

Stakeholders' Perception towards the Role of Secretaries in Globalization Era

Carmen Mandey
Klabat University
carmenmandey@unklab.ac.id

Abstract

This research mainly focused on the stakeholders' perceptions of the role of secretaries in the globalization era. The objectives of this research were to find out how much the secretary was needed, the performance a secretary should have, and what competencies it was that could support the value of a secretary. This was a qualitative research that used direct observation of the respondents' situation and in-depth interview with the respondents to collect the data. The results of the data showed the answers to the three research questions. The answer to the first research question was that the level of needs for a secretary was high; the answer to the second research question was beside mastering her role, secretaries are expected to help the manager in doing managerial tasks like a supervisor; the answer to the third research question was that a secretary should master the office technological devices, master the good way of communicating, master the English language, master the knowledge of personnel, and possess personality and good appearance. Based on the research results, the researcher can conclude that a secretary is still needed in the era of sophisticated technology like nowadays; however, only a secretary with various skills can compete and is highly needed.

Introduction

In globalization era with so many office automations and information technology, office work and administration are a lot easier for the bosses to do without the help of secretaries. This was confirmed by Susilawati (2007) who stated that due to the advance technology that every boss has, the need for the role of secretaries is decreasing for the boss can do most of the jobs by themselves. For example, the boss can book airplane ticket using website, file document using computer or flash disk, write agenda and organizer using smartphones, mail letters or documents through electronic mail, and so on. However, in reality, secretary is still needed in various situations such as being the source of information, idea, and many other. Rahayu (2013) lists down several responsibilities that appear to be small and easy for the boss to do but apparently are usually

done by the secretary. Those responsibilities are business correspondences, meeting preparation, boss' itinerary, the center of information and data, office administration, and the medium between boss and employee and among other companies. All of these responsibilities make a secretary as an assistant for the boss. Based on the above conditions, researcher conducted a study that focused on the perception of stakeholders toward the role of secretary in globalization era.

Research Question

This research focused to answer the following questions:

1. How much needed is a role of secretary in this globalization era?
2. What does a boss expect from a role of secretary in this globalization era?
3. What competences does a secretary should have so that she can compete in this globalization era?

Purpose

The purposes of this study are:

1. To know the level of need for the role of secretary in this globalization era.
2. To know the role of secretary that the boss expects in this globalization era.
3. To know the competences that a secretary should have so that she may be able to compete in this globalization era.

Significant

The significant of this study are:

1. To enlighten secretaries and secretaries to be of ASMI Klabat about their role as an assistant for the boss who have to work quickly, accurately, and with quality.
2. To enrich and expand the knowledge of secretaries and secretaries to be of ASMI Klabat to a higher competences level that can help them with their job, so that it may benefit the company, the boss, themselves, and so they can compete with other people.

Limitation

This research is limited to the perception of several people that has relationship to the profession of a secretary. These groups of people are the general managers, bosses, supervisors, headmasters of a few schools, presidents of a few universities, and several other who use the role of secretaries in daily work.

Methods

Design

This research is a qualitative research. Researcher who uses this method observes an environment or community and/or interviews some respondents who are the target of the research (Wikipedia, 2015).

Researcher used a recording device (smartphone) during the interview process to gather the data. The recording then transcribed into written transcript, which then was analyzed and presented as the answer to the three research questions.

Respondent

The respondents of this research came from different position starting from executive secretary, department secretary, university secretary, supervisor, head department, vice president for university, and general manager. There were 15 respondents in this research, ten female and five male. The respondents' age range from 30 to 60 years old who all have worked for about five years and above in their present company/institution/office.

Results and Discussion

Research question 1:

How big is the need for the role of secretaries in globalization era?

Result:

Out of 15 respondents who were interviewed, 14 respondents gave opinions while one did not. Out of 14 respondents, nine respondents said that the need for the role of secretaries in offices is still high. Below are the summary from every opinion given by nine respondents along with tables that consist of the direct quotations from each respondents.

1. Even though the technology nowadays is advance, and the managers have their own devices; but because of their business, they have no time in finishing all the work by themselves. They need secretaries to help them finish the work.

Table 1a: *Respondents' responses to research question number 1*

Respondent	Opinion
First (1)	Even though the technology nowadays is more advance, secretaries still hold an important role, especially professional secretaries ... which is why secretaries should be able to develop themselves to reach the standard of the boss.
Second (2)	High ... it is the duty of secretaries to ensure that every employee and guests could follow/obey offices regulations and procedures correctly and ethically, to arrange meetings with employee or guests, to organize boss' agenda, ...to communicate properly.
Third (3)	Still high. Because we need a secretary to operate electronic devices.
Fourth (4)	Still high. Because ... boss does not have much time to deal with every document one by one, bosses need secretaries.
Sixth (6)	A secretary should be able to operate computer, use internet, familiar with computer programs, and master English.
Tenth (10)	... although technology is getting more advance, but it still need someone to operate these devices.
Eleventh (11)	If we see from the boss' perspective, the answer is high ... secretaries are still needed.

A secretary can become someone who reminds the boss of his work or meetings.

Table 1b: *Respondents' responses to research question number 1*

Respondent	Opinion
Ninth (9)	High. Because secretaries are not only doing their regular job, incidental job, or creative job but instead ... they should balance their routine by expanding their knowledge and skills.
Fourteenth (14)	... secretaries sometimes take the place of the manager. This happens because secretaries ought to keep the confidentiality of documents ... moreover, at some point secretaries should take charge of making decision as what managers often do.

Three respondents said that the need of the role of secretaries depends on three things. Below is the summary for each response and

the direct quotation from the respondents.
1. It depends on the need of the company.

Table 1c: *Respondents' responses to research question number 1*

Respondent	Opinion
Seventh (7)	It depends on the size and type of the business.
2. It depends on the secretary herself, is she a traditional secretary or a modern secretary. Traditional secretary can only do the routine or basic work; on the other hand, a modern secretary can become a	personal assistant or administrative assistant for she can do more work such as being the manager on duty when her boss is not at the office.

Table 1d: *Respondents' responses to research question number 1*

Respondent	Opinion
... generally speaking, I think the need for the role of secretaries is ... fair. Because ... making Twelfth (12) calls, ... organizing schedules, ... typing ... can be done by the bosses ... but specifically speaking like secretaries as administrative assistants, ... then the need is high.	

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3. It depends on the skill of the secretary. The more skill she has, the more she is | needed; and on the other hand, the less skill she has, the less she is needed. |
|--|--|

Table 1e: *Respondents' responses to research question number 1*

Respondent	Opinion
Actually, the role of secretaries is very high; however, it depends on the secretaries themselves. Though bosses is in need of a secretary but the secretary is not productive, is poor in her job, is not Fifteenth (15) competent as she is supposed to be, ... then she is not needed. But if the secretary is in the contrary, ...then she is what the bosses are looking for.	

- | | |
|---|--|
| Two respondents said that the need of role of secretaries is low or is getting low. | work paperless and is familiar in using modern technology. |
| 1. Nowadays what the company needs is a personal assistant who does administrative | 2. Nowadays there has been a lot of advance technology that can help the bosses in doing their work. |

Table 1f: Respondents' responses to research question

number 1

Respondent	Opinion
Low.	In the office where I work, we need more personal assistant than regular secretary where the
Eight (8)	idea of secretary leans toward handling administration. Nowadays in high technology era where all things are done using electronic devices/virtual administration, the work becomes paperless.
Thirteenth (13)	For me, the nee of secretary compare to the past is a little bit decreasing because of computers, internet ... now the jobs of secretaries can be replaced by machines, computers, and smartphones.

Research question 2:

What is the role of secretaries that the manager expects in globalization era?

Result:

Out of 15 respondents who were interviewed, all respondents give their opinions. six respondents said that the role of present secretaries is no longer focus on routine and

basic work of secretaries but it has been wider than that. Below are the summary from every opinion that the respondent gave along with the direct quotation from each respondents.

1. Secretaries should expand their knowledge and long to improve themselves with other knowledge such as computer, language, and various others, which can help to produce the result that the managers expect.

Table 2a: Respondents' responses to research question number 2

Respondent	Opinion
First (1)	Being a secretary means having the responsibility to learn more ... discipline, quick, precise ... and is observant to the newest technology.
Fifth (5)	Secretary is the assistant to the manager ... the manager should only give them the idea of the letter/memo or things the manager wants them to do.
Seventh (7)	Definitely, they are required to upgrade themselves for bigger expectation.
Ninth (9)	A secretary should be skillful and creative for the advancement of the company depends on it.
Thirteenth (13)	... not only doing what the traditional secretaries do but instead, taking care of administrative work, becoming the manager on duty ...
Fifteenth (15)	Actually, the highest request comes from the administration department ... Secretary is not only serving and having good attitude, but having the capability in operating computer.

2. Five respondents said that the role of secretary in doing the routine and basic work such as typing letters, filing documents, arranging/managing rooms, and taking calls are still important.

Table 2b: *Respondents' responses to research question number 2*

Respondent	Opinion
Third (3)	Filing is important.
Fourth (4)	Correspondences, telephoning, receive and serving guests, and filing.
Sixth (6)	Without secretaries, bosses cannot handle the work at office for bosses tend to leave town ... hence, the secretaries ... do most of administration jobs like making reports.
Tenth (10)	... the role of secretaries is to help director; therefore, secretaries handle most of the directors' work.
Fourteenth (14)	Organize managers' itinerary, prepare meetings, present reports during managerial meetings.

3. Two respondents said that the role of secretaries as the spokesperson of the boss and the company is important; such as receiving guests, communication, and using good and correct grammar in every conversation.

Table 2c: *Respondents' responses to research question number 2*

Respondent	Opinion
First (1)	Much work needs the help of a secretary ... for example in arranging business meetings. Moreover from linguistic view, speaking manner, attitude, ... mastering linguistic skill for both Indonesian and English ... speak politely, use the correct grammar, be able to control emotions ... for secretaries are the window to the company where they work.s
Third (3)	Communication ... patience in dealing with guests.

4. Four respondents said that the role of secretaries is still important, especially in meeting guests, dealing with documents that other department asks, arranging events, and so on. Secretaries in globalization era are expected to do work that machines cannot do while in the same time can make use of the technology to produce efficient, rapid, and accurate work.

Table 2d: *Respondents' responses to research question number 2*

Respondent	Opinion
Seventh (7)	Machines cannot take the place of human relationship.
Eight (8)	Arrange schedule, organize events, do clipping work, translate letters, prepare news bulletin, and present power point presentation.
Tenth (10)	Handling people or guests who require to see the boss, ... get data/documents in office.
Twelfth (12)	In my opinion, one of the most important role of secretaries is to be the assistant of the boss where they will be the one who deal with people face to face without the help of phones or e-mails.

**Research question 3:
What competencies does a secretary need in order to have high competitiveness in globalization era?**

Result:

Out of 15 respondents who were interviewed, all respondents give their opinions. The interview result showed that there are 30 competencies that a secretary should have in order to compete in this globalization era. The most competency mentioned by the respondents and is in the first place is the

mastery of technology. The second most mentioned competency is the mastery of linguistic skill, which includes communication skill, public speaking, and writing skill. The third most mentioned competency is the mastery of English language, which includes human relation, public relation, dealing with others, and serving guests.

The least mentioned competency is personality and look.

Below is the table that shows the opinions of each respondent.

Table 3: *Respondents' responses to research question number 3*

Respondent	Opinion
First (1)	Personality, communication skill, creativity, mastery of technology devices.
Second (2)	Linguistic skill, computer skill, quick-thinking, responsive, mastery of technology devices.
Third (3)	Mastery of English language, mastery of Indonesian language, computer skill, public relation skill, administration skill, hospitality, kindness, and friendly.
Fourth (4)	Public speaking skill, serving guests, mastery of technology devices.
Fifth (5)	Communication skill, appearance, language, writing skill.
Sixth (6)	Precision, punctuality, mastery of technology devices, mastery of English language, responsive.
Seventh (7)	Decision skill, organization skill, information management, etiquette,

	professionalism.
Eight (8)	Mastery of various languages such as English, France, Mandarin; computer skill, public speaking skill, personal power and leadership, assertiveness and influencing skill, writing or notes taker skill.
Ninth (9)	Personality, mastery of technology devices, expertise in managing office, expertise in building relationship with the boss and other people, mastery of various foreign language especially English, quick-witted, precision, and quality, public speaking.
Tenth (10)	English language, correspondence skill, computer skill.
Eleventh (11)	English language, etiquette, public speaking skill.
Twelfth (12)	Linguistic skill, mastery of technology devices, appearances, body care.
Thirteenth (13)	Beside clerical skill, secretary should also master analytical skill, logical skill, being proactive, and expand her knowledge.
Fourteenth (14)	Initiative, creative, public relation skill such as communication, pose, the way we look at other people, how to deal with guests, and appearances.
Fifteenth (15)	Personality, which means character, managing emotion, skill in adapting oneself to another people especially at workplace, and mastery of technology devices that can help to quickened the work and save time.

Discussion

The role of secretaries is still needed as the above tables have clearly listed several arguments given by the respondents regarding this matter. Although there are some respondents who oppose that the need for the role of secretaries is still high due to the use of advance technology, corporate governance Kalbe's secretary wrote on their company blog that secretaries still have relations to the companies. They stated that "The Corporate Secretary is the liaison who bridges interests between the Company and external parties, principally in an effort to maintain a positive public perception of the

Company's image and as the Company's fulfillment of its responsibilities" (Vidjongtius, n.d.). Kalbe clearly emphasize the need for the role of secretary to help the company to success.

Ipsos MORI, a social research institute in their journal, also supports this idea; they found that relationship between stakeholders and

company is built through the people (the staff), not the company itself (August 27, 2009). Companies still need secretaries to work for them, be the image of the company, build relationship between companies and stakeholders, and so on; even though the world nowadays in need of these advance gadgets and office automations but the facts show that the role of secretaries is still high.

Another journal written by the Society of Corporate Secretaries and Governance Professionals, Inc. also clarifies the need for the role of secretary in nowadays situation. They also stated the current professional skills that the companies and stakeholders need from a secretary. This journal stated "the secretary works closely with a company's Board of Directors, its CEO, and senior officers, providing information on board best practices and tailoring the board's governance framework to fit the needs of the company and its directors, as well as the expectations of shareholders. The secretary also supports the board in the carrying out of its fiduciary duties" (2013, 2). Although secretaries have

their standard responsibilities, they are to be more than just regular secretaries. They are to be the face of the company, the help for the boss, the friend for fellow employee, and many others.

References

- [Ipsos MORI, 2009] Ipsos MORI. (2009). *Understanding Your Stakeholders: A Best Practice Guide for the Public Sector. Social Research Institute. (November)*. Retrieved on Thursday, August 27, 2015, from <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/publications/publication.aspx?oItemId=128>.
- [Rahayu, 2013] Rahayu. (2013). *The Role of Secretary (Peran Sekretaris)*. Retrieved on December 21st, 2014 from <http://tyasrahayu.blogspot.com/p/peransekeretaris.html>.
- [Susilawati, 2007] Susilawati. (2007). *The Role and Responsibility of Secretary (Peran dan Tanggung Jawab Sekretaris)*. Retrieved on February 27th, 2014 from <http://susilawati.wordpress.com/2007/05/01/peran-dan-tanggung-jawabsekretaris/>.
- [Society of Corporate Secretaries and Governance Professionals, Inc., 2013] Society of Corporate Secretaries and Governance Professionals, Inc. (2013). *The Corporate Secretary: An Overview of Duties and Responsibilities. (July)*. *Society of Corporate Secretaries and Governance Professionals Publication*. Retrieved on Thursday, August 27, 2015, from <http://www.google.co.id/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=6&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CEQQFjAFahUKEwibgaCiv8jHAhWOTY4KHAR2Bas&url=http%3A%2F%2Fhigherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com>
- [Vidjongtius, n.d.] Vidjongtius. (n.d). *Corporate Secretary, Investor Relations, and Information Disclosure*. Retrieved Thursday, August 27, 2015, from <http://www.kalbe.co.id/AboutKalbe/CorporateGovernance/CorporateSecretaryandInvestorRelations.aspx>. [Wikipedia, 2015]
- Wikipedia. (2015). *Qualitative Research*. Retrieved on March 9th, 2014 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qualitative_research.