



Adult and continuing education needs of employed women aspiring to administrative assistant positions
by Janeth Lee Mende Spicer

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
Montana State University
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Abstract:

The problem of this study was to determine the daily activities, the educational preparation and the experience needed by women aspiring to administrative assistant positions as perceived by personnel managers and administrative assistant aspirants, and to compare the perceptions of the two groups to see if there was congruence. Another dimension of the problem was to see if personnel managers hired administrative assistants with the preparation and experience they viewed as necessary, and if there was congruence between personnel managers and administrative assistants pertaining to the nature of the work. The outcomes of the generalizations of this study were limited to personnel managers who were members of the Yellowstone Valley Personnel Association of the Billings, Montana metropolitan area, and secretaries and administrative assistants employed by the same firms as the personnel managers. Though limited in applicability it was hoped that the generalizations of this study might contribute to the growth of information concerning the educational needs of and the program training changes necessary for women aspiring to the position of administrative assistant. Data were collected by conducting personal interviews with personnel managers, secretaries, and administrative assistants. The Chi Square Test of Independence was used to test the hypotheses at the .05 level of significance. It was determined that there was not agreement in the areas of the amount and the kind of schooling necessary for an administrative assistant, the expertise needed by administrative assistants, handling travel arrangements for supervisors, attending budget meetings, and participating in policy determinations within the organizational unit.

Personnel managers who were paired with administrative assistants in the same companies generally did not agree on the following: years of formal schooling necessary for an administrative assistant; particular expertise which would aid most in preparing for an administrative assistant position; and the importance, or unimportance, of the job tasks of handling travel arrangements for supervisors, attending budget meetings, controlling and purchasing office equipment and supplies, handling personal problems of employees, interviewing job applicants, and participating in policy determinations within the organizational unit.

ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION NEEDS OF EMPLOYED WOMEN

ASPIRING TO ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITIONS

by

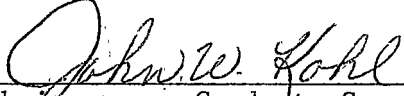
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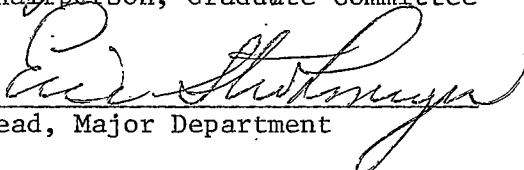
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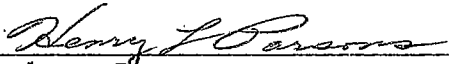
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ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to determine the daily activities, the educational preparation and the experience needed by women aspiring to administrative assistant positions as perceived by personnel managers and administrative assistant aspirants, and to compare the perceptions of the two groups to see if there was congruence. Another dimension of the problem was to see if personnel managers hired administrative assistants with the preparation and experience they viewed as necessary, and if there was congruence between personnel managers and administrative assistants pertaining to the nature of the work. The outcomes of the generalizations of this study were limited to personnel managers who were members of the Yellowstone Valley Personnel Association of the Billings, Montana metropolitan area, and secretaries and administrative assistants employed by the same firms as the personnel managers. Though limited in applicability it was hoped that the generalizations of this study might contribute to the growth of information concerning the educational needs of and the program training changes necessary for women aspiring to the position of administrative assistant.

Data were collected by conducting personal interviews with personnel managers, secretaries, and administrative assistants. The Chi Square Test of Independence was used to test the hypotheses at the .05 level of significance. It was determined that there was not agreement in the areas of the amount and the kind of schooling necessary for an administrative assistant, the expertise needed by administrative assistants, handling travel arrangements for supervisors, attending budget meetings, and participating in policy determinations within the organizational unit.

Personnel managers who were paired with administrative assistants in the same companies generally did not agree on the following: years of formal schooling necessary for an administrative assistant; particular expertise which would aid most in preparing for an administrative assistant position; and the importance, or unimportance, of the job tasks of handling travel arrangements for supervisors, attending budget meetings, controlling and purchasing office equipment and supplies, handling personal problems of employees, interviewing job applicants, and participating in policy determinations within the organizational unit.

The following were recommendations: implementation of adult and continuing education courses and/or programs in office administration should be considered a high priority in collegiate schools of business; short-term workshops and seminars should be developed for management personnel and those aspiring to administrative assistant positions for the purposes of developing job descriptions for administrative assistants, developing career paths for secretaries, and emphasizing intracompany communication skills; a minimum of two years of post high school education should be required for office administration programs, and four-year programs should be encouraged; programs should be kept broad and flexible; and courses in human and/or public relations, management, and supervision skills should be included.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The field of adult and continuing education is expanding. Adults in increasing numbers believe that learning is a life-long process, and they are returning to school to prepare themselves for career changes or advancement in their present careers. As more women plan for business careers, many of them desire to advance to management positions from traditional secretarial roles. Huggins (1977) believed that one obstacle to women being promoted is that specific, adequate training for women executives has been lacking. She charged that educators have a responsibility to make adequate programs available for women who want to continue their education. Participation in adult and continuing education programs is a way for this group to advance.

Women in secretarial positions often face an employment barrier to management positions. In spite of this, the researcher agrees with the recommendations made by Rowe (1973). She concluded that women must approach management positions with the same aspirations as men, with the same career-mindedness as men, and with an understanding of the sacrifices that must be made to obtain these positions. Rowe believed that a woman should not expect promotion because she is a woman regardless of the law; she should expect to be as well prepared

educationally as her male counterpart and should be willing and able to compete on an equal basis.

The position of administrative assistant can be considered to be an entry-level management position. Through research, it is possible to secure information relevant to individuals who are aspiring to administrative assistant positions. Moreover, it is possible to provide women aspiring to the position of administrative assistant with helpful information which may enable them to reach this goal and in a shorter time than would otherwise be possible.

Rowe (1973) had this to say about women breaking into management positions:

If the breakthrough to upper-level jobs for women is to occur by the 1980's, women must be encouraged to take advantage of training programs for job opportunities in a challenging and demanding society. These women must be urged to take advantage of the education which will be available to them and to make use of their talents. The educational programs will enable the women to compete for positions on an equal-opportunity basis with men.

Statement of the Problem

There are women who would like the responsibility of the position of administrative assistant, the title, and the salary. It is desirable to learn what is involved in this position, and to ascertain the educational background and experience needed for this position. This information would be helpful to those who aspire to administrative assistant positions.

The problem of this study was to determine the daily activities, the educational preparation and the experience needed by women aspiring to administrative assistant positions as perceived by personnel managers and administrative assistant aspirants and to determine the degree of relationship between the perceptions of the two groups. Another dimension of the problem was to see if personnel managers hired administrative assistants with the preparation and experience they viewed as necessary, and if there was a relationship between personnel managers and administrative assistants pertaining to the nature of the work of administrative assistants.

Purpose of the Study

Higher education has a role and a responsibility in preparing individuals for career change and career advancement. Seay (1972) stated that higher education must relate to the needs of present-day communities. He said, "Now is the time for colleges and universities to acknowledge the continuousness and the individuality of education."

To further emphasize this point, it is appropriate to quote Ast (1974):

State colleges can no longer limit their efforts to that of the career preparation of youth. Career modifications during an individual's life span, demand newer and different skills. Obsolescence, population mobility, expanding knowledge, and changing lifestyle demand continuing education opportunity for all, throughout life. State colleges must be concerned with

increasing the accessibility for continuous learning experiences for all people.

Collegiate schools of business are a part of this demand for adult and continuing education. To better prepare individuals for furthering or changing a business career, the needs of these individuals must be ascertained. Very few studies have been done pertaining to the experience and educational background needed by a large group of women aspiring to beginning management positions generally, or to administrative assistant positions, specifically. Huggins (1977) recommended that studies be made periodically to assure the adequacy of collegiate programs in meeting the continuing educational needs of administrative assistants. Rowe (1973) also emphasized the need for further research in this area.

It was important to know if those who are hiring administrative assistants see the educational preparation, experience and daily activities of the position differently than those who are aspiring to the position. If it was found that the secretarial group perceived the position differently, they may well be pursuing the position ineffectively if, indeed, they are pursuing it at all. If secretaries are working from a premise different from that of the personnel managers, this could be one of the reasons women workers are not being promoted in business.

Even though women are entering the work force in dramatically increasing numbers, the earning gap between men and women

has actually widened since 1955. This was documented in a recent report by Bomboy (1979):

Despite their increased numbers, despite the women's movement, despite the law, women have not been able to increase their earning power or their job status. The shocking truth is that the earnings gap between men and women has widened since 1955. Full-time women workers in 1977 earned 60 cents for every \$1.00 earned by men. In 1955 they earned almost 64 cents for each \$1.00 men earned. . . the jobs most women currently hold are those that have the least prospect for advancement.

To find why the secretarial group might have perceptions different from the personnel managers, and why this was important to determine, it was necessary to examine the nature of the traditional secretarial position.

There is evidence to support the premise that secretaries generally have not been encouraged to have any positive perceptions about advancement. For example, Hansen (1974) while presenting some of the obstacles to the career development of women stated that one of the hard realities is that women who are working are concentrated in a few occupations; many of them low-paying, low-level and dead-end. Hansen pointed out the lack of work orientation:

Concern for women's career development is not a movement to get every woman into the labor force but, rather, a concern for her uniqueness and individuality as a person and for her right to have some freedom of choice in both her personal and work life. It is concern about the overwhelmingly subordinate nature of women's roles--as nurses rather than doctors, teachers rather than principals, assembly workers rather than supervisors, secretaries rather than bosses, bank tellers rather than lending officers. . . It is concern about the ancillary nature of women's

careers, with only small numbers in banking, engineering, medicine and management. It is concern about the passivity and dependence that keep her from finding room at the top even if she has ability. It is concern about fear of competency that keeps her from maximizing her potentials.

As suggested in the above, secretaries may well have misconceptions concerning advancement.

The obstacles become more formidable when the secretarial group does not perceive the requirements as personnel managers do. After taking into consideration the historical background of the secretarial group, the characteristics of general submissiveness, and the lack of advancement opportunities, it is quite possible that if they have notions of advancement requirements at all, they may well be false perceptions.

Secretaries as a group may have felt opportunities for advancement are quite limited as was frequently the case several years ago. Recent legislation has helped to change some of this, but the secretarial group may not have been affected by these changes.

Role ambiguity further contributes to low morale and feelings of inadequacy about advancement possibilities. Giblin and Giblin found that the inability of the supervisor to give positive direction and motivation to the secretary often stems from inconsistency in the role relationship. They stated (1977), "In a single day, secretaries may be treated as slave, surrogate wife, best friend, and automation

(sic)," This further contributes to possibilities of misconceptions by the secretarial group.

If it was found that different perceptions between the two groups did occur, it may well point up a need for explicit administrative assistant job descriptions which are readily available to secretaries, established career paths for secretaries with potential, and better communication lines between management and secretaries through management by objectives or other programs. None of this would be discovered, however, if the views of the secretarial group were not compared with the personnel managers.

If it was found that discrepancies in perceptions appeared between the two groups, then adjustments would be necessary before curriculum planning could proceed. Thus, congruence between the secretarial group and the personnel managers group as to what constitutes the position of administrative assistant was felt to be a prerequisite to successful training programs design.

Since the educator's role should be to fill the gap between perceptions of what is and what is expected in the areas of knowledge, attitudes and skill development, one of the first steps was to determine whether or not there was general agreement as to what is necessary to obtain the position, before moving on to the planning and implementation of adult and continuing education courses and

programs. Both groups must begin at the same point. Giblin and Giblin found that secretaries were often uninformed about advancement possibilities (1977):

Even secretaries who receive outstanding performance evaluations have questions: Where do I go from here? I'm told my performance is excellent and that I'm invaluable to the department, but so what? I don't want to be a secretary all my life--what promotional opportunities are open to me?

Secretaries are often disillusioned after learning that they are being passed over because of the lack of education--an education they might have been able to obtain, if they had only known the requirements. Giblin and Giblin substantiated this (1977):

. . . inexperienced college graduates are usually chosen to fill these positions while experienced, knowledgeable secretaries are passed over. Even administrative assistant positions--a traditional goal for secretaries--are now being filled by college graduates who have not had one day of business experience.

The need for career planning for secretaries was emphasized by Giblin and Giblin (1977):

Obviously, organizations must increase the career mobility of secretarial personnel . . . If the process is to succeed, there must be an open exchange of information and considerable understanding between the boss and the secretary. The boss must take the time to learn the secretary's career goals as well as to determine her potential for realizing them. And he should give her a realistic view both of the career possibilities open to her and of what she must do to improve her own prospects. . . . The identified knowledge, skills, responsibilities, and tasks can be related to their counterparts in the next-highest position. The process of assessing the secretary's performance against preset standards and jointly setting goals with her will provide a reasonable means of assessing her potential performance in a higher-level position along her identified career path. This

process will reveal that many secretarial positions have provided their incumbents with knowledge and skills--particularly interpersonal or social skills that can be directly applied in such jobs as personnel recruiter, employee relations specialist, public relations associate, professional sales positions, and supervisory positions in administrative areas.

If, on the other hand, it was found through this comparison, that there was general agreement between the two groups, and educational needs were identified, then the next step would be to proceed with the planning and implementation of adult and continuing education programs to meet these needs.

It was felt that another way to identify the daily activities and the education and experience needs of aspirants was to determine the daily activities, and the education and experience needs of administrative assistants, employed by the same firms as the secretaries and the personnel managers. This information could then be correlated with the information gathered from the personnel managers.

Business educators as well as secretaries need to know if the job description is changing. Because of technology, business continues to constantly change. The office of today is involved with word processing, reprographics, management information systems, data communications, records management and micrographics, and data processing. These are just a few of the office functions that were not common a few years ago. It is therefore necessary for business educators to constantly assess their programs. The findings of this

study will contribute to the knowledge of business educators and should contribute to answering the question--what should institutions of higher education be teaching students to prepare them for administrative assistant positions?

The primary purpose of this study was to provide information that would be useful for curricula planning, development, and improvement as it pertains to adult and continuing education courses and/or programs for women aspiring to the position of administrative assistant.

The secondary purpose of this study was the assembly and analysis of data pertaining to the position of administrative assistant which would be helpful to:

1. Women who are aspiring to the position of administrative assistant.
2. Employment personnel who are seeking administrative assistants.
3. Counselors of women who aspire to positions as administrative assistants.

General Procedure

This problem was investigated by constructing data collection instruments that were used to collect information during personal

interviews with the participants. The participants were composed of personnel managers, employed women aspiring to advance to the position of administrative assistant, and administrative assistants. The participants were all employed by the same firms in Billings, Montana, a metropolitan area of approximately 100,000 population.

Limitations

The following were limitations of the study:

1. The willingness and/or the ability of the administrative assistant aspirants who participated in this study, to recall, evaluate, record, and/or communicate to the researcher their experiences and opinions.
2. The willingness and/or the ability of the personnel managers who participated in this study, to recall, evaluate, record, and/or communicate to the researcher their experiences and opinions.
3. The willingness and/or the ability of the administrative assistants who participated in this study, to recall, evaluate, record, and/or communicate to the researcher their experiences and opinions.
4. The outcomes of the generalizations of this study were limited to personnel managers who were members of the Yellowstone Valley Personnel Association of the Billings, Montana metropolitan

area, and secretaries and administrative assistants employed by the same firms as the personnel managers. Though limited in applicability it was hoped that the generalizations of this study might contribute to the growth of information concerning the educational needs of and the program training changes necessary for women aspiring to the position of administrative assistant.

5. The review of literature of this study was limited to the resources available at the Montana State University and the Eastern Montana College libraries.

Delimitations

The investigation was restricted to data obtained from personnel managers, administrative assistant aspirants, and administrative assistants of selected firms in the metropolitan area of Billings, Montana. The personnel managers, the administrative assistant aspirants, and the administrative assistants were employed by the same selected firms. The personnel managers were all members of the Yellowstone Valley Personnel Association.

This study was delimited to administrative assistants as defined in the 1977 Dictionary of Occupational Titles (please see definitions).

Definitions of Terms

The following two definitions were found in Good's Dictionary of Education (1973):

Continuing Education: (1) any extension of opportunities for reading, study, and training to young persons and adults following their completion of or withdrawal from full-time school and college programs. (2) education for adults provided by special schools, centers, colleges, or institutes that emphasizes flexible rather than traditional or academic programs.

Adult Education: Any process by which men and women, either alone or in groups, try to improve themselves by increasing their knowledge, skills, or attitudes, or the process by which individuals or agencies try to improve men and women in these ways.

The 1977 Dictionary of Occupational Titles contains the following definition of administrative assistant:

169.167-010 Administrative Assistant (any ind.) administrative analyst, administrative officer. Aids executive in staff capacity by coordinating office services, such as personnel, budget preparation and control, housekeeping, records control, and special management studies. Studies management methods in order to improve workflow, simplify reporting procedures, or implement cost reductions. Analyzes unit operating practices, such as record-keeping systems, forms control, office layout, suggestion systems, personnel and budgetary requirements, and performance standards to create new systems or revise established procedures. Analyzes jobs to delimit position responsibilities for use in wage-and-salary adjustments, promotions, and evaluation of workflow. Studies methods of improving work measurements or performance standards. Coordinates collection and preparation of operating reports, such as time-and-attendance records, terminations, new hires, transfers, budget expenditures, and statistical records of performance data. Prepares reports including conclusions and recommendations for solution of administrative problems. Issues and interprets operating policies. Reviews and answers correspondence. May assist in preparation of budget needs and annual

reports of organization. May interview job applicants, conduct orientation of new employees, and plan training programs. May direct services, such as maintenance, repair, supplies, mail and files.

Summary of Chapter 1

There is a large group of women aspiring to management positions. One way to reach this goal is through the entry-level management position of administrative assistant. Few studies have dealt with the educational preparation, experience and daily activities of administrative assistants. As this information becomes known, collegiate business courses and/or programs in adult and continuing education can be implemented to serve this group. This chapter included statements of the problem of the study, the purpose of the study, the general procedures that were used, the limitations and delimitations of the study, and definitions of terms.

Chapter 2

RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter includes a review of the literature in the following areas: adult business education programs growth predictions, women in the labor force and in management positions, and related research.

The concept of lifelong learning has appeared in the literature for many years, but only in the last few years has it become a part of the American way of life; no longer is the time for learning reserved for school-aged children. Hansen, Klink and Reece (1970) summarized this concept:

The evolutionary development of education as a lifelong process has accelerated in recent years due to a series of social-economic forces. Paramount among these forces is governmental involvement in establishing broader educational opportunities and a changing economy which has made possible an ever higher standard of living, shorter working hours, and relegation of manual labor to machines. The implications of these many social-economic forces cannot be overlooked by our public schools.

Adult Business Education Programs Growth Predictions

In 1970, 666,100 adults were enrolled in part-time office and distributive adult business programs. By 1974, that number had increased to 911,799 (Grant and Lind, 1976). Educators are predicting an accelerated growth in adult education for business programs

in the United States. Primarily, this predicted growth is based on two major factors: the need for more technological knowledge and skills to function economically and socially in a complex society, and the expanding adult population. Kenneth Swatt (1972) aptly summarized this growth prediction:

The last three decades of the twentieth century find life in the United States becoming increasingly complex. The adult population is expanding rapidly. An adult is a member of a society that strives to maintain a high standard of living and equality of educational opportunities. The life of an adult is influenced, and sometimes dominated, by economic considerations. This should prompt school administrators and business educators to be prepared to witness an increased demand for adult business education programs.

Others agreed with Swatt's prediction. Anderson, Blanford, and Douglas (1973) have said:

Adult education in its many forms continues to grow and to gain in relative importance in the United States. Owing to the rapidly increasing percentage of our population classified as adult, as well as other factors, this trend can be expected to continue and perhaps accelerate.

Anderson, Blanford, and Douglas went on to say that business will continue to be a major factor in adult educational programs.

Career improvement is a constant in adulthood. New knowledge of business and new skills will for the most part be acquired in adult education for business programs. A good rationale for increased growth in this area was offered by Luing (1978):

The largest potential increase in the clientele we serve undoubtedly lies in what is commonly called the non-traditional

student--those above the normal college age. The number of workers having second careers is on the increase. Unions are seeking increased educational opportunity for their members and creating a new demand for both credit and noncredit courses, especially at the two-year institutions. There are new demands for special programs for minorities in industry, and various types of government-related programs.

Women in the Labor Force and in Management Positions

The Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor (July 1976) stated some reasons about why women work:

Women work for the same reasons men do--most importantly, to provide for the welfare of themselves, their families, or others. This was true of most of the 8.5 million women workers who were never married. Nearly all of the 6.9 million women workers who were widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands--particularly the women who were raising children--were working for compelling economic reasons. In addition, the 3.1 million married women workers whose husbands had incomes below \$5,000 in 1974 almost certainly worked because of economic need. Finally, about 2.2 million women would be added if we take into account those women whose husbands had incomes between \$5,000 and \$7,000. Forty-three percent of women workers had husbands whose incomes were \$7,000 or more.

The labor force participation rate by women is increasing. This was verified by another report from the U.S. Department of Labor (1975), which compared the increased number of women in the labor market with the increased number of men:

Within one decade--1964 to 1974--the number of women workers aged 16 and over increased by about 10 million, or 41 percent, when it climbed from 25.4 million to 35.8 million. The number of men workers increased by only 16 percent during this period.

The 1978 Employment and Training Report of the President further substantiated the remarkable increase of women in the labor force:

Most of the 1977 expansion resulted from an unusually large upsurge in the labor force entry of adult women (1.4 million on the average). In recent years, the rise in female participation has been concentrated among women 20 to 34 years of age. Prior to 1965, women 45 to 64 years of age were largely responsible for the increase in the female labor force participation rate. A phenomenal increase has been occurring among women 25 to 34 years. Their participation rate advanced by 21 percentage points between 1965 and 1977.

The President's report stated that numerous social and economic developments have influenced this trend. Some of the most significant developments have been greater social acceptance of working on the part of young wives and mothers; increased proportions of divorced, separated, and never-married women; higher educational attainment; the drop in the fertility rates; and the effects of antidiscrimination laws.

Bomboy (1979) said that in the summer of 1978 women reached a milestone; for the first time more than half of all American women over age 16 were participating in the labor force. Bomboy pointed out, "Once children reach school age, 58 percent of all mothers work. The 'typical American family'--father working, mother at home with two children--now constitutes only 7 percent of all families!"

Several booklets have been published by the U.S. Department of Labor which considered the changing status of women in business

positions. One booklet (U.S. Department of Labor, July, 1975), gave the statistical distribution by occupation of women as compared to men:

In 1974, 35 percent of women workers were employed as clerical workers, only 6 percent were men. Working as managers and administrators were 5 percent of the women and 14 percent of the men.

In the last few years, special programs have emerged to encourage women to move into new job areas, and to help them succeed. One such educational effort is Career Development Women's Studies, a year-long college credit program developed by Cornell University's Institute for Education and Research on Women and Work. According to Bomboy (1979), this innovative program, funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, gives women in clerical, blue collar, and service occupations, education and skills which will help them develop confidence, improve their performance on their present jobs, acquire skills needed to move into better jobs, and earn nine college credits which can be applied toward a degree should they wish to continue their education. Two hundred students are currently enrolled in four locations around New York State. In one pilot location, more than half of the students completing the program report making lateral or upward moves over the program year.

The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges has initiated a new program to prepare women for business management and

ownership, according to Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., President of AACJC (Hula, Editor, Business and Office Insider, 1979). The Association will develop curriculum and counseling models for programs that can be provided by community colleges to open channels to the business world for women. The three-phase project is being conducted by the Association in cooperation with the Association of Community College Trustees and with support from the Small Business Administration. The first phase will involve the development of a training and counseling model, the second will concern itself with field-testing the model in ten locations, and the third will provide for workshops across the country to disseminate course information and promote interest as widely as possible. The long-range goal of the effort is to increase the number of women-owned small businesses in the United States by eliminating the basic anxieties of women approaching the business world while at the same time preparing them for business operations.

The Management Institute of the University of Wisconsin has been providing management training workshops for executive secretaries. Lytton (1969) reported that the sessions presented over a three-day period deal with the following topics:

1. The Executive Secretary Position
2. Improving Communication and Listening Skills

3. Executive Secretaries' Human Relations Problems
4. Understanding Executive Behavior
5. Motivating Employees for Improved Results
6. Maintaining Discipline
7. Planning for Self-Improvement

The basic philosophy and rationale of the workshops has been that managers today can best accomplish work and achieve results through people with a managerial attitude of "leading." Lytton stated:

Since the trend is to extend to the executive secretary position more administrative management functions, it follows logically that the executive secretary, in getting work done through people, must also assume the same attitude of 'leading.'

According to Maymi (1974) one of the most important areas in upgrading women to management positions and other nontraditional jobs is the implementation of educational and informational programs. She stated, "We have encouraged the establishment of information and referral centers, where women can get the information they need about training and employment." As the Director of the Women's Bureau, Department of Labor, Maymi stressed that a climate of acceptance toward women in nontraditional positions must be created.

The phenomenal increase in the number of women in the labor force has implications for adult and continuing education programs for women. This increase means it is likely that a greater number of

management positions will be filled by women in the future than in the past. Continuing education programs and services were reported by the Women's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor (1971). There exists a wide-spread realization that additional education can bring personal enrichment as well as job skills useful in the working world, according to this report. This publication also outlined some of the continuing education programs for women that are now available.

Rich reported on a government funded project at Northeastern University in Boston (1977). The project involved twenty-four women who completed a year of intensive training, and subsequently were hired as managers in the Boston area. This training was done through the adult education center on the campus. Concentration was on job competencies. For example, they needed to know something about leadership, team building, listening, how to be effective in a meeting, how to develop a mentor as liaison, how to get support from other women in the organization, and what to expect and how to cope with it. This successful project emphasized role-playing and business simulation games as an integral part of the education. Rich stated that more of these projects could lead to significant breakthroughs for women who want management jobs.

Buzenberg (1975) pointed out there is a problem of inadequate training for women executives. She suggested that training designed

specifically to prepare women for management positions might help significantly in better utilization of women in management.

Burke and Weir (1977), concurred with Buzenberg about the need for specific training for women, but in addition, they recommended that some of this training should involve both men and women:

As more and more women reach for and attain management status, the difficulties and obstacles that women face when they move into this traditionally male preserve are increasingly documented. This literature, however, seems to have had little impact on the ways most schools of administration go about preparing and educating their students for the work world. . . . Little reference is made to the special problems which arise for both men and women meeting one another as equals in work.

Burke and Weir believed that the problems that stand in the way of women entering management positions are many and complicated. They were not optimistic that women could successfully make a dent in the corporate hierarchy, unless greater commitment and greater creative effort is forthcoming from aspiring women, schools of business, and men and women already working in business organizations.

Herman (1974) stated that employers have fallen prey to myths about the female of the species--high turnover, excessive absenteeism, inability to handle responsibility, emotional instability, etc.

Regarding the societal forces that affect women, she stated that:

. . . as long as society continues to conceptualize women as sex objects and servants, employers are unlikely to consider women as serious participants in the labor force who can command responsible positions and demand high salaries.

Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall (1977) believed that a top priority--second only to reducing joblessness--was responding to the special needs of women. He stated, "I know from experience . . . you do not just pass a law and say there will be no more discrimination. What you have got to do is take some affirmative action."

Lloyd (1962) believed that because of their proximity to company executives, many women are often overlooked in the search for someone promotable to positions of more responsibility. She stated that many office positions held by women qualify them for management status because of the management functions they perform, their freedom to regulate their own time, their privileges and advantages, the status symbols in their jobs and their close association with top management. They have been subjected to the most rigid informal type of management trainee programs imaginable, according to Lloyd, and they are usually well grounded in the fine arts of management.

To assess what kind of progress women have been making among the ranks of office management in the last few years and to provide some help for both men and women managers in dealing knowledgeably and profitably with the realities of women in management, Modern Office Procedures editors polled prominent women executives (1978). According to the editors:

Men and women need to be aware not only simply that women are progressing in management but also that this progress requires

them to know the potential problem areas and to learn appropriate responses so that the mutual goal of optimum business accomplishment is achieved. Learning those responses requires awareness of each other's differing assumptions and expectations.

According to the survey results, there were as many ways of moving up within a company as there were companies. The majority of women managers that were asked revealed they had advanced through established company procedures, such as when there was an opening due to attrition, a promotion, or transfer. Many of the women reported they had taken advantage of various supervisory and management courses offered by state and federal training centers.

There was not general agreement in the literature concerning the status of women in beginning management positions. Leslie, Zoubek, and Hosler (1965) contended that the job of the secretary has increased in status over the years, while the title has not changed:

Occasionally, a high-level secretary is called an 'administrative assistant.' The executive is usually responsible for the fact that this term is not in use in some offices.

These writers said the businessman finds it difficult to refer to his assistant by any name other than secretary. However, to determine her status with him, all one need do is eavesdrop on the boss when someone calls for information and the secretary is on vacation, and he is so needful of her help. The three authors claimed that status is one of the reasons why secretaries enjoy their work.

Riesman, Glazer and Denney, however, gave a different viewpoint. In their book, The Lonely Crowd (1961), a study of the changing American character, they included a section on white-collar workers, whom they characterized as glamorizers, feather-bedders, and indispensables, and secretaries were categorized as part of this group.

Mills (1953) called white-collar workers the great American middle class. In the section of his book devoted to secretaries, as a member of the white-collar world, Mills said that the rank of secretary has been the model of aspiration for most office girls and that the secretaries have borrowed prestige from close and private contact with executives. The role of the private secretary was depicted as a confidential assistant. However, Mills believed that the office of the old hierarchy--graded in income, skill, degree of supervision, and access to important persons--has begun to break down.

Lemaster and Stead (1968) presented some changes that have been taking place in the position of administrative assistant. They stressed the importance of a college background as necessary to prepare women for this position.

The need for college training for secretaries was also advocated by Arnold (1979). Relevant to a college curriculum, she advised that departments need to develop a curriculum that stresses

proficiency in the skills area--shorthand, typewriting, office machines, records management, and data processing--along with a strong basic business administration background. This would help to insure that graduates of office administration departments in colleges and universities have the training and competencies necessary for functioning in a new business environment. In addition, she said:

. . . students need to be equipped with the personal and professional qualifications to lend administrative support, compose letters, carry out research, prepare reports, and supervise others. This will enable them to serve in the intelligence center of business operations, and prepare them for higher level management positions later.

Because of the secretarial shortage, and the effect it is having on the productivity and efficiency of top management, many companies are working toward restructuring the secretarial job, according to Arnold. She stated that companies are changing the secretary's title to administrative assistant, and they are adding various management functions to the traditional duties in order to make the job itself more satisfying as well as to prepare secretaries for higher-level positions. As a part of this new business environment, Arnold stated:

Company policies are being changed to provide new opportunities for well-trained secretaries within a business firm--opportunities to serve as administrative assistants or to move into management jobs.

Campbell (1979) also commented on the secretarial shortage, and how clerical/secretarial jobs today can be "stepping stones" to

management positions, because companies are enhancing these jobs to attract capable women. Campbell stated that although many women are trying the direct route for obtaining employment in management, the clerical/secretarial route was often better because the ones who do the hiring, traditionally men, usually see managers in their own images, as men.

Recently Mott (1980) reported on the changing title and responsibilities of the secretary:

Administrative assistant or some similar title will gradually replace the term secretary. The new title will depict many of the same position characteristics as today's secretarial position, but the total responsibilities will be expanded to include managerial decision making.

He also stated that many authors are suggesting that future workers will need to be better prepared in the areas of data processing and word processing. In addition he predicted:

. . . even with updated skills, the future office worker will need more intensive and broader managerial skills than ever before. The kind of skills that will be required include decision making, priority setting, supervision, personal relationships, and communications.

American Vocational Association Executive Director Gene Bottoms (1979) predicted why the work in offices will change in the next decade and how these changes will affect curriculum planning:

. . . changes in the nature of work will be driven by more energy-efficient and environmentally improved technology and processes and by pressure to improve the nation's productive capacity. This

will result in substantial changes in the knowledge, competencies and instructional media needed in vocational programs.

Additional implications for curriculum changes were found recently by a legislative study team (Olson, 1980). They emphasized that advancement opportunities may be lost due to the lack of technical and managerial competence, and that efforts must be expended to assist women to move into high supervisory and management positions. They stressed that greater attention must be focused on:

business/industrial consultation, greater coordination with business and industry, contracting with business and industry for teachers, establishing supervised field experiences, scheduling class at appropriate times and sites, and offering certificate/degree programs.

Aptt (1980) reported on the transition of the secretarial role and the establishment of secretarial career paths. According to Aptt a change in attitude must be developed in business and in the community regarding the changing status of the secretary. Aptt advised:

Educational systems have to renew their commitment to the education of competent people in new technologies, language art skills and keyboard skills. Only then can managers use career paths to their fullest potential.

Related Research

The following research studies were related to this investigation:

In 1954, Lockwood conducted a study of the characteristics and duties of Certified Professional Secretaries (CPS's) to determine whether CPS's were actually superior to other secretaries. Lockwood posed the following questions:

1. How did the CPS's prepare themselves?
2. What is the present job status of the CPS?
3. What significant character traits, competencies, and understandings do the CPS's possess?

One hundred eighty-five CPS's who had passed all six sections of the CPS examination and two hundred nine secretaries who had passed only two sections, or fewer than two sections of the examination prior to 1953, were compared. Data was gathered concerning certain background factors and job status by means of a questionnaire and a work chart of important duties. The relationship between the background factors and job status of these two groups of secretaries and their performance on the CPS examination were studied by a correlation technique.

The significant findings were: Those secretaries who passed the CPS examination had more years of education than the non-passing secretaries. Also, the CPS's had taken more courses related to the six sections of the examination than the comparative group. The CPS's had more work experience at the high levels of job classifications, although the nonpassers had more total years of experience. The CPS holders achieved a higher salary at a younger age and their

positions required a greater variety of higher level duties than the nonpassers. The CPS's revealed a high degree of intelligence, accuracy, efficiency and initiative; they were outstandingly capable of establishing good human relations. Among the conclusions made by Lockwood, were the following: Effective human relations are of primary importance to the top-level secretary; good human relations should be stressed throughout all courses in the educational program. The elements of office efficiency should be given greater emphasis in school. Education for secretaries should be broad, for the job encompasses a great variety of duties and demands sufficient background on the part of the worker to adapt readily to new things.

Rusher's study of women in office management sought to ascertain promotional opportunities of women in office management positions (1957). The findings were that, for the most part, the middle management level was the top position attained by women and that management possessed a lack of confidence in the ability of women.

Rusher also found that management was reluctant to delegate responsibility and authority to women and paid them less than men.

The purpose of a study done by Noyes (1960) was to make an exploratory survey of the elements in the role of the woman executive secretary in order to define her duties and her behavior patterns in relation to the management activities and status. Noyes considered

executive secretaries as management. Several questions were posed as relevant to this purpose:

1. What has been the education and training of the executive secretary?
2. What has been the work experience of the executive secretary?
3. From a selected list of thirty-two job activities, which are those that are common to the executive secretary as distinct from the non-executive?
4. What are the evidences of the executive secretary's place in management?
5. What is the socio-economic level of a selected sample of executive secretaries?
6. What are some of the auxiliary behavior patterns of the executive secretary that reflect the influence of her occupational role both on and off the job?

Questionnaires were sent to the ten manufacturing industries having the greatest number of workers for the states of Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

The problem of the Noyes' study was to make an exploratory survey of the elements in the role of the woman executive secretary in order to define her duties and her behavior patterns in relation to her management activities and status.

A total of 211 questionnaires returned were found usable. Data on the socio-economic status of the secretaries were obtained by interviewing ten percent of the respondents who were chosen on the

basis of random numbers. Of the 211 secretaries studied in this survey, 116 met the criterion of being secretaries to top management and could thus be judged "executive secretaries."

Among the conclusions Noyes reached were that executive secretarial work is a field for college-educated girls as well as for those with high-school or business-school training. After becoming established in a minor clerical job in an organization, the route to becoming an executive secretary for one type of girl was by becoming a secretary to a man who rose to a top management level and took his secretary with him; for another type of girl, it was by spending a number of years with an organization and at some point in her career coming to the attention of a top management man who chose her for his secretary. His choice was based on the fact that he found her a good person to work with or because he had had a chance to evaluate her work and liked it, or both.

Among the recommendations made by Noyes were that at least one course in management be a requirement for graduation. It was suggested that this course should preferably be a course such as industrial management which is concerned with the elements in the operation of a manufacturing enterprise or in business policy which is concerned with the policies, organization, facilities, and control of business enterprises. Other management courses that were recommended and might

well be required, according to Noyes, were office management and personnel management. Since it was felt that skill in achieving good human relations and/or public relations was considered essential by so many secretaries, it was recommended that emphasis on techniques for "dramatizing" this skill be incorporated in appropriate courses in the secretarial curriculum. Emphasis could be particularly strong in the courses in secretarial procedures and in business communications.

Wagoner conducted a study in 1967 concerning the role of the secretary in a changing world as revealed by an analysis of the duties and functions performed by the secretaries. The problem included the following:

1. The classification of the occupational role of the secretary in today's changing world of work through a study of the duties and functions performed by the secretary.
2. The comparison of this role with the role of the secretary in the past as evidenced by previous research.
3. The determination of how the changes in this role may affect the development of updating the secretarial curricula in secondary schools and colleges.

The questionnaire-checklist was sent to four types of businesses: transportation, communications and utilities; wholesale and retail trade; finance; and manufacturers. Questionnaires were completed by the executive-secretary pairs in 250 business firms in the state of Indiana.

Wagoner found that composing or transcribing business correspondence was the most important function in the total consideration of the secretary's job. The most used method of handling business correspondence was taking dictation in shorthand and transcribing. Wagoner found that the second most important function as indicated by both executives and secretaries was meeting and handling people. Wagoner recommended further study to determine, possibly by depth interview, why the executives expect the secretary to perform many duties with greater frequencies than the secretaries are now doing. Further study was also recommended to determine the specific knowledge and understanding necessary or desirable for today's secretary.

Another study completed in 1967, (Paddock), dealt with the nature of the need for the development of personnel for high-level secretarial positions. The problem of this study was:

. . . a study of the nature of the need for the development of personnel for high-level secretarial positions. It was necessary to learn (1) the nature of the assignments given personnel in high-level secretarial positions; (2) the qualifications of personnel in top-level secretarial positions; and (3) patterns of preparation available to those aspiring to high-level positions.

Data were collected through secretary-executive teams, selected by means of a screening device. Information regarding the scope and depth of assignments given secretaries and the qualifications needed by those who fill the position was obtained. Among the conclusions reached by Paddock were:

1. Variations in the high-level secretarial position were evident since business firms and professional offices differ in their emphasis in duties and activities of secretaries and the degree of responsibility given them. Differences also in the activities and responsibilities of secretaries may be attributed to variation in interpretation of the position by executives and secretaries.
2. There is evidence that in some positions the secretary is given more administrative responsibilities, serving more in the role of an administrative assistant than that of a secretary. When the secretary can assume an assistantship role, her value to the executive is enhanced.
3. A great deal of upgrading was necessary to bring the secretaries to the level of performance desired. Therefore, it would seem the minimum educational requirement should be the baccalaureate degree, preferably in business administration with a major in secretarial studies. Experience of a type other than secretarial might prepare one more adequately for the position.
4. Upgrading of employees is undertaken by many firms, and secretaries on their own initiative pursue self-improvement programs offered by business, educational institutions or their own professional groups.
5. For those who have not been able to secure an adequate education before employment, they should be aware of the requirements to be met for the high-level secretarial position and enroll in courses in evening school at universities where they may secure the needed educational background.

Schwartz in an independent research project completed in 1971, collected data to determine the degree to which discrimination exists toward women at the management level in business. Schwartz surveyed 900 business executives throughout the United States to learn some of the contemporary attitudes and business practices toward women. The

need for the study was based on the assumption that our society needs the fullest possible economic contribution from all working citizens regardless of age, color, or sex. Schwartz stated that she hoped that the results would point the way to more effective utilization of women in management. Schwartz concluded that nowhere in the literature nor in the comments volunteered by respondees was there found to be any concerted effort to develop managerial abilities in women.

In 1973 Rowe conducted a related study to the present study. As a part of the problem statement, Rowe stated:

The problem was a study of the position of administrative assistant held by women--a staff position held by one who aided an executive in a service capacity, functioning as advisor, coordinator, or liaison. The study was to determine where women in Indianapolis had broken through the employment barrier, to learn what was involved in the position, and to ascertain from these women through their education, experience, and opinions what they believed would be helpful to others who aspire to such a position.

Among the conclusions made by Rowe were the following three: first, the position of administrative assistant is attained through growth on the job or through a college degree; the trend being toward the latter. Secondly, Rowe concluded that although discrimination and bias are recognized as being present, women are expected to be career-minded, competitive, and knowledgeable. Thirdly, a minimum of a bachelor's degree preferably in business-administration management curriculum with any specialty being acquired through a master's degree or through supplementary training was desired.

Spinks (1974) completed a study concerned with the educational needs of office employees. She emphasized the need for educators to become instrumental in bringing the classroom and business organizations closer together:

The emphasis placed upon relevance in the programs seemed to indicate a need for bridging the hiatus between business organizations and the classroom. It appeared that the forces external to the college classroom are somewhat pressuring the teachers of administrative management to face up to a change. The school could take the initiative in working as a catalyst to bring about change.

Spinks sent a questionnaire containing validated items to a selected population of Administrative Management Society members. The study determined the educational needs of potential office managers.

The following conclusions were drawn from the results of the study:

1. Certain general educational areas were rated by at least 50 percent of the respondents as necessary in administrative office management programs. Those areas, listed in descending order were English, speech, mathematics, psychology, logic, and sociology.
2. A majority of the humanistic and behavioral studies items were rated by most of the respondents as necessary in administrative office management programs. The largest number of respondents (88.1 percent) indicated that students should be required to study current problems in administrative management.
3. All of the validated basic business training areas were rated by a majority of the respondents as necessary in administrative office management programs. Two areas most frequently indicated were accounting (95.0 percent) and business communication (93.1 percent).

4. Certain specialized areas of management were rated by most of the respondents as necessary in administrative management programs. Those areas, and the frequency of mention of each, were as follows:

	<u>Percent</u>
Personnel management	93.1
Fundamentals of management	89.1
Administrative practices	77.2
Human relations in business	75.2
Managerial accounting	68.3
Administrative analysis and policy	65.3
Information systems	59.4
Labor management	57.4

5. Many of the clinical or case study experiences were felt to be necessary by a majority of the persons participating in the study. "Delegation of authority" was the most frequently indicated experience. Of those responding, 78.2 percent indicated that students should be involved in decision making for clinical or case study experiences, and 72.3 percent felt that students should have opportunity for such experiences during each academic year.
6. Access into administrative management programs should be open to students in other programs and para-professionals, according to a majority of the AMS respondents.
7. Consideration of employment opportunity, analysis of duties performed by businessmen, and consideration of changing business practices were reported by most of the respondents as necessary criteria for planning program developments.
8. A majority of the respondents (61.4 percent) felt that a practicum in which the student, under the supervision of a cooperating executive, assumes reasonable responsibility for executive duties was necessary in programs for training administrative office managers.
9. A supervisory role during the student's first year of work as a means used to evaluate the program and provide

feedback for curriculum planning and revision was rated by more than 50 percent of the respondents as a necessity in administrative office management programs.

In another study involving further training needs of administrative assistants and executive secretaries, Huggins (1977) sampled the largest businesses in the United States. She made the following recommendations:

1. That colleges and universities consider the possibility of increasing their evening offerings as a service to those persons who want to continue their education.
2. That colleges and universities consider the possibility of adding to the curriculum for office administration majors not already employed, an office internship program with a business firm to provide the work experience needed to prepare women for the positions of administrative assistant and executive secretary.
3. That office administration programs be broad and flexible to include general education, business administration courses, and office administration courses including skills.
4. That emphasis on human relations in business be incorporated in appropriate courses in the office administration curriculum.
5. That similar studies be made periodically to assure the adequacy of collegiate programs in meeting the continuing educational needs of administrative assistants and executive secretaries.

Investigating certain perceptions that men and women in middle-management positions have in respect to their positions and investigating certain aspects of the status of the men and women in respect to factual information relative to their positions, was the problem

of a study conducted by Campbell (1980). Although it appeared the management positions were generally on a higher level than administrative assistant, some of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations relate to this study. Approximately the same percentage of men and women chose one course most often which they felt would be helpful in their work--management. Almost fifty percent of the men and fifty-one percent of the women chose this course. The next most frequently chosen course was accounting, chosen by approximately sixteen percent of the men, and twenty-four percent of the women.

Among the conclusions reached by Campbell were:

The perceptions that women in middle management positions have about their job titles not accurately reflecting their duties and about their not getting a perceived deserved promotion were brought out in the present study. The fact of difference in salaries earned was also brought out.

A percentage brought out in the present study was that 52.17 percent of the men had finished their formal education with the baccalaureate degree, while 10.81 percent of the women had completed their formal education with the baccalaureate degree.

Among the recommendations made by Campbell were the following:

1. Women who are interested in careers in business should be encouraged to continue their formal education beyond the high school level.
2. Businesses should have job descriptions, making sure that job titles accurately reflect duties.
3. Businesses should strive to assure equal pay for equal work.

Summary of Chapter 2

Adult business education programs are growing. Predictions are that they will continue to grow and some educators felt this growth will be at an accelerated rate. Women workers are continuing to increase in numbers in the labor force. More attention is being given to the problem of women in management positions--their educational preparation, and experience. Several studies concluded: (1) human relations and/or public relations should be emphasized more than in the past in the preparation of women for management positions; (2) educational programs should be broad; (3) a management course should be included in the curriculum for preparing women for management positions. Conclusions of several studies indicated the need for further education for women aspiring to management positions. Although very little has been researched in the area of women aspiring to the position of administrative assistant, there have been some related studies concerning women in higher management positions. Chapter 2 included adult business education growth predictions, information about women in the labor force and in management positions, and related research studies information.

Chapter 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The problem of this study was to compare perceptions of personnel managers with those of women aspiring to administrative assistant positions, and with administrative assistants, as those perceptions pertained to the educational preparation, experience and daily activities of administrative assistants.

Dissertation abstracts were studied. Relevant doctoral dissertations were secured from various colleges and universities either through inter-library loan, or they were purchased. Two computer searches were conducted. A perusal of related literature was undertaken.

Definition of the Population

The population for this study was the following: personnel managers who were members of the Yellowstone Valley Personnel Association, an affiliate of the American Society for Personnel Administration, secretaries and administrative assistants employed by the same firms as the personnel managers. There were thirty-one members of the Yellowstone Valley Personnel Association, and a concerted effort was made to interview all the members and an equal number of secretaries. Nine administrative assistants were

interviewed. The personnel managers, secretaries, and administrative assistants were employed by firms in the metropolitan area of Billings, Montana. With the assistance of the state president of the ASPA group, a membership list was compiled for the Yellowstone Valley Personnel Association. The publication, Who's Who in ASPA 1979, was obtained and utilized.

Method for Collecting the Data

The method for collecting data for this study, was the personal interview. Since the position of administrative assistant does not have the same meaning for everyone, it was felt that clarification and consistency could be more readily assured, if interviews were used.

The following disadvantages and advantages of the personal interview were stated by Isaac and Michael (1971):

1. Disadvantages:

Interviews are costly, time-consuming, and inconvenient. If the researcher takes advantage of the interview's adaptability, he introduces the problem of subjectivity and personal bias. Eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between the interviewer and the respondent, and the tendency of the interviewer to seek out answers that support his preconceived notions all complicate this method. The thorough training required of the interviewer to offset these disadvantages becomes an additional burden, increasing the cost and the time factors.

2. Advantages (over questionnaire):

- a. Permits greater depth.
- b. Permits probing to obtain more complete data.
- c. Makes it possible to establish and maintain rapport with respondent or at least determine when rapport has not been established.
- d. Provides a means of checking and assuring the effectiveness of communication between the respondent and the interviewer.

It was felt that reliability would be increased by the researcher conducting all the interviews. A structured interview technique was used. The interviewer/researcher followed a well-defined structure resembling the format of an objective questionnaire, allowing clarification and elaboration within narrow limits. The interviews were aimed at specific information. Please see appendix.

After the interview questions format was constructed, the format was reviewed by three personnel managers employed by firms in Billings, Montana to see if the questions were valid in terms of the information needed.

After consultations with a computer programmer, a method of recording and coding responses was developed. This ensured that the data would be compatible for computer programming.

Care was taken to insure that questions were framed in language that insured effective communication between the interviewer/

researcher and the respondent, avoiding ambiguous vocabulary. If the purpose of each question was not clear to the respondent, it was explained, thus avoiding suspicion or resistance, or at least reducing the probability that it might occur. Special efforts were made to avoid leading questions that suggested a desirable or preferred answer.

Efforts were made to insure that the frame of reference surrounding each question was clear so that each respondent perceived the question in as much the same way as possible, thus avoiding misinterpretations.

Members of the Yellowstone Valley Personnel Association Chapter of the American Society for Personnel Administration were contacted by telephone and interview appointments were set at the convenience of the respondents; subsequently, respondents were interviewed using the interview format included in the appendix. After the interview was completed, the interviewer/researcher requested permission to interview one or more secretaries in the organization. Without exception, permission was given, and the interviewer/researcher would simply:

1. Approach the desk of a secretary in the organization.
2. Introduce herself to the secretary.
3. Explain the purpose of the visit.

The secretary was then asked the following two questions:

1. Are you aspiring to a position of administrative assistant? If the secretary gave a yes response to the first question, then the second question was asked:

2. Would you be willing to participate in this study?

If the secretary was unable or unwilling to be a respondent, a second secretary was approached in the same manner as above.

Care was taken not to interrupt the work that was being done in the organization, and usually another time was set for the interview with the secretary.

Through this procedure, thirty-one secretaries aspiring to the position of administrative assistant and willing to participate in the study were determined.

The secretaries were interviewed in the same manner as the personnel managers. Three additional questions were asked the secretaries that were not asked of the personnel managers. Please see appendix, page 187.

It was felt that it would further help to identify the daily activities, the education and experience of administrative assistants if a small group of administrative assistants were interviewed. It was desired to ascertain whether or not personnel managers hired administrative assistants with the skills and training that they said

were important. Personnel managers were contacted again by telephone, and asked if it would be possible to interview an administrative assistant. When permission was given, the administrative assistant was contacted and asked how long she had held the position of administrative assistant with the firm. It was then determined whether the personnel manager had been employed longer in his or her position than had the administrative assistant. If this was so, then the administrative assistant was asked to participate in the study. By this process, nine administrative assistant interviewees were found. The administrative assistants were interviewed in the same manner as the other two groups. Please refer to the appendix for interview format.

Before interviews commenced with the three groups, the following three points were made clear to all participants:

1. Although the information sought was not of a highly confidential nature, the interviewees would be assured that their responses would be kept in absolute confidence.

2. The word "company" as used subsequently in the interview was intended to include businesses, industries, institutions, organizations and governmental units.

3. A typewritten copy of the definition of administrative assistant as defined in the 1977 Dictionary of Occupational Titles would be given to them prior to the interview.

Participants were given the opportunity to request a copy of the results of the study. The data was collected during the latter part of the summer, 1979 for the personnel managers and the secretaries. The administrative assistants were interviewed in early November, 1979.

Method of Organizing the Data

The data collected as a result of the personnel managers and secretarial interviews was organized into 2 x 3 contingency tables for clear presentation. Tables comparing the personnel managers' responses with the secretaries' responses were presented. The information obtained through the administrative assistant interviews was correlated with that of the personnel managers and presented by constructing bivariate contingency tables.

Statistical Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study were:

1. Perceptions of educational needs for the position of administrative assistant are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary.
2. Perceptions of experience needed for the position of administrative assistant are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary.

3. Perceptions of the nature of the work of administrative assistants are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary.

Questions to be Answered

Each administrative assistant who was interviewed was paired with the personnel manager employed in the same company. By correlating the results of the interviews with the two groups, the following questions were to be answered:

1. Do personnel managers and administrative assistants generally agree on the educational needs of administrative assistants?
2. Do personnel managers and administrative assistants generally agree on the experience needed by administrative assistants?
3. Do personnel managers and administrative assistants generally agree on the nature of the work of administrative assistants?

Analysis of Data

To determine whether the perceptions of personnel managers and the secretaries groups were statistically independent of one another, the statistical tool Chi Square (X^2) Test of Independence was used at the .05 level of significance.

The function of Chi Square Tests of Independence, according to Roscoe (1969) was to provide

. . . extremely useful statistical procedures for determining whether two nominal (or higher level) measures are related. If one of the variables is group membership and the other a criterion of some sort, the test may be used to determine whether two or more populations are distributed in the same fashion with respect to the criterion.

The selection of the .05 level of significance reflected the "common convention" as stated by Ferguson (1976). Kerlinger (1973) explained why the .05 level of significance is a good choice:

The .05 level means that an obtained result that is significant at the .05 level could occur by chance only five times in one hundred trials. . . . The .05 and .01 levels correspond fairly well to two and three standard deviations from the mean of a normal probability distribution. . . . The .05 level was originally chosen--and has persisted with the researchers--because it is considered a reasonably good gamble. It is neither too high nor too low for most social scientific research.

The .01 level of significance protected more adequately against the possibility of rejecting a true null hypotheses, a Type I error. Selection of the .10 level protected more adequately against retaining a false null hypotheses, a Type II error. The .05 level of significance, in the opinion of this researcher, provided a compromise position between other available levels.

The Chi Square formula that was used was as follows:

$$\text{Chi Square } (X^2) = \sum \frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$$

Ferguson stated (1976) that the number of degrees of freedom is the number of values of the variable that are free to vary. The formula for the degrees of freedom (df) was:

$$df = (R-1)(C-1)$$

where "R" represents rows and "C" represents columns. This was appropriate in computing contingency table data.

The results of the administrative assistant interviews were compared with those of the personnel managers by the use of bivariate contingency tables, to determine if there was a correlation between the perceptions of the two groups.

Precautions for Accuracy

Efforts were made to insure the highest degree of accuracy possible. Table data were hand-tallied twice. A computer was employed to insure the accuracy of the Chi Square calculations and the computer printout was checked with the table figures. In addition, the calculations were run through a computer a second time to assure accuracy.

Summary of Chapter 3

Through personal interviews with personnel managers, who were members of the Yellowstone Valley Personnel Association, secretaries and administrative assistants, all employed by the same companies, data were collected and analyzed. This data pertained to the perceptions of the three groups regarding the education, the experience and

the nature of the work of administrative assistants. The Chi Square (χ^2) Test of Independence and bivariate contingency tables were used to analyze the findings of the data. This chapter included a definition of the population that was used in the study, and described the method used for collecting the data, the method of organizing the data, the statistical hypotheses, the questions to be answered, how the data were analyzed, and the precautions that were taken for accuracy.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

The primary purpose of this study was to provide information that would be useful for curriculum planning, development, and improvement as it pertains to adult and continuing education courses and/or programs for women aspiring to the position of administrative assistant.

The secondary purpose of this study was the assembly and analysis of data pertaining to the position of administrative assistant which would be helpful to:

1. Women who are aspiring to the position of administrative assistant.
2. Employment personnel who are seeking administrative assistants.
3. Counselors of women who aspire to positions as administrative assistants.

This chapter includes: (1) findings of general information obtained from the personnel managers and secretarial groups; (2) statistical results as related to the hypotheses in Chapter 3; (3) findings of perception correlations between the personnel managers and the administrative assistants groups.

General Information

Tables one through ten show the responses of personnel managers and secretaries pertaining to general information.

Table 1 displays the results of the question which asked for the total number of office employees in the local operation. There were more personnel managers in the 21-50 office employees category than in any other. Thirty-five percent (11) of the personnel managers, and 10 percent (3) of the secretaries were in this category. There were more secretaries in the 101-200 office employees category than in any other. Thirty-five percent (11) of the secretaries, and 16 percent (5) of the personnel managers were in this category.

Table 1

Number of Office Employees in Local Operation

No. of Employees	Number Responding		*Percent	
	personnel managers	secretaries	personnel managers	secretaries
1 - 5	1	1	3	3
6 - 10	3	4	10	13
11 - 20	4	3	13	10
21 - 50	11	3	35	10
51 - 100	5	4	16	13
101 - 200	5	11	16	35
over 200	2	5	6	16

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

Table 2 pertains to the question of whether or not the company would pay for continuing education courses for its employees. Eighty-one percent (25) of both the personnel managers and secretarial groups responded that their companies would pay for continuing education courses for its employees. The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 2

Employee Reimbursement for Continuing Education Courses

Group	Yes	No	Uncertain
personnel managers	81%* (25)	19% (6)	0% (0)
secretaries	81% (25)	10% (3)	10% (3)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

If a participant responded affirmatively to the above question, he/she was next asked the percentage the company would pay. Table 3 shows that the majority in both groups responded in the 76-100% category. Seventy-one percent (15) of the personnel managers and 91 percent (20) of the secretaries said their companies paid 76-100% for continuing education courses. The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 3

Percentage Company pays for Continuing Education Courses

Group	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
personnel managers	10%* (2)	10% (2)	10% (2)	71% (15)
secretaries	0% (0)	5% (1)	5% (1)	91% (20)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

Personnel managers and secretaries were next asked if their company would give leave time to take a course during the daytime. The majority of both groups responded affirmatively; fifty-eight percent (18) of the personnel managers, and 61 percent (19) of the secretaries. Table 4 shows the responses to this question. The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 4

Company Leave-Time for Daytime Courses

Group	Yes	No	Uncertain
personnel managers	58%* (18)	26% (8)	16% (5)
secretaries	61% (19)	13% (4)	26% (8)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

Next, the two groups were asked to indicate to the interviewer/researcher whether or not their company sends employees to other than company-sponsored training institutes and seminars. The majority in both groups replied in the affirmative; eighty-four percent (26) of the personnel managers and 77 percent (24) of the secretaries. Table 5 reflects the responses to this question. The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 5

Employees Eligible for Other Than Company-Sponsored
Training Institutes and Seminars

Group	Yes	No	Uncertain
personnel managers	84%* (26)	16% (5)	0% (0)
secretaries	77% (24)	10% (3)	13% (4)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

Table 6 presents the responses to a question dealing with whether or not the company sends employees to other than company-sponsored training schools on the operation of new equipment and machines. The majority in both groups said this was done in their respective companies; forty-seven percent (14) of the personnel managers, and 58 percent (18) of the secretaries. The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 6

Employees Eligible for Other Than Company-Sponsored
Training Schools on the Operation of
New Equipment and Machines

Group	Yes	No	Uncertain
personnel managers	47%* (14)	43% (13)	10% (3)
secretaries	58% (18)	16% (5)	26% (8)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

The participants were asked how many years they had been employed by the company for which they were presently working. Table 7 indicates more personnel managers than in any other category, 32 percent (10), have been employed by their respective companies from 3 to less than 6 years. The table shows more secretaries than in any other category, 32 percent (10), have been employed by their respective companies from 1 to less than 3 years. The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 7

Years Employed by Company for Which presently Working

No. of Years	personnel managers	secretaries
Less than 1	3%* (1)	23% (7)
1 to less than 3	13% (4)	32% (10)
3 to less than 6	32% (10)	19% (6)
6 to less than 10	26% (8)	13% (4)
10 or more	26% (8)	13% (4)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

Participants were then asked how long they had held their present title. Personnel managers reported more often in the 1 to less than 3 years and 3 to less than 6 years categories; 32 percent (10) for each category. Secretaries reported most often in the less than 1 year and 1 to less than 3 years categories; 32 percent (10) for each category. Table 8 displays these findings. The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 8
Years in Present Title

No. of Years	personnel managers	secretaries
Less than 1	13%* (4)	32% (10)
1 to less than 3	32% (10)	32% (10)
3 to less than 6	32% (10)	26% (8)
6 to less than 10	16% (5)	6% (2)
10 or more	6% (2)	3% (1)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

Table 9 reflects responses to a question asking whether or not companies had established career paths for secretaries. The majority in both groups gave a negative response to this question; personnel managers 71 percent (22), and secretaries 74 percent (23). The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 9

Established Secretarial Career Paths

Group	Yes	No	Uncertain
personnel managers	23%* (7)	71% (22)	6% (2)
secretaries	10% (3)	74% (23)	16% (5)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

When asked to describe the frequency of in-service training, the majority of responses in both groups reflected the category, most training done on an in-service basis. Eighty-seven percent (27) of the personnel managers, and 81 percent (25) of the secretaries named this category. Table 10 presents these findings. The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 10
In-Service Training

Category	personnel managers	secretaries
No in-service training	0% (0)	0% (0)
Very little in-service training	13%* (4)	6% (2)
Most training done on in-service basis	87% (27)	81% (25)
All training done on in-service basis	0% (0)	6% (2)
Uncertain	0% (0)	6% (2)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

The last three tables in this section (Tables 11, 12 and 13) deal with opinions of the secretarial group.

Table 11 presents the findings of a question which asked the secretaries whether or not they felt they had a chance for advancement in their present employment. Over half of the secretaries responded that they felt they did have a chance for advancement in their present employment; 58 percent (18). The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 11

Advancement Possibilities in Present Employment

Group	Yes	No	Uncertain
secretaries	58%* (18)	16% (5)	26% (8)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

Secretarial participants were then asked if they would be interested in enrolling in adult and/or continuing education classes that would increase their knowledge and/or upgrade their skills preparatory to advancement. Table 12 shows that over three-fourths of the secretarial group responded affirmatively; 84 percent (26). The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 12

Interest in Adult and/or Continuing Education Classes

Group	Yes	No	Uncertain
secretaries	84%* (26)	6% (2)	10% (3)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

Table 13 presents the secretarial group responses to a question that asked whether or not they felt they had the potential to be as effective as males in an administrative assistant position. There were no negative responses to this question, 4 (13%) uncertain responses, and 27 (87%) affirmative responses. The number of responses is shown in parentheses following the percentage amount.

Table 13

Potential to be as Effective as a Male
in Administrative Assistant Position

Group	Yes	No	Uncertain
secretaries	87%* (27)	0% (0)	13% (4)

*Categories have been rounded and do not consistently total 100%.

Education, Experience, and Nature of Work Perception
Comparisons by Personnel Managers and Secretaries

Tables 14 through 67 present the statistical findings related to the following hypotheses:

1. Perceptions of educational needs for the position of administrative assistant are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary.

2. Perceptions of experience needed for the position of administrative assistant are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary.

3. Perceptions of the nature of the work of administrative assistants are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary.

The results of the Spearman Rho analysis which quantified the relationship between the personnel managers and secretarial groups perceptions as to which factors would aid most in advancing to an administrative assistant position, is found in this section (Table 42). Data in all other tables in this section have been calculated using the Chi Square (X^2) Test of Independence (Ferguson, 1976). A computer was utilized in the Chi Square (X^2) calculations. The following formula was used for this test:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$$

The degrees of freedom were found by the following formula:

$$(R-1)(C-1)$$

The expected values (e) in each case were found by the following formula:

$$\frac{R \cdot X \cdot C}{N}$$

The .05 level of significance was used in all Chi Square (X^2) cases.

Table 14 deals with the minimum years of formal schooling necessary for administrative assistants. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 7.82. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 11.2325; therefore, there was a statistically significant dependency on group affiliation between the personnel managers group and the secretarial group. The hypothesis was rejected.

Table 14

Minimum Formal Schooling for Administrative Assistants

Group	12 Years	13 Years	14 Years	16 Years
personnel managers	4	1	15	10
secretaries	16	1	6	8

N = 61

DF = 3

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 7.82

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 11.2325

The next question regarding education asked the two groups what kind of formal education they felt should be the minimum for an administrative assistant. In this case the hypothesis was rejected. There was a statistically significant dependency depending on group affiliation. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 7.82. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 8.9649. Table 15 presents the findings.

Table 15

Kind of Minimum Schooling for Administrative Assistants

Group	High School	Business College	College 2-year	College 4-year
personnel managers	5	3	12	10
secretaries	16	1	6	8

N = 61

DF = 3

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 7.82

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 8.9649

Personnel managers and secretaries were asked what courses they felt would be most beneficial in preparing for an administrative assistant position. Tables 16 through 40 present data, by course title, of these findings.

As Table 16 shows there was general agreement between the two groups, that accounting is beneficial in preparing for an administrative assistant position. The hypothesis was retained; the critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was .8002.

Table 16

Accounting

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	23	5	3
secretaries	20	6	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = .8002

Table 17 presents the findings on how beneficial the two groups perceived the course business communications. There was general agreement between the two groups that business communications was a beneficial course. The hypothesis was retained, as there was not a statistically significant dependency by group affiliation between the two groups. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 4.80.

Table 17

Business Communications

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	28	2	1
secretaries	21	6	4

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 4.80

Thirteen personnel managers believed business finance was beneficial, and an equal number were uncertain. The majority of the secretarial group believed the course was beneficial. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 1.8341. The hypothesis was retained. Table 18 shows the findings.

Table 18

Business Finance

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	13	13	5
secretaries	16	8	7

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 1.8341

Although there were eleven personnel managers who were uncertain about how beneficial the course business law would be in preparing for an administrative assistant position, there was general agreement between the two groups that it would be beneficial. The hypothesis was retained, as the critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99 and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 2.8342. Table 19 presents this data.

Table 19

Business Law

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	16	11	6
secretaries	17	6	8

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 2.8342

Table 20 recapitulates the business math findings. Personnel managers and secretaries generally agreed this course would be beneficial in preparing administrative assistants. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 4.7965; therefore the hypothesis was retained.

Table 20
Business Math

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	25	3	3
secretaries	17	6	8

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 4.7965

Table 21 reports there was general agreement that business report writing was beneficial. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99 and the calculated value of Chi Square was .3246. The hypothesis was retained.

Table 21
Business Report Writing

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	23	5	3
secretaries	21	6	4

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .3246

As Table 22 indicates, the personnel managers group and the secretarial group agreed that the course business statistics would be beneficial. There was perfect correlation in all three categories. Thus the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) in this case was 0, and the hypothesis was retained.

Table 22
Business Statistics

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	19	7	5
secretaries	19	7	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 0

When asked how beneficial a course on data processing would be, both groups generally agreed it would be beneficial. As many secretaries thought the course would be generally not beneficial as were uncertain about the course. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 1.6564. The hypothesis was retained as there was not a statistically significant dependency by group affiliation. Table 23 presents this data.

Table 23

Data Processing

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	18	7	6
secretaries	13	9	9

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 1.6564

Table 24 reflects how the personnel managers and secretaries perceived how beneficial a course in economics would be. Thirteen persons in each group felt it would be beneficial, and a like number of secretaries also were uncertain about how beneficial such a course would be. The hypothesis was retained. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was .5000.

Table 24

Economics

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	13	11	7
secretaries	13	13	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = .5000

It was thought that a course in human relations would be beneficial by almost all of the personnel managers and by the majority of secretaries. Since group affiliation did not affect the opinions, the hypothesis was retained. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.3333. Table 25 shows these findings.

Table 25

Human Relations in Business

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	30	1	0
secretaries	24	5	2

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.3333

Table 26 shows that the personnel managers and the secretaries generally agreed that a course in management would be beneficial in training administrative assistants. The hypothesis was retained. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 1.2636.

Table 26

Management

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	24	4	3
secretaries	20	6	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 1.2636

The next course asked about was one on management simulations. The personnel managers group and the secretarial group generally agreed that such a course would be beneficial in the training of administrative assistants. The hypothesis was retained as there was not a statistically significant dependency by group affiliation. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 1.3292. Table 27 indicates these findings.

Table 27

Management Simulations

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	16	8	7
secretaries	20	7	4

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 1.3292

Table 28 shows how the personnel managers group and the secretarial group felt about a course in managerial accounting. More personnel managers felt the course was generally not beneficial than beneficial. More secretaries felt the course would be beneficial than generally not beneficial. However, the dependency of opinion on group affiliation was not enough to reject the null. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.5105.

Table 28
Managerial Accounting

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	8	12	11
secretaries	17	8	6

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.5105

A course in marketing was the next topic asked about. Personnel managers' opinions were almost evenly split among beneficial, uncertain and generally not beneficial. There was not a clear trend with the secretarial group either, as 12 felt it was beneficial, 11 were uncertain and 8 felt it was generally not beneficial. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. Since the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .3133, the hypothesis was retained. Table 29 presents these findings.

Table 29

Marketing

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	11	10	10
secretaries	12	11	8

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .3133

There was general agreement between the personnel managers and the secretaries that a course in office administration would be beneficial in the education of administrative assistants. Twenty-seven of the personnel managers felt this would be beneficial, while twenty-two of the secretaries agreed. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 2.7102. Table 30 shows these findings.

Table 30
Office Administration

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	27	2	2
secretaries	22	6	3

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 2.7102

Table 31 shows how the two groups felt about a course in office systems and procedures. Personnel managers and secretaries generally agreed that a course in office systems and procedures would be beneficial in preparing women for administrative assistant positions. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 1.0666; therefore, the hypothesis was retained.

Table 31
Office Systems and Procedures

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	23	4	4
secretaries	23	2	6

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 1.0666

The majority of participants in both groups felt a course in personnel management would be beneficial in training for a position as an administrative assistant. Since there was general agreement among the three categories by both groups, there was not a statistically significant dependency by group affiliation. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated Chi Square (X^2) was .1165. The hypothesis was retained. Table 32 presents the data:

Table 32
Personnel Management

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	20	6	5
secretaries	19	6	6

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .1165

Table 33 shows the findings for a course in records management. Eighteen personnel managers, and nineteen secretaries felt a course in records management would be beneficial in the training of administrative assistants. Since there was general agreement between the two groups, the hypothesis was retained. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .0936.

Table 33
Records Management

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	18	8	5
secretaries	19	7	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .0936

When asked about a course in reprographics, more participants in both groups were uncertain than in the other two categories. Six secretaries felt it would be beneficial, and ten personnel managers thought so. Since there was general agreement between the two groups on how worthwhile such a course might be, the hypothesis was retained. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 2.0763. Table 34 displays these findings.

Table 34
Reprographics

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	10	13	8
secretaries	6	18	6

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 2.0763

Table 35 presents the findings concerning a course in secretarial procedures. The majority of participants in the personnel managers group and the secretarial group felt that a course in secretarial procedures would be beneficial. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .1152, so the hypothesis was retained.

Table 35

Secretarial Procedures

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	21	5	5
secretaries	20	6	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .1152

Shorthand was the next course asked about. The majority of the personnel managers felt a course in shorthand would be beneficial. The secretaries generally agreed with this opinion. The hypothesis was retained, because there was general agreement between the two groups. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .6571. Table 36 shows the findings.

Table 36

Shorthand

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	16	8	7
secretaries	19	7	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .6571

Table 37 presents data about a course in typewriting. The personnel managers group and the secretarial group generally agreed that a course in typewriting would be beneficial in the preparation of administrative assistants. The hypothesis was retained as there was not a statistically significant dependency by group affiliation. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 2.2628.

Table 37
Typewriting

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	23	4	4
secretaries	27	3	1

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 2.2628

Next, the respondents were asked about a course in voice writing machines (dictation). Sixteen personnel managers felt such a course would be beneficial, and seventeen secretaries agreed with this opinion. The hypothesis was retained, as the critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99 while the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .3434. Table 38 reports this data.

Table 38

Voice Writing Machines (dictation)

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	16	5	10
secretaries	17	6	8

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .3434

Participants were then asked about a course in voice writing machines (transcription). More personnel managers felt such a course would be generally not beneficial than felt it would be beneficial. Secretaries, however, generally felt that such a course would be beneficial. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 2.7092. The hypothesis was retained. Table 39 presents the findings of this data.

Table 39
Voice Writing Machines (transcription)

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	10	9	12
secretaries	16	5	10

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 2.7092

Word processing was the last course asked about. Although there were 10 personnel managers who felt uncertain, and 10 secretaries who felt a course in word processing would be generally not beneficial, the majority in both groups agreed such a course would be beneficial. The hypothesis was retained, as the critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .7886.

Table 40
Word Processing

Group	Beneficial	Uncertain	Generally not Beneficial
personnel managers	14	10	7
secretaries	13	8	10

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .7886

The personnel managers group and the secretarial group were then asked how much past business experience they felt was necessary for the position of administrative assistant. The majority of respondents in both groups said that between 1 and 5 years was necessary. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99 and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 2.6100; therefore, the hypothesis was retained. Table 41 presents the results of the findings.

Table 41

Minimum Past Business Experience

Group	None	Less than 1 yr.	Between 1 & 5 yrs.	Between 6 & 10 yrs.	Between 11 & 15 yrs.
personnel managers	3	3	21	4	0
secre- taries	2	2	19	5	2

N = 61

DF = 4

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 9.49

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 2.6100

The personnel managers and the secretaries were asked about the particular expertise which they felt would aid most in advancing to an administrative assistant position. The data was submitted to calculation using Spearman's Rho with tied ranks (Ferguson, 1976). The critical value of Spearman's Rho was .564, and the calculated value of Spearman's Rho was .6152; therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. Personnel managers stated that supervision expertise would aid most in eleven cases, and secretaries stated that secretarial skills expertise would aid most in thirteen cases. Table 42 presents this data.

Personnel managers and secretaries were asked what they felt was the general nature of the work of an administrative assistant. Tables 43 through 67 present these findings.

Personnel managers and secretaries were asked how important they thought answering correspondence by shorthand dictation was. The majority of participants in both groups responded that they felt answering correspondence by shorthand dictation was important. Approximately the same number in each group felt this was not important or were uncertain. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .3180. The hypothesis was retained. Table 43 shows these findings.

Table 42

Expertise Which Would Aid Most in Advancing
to an Administrative Assistant Position

Expertise	Fre- quency P.M.	Fre- quency Sec.	Rank P.M.	Rank Sec.	d-diff. in rank	d ²
Banking	2	3	5.5	3.5	2	4
Insurance	1	0	8.0	9.0	-1	1
Law	0	0	10.0	9.0	1	1
Data Pro- cessing	1	0	8.0	9.0	-1	1
Super- vision	11	7	1.0	2.0	-1	1
Personal- ity traits	6	1	2.0	7.0	-5	25
Public Relations	3	3	3.5	3.5	0	0
Written Commun. Skills	3	2	3.5	5.5	-2	4
Verbal Commun. Skills	1	2	8.0	5.5	2.5	6.25
Secre- tarial skills	2	13	5.5	1.0	4.5	20.25

Spearman's Rho with Tied Ranks

N = 61

$$R = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d^2}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

Critical Value = .564

Calculated Value = .6152

Level of Significance = .05

Table 43

Answering Correspondence by Shorthand Dictation

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	14	8	9
secretaries	13	10	8

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2)₂ = 5.99Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = .3180

Table 44 presents data that reflects how the personnel managers and secretaries felt about answering correspondence by use of dictation equipment. The majority in both groups felt this was an important task in the nature of the work of an administrative assistant. There was perfect agreement in both the uncertain and the not important categories; therefore, the hypothesis was retained. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was .01802.

Table 45 presents data that shows how the two groups felt about the importance of composing correspondence for the supervisor's signature. Almost perfect agreement was found between the two groups. The majority of participants in both groups felt this was an important

Table 44

Answering Correspondence by Use of Dictation Equipment

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	14	9	7
secretaries	15	9	7

N = 61

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square $(X^2)_2 = 5.99$ Calculated Value of Chi Square $(X^2) = .0180$

Table 45

Composing Correspondence for Supervisor's Signature

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	21	4	5
secretaries	21	5	5

N = 61

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square $(X^2)_2 = 5.99$ Calculated Value of Chi Square $(X^2) = .0947$

function of the administrative assistant. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .0947, thus retaining the hypothesis.

Table 46 shows how the two groups felt about the importance of composing correspondence for the administrative assistant's signature. The majority in both groups felt that this was an important function of the administrative assistant. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .1025. The hypothesis was retained.

Table 46

Composing Correspondence for Administrative Assistant's Signature

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	19	7	5
secretaries	20	6	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .1025

The two groups were asked how important they felt preparing reports was in the work of an administrative assistant. The majority of responses from both groups indicated they felt this was an important task for the administrative assistant. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was .2972, thus the hypothesis was retained. Table 47 shows this data.

Table 47

Preparing Reports

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	20	5	6
secretaries	22	4	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = .2972

Table 48 reflects how the personnel managers and the secretaries felt about the importance of preparing annual reports.

Although approximately half of the responses from both groups felt this was not important or were uncertain, the majority in both groups felt this was an important task for the administrative assistant.

The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99 and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was .3826. The hypothesis was retained.

Table 48
Preparing Annual Reports

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	16	7	8
secretaries	17	8	6

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = .3826

The majority in both groups felt that preparing materials such as booklets and manuals was an important function of the administrative assistant. Although 10 of the personnel managers deemed this as not important, 14 personnel managers thought it was important. Twenty-one of the secretaries thought this was important. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 4.0483. The hypothesis was retained. Table 49 shows this data.

Table 49

Preparing Booklets, Manuals etc.

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	14	7	10
secretaries	21	6	4

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 4.0483

Table 50 presents how the personnel managers group and the secretarial group felt about the importance of arranging and preparing agenda for meetings and conferences. Most participants in both groups felt this was an important function of the administrative assistant. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99; the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .5152. The hypothesis was retained.

Table 50

Arranging & Preparing Agenda for Meetings & Conferences

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	20	5	6
secretaries	21	6	4

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .5152

Table 51 shows that more personnel managers thought acting as a hostess for functions was not important than they did in the other two categories. More secretaries thought that acting as a hostess for functions was important, than they did in the other two categories. There was not enough disagreement between the two groups to reject the hypothesis, as the critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 1.1190.

Table 51

Acting as Hostess for Functions

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	10	8	13
secretaries	14	6	11

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 1.1190

Giving speeches as a representative of her supervisor or company was the next topic. The majority of participants from both groups chose the important category for this task. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 2.9411. Table 52 reports this data. The hypothesis was retained.

Table 52

Giving Speeches as a Representative of Supervisor or Company

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	14	6	11
secretaries	14	11	6

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 2.9411

The majority of respondents in both groups felt that coordinating public relations activities was important. Eleven personnel managers said this was not an important task for administrative assistants to perform. Table 53 presents this data. The hypothesis was retained. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99 and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 3.0944.

Table 53

Coordinating Public Relations Activities

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	16	4	11
secretaries	20	6	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 3.0944

The majority of respondents in both the personnel managers group and the secretarial group felt that maintaining files was an important task of the administrative assistant. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .6190. The hypothesis was retained. Table 54 shows the findings.

Table 54
Maintaining Files

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	18	7	6
secretaries	18	5	8

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .6190

Table 55 presents the data concerning accounting activities as a part of the work of an administrative assistant. More persons in both groups felt this was important; 15 personnel managers and 17 secretaries chose the important category. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was .2685. The hypothesis was retained.

Table 55
Accounting Activities

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	15	10	6
secretaries	17	9	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = .2685

Fifteen in the personnel managers' group said handling the payroll was not an important task of administrative assistants. Twelve in the secretarial group also chose the not important category. Almost as many secretaries, however, chose the important category for this item. Eight in each group were uncertain. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .8070. The hypothesis was retained. Table 56 shows this information.

Table 56

Handling Payroll

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	8	8	15
secretaries	11	8	12

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .8070

Nineteen secretaries felt that handling travel arrangements for the supervisor was an important task of an administrative assistant. The majority of personnel managers, 15, felt this task was not important. There was a statistically significant dependency by group affiliation; therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 6.8138. Table 57 presents this data.

Table 57

Handling Travel Arrangements for Supervisor

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	9	7	15
secretaries	19	5	7

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 6.8138

Attending budget meetings was the next topic. Most personnel managers felt this was not an important task of the administrative assistant, while most secretaries felt this task was important. Since the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) exceeded the critical value, the hypothesis was rejected. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 10.8667. Table 58 shows the findings.

Table 58

Attending Budget Meetings

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	10	5	16
secretaries	20	7	4

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 10.8667

Table 59 displays how the two groups felt about the importance of controlling and purchasing office equipment and supplies. A slight majority of the personnel managers agreed this was an important task. The majority of secretaries agreed that this was an important task of the administrative assistant. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 2.1419. The hypothesis was retained.

Table 59

Controlling & Purchasing Office Equipment & Supplies

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	14	4	13
secretaries	16	7	8

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2)₂ = 5.99Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 2.1419

Table 60 shows how the personnel managers group and the secretarial group felt about the importance of supervising programs for maintenance of office equipment. Most of the personnel managers felt this was not an important task, while twelve of the secretaries were uncertain. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 1.2761. The hypothesis was retained.

Table 60

Supervising Programs for Maintenance of Office Equipment

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	11	8	12
secretaries	10	12	9

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 1.2761

Nineteen of the secretaries felt that handling personal problems of employees was an important task of the administrative assistant. Thirteen of the personnel managers felt this was important. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 3.125. The hypothesis was retained. Table 61 presents the findings.

Table 61

Handling Personal Problems of Employees

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	13	6	12
secretaries	19	6	6

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 3.125

Table 62 shows that personnel managers and secretaries agreed on the importance of interviewing job applicants. Seventeen personnel managers thought this was important, and 20 secretaries agreed. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .6535, thus the hypothesis was retained.

Table 62
Interviewing Job Applicants

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	17	7	7
secretaries	20	6	5

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .6535

Table 63 shows that 24 of the personnel managers felt that conducting orientation of new employees was an important task of the administrative assistant. Nineteen, a majority, of secretaries agreed on the importance of this task. Since there was not a statistically significant dependency by group affiliation, the hypothesis was retained. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 1.9814.

Table 63

Conducting Orientation of New Employees

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	24	3	4
secretaries	19	6	6

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 1.9814

Table 64 shows that the majority of the personnel managers group and the secretarial group felt that planning training programs was an important task of the administrative assistant. Seventeen personnel managers felt this was important, and 19 secretaries agreed. The critical value of the Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99. The calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .5111. The hypothesis was retained.

Table 64
Planning Training Programs

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	17	8	6
secretaries	19	8	4

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2)₂ = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .5111

Handling personal and financial affairs of the supervisor was the next topic. The majority in both the personnel managers group and the secretarial group agreed that this was not an important part of the administrative assistant's job. Twenty personnel managers said this was not important. Seventeen secretaries said this was not important. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was .6198. The hypothesis was retained. Table 65 shows this information.

Table 65

Handling Personal & Financial Affairs of Supervisor

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	6	5	20
secretaries	8	6	17

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (X^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (X^2) = .6198

Table 66 shows how the personnel managers and the secretaries felt about the importance of participating in policy determinations within the organizational unit. There was disagreement between the two groups. Twenty-three of the secretaries felt this was an important function of the administrative assistant, while 14 of the personnel managers felt it was. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 7.5891; therefore, the hypothesis was rejected for this item.

Table 66

Participating in Policy Determinations Within Organizational Unit

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	14	5	12
secretaries	23	5	3

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 7.5891

The last table in this section, Table 67, shows how the two groups perceived the importance of attending staff meetings. The majority in both groups, 20, agreed that attending staff meetings was an important function of the administrative assistant. The critical value of Chi Square (χ^2) was 5.99, and the calculated value of Chi Square (χ^2) was .7333; therefore, the hypothesis was retained.

Table 67

Attending Staff Meetings

Group	Important	Uncertain	Not Important
personnel managers	20	7	4
secretaries	20	5	6

N = 62

DF = 2

Critical Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = 5.99

Calculated Value of Chi Square (χ^2) = .7333

Personnel Managers and Administrative Assistants
Perception Correlations

An additional dimension of this study was to compare the perceptions of personnel managers with those of administrative assistants. The perceptions pertained to the education, experience, and nature of the work of an administrative assistant.

Nine administrative assistants were personally interviewed, and each response was paired with a personnel manager's response in the same company.

Table 68 shows the administrative assistants and personnel managers responses pertaining to the formal schooling of an administrative assistant.

Personnel managers were asked: How many years of formal schooling do you feel is the minimum for an administrative assistant? Administrative assistants were asked: How many years of formal schooling have you had?

Less than half of the pairs, 3, were in agreement. One pair agreed that 12 years was the minimum necessary, and 2 pairs agreed on 14 years. Three administrative assistants had 13 years, while their corresponding personnel managers said 16 years was the minimum.

The personnel managers group was asked how beneficial it thought certain courses were in preparing for an administrative assistant position. Administrative assistants were asked how beneficial the courses they had completed from the list were in preparing them for an administrative assistant position.

Four courses were completed by at least 8 of the administrative assistants group. All other courses were completed by 5 or fewer administrative assistants. The 4 courses completed by at least 8 of

Table 68

Minimum Formal Schooling for an Administrative Assistant

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S				
		12 years	13 years	14 years	16 years	18 years
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	12 yrs.	1				
	13 yrs.	1		1	3	
	14 yrs.			2		
	16 yrs.					
	18 yrs.			1		

the administrative assistants group were in accounting (8), secretarial procedures (8), shorthand (8), and typewriting (9).

Six of the 8 administrative assistants felt their accounting course was beneficial, and 2 thought it was generally not beneficial. All 8 personnel managers felt an accounting course would be beneficial.

Seven administrative assistants and their corresponding personnel managers felt that a secretarial procedures course was beneficial. One personnel manager was uncertain, and the administrative assistant in the same company felt it had been beneficial.

Comparisons of a shorthand course revealed that 6 pairs were in agreement that it was beneficial. In one company the administrative assistant thought it had been generally not beneficial, and the personnel manager thought it was beneficial.

All 9 pairs believed a typewriting course was beneficial.

Personnel managers were asked: What is the particular expertise which you feel would aid most in advancing to an administrative assistant position?

Administrative assistants were asked: What is the particular expertise which you feel aided you most in advancing to an administrative position?

Table 69 shows that 7 (78%) of the personnel managers felt supervision was the most important expertise that would aid most in advancing to an administrative assistant position. Four (44%) administrative assistants felt secretarial skills had been the expertise that had aided them most in advancing to an administrative assistant position.

The administrative assistants were asked about the nature of their work. These responses were paired with the responses given by the personnel managers in the same companies.

Personnel managers were asked: What do you think is the general nature of the work of an administrative assistant?

Table 69

Expertise Which Aided Most in Advancing
to an Administrative Assistant Position

Expertise	personnel managers	administrative assistants
Banking		2
Insurance		
Law		
Data Processing		1
Supervision	7	
Personality Traits		1
Public Relations	1	
Written Communication Skills		
Verbal Communication Skills		
Secretarial Skills	1	4
Other--Academic Record		1

Administrative assistants were asked: What is the general nature of the work you do? Contingency Tables 70 through 94 present the findings.

Table 70 gives the findings pertaining to the administrative assistant task of answering correspondence by shorthand dictation. Three pairs agreed this was an important task for the administrative assistant to perform. One pair agreed it was not an important task.

Table 70

Answering Correspondence by Shorthand Dictation

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	3		1
	Uncertain			
	Not Important	2	2	1

Five pairs agreed that answering correspondence by use of dictation equipment was an important task for administrative assistants. One pair agreed that this was not an important task. Table 71 presents the findings.

Table 71

Answering Correspondence by Use of Dictation Equipment

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	5		
	Uncertain	1		
	Not Important	2		1

Five of the 9 pairs agreed that composing correspondence for a supervisor's signature was an important task of the administrative assistant. Two personnel managers were uncertain and the corresponding administrative assistants said it was important. Table 72 presents these results.

Table 72

Composing Correspondence for Supervisor's Signature

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	5	2	1
	Uncertain			1
	Not Important			

When asked about the importance of composing correspondence for the administrative assistant's signature, seven of the nine pairs agreed that this was an important function of the administrative assistant. Table 73 reports these findings.

Table 73

Composing Correspondence for Administrative Assistant's Signature

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	7	2	
	Uncertain			
	Not Important			

Eight of the nine pairs agreed that preparing reports was an important function of the administrative assistant. One administrative assistant felt this was unimportant, and the corresponding personnel manager felt that it was important. Table 74 gives these findings.

Table 74

Preparing Reports

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	8		
	Uncertain			
	Not Important	1		

When asked about the importance of preparing annual reports, 7 pairs replied that they believed this was an important function of the administrative assistant. Two administrative assistants felt this was not important, but their corresponding personnel managers said they felt that it was important. Table 75 shows the results.

Table 75

Preparing Annual Reports

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	7		
	Uncertain			
	Not Important	2		

Table 76 reflects the responses of the pairs regarding the importance of preparing booklets, manuals etc. Three pair believed this was important, two pair agreed this was not important, and 3 administrative assistants said this was not important while the corresponding personnel managers were uncertain.

Table 76

Preparing Booklets, Manuals etc.

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	3	1	
	Uncertain			
	Not Important		3	2

Arranging and preparing agenda for meetings and conferences was the next task. Four pair thought this was an important task of the administrative assistant. Two administrative assistants believed it was important, while the corresponding personnel managers said it was not important. Two administrative assistants said this was not important, and the corresponding personnel managers were uncertain. Table 77 shows the findings.

Table 77

Arranging and Preparing Agenda for Meetings and Conferences

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	4	1	2
	Uncertain			
	Not Important		2	

Acting as a hostess for functions was the next task. Five of the 9 pairs felt this was not an important task of the administrative assistant. Two administrative assistants said that it was important, and the corresponding personnel managers were uncertain. Table 78 presents this information.

Table 78

Acting as Hostess for Functions

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important		2	1
	Uncertain		1	
	Not Important			5

Table 79 presents the findings from responses pertaining to giving speeches as a representative of the supervisor or company. Five of the 9 pairs believed this was not an important task of the administrative assistant.

Table 79

Giving Speeches as a Representative of Supervisor or Company

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	1	1	
	Uncertain			
	Not Important	1	1	5

Coordinating public relations activities was the next topic. One pair felt this was important, and two pair agreed that it was not important. Two personnel managers felt it was not important, and the corresponding administrative assistants felt that it was important. Table 80 gives the results.

Table 80

Coordinating Public Relations Activities

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	1	1	2
	Uncertain			1
	Not Important	1	1	2

Maintaining the files was the next task. Almost all of the pairs, 8, felt this was an important task of the administrative assistant. Table 81 recapitulates these findings.

Table 81

Maintaining Files

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	8		1
	Uncertain			
	Not Important			

Table 82 summarizes the opinions of the pairs regarding accounting activities tasks. Four pairs believed this was an important task of the administrative assistant. Three administrative assistants said this was not an important function, and the corresponding personnel managers felt that it was important.

Table 82

Accounting Activities

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	4		
	Uncertain			
	Not Important	3	2	

Table 83 presents the findings from responses regarding handling payroll tasks. One pair agreed it was important, and one pair agreed it was not important. Four administrative assistants said this was not an important function of the administrative assistant, and the four corresponding personnel managers were uncertain about the importance.

Table 83
Handling Payroll

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	1	2	1
	Uncertain			
	Not Important		4	1

Handling travel arrangements for the supervisor was the next topic. Five administrative assistants felt this was an important task of administrative assistants, and the five corresponding personnel managers felt this was not important. Two administrative assistants felt this was not part of the job of an administrative assistant, while the corresponding personnel managers said they felt it was an important part of the job. Table 84 presents these findings.

Table 84

Handling Travel Arrangements for Supervisor

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important		1	5
	Uncertain			
	Not Important	2		1

Table 85 recapitulates the findings regarding attending budget meetings. Three administrative assistants felt this was an important function of the administrative assistant, and the corresponding personnel managers said it was not important. Two administrative assistants felt this was not important, and the corresponding personnel managers said it was important. Two pair agreed that this was not an important task.

Table 85

Attending Budget Meetings

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important			3
	Uncertain			1
	Not Important	2	1	2

Table 86 shows the responses pertaining to controlling and purchasing office equipment and supplies. Six of the nine administrative assistants said this was an important job of the administrative assistant, and the corresponding personnel managers said it was not important.

Table 86

Controlling and Purchasing Office Equipment and Supplies

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	1		6
	Uncertain		1	
	Not Important		1	

Supervising programs for maintenance of office equipment was the next topic. Six administrative assistants said this was not an important job activity of an administrative assistant, while 2 personnel managers said it was important, 2 said it was not important, and 2 were uncertain. Table 87 shows these results.

Table 87

Supervising Programs for Maintenance of Office Equipment

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	1	1	1
	Uncertain			
	Not Important	2	2	2

Table 88 summarizes the responses, by pair, regarding handling personal problems of employees. Six of the 9 administrative assistants said this was an important duty of the administrative assistant, and the corresponding personnel managers said it was not important. Two pair agreed it was not important.

Table 88

Handling Personal Problems of Employees

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	1		6
	Uncertain			
	Not Important			2

Table 89 reflects how the respondents felt about the task of interviewing job applicants. Four of the administrative assistants felt this was not important, while the corresponding personnel managers felt that it was important. Two additional administrative assistants said it was not important, and the corresponding personnel managers were uncertain.

Table 89

Interviewing Job Applicants

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	1	1	1
	Uncertain			
	Not Important	4	2	

Five pairs responded that they believed conducting orientation of new employees was an important job of an administrative assistant. Three personnel managers said it was important, and the corresponding administrative assistants felt it was not important. Table 90 shows these results.

Table 90
Conducting Orientation of New Employees

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	5		1
	Uncertain			
	Not Important	3		

Four administrative assistants felt planning training programs was not important. The 4 corresponding personnel managers were uncertain about this task. One pair agreed this was an important function of an administrative assistant, and one pair agreed that it was not important. Table 91 reflects the results.

Table 91

Planning Training Programs

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	1	1	
	Uncertain	1		
	Not Important	1	4	1

Eight of the 9 pair agreed that handling personal and financial affairs of the supervisor was not an important task of the administrative assistant. One administrative assistant said it was not important, and the corresponding personnel manager was uncertain. Table 92 presents the findings.

Table 92

Handling Personal and Financial Affairs of Supervisor

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important			
	Uncertain			
	Not Important		1	8

Table 93 summarizes the opinions of the two groups regarding participating in policy determinations within organizational units. Seven personnel managers said this was not important, 6 of the corresponding administrative assistants said this was an important part of the job of an administrative assistant, and the remaining administrative assistant was uncertain.

Table 93

Participating in Policy Determinations Within Organizational Unit

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	2		6
	Uncertain			1
	Not Important			

The last table, Table 94, shows how the respondents felt about the importance of administrative assistants attending staff meetings as a part of their duties. Five pairs agreed this was an important function of an administrative assistant. Four administrative assistants felt this was not important and the corresponding personnel managers said it was important.

Table 94

Attending Staff Meetings

		P E R S O N N E L M A N A G E R S		
		Important	Uncertain	Not Important
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	Important	5		
	Uncertain			
	Not Important	4		

Summary of Chapter 4

Chapter four included three sections. The first section dealt with the general information findings from the personnel managers and secretarial groups. It also included a summary of the following three questions asked of the secretarial group: In your present employment,

do you feel you have a chance for advancement to a beginning management position? Would you be interested in enrolling in classes that would increase your knowledge and upgrade your skills preparatory to advancement? Do you feel you have the potential to be as effective in an administrative assistant position, as your male counterpart?

The second section included statistical results pertaining to the following hypotheses: Perceptions of educational needs for the position of administrative assistant are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary. Perceptions of experience needed for the position of administrative assistant are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary. Perceptions of the nature of the work of administrative assistants are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary. With the exception of one table which was calculated using Spearman's Rho with tied ranks, the data were submitted to the Chi Square (χ^2) Test of Independence.

The third section, an additional dimension of this study, addressed correlations of perceptions between the personnel managers and the administrative assistants groups concerning courses, educational requirements, and daily activities of administrative assistants.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The problem of this study was to determine the daily activities, the educational preparation and the experience needed by women aspiring to administrative assistant positions as perceived by personnel managers and administrative assistant aspirants, and to determine the degree of relationship between the perceptions of the two groups. Another dimension of the problem was to see if personnel managers hired administrative assistants with the preparation and experience they viewed as necessary, and if there was a relationship between personnel managers and administrative assistants pertaining to their perceptions of the nature of the work of administrative assistants.

The primary purpose of this study was to provide information that would be useful for curricula planning, development, and improvement as it pertains to adult and continuing education courses and/or programs for women aspiring to the position of administrative assistant.

The secondary purpose of this study was the assembly and analysis of data pertaining to the position of administrative assistant which would be helpful to:

1. Women who are aspiring to the position of administrative assistant.
2. Employment personnel who are seeking administrative assistants.
3. Counselors of women who aspire to positions of administrative assistants.

The study was limited to personnel managers who were members of the Yellowstone Valley Personnel Association in the metropolitan area of Billings, Montana, and secretaries and administrative assistants employed by the same firms as the personnel managers. The study was limited by the willingness and/or the ability of the three groups to recall, evaluate, record, and/or communicate to the researcher their experiences and opinions.

Data were collected for this study by conducting a personal interview with each participant.

Review of Literature Summary

The review of literature for this study was divided into three categories: (1) adult business education programs growth predictions; (2) women in the labor force and in management positions; and (3) related research. Adult business education programs are growing, and some educators felt this growth will continue at an accelerated rate. The labor force participation rate by women is

increasing. Several programs have emerged to assist women in seeking management positions; however, the problems for women advancing to management positions are still varied and numerous. Several related studies recommended: (1) human relations and/or public relations should be emphasized more than in the past in the preparation of women for management positions; (2) educational programs should be broad; and (3) at least one management course should be included in the curriculum for preparing women for advancement. Several studies indicated the need for further education for women aspiring to management positions. Although there has been very little research in the area of women aspiring to the position of administrative assistant, there have been some related studies concerning women in higher management positions.

Methods and Procedures Summary

The methods and procedures for this investigation were organized into the following areas: definition of the population, method of collecting the data, method of organizing the data, statistical hypotheses, questions to be answered, analysis of data and precautions for accuracy. Data were collected from three sources: personnel managers, secretaries, and administrative assistants. Participants were asked their opinions about the beginning management position of administrative assistant. The personal interviews were divided into

four parts: general information, education, experience and nature of the work performed.

The data collected for this study were compiled and presented as descriptive narration and statistical tables. The statistical presentation was used in conjunction with the following global hypotheses:

1. Perceptions of educational needs for the position of administrative assistant are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary.
2. Perceptions of experience needed for the position of administrative assistant are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary.
3. Perceptions of the nature of the work of administrative assistants are independent of group affiliation, i.e., whether one is a personnel manager or a secretary.

Findings Summary

The findings of this study included general information obtained from the personnel managers and secretarial groups, statistical results as related to the hypotheses, and correlations of perceptions between the personnel managers and the administrative assistants groups. The following are the summaries of findings from these three categories:

General information findings. Tables one through ten presented the responses of personnel managers and secretaries pertaining to general information. Most personnel managers (81 percent) and most secretaries (81 percent) responded that their companies would pay for continuing education courses for its employees. The majority in both groups, 71 percent and 91 percent for personnel managers and secretaries respectively, said their companies would pay from 76-100% of the costs for taking continuing education courses. When asked whether or not their company sends employees to other than company-sponsored training institutes and seminars, the majority in both groups replied in the affirmative, 84 percent of the personnel managers group, and 77 percent of the secretarial group. It was determined that the majority of personnel managers had held their present titles for either 1 to less than 3 years (32 percent), or 3 to less than 6 years (32 percent). The majority of the secretaries had held their present titles for less than 1 year (32 percent), or from 1 to less than 3 years (32 percent). Almost three-fourths of both groups, 71 percent of the personnel managers, and 74 percent of the secretaries, said their companies had no established career paths for secretaries.

Tables eleven through thirteen in the general information section dealt with opinions of the secretarial group. Over half of the secretaries (58 percent) responded that they felt they did have a chance for advancement in their present employment. The vast majority

of the secretarial group (84 percent) reported they were interested in taking adult and/or continuing education classes that would increase their knowledge and/or upgrade their skills preparatory to advancement. Eighty-seven percent of the secretaries felt they had the potential to be as effective as their male counterpart in an administrative assistant position.

Statistical findings. Tables fourteen through sixty-seven presented the statistical findings related to the hypotheses. With the exception of data from one question which were analyzed by using Spearman's Rho with tied ranks (Ferguson, 1976), all other data in the section were tested using the Chi Square (X^2) Test of Independence (Ferguson, 1976). The .05 level of significance was used in all cases. A computer was used to perform the Chi Square (X^2) calculations.

There was a statistically significant dependency on group affiliation between the personnel managers group and the secretarial group pertaining to the question of minimum formal schooling for administrative assistants. Most personnel managers felt fourteen years of schooling was the minimum for the position, and most secretaries felt that twelve years was the minimum. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 7.82 and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 11.2325; therefore, the hypothesis that the groups were

independent of group affiliation, was rejected. Following the question about minimum formal schooling, the two groups were then asked about the kind of schooling administrative assistants should have. The majority of personnel managers said two years of college was the minimum, and the majority of secretaries said completion of high school was the minimum. Again, the hypothesis was rejected; the critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 7.82 and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 8.9649.

Personnel managers and secretaries were asked about course areas they felt would be most beneficial in preparing for an administrative assistant position. The findings indicated they viewed the importance of the courses similarly. The majority in both groups perceived most of the courses as beneficial. The critical Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99 and the calculated Chi Square (X^2) is shown in parentheses following the course area: accounting (.8002), business communications (4.80), business finance (1.8341), business law (2.8342), business math (4.7965), business report writing (.3246), business statistics (0), data processing (1.6564), economics (.5000), human relations in business (5.3333), management (1.2636), management simulations (1.3292), managerial accounting (5.5105), marketing (.3133), office administration (2.7102), office systems and procedures (1.0666), personnel management (.1165), records management (.0936),

reprographics (2.0763), secretarial procedures (.1152), shorthand (.6571), typewriting (2.2628), voice writing machines (dictation) (.3434), voice writing machines (transcription) (2.7092), and word processing (.7886).

The personnel managers group and the secretarial group were asked how much business experience they felt was necessary for the position of administrative assistant. The majority in both groups felt that between one and five years should be the minimum. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 9.49, and the calculated value of Chi Square (X^2) was 2.6100, thus the null hypothesis that response was independent of group affiliation was retained.

The two groups were then asked about the particular expertise which they felt would aid most in advancing to an administrative assistant position. This data was tested for relationship using Spearman's Rho with tied ranks. The critical value of Spearman's Rho was .564, and calculated value of Spearman's Rho was .6152; therefore, the hypothesis that perceptions would be similar was rejected. Most personnel managers stated that supervision expertise would aid most, and most secretaries stated that secretarial skills expertise would aid most in advancing to the position.

Personnel managers and secretaries were asked what they perceived was the general nature of the work of an administrative assistant. The critical value of Chi Square (X^2) was 5.99; the calculated

value of Chi Square (X^2) is given in parentheses following each item. The hypotheses that response was independent of group affiliation were rejected for the following: handling travel arrangements for supervisor (6.8138), attending budget meetings (10.8667), and participating in policy determinations within the organizational unit (7.5891).

There was not sufficient dependency upon group affiliation to reject the hypotheses for the following items: answering correspondence by shorthand dictation (.3180), answering correspondence by use of dictation equipment (.0180), composing correspondence for supervisor's signature (.0947), composing correspondence for administrative assistant's signature (.1025), preparing reports (.2972), preparing annual reports (.3826), preparing booklets, manuals etc. (4.0483), arranging and preparing agenda for meetings and conferences (.5152), acting as hostess for functions (1.1190), giving speeches as a representative of supervisor or company (2.9411), coordinating public relations activities (3.0944), maintaining files (.6190), accounting activities (.2685), handling payroll (.8070), controlling and purchasing office equipment and supplies (2.1419), supervising programs for maintenance of office equipment (1.2761), handling personal problems of employees (3.125), interviewing job applicants (.6535), conducting orientation of new employees (1.9814), planning training programs (.5111), handling personal and financial affairs of supervisor (.6198), and attending staff meetings (.7333).

Perception correlation findings. The last section of the findings chapter was devoted to personnel managers and administrative assistants perception correlations. Another dimension of this study was to compare the perceptions of personnel managers with those of administrative assistants, as these perceptions pertained to education, experience and nature of the work of administrative assistants. Nine administrative assistants were interviewed, and each response was paired with a personnel manager's response in the same company. Personnel managers were asked how many years of formal schooling they felt was the minimum for an administrative assistant, and the administrative assistants were asked how many years of formal schooling they had had. One third of the pairs were in agreement.

The personnel managers group was asked how beneficial it thought certain courses were in preparing for an administrative assistant position. Administrative assistants were asked how beneficial the courses they had completed from the list were in preparing them for an administrative assistant position. The courses completed by at least eight of the administrative assistants group were in accounting (8), secretarial procedures (8), shorthand (8), and typewriting (9). Although there were some in both groups who felt some of these courses were not beneficial, most felt they were.

The personnel managers were asked which expertise they felt would aid most in advancing to an administrative assistant position. The administrative assistants were asked which expertise aided them most in advancing to an administrative assistant position. The majority of personnel managers (7) said supervision skills, and more administrative assistants chose secretarial skills (4) than any other.

Personnel managers were asked: What do you think is the general nature of the work of an administrative assistant? Administrative assistants were asked: What is the general nature of the work you do? Items that reflected at least five pairs agreeing on the importance, or unimportance, of the job task were: answering correspondence by use of dictation equipment (6), composing correspondence for supervisor's signature (5), composing correspondence for administrative assistant's signature (7), preparing reports (8), preparing annual reports (7), preparing booklets, manuals etc. (5), acting as hostess for functions (5), giving speeches as a representative of supervisor or company (6), maintaining files (8), conducting orientation of new employees (5), handling personal and financial affairs of supervisor (8), and attending staff meetings (5).

Items that reflected at least five pairs disagreeing on the importance, or unimportance, of the job task were: handling travel arrangements for supervisor (7), attending budget meetings (5),

controlling and purchasing office equipment and supplies (6), handling personal problems of employees (6), interviewing job applicants (5), and participating in policy determinations within organizational unit (6).

Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn from an analysis of the study's findings:

1. There was a statistically significant dependency on group affiliation between the personnel managers group and the secretarial group pertaining to the minimum formal schooling required for administrative assistants. It was concluded that the number of years of formal schooling that the participants thought was necessary was dependent on whether the participant was a personnel manager or a secretary. The majority of personnel managers perceived fourteen years as the minimum, and the majority of secretaries perceived twelve as the minimum.

2. There was a statistically significant dependency on group affiliation between the personnel managers group and the secretarial group pertaining to the kind of minimum schooling administrative assistants should have. It was concluded that the kind of minimum schooling that the participants thought was necessary was dependent

on whether the participant was a personnel manager or a secretary.

Most personnel managers thought the minimum should be completion of two years of college, while most of the secretaries thought completion of high school was the minimum.

3. It was concluded that personnel managers and secretaries generally agreed on which courses were beneficial or not beneficial in preparing for the position of administrative assistant. Most courses were perceived as beneficial by both of the groups responding. The courses listed were: accounting, business communications, business finance, business law, business math, business report writing, business statistics, data processing, economics, human relations in business, management, management simulations, managerial accounting, marketing, office administration, office systems and procedures, personnel management, records management, reprographics, secretarial procedures, shorthand, typewriting, voice writing machines (dictation), voice writing machines (transcription), and word processing.

4. It was concluded that the majority in both groups agreed that between one and five years of past business experience was necessary for the position of administrative assistant.

5. There was a statistically significant dependency on group affiliation between the personnel managers group and the secretarial

group pertaining to the particular expertise which they felt would aid most in advancing to an administrative assistant position. It was concluded that the particular expertise chosen, depended on whether one was a personnel manager or a secretary. The majority of personnel managers perceived supervision expertise as aiding most, and the majority of secretaries perceived secretarial skills as aiding most.

6. There was a statistically significant dependency on group affiliation between the personnel managers group and the secretarial group pertaining to the importance or unimportance of the following job tasks that should be performed by an administrative assistant: handling travel arrangements for supervisor, attending budget meetings, and participating in policy determinations within the organizational unit. It was concluded that whether one felt these tasks were important or not important was dependent on whether one was a personnel manager or a secretary.

7. It appears that personnel managers and the paired administrative assistants in the same companies did not generally agree on the following: years of formal schooling necessary for an administrative assistant; particular expertise which would aid most in preparing for an administrative assistant position; and the importance, or unimportance, of the job tasks of handling travel arrangements for supervisor, attending budget meetings, controlling and purchasing office.

equipment and supplies, handling personal problems of employees, interviewing job applicants, and participating in policy determinations within organizational unit.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a minimum of two years of post high school education be required for office administration programs, and four-year programs be encouraged. It is recommended that implementing adult and continuing education courses and/or programs in office administration be considered a high priority in collegiate schools of business. The literature heavily supported the need for educational programs for women advancing to management positions. Maymi (1974), Buzenberg (1975), and Burke and Weir (1977) all advocated programs for educating women for advancement into management. Lemaster and Stead (1968) and Arnold (1979) stressed the importance of a college background to prepare women for management positions. Results of research studies also supported the need for continued education. Among the studies advocating this need were: The Lockwood (1954) and the Noyes (1960) studies; Paddock (1967), who concluded a baccalaureate degree be considered the minimum, and that evening school at universities should be made available; Rowe (1973) found the trend toward a college degree necessary to attain an administrative assistant position;

Spinks (1974) concluded that collegiate training was necessary for persons aspiring to management positions; Huggins (1977) recommended colleges and universities increase their evening offerings for administrative assistants and executive secretaries; and Campbell (1980) recommended businesswomen be encouraged to continue their education beyond the high-school level. Approximately 83 percent of the personnel managers in the present study believed the minimum schooling for an administrative assistant should be either two or four years of college. Eighty-four percent of the group aspiring to administrative assistant positions stated they were interested in taking adult and/or continuing education classes that would increase their knowledge and/or upgrade their skills preparatory to advancement.

Aptt (1980) reported on the need for establishing secretarial career paths and the need for commitment on the part of educational systems to assist with this. Among the recommendations Campbell (1980) made, supported by the findings in that study, was that businesses should have job descriptions, and they should make sure that job titles accurately reflect duties. Mott (1980) emphasized the importance of communication skills. The findings of the present study showed that it appeared personnel managers, secretaries, and administrative assistants did not generally agree on the minimum number of years of education necessary for an administrative assistant, what

expertise would aid the most in advancing to the position, nor several of the job tasks involved with the position, including whether or not administrative assistants should participate in policy determinations within the organizational unit. Seventy-four percent of the secretaries, and seventy-one percent of the personnel managers said there were no career paths established in their companies for secretaries. These findings suggest problems involving either a lack of information or misinformation, or both, which job descriptions, career paths and better intracompany communications could help remedy. It is recommended that short-term workshops and seminars be developed for management personnel and those aspiring to administrative assistant positions for the purposes of developing job descriptions for administrative assistants, and developing career paths for secretaries. It is recommended that short-term workshops and seminars be developed for management personnel and those aspiring to administrative assistant positions that would emphasize improving verbal and written intracompany communications concerning perceptions and expectations.

It is recommended that office administration programs include courses in human and/or public relations, and supervision skills, and at least one management course be included in the program. Human and/or public relations should be given greater emphasis throughout the program. It is recommended that office administration programs

include skills in accounting, business communications, business math, office administration, office systems and procedures, records management, and secretarial procedures. One of the skill-proficiency areas stressed by Arnold (1979) was records management. She also advocated a strong basic business administration background and skill in supervising others. Mott (1980) said that skill in managerial decision making, supervision, and working with people was important. Included in the conclusions reached by Lockwood (1954) was that good human relations should be stressed throughout all courses in the educational program. Noyes (1960) recommended at least one management course be required, and human relations and/or public relations be emphasized in courses such as secretarial procedures and business communications. Spinks (1974) concluded that a majority of the humanistic and behavioral studies items were rated by most of the respondents as necessary in administrative office management programs. Human relations in business and decision making were two of the areas emphasized. Huggins (1977) recommended, "That emphasis on human relations in business be incorporated in appropriate courses in the office administration curriculum." Campbell (1980) found the course most frequently chosen as being helpful in their work was management, and the next most frequently chosen course was accounting. In the present study, supervision expertise was mentioned by personnel managers more often

than any other skill in aiding secretaries to advance to administrative assistant positions. Almost 97 percent of the personnel managers interviewed stated that a course in human relations in business would be beneficial. The majority of personnel managers and secretaries, at least 68 percent in each case, believed office administration programs should include the following courses: accounting, business communications, business math, office administration, office systems and procedures, and secretarial procedures.

It is recommended that programs for educating administrative assistants be kept broad and flexible, as the job encompasses a variety of duties. Lockwood (1954), Paddock (1967), and Huggins (1977) all noted in their studies, the flexibility and broadness that is needed because of the variety of duties in secretarial and administrative assistant positions. The majority of personnel managers and secretaries interviewed chose 19 of the 25 job tasks of administrative assistants as being important to the job, suggesting the variety of duties performed.

It is recommended that similar studies be undertaken to assess the validity of these findings in other parts of the country, and to periodically ascertain if job descriptions and/or expectations for administrative assistants are changing. Bottoms (1979) predicted many changes in office work in the future and that these changes will affect

curriculum planning. Others who predicted more changes in job descriptions and/or expectations in the future were Mott (1980) and Aptt (1980).

Suggestions for Further Study

Suggestions for research in areas related to this study are as follows:

1. A study to determine how many secretaries advance to management positions after completing the recommended adult and/or continuing education courses in office administration.
2. A study matching perceptions among personnel managers, administrative assistants, and secretaries when all three are employed by the same company.
3. A study, national in scope, comparing job descriptions and/or expectations of administrative assistants.
4. A study comparing office administration course syllabi with administrative assistant job descriptions to determine if course content reflected job activities.

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APPENDIX

(Interview questions format for personnel managers and secretaries)

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name _____
2. Title _____
3. Employer _____
Name Address

Please check one response for each of the following questions:

4. What is the approximate total number of office employees in your local operation?

1-5 _____	51-100 _____
6-10 _____	101-200 _____
11-20 _____	over 200 _____
21-50 _____	

5. Does your company pay for continuing education courses for its employees?

Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain _____

If yes, how much?

0-25% _____
26-50% _____
51-75% _____
76-100% _____

Comments _____

6. Will your company give leave time to take a course during the daytime?

Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain _____

Comments _____

7. Does your company send employees to other than company-sponsored training institutes and seminars?

Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain _____

Comments _____

8. Does your company send employees to other than company-sponsored training schools on the operation of new equipment and machines?

Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain _____

Comments _____

9. Is there an established career path for secretaries in your company?

Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain _____

Comments _____

10. Which of the following best describes your company:

No in-service training _____

Very little in-service training _____

Most training done on in-service basis _____

All training done on in-service basis _____

Uncertain _____

Comments _____

II. EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

1. How many years of formal schooling do you feel is the minimum for an administrative assistant? Please check one of the following:

12 _____

16 _____

13 _____

17 _____

14 _____

18 _____

15 _____

other (specify) _____

2. What kind of formal education do you feel is the minimum for an administrative assistant? Please check one of the following:

High School _____

College, 4-year degree _____

Business college _____

Company in-service
institutes _____

College, 2-year degree _____

Other (Specify) _____

3. How many years have you been employed by the company for which you are working?

Less than 1 _____

6 to less than 10 _____

1 to less than 3 _____

10 or more _____

3 to less than 6 _____

4. How many years have you held your present title?

Less than 1 _____

6 to less than 10 _____

1 to less than 3 _____

10 or more _____

3 to less than 6 _____

5. What courses do you feel would be most beneficial in preparing for an administrative assistant position? Please place a check mark in the appropriate column.

Column I - Beneficial

Column II - Uncertain

Column III - Generally not beneficial

	I	II	III
(1) Accounting	_____	_____	_____
(2) Business Communications	_____	_____	_____
(3) Business Finance	_____	_____	_____
(4) Business Law	_____	_____	_____
(5) Business Math	_____	_____	_____
(6) Business Report Writing	_____	_____	_____
(7) Business Statistics	_____	_____	_____
(8) Data Processing	_____	_____	_____
(9) Economics	_____	_____	_____
(10) Human Relations in Business	_____	_____	_____
(11) Management	_____	_____	_____
(12) Management Simulations	_____	_____	_____
(13) Managerial Accounting	_____	_____	_____
(14) Marketing	_____	_____	_____
(15) Office Administration	_____	_____	_____
(16) Office Systems and Procedures	_____	_____	_____
(17) Personnel Management	_____	_____	_____

	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>
(18) Records Management	_____	_____	_____
(19) Reprographics	_____	_____	_____
(20) Secretarial Procedures	_____	_____	_____
(21) Shorthand	_____	_____	_____
(22) Typewriting	_____	_____	_____
(23) Voice-writing Machines (dictation)	_____	_____	_____
(24) Voice-writing Machines (transcription)	_____	_____	_____
(25) Word Processing	_____	_____	_____
(26) Other (Specify)	_____	_____	_____

6. How much past business experience do you feel is necessary for the position of administrative assistant? Please check one of the following:

None

Less than one year

Between one and five years

Between six and ten years

Between eleven and fifteen years

Other (specify) _____

7. What is the particular expertise which you feel would aid most in advancing to an administrative assistant position? Please check one of the following:

Knowledge and/or experience in:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| (1) Banking | _____ |
| (2) Insurance | _____ |
| (3) Law | _____ |
| (4) Data Processing | _____ |
| (5) Supervision | _____ |
| (6) Personality traits | _____ |
| (7) Public Relations | _____ |
| (8) Written Communication Skills | _____ |
| (9) Verbal Communication Skills | _____ |
| (10) Secretarial Skills | _____ |
| Other (specify) | |
| (11) _____ | _____ |
| (12) _____ | _____ |

Comments on education and experience _____

III. NATURE OF WORK

1. What do you think is the general nature of the work of an administrative assistant? Please place a check mark in the appropriate column.

Column I - Important

Column II - Uncertain

Column III - Not Important

	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>
(1) Answering correspondence by dictation	_____	_____	_____
by use of dictation equipment	_____	_____	_____
(2) Composing correspondence for superior			
for superior's signature	_____	_____	_____
for administrative assistant's signature	_____	_____	_____
(3) Preparing reports	_____	_____	_____
(4) Preparing annual reports	_____	_____	_____
(5) Preparing booklets, manuals, etc.	_____	_____	_____
(6) Arranging and preparing agenda for meetings and conferences	_____	_____	_____
(7) Acting as hostess for special functions	_____	_____	_____
(8) Giving speeches as a representa- tive of superior or company	_____	_____	_____
(9) Coordinating public realtions activities	_____	_____	_____
(10) Maintaining files	_____	_____	_____
(11) Accounting activities	_____	_____	_____

	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>
(12) Handling payroll	_____	_____	_____
(13) Handling complete travel arrangements for superior	_____	_____	_____
(14) Attending budget meetings	_____	_____	_____
(15) Controlling and purchasing office equipment and supplies	_____	_____	_____
(16) Supervising programs for maintenance of office equipment	_____	_____	_____
(17) Handling personal problems of employees	_____	_____	_____
(18) Interviewing job applicants	_____	_____	_____
(19) Conducting orientation of new employees	_____	_____	_____
(20) Planning training programs	_____	_____	_____
(21) Handling personal and financial affairs of superior	_____	_____	_____
(22) Participating in policy determinations within organizational unit	_____	_____	_____
(23) Attending staff meetings	_____	_____	_____
(24) Other (specify) _____	_____	_____	_____
Comments on nature of work _____			

(Additional questions format for secretaries)

For each of the questions below, please check one reply:

1. In your present employment, do you feel you have a chance for advancement to a beginning management position?

Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain _____

Comments _____

2. Would you be interested in enrolling in classes that would increase your knowledge and upgrade your skills preparatory to advancement?

Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain _____

Comments _____

3. Do you feel you have the potential to be as effective in an administrative assistant position, as your male counterpart?

Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain _____

Comments _____

(Interview questions format for administrative assistants)

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name _____
2. Title _____
3. Employer _____

Name
Address

II. EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Please check one response for each of the following questions:

1. How many years of formal schooling have you had?

12 _____
13 _____
14 _____
15 _____

16 _____
17 _____
18 _____
Other (specify) _____
2. How many years have you been employed by the company for whom you are working?

less than 1 _____
1 to less than 3 _____
3 to less than 6 _____

6 to less than 10 _____
10 or more _____
3. How many years have you held your present title?

Less than 1 _____
1 to less than 3 _____
3 to less than 6 _____

6 to less than 10 _____
10 or more _____
4. Please indicate how beneficial the following courses were in preparing you for your present position. If you have not had the course, do not respond; just go on to the next one.

Column I - Beneficial

Column II - Uncertain

Column III - Generally not beneficial

	I	II	III
(1) Accounting	_____	_____	_____
(2) Business Communications	_____	_____	_____

	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>
(3) Business Finance	_____	_____	_____
(4) Business Law	_____	_____	_____
(5) Business Math	_____	_____	_____
(6) Business Report Writing	_____	_____	_____
(7) Business Statistics	_____	_____	_____
(8) Data Processing	_____	_____	_____
(9) Economics	_____	_____	_____
(10) Human Relations in Business	_____	_____	_____
(11) Management	_____	_____	_____
(12) Management Simulations	_____	_____	_____
(13) Managerial Accounting	_____	_____	_____
(14) Marketing	_____	_____	_____
(15) Office Administration	_____	_____	_____
(16) Office Systems and Procedures	_____	_____	_____
(17) Personnel Management	_____	_____	_____
(18) Records Management	_____	_____	_____
(19) Reprographics	_____	_____	_____
(20) Secretarial Procedures	_____	_____	_____
(21) Shorthand	_____	_____	_____
(22) Typewriting	_____	_____	_____
(23) Voice-writing Machines (dictation)	_____	_____	_____

	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>
(24) Voice-writing Machines (transcription)	_____	_____	_____
(25) Word Processing	_____	_____	_____
(26) Other (specify)	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

5. How much past business experience have you had prior to your present position? Please check one of the following:
- None _____ Between 6 and 10 years _____
 Less than 1 year _____ Between 11 and 15 years _____
 Between 1 and 5 years _____ Other (specify) _____
6. What is the particular expertise which you feel aided you most in advancing to an administrative assistant position? Please check one of the following. If none of the following apply to you, please fill in "other."
- (1) Banking _____
 (2) Insurance _____
 (3) Law _____
 (4) Data Processing _____
 (5) Supervision _____
 (6) Personality traits _____
 (7) Public Relations _____
 (8) Written Communication skills _____
 (9) Verbal Communication skills _____
 (10) Secretarial skills _____
 (11) Other (specify) _____

Comments on education and experience _____

III. NATURE OF WORK

1. What is the general nature of the work you do? Please place a check mark in the appropriate column.

Column I - Important	I	II	III
Column II - Uncertain			
Column III - Not Important			
(1) Answering correspondence by shorthand dictation	_____	_____	_____
by use of dictation equipment	_____	_____	_____
(2) Composing correspondence for supervisor:			
for supervisor's signature	_____	_____	_____
for your signature	_____	_____	_____
(3) Preparing reports	_____	_____	_____
(4) Preparing annual reports	_____	_____	_____
(5) Preparing booklets, manuals etc.	_____	_____	_____
(6) Arranging and preparing agenda for meetings and conferences	_____	_____	_____
(7) Acting as hostess for functions	_____	_____	_____
(8) Giving speeches as a represen- tative of supervisor or company	_____	_____	_____
(9) Coordinating public relations activities	_____	_____	_____
(10) Maintaining files	_____	_____	_____
(11) Accounting activities	_____	_____	_____
(12) Handling payroll	_____	_____	_____
(13) Handling complete travel arrange- ments for supervisor	_____	_____	_____
(14) Attending budget meetings	_____	_____	_____
(15) Controlling and purchasing office equipment & supplies	_____	_____	_____

	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>
(16) Supervising programs for main- tenance of office equipment	_____	_____	_____
(17) Handling personal problems of employees	_____	_____	_____
(18) Interviewing job applicants	_____	_____	_____
(19) Orientation of new employees	_____	_____	_____
(20) Planning training programs	_____	_____	_____
(21) Handling personal and financial affairs of supervisor	_____	_____	_____
(22) Participating in policy deter- minations within organizational unit	_____	_____	_____
(23) Attending staff meetings	_____	_____	_____
(24) Other (specify) _____	_____		

Comments on nature of work _____

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