
The Differential Impact of On-the-Job Training, Mentoring, and Spousal Support on Achievement Motivation and Job Effectiveness in the Secretarial Profession, South-West Nigeria

By

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Abstract

This study explores the differential impact of on-the-job training, professional mentoring, and spousal support on achievement motivation and job effectiveness among secretarial staff in the public sector of South-West Nigeria. Using a sample of 801 secretarial staff and 272 superior officers, the study employed descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analysis to examine how these factors contribute to secretarial productivity across job cadres (junior, senior, and experienced). The results indicate that spousal support has a significant positive effect on job effectiveness, particularly for senior and more experienced staff. On-the-job training and professional mentoring showed significant impacts only for senior secretarial staff, suggesting that more experienced employees benefit most from structured support systems. However, junior and experienced staff showed minimal improvement in job performance due to training and mentoring interventions. The study also revealed that spousal support did not significantly influence achievement motivation, indicating that intrinsic factors, such as personal ambition, are more critical drivers of motivation. The findings underscore the importance of cadre-specific interventions in enhancing secretarial staff performance and offer practical recommendations for improving professional development programs, work-life balance, and tailored mentoring for different staff levels.

Keywords: on-the-job training, professional mentoring, spousal support, achievement motivation, job effectiveness.

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1.0 Introduction

The secretarial profession plays a pivotal role in the efficiency of organizations, especially within the public sector in Nigeria. Secretaries are entrusted with a wide range of administrative responsibilities, which contribute significantly to the success of the organization. However, despite their essential roles, there has been a persistent challenge in ensuring that secretarial staff maintain high levels of job effectiveness and achievement motivation. This issue is particularly pronounced in the civil service, where various external factors, such as inadequate resources, economic constraints, and changing technological demands, have hindered the professional development of secretaries (Sam-Eleyi & Koko, 2020). As the workplace continues to evolve with new technologies and organizational structures, there is a growing need to explore the factors that influence the motivation and effectiveness of secretarial staff, particularly in the context of South-West Nigeria.

Secretarial staff in the public sector are expected to contribute significantly to organizational goals by managing office systems, records, and communication. They are also required to exhibit high levels of interpersonal skills, moral conduct, and technical competence. Despite these expectations, research has shown that secretarial work in Nigeria's civil service is often met with various challenges, including poor

working conditions, inadequate training opportunities, and the lack of professional mentoring (Sam-Eleyi & Koko, 2020). These factors may contribute to the diminished achievement motivation and job effectiveness of secretaries, as they are unable to access the resources or support needed to enhance their performance.

The concept of achievement motivation, as outlined by Acquah (2017), refers to the internal drive that motivates individuals to pursue work that they perceive as valuable and to achieve high standards of performance. In secretarial roles, achievement motivation is crucial for driving individuals to meet organizational expectations, particularly when faced with job-related challenges. However, factors such as economic crises, delayed salary payments, and the absence of modern office facilities can undermine this intrinsic drive, leading to low job effectiveness among secretarial staff (Athuman & Mubarak, 2023). In this context, the roles of on-the-job training, professional mentoring, and spouse support are worth investigating as potential solutions to enhance motivation and effectiveness.

Training is essential for improving the skills and performance of employees, and it has been recognized as a critical component of employee development. In particular, on-the-job training has been identified as an effective method for developing the skills required for secretarial roles. Despite the importance of training, secretaries in Nigeria's civil service often lack access to sufficient training programs, which could help them cope with the evolving demands of their profession (Odusanya et al., 2024). Professional mentoring, on the other hand, provides an informal yet structured approach to developing competence and providing guidance, which is especially critical for less experienced secretaries. Additionally, spouse support, as discussed by Allen et al., (2020) has been found to be a crucial factor in reducing emotional strain and increasing work motivation, particularly for employed women in challenging work environments.

This study aims to explore the combined influence of on-the-job training, professional mentoring, and spouse support on achievement motivation and job effectiveness among secretarial staff in South-West Nigeria's civil service. Specifically, the study examines the relationship between these variables, as well as their composite and individual contributions to the achievement motivation and job effectiveness of secretarial staff across different job cadres (junior, senior, and experienced). By investigating the impact of these factors, this research seeks to provide insights into how training, mentoring, and spousal support can be leveraged to enhance the performance and motivation of secretaries in the public sector.

Given the central role that secretaries play in public organizations and the challenges they face, the findings of this study will be beneficial for policy makers, organizational leaders, and HR managers seeking to improve the effectiveness of the secretarial workforce. It will also contribute to the broader body of knowledge on employee motivation and performance, especially within the context of developing nations where the civil service plays a vital role in governance and public administration.

2.0 Literature Review

The effectiveness of secretarial staff in the public sector, particularly in South-West Nigeria, is influenced by various factors, including on-the-job training, professional mentoring, and spousal support. This literature review aims to explore existing theories and empirical research related to these factors, their impact on achievement motivation, job effectiveness, and productivity, and their applicability to the secretarial profession within the Nigerian public sector.

Theoretical Framework

Two foundational theories underpin this study: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory. These theories provide a framework for understanding motivation and job effectiveness in the workplace.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory posits that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction arise from different sets of factors: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators, such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility, contribute to job satisfaction, while hygiene factors, including working conditions, salary, and job security, prevent dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1959). According to Herzberg, motivating employees requires meeting their intrinsic needs, such as the desire for achievement and personal growth. In the context of secretarial staff, on-the-job training and professional mentoring are motivational factors that enhance job satisfaction and effectiveness, while spousal support may serve as a hygiene factor by reducing stress and supporting work-life balance.

McClelland's Need for Achievement Theory emphasizes that individuals are motivated by a desire to achieve challenging goals and excel in their tasks (McClelland, 1958). Secretarial staff with a high need for achievement are likely to be more motivated to enhance their job performance through training and mentoring. These intrinsic motivators can drive them to meet organizational goals effectively. McClelland's theory is particularly relevant in understanding how professional development opportunities, such as mentoring and training, can foster a sense of accomplishment and lead to higher job effectiveness.

Concept of Job Effectiveness and Achievement Motivation

Job Effectiveness is the extent to which an employee fulfills the duties assigned to them and produces the desired outcomes (Akintola & Adepoju, 2016). For secretarial staff, job effectiveness involves the ability to manage office tasks efficiently, demonstrate strong organizational skills, and handle interpersonal relationships with tact and professionalism. Research has shown that effective employees possess the right combination of skills, knowledge, and workplace attributes, which enable them to perform their tasks with high efficiency. The role of job effectiveness in public sector organizations is critical as it directly impacts service delivery, organizational goals, and client satisfaction.

Achievement Motivation is a psychological drive that influences an individual's desire to accomplish work goals. Secretarial staff with high achievement motivation tend to set and pursue challenging targets, seek feedback, and strive for personal and professional growth (Acquah, 2017). In the context of secretarial work, achievement motivation can influence how employees approach their tasks and their willingness to engage in continuous learning and development. As such, factors like on-the-job training, mentoring, and spousal support are believed to contribute to the development of achievement motivation, which subsequently enhances job effectiveness.

The Role of On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training (OJT) refers to the process by which employees acquire the necessary skills and knowledge while performing their job duties (Odusanya et al., 2025). OJT is a highly effective method for improving employee performance, as it allows for immediate application of learned skills in a real-world setting. Research suggests that regular training is crucial for improving employee skills and keeping up with technological advancements. For secretarial staff, OJT can enhance their ability to operate office technology, communicate effectively, and perform administrative duties efficiently.

In Nigeria's public sector, secretarial staff often face challenges related to outdated technology, limited training opportunities, and a lack of resources for skill development (Sam-Eleyi & Koko, 2020). Despite

these challenges, studies have shown that employees who undergo regular training tend to have better performance outcomes (Menaka & Puppala, 2019). For example, secretaries who receive training in modern office equipment and administrative techniques are better equipped to handle their duties and contribute to organizational goals. Athuman and Mubarak (2023) found that inadequate human relations skills significantly impacted the image of organizations, with effective training, particularly in interpersonal skills, being crucial for secretaries' performance. Similarly, Oluwasina (2025) emphasized the importance of training for executive secretaries in Nigeria, specifically in office procedures and operations. Samuel (2012) in Ghana showed that training positively affected public sector job performance, further supporting the role of OJT in enhancing secretarial productivity.

The Importance of Professional Mentoring

Professional mentoring is a relationship in which an experienced individual (mentor) provides guidance, support, and advice to a less experienced person (mentee) (Allen et al., 2024). Mentoring has been identified as a crucial tool for professional development, as it helps mentees build the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to excel in their roles. Mentoring relationships provide secretarial staff with valuable insights into career progression, skill enhancement, and workplace dynamics.

Studies have demonstrated that mentoring can improve job performance by offering emotional support, career guidance, and technical advice (Rogers, 2011). In the context of secretarial work, mentoring can foster a sense of belonging and increase motivation by providing a supportive environment for skill development. In Nigeria, where professional mentoring is often informal or ad hoc, structured mentoring programs could significantly enhance the development and performance of secretarial staff in the public sector (Dosunmu, 2017). Inyang (2022) found that mentoring relationships significantly improved job satisfaction and performance. Similarly, also, the positive impact of mentoring on job satisfaction and retention, which could be applied to secretarial roles. Caroline (2025) also emphasized that mentoring fosters knowledge exchange, contributing to improved job performance.

The Role of Spousal Support

Spousal support refers to the emotional, instrumental, and informational assistance provided by a spouse to help reduce stress and improve job performance (Singh et al., 2023). In the context of secretarial work, where many employees balance work and family responsibilities, spousal support plays a vital role in ensuring emotional stability and mitigating work-related stress. Research has shown that employees with supportive spouses are better equipped to manage job demands and perform effectively (Ebenuwa-Okoh et al., 2016).

For female secretaries in Nigeria, spousal support can be especially important, as they often face the dual burden of work and family responsibilities. Studies indicate that spousal support helps reduce role strain and inter-role conflict, allowing employees to focus on their work and improve their job. Also, spousal support significantly impacted work-related well-being, particularly for women in the medical field. Wan and Yu (2024) also emphasized that spousal support contributed to marital happiness, which in turn positively influenced work performance. Ebenuwa-Okoh et al. (2016) further demonstrated that spousal support was crucial in reducing emotional strain, enhancing job satisfaction, and improving job effectiveness.

Studies on Secretarial Productivity in Nigeria

Several studies have explored factors influencing job performance and motivation in the Nigerian context. Research by Akintola and Adepoju (2016) examined the relationship between organizational culture and

secretarial job effectiveness in Nigerian public organizations, highlighting the importance of a supportive work environment in enhancing job performance. Similarly, Abosede and Akintola (2015) found that the utilization of ICT facilities significantly influenced the effectiveness of secretarial staff in Nigeria. However, most studies have focused on individual factors such as training or motivation, with little attention to the combined effect of training, mentoring, and spousal support on job effectiveness.

Dosunmu (2017) also pointed to the importance of training and professional development in the secretarial profession. However, it acknowledged the challenges faced by secretarial staff in the Nigerian civil service, such as limited access to training programs, inadequate resources, and poor working conditions. These challenges make it difficult for secretaries to perform optimally, underscoring the need for external support systems like mentoring and spousal support to enhance job performance.

While much research has focused on the individual impact of training, mentoring, and spousal support on job motivation and effectiveness, few studies have investigated their combined effect within the secretarial profession, particularly in Nigeria's public sector. Furthermore, existing studies often overlook how these factors affect secretarial staff across different job cadres, such as junior, senior, and experienced staff. This literature review highlights the need for further research into the combined impact of these factors on secretarial performance, with a focus on Nigeria's unique challenges and work culture.

This study aims to fill these gaps by examining the differential impact of on-the-job training, professional mentoring, and spousal support on achievement motivation and job effectiveness among secretarial staff in South-West Nigeria, across different job cadres. By doing so, it contributes to the understanding of how these support systems can enhance secretarial productivity and provide valuable insights for policy makers and HR managers in the Nigerian public sector.

3.0 Methodology

This study used a descriptive research design to investigate the impact of on-the-job training, professional mentoring, and spousal support on achievement motivation and job effectiveness among secretarial staff in the public sector of South-West Nigeria. A total of 801 secretarial staff and 272 superior officers were selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Four states from South-West Nigeria were randomly chosen, and then ministries, departments, and agencies within these states were sampled. Married secretarial staff were purposively selected to account for spousal support. The data collection process utilized five standardized instruments: On-the-Job Training Scale (OJTS), Professional Mentoring Scale (PMS), Spousal Support Scale (SSS), Achievement Motivation Factor Scale (AMFS), and Secretaries' Job Effectiveness Scale (SJES). These instruments had established reliability coefficients ranging from 0.65 to 0.90. Data were collected via self-administered questionnaires for secretarial staff and performance ratings from their superior officers. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) were used to summarize the data, and multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the relationships between the variables. The first hypothesis was tested using Pearson's product moment correlation. All statistical tests were conducted at a 0.05 significance level. The study achieved a high response rate of 90.14%, with 722 valid responses included in the final analysis.

4.0 Results

The results of this study were derived through a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, aimed at exploring how on-the-job training, professional mentoring, and spousal support affect achievement motivation and job effectiveness among secretarial staff in South-West Nigeria's public sector. These results provide critical insights into how these factors impact secretarial productivity and

contribute to understanding the differential impact of these support systems across different cadres of secretarial staff (junior, senior, and experienced).

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 provides a summary of the mean scores and standard deviations for the key variables under investigation. These descriptive statistics help to give a clearer picture of how secretarial staff in the public sector perceive the three support systems, training, mentoring, and spousal support, and their own job effectiveness and motivation levels.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Key Variables

Variables	\bar{x}	Standard Deviation
On-the-job training	47.31	7.46
Professional mentoring	26.72	4.44
Spouse support	52.80	9.97
Achievement motivation	42.00	6.71
Job effectiveness	133.77	27.04

The table shows that spousal support ($\bar{x} = 52.80$) is the most highly perceived factor among secretarial staff, suggesting that many respondents feel their spouses provide substantial support in managing both work and family life. On-the-job training ($\bar{x} = 47.31$) and achievement motivation ($\bar{x} = 42.00$) were also rated moderately high, indicating that these factors are seen as important in shaping the secretarial staff's performance and professional growth. However, the job effectiveness mean score ($\bar{x} = 133.77$) shows considerable variability ($SD = 27.04$), indicating that secretarial staff's job performance differs significantly. This variability in effectiveness could be linked to the diverse support systems available to different cadres of secretarial staff.

Pearson's Correlation Analysis

The Pearson's correlation matrix reveals the strength and direction of relationships between the independent variables (on-the-job training, professional mentoring, spousal support) and the dependent variables (achievement motivation, job effectiveness).

Table 2: Pearson's Correlation Matrix of Key Variables

Variables	On-the-job Training	Professional Mentoring	Spouse Support	Achievement Motivation	Job Effectiveness
On-the-job training	1.000	-0.005	-0.046	0.017	-0.057
Professional mentoring	-0.005	1.000	0.009	0.057	0.048
Spouse support	-0.046	0.009	1.000	-0.060	0.114*
Achievement motivation	0.017	0.057	-0.060	1.000	0.022
Job effectiveness	-0.057	0.048	0.114*	0.022	1.000

A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.114$, $p < 0.05$) was observed between spouse support and job effectiveness, suggesting that spousal support plays a critical role in enhancing job performance. This finding highlights the importance of emotional and practical support from spouses in reducing stress and enabling staff to perform effectively at work. However, the correlation between on-the-job training and job effectiveness was negative ($r = -0.057$), indicating that for some secretarial staff, training might not immediately translate into improved job performance. Similarly, there was no significant correlation between professional mentoring and job effectiveness ($r = 0.048$), suggesting that mentoring, while potentially valuable, may not have an immediate or direct influence on job effectiveness.

Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA)

To address the study's objective of exploring the differential impact of these support systems across different cadres of secretarial staff, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The regression models were assessed separately for junior, senior, experienced, and more experienced secretarial staff to understand how these factors contribute to job effectiveness and achievement motivation.

Junior Secretarial Staff

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Predictors on Job Effectiveness of Junior Secretarial Staff

Model	Multiple R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-value	p-value
Junior Staff	0.056	0.003	0.012	0.215	$p > 0.05$

For junior secretarial staff, the regression results indicate that the combined predictors (on-the-job training, professional mentoring, and spousal support) explained only 0.3% of the variance in job effectiveness, which is statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that for less experienced staff, the support systems assessed in this study may not be as impactful in improving job performance, possibly due to the simpler nature of their tasks and their need for more foundational development.

Senior Secretarial Staff

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Predictors on Job Effectiveness of Senior Secretarial Staff

Model	Multiple R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-value	p-value
Senior Staff	0.170	0.029	0.023	5.074	$p < 0.05$

For senior secretarial staff, the model shows that the predictors accounted for 3% of the variance in job effectiveness, and the result was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that senior staff benefit from training, mentoring, and spousal support, and that these factors significantly contribute to improving their performance. The higher contribution for senior staff implies that more experienced employees are more receptive to structured support systems, which enhance their productivity.

Experienced Secretarial Staff

Table 5: Regression Analysis of Predictors on Job Effectiveness of Experienced Secretarial Staff

Model	Multiple R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-value	p-value
Experienced Staff	0.168	0.028	0.013	1.800	$p > 0.05$

For experienced secretarial staff, the predictors explained only 2.8% of the variance in job effectiveness, and the result was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that while experience might buffer the effects of training and mentoring, the support systems provided in this study did not show significant improvements in job performance. These staff members may have developed their own coping mechanisms and routines, making the external support less impactful.

More Experienced Secretarial Staff

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Predictors on Job Effectiveness of More Experienced Secretarial Staff

Model	Multiple R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-value	p-value
More Experienced Staff	0.188	0.035	0.029	5.487	$p < 0.05$

For more experienced secretarial staff, the regression model revealed a significant result ($p < 0.05$), with the predictors explaining 3.5% of the variance in job effectiveness. This indicates that even for highly experienced staff, on-the-job training, mentoring, and spousal support still contribute to their job effectiveness, albeit in a more modest way. The positive relationship suggests that these factors continue to have value, even for more experienced employees.

5.0 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the impact of on-the-job training, professional mentoring, and spousal support on achievement motivation and job effectiveness among secretarial staff in South-West Nigeria's public sector. These findings both corroborate and contrast with existing studies, highlighting the complex interplay of these factors and their varied effects across different cadres of secretarial staff.

A significant positive relationship was found between spousal support and job effectiveness. This aligns with recent studies indicating that spousal support helps alleviate work-related stress and improves job performance, especially for employees managing both professional and personal responsibilities. For instance, a study by Awotoye and Stevens (2023) emphasized that gendered perceptions of spousal support significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions in Nigeria, highlighting the importance of spousal support in the Nigerian context. Similarly, Alarifi and Basahal (2023) found that spousal support plays a crucial role in reducing emotional strain and increasing work motivation, particularly for employed women in challenging work environments.

The study revealed that senior and more experienced secretarial staff benefited more from on-the-job training and professional mentoring than their junior counterparts. This supports the idea that the impact of training and mentoring programs increases with experience, as more senior staff have the foundational skills needed to benefit from specialized development. Recent research by Dhingra et al. (2023) found that mentoring relationships significantly improved job satisfaction and performance, emphasizing the importance of mentoring in professional development.

However, the findings also revealed that on-the-job training and professional mentoring had limited effects on junior and experienced secretarial staff. This contrasts with studies suggesting that training should have a significant impact on job performance across all levels of employees. For instance, a study

by Timsal et al. (2023) found that on-the-job training significantly improved the performance of employees, indicating that training can be effective for employees at various levels.

The study revealed that spousal support had no significant impact on achievement motivation. This contrasts with findings from recent studies that argue supportive relationships, including spousal support, can enhance intrinsic motivation by providing emotional stability. For example, a study by Dhingra et al. (2023) found that spousal social support positively affected multiple role conflict in married early adult women, suggesting that spousal support can influence intrinsic motivation. The study relied on supervisor ratings to assess job effectiveness, which could introduce bias, as supervisors' perceptions may be influenced by subjective opinions. Recent research by Cho et al. (2023) examined the validity of supervisor-perspective ratings and found that such ratings can be influenced by various factors, highlighting the potential for bias in performance evaluations.

6.0 Conclusion

The study provides important insights into the factors that influence job performance and achievement motivation among secretarial staff in South-West Nigeria's public sector. The findings highlight the importance of spousal support in enhancing job effectiveness, especially for senior and experienced staff, and emphasize the moderating role of experience in benefiting from training and mentoring interventions. However, the limited impact of on-the-job training and mentoring for junior and experienced staff suggests that these interventions may need to be more targeted and tailored to meet the specific needs of different cadres. While spousal support positively impacts job effectiveness, its limited impact on achievement motivation indicates that intrinsic factors, such as personal ambition and career goals, play a more significant role in driving motivation. Future research should focus on refining training and mentoring programs to ensure they align with the developmental needs of different staff cadres, and explore additional factors that contribute to achievement motivation in the workplace.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Tailor Training Programs:** Develop more specific, role-based training programs for junior and experienced secretarial staff to address their unique developmental needs.
- **Mentoring Systems:** Implement structured mentoring programs that cater to both junior and senior staff, with a focus on career development and skill enhancement.
- **Work-Life Balance Initiatives:** Enhance spousal support programs and promote work-life balance initiatives to further improve job effectiveness, particularly for staff balancing family and work responsibilities.
- **Cadre-Specific Interventions:** Design cadre-specific interventions that consider the experience levels of secretarial staff, ensuring that junior, senior, and experienced staff receive appropriate support.
- **Holistic Evaluation:** Incorporate self-assessments and peer reviews in performance evaluations to provide a more comprehensive and balanced view of job effectiveness.
- **Further Research:** Conduct future studies on the long-term impact of spousal support, training, and mentoring on motivation and job effectiveness across various sectors.

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