Result revealed that there was a significant relationship between personal and professional attributes on organisational productivity. The author recommended that the challenges of ethical behaviour should be met by organisations if they are truly concerned about survival and success.

### Statement of the Problem

Every organisation including university is concerned about meeting its set goals and objectives. But these goals and objectives could be hampered by employees most especially secretaries simply because they are at the hub of administration, coordination and record maintenance. The success of the university could be truncated by the secretary as a result of poor dressing, poor communication skill, lateness to work, late submission of tasks, rudeness to co-workers and external body, romantic relationship with boss and colleagues among others. The problems that could stem from these acts is that, it could make such organisation not to meet its goals, objectives vision and mission, once all these are not met, such organisation could go into moribund whereby staff could be sacked, retrenched, retired among others. Several studies have been conducted on job performance among employees, but limited studies have been conducted on personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success. This is the gap to be filled in this study.

### Aims of the Study

The main aim of the study was to examine the influence of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to;

- i. examine the those personal and professional attributes possessed by secretaries of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria
- ii. examine the level of organisational success of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria;
- iii. examine the influence of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria; and
- iv. investigate the relationship between personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria.

### Research questions

1. What are the personal and professional attributes possessed by secretaries of universities in Oyo State?
2. What is the level of organisational success of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria?

### Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant influence of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The descriptive survey design was adopted. This type of design involves the interpretation of facts without manipulating any variable. One of the advantages of survey research and relevance to the present study is the fact that it makes evaluation of existing condition as well as collection of factual information possible.

### Population

The study population comprised secretaries (male and females) in universities in Oyo State. Four universities were selected in the study and these included: University of Ibadan (78), Ladoke Akintola University (62), Lead City University (48) and Dominican University (5). It was revealed that the total number of secretaries in the four universities selected for this study was 193.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select four universities in Oyo State which included; one federal university (University of Ibadan), one state university (Ladoke Akintola University) and two private universities (Lead City and Dominican Universities). The sample size comprised 193 secretaries. Total enumeration technique was employed to ensure robust participation of all secretaries in the four universities selected for the study. The use of total enumeration technique is in line with the position of Byrman (2003) who posited that the use of this technique arises when the respondents for the study are not too numerous.

### Instrument

The instrument that was used in the collection of data was the questionnaire. Questionnaire is preferred because of the high literacy level of the study population. In a non-experimental study, the questionnaire is an acceptable instrument. It is tagged "Personal and Professional Attributes Organisational Success Questionnaire" (*PPAOSQ*). It consisted of open and closed item questionnaire and is made up of four parts of 'A to C'. Part A elicited information on the demographic characteristics of the participants while part B consisted of items on personal and professional attributes of secretaries which was a self-designed questionnaire which had 10 items. Section C comprised items on organisational success which was designed by the researcher with the aid of the Human Resource Unit to measure some indicators that could lead to organisational success. The face and content validity of the instrument were done by sending the copies of the questionnaire along with copies of the objectives to two test and measurement professionals in the Department of Office Information Management, Lead City University, Ibadan. In addressing the research questions and the hypothesis, the items were scrutinized for clarity and adequacy. The final draft of the questionnaire used in this study was drafted based on their suggestions. In testing the reliability of the scale, a pilot study was conducted. In order to determine the reliability of the

instrument, a Cronbach Alpha was used. The reliability coefficient of organisational success scale is 0.81.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher administered the instrument to the respondents in their respective department in each of the university with the help of a trained assistant researcher. After the copies of the questionnaire have been filled out by the respondents, they were collated for analysis. Only 187 questionnaires were retrieved and were used for the study. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used to analyse the research questions while inferential statistics of Pearson's product moment correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic information of the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	30	16.0
	Female	157	84.0
Educational qualification	OND	22	25.3
	HND	43	23.0
	B.Sc	93	49.7
	Masters	19	10.2
	Others	10	5.3
Years of service	0-5	41	21.9
	6-11	53	28.3
	12-17	86	46.0
	18 and above	7	3.7

Table 1 shows that 30 (16.0%) were male and the rest 157 (84.0%) were female. This means that females participated more in the study than their other counterpart. Twenty-two (25.3%) had OND as their highest educational qualification, 43 (23.0%) had HND, 93 (49.7%) had B.Sc, 19 (10.2%) had masters and the rest 10 (4.1%) had other qualification. This means that respondents who had B.Sc participated more in the study. The respondents had different years of service, respondents with 12-17 years of service had a larger population of participants (46.0%) followed by 6-11 years (28.3%), 0-5 years (21.9%) while, respondents with 18 years and above had the least number of participants (3.7%).

**Research question 1:** What are the personal and professional attributes possessed by secretaries of universities in Oyo State?

Table 2 reveals the personal and professional attribute possessed by secretaries. It was revealed that punctuality ( $\bar{x} = 3.49$ ) was ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by good interpersonal relationship ( $\bar{x} = 3.48$ ), good communication skill ( $\bar{x} = 3.46$ ), "good dress sense" ( $\bar{x} = 3.26$ ), solve problems with other staff and co-workers ( $\bar{x} = 2.85$ ), good team spirit ( $\bar{x} = 2.73$ ), rudeness to colleagues, boss and visitors ( $\bar{x} = 1.58$ ), romantic relationship with colleagues/boss ( $\bar{x} = 1.42$ ) and lastly late submission of tasks ( $\bar{x} = 1.41$ ). It could be inferred that the some of the personal and professional attribute possessed by secretaries in Universities in Oyo State include; punctuality, good interpersonal relationship, good communication skills, good dress sense and good team spirit.

**Research question 2:** What is the level of organisational success of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria?

**Table 2. Personal and professional attributes possessed by secretaries**

s/n		Yes		No		$\bar{X}$
		N	%	N	%	
1	Punctuality	183	97.9	4	2.1	3.49
2	Good interpersonal relationship	179	95.7	8	4.3	3.48
3	Good communication skills	182	97.3	5	2.7	3.46
4	Romantic relationship with colleagues/boss	3	1.6	184	98.4	1.42
5	Late submission of tasks	13	7.0	174	93.0	1.41
6	Good dress sense	180	96.3	7	3.7	3.26
7	Good team spirit	157	84.0	30	16.0	2.73
8	Rudeness to colleagues, boss and visitors	2	1.1	185	98.9	1.58
9	Solve problems with other staff and co-workers	136	72.7	51	27.3	2.85

**Table 3. Level of organisational success of universities in Oyo State**

		VH	H	L	VL	$\bar{X}$
		N %	N %	N %	N %	
1	Ability to perform office routine works	52	105	24	6	2.83
2	Attending to information requests	56	112	16	3	3.03
3	Ability to attend promptly to requests from other staff	47	121	15	4	2.45
4	Always meeting with deadline	31	118	24	14	3.09
5	Providing input to growth of the unit/department	36	138	10	3	2.99
6	Using communication skills for organisational growth	34	129	12	12	3.35
7	Using information tools and technologies	39	132	13	3	2.80
8	Creativity and diligence	41	126	14	6	3.23
9	Performing competently under pressure	21.9	67.4	7.5	3.2	3.13
10	Provide better training for members of individual departments with focus on core technical skills and knowledge needed for better performance on the job	48	98	29	12	3.13
	Average mean: 2.96	25.7	52.4	15.5	6.4	3.13
		36.4	50.3	11.2	2.1	2.70

Note: VH = Very high, H= High, L= Low, VL = Very low

Table 3 reveals the level of organisational success of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. It shows that using communication skills for organisational growth ( $\bar{x} = 3.35$ ) was ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by creativity and diligence ( $\bar{x} = 3.23$ ), Performing competently under pressure ( $\bar{x} = 3.13$ ), always meeting with deadline ( $\bar{x} = 3.09$ ), attending to information requests ( $\bar{x} = 3.03$ ), providing input to growth of the unit/department ( $\bar{x} = 2.99$ ), Ability to perform office routine works ( $\bar{x} = 2.83$ ), Using information tools and technologies ( $\bar{x} = 2.80$ ), provide better training for members of individual departments with focus on core technical skills and knowledge needed for better performance on the job ( $\bar{x} = 2.70$ ) and lastly, ability to attend promptly to requests from other staff ( $\bar{x} = 2.45$ ). The average mean is 2.96, it could be inferred that the level of organisational success of universities in Oyo State, Nigeria is high.

### Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant influence of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success.

Table 4 shows the ANOVA table of the influence of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success. It was revealed that there was a significant influence of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success ( $F = 6.185$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). This shows that the attributes possessed by secretaries could influence the success of an organisation. The hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 4. ANOVA table showing the influence of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	627.627	1	627.627	6.185	.011
Within Groups	18771.728	185	101.469		
Total	19399.355	186			

### DISCUSSION

It was revealed that some of the personal and professional attribute possessed by secretaries in Universities in Oyo State include; punctuality, good interpersonal relationship, good communication skills, good dress sense and good team spirit. This means that all these skills could enhance organisational success. The finding lends credence with that of Zakharova and Korobeynikova (2015) who conducted a study on the influence of personal characteristics of secretaries on organisational success in Russia and reported that some of the personal characteristics that enhance organisational success

included: good communication skill, good interpersonal relationship, creativity and morality. The authors surmised that these personal characteristics are very germane for secretaries to exhibit if they want to be productive and crave for the success of the organisation. Exhibiting good personal behaviour in the office could make secretaries to be efficient and effective in the discharge of their duties and this could make such organisation to be successful. It was also found that the level of organisational success of universities in Oyo State is high. This means that for an organisation to be successful, its secretaries have to exhibit good behaviours with colleagues, boss and visitors. Also, universities are expected to create an enabling working environment for secretaries such as giving them incentives that would make them to be satisfied with their job. This would make secretaries to be productive and effective which would in turn have positive effect on the organisation, hence organisational success would be achieved. The finding validates that of Milana and Maldaon (2015) who conducted a study on the impact of managerial characteristics on organisational success in Syria and reported that there was a positive, strong and significant relationship between personal and professional characteristics and organisational success, which indicates that managerial characteristics are relevant with performance which consequently enhances organisational success. There was a significant influence of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success. This means that when secretaries exhibit good attributes in the organisation, it would enhance organisational success. The finding corroborates that of Schuetz (2016) who conducted a study on the impact of personal and professional attributes of secretaries on organisational success and reported that exhibiting unethical behaviour such as making noise in the office, poor interpersonal relationship poor communication skill, absent from work among other could inhibit the growth of such organisation and could in turn hinder its success. The author affirmed that there is no doubt, however, that secretaries have to possess outstanding skills and abilities such as knowledge, sensitivity, credibility, values, and charisma which combined with professional attributes which will make organisation to be successful.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

It could be concluded that the personal and professional attributes of secretaries had influence on organisational success. These attributes determine if the goals, mission and the vision of the university would be met or not. Secretaries who are always punctual, have good communication skill, high educational level and good interpersonal relationship tend to be dedicated to their job as this would enhance their performance and organisational success would be achieved. It could be recommended that:

1. Secretaries in the university should shun any form of unethical behaviours such as sleeping, lateness to work, delaying of tasks among others in the office as this could hinder the university in meeting its mission and vision.
2. University management should make strict rule to every staff in the university against some unethical behaviours that could hinder the success of the university.
3. Secretaries should be trained and also allow to attend seminars and conferences so that they can acquire some professional attributes that would help them to be productive and efficient in the office as this would also enhance organisational success.
4. The provision of professional development, training and re-training courses for secretaries should reflect the needs of individuals and enterprises. This would foster and also improve linkages between secretaries and tertiary institutions and their customers.

### REFERENCES

- Almazán, D. A., Tovar, Y. S. and Quintero, J. M. 2017. Influence of information systems on organisational results. *Contaduría y Administración*, (2017). 62 321–338. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cya.2017.03.001>.
- Analoui, F., Moghimi, S., Khanifar, H. 2009. Public sector managers and entrepreneurship in Islamic republic of Iran, *Journal of Management Development* 28(6): 522–532. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02621710910959684>
- Basuony, M. A. K. 2014. The Balanced Scorecard in Large Firms and SMEs: A Critique of the Nature, Value and Application. *Accounting and Finance Research*, (2014). 3, 14-22. <https://doi.org/10.5430/afr.v3n2p14>.
- Byrman, A. 2003. Research methods and organisation studies 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Liu, Y. and Ravichandran, T. 2007. Information technology capital, managerial human capital, and firm performance: an empirical investigation, in ECIS, Paper 109: 994–1006 [online], [cited 19 February 2014]. Available from Internet: <http://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1087&context=ecis2007>.
- Obi, B. I. 2012. Assessment of Secretaries utilisation of service delivery skills in tertiary institutions in the South Eastern states of Nigeria. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Manchester, 4-6 September 2012
- Onyije, O. C. and Nweke, E. O. 2017. Unethical Behaviour of Secretaries and its Effect on Organisational Productivity. *World Journal of Management and Behavioral Studies*, 5 (2), 31-40.
- Schuetz, A. (2016) Effective leadership and its impact on an organisation's success. *Journal of corporate responsibility and leadership*, Volume 3, Issue 3, 74-90.
- Zakharova, L. N. and Korobeynikova, E. V. 2015. Personal characteristics of effective managers in organisational cultures of different types. *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art* Volume 8, Issue 3, 70-83.
- Zheng, W., Yang, B. and McLean. G. 2015. Linking Organisational Culture, Structure, Strategy, and Organisational Effectiveness: Mediating Role of Knowledge Management. *Journal of Business Research*, 63, 763-771. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.06.005>

\*\*\*\*\*