

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN SECRETARIAL PRACTICE AND THE LEVEL OF JOB PERFORMANCE OF SECRETARIES

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ABSTRACT

The study made an assessment of professional ethics in secretarial practice and the level of job performance of secretaries. In order to carry out this study, specified research objectives were drawn from which research questions and hypotheses were formulated and used for the study. The research design for this study is a survey design. The population of this study consisted of all the Secretaries, clerks, confidential secretaries, executive secretaries of Uyo local government area council of Akwa Ibom State. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The instrument was validated by two experts. Data from completed questionnaires was subjected to descriptive analysis. The findings showed that there is positive impact of professional ethics in secretarial practice and the level of job performance of secretaries. The study recommended that there is urgent need for a viable professional body to oversee the activities of secretarial professionals in Nigeria. This will go a long way to bring about professionalism in this profession; help regulate and serve as check and balances and bring about the benefits of having a professional body just as in other professions like in health, law, etc. With a viable professional body, all the lapses identified in this study can be resolved.

INTRODUCTION

Professional ethics are principles that govern the behaviour of a person or group in a business environment. Like values, professional ethics provide rules on how a person should act towards other people and institutions in such an environment Ede, (2015). Professional ethics may be understood as professionally acknowledged measures of individual and business conduct, values, and guiding principles. Professional ethics is nothing but a code of conduct applicable to different professions and is set up by the expert members of such profession or professional organizations. The underlying philosophy of having professional ethics is to make the persons performing in such jobs to follow the sound, uniform ethical conduct Adebayo, (2012). Organizations and other Institutions whether public and private in Nigeria always need secretarial services because these services greatly assist the organizations and institutions in carrying out their main functions and ultimately achieve their respective objectives. No organization can easily function without secretarial duties and the secretary. The secretary is very important personnel in the success and growth of the organization. The secretary here, refers to the confidential secretary who act as an assistant to an executive in the various organizations and institutions and apart from being skilled in shorthand and computer word processing, is also skilled in handling all types of correspondences, office procedure and administration and function to provide communication support services and other issues that are routine in nature.

According to Asiegbo (2002), professional Ethics are personal and corporate rules that govern behaviour within the context of a particular profession. Asiegbo further stated that professional ethics are those moral principles that influence the manner in which a professional conduct in his professional process. According to Austen (2009) Every Education is aimed at gaining employment and making a career, which is from growing from one position to the other in the organization until disengagement. Organizations valued employees that worked several years with them, still what to call "Long Service Award". Every employer

wants their workers to attain the maximum job performance feasible. They motivate their workers with security of employment, adequate reward, attractive conditions of service, and interesting nature of works. On the other hand, the workers want to know their prospects for their job performance. Ezeoke, (2009) asserted that human beings work in organizations, and they are not dormant. Ezeoke further stated that if people are not developed in an organization they will not be happy. He also added that the reason why people involve themselves in a career is because they want to develop, and development is one of the characteristics of human being. Having a job does not necessarily mean that you will developed in it. Some workers resigned from their jobs when the realized that development prospects are virtually non-existent in the organization they are working for. It therefore necessary for employer to have prospects for job performance embedded in the job analysis of their prospective employee. This study was therefore undertaken to determine how professional ethics enhances secretarial job performance.

However, the terms morals and ethics are closely related in original meaning. Morals come from the Latin word “moralis” and ethics come from the Greek term “ethos.” Both terms means “the custom or way of life.” However, the terms morals and morality refer to the conduct itself and ethics and ethical refer to the study of moral conduct or the system or code that is followed (Ilori, 1994). Ethics are standards and rules that are meant to be guiding principles for any profession or institution (Adeyinka, 2014). It is also a rational inquiry into or a theory of the standards of right and wrong, good and bad in respect of character and conduct, which ought to be accepted by a class of individuals. Ethics further means principles by which to evaluate behaviour as right or wrong, good or bad.

Therefore, the ethics of a secretary are moral principles relating to the job that he/she will be bound (Onifade, 2010). In short secretary’s ethics are principles or norms that state how secretaries should conduct themselves in the course of carrying out their official duties. A secretary is an assistant to an executive, possessing mastering of shorthand, computer word processing and office skills together with the ability to assume responsibility without direct supervision and displays initiative within the scope of his/her authority (Onifade, 2010). In order for the secretary to put his skills into full use, he/she needs an organization.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In any organization every workers accepting a job offer expects to develop in that job, and where development is no feasible, the workers may become frustrated and decide to resign. In so doing, several organizations have lost their best workers to other organizations who are willing and ready to employ them. On the other part, the professional ethics of a secretary contributes to the effectiveness and success in the running of any organization. But it has been observed that some secretaries behave unethically to their bosses and co-workers, Some behave in the way that they are not allow to gain their promotion as at when due. This study was therefore undertaken to determine how professional ethics influences secretarial job performance.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to examine how professional ethics of secretary and influence on job performance in Uyo Local Government Area as a study. Specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1.To examine how secretary’s confidentiality influence job performance in Uyo Local government area
- 2.To examine how secretary’s politeness influence job performance in Uyo Local government area

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1.How does secretary’s confidentiality influence job performance in Uyo Local government area?
- 2.How does secretary’s politeness influence job performance in Uyo Local government area?

HYPOTHESES

1. Secretary's confidentiality does not significantly influence job performance in Uyo Local government area
2. Secretary's politeness does not significantly influence job performance in Uyo Local government area.

CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONALISM

The term professionalism means different things to different people. One view is that it may be fruitless to try and pin down one exact meaning like many words and concepts which have different dimensions and changes over time too. Being a professional, firstly, can be factual and thus associated with holding certain qualifications and or membership of a professional body and secondly be descriptive measuring the characteristics expected of a professional and thus includes ongoing professional development and ever-increasing levels of excellence in services giving by a professional. The first is regulatory in form, and the second is a self-improvement and an ambition-led approach on what is expected of a professional (<http://work.chron.com/concept-professionalism-151569>).

Professionalism as a named entity is defined as 'the qualities or typical features of a profession or of professional's especially competence and skills' (Oxford English Dictionary). According to Webster's dictionary, professionalism is the conduct, aims and qualities that characterises or mark a profession or a professional. According to Neil Kokemuller (2013), professionalism conveys intangible meanings in the working world; it is usually attached to high performing employees in any line of work. According to Encarta Dictionaries, professionalism is conforming to professional standard which includes the skills, competence, or character expected of a member of a high trained profession. According to the students support services sponsored by TRIO, it states that professionalism is when a person conforms to the technical and/or ethical standards of his/her profession. It also stated that a professional is courteous, conscientious, and generally business like in his/her workplace. In the research report presented to the health care professionals council on professionalism by health care professionals, it stated that professionalism encompasses many and varied aspects of behaviour, communication and appearance as well as being perceived as a holistic concept encompassing all aspects of practice. Professionalism has a basis in individual characteristic and values but also largely defined by context. Its definition varies with a number of factors including organizational support, the workplaces, expectations of others, and the specifics of each service user/people encountered. This contextual professionalism is based on well-established or even innate personal qualities and values. There are regulations that provide basic guidance and signposting on what is appropriate and that is unacceptable but act as a baseline for professionalism.

In a nutshell, professionalism means different things to different people in different contexts. Professionalism can be presented in a holistic view, all-encompassing concept (everything you do), an overall way of being which comprises a range of attitudes and behaviour. It is everything from the time you get to your office to the time you get home specifically and explicitly, professionalism is competence: knowledge, skills, abilities and personal characteristic in doing or performing a job.

According to Lisa McQuerry (2013), the principles of professionalism are a standard of personal conduct by a professional in his business dealings. Guiding principle for acceptable and expected behaviour vary from industry to industry, that notwithstanding, the following are the general principles of professionalism: Appearance: One of the critical entreaties to be a professional is building a reputation for professionalism and to meet the basic dress, groom and hygiene standards of your industry. Naturally, those blue collar workers who deal with dirt and grime on daily bases may not be affected in this regard. But officers such as the likes of secretaries are among professionals who are commonly judged by the way they look. Professional dress, well-groomed hair and a clean-cut image without excessive piercing

and visible tattoos are among expectations of professionalism in many white collar jobs.

OVERVIEW OF JOB PERFORMANCE

Job performance is a critical human resource management function in both Public and Private Organizations. Job performance has been a recurrent subject of debate among scholars and academics. According to Alnaqbi (2011) job performance is not simply a means of arming employees with skills they need to perform their jobs, it is often deemed to be representative of an employer's commitment to their work force. However, it is important to point out that HR practices work to develop individual knowledge and skills, as well as employee attitude and behaviours. If these effects are prevalent enough in the employee population, then the collective changes in human capital, attitudes, behaviours and associated organizational climate should be strong enough to influence organizational performance.

Gill and Kustron (2011) expressed that career planning is a job performance practice which involved continuous process of discovery in which an individual develops his own occupational concept as a result of skills or abilities, needs, motivations and aspirations of his own value system. To be viable, on short-term, or to maintain competitive advantage, in the long term, organizations must match employees with appropriate skills in the right positions. Career planning practice process involves both the organization and the individual responsibility. Thus, the individuals must identify their aspirations and abilities, and through assessment and counseling to understand their needs of training and development; in terms of the technical skills and education advancement needed.

Lockwood (2007) defines coaching as a primarily job performance for a short-term intervention aimed at performance improvement or developing a particular competence. This job performance practice involves the process that enables supervisors providing learning and development to occur on the job as job training which enhance performance and improvement of the employee. Coaching as a job performance practice is a popular capacity-building tool, especially in the area of leadership development. It is often mentioned in projects and reviews as a key element of good capacity-building job performance practice. Yet despite its current status, many people are unclear what coaching really involves, and where and when it works. In order to be able to understand this practice, it is important to understand what a coach actually does; the origin of the concept; when it is appropriate or not appropriate to use coaching (CIPD, 2004).

According to Murray (2008), mentoring is a job performance practice which entails helping and supporting people to manage their own learning in order to maximize their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be in alignment with organization objective. Mentoring has been practiced in different cultures for hundreds of years. But it is only recently that mentoring has been a job performance practice rediscovered by the private sector, and now by the civil society sector, as a mechanism for leadership development.

According to research it has been suggested that careers counseling is a job performance practice that consist of a greater number of transitions as a result of the changing nature of work organizations Jackson *et al.*, (2012). One implication of this change is that careers counseling which is a job performance practice will be needed at a greater number of points during the course of an adult career as people encounter more frequent employer and job changes. It is also suggested that, since employers will increasingly withdraw structured career management programs, people need to be more reliant on their own career self-management (Lockwood, 2007). Training is an integral part of every company's agenda. Because of the implications of training, it is important to have training that is effective. Studies have proven that more costly but effective training can save money that is wasted on cheap but inefficient training (Xu & Thomas, 2011). Training provides staff with knowledge and expertise relevant to their areas of operation and translates into increased output. It also enhances the quality of the human resources by keeping staff abreast with the state-of-the-art

development in their areas of operation. Staff training and development aims at improving the productive capacity of the human resources. It also enables staff members realize their full potential and enhances their professional development and work environment. Appraising how staff development process is being undertaken in the university is an important aspect of an ambitious university and a starting point for a feedback (Salancik, 2007).

EFFECT OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND JOB PERFORMANCE

Ethics play an important role in the society as it ensures that people conduct themselves morally. The purpose of ethics according to Sunday, Elejo and Abubakar (2013), was that first, it provides man with guidelines for regulating and controlling his conduct and actions in life. For example the code of ethics for secretaries is to regulate their actions and conducts to ensure quality and standard of services are rendered. Institutions like the universities have guidelines for appointment, promotion and discipline of erring secretaries. Another purpose of ethics is to ensure uniformity, fairness and standard in the performance of duties. In addition, ethics serve the purpose of helping man to discover the general or universal principles guiding human conduct. For example, this moral question provides a general principle to guide conduct of secretaries: should disclosure of confidential information by secretaries be encouraged? Should secretaries be allowed to extort money from visitors? Or should secretaries assist their boss to force helpless female students for sex? These are questions of morality and ethics.

Armstrong (2006) pointed out that job performance is a critical human resource management function in both Public and Private Organizations. Job performance has been a recurrent subject of debate among scholars and academics. Armstrong (2006) adds that job performance is the use of planned instruction activities to promote learning. Training is not simply a means of arming employees with skills they need to perform their jobs; it is often deemed to be representative of an employer's commitment to their work force. However, it is important to point out that HR practices work to develop individual knowledge and skills, as well as employee attitude and behaviors. If these effects are prevalent enough in the employee population, then the collective changes in human capital, attitudes, behaviors and associated organizational climate should be strong enough to influence organizational performance (Clarke, 2001).

Ikeanyibe (2009) in Ibietan and Joshua (2013), gave the following as the significance of ethics to Secretarial Administration or human endeavour in general:

- i) Ethics as the science of human acts furnishes the norm by which relations among men are regulated. It shows what such relations must be and indicates the reasons that require them to be so;
- ii) Ethics as an applied science is fundamental to other fields of study and practice, it is important because it guides/stipulates codes guiding human actions in many aspects of life;
- iii) It reaffirms the uniqueness of man among other creatures in view of the fact that human life is an ethical self-construction;
- iv) To a greater extent, the study of ethics facilitates the formation of fundamental attitudes to life. Training in ethics should enable us to see the defects in our own and other people's conducts and to understand their exact nature, so that we are better able to set things right in our own conduct and to make profitable suggestion to others;
- v) It functions as a societal strategy for improving human life through the preservation of a more humane eco-system and for attaining social and global harmony. It thus facilitates common societal values, rewards/reinforces positive values;
- vi) It has intertwining link with religion, implying that it shares close affinity with religion. Most religions are built on the fundamental principle that good conduct will be rewarded and bad/evil punished. This link with religion provides an ultimate reason for right deeds and aversion for evil.

ETHICAL ISSUES FOR SECRETARIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Secretarial profession just like every other profession has a well articulated code of ethics that guides its member's behaviour and conduct. The followings are some of the ethics for secretaries as provided by Onifade (2010) and Emeti (2009):

- i) **Honesty:** Honesty is another important ethics of the secretarial profession. Honesty is a standard expected of the secretary. He/she should be honest in his/her dealings in order to maintain a very good reputation and integrity; anything to the contrary will render him/her unfit for employment in the organization.
- ii) **Reliable:** The secretary should cultivate an atmosphere in which the boss will rely on him/her to carryout and complete assignments unsupervised.
- iii) **Orderliness:** The secretary should be organised at all times. Plan his/her work and avoid time wastages in order to achieve maximum result within a short time.
- iv) **Tactfulness:** The secretary should exhibit a great deal of tact in the performance of duties, especially when handling members of the public and other colleagues in the organization.
- v) **Cooperativeness:** The secretary should maintain good working relationship with other members of staff. He/she should cooperate with other members of staff so that the main objective of the organization could be achieved.
- vi) **Punctuality:** The secretary must make punctuality his/her watch-word on all occasions. The secretary must be in office before his/her boss so as to organise the day's work and deal with outstanding matters before the arrival of his/her boss and also should leave office after the boss to make sure the table is cleared of the day's tasks.
- vii) **Bribery:** The secretary should not be tempted to accept gifts or favours from members of the public in case there is a hidden reason for such gifts or favours.
- viii) **Multi-skilling:** The secretary should as much as possible acquire skill of operating photocopying machine, shredding machine, computer programmes and other positions in the organization.
- ix) **Impartiality:** The Confidential Secretary (i.e. working in any government organization) should not be involved in partisan politics.
- x) Merit is one of the ethical requirements of the Confidential Secretary. He/she should be guided by merit in whatever is being done.
- xi) **Anonymous:** Whatever the secretary does in the performance of his/her duties is on behalf of the organization and the immediate boss. He/she should not claim credit for it.
- xii) **Good dressing:** This is also an important ethic of the profession. The secretary should dress corporately and smart always.
- xiii) **Cleanliness:** The secretary's body, office and surrounding environment should always be clean. Importantly, the secretary should avoid body odour.

SECRETARY'S CONFIDENTIALITY INFLUENCE JOB PERFORMANCE

In both the public and private sector, secretaries of whatever rank and position are expected to perform all or most of the following general duties as identified by Edun and Ajetonmobi (1996) and put forward by Ahukunnah and Ugoji (2009). The understanding of these duties will assist the various chief executives, personnel directors and managers and other middle level executives to know what to expect from their respective secretaries. These duties will in one way or the other tempt the code of ethic of the secretary. The general duties of secretaries are: Take dictation and transcribe same on the computer; Despatch letters; Do filing; Open new files; Read and sort mails; Answer the telephone and make outgoing calls; Take messages; Make appointments for the boss and keep records of them; Act as memory aid to the boss; Compose letters

and help prepare reports; Order supplies for the office; Type materials from longhand or shorthand notes; Make hotel reservations and other travel arrangements; Keep financial records and handle imprest accounts; Prepare agenda and notice of meeting and despatch same to members; Type minutes of meetings; Type materials to be published; personal banking and local purchases; Keep press cuttings, files and scrapbook about employer's interests; Act as a go-between for the boss; Supervise other employees and act as officer manager and take speeches in shorthand at conferences, seminars; Take down and transcribe board/tribunal proceedings; Advise where necessary; Read travel time-tables and plan itineraries for the boss; Check all travel documents.; Run errands for the boss; Change calendar date every morning; Prepare relevant briefs for the boss concerning interviews; Send out invitations and replies to invitations received; Write congratulatory letters or letters of condolence when necessary and the website for e-mail.

In addition to the general duties, there are specific duties that are applicable to junior and senior secretaries in the Organization in addition to the specific requirements of the office, division, department and unit of postings (Ahukannah and Ugoji, 2009). The specific duties applicable to Junior Secretaries such as Confidential Secretary Grade IV and similarly placed secretaries in the private sector are: Works as assistants to the more senior secretaries; Prepare the office tea; Do copy typing on the computer; Take notes in shorthand from the more senior secretaries and do the transcription; Maintain good sanitation of the office if a cleaner is not available; Work as secretaries to middle-level management and Photocopy documents.

Senior Secretaries from Confidential Secretary Grade III upwards and similarly placed secretaries in the private sector will be working with top or middle management. They are expected to perform the following specific duties appropriate to their rank in addition to the specialised duties relating to their individual departments or offices: Serve as executive assistant to top or middle management as the case may be; Supervise other senior or junior secretaries or clerical staff and take general control of the office; Spend the imprest money and keep the impress accounts; May be authorised to open envelopes containing confidential documents; May represent the boss at functions when he cannot attend; Will train his/her junior in office procedures and report on their performance; Use the computer to produce various documents needed in the office and accompany the boss to conferences and handle the PowerPoint presentations of his conference papers etc (Ahukannah and Ugoji, 2009).

Top flight secretaries are expected to be very innovative in whatever they do, as such are expected to be up-to-date and improve upon what is expected of him/her but not to be static to the enumerated duties and those of the office or department of postings. The duties of top flight Confidential Secretaries (i.e. secretaries to chief executives) according to Obadailki (2013) are:

- i) **Administrative Services:** This include managing the reception function, planninreg meetings and conferences, man aging transportation and travel, managing mail processing, coordinating officer parties and administering business continuity programmes such as b business insurance, liability insurances etc.
- ii) **Information Technology:** This refers to the use of desktop software (word processing, e-mail, spreadsheets and presentation); use of database systems, administering a file server and local area network, data and system security, system monitoring and reporting, digital graphics and design and publishing and even view editing and streaming, communication systems, cell phones, 2-way radios broadband, internet access and document collaboration systems); record management/organization, retention, storage, retrieval, disposal and security.
- iii) **Facilities, Equipment and supplies:** This is made up of office space costing and leasing, office moves and relocation, signage, interior design and decor, overseeing cleaning, maintenance and repairs arranging for office equipment and supplies, and arranging for commercial printing.

- iv) **Management:** This has to do with the top flight secretary applying principles and functions of management (planning, organizing, leading, controlling) documenting the management organization and chain of command and establishing office etiquette and business ethics guidelines.
- v) **Communication:** This include writing letters and reports, establishing phones procedures; formatting and proof-reading documents; using paper and electronic forms; putting together a corporate style manual and making presentations etc.
- vi) **Skills:** These include conceptual skills, people skills and technical skills. Conceptual skills include ability to analyse problems and come up with solutions and to identify potential problems and prevent them; ability to work without supervision, demonstrate sound reasoning and judgement; and also have ability to make decisions. People skills which enable the secretary to work with others include good oral and written communication, ability to read people, work with different people and to be fair and firm, ability to listen and give others the opportunity to provide input and other meaningful suggestions. These skills are very important for a confidential secretary because they are the liaison between the chief executives and all kinds of other employees from professional, technical and managerial staff to clerk and blue collar workers. The Technical skill on the other hand include ability to use computer technology, specialised knowledge and abilities in communication system, records management, finance, human resources, facilities, commercial printing, mail processing, and business insurance to name a few.

SECRETARY'S POLITENESS INFLUENCE JOB PERFORMANCE

Politeness is considered an essential practice which ensures that interactions between people are orderly and that the desired goal is realized (Bremner, 2012). According to Pullin (2010), politeness is a universal phenomenon involved in the creation and maintenance of good interactional relations, although politeness norms may vary from one community or individual to another. Politeness stands out as a vital communicative activity that tends to harmonize social interactions (Kádár & Pan, 2011) and foster interpersonal relations between the members of a society (Najeeb, Maros & Nor, 2012). Brown and Levinson (1978) define politeness as a countenance of the intention of the speaker to assuage threats of the face carried out by face threatening acts (FTAs) towards another person in social interaction. 'Act' according to Darics (2010) refers to the intended act either verbally or through non-verbal communication. On the other hand, Rixer (2016) defines politeness as portrayal of good manners and respect for others.

According to Mills (2011) being polite is an attempt to save face for another. Lakoff (1989) looks at politeness as a means of minimizing the risk of confrontation in discourse while Eelen (2014) views politeness as formality, as difference, as etiquette, good manners or as tact. Politeness gets its strength over others by explaining it from a more fundamental notion of what is to be a human being, the basic notion of face; which is all about the self-image in public which everyone wishes to claim (Bloor & Bloor, 2013). Politeness is such an important principle in human language use because speakers must consider the listeners' feelings (Eelen, 2014). Understanding among people promotes good interpersonal association and creates a favorable working environment. Brown and Levinson (1978) notes that politeness has the notion of 'face' which exists universally in human culture and social interaction. 'Face' which originated from Goffman (1967), is the self-image in the public that people want to claim for themselves. Face has two related aspects: positive and negative faces. Positive face is the consistent self-image that is positive (Brown & Levinson, 1978) or personality desiring that a self-image is acknowledged and claimed by members in an interaction (Eelen, 2014) while negative face is the desire of every participant in a conversation to be unhindered in social interaction and described as an individual's basic claim to territories, personal preserves and self-determination (Harris, 2003). Kithure (2008) avers that the two aspects of face are the basic wants in any social interaction, so co-operation is needed amongst the participants to maintain each other's face. 3

Mills (2003) notes that politeness is the manifestation of the encoder's intentions to lessen threats of the face supported by face threatening acts towards others. The concept of face is vital to power since it defines the personalities established in different contexts by people for output in linguistic. Face affects linguistic strategies that are used by people with varying social distance. Nevertheless, not all circumstances cater for the face needs of members. Stephan, Liberman and Trope (2010) state that people require to show urgency or emphasis and may thus appear pushy, intimidating or impolite.

A secretary should be very polite at all times as politeness is one of the most cherished qualities of a secretary. The secretary must not allow the pressure and complex nature of the job affect his/her dealing with the public and fellow staff. Politeness is the practical application of good manners or etiquette so as not to offend others. It is a culturally defined phenomenon, and therefore what is considered polite in one culture can sometimes be quite rude or simply eccentric in another cultural context. While the goal of politeness is to refrain from behaving in an offensive way so as not to offend others and make all people feel relaxed and comfortable with one another, these culturally defined standards at times may be manipulated.

SECRETARY'S LOYALTY INFLUENCE JOB PERFORMANCE

The secretary must be loyal to the organization and his/her boss; show respect to other top officers of the organization and respect constituted authority. Ade, (2015) Loyalty tends to encourage your employees to do their best work and perform to their highest of standards. If you have loyal employees working for you, then you are going to have employees who work productively and efficiently. Staff loyalty lowers the rates of turnover that you may see within your company.

Bidwell (2011) divides the term loyalty into two parts. "The first piece is having the employer's best interests at heart. The second piece is when an employee remains with the same employer rather than moving on." Employee loyalty is an organisational citizenship behaviour that reflects allegiance to the organisation through the promotion of its interests and image to outsiders (Bettencourt, Gwinner, & Meuter, 2001). Employees who engage in these loyalty behaviours act as advocates to consumers of the organisation's products, services and image.

In this modern day and age where there is liberalization, secretaries continue to become the competitive advantage for businesses. Although some businesses may manage with mediocre secretaries, it is competent secretaries who can actually drive an average business to greater heights. In the same vein, bad secretaries can cause flourishing business empires to collapse. In a tight labour market, keeping good secretaries and developing secretary loyalty become increasingly important and a continuing challenge. Human beings are the basic resources operating in the organisations, thus the survival of the industry depends to a large extent on its ability to develop and retain its human resource base (Landford, Hancock, Fellows & Gale, 2005). The need for human resource managers to keep up with effective management of secretaries in the organisations cannot be overemphasized. It is therefore dependent on the industry to manage, develop and maintain the workforce in order to meet the new demand. Having secretary loyalty means the secretary is committed to the future and success of the organization. Creating an exciting work place where the company is moving forward and has opportunities will encourage secretary loyalty to the organization and help with staff retention. Great ways to motivate secretaries and boost secretary loyalty to a company are through incentives and rewards. If a secretary has been with the company for a certain number of years, then they should be rewarded for their loyalty. Rewards ought to be personal to the individual secretary; as a result, the company is showing they care about the individual within the organization (Dailey & Kirk, 2002).

RESEARCH METHOD

Area of the Study

Uyo metropolis was chosen as a study area for this study. It is the geopolitical headquarters of Akwa Ibom State as well as Uyo Local Government Area. Uyo LGA is located on latitude 0532°North and longitude 07 56°East. It is bounded on the South by Nsit Atai and Nsit Ibom Local Government Area, on the East by Uruan Local Government Area while North is Itu and bounded on the West with Etinan local government. Uyo is located within the low land coastal region of Nigeria.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A survey design was used for this study. This approach was considered most appropriate because it helped the researcher to describe, examine, record, analyze and interpret the variables that were found in the study. It is also useful because of the relatively large population from which the information was collected.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of this study consisted of all the Secretaries, clerks, confidential secretaries, executive secretaries of Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The sample size of 60 drawn from Secretaries, clerks, confidential secretaries, executive secretaries in the local government commission was used for the study.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument used for the study was Questionnaire. The instruments elicited information on the dependent and independent variables. The research instrument was made up of three sections; A and B. Section A, focused on the personal data of the respondents. Section B measured the constructs of the research variables using. Each variable was measured with a 4 points level of internal scale of measurement -Strongly Agreed (SA) (4points), Agreed- (A) (3 points), Disagree-(D) (2 points); Strongly Disagreed (SD)- 1 point if the item was positively worded. Reversed scoring was used for items negatively worded.

VALIDATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The two research instrument was given to validate in the Department of Office Technology and Management. The purpose was to ensure that items on the questionnaire were properly worded to meet the respondents' level of understanding and comprehensively covered the research objectives. Finally, the purpose of the validation of the instrument was to determine face and content validity. At the end, the instruments were adjudged valid for use.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

The questionnaire was administered to the sampled respondents after obtaining permission from the council Head of Service on presentation of a letter of introduction from the Department. All the questions on the questionnaire were read to the students to avoid any misunderstanding. The council clerk assisted the researcher in the distribution and collection of completed copies of the questionnaire on the spot method. This method adopted by the researcher to ensure that time was judiciously utilized and to avoid missing copies of the questionnaire. At the end, all the copies distributed were collected for subsequent analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

Data generated in the study were analyzed with Chi-square Statistic.

DATA PRESENTATION

The results are presented in tables 1-3 and analyzed under each of the hypotheses. **HO₁:** Secretary's confidentiality does not significantly influence job performance in Uyo Local government area

Table 1: Chi-square Analysis on how Secretary's confidentiality influence job performance in Uyo Local government area.

O	E	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$	X ²
8	15.33	3.5	17.05
32	24.67	2.18	
15	7.67	7.01	
5	4.36	4.36	

df = 1, X² cri: 3.84, X² cal = 17.05, p < 0.05

Data analysis in table 1 above shows that calculated X² value of 17.05 is greater than the critical X² value of 3.84 at 0.05 levels of significance. This means that Secretary's confidentiality does significantly influence job performance in Uyo Local government area; hence the null hypotheses is rejected.

HO₂: Secretary's politeness does not significantly influence job performance in Uyo Local government area.

Table 2: Chi-square Analysis on how Secretary's politeness influence job performance in Uyo Local government area.

O	E	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$	X ²
10	15.83	2.15	10.04
28	22.07	1.53	
15	7.17	3.71	
7	12.86	2.65	

df = 1, X² cri: 3.84, X² cal = 10.04, p < 0.05

Analysis of in data table 2 above shows that calculated X² value of 10.04 is greater than the critical X² value of 3.84 at 0.05 levels of significance. This means Secretary's politeness does significantly influence job performance in Uyo Local government area; hence the null hypotheses is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis in table 1 indicates that Secretary's confidentiality does significantly influence job performance in Uyo Local government area. The findings obtained agrees with the view of Edun and Ajetunmobi (1996) and put forward by Ahukunnah and Ugoji (2009). The understanding of these duties will assist the various chief executives, personnel directors and managers and other middle level executives to know what to expect from their respective secretaries. These duties will in one way or the other tempt the code of ethic of the secretary.

Data in table 2 showed that Secretary's politeness does significantly influence job performance in Uyo Local government area. The result obtained is in line with Pullin (2010), politeness is a universal phenomenon involved in the creation and maintenance of good interactional relations, although politeness norms may vary from one community or individual to another. Politeness stands out as a vital communicative activity that tends to harmonize social interactions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the data analysis and findings, it is concluded that Secretary's confidentiality, politeness and loyalty does significantly influence job performance in Uyo Local government area. The following recommendations are therefore made:-

1. There is urgent need for a viable professional body to oversee the activities of secretarial professionals in Nigeria. This will go a long way to bring about professionalism in this profession; help regulate and serve as check and balances and bring about the benefits of having a professional body just as in other professions like in health, law, etc. With a viable professional body, all the lapses identified in this study can be resolved.
2. There should be awareness campaign by the National body of Professional secretaries (Nigeria Institute of Professional Secretaries) to educate or enlighten the public most especially employers of Labour of the need to identify with the professional body by liaising with the body in terms of employing of professional secretaries.
3. Ethical secretaries should always be appreciated by the boss and the organization. In this way, the secretary will maintain the ethical standard. In addition, secretaries should always be reminded of the ethics of their profession by the Human resource office so as to get the best out of them. While it is common at times that some organizations succumb to unethical practices because of competition, the secretary should not be part of it, he/she should rather resign than play along.

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